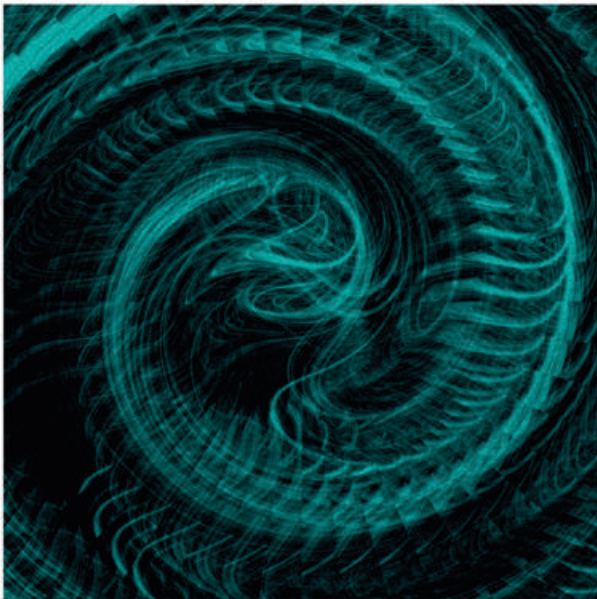


Tomasz Pawelec

History and the Unconscious

The Theoretical Assumptions
and Research Practices of Psychohistory



Tomasz Pawelec

History and the Unconscious

This work represents the first truly comprehensive and non-biased history of psychohistory, a vanguard branch of historical scholarship that studies the psychological dimension of the past using principles of psychoanalysis and psychology as its theoretical ground. Tomasz Pawelec is an experienced methodologist and historiographer who systematically examines, reconstructs, and evaluates the major theoretical and methodological guiding assumptions shared by psychohistorians. In effect, he provides the reader with an intriguing portrait of a peculiar research paradigm – and a specific intellectual “monad” – that developed within the twentieth-century American history. At the empirical foundation of his work lies a broad collection of psychohistorical publications.

The Author

Tomasz Pawelec, Professor of History at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. His research interests include history of historiography in Poland and the USA, the methodology of history, and collective memory. He authored or co-authored seven books and several other publications related to these areas.



UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA
IN KATOWICE

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PETER LANG



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INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

This book was originally a monograph addressed to readers in Poland, written in response to the practical absence heretofore of psychohistory in my country. It is not only the case that this field has not been cultivated in Poland; it is also true that, until the original publication of this book, few Polish scholars were aware of psychohistory's achievements, research strategies and methodological assumptions, which grew in significance in the second half of the twentieth century, which were once prominent (even if in a transient way) in American historical scholarship, and which attracted the attention of scholars broadly beyond the borders of the United States.

This undertaking is also part of a process that started after the collapse of the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe (1989–1991) by which Polish academic history (and, more broadly, the entire humanities and social sciences) integrated the achievements of various Western schools of research and thought which, for a number of reasons (above all political and ideological), had not been integrated before, and of which scholars in the former communist bloc had at best partial and indirect knowledge. Numerous studies have been published on these achievements, and even more translations of original texts have appeared, which together have helped make up for ground lost through years of neglect in providing Polish-language versions of works written by many outstanding authors.

In writing this monograph, I did not intend to act as a “supplier” of yet another Western discourse. I wanted those who read this study to be able to realistically grasp the research model under consideration here and to appreciate its concrete historical achievements (1) as one of the significant and comprehensive (i.e. intellectually and methodologically autonomous) “options” available to historians in the second half of the twentieth century; but (2) not as a panacea for the difficulties, dilemmas, and blind alleys associated with historical knowledge; and (3) certainly not as a list of “prepared” recipes for Polish (or any other) historians who are perhaps seeking new and alternative ways to talk about the past. Beyond describing the history of this field of study (that is – its trajectory and its dynamics over time), I also wanted to reconstruct the mental universe that characterizes representatives of psychohistory, to show how this specialization is viewed both through the eyes of the devoted advocate and through the eyes of “external” observers – those who are friendly, critical, and

even radically hostile. Moreover, it was important for me to show how psychohistorical research works, in particular, how various antinomies within this model for investigating the past and its problems and limitations “break through” into this actual practice (successfully or not), both those recognized by psychohistorians themselves and those revealed in the course of fierce debates with hostile external critics.

All of these aspects have defined the character of my monograph. I did not write it, quite obviously, as an apologia for psychohistory. And I did not write it as a mere presentation – that is, as a historiographical introduction to the theory and practice of psychohistorical research.¹ Rather, I constructed this work with the intention of developing the fullest possible critical treatment of the subject, one which is written from an “external” perspective but which is not “programmatically” hostile toward psychohistory, one that makes systematic use of the analytical apparatus of modern methodology and philosophy of history, and one that takes into consideration historical context – that is, previous historiographic developments and historiography’s modern condition. My goal was to capture, in a balanced manner, the theoretical-methodological properties of psychohistory; to estimate its cognitive possibilities and limitations; to identify psychohistorians’ actual achievements and to distinguish them from apparent achievements. A picture painted in this way would – such was my assumption, at least – will enrich the conceptual tools available to historians/readers of this monograph. It is intended to build an appreciation for psychohistory and its legacy, viewed critically, and for the ways in which scholars can creatively employ psychohistory (or some of its elements) without feeling forced either to absolutely “surrender” to it or to thoroughly reject it.

When the original edition of this book was first published (2004), no other work treating psychohistory in such a holistic and exhaustive way was available. This is still the case, which is precisely what prompted me to prepare an English edition of this book. Although the original version was directed at the Polish market, I expect (at least I certainly hope) that this book will prove useful to a broader readership. Psychohistory’s heyday has already passed, but devoted (albeit relatively few) practitioners of psychohistory have continued their work. Even more importantly, the cognitive achievements of psychohistorians and their intellectual legacy remain an immanent and significant component of

1 Only a few such works have appeared over the course of recent decades in various non-English-speaking countries. Most notably O. Shutova, *Psichoistorija. Škola i metody* (Minsk: Vedy, 1997).

historiographic traditions in the United States and beyond. In fact, scholars invoke these achievements, and make practical use of them, much more frequently than the recent generation of historians would be willing to admit.

Psychohistory has not changed significantly since the turn of the millennium in terms of its theoretical and methodological approaches and its organizational structures. New and valuable historical studies have appeared, but the older works and models² in psychohistory have maintained their position within the intellectual world of its practitioners. So far at least, my research conclusions remain valid. Thus, there has been no need for any far-reaching revision of the structure and contents of this book. Therefore, differences between the English-language edition and the Polish edition are small. I have modified the introduction a bit; for the needs of the Western reader, I have provided a deeper explanation for the above-mentioned absence of psychohistory in Poland (and, more broadly, in East-Central Europe); and I have rewritten certain passages that were particularly focused on the needs of Polish readers. Furthermore, I have removed or re-worked a few paragraphs from Part I that were unnecessary for non-Polish readers. The greatest change comes in Part II, where I have added – with reference to research I have completed since the publication of the Polish version – a section in which I deepen my methodological characterization of the psychohistorical approach to sources. Some of the footnotes have also undergone minor modifications; I rewrote or expanded some of the comments, taking into account more recent literature (although the amount of this new literature is not great) and a few papers to which I had not previously had access. The bibliography has been updated accordingly. Moreover, I have added a few new comments to the conclusion, which is the result of expanding my research perspective over recent years.³

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- 2 Or, as Thomas S. Kuhn put it, the exemplary works and exemplary scholars. See Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*, intro. Ian Hacking (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: Fourth edition, 2012), 186–191.
 - 3 After the text for the English-language edition was prepared and the translation process had already begun, a work appeared by one of today's leading psychohistorians, Paul Elovitz's *The Making of Psychohistory: Origins, Controversies, and Pioneering Contributions* (New York: Routledge, 2018). This rather short work fits within the tradition – discussed in the Introduction below – of psychohistorians reflecting on their own cognitive endeavors, although it was undoubtedly written with greater historiographic and methodological self-awareness than other works of this kind. A significant number of the findings contained in *The Making of Psychohistory* (in particular those concerning the genesis of psychohistory and contributions made by the field's eminent representatives) were contained in several articles published by Elovitz after 2000, cited below. Elovitz wrote his book programmatically from the

This edition is dedicated to the memory of the late Rudolph Binion, Leff Professor of History at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, a true humanist, a good and wise man. I owe a great deal to him not only as a scholar of psychohistory. It saddens me deeply that he departed this world before it was possible to publish in English the basic results of my scholarship related to the field to which he devoted his entire professional life.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Alex Shannon, who took on the difficult task of translating this monograph into English. With great effort, care and skill, he made certain that English-language readers would have access to both the letter and the spirit of its content.

very personal perspective of a participant in (and an important co-creator of) the history of psychohistory, as one who reflects on his experiences as a researcher-practitioner in psychohistory, as a college professor in this field, as an editor of a psychohistorical journal, and as the initiator and leader of a number of organizational actions designed to integrate and support the efforts of other representatives of psychohistory. Therefore, the work bears the hallmarks of a record of “participant observation” regarding psychohistory’s development and functioning. From my point of view, it seems important that his theses and observations do not undermine my own work’s findings. What is more, in many cases, they turn out to be an unconscious (because Elovitz, who tries to monitor psychohistory’s development in the world, clearly did not discover the Polish edition of my work), but in particular a deepened (because it was carried out from the “inside perspective” of a prominent participant in the psychohistorical movement) confirmation of my findings.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary historiographers have put forward a highly diverse set of conceptualizations and methods to capture the changes in how history was written in the twentieth century. Regardless of whether they were eager to perceive these changes as an evolutionary process or to seek discontinuity and revolution, whether they emphasized differences in development in individual countries or identified trends taking shape “across borders,” or whether they wrote about different tendencies and paradigms or compiled the “cumulative” achievements of master historians, they were unanimous in that they invariably emphasized that historical studies conducted in the twentieth century were permanently marked by the tendency to constantly expand and deepen the field of historical research. The belief, so closely tied to Leopold von Ranke and his immediate heirs, that the “backbone of history” involved politics and processes tied to the exercise of power faded from memory. It would require a great deal of space to list those spheres, dimensions, and aspects of the historical process that have moved from the periphery of historians’ interests toward their center in recent decades. Even more space would be required to account for all of the various schools of thought that have risen and fallen in historiography over the course of this period of time, and to describe all the cultural trends from which these new ways of dealing with the past have emerged.

The subjective (psychological) dimension of history – that is, generally speaking: questions related to people’s subjective experience (as individuals and as collectives) of their own existence – has long occupied a significant place in the broader study of the past. The challenge of how to conceptualize and study this issue was taken up in particular by the “Annales” School, especially by scholars investigating mentalities, whose intellectual heir on a global scale today is that diverse movement in contemporary historical writings often referred to as historical anthropology. That having been said, I have devoted my own study to a different, not to say alternative, model for exploring the psychological side of history, namely psychohistory – a kind of historical scholarship that accepts both psychoanalysis and psychology as a theoretical-methodological basis for historical investigation.

Unlike the achievements of historians of mentalities, those made by psychohistorians are largely unknown in Poland,¹ even if – in world (especially

1 Until the second half of the 1990s, Polish secondary literature on the subject boils down to review articles: J. Topolski: “Co to jest psychohistoria?” in J.

American) history – psychohistory has been a prolific and flourishing movement. The peak of psychohistory's influence and popularity is undoubtedly behind us, but it is still a living component of contemporary historical research, one which deserves the attention of both historiographers (due to its contribution to the development of historical scholarship throughout the world) and methodologists of history (due to the methodological specificity of research about the past based on depth psychology).

However, the current state of research in psychohistory does not inspire optimism, which in Poland is, of course, a function of a decades-long lack of interest in psychohistory and a lack of broad knowledge of the field.² It was

Topolski: *Marksizm i historia* (Warszawa: PIW, 1976), 308–328, and A. F. Grabski, “Dylematy psychohistorii,” in A. F. Grabski, *Kształty historii* (Łódź: Wyd. Łódzkie, 1985), 505–571 (only the latter article is truly valuable), along with a translation of an American work on methodology that raised psychohistorical issues as one its most important aspects: W. M. Runyan, *Historie życia i psychobiografia. Badania teorii i metody*, trans. from the English by J. Kasprzewski (Warszawa: PWN, 1992) (originally published as *Life Histories and Psychobiography: Explorations in Theory and Method* [New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984]). I might also refer to a few other Polish historical texts in which psychohistory is mentioned (most notably Z. Kuchowicz, *O biologiczny wymiar historii. Książka propozycji* [Warszawa: PWN, 1985], 75–81). But that would be it.

- 2 At the end of the last century I began to publish further works devoted to psychohistory, including “Psychohistoria a psychoanaliza (z problematyki wzajemnych relacji),” in *Historia, metodologia, współczesność*, ed. J. Pomorski (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1998), 117–133; “Psychobiografia jako biografia historyczna,” in *Historia. Poznanie i przekaz*, ed. B. Jakubowska (Rzeszów: Wyd. WSP w Rzeszowie, 2000), 125–135; “Psychohistorycy w debacie z historią,” in *Światopoglądy historiograficzne*, ed. J. Pomorski (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 2002), 157–189; *Psyche i Klio. Historia w oczach psychohistoryków*, selected and ed. T. Pawelec (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 2002). To a certain degree, this matter has been of interest to psychologists; see above all T. Ochinoski, “Metoda psychohistoryczna a badawcze problemy zarządzania,” *Zarządzanie i Edukacja* (1997), no. 1–2: 153–180; T. Ochinoski, “Nie tylko psychoanaliza. Wybrane problemy współpracy badawczej historii i psychologii,” *Historyka* 32 (2002): 62–88; T. Ochinoski, “Biografistyka historyczna i psychologia. Metodologiczne przestrzenie współpracy,” in *Szkice psychologiczne. Doniesienia z badań. Aplikacje. Refleksje*, ed. M. Straś-Romanowska (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002), 239–254. This author was a pioneer in his country in the effort to publish concrete psychohistorical studies: *Model analizy przeżyć więźniów politycznych na terenie Polski okresu stalinowskiego (1945–1956) w perspektywie psychohistorycznej* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 2000). See also comments in the following works: Z. Spindel, *Podmiotowość człowieka a psychologia historyczna* (Katowice: Wyd. UŚ, 1994), 40–42;

not until the end of the twentieth century that the cultural and intellectual context began to form in my country, as it had earlier in the United States, which enabled the emergence of psychohistory. Of course, this context was tied to the existence of psychoanalysis itself. In the West, psychoanalysis has developed alongside psychotherapy and counseling for many decades, a fact which had an influence on psychological scholarship and on the discourse carried out within the humanities and social sciences (not to mention mass culture). In Poland, all of this was lacking, even though – before the Second World War – psychoanalysis developed there no less intensely than it had anywhere else.³ But Nazi Germany's attack on Poland and the brutal Nazi occupation almost completely destroyed the country's achievements in this area, and a revival of depth psychology in Poland was hindered by postwar Poland's dependence on the Soviet Union. In the USSR at that time, psychoanalysis did not exist; after a short period of relatively free development (until the beginning of 1930s), it was condemned and prohibited as a bourgeois pseudoscience. Thus, when Poland and other countries in East-Central Europe were pulled into the Soviet orbit, this prohibition was enforced there as well. The communists' negative attitude toward depth psychology, combined with a clearly incomplete understanding of its theoretical assumptions (especially those tied to later, post-Freudian currents of thought) and the basic principles of clinical practice all lasted for decades in Polish psychology and psychotherapy,⁴ which of course meant that

Z. Zaborowski, *Współczesne problemy psychologii społecznej i psychologii osobowości* (Warszawa: "Profi" 1994), 253–258. Other items of interest are reviews of psychohistorical publications found from time to time (since the late 1980s) in Polish psychology periodicals. It seems that it has not been just a Polish phenomenon that representatives of psychology are more interested in "excursions" into history than historians are in psychology or psychoanalysis.

- 3 For more on the development of psychoanalysis in Poland until 1939 and its significance and direct ties to the main currents of analytical thought in Europe at the time, see the recently published monographs: P. Dybel, *Psychoanaliza – ziemia obiecana? Z dziejów psychoanalizy w Polsce 1900–1989. Cz. I. Okres burzy i naporu: początki psychoanalizy na ziemiach polskich okresu rozbiorów 1900–1918* (Kraków: Universitas, 2016); and L. Magnone, *Emisariusze Freuda. Transfer kulturowy psychoanalizy do polskich sfer inteligentnych przed drugą wojną światową* (Kraków: Universitas, 2016). English versions of these texts are being prepared now.
- 4 Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. For more on the activities of some psychoanalysts under Polish communism, see K. Pawlak Z. Sokolik, "Historia psychoanalizy w Polsce," *Nowiny psychologiczne* 11 (1992), no. 4: 85–87; K. Walewska,

such an understanding was almost completely absent in the academic discourse of the Polish humanities and social sciences. Although that part of the intelligentsia that resisted Marxist influence tried hard to maintain intellectual and cultural ties with the free world, there was no chance for a tradition of psychotherapy based on psychoanalysis to take hold in Polish society the way it did in Western societies. Thus, it is not surprising that professional historians in Poland also inherited this lack of knowledge.⁵

It is more difficult to explain the modest development of psychohistorical research throughout the world. It is mostly representatives of the field themselves who write about psychohistory, which thus means that we have at our disposal a number of works published by them: articles on the field's genesis and select conceptual foundations⁶ and several textbook-like works.⁷ It was not until the turn of the millennium that Jacques Szaluta attempted to provide a full summary of psychohistory's methodological and concrete scholarly achievements.⁸ His interesting study was based on a psychohistory textbook published several years earlier, which Szaluta expanded and updated significantly. Nonetheless, it represents weaknesses typical of a methodological study written by a practitioner who did not have a deeper background in methodology and,

“Terapia psychoanalityczna w Polsce,” in *Freud i nowoczesność*, eds. Z. Rosińska, J. Michalik, P. Bursztyka (Kraków: Universitas, 2008), 233–244.

- 5 For more on how psychoanalysis and psychohistory (they are connected with one another) have been received by Polish historians, see T. Pawelec, “Psychoanaliza w refleksji metodologicznej historyków polskich po II wojnie światowej (okres PRL),” in *Klio Polska. Studia i materiały z dziejów historiografii polskiej po II wojnie światowej*, ed. A. Wierzbicki (Warszawa: Wyd. Neriton, 2004), 115–130; see also V. Birladeanu, T. Pawelec, V. Vaschenko, “State of the Art in Psychohistory and Related Fields in Selected Countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” *Interstitio. East European Review of Historical Anthropology* 2 (2008), no. 1: 33–44.
- 6 Here I have in mind certain works by such authors as Louise Hoffman, Elizabeth Wirth Marvick, Peter Loewenberg, Charles Strozier and Henry Lawton.
- 7 See S. Prisco, *An Introduction to Psychohistory: Theories and Case Studies* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1980); R. Binion, *Introduction a la psychohistoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982); J. Szaluta, *La psychohistoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987); and most importantly H. Lawton: *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1988). Interestingly, two of them were written in French – in a sense, they are an expression of a desire by proponents of psychohistory to win supporters on our side of the ocean. One of them was written for his compatriots by a French psychohistorian working in the USA for many years (Szaluta), and the other was written by an American.
- 8 J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

moreover, was not able to fully distance himself from the research field about which he was writing (in part because he himself belongs to that field). Szaluta seems to have succumbed to the “pressure” of existing psychohistorical literature; thus, his study sometimes appears to be more of an “accounting” of the *what*, *who* and *how* of psychohistory rather than an in-depth attempt to reveal the rules and assumptions behind its writing.

In addition to texts written by psychohistorians themselves,⁹ I need to mention a few studies on the (mainly ontological) assumptions of some prominent representatives of this field published by the American historian of ideas and methodologist Philip Pomper¹⁰ and the often superficial discussions of psychohistory we find in synthetic studies from twentieth-century historiography.¹¹ I should also mention a certain amount of literature that emerged from debates carried out especially in the 1970s revolving around the psychohistorical approach to history (as viewed by both psychohistorians and fierce

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- 9 From among recent works one must mention those of Paul Elovitz, a representative of psychohistory marked by a tendency to take his reflections in a theoretical and historiographical direction. See, above all, P. Elovitz, “The Successes and Obstacles to the Interdisciplinary Marriage of Psychology and History,” in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, eds. C. Tileagă, J. Byford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 83–108. We see a certain kind of methodological summary of psychohistorians’ achievements in the *Handbook of Psychobiography*, ed. W. T. Schultz (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), although (a) it refers to only one of psychohistory’s research fields, and (b) to a large degree it seems to promote the idea of “stepping over” its directives.
- 10 Philip Pomper, “Problems of a Naturalistic Psychohistory,” *History and Theory* 12 (1973): 367–388; Philip Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History: Five Major Figures in Psychohistory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
- 11 In the new millennium, some new (and sometimes more insightful) texts of this kind have appeared, either in individual (and collective) historiographic works and readers, or in collective monographs dealing with possible forms and areas of cooperation between historians and psychologists (few of them have recently appeared in print). It is significant that, in the latter, psychohistory is usually mentioned as just one of many possibilities (and not usually the most promising one). See above all J. Scott: “The Incommensurability of Psychoanalysis and History,” *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, 40–63; J. Straub: “Psychoanalysis, History and Historical Studies,” in *Dark Traces of the Past: Psychoanalysis and Historical Thinking*, eds. J. Straub, J. Rüsen (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 1–15.

opponents of the approach), though this really only provides source material for more serious historiographic or methodological analyses.¹²

My observations here are the foundation for how I formulate this study's cognitive goals. What I want to do is reconstruct the theoretical and methodological assumptions of psychohistory and the basic properties of psychohistorical research in practice. At the foundation of my conceptualization of this subject is the "historiographic paradigm" developed within the Polish historical methodology by Jan Pomorski, which grew out of the intellectual traditions of the so-called Poznań school of methodology, and which drew from contemporary scholarship on the history and philosophy of science and culture.¹³ Thus, when I started studying psychohistory, I assumed (in the form of a working hypothesis) that the field is "uniform" enough in both its guiding principles and its research practice that it could be treated as a paradigmatic community. The next goal of my deliberations was to test this hypothesis – that is, to decide whether psychohistory may actually be referred to as a separate historiographic paradigm.

The empirical basis of this work is psychohistorical literature – both what we might call straight histories (based on primary sources and whose topics are actual historical events) and works written by representatives of this field in the sphere of theory and methodology. I tried to include primarily works written by "leading" authors and those that enjoy "exemplary" status in the field or at least are broadly considered, in one way or another, outstanding.

Thus, the construction of this study results from the above-described goals and assumptions. It consists of four parts. In Part I, I strive to make the very

12 In fact, one exception should be mentioned: a comprehensive (as the authors intended) elaboration of the ideological and theoretical assumptions behind psychohistory (along with an attempt to present its application in practice in a few example areas of psychohistorical investigations) appeared in the former USSR in the mid-1980s. This work grew out of Marxist (Soviet style) historiographic tendencies to combat "decadent" and "crisis-ridden" "bourgeois" science. It duplicates the weaknesses of many similar works of this type in its treatment of different trends and views in the Western historical scholarship. Despite its efforts and the "factual" reliability of its arguments, it is difficult to regard it as an important reference point in the study of psychohistory. See B. G. Mogilnickij, I. J. Nikolajeva, F. K. Gulbin, *Amerikanskaja buržuaznaja Psichoistorija.* "Kritičeskij očerk" (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskovo Universiteta, 1985).

13 I discuss this concept more broadly in the below section entitled "Psychohistory as a Historiographical Paradigm" in the context of applied historiographic research models.

concept of “psychohistory” more precise, which (due to the interdisciplinary origins of psychohistorical inquiry) remains far from clear-cut and is entangled in a network of terms and meanings. Moreover, I further define the conceptual apparatus of the fields of methodology and historiography that I employ in later discussions. I also present the origins and evolution of psychohistorical scholarship through the end of the twentieth century. My use of this “conventional” end date is a result of the fact that it is at that point that historians’ attention turned away from psychohistory, and that, in the twenty-first century, serious theoretical debates began to die down within the community of psychohistorians. Many of those who had been attracted to this field because it was “fashionable” left, and those who remained did so by “digging themselves into” already-defined positions. In general, looking at the turbulent process by which psychohistory “grew” into history, I will attempt to determine what place the field finally established for itself as part of historiography.

Part II is devoted to analysis of the methodological thinking employed by psychohistorians in which they have articulated and discussed (among themselves and with “outside” thinkers) the basic assumptions of their methodology and research strategy. Because of the assumptions I make regarding the relationship between psychohistorians’ methodological thinking and research practice, the inquiries presented here are of great importance for decisions regarding the paradigmatic nature of the psychohistorical enterprise.

In Part III, I deal with the applied methodology of psychohistory reconstructed thanks to the analysis of selected significant works written by outstanding representatives in the field. I concentrate primarily (but not exclusively) on psychobiographical literature, the most common and dominant model for practicing psychohistorical research. I am talking here about demonstrating both the methodological specificity of actual psychohistorical investigations and the extraordinarily wide range of issues that psychohistorians have dared to undertake. The findings made here will be a decisive part of the answer to the question regarding the paradigmatic nature of the psychohistorical enterprise.

Part IV is a kind of “complement” to Part III. It consists of three detailed “studies of psychohistorical cases” – that is, works representing psychobiography, psychohistorical studies on childhood, and group psychohistory (actually one of its variants). An essential “complement” to analysis of applied psychohistorical methodology is a presentation of how this methodology functions in “practice” at the level of a single study, a single subject, and a single research undertaking. By focusing on methodological and research concreteness (in Part III I also tried to “give voice” to representatives of psychohistory in the

broadest possible way),¹⁴ I have tried to encourage the reader (who might not be familiar with psychohistory, or even psychoanalysis) to enter into the peculiar “mental world” of the psychohistorian, and to introduce what the psychohistorian regards as the proper way to conduct historical research.

I do not want to hide the difficulties and challenges that I faced when writing this book, which is in fact an attempt to explore a phenomenon that is interdisciplinary. Crossing the “safe” boundaries of one’s own discipline is always risky, but at the same time it offers hope for certain intellectual benefits and deeper insight. In this case, an additional problem was that I had to take a journey toward a place that was foreign to me (and to most historians, especially Polish historians), namely the “world” of psychoanalysis and psychology. I could only do this by reading psychoanalytical and psychohistorical works. Meanwhile, as emphasized by many representatives of depth psychology (we will revisit this matter below), what offers the greatest access to such knowledge is direct contact with a psychoanalyst – that is, direct experience with analytical therapy. Unfortunately, it was not possible in my case; I can only hope that I will prove to be a “good enough” guide along all those paths that extend between historiography, psychoanalysis, and psychology.

In the end, it is my pleasure to thank people whose assistance, advice, and encouragement contributed to the value of this work. I am grateful to every one of them. Professor Jan Pomorski was the first to reveal to me the “world of psychohistory.” His support and encouragement accompanied me in various phases of this investigation. My submission of parts of this work for discussion at the methodological seminar he conducted was highly fruitful. Professors Andrzej F. Grabski and Wojciech Wrzosek provided me with valuable advice at an important stage: the construction of a plan for research into, and the writing of, this work. Professor Rudolph Binion created a unique opportunity for me to study the methodology and history of psychohistory “on the spot,” in the United States. As a scholarship holder of the Polish-American Fulbright Commission at Brandeis University, I was able to take advantage of his insightful advice, remarks, and suggestions. My stay in the USA allowed me to approach many representatives of the psychohistorical community who willingly, and with great kindness, shared with me their thoughts about their profession and allowed access to literature on the topic that is not always readily

14 In these two parts of this work, I tried to construct the discourse in the form of a “thick description” to provide the closest possible insight into ways in which psychohistorians have conceptualized issues and formulated interpretations.

available. David Beisel, Lloyd deMause, Paul Elovitz, Peter Gay, Bruce Mazlish, and Charles Strozier (in alphabetical order) provided the greatest assistance in this regard. I also benefitted greatly from conversations with Peter Loewenberg, whom I had the opportunity to meet in Kraków (the paradox of globalization!). Tomasz Ochowski also provided me assistance, sharing his thoughts on psychohistory and kindly making available the typescript of his publications on the topic.

PART I THE PSYCHOHISTORICAL CONCEPT

Conceptualization and Research Program

To begin, I would like to recall a truth that is important for scholarly investigation, namely that learning involves, in a sense, the construction of the object of cognition. To determine the field of research means choosing (on the basis of a given vision of the world, and therefore always in some way arbitrary or subjective) what we examine and what we omit, which together makes a certain whole. It is with this act that we create (epistemologically) the object of our investigations.

Such is the case also with studies in psychohistory. The problem begins when trying to determine what psychohistory is; one's research strategy and – ultimately – one's final results depend on the answer to this question. When we look deeper into the semantics of the concept *psychohistory*, it would appear to be already settled in the scholarly discourse, where one can find a wealth of content and semantic contexts in which authors from various fields use this term. Paradoxically, at the same time, the term is very often treated as relatively unambiguous, a kind of cliché that can be freely used without needless exploration of the definition, and without fear of misunderstanding. For this reason, I begin this discussion with an attempt to define psychohistory more carefully as a viewpoint (paradigm) in historical research. With this particular subject, one probably needs to go above and beyond the standard requirement to specify (conceptualize) the subject of study, because it is necessary not just to specify the term precisely, but also in a certain sense to “design” – that is, formulate – one's own understanding of psychohistory as a subject of historiographical and methodological investigations (1) in the face of various formulas and traditions of understanding psychohistory settled in the discourses of the twentieth-century humanities; and (2) in reference to a specific “postulated reality” – that is, particular author's vision of the “internal” and “external” mechanisms in the development of historiography. Thus, our first research task is to “sketch” the external features of the phenomenon called *psychohistory* and to indicate the most important elements of its internal architecture. At the same time, I will reveal to the reader a set of fundamental assumptions with which I will proceed to explore this issue, along with the basic elements of my research strategy.¹

1 It may be somewhat surprising to the reader, but this preoccupation with the issue of the definition of the phenomenon called psychohistory comes from a very early stage

In fact, it is quite difficult to determine exactly what psychohistory really is. For example, the question of whether psychohistory is a separate academic discipline, or part of an already existing, long-established discipline (say: historiography, for this is precisely what is suggested by the presence of “history” in its name), or perhaps a kind of interdisciplinary enterprise that cannot be “pigeonholed” into the traditional systematics of science that emerged from the nineteenth century. As we shall see later, in the study of psychohistory, it will also be necessary to answer the question whether the field conforms in fact to the very notion of science, even in its broader sense as a type of social practice oriented toward the systematic cognition of the reality around us, including ourselves.²

In the scholarly literature related to psychohistory, the terms most often used are “field” or “field of study.” *Field* denotes a certain area of reflection primarily in the sense of a “specialization” within a particular academic discipline. But such a specialization does not have to be unambiguously subordinated to this particular discipline. By separating itself in terms of both its proper subject (area) of research and its particular methods and research assumptions, which may be derived from traditions found in various disciplines, it can gain autonomy or even “independence” as an interdisciplinary field of study. Psychohistory emerges as just such a “borderland discipline.”

of my investigations. While studying literature on the subject and (perhaps above all) talking with people who “felt” like they were psychohistorians or who simply shared with me their thoughts on psychohistory (these were mostly – but not exclusively – historians), I encountered considerable difficulties in my attempt to grasp the entirety of the phenomenon, to determine its constitutive parts, and to grasp its “essence.” The question: “What is psychohistory *really*?” would constantly return. It was still “hidden” somewhere “behind the fog,” ambiguous, multi-dimensional, always surprising me with a new face, but undoubtedly having an impact on historiography, the philosophy of history or even all of the twentieth-century humanities and social thought. But the methodologist or historian of historiography cannot limit himself to “contemplating the unknowable.” Hence, there is this need for a “positive resolution” regarding what psychohistory is.

- 2 The philosopher of science could point out here that the function of scientific practice is to recognize and systematize socio-subjective ideas about the surrounding reality. See J. Kmita, *Essays on the Theory of Scientific Cognition*, trans. from the Polish by J. Hołowka (Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1991), 78–115.

In the case of this type of undertaking, there is always a problem involving its theoretical and methodological identity. The shaping of a borderland discipline can be compared to a situation in which restrictions are lifted within a certain area that had previously been divided by essentially unpassable political and customs borders, and in which the free movement of people, goods, ideas or lifestyles becomes possible. This is how a new cultural quality emerges: a sphere in which a creative synthesis takes place involving currents and tendencies with a different genesis, originating from completely different traditions and socio-cultural contexts. Formally, however, those borders still exist and anyone who feels they are carriers of “something new” remain torn between affirmation of the world being formed and their previous “local” roots. In my view, this precisely is psychohistory’s status in the landscape of the contemporary humanities. Developing at the junction of several very different disciplines or areas of research and reflection, scholarship has never decided whether psychohistory is a fully accepted new and independent discipline, or whether it remains part of any of them – particularly history. At the same time, even if it were to remain within the framework of historiography (which suits many of its adherents just fine), it is not clear whether psychohistory is a certain (one of many) subdiscipline of historical research or a new, general theoretical and methodological perspective in study of the past. Even the nomenclature applied to psychohistory reveals this uncertainty; next to the term “psychohistory,” we often encounter such phrases as “psychological interpretation of the past” or “history permeated by psychoanalysis.”

The fact that we are talking here about a borderland discipline also means it is necessary to define those points in which impulses flowing from “parent” disciplines began to form a new entity, namely psychohistory. Through this undertaking, several issues arise, each of which forces us to make decisions regarding their significance and influence on the shape of psychohistory. According to the most commonly used definition, psychohistory is the “application of psychoanalysis to history.” This clearly raises the following issues: (1) psychohistory’s relationship with psychoanalysis, and (2) its position in relation to history as a scientific practice used to learn about the past. Before we examine these issues in more detail, let us add several others that are similar in nature: psychohistory and the social sciences, psychohistory and psychology (academic), psychohistory and “psychoanalytic thinking” in philosophy and social thought. Having considered them, we will be able to sketch the outline we want of the phenomenon called psychohistory – the actual subject of this investigation.

A Few Words about Psychoanalysis³

Psychoanalysis is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. First of all – and most importantly – it is a definite (not entirely uniform) type of therapeutic approach within psychiatric and psychological clinical practice, focused not only on the treatment of mental disorders, but also on the improvement of the human personality. At the same time – secondly – it is a special method of studying/reproducing the content of unconscious mental processes and examining the mechanisms that regulate them. It is assumed that the cognitive effects stemming from use of this method have therapeutic power. In other words: using this method to examine the suffering person's unconscious brings that person relief. Therapy, therefore, becomes a cognitive exploration, or rather: examination is simultaneously treatment.⁴

In our further understanding, psychoanalysis is also defined – this is the third view of the matter – as a definite general concept (or theory) of human psychology originally formulated by Freud and later gradually developed/modified as a generalization or (as some analysts put it) “shortcut” of practical experience gathered by the next generations of therapists. With time, this concept fell in line with several of the most important theoretical perspectives of twentieth-century psychology. Finally, in the fourth view, we can talk about a certain general concept of human nature – a particular vision of man aspiring to be a holistic philosophy of man and culture. It remains “superstructured”

3 The body of literature on psychoanalysis is huge; it contains tens of thousands of works in almost every language. In my subjective view, Peter Gay is an excellent guide (also for non-specialists in psychology), an outstanding historian of psychoanalysis and perhaps the best biographer of Sigmund Freud so far. See a broad “bibliographic essay” in his *Opus magnum – Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York-London: W. W. Norton, 1998), 741–779. Noted there (and usually briefly discussed) are the most significant studies on the basic issues and problem areas of psychoanalysis, followed by representative “manifestos” and model studies within the framework of individual “schools” or “branches,” and finally the most important polemical and critical works created both in psychology and in philosophy. A good combination of key texts is also included in P. Kutter, *Moderne psychoanalyse: eine Einführung in die Psychologie unbewusster Prozesse* (Stuttgart: Verlag Internationale Psychoanalyse, 1989); I made use of the following edition: *Współczesna psychoanaliza. Psychologia procesów nieświadomych*, trans. from the German by A. Ubartowska (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 1998).

4 During a session, the analyst explains the unconscious significance of the patient's actions and their symbolic messages; as Freud put, “he makes the unconscious conscious” and thus brings about healing.

over psychoanalysis as a theory in the field of psychology. On the one hand, it manifests itself in various areas of philosophical reflection, and on the other hand, it helps some analysts undertake specific “cognitive excursions” into the fields of anthropology, sociology, history, art history or biography. All such undertakings are referred to as “applied psychoanalysis.”⁵

In our attempt to recognize mutual dependencies but also the boundaries that separate psychohistory and psychoanalysis, we must basically disregard the first of the above-mentioned views of psychoanalysis, because when viewed in this way, psychoanalysis is a completely different undertaking than psychohistory; the two have different goals and belong to different spheres of human activity. While the first is a kind of therapeutic practice, the second is a research practice focused on learning about the past. Analyzing the unconscious mental processes of his patient, the analyst tries to “heal” him “here and now.” The psychohistorian, on the other hand, wants to explain the motives behind actions taken by people who are already gone, and to thus understand the course of the historical process. The difference between the goal and the “object” thus implies different rules of conduct, different – so to speak – methodological principles.⁶ Which causes us, when discussing the relationship between psychoanalysis and psychohistory, to first of all consider the role that the theoretical basis of the clinical practice of psychoanalysis (including its ontological foundation in particular) plays in psychohistory. In any case, if we pay attention to how

5 See *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, eds. J. Laplanche & J.-B. Pontalis, trans. from the French by D. Nicholson-Smith (London: The Hogarth Press, 1973), 367; P. Loewenberg, “Professional and Personal Insights,” *Clio’s Psyche* 4 (1997), no. 2: 33–34. The striking impression of ambiguity exhibited by depth psychology does not disappear at all when we limit ourselves only to the scientific-cognitive level of psychoanalytical activity. It has long been emphasized that psychoanalysis – as a paradigm or “research program” (I use this term in the meaning given by Imre Lakatos in “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes,” in idem, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, vol. 1 [Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 8–101) for the study of the human world – exhibits some features that are characteristic of the interpretative humanities and some qualities usually associated with naturalistic and nomological natural science. Moreover, as a result of its built-in therapeutic “sensitivity,” psychoanalysis exhibits features of a socially (and culturally) involved science, a kind of “emancipation discipline” to change the social world “for the better.” See P. Kutter: *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 56–64.

6 See R. J. Brugger, “Introduction: The House of Many Gables,” in *Ourselves/Our Past: Psychological Approaches to American History*, ed. R. J. Brugger (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 16–17.

psychohistorians themselves try to define their cognitive endeavor, we find out that they usually speak of the application of psychoanalytic concepts, theories or inspirations.⁷

Applied Psychoanalysis and Psychohistory

In this context, another problem arises. Do all applications of psychoanalytic concepts in historical research need to be combined with psychohistory? Should we thus treat so-called applied psychoanalysis “automatically” (at least when it takes up the search for the past) as a component of psychohistory? It would seem that this issue remains a matter of debate, indeed precisely for psychohistorians. On the one hand, we notice a tendency on the part of many authors to treat all of this kind of research and reflection (including those located at the level of metahistorical discourse) as psychohistory *par excellence*,⁸ though – on the other hand – we see in the works of many psychohistorians a more or less clearly expressed belief in the existence of a certain difficult-to-define border.⁹ Trying to more precisely plot the course of psychoanalysis, I would like to draw attention to the fact that applied psychoanalysis is no doubt a part of the psychoanalytic movement. It is cultivated by practicing analysts, who publish the results of their research in the pages of psychoanalytic periodicals which are obviously read almost exclusively by “fellow professionals.” More importantly, these researchers usually set cognitive goals that differ from those formulated by historians (and psychohistorians). It is not so much about learning about

7 For example, S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis. An Inquiry into the Possibilities and Limits of Psychohistory*, trans. from the French by S. Suleiman (New York-London: Holmes & Meier, 1978), 5–9; Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” *American Historical Review* [cited hereafter as *AHR*] 96 (1986): 337–339; H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, 5–11; R. J. Lifton, “On Psychohistory,” in *Explorations in Psychohistory. The Wellfleet Papers*, eds. R. J. Lifton, E. Olson (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 21–41; P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past. The Psychohistorical Approach* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 3–8; B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 151; J. Woods, “Some Considerations on Psycho-History,” *The Historian* 36 (1974): 24; *Clio’s Psyche*, Special Student Edition (1995–1996), 3–4; J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 1.

8 See, for example, Ph. Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*.

9 See, for example, F. Crosby, T. Crosby, “Psychobiography and Psychohistory,” in *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, ed. S. Long (New York: Plenum Press, 1981), 198.

the past *per se*, than it is about (as the example of Freud would indicate¹⁰) finding new areas to illustrate psychoanalytic schemes and testing their interpretative strength.¹¹ In fact, such projects are therefore subordinated to the needs of the current clinical practice of researchers who lead such projects. Thus, in the case of, for example, a biographical study, the analyst would often be less concerned with explaining someone's actions as a real occurrence in a historical context than with confirming the correctness of a clinical theory. The psychoanalytic biography written by the clinician appears here to be a specific kind of time-shifted "case study," and it is not accidental that it often takes a narrative form that is typical of clinical literature.¹² For this reason, knowledge of – or respect for – the standard methodological rules of historical scholarship is rather a side effect for the authors of such works. Due to their sometimes glaring historical inadequacies, such psychoanalytical biographies naturally become an easy target for the historian's criticism, and it is quite obvious that they in fact have little to do with history.

However, returning to the above-formulated notion of a border between psychohistory and applied psychoanalysis, it would be useful to recognize the existence of a kind of "gray zone," an area inter-penetrated by both of these cognitive undertakings, the existence of which is evidenced by the presence in the psychohistorical movement of such non-historians (and their highly prominent works) as Erik H. Erikson and Robert Jay Lifton, and which would explain the previously discussed controversy over their

10 As Donna Arzt rightly pointed out when writing about Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci*, Freud "wished to find confirmation for universal 'laws' – that is, his clinically-derived psychoanalytical theories, in the life of a figure historically and culturally removed from the clinical setting." D. Arzt: "Psychohistory and Its Discontents," *Biography* 1 (1978), no. 3: 3; see also P. Loewenberg, "Psychoanalytic Models of History: Freud and After," in *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, ed. W. M. Runyan (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 126.

11 See Ch. Strozier, D. Offer: "Introduction," in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 3–4. For more on the methods, goals and types of applied psychoanalysis, see H. Kohut, "Beyond the Bounds of the Basic Rule: Some Recent Contributions to Applied Psychoanalysis," *Journal of The American Psychoanalytic Association* 8 (1960): 567–586 (particularly pp. 571–572, 583–586).

12 See, for example, the psychoanalytical comments at the end of J. C. Flügel's biography of Henry VIII, first published in 1920, in "On the Character and Married Life of Henry VIII," in *Psychoanalysis and History*, ed. B. Mazlish (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), 148–149. Of course, in more recent literature of this kind we can also find many similar statements. See also Th. A. Kohut, "Psychohistory," 343.

two-way relationship. Finally, from the historical perspective, it should not be forgotten that, genetically, psychohistory as a discipline clearly “grew out” of applied psychoanalysis.¹³

Psychohistory and Academic History

In light of what has been presented so far, we can state that historical studies guided by a psychoanalytic perspective deserve to be called *psychohistory* when they aspire to gain the status of professional and accepted historical research. Which means that it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between psychohistory and academic historiography. In this regard, there are two questions:

1. Is psychohistory considered a part of academic history, or is it a research discipline independent of academic history?
2. If we consider it a component of academic history, what status does it possibly have within the scholarly study of history?

Psychohistorians are usually aware that, when taking up research into the past, they are entering a garden that *Clio* has cultivated for a long time. Usually, they also accept the latter’s demand that the methodological rules of research elaborated by academic history be respected. In other words, they feel a sense of community with professional historians. It is hard to find more prominent signs of such a state of affairs than in the fact that psychohistorical writing is present in professional periodicals and publications; that a typical psychohistorian has university training in history; that he is often employed in a history department; that he works within its framework (especially for history students); and that he leads courses and seminars in psychohistory. All of which indicates a clear separation between the professions of psychohistorian and psychoanalyst, and although there are – quite naturally – still therapists among psychohistorians, such cases usually indicate at most that a person has professional skills in two separate fields of activity.¹⁴ The oldest of psychohistorical associations – the Group for the Use of Psychology in History (GUPH) – was

13 For more, see T. Pawelec, “Psychohistoria a psychoanaliza;” T. Pawelec, “Wprowadzenie: psychohistoria w poszukiwaniu swojej tożsamości,” in *Psyche i Klio*, 11–20. I will return to this subject later in this book.

14 For more on this separation, see G. Sanders, *Freud and Clio: A Historiographical Inquiry into Psychohistory*, unpublished doctoral work at North Texas State University, 1976.

affiliated from the beginning with the American Historical Association and for many years, during its annual meetings, the Association gave out the William Langer Award for the best publication in the field of psychohistory. The GUPH was closely tied to the most-serious periodical in this field, the *Psychohistory Review*, which ceased publication in 1999.

Professional historians view the matter in very much the same way in that they deem worthy of intellectual attention only those psychohistorical works that they regard as belonging to the historian's "guild," works whose authors attempt to meet that guild's methodological requirements. In other words, for historians, psychohistory remains part of the discipline called history, even if, as some of them seem to think, it is "bad" history.

In reality, however, the matter is more complicated, because some representatives of psychohistory have adopted the theoretical-methodological (as well as organizational) view that their cognitive endeavor is distinct from academic history. Representatives of this view regard psychohistory as an independent research discipline for which academic history is at best a kind of ancillary discipline (indeed, one of many).¹⁵ They operate outside the structures of history departments and sometimes outside of the framework of formal academic life. They have their own organizational structures (the International Psychohistorical Association, the Association for Psychohistory) and publishing houses (*The Journal of Psychohistory* and *The Psychohistory Press*), representing what they believe is the "radical" wing of psychohistory (as opposed to its "conservative" wing, which is "in the clutches" of university history). Alongside the attempt by "conservatives" to gain recognition and acceptance from colleagues in academic circles, "radicals" sometimes seem to be a kind of troublesome ballast, a negative reflection of the discipline that "conservatives" would like to cultivate in the context of academic history writing. That having been said, though these two factions of psychohistorians often seem to dislike each other, one can also find areas where their views "overlap," as seen, for example, in various joint research and publishing initiatives (especially as evidenced in the newest and nowadays influential psychohistory periodical, *Clio's Psyche*, and in the activities of the Psychohistory Forum, which represents the organizational

15 See, for example, L. deMause, "The Independence of Psychohistory," in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory* (New York: Creative Roots, 1982), 84–104; H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 5–11, 83–87; H. Lawton, "Philosophical Aspects of Psychohistory," in *Historical and Psychological Inquiry*, ed. P. Elovitz (New York: International Psychohistorical Association, 1990), 537–552.

foundation of *Clio's Psyche*), and in the fact that some scholars participate in the organizational structures and intellectual activities of both camps.¹⁶

The recognition of psychohistory as part of historical scholarship (or more cautiously: its adherents' aspiration to attain such a position) leads to another question: What status would it have in the field of academic history? The majority of academics argue that a separate specialization within history ought to be created, with its own methodology and area of study (that is, the psychological dimension of the past), much like, say, economic history being the study of economic phenomena, political history being the study of issues related to power and government, the history of culture, social history, etc. It would be, so to speak, a "complement" to other specializations and sub-disciplines on the path toward constructing a "total" history. Others, however, argue that psychohistory can and should work to combine efforts and integrate the cognitive results of historians from other specializations, a kind of "axis" of historical synthesis. The idea of psychohistory as an overarching, general perspective on historical research would result from the fact that the historical process has been mediated by the human mental apparatus (psyche) – the true creator of history.¹⁷

But the radical psychologism of this last position better characterizes thinkers engaged in metahistorical thought than psychohistorical practitioners. The latter most often stop at a more moderate concept of psychohistory – a subdivision of historical scholarship or a kind of auxiliary science of history. Average historians – in any case, those who are positively disposed toward, or at least tolerant of, the presence of this kind of investigation in the profession of historical scholarship – see it no differently.

Psychohistory and Philosophy of History

The average historian typically distinguishes his own research practices from any kind of metahistorical reflection – from "philosophizing" or "unfounded speculation" with regard to the purpose and meaning of history and the mechanisms of the historical process. But in the case of psychohistory, this

16 From the perspective of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can say that when the hopes of researchers who had striven to "anchor" psychohistory with mainstream academic history definitely began to fade, then scholars gathered around *Clio's Psyche*, taking an "ecumenical" attitude toward "overcoming" this division, began to clearly gain significance in the psychohistory community.

17 For more, see R. Binion, "Doing Psychohistory," in R. Binion, *Soundings: Psychohistorical and Psycholiterary* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1981), 116–126.

matter – that is, the connections between the philosophy of history and psychohistorical investigations – requires careful consideration.

Let us start with the rather banal statement that psychoanalytic concepts and theories have long ceased to be the exclusive intellectual “property” of professional psychoanalysts (therapists). One can even say that they are (though sometimes deformed and simplified, not to mention trivialized) one of the most important elements of the cultural universe of modern times.¹⁸ Undoubtedly, this fact was determined by Freud and his successors’ investigations in the field of applied psychoanalysis. Their efforts meant that Freudian thought gained the opportunity to penetrate into the discourse of philosophy and social thought, and to demonstrate in those fields the wide interpretative possibilities offered by depth psychology. Thus, regardless of the reflections cultivated in this area by practicing analysts themselves, more or less clearly marked psychoanalytic concepts and themes (or at least references to psychoanalysis) can be found in many twentieth-century intellectual trends. In some cases, the themes that we see in depth psychology (in the metapsychological sense) have made up a significant part of, or basis for, the theoretical reflection of various thinkers – including in the sub-field of interest to us now, namely the philosophy of history. Usually mentioned in this context are the works of Norman O. Brown, certain authors from the so-called Frankfurt School¹⁹ (above all Herbert Marcuse), and Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Jacques Lacan. More recent authors include,

18 Psychoanalysts are aware of this fact. Joseph Lichtenberg wrote about the “popularization of a diluted version of its tenets. Throughout the twentieth century, ideas about motivations have become as much the property of every man as the idea of gravity after Newton. A report of a life today is of necessity a report of motivation; it can’t be otherwise since that is how the literate society of today thinks”. J. Lichtenberg, “Psychoanalysis and Biography,” in *Introspection in Biography: The Biographer’s Quest for Self-Awareness*, eds. S. H. Baron & C. Pletsch (Hillsdale-London: The Analytic Press, 1985), 55. In turn, Peter Gay provides examples of how Freudian concepts imperceptibly penetrated the discourse even of historians hostile to depth psychology. See P. Gay, *Freud for Historians* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 16–18. For more see E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

19 Christian Schneider drew my attention to an early contribution by Max Horkheimer in this regard. Schneider commented that a foundational essay written by Horkheimer (then head of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research) in 1932, “History and Psychology,” turned out to be a “paradigm for all future attempts to establish a synthesis [between history and psychology] regardless of the theoretical (or methodological) differences with respect to Horkheimer’s position.” See Schneider, “History and Psychoanalysis,” manuscript of a paper delivered as part of the Summer School

for example, Alexander Mitscherlich or Christopher Lasch. While some of these works fall under the category of applied psychoanalysis (because their authors were practicing psychoanalysts), others do not. Thus, psychoanalytic philosophy of history has been practiced both within the scope of applied psychoanalysis (in the above-mentioned sense of the term) and beyond it, which is to say that it has been practiced by both those who conducted empirical research on the past within psychohistory, as well as by those who remained exclusively at the level of metahistorical discourse. Philip Pomper, who has studied this issue, is inclined to include all such thinkers in the psychohistorical movement; in his work he has analyzed the historical thinking of Freud, E. H. Erikson, Brown, Marcuse and Lifton as “leading psychohistory theorists” – that is, thinkers referring to a notion of the “dynamic” unconscious (a key distinction for Pomper, it would seem) that characterizes only psychoanalytic thinking.²⁰ Thus, for Pomper the father of psychoanalysis himself (because of his historical-anthropological speculations) was a psychohistorian *par excellence*, along with thinkers speculatively linking psychoanalytical ideas with concepts put forward by Marxists and the Hegelian left (such as Brown and Marcuse) and those scholars (E. H. Erikson and Lifton) who put thought into the meaning and mechanisms of history associated with the actual practice of psychohistorical research on the past.²¹

of the Central European University, “State of the Art in Historical Studies: Putting Theories into Practice,” Budapest, July/August 1999. The author drew attention to the “strange tension” between the idea of (psychoanalytic) psychology, formally only an “auxiliary discipline,” and the fact that it had been assigned “supreme diagnostic power” tied to the acceptance of the thesis that irrationality has played a significant role in history. Schneider’s analysis suggests that, according to Horkheimer’s postulates, the psychoanalytic perspective ought to be an important element of critical social theory. One can thus look for the roots of later Frankfurt School empirical studies, immersed by depth psychology, in the kind of research on the authoritarian personality developed by the team surrounding Theodore Adorno.

- 20 Philip Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*. See especially the conceptual precision proposed in the introduction, pp. xiii-xv.
- 21 What also connects these authors, according to Pomper, is their moral dimension, including criticism – characteristic of the intelligentsia (not only in psychoanalysis) – of the existing social order together with its cultural context and the search for new, less oppressive variants. See, in this context, E. W. Marvick [review of Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History* (New York 1985)], *Psychohistory Review* [cited hereafter as *PR*] 14 (1985), no. 2: 54. Such a clear link between psychohistory and radical criticism and social philosophy is probably due to the fact that it was Robert Lifton

Such a radical extension of the psychohistorical understanding does not seem justified.²² However, it would be difficult to argue that it ought to be handled in complete isolation from the metahistorical discourse represented not only by the above-mentioned thinkers, but also by many others similar to them, because in the eyes of the methodologist and the historiographer, the traditional separation of history from the philosophy of history is largely blurred; they find in both cases the presence of the same historical thought and similar linguistic structures and metaphors²³ that determine the characteristics of historical and metahistorical discourse. Thus, we cannot separate these considerations from psychoanalysis-influenced metahistory. However, it should be clearly stated that we will be interested in (1) those theorists whose reflection is accompanied by historical research into the past; and (2) those whose theses can be clearly found in the methodological assumptions of concrete psychohistorical research practices.

The reservation formulated here largely eliminates from the scope of this work the wave of interest in the psychoanalytical (rather post-Freudian) inspirations that we observe in the discourse of the humanities in the postmodern day. Indeed, this wave appeared independently of the then clearly shaped contours of the psychohistorical approach; it did not alleviate the difficulties that that approach experienced in its struggles for acceptance and recognition within the historical professional environment. Representatives of gender history or theoreticians of memory studies, who were reaching for this or that idea in depth psychology, felt no bonds with psychohistory.²⁴

who introduced Pomper to the “world of psychohistory.” On the subject of Lifton’s political commitment and the therapeutic dimension (on a social scale) of the concept of practiced discipline, see P. Elovitz, “The Advocacy and Detachment of Robert Jay Lifton,” *Clio’s Psyche* 2 (1995), no. 2: 45, 56–62. For the “therapeutic” function of psychohistory, see this work’s Part II.

- 22 A similar position was taken by, for example, S. Friedländer in *History and Psychoanalysis*, 82. It seems that this is, in fact, characteristic of the majority of psychohistory practitioners
- 23 See H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore-London: John Hopkins University Press, 1973); W. Wrzosek: *History – Culture – Metaphor. The Facets of Non-Classical Historiography*, trans. from the Polish by P. Znaniecki (Poznań: Wyd. UAM, 1997).
- 24 See Ewa Domańska’s comments in her introduction to *Pamięć, etyka i historia*, ed. E. Domańska (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 2002), 15–18. See also G. Cubitt, “History, Psychology and Social Memory,” in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, 15–39.

Psychohistory and the Social Sciences

Over the last 60 years, psychoanalytical thought has proven attractive not only to scholars in the humanities; it has also penetrated the concrete research practices of numerous social science disciplines, which has been particularly noticeable in the field of cultural anthropology (Margaret Mead, Geza Roheim) and political science (Nathan Leites, Harold Lasswell). And here we cannot exclude sociology, where Talcott Parsons was, in particular, one of those researchers interested in the application of Freudian inspirations in social research.²⁵ From this perspective, it can even be said that, compared to other disciplines, history turned out to be relatively “resistant” to the influence of depth psychology. But there is no doubt that phenomena playing out in related disciplines had an effect at least on some historians. In his speech at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1957, William Langer referred to the social sciences as one example where psychoanalytical themes – he argued – had already demonstrated their cognitive value.²⁶

There are many research fields in which historians have long joined with representatives of the social sciences; the boundaries between, for example, social history and sociology, and the history of culture and cultural anthropology, remain fluid. To be sure, psychoanalytic thinking permeated other fields that interested historians, penetrating “Clio’s garden” and thus giving shape to the psychohistorical community. But such a statement raises the issue of how to determine the boundary between psychohistory (in the strict sense of the word) and investigations which – although similar in theoretical and methodological terms – remain outside the scope of historical scholarship. Certainly, this issue is particularly pronounced in relation to political science, especially when it comes to research on political leaders. It seems that in this area it was decided whether the results of relevant research practice “worked” among psychohistorians. Often, psychoanalytical biographies of prominent political figures in history, written by political scientists, gained recognition as outstanding (or even model/exemplary) psychohistorical works, classic examples of which are Alexander and Juliette George’s *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House* and Robert Tucker’s *Stalin as Revolutionary*.²⁷ At the same time, psychohistorians

25 Parsons’ text *The Superego and the Theory of Social Systems*, published in the 1950s, was a start. For more, see S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 30–31.

26 W. Langer, “The Next Assignment,” *AHR* 63 (1958), no. 2: 283–304.

27 A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (New York: Dover Publications, 1964) (first published in 1956); R. C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879—1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York: W. W.

themselves have undertaken studies of characters who have appeared on the front pages of newspapers. This applies to both representatives of academic psychohistory (the most famous example being studies by Bruce Mazlish on Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and Henry Kissinger in the 1970s), and representatives of the field's "radical" wing (who continuously "psychoanalyze" various public figures, including U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump²⁸). Such inquiries and their conclusions have little in common with historical scholarship (especially in the professional historian's understanding) if only because they concern the current activity of living public figures. That having been said, in the belief of many psychohistorians, these works are undoubtedly part of psychohistory. To describe them, certain more skeptical scholars use the rather pejorative term "psychojournalism."

Other Psychological Concepts

Political science is cultivated as a social science, and with the former there is the constant issue of how to develop and apply theories of varying degrees of generality or scope. Scholars devote a great deal of attention to psychological theory in connection with, for example, leaders and their political decisions, and with groups at work in larger decision-making bodies. Alongside approaches (currently of lesser significance) based on psychoanalytical inspiration, we also find numerous approaches based on concepts developed within the framework of contemporary academic psychology, especially in the area of social psychology. Thus, we confront the fact that psychohistory's theoretical background extends beyond the scope of depth psychology.

The above considerations have been accompanied by the "silent" premise that references to psychoanalytic concepts are one of the basic (constitutive) properties of the psychohistory research practice. However, as a model of historical research, psychohistory goes beyond "psychoanalytic history." The process of shaping a variant of psychohistory that remains an "alternative" to its basic,

Norton, 1973). Particularly the first of these two works is often called a pioneering work in psychohistorical research. See also W. Friedman, "Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House and Political Psychobiography," *Political Psychology* 15 (1994), no. 1: 35–59. Other interesting "border" examples can be found in *Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership* (New York 1970), put together by political scientists and psychohistorians. See also F. Crosby, T. Crosby, "Psychobiography and Psychohistory," 198.

28 One can read texts of this kind in nearly every issue of *The Journal of Psychohistory* and *Clio's Psyche*.

analytical form is associated, on the one hand, with changes in psychology that have occurred in the last half-century and, on the other hand, with persistent skepticism and distrust on the part of many historians toward psychoanalytical thinking.

In the period when the psychohistorical venture was launched, psychoanalysis – regardless of the controversy and aura of scandal surrounding many of its claims – could reasonably maintain that it alone, in contrast to contemporary academic psychology, offered a holistic vision of the human psyche. But subsequent development of psychological research resulted in the emergence of a number of cognitive concepts and perspectives that could provide a holistic alternative to depth psychology (including behaviorism, the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget, the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow, and – a bit later – various cognitive theories). Therefore, psychohistorians have been able to choose new “theoretical options,” those whose origins were “more scientific” than Freudian, a fact which has been of considerable importance to all those historians who – recognizing (1) the need to study the psychological dimension of the past as a separate specialization or research subdivision, and (2) the need to base such research on psychological theory – were not able to accept that such research was based on psychoanalysis.

Thus, we must view attempts to explore the psychological dimension of history referring to theoretical perspectives in psychology other than psychoanalysis as part of the psychohistorical venture, especially those whose authors have expressly demanded that psychohistory be modernized and reformed (in the sense that prevalent Freudian concepts must be removed or marginalized). These concepts have been shunned by the vast majority of practicing psychohistorians, though they find support from at least some recognized discipline theorists and are occasionally employed in articles in psychohistorical periodicals (mainly in the *Psychohistory Review*).²⁹

29 On the application of academic psychological theories in historical research, see R. J. Brugger, “Introduction: The House of Many Gables,” 7–9. Footnotes in the pages of this book refer to the wide body of older literature (through the 1970s). For more recent literature, see W. M. Runyan: “Alternatives to Psychoanalytic Psychobiography,” in *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, 219–244; W. M. Runyan: “Evolving Conceptions of Psychobiography and the Study of Lives: Encounters with Psychoanalysis, Personality Psychology and Historical Science,” in *Handbook of Psychobiography*, 19–41. See also T. Ochowski: “Nie tylko psychoanaliza,” 63–88; T. Ochowski, T. Pawelec: “Historia psychologiczna a problematyka źródeł,” in *Historyk wobec źródeł. Historia klasyczna i nowe propozycje metodologiczne*, ed. J. Kolbuszewska & R. Stobiecki (Łódź: Ibidem,

The attempt made here to delineate the “outer contours” of psychohistory shows that we are dealing with a complex and multi-threaded phenomenon. Hence, we should give some indication of the nature of its internal architecture and diversification. In this regard, we should pay attention to the following issues: (1) Psychohistory’s research fields; (2) the psychohistorical profession; and (3) psychohistory between the “new” and “traditional” historiographies.

Psychohistory’s Research Fields

When attempting to specify their field of study, psychohistorians most often talk about two basic research fields – psychobiography and group psychohistory. The first is a traditional area of psychohistorical investigation. After all, originally, practically the entire discipline boiled down to psychoanalytic studies of outstanding individuals, and the appearance of Sigmund Freud’s psychobiographical “exercises” (on Leonardo da Vinci, Dostoyevsky and Moses) is often regarded as the moment of its birth. Moreover, later, at least until the 1980s, in quantitative terms, psychobiographical works were dominant in psychohistory.³⁰ Psychobiography also remains the area in which psychohistorical research (severe criticism of these and other specific cognitive enterprises notwithstanding) is most accepted (or tolerated) by the community of university historians.

According to William McKinley Runyan, we should understand the concept of psychobiography as biographical studies explicitly applying “systematic or formal psychology,” i.e. “concepts, data and methods from any branch of psychology.”³¹ When trying to specify psychobiography’s cognitive goals, scholars usually emphasize the decisive importance of applying a specific personality theory to the study of the individual’s life cycle. Most often this involves the use

2010), 39–78. One can place the Polish social psychologist Maciej Dymkowski in this tradition, though he belongs on that list of scholars who reject the psychohistorical concept as being too “loaded” with psychoanalytical connotations. M. Dymkowski, *Między psychologią a historią. O roli złudzeń w dziejach* (Warszawa: Scholar, 2000), particularly chapter 5; M. Dymkowski, *Wprowadzenie do psychologii historycznej* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 2003), 17–25.

30 F. and T. Crosby reported in their time (1981) that psychobiographies account for as much as 80 % (!) of psychohistorical literature (F. Crosby, T. Crosby, “Psychobiography and Psychohistory,” 233). Even if this estimate was a bit high (as suggested by W. M. Runyan’s calculations, about which I write more below), the domination of biographical writings is beyond question.

31 W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 202.

of a psychoanalytic theory, and a standard work of this kind – as viewed by a majority of researchers – is the psychoanalytic biography.³²

Above all, the psychoanalytic psychobiography assumes a model of the human personality (and the concept of determinants of human behavior) – that is, an alternative to the concept of a rational human being commonly assumed by historians, one who acts in accordance with his knowledge and value system. In the psychoanalytic perspective, the scholar emphasizes phenomena and processes which (as “psychological factors”) are omitted – in an idealizing way – in rational explanation (that is, in the so-called humanistic interpretation). This vision of the world and of man naturally offers the psychobiographer specific methodological directives and research goals. On the one hand, the psychobiographer tries to construct a model of the protagonist’s personality expressed in terms of psychoanalytic discourse, which then becomes a significant element of explanation (in some circumstances, its basis) while explaining the examined character’s particular behaviors and emotional states. As Saul Friedländer wrote: “The aim of the biographer will be to discover the link between the personality and the work, to rediscovery the coherence that characterizes any personality and its creation – and to do this not only on the synchronic level but also through time, in the genuinely historical dimension.”³³ On the other hand, the psychobiographer seeks to explain why a particular person was shaped one way, and not another, which does not usually mean directly applying one of the many competing psychoanalytic theories. Rather, it boils down to the adoption of a certain research stance, a way of perceiving the examined reality, in which

32 See, for example, B. Glad, “Contributions of Psychobiography,” in *Handbook of Political Psychology*, ed. J. N. Knutson (San Francisco-Washington-London: Jossey-Bass, 1973), 296–321; S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 29 (and further in chapter 2); J. E. Mack: “Psychoanalysis and Historical Biography,” *Journal of The American Psychoanalytic Association* 19 (1971), no. 1: 145–179; M. F. Shore, “Biography in the 1980s,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* [cited hereafter as *JIH*] 12 (1981), no. 1: 80–113. In his classic study of methodology and the psychobiography, James W. Anderson writes about the “application of psychology” (in general), but in practice he limits his analysis to deep psychology. J. W. Anderson: “The Methodology of Psychological Biography,” *JIH* 11 (1981), no. 3: 455–475. In turn, a good example of works that go in different directions (Murray’s personology, studies on “life history narratives”) are the texts included in *Psychobiography and Life Narratives*, eds. D. P. McAdams, R. L. Ochberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988). We can detect a certain distance from psychoanalysis in texts included in the recently published *Handbook of Psychobiography* (2005).

33 S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 44.

psychoanalysis provides, as Runyan wrote, “a set of conceptual tools that can be used in a flexible and partly idiographic way; they are flexible enough to be used to construct interpretations of a wide range of particular patterns of individual behavior.”³⁴ In any case, the psychobiographer’s attention turns to the protagonist’s childhood, in the experiences of which he seeks the roots of his adult personality.

The psychohistorian’s research of mass phenomena raises historians’ objections much more than biographical studies, although, paradoxically, it was precisely for this kind of investigation that William Langer primarily appealed. Here, to a greater extent than with the biography, we observe a lack of agreement among psychohistorians regarding the methodological shape and cognitive purposes of such investigations. Controversy surrounds their psychoanalytic theoretical foundation, which according to many critics (including some within the psychohistorical community) is inadequate for the study of supra-individual phenomena.³⁵ In addition to maintaining Freud’s thinking about the validity of reducing psychological processes at the collective level to the dynamics of an individual psyche, we encounter attempts to apply the concept of group process developed by various representatives of post-Freudian psychoanalysis and efforts to “marry” psychoanalytic concepts to inspirations from the social sciences – above all from sociology and, to a lesser extent, linguistics.

34 W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 221.

35 Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt called for a “sociological reference system to be found before [psychoanalysis – T. P.] can be applied to history on any level other than the biographical level.” F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis,” *JIH* 2 (1972): 419. See also F. Weinstein and G. M. Platt, “The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory,” *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975), no. 2: 202–228; F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt: *Psychoanalytic Sociology: An Essay on the Interpretation of Historical Data and the Phenomena of Collective Behavior* (Baltimore-London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973); B. Mazlish, “American Psyche,” in B. Mazlish: *The Leader, the Led, and the Psyche* (Hannover London: University Press of New England, 1990), particularly p. 285; B. Mazlish, “Leader and Led, Individual and Group,” *PR* 9 (1981), no. 3: 214–237; B. Mazlish, “Psychoanalytic Theory and History: Groups and Events,” *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 6 (1978): 141–157. Cases documenting the inadequacy of the psychoanalytic perspective in this regard were also described by F. and T. Crosby (“Psychobiography and Psychohistory”). On the other hand, an extensive introduction to the study of groups conducted on the basis of group process can be found in J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 188–197, and in H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, chapter 8, including extensive literature.

Group psychohistory's research tasks are also formulated in various ways. For example, there is the study on the dynamics of the collective unconsciousness, the investigation of ego defense mechanisms among members of a given group or mass movement, and the study of mass states of anxiety or panic. The psychological impact of events or processes that traumatized entire communities (or certain groups) is the subject of examination, which includes such events as wars, catastrophes, genocide, and a deep breakdown in social order, etc. Yet another direction of investigation is the development of specific personality types characteristic of particular communities (the so-called modal personality) in relation to the life experiences of a given group, its social position, etc. Often, the psychological dynamics of small groups is also the focus of scholars' attention, for example in the case of decisions made by narrow groups of leaders or politicians.³⁶

Many representatives of psychohistory tend to distinguish one more research area that is, in their opinion, independent of those mentioned above, namely the history of childhood. Studies on childhood, an otherwise new research specialization in contemporary historical scholarship, have always been of great importance in psychohistorical investigations, a fact which is tied to the significance attributed in various psychoanalytic concepts to the experiences and mental dynamics of this phase in the human life cycle. Therefore, in psychohistorical writing (especially in psychobiography), there have always been numerous references to this issue. However, what I specifically mean here is the development of research on childhood that is independent of the cognitive needs of a psychohistorical biography. Such a research focuses on tracing relationships between historically recorded child-rearing practices – the type of childhood experience of people who have been subject to specific practices – and the shape of their personality or attitudes in adulthood. Such studies,

36 Ibid. See also L. deMause, "Historical Group-Fantasies," in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 172–243. For a different understanding of the dynamics of the collective unconscious, see R. Binion, "Doing Psychohistory," 124–125. In turn, for the most mature studies of experiences affecting entire collectives, see R. J. Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967); R. J. Lifton, *Home from the War: Vietnam Veterans – Neither Victims nor Executioners* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974); R. J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). For more, see T. Ochowski, "Nie tylko psychoanaliza." For an exemplary study of small groups, see I. I. Janis, "Groupthink among Policy Makers," in *Varieties of Psychohistory*, eds. G. M. Kren, L. Rappoport (New York: Springer, 1976), 315–329.

though present in both “wings” of psychohistory, have gained an additional therapeutic dimension within the radical wing as a tool for liberating children from the psychotic oppression of adults.³⁷ In my opinion, the dynamic development of childhood research in the field of psychohistory has been an important stimulant for the broader investigation of this matter in academic history, and has contributed to establishing such studies as a new historical subdivision at the junction of historical demography, the history of mentalities and family.

There is yet another area in which many psychohistorians are active, namely the history of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic movement. Issues raised in this area belong primarily to the history of science and the history of ideas, though at the same time they attract the attention of a significant group of psychoanalytic practitioners interested in the history of the movement they have co-created. Investigations carried out by psychohistorians in this area “melt” into the work of other scholars and do not go beyond the collection-descriptive model of traditional history of science on the one hand, and the research model of applied psychoanalysis on the other. Though they may be valuable cognitively (factographically), they add nothing new to the theoretical-methodological characteristics of the psychohistory paradigm.

Within the framework of the research fields outlined here, psychohistorians undertake a wide range of studies. In addition to analytical and monographic contributions, we come upon comparative studies and even attempts (sometimes too bold) at synthetic, including metahistorical, treatments of the subject. Straight historical publications are accompanied by a disproportionate number of theoretical and methodological works whose authors address issues related to both the discipline as a whole and its particular research areas. Many of them engage in polemics with opponents of psychohistory.³⁸

37 For a program of comparative research in this field, see J. P. Demos, “Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood,” *JIH* 2 (1971): 315–327. As part of psychohistory’s radical wing, the work of L. deMause served as the starting point for such investigations; see deMause, “The Evolution of Childhood,” which was an introduction to a work edited by deMause under the title *The History of Childhood* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1974). It is worth noting that, to a large extent, it is scholars associated with “radical” psychohistory who are willing to treat the history of childhood as an independent research field.

38 See T. Pawelec, “Psychohistorycy w debacie z historią;” W. M. Runyan, “A Historical and Conceptual Background to Psychohistory,” in *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, 19–29.

The Psychohistorian's Profession

An inseparable part of the psychohistorical undertaking is the idea of the psychohistorical profession itself. Psychohistory took shape on the border between psychoanalysis (which is, after all, a venture with both cognitive and therapeutic dimensions) and historical scholarship, and at the same time along the border between the philosophy of history and critical social theory. Therefore, the profession (or, one might say, the calling) of the psychohistorian combines components from various professional roles or identities. The psychohistorian's primary role is that of a professional historian who has at the front of his mind the ideal of historical investigation. After all, the aspirations of so many representatives of psychohistory to gain recognition from within academic history were expressed through the most complete internalization of history's norms and directives. Thus, a psychohistorian is above all a historian – a university scholar. However, the theoretical horizon of the psychohistorian's research practice is marked by a particular cognitive perspective that has an open therapeutic dimension. In this context, “therapeutic” means much more than “healing” (in the sense of combating a specific disease), because psychoanalysis (in any case, as Freud understood it) is a path to knowledge and self-knowledge, a way to gain deep insight into oneself and one's own actions, leading to the greatest possible use of creativity potential and self-improvement.³⁹ At the same time, by referring to the sphere of culture and society, psychoanalysis revealed its great potential as a critical theory refuting and re-evaluating existing norms, institutions, and types of symbolic and practical actions established in society. It is thanks to this fact that psychoanalysis has been able to serve as a conceptual basis for the philosophy of history. The broad penetration of psychoanalytic thinking into the sphere of radical social thought best proves the great potential of psychoanalysis in this field.⁴⁰ The identity of an academic historian,

39 Regarding this “humanistic” reading of Freud's achievements, see B. Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984); J. D. Fisher, “Psychoanalytic Culture Criticism and the Soul,” in J. D. Fisher, *Cultural Theory and Psychoanalytic Tradition* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 139–157. See also B. Killingmo, *Den psykoanalytiske behandlingsmetode: prinsipper og begreper* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1994), chapter 15. I used the Polish version, *Psychoanalityczna metoda leczenia. Zasady i pojęcia*, trans. from the Norwegian by J. Kubitsky (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 1995). More on this in the next Part of this book.

40 Apart from the previously cited synthetic works, for an overview of some of the achievements and possibilities of psychoanalysis in this field, see P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, chapter 9. See also E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, *passim*.

as adopted by psychohistorians, works to suppress and repress (to use Freudian categories) therapeutic and critical properties of psychoanalytic thinking. However, suppressed though they might be, they often come “to the surface,” giving a special tone to the psychohistorian’s profession.

Therefore, it should not be surprising that the program statements (and research) of certain psychohistorians quite clearly contain a certain therapeutic mission that must be carried out by psychohistorical inquiry. With a certain sense of drama, L. deMause wrote that psychohistory is “a science with a terrible sense of urgency ..., [it is] uncertain whether it has ten years to discover what is necessary to play a part in the struggle ... with man’s rapidly growing ability to destroy himself.”⁴¹ Although such a radical approach to psychohistory’s social mission was met with ironic skepticism from many historians, it is something we commonly find, in more cautious form, in the psychohistorical literature.⁴² From this point of view, a psychohistorian is not just another academic researcher maintaining distance from his subject. Rather, he is supposed to play the role of a psychoanalytic therapist on a social scale, and his cognitive reflection, revealing social ailments both in the past and today, is intended to overcome the destructive and mutilating tendencies present in contemporary culture for the benefit of future generations.

Moreover, the problem of the psychohistorian’s identity has a practical dimension, expressed particularly in the question: how important is psychoanalytic training in the practice of psychohistorical research? Given the practical (therapeutic) face of psychoanalysis and the hermeneutic properties of psychoanalytic cognition, this issue is highly complex. Psychoanalytic training cannot be reduced simply to knowledge of arguments, theories or ideas tied to depth psychology, or to an ability to “intellectually” make use of them – for example, during the study of past events. Freud argued that a proper understanding of psychoanalysis requires a direct (in a sense “intimate”) kind of personal contact, indeed a submission to analytical therapy. Thus, among psychohistorians, there remains the widespread faith, expressed by William Langer, in the great role that clinical training, or at least personal experience with psychoanalysis, can play in psychohistorical investigations. First of all, according

41 L. deMause, “Psychohistory: The New Science,” *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 3 (1975), no. 1: 123–126. Quote from R. J. Brugger. “Introduction: The House of Many Gables,” 2.

42 One can refer here even to the considerations of the above-mentioned Robert J. Lifton and Erik H. Erikson on the final pages of his *Childhood and Society*.

to scholars who have such training, it allows them to skillfully exploit research techniques developed for use in clinical settings (such as the analysis of free association, mistakes and slips of the tongue, dream interpretation) in their study of the past. A psychohistorian with clinical experience is also prepared to use his own psychological reactions to the studied phenomena (taken as an equivalent of countertransference in the therapy process) as a tool for studying the past. For many representatives of psychohistory, it is the possession of such skills (along with the kind of analytical “sensitivity” to the various conscious and unconscious motives of human behavior that could be developed through analytic training) that lie at the core of the psychohistorian’s methodological competence. Knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and its “intellectualized” application is, in their view, of secondary importance.⁴³ Although, as I have already mentioned, the psychohistorical and psychoanalytical professions are separate today, the scholar who combines professional training in history (or in a related discipline, such as literary studies, anthropology, etc.) with formal psychoanalytical education, or even some kind of therapeutic work with patients, remains an “exemplary type.” Undoubtedly, such a combination lends itself to a strengthened therapeutic dimension in the psychohistorian’s professional identity.

Psychohistory between “Traditional” and “New” History

Historical scholarship, whose recognition and acceptance psychohistory has sought since its inception, has never been uniform. Furthermore, in the second half of the twentieth century, psychohistorians found themselves players in the fundamental conflict, indeed a “fracture,” on university campuses between “traditional” history and the “new” history.⁴⁴ Because psychohistory’s research

43 See the collection of statements made by a group of psychohistorians published in the single-theme issue of *Clio’s Psyche* (1997, vol. 4, no. 2) entitled “Dual Training in Psychoanalysis and History, Literature, or Another Academic Discipline.”

44 Without going deeper into the complexity of the changes that took place in academic history in the twentieth century, I can say that by “traditional history” I mean narrative history tied to the heritage of Rankean historicism and *histoire evenementielle et historisante* (as it was called in France) or “scientific history” (as it was called in America and elsewhere in late nineteenth and early twentieth century). We could say that this kind of history was characterized by a fundamental distrust of (and defense against) efforts to reform the discipline (a distrust that did not exclude the selective acceptance of certain innovations and the gradual evolution of this model of studying the past). By contrast, with the term “new history” I mean the wide variety of perspectives, trends, and historiographic paradigms, which began to take shape after World

practices and theoretical and methodological assumptions adhered in part to the traditional model, and in part to the model that characterized the new history, this matter significantly affected both the evolution of the psychohistorical approach itself and psychohistory's vicissitudes as part of the historical scholarship.

In the spirit of Langer's 1957 speech, which "legalized" the use of depth psychology in historical investigation, psychohistory was to be joined with those historical specializations (like economic history and social history) that were inspired by theories from other academic disciplines and would thus move traditional narrative history in the direction of the social sciences. Indeed, along with such main trends in the new history as cliometrics, psychohistory would soon have to withstand sharp attacks from defenders of the traditional historical research model, who accused psychohistory of moving away from narrative history to the unauthorized use of theory in historical investigation, theory that was as extravagant as Freudianism! At the same time, in the eyes of many new history supporters, psychohistory was not scientific enough, mainly because of its theoretical background in psychoanalysis, which – as viewed by depth psychology's opponents – did not deserve to be called a decent scientific theory. Psychohistorians were also accused of justifying procedures that deviated both from the classic model of evidentiary proof (characteristic of traditional history) and from the rules for checking and testing hypotheses that applied to the social sciences (as postulated by the new historians). Ultimately, psychohistory found itself "under fire" from both sides. Attempts to meet the requirements of one camp intensified criticism from the other camp, which contributed to the consolidation and dissemination of the belief among historians (both "new"

War II in Europe and North America, and which gradually replaced the existing, traditional model. For the sake of simplicity, I omit here the "new history's" internal differentiation and the fact that (1) the first serious attempts at developing the New History took place even before the Second World War (American pragmatists and the French founders of "Annales"), and that (2) from our perspective in the twenty-first century, some early manifestations of the "new history" now seem "traditional." For more on this, see J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej* (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 1983); W. Wrzosek, *History-Culture-Metaphor*; G. Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 1987); G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1991); D. Kelley, *Frontiers of History. Historical Inquiry in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 2006); E. Breisach, *Historiography Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

and “old”) that psychohistory is not a serious cognitive undertaking. Of course, this state of affairs seriously complicated psychohistory’s maturation process and threatened the paradigm with loss of the position it had gained within academic history. Naturally, criticism and discussion often allowed scholars to define or resolve various methodological problems afflicting psychohistory, but given the scale and intensity of the criticism, the psychohistorical community found itself hard pressed to develop and disseminate a relatively unified methodological consensus. Psychohistorians “internalized” the criticism, gradually dividing themselves (this fundamental “split” has been growing since the mid-1970s) into advocates of psychohistory as a science independent of history, and psychohistory as history (or rather history modernized, to one degree or another). Externally, this development resulted in the ability to fight on many fronts simultaneously, though it led at the same time to the internal disintegration of the psychohistorical approach.⁴⁵

Psychohistory as a Historiographical Paradigm

In the light of the arguments presented above, psychohistory appears as a scientific (cognitive) movement developing primarily on the border between academic studies of the past (historiography) and applied psychoanalysis – that is, the application of psychoanalytic thinking to various phenomena in culture and society (present and past). In addition to these two most important points of reference, we can see further ties that strongly connect the psychohistorical enterprise with the philosophy of history, academic psychology, and the social sciences. Psychohistorical investigations are conducted by a clearly distinguished group of scholars who are linked by an awareness that they are part of the shared practice of a particular kind of research, namely psychohistory. This occurs even though, the scientists are “formally” scattered across various academic disciplines (alongside the most common historical fields, one can also note, for example, political science, literature or sociology) and even find themselves “outside the parentheses” of the formal academic world.

Thus, psychohistorians make up a kind of community that collectively practices certain kind of cognitive inquiry that is “above and beyond formal academic divisions.” For this reason it is necessary for the historiographic and methodological study of psychohistory to use appropriate conceptual tools, namely those that would allow the mechanisms by which the field is shaped and

45 For a broad treatment of this subject, see T. Pawelec, “Psychohistorycy w debacie z historią.”

functions to be understood as (1) a kind of collective undertaking to penetrate and grasp the past; and (2) a collective undertaking that is different than other such undertakings (which both run parallel to psychohistory and are simultaneously competitive). In other words, to be recognized as a specific type of social research practice, driven by specific epistemological and methodological assumptions.

These remarks suggest the need to reach for some theory regarding the development and functioning of science. But historiography, as a research discipline dealing with the history of historical scholarship, has had a long life without such a theory; scholars have cultivated it using basically two complementary research approaches – “subjective” and “objective.” The first “includes works that deal with the subject of historical research: the historian, a group of historians, a historical circle, a historical school of thought – the activity of historians – of a given country or part of the world, in a specific period of time, etc.” The second includes:

Works dealing not with the subject, but the object of historical research: namely, historical literature, referring to one or another issue that is the focus of historical research, the historiography – meaning the products of the historian’s activity – of some sort of problem that scholars of historiography investigate using the categories and methods of their research specialization.⁴⁶

Within the framework of both approaches, the evolution of a research model proceeded from the simple “registration” of what a given subject (individual or collective) was dealing with and what had been said about the given topic, toward the search for certain, usually socio-political determinants of the relevant historical scholarship. Gradually, and to an increasing degree, various aspects of historians’ lives and activities were taken into account, attention being paid to the “ideological-conceptual” and “workshop” sphere of the study of history. Jan Pomorski noticed that what we usually find behind historiographic research conducted in such a way is a cumulative vision (one, we might add, that refers to the idea of progress) of the development of the historical scholarship. According to this vision, Pomorski writes:

The development of historical research includes the use of an expanding circle of sources, the constant enlargement of factual information, the improvement of techniques employed to evaluate sources and to elaborate on statistical historical data.

46 I quote here from the classic work by Andrzej F. Grabski, “Przedmiot i modele badań historiograficznych,” in A. F. Grabski, *Kształty historii*, 76.

With each decade, the number of “reports” and “contributions” is growing rapidly, encompassing ever narrower space-time parameters and issues.⁴⁷

Probably everyone has come across the popular metaphor for historical knowledge as a “building” whose “walls” are constantly rising thanks to the fact that successive generations of historians, guided by the “timeless” ideal of “objectivity” and scientific conscientiousness, have constantly added to the structure new “building blocks.”

Within this perspective, the historian’s activity manifested itself, as Andrzej Radomski puts it:

As a series of discoveries, the formulation of further facts that [within the historiographic framework] are meticulously registered and then evaluated in light of today’s academic standards (standards respected by today’s scholars of historiography): what was valuable for researchers in a given era, and what brought nothing special ... Such academic activity of the historians under examination is confronted with the ideals of “objectivity” and “truth” (to what extent was what [the historian] perceived objective or biased; what was the historian not able to perceive; how and to what extent did the historian use sources for a given issue; did the historian make use of appropriate – that is, scholarly – methods; and, finally, how did the images created by the historian relate to historical reality?).

Radomski defines this pattern for conducting historiographic investigations as a “registering-systematizing model.”⁴⁸

It is not difficult to see that we are dealing here with a common sense understanding of what historical scholarship is and how to study its development. The aspects that were important and worthy of research were “on the surface:” established facts, discovered sources, proposed interpretations. The assumptions behind them were important insofar as (departing from the universal rules of “rational” and objective scientific research) they caused one “stumble” or another in the research activity of the historian (or historians) concerned.⁴⁹

47 J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat “New Economic History.” Droga do Nobla* (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1995), 18–19.

48 What is registered in this model, Radomski wrote, is “the activity of historians (life, education, publications, views of the past, historical scholarship, and possibly so-called public affairs),” in addition to which there is the “registration and systematization of the most important matters of historiography in a given place and time, activities of academic institutions, academic life, the popularization of history, editorial and publishing activities.” A. Radomski, *Kultura-Tekst-Historiografia* (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1999), 127–128.

49 In practice, these “universal rules” are nothing more than objectified and absolutized rules professed (respected) “here and now” by a given scholar in historiography (or

A breakthrough came when ideas developing (more or less from the early 1960s) within the philosophy of science and history of science began to influence historiographic research. Such authors as Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, Stephen Toulmin and Paul Feyerabend⁵⁰ – their differences notwithstanding – convincingly justified the argument that (1) the conduct of academic research in various disciplines is social in nature, which is expressed in the fact that (2) scholars' concrete cognitive activities are "controlled" (i.e. directed) by certain methodological rules⁵¹ respected by a given group of scholars. In other words, rules individually respected by a particular researcher are only a variant (manifestation) of rules respected by the group. Most importantly, (3) these sets of rules are historically changeable, so one cannot speak of the existence of any permanent, universal, or "timeless" pattern of conducting academic and cognitive activity. Therefore, among the variables are specific facts, theories, and statements produced within the scope of this activity. Here we see a break with the cumulative image of the development of scientific knowledge: due to the different nature of the guiding rules that come into play, claims produced by a specific community of scholars within a given discipline are (or may be) more or less "incommensurable" with claims produced by another community of scholars within this discipline; it is impossible to "build" the same "edifice of knowledge" out of all of them.

Assertions like these lead to the formation of a so-called methodological model for the history of science. Within its framework:

The center of gravity in the interpretation of history of science is/was transferred into specific rules (ontological, epistemological, and values-oriented) that guide scholars' activities. Therefore, depending on one's orientation, the following are analyzed: thought styles, paradigms, research programs, language games, discourses, visions of the world and the human being, and metaphors responsible for one (but not another) shape of academic practice and its products.⁵²

rather by the research community to which he belongs). This is what most clearly testifies to the existence of such investigations within the horizon of ordinary/common sense experience.

- 50 The best systematic introduction known to me to the concepts developed by these thinkers is the work of K. Jodkowski, *Wspólnoty uczonych, paradygmaty i rewolucje naukowe* (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1990).
- 51 In the broad sense of the word, these rules include judgments referring to both specific research methods (methodology in a more strict sense) and to the vision of the world (ontology) and values (axiology).
- 52 A. Radomski, *Kultura-Tekst-Historiografia*, 128–129. See also J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 19–20.

Among the many concrete approaches that co-create the above-mentioned model, a truly global “career” has been established by the theory of science development proposed by Thomas Kuhn, well known for its concept of the paradigm shift. According to Kuhn, science is a product of specific communities that cultivate it according to certain rules. These rules – mastered by members of this community through training and educating specialists in a given field – constitute a paradigm (in the sociological sense of the term). It is the “shared property” of community members (also sometimes referred to as a paradigm): “Within such groups communication is relatively full and professional judgment relatively unanimous.” As Kuhn writes, it constitutes a “disciplinary matrix” that includes metaphysical beliefs, symbolic generalizations, values, and examples of problem-solving patterns. Conducting scientific research is “puzzle-solving” – that is, resolving problems formulated on the model of those resolved by means of model solutions provided by the paradigm. In another sense, the paradigm is a way of perceiving the world appropriate to this community (in the gnosiological sense of the term), of giving shape to a postulated reality accepted by its members. Kuhn also says that science develops in an alternating cycle of “normal science” (when researchers solve puzzles defined by the paradigm), “crisis” (when there are anomalies that cannot be handled by existing patterns) and “revolutions” (when the existing paradigm is replaced by a new one, able to overcome previous anomalies).⁵³

Above all, the empirical reference point for Kuhn’s claims involved the research practices of the natural sciences, but discussion soon began on the application of his concepts to the social sciences and humanities – including history. David Hollinger even wrote that not since Robin Collingwood’s *Idea of History*

has a work of “theory” won from historians the amount of interest recently accorded Thomas S. Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. If historians are conventionally aloof from philosophy of history, they are even less attentive to philosophy of science – yet contemporary footnotes prove that Kuhn’s theory of *science* speaks to, and for, historians as few works of philosophy of *history* ever have.⁵⁴

53 Kuhn developed his theories in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977). For the above quote, see Th. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 176. See also J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 23–34; K. Jodkowski, *Wspólnoty uczonych*, 133–201.

54 D. A. Hollinger, “T. S. Kuhn’s Theory of Science and Its Implications for History,” *AHR* 78 (1973), no. 2: 370. It is true that, at least initially, its usefulness was not emphasized in relation to historiography, but rather in general history – i.e. in the

Although the schools of thought, trends, and research perspectives that we find in historical scholarship do not exactly “suit” the Kuhnian vision of a paradigmatic scientific community, and the development processes at the heart of historical writing do not necessarily resemble Kuhn’s series of alternate stages of “scientific revolution” and “normal science,” the paradigm category quickly “settled” into historiographic writing. That having been said, it is true – as Jan Pomorski noted – that this category often functioned only as a “fashionable label,” one which simply “replaced” such traditionally used terms as historical school, direction, perspective, or trend in historical writing.⁵⁵

However, successful attempts have been made to more or less literally apply Kuhn’s approach to historiographic research. In the colorful landscape of trends and directions in history, it was possible to find those that could be studied as paradigms in a way that resembled Kuhn’s concept. One subject of such analysis was, for example, the expressive and globally successful “Annales” school. Traian Stoianovich studied the network of “Annales” historical and methodological concepts in direct reference to Kuhn’s concept of a disciplinary matrix, arguing that the “annalists” developed a “functional-structural paradigm” that is basic for contemporary academic history.⁵⁶

Inspired by Kuhn (though not exclusively), scholars developed a methodological (also called “logological”) model for studying historiography⁵⁷ that also found its creative continuation within historiography practiced in Poland – above all in the form of studies published by Jan Pomorski and Gwidon Zalejko on the New Economic History and Marxist/Soviet historiography, respectively.

functioning of various groups or communities other than those that are academic, rather religious, political, artistic, etc. See *ibid.*, 374–378; D. H. Fischer, *Historian’s Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (London: Routledge, 1971), 161–162. For more on discussion on the possible applications of Kuhn’s approach in the historical scholarship, see J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 32–38. See also P. Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 624–626.

55 J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 35.

56 T. Stoianovich, *French Historical Method: The “Annales” Paradigm* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1976), 20, 25. Following in Kuhn’s footsteps, Stoianovich started his study by identifying (by sociological methods) the group of people creating the “Annales” community (more precisely: the third generation). *Ibid.*, 39–61, particularly pp. 48–58.

57 Among the American and Western European authors who write in this vein, we can mention Gene Wise, Stephen Humphreys, Alfred Stern, Alexander Demandt, Timothy Donovan and Konrad Jarausch.

For the authors of these two studies, Kuhn's ideas were a significant inspiration, and Zalejko "supplemented" them with the "structuralist" or "non-statement view of theories" put forward by Wolfgang Stegmüller and Joseph Sneed, which – more so than Kuhn's original theories, in Zalejko's view – allows for descriptions of the shape and functioning of theory (and related paradigms) in the social sciences and humanities. In turn, Pomorski's study combined Kuhnian motifs with inspirations from Polish methodologists and philosophers of science (primarily Jerzy Kmita and Jerzy Topolski) who studied the developmental mechanisms of science in a "spirit" much like Kuhn's, though they categorized them in a different way, with greater respect given to the specificity of development and the functioning of the humanities and history itself. It was precisely in connection with the research on the NEH that Jan Pomorski began to develop the concept for a historiographic paradigm to which this study refers.⁵⁸

It is worth noting that the two authors just mentioned studied research communities that clearly "distinguished" themselves from their academic environment in terms of the broad research methods and strategies their members used; the conceptual apparatus they employed; the research issues they chose; and the image of the past they constructed. This lends credence to arguments about the specificity of the theoretical-methodological and axiological communities of assumptions (rules) hidden within research practices; indeed, it leads us to view them in paradigmatic categories.⁵⁹ And it is worth noting here that we get a similar impression from the work of psychohistorians. An external observer's view is that psychohistory can in fact bear a striking resemblance to a paradigm community in the Kuhnian sense, which would seem to be

58 See J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 35–37; G. Zalejko, *Marksistowski paradygmat badań historycznych* (Toruń: Wyd. UMK, 1993). See also A. Zybortowicz, *Między dogmatem a programem badawczym* (Warszawa-Poznań: PWN, 1990), which investigates the presence of the methodology of historical materialism in Polish historical scholarship after World War II in reference to Imre Lakatos' theory of "research programs."

59 Every classic historian in contact with works written by the NEH scholar will immediately feel its "dissimilarity" as expressed in the specifics of its conceptualization, its use of econometric equations, economic theories, quantitative data, etc. For everyone, the "specifics" of Soviet historiography is also evident, intellectually (and in part also "physically") isolated for decades from what Western historians were doing, and in a fundamental way embroiled in the Bolshevik version of Marxism. Probably even thinkers who doubt the paradigmatic structure of the historical sciences (Kuhn would belong to them) would not necessarily question the paradigmatic character of these particular trends in history writing.

validated by the sometimes striking quality of psychohistory's (predominantly) psychoanalytical theoretical foundations, in terms of its vision of the world, its methodological rules, its foundational values, the existence of organizational structures specific to psychohistory, publishing houses, "canonical" authors etc. In any case, it is my view that this is how many professional historians perceive psychohistory – that is, as a peculiar, closed monad developing on the edges of history.⁶⁰

The methodological model for historiographic investigations draws from one more important source – a narrative oriented philosophy of history, which is an effect on metahistorical thought of the so-called linguistic turn in the Western humanities. In simplified terms, this linguistic turn meant the recognition of the basic role that language plays in constructing what we call reality, the result of which, quite obviously, resulted in a reorientation in the research practices of scholars in the humanities, which were focused then on studying linguistic phenomena, discourse-creating practices, etc. In history and historiography, this meant lending the empirical material of history (that is, the historical work) a textual character.

In this regard, historiographic studies inspired by narrativism conceptualized the "thinking" that guided historians differently than did studies discussed so far. Indeed, they did so (generally speaking) using historically variable principles for writing historical texts, i.e. variable rules guiding the historian's narrative practices. Historical writing appeared then as a kind of art (specifically: literature) rather than science. The standard model for such investigations was established in 1973 by Hayden White's *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*,⁶¹ which focused on the work of leading historians and history-philosophers of nineteenth-century Europe. White emphasizes that historical narratives are "verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the

60 Psychologically speaking, such a view undoubtedly also expresses the fears, reluctance, and hostility felt by many representatives of academic history toward psychohistory. Kenneth Lynn clearly communicated this sentiment, using the symbolism of a deadly disease – a cancer growing on the body of the historical profession: "History's Reckless Psychologizing," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 15 (1978), no. 18: 48.

61 H. White: *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 1973.

sciences.”⁶² In order to develop tools for studying historical texts as literary artifacts, White put together a three-part poetics of history:

1. The theory of tropes describing the transformation of historical consciousness and the dynamics of the basic cognitive processes of man (i.e. “transforming the unknown into the known”) based on the concept of four tropes constantly present in modern Western thought – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and (metatropic) irony.
2. The theory of historical explanation based on the idea of fictionalization – that is, encoding elements of a given story as components of certain (*a priori*, in relation to the content of a given story) plot structures – comedy, romance, tragedy and satire; in White’s approach explanation by fictionalization remains superior to explanation referring to logical (cause and effect) argumentation and ideological implication.
3. The theory of historiographical styles recognizing certain types of connections between the various aspects of a given story (historical work) including plot, argument, and ideological attitude.⁶³

Many scholars, such as Linda Orr, Stephen Bann, Lionel Gossman, and Ann Rigney, worked under White’s influence in the study primarily of nineteenth-century historians, searching for the linguistic and literary “structures” (variously defined) that generated both the facts produced by these historians and broader images of the past.

Historiographical scholarship founded on narrativism is often accused of what we might call methodological individualism. However, this approach does not preclude the possibility of the programmatic exploration of the narrative practice of entire research communities. For example, Philippe Carrard (more of a literary scholar than a historiographer) started his study of the “Annalist” discourse by writing:

My purpose here is to ... focus on the writing practices of the New History [mainly the so-called third generation of “Annales” historians, but also parts of the second and fourth generations]. ... Current, literary theory allows for a distinction between criticism (the interpretation of individual texts) and poetics (the study of the rules, codes, and procedures that operate in a given set of texts). My purpose is to undertake a poetics – that is, in this instance, to describe the discursive conventions that inform

62 H. White, “Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” in H. White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore-London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 82.

63 For more on White’s program for carrying out historical research, see the “Introduction” to his *Metahistory*.

the texts coming under the label “New History.” ... Indeed, I look at the basic patterns underlying the works in my corpus. However, ... I do not privilege the “deep structures” of the texts under consideration – for instance, the “modes of employment” and the “basic tropes” in which these texts supposedly originate. I give equal status to their surface structures, posing such questions as these: Who is speaking? To whom? In what circumstances? For what purposes? Using what kind of rhetorical strategies? My investigation, furthermore, is not limited to classifying formal choices. I also ask what connections those choices may have with other domains – for example, with the New Historians’ epistemology ..., their ideology ..., and their institutional affiliations.⁶⁴

Carrard emphasizes that his:

Chief purpose, throughout the study, is to determine whether the “new problems,” “approaches,” and “objects” which Le Goff and Nora deemed to be specific to the *Annales* might be connected with “new” modes of writing, and ... whether those modes resemble or differ from discursive schemes employed in neighboring disciplines, like anthropology and literary criticism.⁶⁵

In contemporary metahistorical reflections, scholars have increasingly emphasized the cultural dimension of historical research. This cultural orientation, generally speaking, treats historical scholarship not as a “privileged” and rational way of providing “correct” knowledge about reality (specifically, in this case, about the past), but only as one of the several ways present in culture by which we make sense of the world around us (specifically in this case, the world of the past). It is a way that, like all others, remains entangled in various “non-cognitive” interests and is, at the same time, rooted in the fundamental categories of the culture in which historians participate. Thus, a historical work is simply a kind of cultural artifact, the analysis of which allows us to look at the cultural features that “created” it rather than at the past in its “real” form.⁶⁶ This

64 Philippe Carrard, *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier* (Baltimore-London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), x-xiii.

65 *Ibid.*, xiii. Carrard’s study can be read as a kind of alternative (and, at the same time, a complement) to the above-mentioned book by Stoianovich; taken together, both works, I think, exemplify the opposite ends of a continuum in which approaches representing the methodological model of historiography history are located.

66 On the “cultural” approach to historiography, see J. Pomorski, “Czy scjentyzm w historiografii końca XX wieku jest całkiem ‘passé’?” *Historyka* 30 (2000): 17–25; J. Pomorski, “Koncepcja paradygmatu historiograficznego,” in *Historia. Poznanie i przekaz*, ed. B. Jakubowska (Rzeszów: Wyd. WSP w Rzeszowie, 2000), 137–143 (particularly pp. 138–139); J. Pomorski, “Historiografia jako autorefleksja kultury poznającej,” in *Świat historii*, ed. W. Wrzosek (Poznań: Wyd. Instytutu Historii UAM,

approach turns out to give a deeper dimension to historiographic inquiries,⁶⁷ including the previously considered category of the paradigm. As Jan Pomorski has emphasized in his more recent works, the historiographic paradigm as viewed through cultural studies and as “the basic form of historians’ academic life,” does not so much “research” an “objective” past reality, but rather primarily disseminates and defends a specific world view “emerging ... from the way the community [of the paradigm followers] experiences history.”⁶⁸ As Pomorski writes, the “historiographical paradigm:”

is based on an ontology of the historical world shared by the given research environment. What is performed here, directly or – more often – indirectly, is an ontic categorization of the past reality that distinguishes within that reality the basic entities and relations between them. On the principle of semantic prefiguration, we decide what is possible and what is impossible in the assumed historical world. What could have happened and what absolutely could not have happened.⁶⁹

Of course, practitioners within the framework of a paradigm usually perceive this process of cultural sense-making in a scientific (positivist) manner – as a tedious investigation into the real “truth” (in the classical, Aristotelian sense) about past reality. They do not usually notice that they are really only constructing – in the perspective of the assumed ontology – one of many possible versions of this reality.⁷⁰

1998), 375–379; W. Wrzosek, *History-Culture-Metaphor*, 25; A. Radomski: *Kultura-Tekst-Historiografia*, 138–150.

67 Wojciech Wrzosek studied the *nouvelle histoire* that took shape around the “Annales” school. He examined the characteristic “fundamental metaphors” as the basic intellectual tools used by its representatives to understand history. See W. Wrzosek, *History – Culture – Metaphor*. In a somewhat similar way, Rafał Stobiecki looked for the fundamental “historical metaphors” that “organized the Bolsheviks’ thinking about the world” and enabled them to “make sense” of the past within the framework of their respective philosophy of history. R. Stobiecki, *Bolszewizm a historia. Próba rekonstrukcji bolszewickiej filozofii dziejów* (Łódź: Wyd. UŁ, 1998).

68 J. Pomorski: “Koncepcja paradygmatu,” 142.

69 J. Pomorski, “Historiografia jako autorefleksja,” 377.

70 Andrzej Zybortowicz interpreted this in the form of a contrast between the objectivist model of cognition (which the average academic accepts to this day) and the constructivist model, which recognizes, in one shape or another, the conventionality by which the object is separated from the subject of cognition (because the former is the product of the latter). For more, see A. Zybortowicz, *Przemoc i poznanie. Studium z nie-klasycznej socjologii wiedzy* (Toruń: Wyd. UMK, 1995).

Pomorski posits the following model image of the functioning of the paradigmatic community in history:

... applied methodology, acquired through individual training according to standards in force in a given community, ... steers the social research practices implemented there. It is the recognition, colloquial or scientific, of the social methodological consciousness relevant to a given paradigm of historical research. Historians practicing within this given paradigm can absorb particular rules without them being first verbalized. This is the so-called “silent functions of the paradigm.” Sometimes they are ... verbalized in an individual way and preserved in the methodological social experience of the paradigm. Then, in works produced by academics forming a given paradigm, explicitly formulated methodological assumptions appear ... Young students are trained in works that are considered to be classic for the paradigm, or they are referred to the program’s methodological texts, which contain model ways of solving research problems.⁷¹

In these considerations, I will focus primarily on the set of assumptions and convictions that psychohistorians refer to during the “construction” of their version of past reality. One could do this without highlighting the cultural (in the sense indicated above) character of historical writing. But by treating the psychohistorical approach as simply one of the historically existing ways of associating people with their own past,⁷² I am allowed to maintain an intellectual distance (as an “external observer”) in relation to debates and disputes over psychohistory’s academic and cognitive qualities; as a scholar in historiography, I do not intend to become a “party” to these controversies or to “judge” the psychohistory paradigm.

Thus, the historiographical study of a given paradigm must start with the recognition of its ontology, its vision of the world and the human being, its chosen worldview. For the paradigm’s representatives, this ontology forms the basis of the mental universe in which they perceive (i.e. in which they create, epistemologically) historical reality. Within this universe, further theoretical and methodological assumptions take shape,⁷³ which – through the paradigm’s applied methodology and its methodological experience – become the object of the historiographer’s investigations.

71 J. Pomorski, “Koncepcja paradygmatu,” 141–142.

72 More precisely, one that grows out of a therapeutic twentieth-century Western culture filled by ideas tied to depth psychology.

73 Referring to categories proposed by Jerzy Kmita and Jerzy Topolski, J. Pomorski described them collectively as the social methodological consciousness of paradigm. See J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 46–51.

When I started to study psychohistory, I was inclined to assume that this field belongs to those historical currents to which the paradigmatic perspective presented here seems well suited. Therefore, I adopted the working hypothesis that (briefly stated) the community of psychohistorical scholars functioned (were functioning) within a specific, stable intellectual universe, expressed by the community primarily in terms of accepted (respected) ontological beliefs, methodological principles, and values. It establishes a way of viewing the world, and thus a way of interpreting the empirical material. Within the paradigmatic community, scholars usually undertake certain, in a peculiar way, standardized (i.e. predefined by this universe) research problems – which Kuhn called “puzzles” – and solve them based on model solutions of analogous problems contained in the works of “canonical” authors or select representatives of the paradigm (so-called model, or exemplary, works).

The presented “ideal model” of the paradigmatic community at work within historical scholarship “prompts” the basic elements of a research strategy and suggests a catalog of questions and problems to be considered: search for what preceded the process of (psycho)historical research itself and what is respected during that process. In particular, it is necessary to test the hypothesis that some stable intellectual universe has indeed formed within psychohistory, one which has allowed its students to practice psychohistory as a “normal science.” It is also necessary to determine whether the interdisciplinary community of psychohistorians has shown a sufficient degree of internal integration (in theoretical, organizational, and research terms) to be treated as a paradigmatic community.

In order to respond to the research issues formulated in this way, in the next part of this work, I will have to first outline the genesis and evolution of psychohistory by examining the various stages in which the movement took shape in interaction with various trends and phenomena within the world of academic history and beyond, e.g. within psychoanalysis, academic psychology and even the entire humanities. Next, in the context of the psychohistory concept adopted in this work, I will try to identify those creators and those works that have best defined the cognitive horizon and methodological assumptions of psychohistorical studies. This information will be used to answer the question whether (and to what extent) these “canonical” authors and their “model/exemplary works” make up a coherent vision of psychohistory’s subject matter and methodology.

Psychohistorical research has a decades-long tradition. Throughout this period, psychohistory practitioners have confronted guidelines derived from model/exemplary works with the needs of their own (evolving) specific research,

and with external opinions and criticisms. Gradually, a rich body of theoretical and methodological literature – a record of the psychohistorians’ methodological experience – grew.⁷⁴ Analysis of this methodological experience should reveal the basic assumptions guiding psychohistory’s research practices. In this way, the rules and assumptions at work in the broader community, along with those that characterize specific areas of psychohistorical research and certain subgroups within the psychohistorical environment, can be revealed. In turn, the identification of “splits” or discontinuities within the psychohistorical methodological experience can allow for the identification of internal divisions within this community. It will also be important to identify “hot spots” in the debate over psychohistory; what I am talking about here, for example, involves the arguments and procedures by which psychohistorians have tried to legitimize their enterprise in the eyes of professional historians. Psychohistory’s development has been accompanied by a large number of publications addressing “the subject” of this model for exploring the past and giving expression to diverse attitudes held by historians (and wider intellectual circles) toward this model as a new challenge in the sphere of historical studies. The analysis of such “external” polemic literature will allow us to show how historians have referred to attempts to “anchor” psychohistory within historical scholarship at various stages of psychohistory’s development. This will provide a significant part of my answer to the question about the reasons for psychohistory’s currently ambiguous position toward academic history.

The next stage of my considerations will be an attempt to analyze the applied methodology of psychohistory based on a set of the most important historical studies published within this field. This analysis will take place on two fronts. On the one hand, I will make general observations regarding the function of the basic aspects of psychohistory’s research strategy, and on the other hand I will study more deeply a few selected, individual “cases.” I am concerned not only with a general confrontation between real research practices and theoretical reflections in psychohistory (showing how one is related to the other) but also with a demonstration of the diversity of methodologies employed by psychohistorians at the level of individual study.

In this way, we can formulate an in-depth empirical response to the question raised at the beginning of this book: What is psychohistory really as a paradigm of historical research?

74 I use this term (and the associated concept of applied methodology) as J. Pomorski did in his work *Paradygmat*, 41–48.

Birth, Development, Crisis

The above considerations have revealed to the reader the complex nature of the phenomenon called psychohistory. Now I will trace the stages of its formation and evolution. At the same time, I will try to show how the interdisciplinary nature of psychohistorical research meant that this specialization, as William M. Runyan put it, “has not developed within one unified and coherent stream, but has evolved within several partially independent traditions and lines of influence.”⁷⁵

I think that we must distinguish at least three basic periods in psychohistory’s evolution. Its starting point was the appearance of the first historical studies inspired by depth psychology (more or less at the end of the 1910s). This period of early psychohistory ended in the 1950s, when several groundbreaking psychohistorical studies (led by Erik H. Erikson’s *Young Man Luther*, published in 1958) directed the attention of historians, more than ever before, toward questions about how to apply psychoanalysis to history writing. More importantly, such attempts were “legalized” in the above-mentioned speech that William Langer gave at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in December 1957 (and published the following year). As the President of the Association, Langer called on his colleagues to apply psychoanalytic concepts to the study of collective behaviors that had so far evaded historical explanation, such behaviors as seen, for example, in times of great catastrophe, during epidemics of mass psychoses, panic, anxiety etc.⁷⁶ From that moment, we may talk about the gradual development of “proper” psychohistory, one that is more clearly linked to academic history. The next break seems to have come in the first half of the 1970s, when the processes by which the psychohistorical movement was being institutionalized (establishing associations, the formation of specialized bulletins and periodicals) became increasingly visible, and psychohistory began to penetrate study programs/curricula on American universities in a perceptible way. Scholars usually interpret such phenomena as signs of “maturation” within a discipline and its specializations. However, in the case of psychohistory, because of certain additional circumstances, this maturation process was more apparent than real. In my view, psychohistory’s evolution in the 1970s and 1980s could be more accurately described as a prolonged identity crisis within the discipline. As I will attempt to argue, this crisis resulted in a noticeable slow-down in the field’s expansion as an interdisciplinary approach.

75 W. M. Runyan, “A Historical and Conceptual Background,” 14.

76 W. Langer, “The Next Assignment.”

At the same time, psychohistory was undoubtedly pushed to the margins of academic history.⁷⁷

Beginnings

The standard answer to the question about when psychohistory began involves the achievements of Sigmund Freud and his supporters from the psychoanalytic movement's early period. However, we should remember that scholars dealing with the genesis of psychohistorical ventures are sometimes inclined to go back much further into the past in search of their precursors. In this context, names like Giambattista Vico, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Jules Michelet and even Niccolò Machiavelli or Plutarch come up!⁷⁸ It is difficult not to view the mention of such names as a somewhat desperate attempt to show that the exploration of the psychological dimension of history has "always" attracted scholars.⁷⁹

77 For a recent perspective on this matter, see Paul Elovitz's article "The Successes and Obstacles," in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, particularly pp. 83–100. However, as an outstanding representative interested in broadening the influence of psychohistory, Elovitz was not inclined to stress the crisis character of its final phase. In Elovitz's publication, we may also find a few more details – on the history of psychohistory (especially its beginnings) which I omitted in this book.

78 See F. Manuel, "Use and Abuse of Psychology in History," in *Historical Studies Today*, eds. F. Gilbert & S.R. Graubard (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 211–217; Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, "Introduction," *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 4; Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, "Leaders in Ancient Times," in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 15–16.

79 In a sense, such a claim is true. It was connected with the domination – so characteristic especially (but not exclusively!) of all kinds of classical history – of the so-called direct anthropomorphization perspective, according to which the basic subject of investigation must be decisions made, and actions taken, by individuals and human groups. In essence, questions about their goals and motives, desires and fears, emotions or passions became (at least implicitly) questions that were psychological in nature. Scholars of many kinds and often quite distant from psychohistory, such as Johann G. Droysen ("Every so-called historical fact ... is a complex of favorable or unfavorable acts of will") and Marc Bloch ("Historical facts are, in essence, psychological facts. Normally, therefore, they find their antecedents in other psychological facts"), asked such questions. In fact, change would consist in recognizing the autonomy and cognitive specificity of this dimension or aspect of historical inquiry in relation to other types of historical issues that the historian might raise. See J. G. Droysen, *Outline of Principles of History*, trans. from the German by E. Benjamin Andrews (Boston: Ginn, 1897), 21–22 (first edition 1868/1882); M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. from the French by P. Putnam

Psychohistory's genesis is more likely related to the explicit postulate that the study of the past ought to be based on psychology. In this context, one can point to declarations made by such German historians (or philosophers of history) as Karl Lamprecht and Wilhelm Dilthey, and their French counterparts, Gabriel Tarde or Hippolyte Taine.⁸⁰ All of these thinkers have suggested, in one form or another, that emphasis be placed on the sphere of human thought (the psyche) in history, on the study above all of the motives behind human actions, and only then on the actions themselves. The influences of the contemporary biography were also significant; for example, Thomas Carlyle claimed that the historian should recreate the emotions felt by the described characters. The problem faced by scholars at the time was that, in their arguments, they could refer only to the colloquial, common sense psychology of everyday experience, or to detached philosophical speculations about the human psyche. University psychology, which Wilhelm Wundt⁸¹ was just starting, was able to offer historians only the "pathographic" optics tracking the relationship between soma and psyche in hereditary and environmental (and gender-associated) disorders responsible for a wide range of human psychopathology. This resulted in the emergence at the end of the century of a specific biographical genre ("pathography") that focused on tracking the psychopathology of various prominent figures.⁸² The work of Gustave Le Bon and his followers was similarly disappointing,

(New York: Vintage Books 1953), 194. For more on direct anthropomorphization and its epistemological consequences, see W. Wrzosek, *O myśleniu historycznym* (Bydgoszcz: Epigram, 2009), 41–50.

- 80 Beyond the works mentioned in the previous footnote, see also H. E. Barnes, *Psychology and History* (New York: Century, 1925); D. Dervin, *Enactments: American Modes and Psychohistorical Models* (Madison-Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 17–18; P. Lewicki, "O psychologii historycznej," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 82 (1975), no. 3: 589.
- 81 For more on Wundt and his significance to psychology at the time, see for example George Sidney Brett, *Brett's History of Psychology* (Allen & Unwin, 1962), 504–513; D. B. Klein, *A History of Scientific Psychology: Its Origins and Philosophical Backgrounds* (London: Routledge, 1970), 816–872. On pp. 868–870, Klein writes about Wundt's development of so-called folk psychology – a "nonexperimental but nevertheless scientific supplement to the work of the laboratory" in psychology. One can find, in the above-mentioned work by Barnes, references to Wundt's studies on folk psychology. A reading of Freud's writings indicates that he was also familiar with them.
- 82 L. E. Hoffman, "Early Psychobiography, 1900–1930: Some Reconsiderations," *Biography* 7 (1984), no. 4: 342–343; B. Glad, "Contributions of Psychobiography," 297–298.

despite initial excitement.⁸³ And it is in this context that we should present Sigmund Freud and the emergence of psychoanalysis; thanks to this new theoretical approach, it was possible for an emerging field of psychohistory to “escape from the dead end” to explore history’s psychological dimension. Which is why we should begin the history of psychohistory with Freud.

Historians of psychoanalysis identify several distinct phases in the development of Freud’s thoughts over the course of the 40 years he devoted to the construction of psychoanalysis, a fact which raises the question of exactly when did the impulses that initiated the psychohistorical enterprise and that signified a radical break beyond the framework of neurotic disorders therapy in which depth psychology emerge. Many scholars, referring to certain statements contained in Freud’s autobiography, maintain that it was only in the last period of his activity (i.e. after 1920) that Freud expanded his interests significantly into broader issues of philosophy, culture, and history.⁸⁴ Indeed, it was at this time that such “social” works appeared as *Moses and Monotheism* (1937–1939), *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) or *The Future of an Illusion* (1927).⁸⁵ At the same time, in the essay *Die Frage der Laienanalyse* (1926), Freud wrote that psychoanalysis as:

a ‘depth-psychology’, a theory of the mental unconscious, ... can become indispensable to all the sciences which are concerned with the evolution of human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion and the social order. It has already, in my opinion, afforded these sciences considerable help in solving their problems. But these are only small contributions compared with what might be achieved if historians of civilization, psychologists of religion, philologists and so on would agree themselves to handle the new instrument of research which is at their service.⁸⁶

83 G. Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1908) (first edition 1895). For more on this concept (which also greatly interested Freud) and its consequences in social psychology, see S. Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd* (Cambridge-London-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); J. D. Fisher, “An Intellectual History of Crowds,” in J. D. Fisher, *Cultural Theory*, 227–236. See also Charles Strozier & D. Offer, “Sigmund Freud and History,” in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 46.

84 For example, R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 67–71. Henri Ellenberger is of a different opinion, – see Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 525 and *passim*.

85 Along with his study of Woodrow Wilson, not published until the 1960s.

86 Quote from S. Freud, “The Question of Lay Analysis,” in *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* [cited hereafter as SE], vol. 20, ed. J. Strachey, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), 248.

In this way, the use of psychoanalytic concepts as a valuable interpretative tool in social sciences and humanities was justified, and efforts in the field of “applied psychoanalysis” in fact received the Master’s official “blessing.”

On the other hand, it is hard not to notice that Freud published his essay “Leonardo da Vinci, A Memory of His Childhood” – considered the first psychoanalytic biography⁸⁷ – much earlier (in 1910), and that his study *Totem and Taboo* and an article on Goethe’s childhood memories appeared a few years later (1912/1913 and 1916/1917, respectively). Similarly, the published protocols of meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society from 1906–1911 reveal Freud and his supporters’ interest in matters tied to literature, art and history, which at that time represented an essential component of psychoanalytic cognitive reflection. It was there that the ideas contained in Freud’s above-mentioned works, and in publications put out by his supporters after 1910, were developed.⁸⁸ Reflecting on the importance of these early investigations, Charles Strozier and D. Offer argue against the well-worn belief that they resulted only from an insufficient psychoanalytical clinical base (i.e. a lack of a sufficient number of patients examined) and were only a kind of “surrogate.” They write:

Such a view unduly minimizes the deep commitment of the early Freudians to explore the hidden motives and deeper meanings of everything human. The world of the consulting room mattered in special ways (it was the laboratory), but the data it yielded lacked broad theoretical significance unless also applied to culture in the broadest sense. Psychohistory for the early Freudians was not trivial; everything hung on it.⁸⁹

87 A. C. Elms, “Freud as Leonardo: Why the First Psychobiography Went Wrong,” *Journal of Personality* 56 (1988), no. 1: 19–40; A. C. Elms, “Sigmund Freud. Psychohistorian,” *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 31 (2003), no. 3: 65–78.

88 P. Gay, *Freud*, 173–179, 311–320; A. C. Elms, “Sigmund Freud. Psychohistorian,” 66–69. Martin S. Bregman claims that the years 1907–1908 were decisive. Presenting the early Freudians’ growing interest in “biography and creativity,” Bregman distinguished (beyond pathographies written “exclusively for medical reasons”) two approaches characteristic of the first psychobiographies, which called for: (1) the study of the artist’s life history to determine “why a creative person chooses to express himself just in this particular form;” (2) the study of the artist’s works only, in chronological order with an emphasis on the earliest works (the starting point being the assumption that the artist’s work, just like dreams – expresses unconscious processes and early formative experiences). See M. S. Bregman, “Limitations of Method in Psychoanalytic Biography: A Historical Inquiry,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 21 (1973): 833–834.

89 Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “The Heroic Period of Psychohistory,” in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 21–22. Daniel Dervin expressed a similar view, writing: “Moreover,

If we also take into account the fact that Freud himself admitted that cultural interests had been a hidden motive behind his investigations since his adolescence,⁹⁰ one should agree with the suggestion made by Strozier and Offer that from the very beginning of the development of depth psychology, applied psychoanalysis (this term is certainly more applicable here than the as yet unused term “psychohistory”⁹¹) was an essential element in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis.

It was in this context that the first wave of psychobiographical publications devoted to outstanding figures appeared – artists, politicians, rulers, thinkers, etc. Coming from the pen of close associates of Freud, these works usually appeared in the pages of *Imago* and other contemporary psychoanalytic periodicals. From today’s perspective, even proponents of psychoanalytic psychohistory are often forced to admit that these “interpretations now read as somewhat wooden,” and that “the apparent ease with which they [their authors] could, on the basis of a few key pieces of evidence and a few key theoretical concepts, arrive at original ‘discoveries,’” puts their cognitive value in doubt.⁹² Nevertheless, early psychobiographical works deserve our attention because, as Louise Hoffman emphasizes, it was the first time a comprehensive and systematic psychological theoretical perspective was applied to the historical discourse; these

the aim of Freud’s own forays into cultural fields ‘was to verify that his clinical interests were representative of a general psychological predicament of being civilized.’” D. Dervin, *Enactments*, 17.

- 90 “My interest, after making a lifelong *détour* through the natural sciences, medicine and psychotherapy, returned to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long before, when I was a youth scarcely old enough for thinking. ... I perceived ever more clearly that the events of human history, the interactions between human nature, cultural development and the precipitates of primeval experiences (the most important example of which is religion) are no more than a reflection of the dynamic conflicts between the ego, the id and the super-ego...” Freud continues: “These studies, which, though they originate in psychoanalysis, stretch far beyond it.” S. Freud, *An Autobiographical Study* in *SE*, vol. 20, 72.
- 91 Strozier and Offer use here an expanded concept of psychohistory, basically identical to the term “applied psychoanalysis” (see the discussion contained in the earlier section of this part). In the context of this embryonic stage of the discipline’s development, it is probably still possible to apply such a term despite the risk of some misunderstanding.
- 92 Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “The Heroic Period of Psychohistory,” *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 36; S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 43.

works marked a significant step forward in the exploration of the psychological dimension of history.⁹³

Professional historians were essentially hostile to this type of exploration. However, as noted by Elizabeth Wirth Marvick, we can find individual cases of scholars who had a more open, even benevolent, attitude toward the notion of applying psychoanalytic theories to historical research. What is more interesting, we find these cases in the United States (European historians were hostile in a more unequivocal manner), as if anticipating the later birth and development of proper psychohistory, especially on the American continent.⁹⁴ I am referring here to certain scholars from the circle of “new historians” of that time (it was the first in a series of “new histories” that took shape in the twentieth-century United States) – especially Harry Elmer Barnes and James Harvey Robinson. Robinson thought that “the relationship of our reason to the more primitive instincts which we inherit from our animal ancestors ... will never be understood without social psychology.”⁹⁵ As Robinson believed, history was “beginning to take account of the knowledge of man’s nature and origin contributed by the biologist and the anthropologist and the new psychologists.”⁹⁶ Hence, Robinson turned out to be a kind consultant to the psychiatrist L. Pierce Clark in his studies of Abraham Lincoln and Alexander the Great, while Robinson’s student Preserved Smith published in 1913 (not without the inspiration of the master, as one might suspect) the first psychobiographical study of Martin Luther. In turn, Barnes became the first professional historian to argue openly (in a series of publications in the *American Journal of Psychology* and *Psychoanalytic Review* in 1919–1921) in favor of psychoanalysis.

93 L. E. Hoffman, “Early Psychobiography,” 341–342. See also B. Glad, “Contributions of Psychobiography,” 297–298. For this author as well, the distinction of psychobiographical writing (under the much broader category of the “pathographic” biography) is based on authors’ conscious use of psychoanalytic theory.

94 E. W. Marvick, “New Lives: Differential Receptions of Psychobiographical Writings by Twentieth-Century Historians,” *PR* 21 (1992), no. 1: 3–26.

95 J. H. Robinson, *The New History* (New York 1912), 73, 93. Quote from J. A. Garraty, “Preserved Smith, Ralph Volney Harlow and Psychology,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (1954): 460.

96 J. H. Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*. New York 1921, 66–67. Quote from J. A. Garraty: “Preserved Smith,” 460. See also J. A. Garraty, “The Interrelations of Psychology and Biography,” *Psychological Bulletin* 51 (1954), no. 6: 569–583, which cites a speech delivered by Robinson as President of the American Historical Association at that organization’s 1910 annual meeting.

He detected a place for psychoanalysis primarily in the area of historical biography:

Modern dynamic psychology proves that different methods and standards must be adopted in interpretative historical biography if it is to be more than a contribution to descriptive literature. *Vital* biography must deal with those intimate features of private life which reveal the deeper complexes in the personality and cannot content itself with a superficial presentation of certain objective achievements nor accept as valid expressions of doctrine which may be only elaborate forms of disguise or extended secondary rationalization.⁹⁷

Barnes was convinced that, in research on American leaders, we can point to a number of “interesting cases where the new psychiatry can doubtless contribute very greatly to the more complete mastery of American history,” and in the same article, he did not miss the opportunity to provide analysis of the personalities of Jefferson, Hamilton, and other American political leaders.⁹⁸ Unlike Smith (for whom the psychoanalytic treatise about Luther was but a “youthful episode”⁹⁹), Barnes remained an advocate of depth psychology in his later publications as well. Thus, we find here the first more serious attempt to penetrate academic history with psychoanalytic thought.¹⁰⁰

But the above-mentioned statements did not attract the attention of historians, who in principle remained indifferent to these issues; even if they offered

97 H. E. Barnes, “Some Reflections on the Possible Service of Analytical Psychology to History,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 8 (1921), no. 1: 2. Author’s emphasis – T. P.

98 *Ibid.*, 27 ff.

99 And he concealed it quite carefully; in his later publications on the subject of the Reformation and its co-founder, not only did Smith not refer to his article “Luther’s Early Development in the Light of Psycho Analysis,” he did not even mention its existence. This text, published in the *American Journal of Psychology*, remained practically unknown to historians for years. For an interesting analysis of this text, which indicates the historian’s real personal motives for turning to psychoanalysis, see J. Scott, “The Incommensurability of Psychoanalysis and History,” in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, 46–47. See also E. W. Marvick, P. Elovitz, “America’s First Psychobiographer: Preserved Smith and His Insights on Luther,” *Clio’s Psyche* 17 (2010), no. 1–2: 22–28.

100 For more, see previously cited items by L. E. Hoffman, J. A. Garraty, and D. Ross, “The ‘New History’ and the ‘New Psychology’: An Early Attempt at Psychohistory,” in *The Hofstadter Aegis: A Memorial*, eds. S. Elkins, E. McKittrick (New York: A. Knopf, 1974), 207–234.

criticism of them, they spoke in a way that would prove that their knowledge was only superficial.¹⁰¹

As I noted above, the “psychoanalytic alternative” was shaped not only through biography. Following Freud’s example, enthusiasts of depth psychology penetrated an increasing number of spheres of human activity, affecting the field of research of various humanistic disciplines. This gradual infiltration of psychoanalysis took place within cultural anthropology (Margaret Mead, Geza Roheim), political science (Harold Lasswell, Nathan Leites), and social theory (members of the Frankfurt School as led Max Horkheimer). Scholars developed psychoanalytic studies on myths and religious phenomena. Within these diverse and chaotic trends, Louise Hoffman has identified those that were directly relevant to the subsequent development of “proper” psychohistory. In her opinion, psychoanalytic investigations of ideologies and political and social movements played a particularly significant role. As Hoffmann emphasizes, these “efforts ... anticipated what later came to be called psychohistorical explanation.”¹⁰² Researchers (usually non-historians, of course) developed their interpretations with their own political preferences and professional interests in mind, in light of (perhaps above all) the turbulent changes that marked the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, one topic of debate was the psychological foundation of socialism and – as of the 1920s – Bolshevik communism. Then came the fascist movement, and finally (more or less from the end of World War II) the ideologies and institutions developed by the victorious Western democracies. Alongside the prevailing “diagnostic” concepts – i.e. the application of “individual psychopathology to social movements” (usually using theories of libido and oedipal relations) – scholars made gradual attempts to “open” themselves to the influence of “external” factors associated with the historical experience of members of groups or social movements. This led to, among other things, a search for correlations between certain character types

101 Instructive here is the case of the biased and poorly informed criticism put forward by Lucien Febvre, who otherwise sought the appropriate conceptual frameworks for the study of the psychological dimension of the past; this resulted later in the idea of *mentalité*. See E. W. Marvick, “New Lives,” 5; S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 1. See also E. W. Marvick, “The ‘Annales’ and the Unconscious: Continuity and Contrast within a Historical School,” *PR* 13 (1985): 42–52, where, among other things, Febvre’s hostile attitude toward psychoanalysis is juxtaposed with the significantly more open attitude of Marc Bloch.

102 L. E. Hoffman. “Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Political Movements, 1900–1950,” *PR* 13 (1984), no. 1: 16.

(“systems of personality traits reflecting cultural values”) and certain types of social experiences, and to the adoption of certain aspects of Marxist social thought (Wilhelm Reich and thinkers in the Frankfurt School). Hoffman therefore maintains that:

These psychoanalytic confrontations with political ideologies and movements present pioneering efforts at a systematic psychohistorical understanding of collective life. As they evolved from the interaction of compelling [contemporary] events and changing theories, they developed forms of explanation which served as models to historians who paid increasing attention to this approach from the 1950s onward.¹⁰³

Early studies on the personality of Adolf Hitler and the broader Nazi movement were particularly significant in this context. In the mid-1970s, P. Loewenberg summarized the long tradition of psychohistorical studies in this area and rightly noted that:

The levels of irrationality manifested by the Third Reich pushed impoverished [rational] explanatory models to their limits. Here are phenomena for which the conventional historical categories of conceptualization do not suffice. Their inadequacy is so evident that even the most political of historians are driven to expedients of writing that Hitler and Nazism ‘defies all rational explanation; it cannot be measured by political or pragmatic gauges ... we are confronted not merely with the inexplicable dynamics of one man, but also with a terrible disease’.¹⁰⁴

This goes far in explaining the great interest that researchers using depth psychology took in Nazi movement as it gained increasing political significance. Loewenberg described the efforts they made in this area in the 1930s and 1940s as “the first systematic large-scale application of the social and behavioral sciences to a current historical problem.”¹⁰⁵ However, for the development of the methodological aspect (and various associated difficulties) of psychohistory, it was not only the appearance of such a “psychologically promising” subject as Hitlerism that turned out to be significant. Undoubtedly, L. E. Hoffman was correct when she asserted that at that time, non-historians using psychoanalysis:

103 *Ibid.*, 24–25. For a more detailed discussion of contributions made by individual authors and a presentation of the interpretative models applied, see pp. 17–24.

104 P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistorical Perspectives on Modern German History,” *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975): 229. Loewenberg quoted a statement by the “traditional” historian of politics K. D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Effects of National Socialism* (New York: Praeger Publisher 1970), 63.

105 *Ibid.*, 253.

Unwittingly established patterns of conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation that affected later applications of psychoanalysis to historical research and contributed to the controversies that have since surrounded these efforts. The empirical and theoretical demands of their subject impelled them to apply other social science concepts and methodologies as heuristic devices while continuing to rely on psychoanalytic categories of psychosexual dynamics, family relationships, and social life that had originated in a very different context. Difficulties arising out of this unsatisfactory synthesis continue to be evident today.¹⁰⁶

Psychohistory Becomes History

All the phenomena discussed above remained essentially outside the purview of historical scholarship as practiced in academia. The slow conceptual refinement of psychoanalysis-guided studies on society and history took place virtually without the participation of professional historians. The breakthrough came in the 1950s. As I mentioned, a series of works appeared at that time which, thanks to their cognitive and methodological qualities, demonstrated the interesting possibilities that the psychoanalytic perspective could offer historians. By way of example: *Childhood and Society* (1950) and *Young Man Luther* (1958) by Erik H. Erikson (for the first time in the academic discourse, the term “psycho-history” was used¹⁰⁷); *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (1956) by Alexander and Juliette George; *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959) by Stanley Elkins; *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) edited by Theodore Adorno; *Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957) by Norman Cohn; and *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951) by Eric Dodds. With their often very different intellectual “roots” and professional interests, these authors illustrate the diversity of impulses that contributed to psychohistory’s emergence. In addition to practicing psychoanalysts (Erikson), we find among them philosophers and social thinkers, political scientists, historians and even a classical philologist (Dodds). Although there was a powerful tendency within the historiographical establishment to ignore this kind of creativity (for example, *Young Man Luther* was reviewed in none of the more serious historical

106 L. E. Hoffman, “Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Adolf Hitler and Nazism, 1933–1945: A Prelude to Psychohistory,” *PR* 11 (1982), no. 1: 68–69, emphasis in original. See also G. M. Kren, L. Rappoport, “Clio and Psyche,” *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 1 (1973), no. 1: 151–163.

107 As we know, the hyphen was later dropped, having been introduced by Erikson out of his concern to highlight the provisional status of this new way of exploring the past.

journals), they offered inspiration to some of the younger historians just “developing their wings.” In any case, at least some of these works (in particular those by Elkins and the Georges) immediately attracted the attention of wider circles of scholars and triggered lively discussions, which were the result in part of the “carrying capacity” of the issues raised in them.¹⁰⁸ Above all, however, we must remember that the 1950s marked the beginning of an academic revolution in the United States in the field of history, as evidenced by the exploration of new research methodologies, new cognitive perspectives, theories, conceptualizations, etc. The process by which historians (especially those representing such subdisciplines as economic or social history or historical demography) accepted these conceptual achievements and social sciences methodologies no doubt improved the climate for historiographic experiments applying psychology and psychoanalysis.¹⁰⁹

108 For example, Elkins dealt in his book with the influence of the slave system in the American South on the shaping of a particular personality type shared by the majority – he believed – of the black population in the United States before the Civil War (at least some elements of this personality were to last much longer), namely the so-called “Sambo” personality – passive, submissive, characterized by mental traits typical of young children. One element of Elkins’ book that caused great controversy was his comparison of the American slave system and the system of Nazi concentration camps. Elkins conceived the influence of the camp experience on a prisoners’ psyche as being similar in many respects to the effects of slavery on black Americans, and he analyzed these matters using the psychoanalytic categories proposed by Bruno Bettelheim. See S. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). In turn, the Georges – especially in connection with the case of Wilson’s dramatic and (for special psychological reasons) unsuccessful efforts to get the U.S. Senate to ratify the Versailles Treaty – raised in their book a longstanding question in American politics and social life, namely the dilemma of “isolationism vs. involvement” in global affairs. For more, see A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House*. On American historians and their experimentation with psychoanalysis in the 1950s, see C. Strout, “The Uses and Abuses of Psychology in American History,” *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 327–328.

109 For a closer look at the origins and course of the historiographic revolution in the U.S. and the world, see G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*; M. Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (London-New York: Routledge, 1999), 103–160; *Historical Studies Today*; A. F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii* (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 2003), 749–830; D. Kelley, *Frontiers of History*; J. Pomorski, *Historyk i metodologia* (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1990), 79–109; J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*; J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 69–109; J. Topolski, *Od Achillesa do Béatrice de Planissolles* (Warszawa: Rytm, 1998), 113–155; G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth*

In such circumstances, on December 29, 1957, William Langer delivered his speech on the “next assignment” which, as the official enunciation of the President of the American Historical Association, was immediately published in the *American Historical Review*. Although Strozier and Offer rightly emphasize that this date “conventionally” marks the beginning of the history of psychohistory,¹¹⁰ references to this speech are found in all studies dealing with the history of the psychohistorical movement. Let us look at what Langer said and why it would turn out to be so important for the development of psychohistory.

In drawing the contours of the “next assignment,” defined as “deepening our historical understanding through exploitation of the concepts and findings of modern psychology,” Langer stated clearly that he did not mean “classical or academic psychology, which ... has little bearing on historical problems, but rather to psychoanalysis and its later developments and variations as included in the terms ‘dynamic’ and ‘depth psychology.’”¹¹¹ This helped establish a permanent link, in the historians’ consciousness, between the new, nascent specialization and the ideas of Freud and his successors. Psychohistory was thus defined as psychoanalytic history (in the sense of being “the application of psychoanalysis to history”), which to this day remains its common, simplified definition.

Langer particularly emphasized the need to study collective human behavior, whose theoretical basis was to be the results of in-depth psychoanalytic studies of the individual. He was primarily thinking of behavior within a given community confronted by various shared traumatic experiences – elemental disasters (hunger, plague), wars or other great threats to the social order. Langer postulated a search for explanations for such irrational behaviors as millennial and flagellant movements, mass states of terror, hysteria, etc. He wondered about the influence of such experiences on social structures, art, etc., in order to express, at his conclusion, the opinion that “psychological doctrine” would not “resolve all the perplexities of the historian,” but in this area “there are still possibilities of enriching our understanding of the past and that it is our responsibility, as historians, to leave none of these possibilities unexplored.” He appealed to younger historians to take up their studies in psychoanalytic

Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge (Hanover-London: University Press of New England, 1997); *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the USA*, ed. M. Kammen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

110 Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “Introduction,” 3–4.

111 W. Langer, “The Next Assignment,” 284–285.

institutes, expressing the conviction that “modern psychology is bound to play an ever-greater role in historical interpretations.”¹¹²

Thus, William Langer viewed psychoanalysis as a potential, rich reservoir of historical explanation. He hoped that psychoanalytic metapsychology would become, as B. Mazlish later put it, a kind of social psychology, a theory allowing historians to “cope” with history’s psychological dimension. Thus, he initially formulated the first program for this new specialty in historical scholarship.

In his speech, Langer also tried to address the most basic objections that his colleagues could put forward to the new project. He stressed that historians should not hesitate to apply psychoanalysis because, after all, representatives of other social disciplines (especially political scientists) had already “begun to apply psychoanalytic principles to the study of personality types and their social role.” Considering the issue of biographical studies, he dismissed the fundamental objection that there was naturally a lack of source material documenting the childhood of any examined character (material that was decisive, according to Freudians, in determining that character’s personality and conduct). He admitted that the historian cannot have direct contact with the historical subject under examination (such contact allows the analyst to revive the patient’s memories), but he put that admission into context, arguing that no historical research enjoys a perfect base of sources. He also pointed out that in some cases (especially when prominent figures are involved) the preserved source base is sometimes “enormous.” Finally, Langer emphasized that in current psychoanalysis less importance was being attached to the role of early childhood in future human development and that the historian could in any case subject the character’s entire life to study (which would allow the scholar to balance out the lack of source materials from childhood and the lack of personal contact with the subject).¹¹³

On the one hand, Langer’s speech undoubtedly meant the formal “legalization” of psychohistorical experiments within the institutional study of history, an *imprimatur* given from the highest authority. On the other hand, in a sense it was merely a symbolic gesture. What would determine whether distrust and skepticism among the majority of historians (such were the dominant feelings in the auditorium during Langer’s speech¹¹⁴) would be overcome in practice

112 *Ibid.*, 302–303.

113 *Ibid.*, 288–292.

114 F. Manuel described listeners exhibiting visible agitation and consternation. See F. Manuel, “The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History,” 229. On sarcastic

was the work being done by psychohistorical enthusiasts, and the expansion of psychohistory would in fact be reflected, for example, in articles accepted for print by renowned periodicals, in courses offered to students of history, in master's and doctoral theses, and finally in the career opportunities in history available to scholars who had openly declared themselves to be advocates of psychohistory.¹¹⁵

Langer's speech turned out to be important in yet another respect. As would become clear later, it largely outlined both the conceptual and rhetorical framework of the debate over psychohistory that developed within academic history. I have already indicated that the speech definitely contributed to the connection in the minds of wide circles of historians between the idea of exploring the psychological dimension of history and the directive to apply the conclusions of psychoanalysis. Going forward, the reasoning and argumentation that Langer used to justify his proposal would be repeated (naturally in a much more extended form) with remarkable monotony in almost all discussions on psychohistory's methodological and cognitive qualities and shortcomings. And one of the more important aspects of this discussion would be the clinical training needs and possibilities for the field's adherents.

In the 1960s, in the wake of Langer's speech, there was a noticeable increase in the number of psychohistorical publications.¹¹⁶ A group of young historians

commentary made by many historians attending the meeting, see B. Mazlish, "Psychohistory and Classical Liberalism," *Society* 26 (1988), no. 1: 56.

115 According to Szaluta, William Langer himself said at the time that if he had been younger, he would have tried to move in the direction of psychohistory (J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 62). Indeed, this prominent "traditional" historian of diplomacy henceforth devoted a significant part of his authority and influence to supporting and promoting psychohistorical undertakings, and he eventually put his skills to use in the field of childhood history! We might well treat this as a model case of paradigmatic "conversion" in the Kuhnian sense. However, we should add that Langer's brother, Walter, was a practicing psychoanalyst who, together with several colleagues, wrote a psychobiographical study of Adolf Hitler for U.S. intelligence services (more about this work below). Therefore, it is possible that the psychoanalyst's historical interests influenced the historian's psychological interests, which probably also stemmed from William Langer's deeper psychological motifs themselves. For more on the latter issue, see P. Loewenberg: "The Langer Family and the Dynamics of Shame and Success," in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 81–95.

116 According to W. M. Runyan, the number of psychohistorical works published in the years 1960–1969 was two times larger than the number published in the previous decade. W. M. Runyan, "A Historical and Conceptual Background," 21 (graph no. 1).

prepared for the “next assignment” formed. The process of constructing psychohistory’s theoretical and methodological identity was just beginning, and discipline advocates were still in the process of developing its framework. An important element in any process like this is the creation of “model/exemplary” works, which become the determinants of a group’s emerging methodological awareness. Undoubtedly, Erik H. Erikson’s work played a special role here; in the 1960s and early 1970s, he enjoyed the position of “leading Western intellectual, and a professor who was virtually worshipped on many American campuses.”¹¹⁷ Their significance is evidenced by the number of psychohistorical works, some more successful than others, referring to the concepts applied in Erikson’s *Young Man Luther* and *Gandhi’s Truth* (they were no doubt prevalent then), and many theoretical and methodological articles in which psychohistorians meticulously considered their pluses and minuses.

In general, the first psychohistorians, as pioneers, had to go beyond academic history to find models, and they looked first of all toward works based on so-called applied psychoanalysis. It was in this context that the anthology *Psychoanalysis and History*, edited by Bruce Mazlish in 1963, played a special role. Being one of the pioneers of the nascent psychohistorical orientation,¹¹⁸ Mazlish made a set of texts available to historians which, on the one hand, focused on the psychoanalytic vision of human development (a “Freudian philosophy of history”) and which, on the other hand, demonstrated the current applications of psychoanalytic thinking to specific historical issues. In the introduction to this book, Mazlish tried to develop, more deeply than Langer had done, the arguments in favor of the marriage between history and psychoanalysis.¹¹⁹

Above all, Mazlish emphasized the fundamental affinity between both ventures: while historians examine the collective human past, psychoanalysts examine an individual’s past, and one would thus think “that a mental bridge

117 L. J. Friedman, “Introduction,” *PR* 22 (1993), no. 1: 1 (special issue on Erik H. Erikson).

118 For more on this author’s contribution to the development of psychohistory see T. Pawelec, “Bruce Mazlish: Pioneer Psychohistorian,” *Clio’s Psyche* 3 (1996): 69, 76–81. This article contains the text of an interview that Pawelec conducted with Mazlish.

119 Many historians who were students in the 1960s mentioned how this book was used in their university classes. See, for example, L. Perry, “Has Psychohistory Come of Age?,” *History Teacher* 20 (1987), no. 3: 401. See also discussion of this anthology in *History and Theory*. R. J. Lifton [review of *Psychoanalysis and History*, ed. B. Mazlish (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963)], *History and Theory* 4 (1964/1965): 353–358.

could be built to connect the two investigations.” This is how it was in other fields of historical research, Mazlish pointed out, stressing the fruitful cooperation between economic history and economics, or social history and sociology (let us remember, this was only the beginning of the 1960s). In the meantime, only a handful of pioneers took up Langer’s call. Mazlish located the reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs in the psychological resistance experienced by historians toward psychoanalysis and its arguments: “They touch us in our most sensitive area; ourselves the product of repressions, resistance, and sublimations, we [historians] are now asked to break through these to a new self-awareness.” However, if historians were to remain faithful to the still-valid Rankean call to seek the truth, then – Mazlish believed – psychoanalysis would be able to help us investigate the facts and reach the real and “naked truth.”¹²⁰

After Langer’s speech, psychohistorical publications began to gradually “break through” into the pages of prestigious historical periodicals, e.g. *American Historical Review*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, *Journal of Modern History*. New historical journals tied to reformist groups in historiographic circles (such as *History and Theory*), as well as journals with a more general-humanist profile (such as *Daedalus*, the organ of the American Academy of Art and Sciences), were also eager to publish psychohistorical material. In the middle of the decade, scholars launched the first university courses in psychohistory. The pioneers in this field were Erik H. Erikson at Harvard University and Bruce Mazlish at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).¹²¹ Under the auspices of the American Academy of Art and Sciences, the first psychohistorical research group was founded (in Massachusetts), the so-called Wellfleet Group, in which – apart from Erikson and Mazlish – the leading role was played by, among others, psychiatrists Robert J. Lifton and Kenneth Keniston. The presence of these (and many other) non-historians in the formation of the psychohistorical movement – and the fact that they sometimes occupied quite prominent positions – clearly testified to the persistence of its interdisciplinary profile. Such a presence also determined the movement’s political tones. Some of these scholars sympathized more or less with the counterculture and student revolts of the late 1960s, engaged as they were in protests against the Vietnam War; they supported leftist and student movements, supported campaigns against atomic weapons and racial discrimination, etc., and their research

120 B. Mazlish, “Introduction,” in *Psychoanalysis*, 1–3.

121 B. Mazlish, “Inside the Whales,” *Times Literary Supplement* (28 June 1966), 667–669.

practices were characterized by socio-political engagement.¹²² This situation was not conducive to overcoming mistrust in the psychohistorical enterprise within the conservative history establishment; it perpetuated the impression that psychohistory was essentially one of the ephemeral products of a decade of rebellion and opposition.

Despite clearly noticeable progress in terms of the increasing number of psychohistorical publications; despite attempts to initiate university programs in the study of psychohistory; despite the first doctorates in psychohistory being completed; and despite signs that the field was becoming institutionalized – in 1960s, psychohistory remained far from the mainstream of American historical scholarship. Its moderate rate of development is visible especially in comparison with the rapid expansion of the so-called New Economic History, whose moment of “birth” coincided roughly with the date on which Langer “legalized” psychohistory. Ten years was enough for NEH supporters to completely dominate historical and economic research in the United States, and at the same time to successfully “transplant” the quantitative research approach into the field of social history and even political history.¹²³

The fact that studies on the psychological dimension of history gained only moderate recognition in this period is confirmed by the first “official” attempts to articulate university history’s position toward the psychohistorical undertaking, whose basic medium involved reviews (not too great in number) of psychohistorical studies published in the 1960s. At the same time, there were many instances in which such works were ignored by the reviewing departments of the most important historical periodicals. As I mentioned above, this was the fate of Erikson’s *Young Man Luther*, which was disregarded by both the *American Historical Review* and *The Journal of Modern History*.¹²⁴ The standard

122 Robert J. Lifton can serve as an example here. He conceived all of his academic and public activities as a kind of social mission. See especially his recently published memoirs – R. J. Lifton, *Witness to an Extreme Century* (New York-London-Toronto-Sydney: Free Press, 2011). See more reflections on the social function of psychohistory below.

123 J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, chapter 3.

124 Only the new periodical *History and Theory* published a broad and generally positive review of this book (D. B. Meyer: “A Review of ‘Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History,’” *History and Theory* 1 (1961), no. 3: 291–297). This should be interpreted above all as a way of propagating the new psychohistorical approach; as I mentioned above, in the first decade of its existence, *History and Theory* opened its arms quite widely to psychohistorians. At that time, the journal did not share the

reaction of reviewers was surprise combined with a certain skepticism about the cognitive value of the venture. Attempts to deepen the analyses were rare. A typical example might well be a biography of General Henry Clinton (a distinguished British commander during the American Revolutionary War), reviewed in *The American Historical Review* with the claim that “the author,” W. B. Willcox, “even uses psychotherapeutic scrutiny to bolster his vivid findings.” At the review’s conclusion, after being told of the work’s merits from the perspective of classical history (full use of source materials, use of new materials, the protagonist shown “against the backdrop” of important events, etc.), we read that “the author questionably includes a psychological analysis of his subject, which appears to be more nebulous than conclusive.”¹²⁵ I would argue that the general attitude of historians in the 1960s – fearful and reluctant, though not unambiguously negative – was accurately expressed by Barbara Tuchman in her (not entirely positive) review in *The Atlantic Monthly* of the psychobiography of Woodrow Wilson: “What can the Freudian method do for history? The answer must be that as an instrument of illumination it can do much – on one condition: let it for God’s sake be applied by a responsible historian.”¹²⁶ All this indicates that the overall influence of this new direction in history was still quite weak. In any case, it was insufficient to provoke a more distinctive reaction from historians in the face of the challenge that depth psychology had posed to the profession.

Psychohistory on the Road to Stabilization

At the beginning of the 1970s, one impatient psychohistorian complained that the discipline still has:

No place generally agreed upon to go for training, no system of training generally agreed upon, no cohesive body of scholars who know and support each other, no journal, and no means for promoting collective morale and offsetting the attenuation of intellectual range and audacity which result from dismaying professional indifference and bitter professional opposition.¹²⁷

views of the historical establishment, but rather those of the members of reformist groups that populated its editorial staff.

125 N. Callahan [review of W. B. Willcox, *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1964)], *The AHR* 70 (Oct. 1964), no. 1: 121–122.

126 B. Tuchman, “Can History Use Freud? The Case of Woodrow Wilson,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1967), no. 219: 3–8.

127 R. L. Schoenwald, “Using Psychology in History: A Review Essay,” *Historical Methods Newsletter* 7 (1973): 12.

However, the decade that had just begun brought fundamental change; it was undoubtedly a period of rapid development in psychohistory, particularly in terms of its institutional stability. The first discussion and research groups, already in existence, were joined by others in New York, Topeka, and Los Angeles. Moreover, the first psychohistorical associations were founded. Following calls by those participants at the American Historical Association's annual meeting in 1971 who perceived among historians a "wide and deep interest in psychohistory," psychohistorical enthusiasts formed, the very next year, the so-called Group for the Use of Psychology in History (GUPH). This association's aim was to "bring together scholars interested in studying the past psychologically," and its founders were mainly young historians, including Richard Schoenwald, Charles Strozier, John Fitzpatrick, and Patrick Dunn.¹²⁸ The rise of the GUPH was undoubtedly an expression of the aspirations of numerous psychohistorians to gain recognition and acceptance from the academic community of historians and to safely "anchor" psychohistorical research within the historical profession. GUPH functioned as a research group affiliated with the American Historical Association until the first years of the twenty-first century and organized psychohistorical sessions and panels during the Society's annual meetings (although the number of such events has continuously decreased).

Other assumptions guided Lloyd deMause during the organization of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) in 1977. According to its creator's intention, the association was supposed to attract specialists not only – indeed, not primarily – from the academic (historical) establishment. Above all, it was to encourage "scholars ... from all disciplines ... to join together for research and communication in the study of psychohistory ... to promote, encourage, and responsibly advance all interdisciplinary study that aims to integrate psychology and the social sciences with history."¹²⁹ From the beginning, historians were in fact a distinct minority within the association membership, and alongside representatives of other academic disciplines (e.g. literary studies), a significant percentage of researchers were not associated with academia. In addition to the "classic" practicing psychoanalysts, there were, for example, psychotherapists from various perspectives and social workers with a certain

128 "Communications," *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 1 (1972), no. 1: 1. For more on the formation of the GUPH, see L. E. Shiner, Ch. Strozier, R. Binion, "In Memoriam. Richard L. Schoenwald," *PR* 24 (1996), no. 3: 363–366.

129 From the IPA statutes. Quote from H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 7–8.

“flair” for research. Annual association meetings remained the basic venue for the expression of the IPA’s research activity.

The emergence of two separate institutions, which had different goals and which were clearly in competition with one another, would contribute significantly to the breakup of the psychohistorical movement. One indication of the coming problem was the fact that in very few cases did a given psychohistorian participate in the work of both organizations at the same time.

Another significant forum for psychohistorians was founded in 1977 (based on the initiative of Jeanne N. Knutson), namely the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP). Though it focused primarily on the study of the psychological aspects of contemporary political life, the Society sometimes organized psychohistorical panels or seminars as part of its annual meetings.¹³⁰

A no less important sign of the “solidification” and stabilization of the psychohistorical enterprise was the appearance of specialized periodicals. Since its formation, the GUPH issued its own newsletter. In 1976, it took the title *Psychohistory Review* and it achieved the status of a “full-sized” academic quarterly which “seeks to keep its readers informed of recent developments in the diverse field of psychohistory.” Its editorial board declared “an ecumenical position toward psychohistory.”¹³¹ In practice, this periodical remained the organ of the psychohistorical milieu, which seeks to sustain and deepen links between psychohistory and academic history. At the same time, it is worth noting that the *Psychohistory Review* had one of the smallest circulations of all historical periodicals published in the USA.¹³² Indirectly, this may indicate both that the significance and influence of psychohistorians within the sphere

130 See G. Cocks, “Contributions of Psychohistory to Understanding Politics,” in *Political Psychology*, ed. M. Herman (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1986); P. O’Toole, “The New Psycho-Disciplines,” *Change* 11 (1979), no. 3: 36–40.

131 From the proclamation printed on p. 3 of each issue of the *Psychohistory Review*.

132 Naturally, what I am referring to here are the more serious, non-regional periodicals, affiliated for example with major universities and colleges. As I mentioned, the *Psychohistory Review* was shut down in 1999. In the farewell issue, its retiring editor, Larry Shiner, stated that he had not been able to find people or an institution that would continue the magazine. At the same time, Shiner expressed the belief that psychohistorical investigations “broadly understood” had already entered the mainstream of historical scholarship, and the main historical periodicals were publishing psychohistorical texts. Was he suggesting that there was no longer any need to publish a specialized psychohistorical journal for historians? See “Editor’s Farewell,” *PR* 27 (1999), no. 3.

of historical studies was limited, and that the powers distancing themselves from it remained strong.¹³³

The *Journal of Psychohistory* – the second specialized periodical within the discipline, which constituted, in an organizational sense, a private financial venture of Lloyd deMause – was able to avoid problems of this kind. The journal first appeared in 1973 (for the first four years it was issued under the title *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*) and within a short period of time, thanks to the marketing skills of its publisher, it gained a permanent position on the market. Gradually, however, a significant number of the professional historians with an interest in psychohistory began to distance themselves from the periodical (a trend that became more evident after the early 1980s) and it increasingly represented the views of the research community grouped around IPA. For this reason, matters covered by the majority of texts published there diverged significantly from the areas in which practicing historians were interested. It began to emphasize the psychoanalytical “monitoring” of current political events and trends in mass culture, along with the study of violence against children and child abuse both past and present. This is the profile that the journal has maintained to this day. Among its collaborators and readers was a small and shrinking number of historians, and the *Journal* itself – for a time it was the target of brutal attacks by representatives of the historical establishment (sometimes very bluntly questioning its scientific and cognitive values) – is currently ignored by professional historians.

In addition to their own specialized periodicals,¹³⁴ psychohistorians were able to make broader use of psychopolitical periodicals, such as *Political Psychology* (the organ of the above-mentioned ISPP) and *Mind and Human*

133 “In the sixties,” Charles Strozier remembered, “the field had the prospect of being structurally grounded. But it started just as the bottom dropped out of academic hiring between 1971 and 1972. ... The established people like Erikson and Lifton were doing nothing to institutionalize psychohistory – in terms of creating an institutional framework where you bring students in, train them, they get PhDs, and then they have jobs. Then, fifteen or twenty years later you have the next generation of people moving into the field.” P. Elovitz, “A Conversation with Charles B. Strozier,” *Clio’s Psyche* 3 (1997), no. 4: 124.

134 In addition to the two above-mentioned foundational quarterlies, one can also mention a few smaller bulletins like *Psychohistory* and the *IPA Newsletter*. For more on the twists and turns and functioning of the main psychohistorical periodicals, see P. Elovitz, D. Cifelli, “Three Psychohistorical Journals,” *Clio’s Psyche* 22 (2015), no. 2: 74–80; P. Elovitz, D. Cifelli, “Insights from Psychohistorical Journals Editors,” *ibid.*, 81–90.

Interactions. Psychohistorical texts were also accepted by historical journals founded in the 1970s that had a more interdisciplinary profile – such as, above all, *Biography* and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Articles written by psychohistorians still found their way into the most prestigious historical quarterlies (in this regard, the “peak” was reached in 1975, when such a respected periodical as the *Journal of Modern History* published a special issue devoted exclusively to psychohistory¹³⁵), but in the second half of the 1970s their number began to decrease noticeably. Psychohistorical literature was also present in some periodicals tied to the psychoanalytic movement, such as the *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, the *Psychoanalytic Review*, the *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, etc. Also during this period, the field of psychohistory “built up” its own extensive bibliography.¹³⁶

As W. M. Runyan’s estimates indicate, during this period there was a surge in the number of psychohistorical works: a 2.5-fold increase in books, a nearly 4-fold increase in articles, and an almost 7-fold (!) increase in defended doctoral dissertations.¹³⁷

135 *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975), no. 2. The “guest editor” of this issue was Charles Strozier (at the time the editor of *Psychohistory Review*), who – wanting to “familiarize historians with important issues which are currently being debated by psychohistorians” – made a specific appeal in his preface to representatives of the historical profession. Full of the cognitive optimism that characterized those years, it is probably worth offering a generous citation: “Psychohistory poses a challenge to the discipline of history. Extensive developments in psychology, and particularly in psychoanalysis ... have forced reconsideration of basic questions of human motivation. We can no longer comfortably assume rationality in individual, institutional, or collective behavior. Nor can we afford to ignore new data of observation, such as childhood experiences, made accessible and relevant by psychological interpretation. ... In the last decade psychohistorical work has taken a quantum leap forward. The somewhat frenetic nature of this activity in part accounts for its tentativeness and absence of agreement on fundamental questions of theory and methodology. It is clear, however, that neither facile acceptance of psychohistory nor blanket denunciation of the psychohistorical perspective are valid intellectual opinions.” *Ibid.*, 1.

136 *A Bibliography of Psychohistory*, ed. L. deMause (New York-London: Garland Publishing, 1975); W. J. Gilmore, *Psychohistorical Inquiry: A Comprehensive Research Bibliography* (New York-London: Garland Publishing, 1984). Bibliographic material was also published by the *Psychohistory Review* and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. In the 1990s, Henry Lawton extended this tradition by publishing (irregularly) updates as a “Bibliography of Psychohistory.”

137 W. M. Runyan, “A Historical and Conceptual Background,” 19–25. Another one of Runyan’s observations is significant. It concerns a disproportionately high increase

Psychohistory in the Seminar Room

The last of the above-cited numbers leads us to the problem of the psychohistorian's education. For the stabilization and development of a given research field, what is always most important is to have that field "anchored" in university education, which assures a flow of new followers and which thus enables the "reproduction" of the community in question. In this respect, the 1970s might well appear to have been a period of undoubted success in psychohistory. Having conducted research on this topic in 1977, G. M. Kren and L. Rappoport claimed that "at the present time there are over 200 courses ... being offered around the country in colleges, universities and psychological institutes."¹³⁸ These programs covered an extremely broad range of topics – from psychobiographical issues (with a relatively modest set of outstanding historical figures as subjects), through childhood history courses, to such group process issues as racism, anti-Semitism, and war. Even occasional "metapsychohistorical" courses were offered, which focused, for example, on metahistorical and psychoanalysis-driven reflections as cultivated by Freud, Marcuse or Brown. Kren and Rappoport emphasized that most of these courses were offered by historians who almost always ran other "regular" (i.e. more "traditional") courses. All of which means that psychohistorical teaching's main home was history departments on American universities, which suggests that the psychohistorical "implant" actually managed to take root within institutional history.

But we cannot help but notice that – as shown by Kren and Rappoport – most of these courses were designed for younger students (undergraduates), lower-level courses introducing psychohistory or addressing a topic within a broader psychohistorical perspective. More advanced proposals for graduate students (i.e., doctoral students) were lacking. In addition, the authors noted only a single, isolated case of a doctoral program with a specialization in psychohistory (at the University of California at Los Angeles).¹³⁹ This leads us to the

in the percentage of publications of a theoretical, methodological and polemical nature. I will return to this matter later.

138 G. M. Kren, L. Rappoport, "Psychohistory in the University," *Journal of Psychohistory* 4 (1977) no. 3: 339–350.

139 Later, a doctoral program was set up at the State University of Kansas. W. J. Gilmore, "Introduction. Psychohistory: Retrospect, Present State and Future Prospect," in W. J. Gilmore, *Psychohistorical Inquiry*, footnote 8. Of course, psychohistorical doctoral theses were completed on at least a few more universities, including at Boston University and Brandeis University, but this came as the result of the fact that these universities had a psychohistorian on the faculty who could direct PhD students in

conclusion that the relatively significant expansion of psychohistorical study programs did not mean that psychohistorical education had gained strength institutionally. It appears to have been rather a kind of “fashion” dictated by the search for new opportunities to attract students into history departments on American universities. Kren and Rappoport tend to share this opinion. In view of the declining interest of young people in history’s course offerings, history departments tended to “support unorthodox courses which promise to attract students, and above all which may appeal to students who had hitherto shown little interest in history.”¹⁴⁰ Therefore, psychohistorical education as part of historical studies functioned as an “additional attraction,” a kind of “bait” to attract new students to history, and as such could not be an effective tool for the “reproduction” of psychohistorians.¹⁴¹ It was equally important that courses of this kind, as Kren and Rappoport noted, were often led by scholars who also taught other subjects, and who therefore, as one might surmise, were not necessarily specialized in psychohistory. Thus, this “fashion for psychohistory” did not call for a radical increase in academic career opportunities for representatives of this field of research.

The situation was even worse outside of university history departments. Numerous educational institutions founded by supporters of depth psychology (so-called psychoanalytical institutes) usually focused on educating future psychoanalytic therapists, who then opened up private clinical practices. They showed little interest in training candidates who would think of something other than the therapeutic applications of their analytical training. The roots of this attitude reached deep into the past. In the interwar period, the American Psychoanalytic Association adopted the principle of making psychoanalytic training available only to those people with a medical degree – which happened,

psychohistory (although formally within a completely different research specialization, – e.g. the history of World War II). I personally encountered such cases during an internship at Brandeis University. Szaluta sees the situation in much the same way, noting that “interest and work in the field is individualistic, supported where there happens to be a sympathetic faculty member willing to sponsor a graduate student.” J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 13.

140 G. M. Kren, L. Rappoport, “Psychohistory,” 341.

141 What is significant in this context is the fact that, in the period under discussion here, there was only a single work – one that was, according to specialists in the field, completely unsuccessful – that aspired to be a textbook on psychohistory. See S. Prisco, *An Introduction to Psychohistory: Theories and Case Studies* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1980).

we might add, contrary to the opinion of Sigmund Freud, who was still active at the time, and despite the clear opposition of European psychoanalytic circles.¹⁴² In practice, this meant that a psychoanalytic education was for decades closed to non-doctors. In the context of this book, the related “medicalization” of American psychoanalysis (which is an interesting research topic in itself) is important in the sense that it created an atmosphere of intolerance toward people who wanted to educate themselves as psychoanalytic researchers, and not as therapists – especially when they had no medical training. Naturally, there were always “gaps” and “crevices” (i.e. psychoanalytical institutes which sometimes, exceptionally, accepted such candidates), but this could not replace real institutional solutions. For potential psychohistorians, the easiest way to establish contact with psychoanalysis remained to submit themselves to therapy – an experience that was shared by thousands of middle-class Americans. Therefore, the role of informal “training centers” for students of psychohistory had to be played by the above-mentioned research and discussion groups, and the establishment of the Center for Psychosocial Studies in Chicago in the first half of the 1970s was widely regarded as a great step forward in the field of psychohistorical education.¹⁴³ Although the number of centers opening to non-medical candidates began to gradually increase (e.g. the Menninger Clinic in Kansas, the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute in Los Angeles, and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute),¹⁴⁴ in the recollections of psychohistorians (with university training in history), we often find people who undertook psychoanalytic training after 1970 – references and allusions to the “pioneering” or “precedent-setting” nature of their formal psychoanalytic education.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, psychoanalytical institutes could not serve as an effective training tool for psychohistorians also for reasons tied to specific psychoanalytical

142 For more, see R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, chapters 4 and 5.

143 In cooperation with a local psychoanalytic institute. It is worth adding that in Chicago the traditions of social work guided by psychoanalytical research reaches back to the prewar activity of Franz Alexander, Nathan Leites and Harold Lasswell. For more on the Center, see J. P. Demos. “Center for Psychosocial Studies: A Birth Announcement,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 3 (1974), no. 1: 4–5.

144 The prohibition on accepting candidates from outside medical specializations is no longer formally obligatory in the USA.

145 See, for example, P. Gay: *Freud for Historians*, xv. For a particularly expressive case illustrating the difficulties faced by a historian at an analytical institute (based on P. Loewenberg’s account), see J. D. Fisher, “The Question of Psychohistory,” in J. D. Fisher, *Cultural Theory*, 219.

requirements that a candidate had to fulfill. The educational system developed in the 1920s (later only slightly modified) by Max Eitington and Hanns Sachs was created primarily for the preparation of analytical psychotherapists, whose aim was to open a private psychoanalytic practice. This system had three pillars: training analysis, theoretical education in the field of psychoanalytic concepts, and control analysis (i.e. analysis carried out under supervision). The essence of the first element involves the long-term personal analysis of the candidate conducted by an experienced psychoanalyst.¹⁴⁶ The third part of the program boils down to therapy carried out by the candidate on several patients chosen by the Institute, with the entire treatment being monitored and supervised by designated members of the Institute,¹⁴⁷ all of which reminds us of a kind of professional “internship” or apprenticeship. During the entire training, emphasis is usually placed on practical skills and “workshop” issues helpful in specific therapy cases. Education in the field of theory, the “intellectual appropriation” of the conceptual product of analytical thought, is usually regarded as a secondary, ancillary element. In addition, such a course of study extends over many years (even 10 or more); it consumes a great deal of the candidate’s time and energy (the development of activities in other fields then becomes seriously difficult); and it requires the expenditure of considerable financial resources.¹⁴⁸ Another complication, important from the historian’s perspective, is the unavoidable “attachment to place” as determined by the regular rhythm of frequent meetings with the psychoanalyst as part of personal psychoanalysis, and later by the need to conduct long-term control analyses, which often collided with the need to conduct research in the field of history (internships, conferences, long-distance archival research, etc.).¹⁴⁹ Therefore, only a minority of practicing

146 For more, see *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 453–455; S. Fhanér, *Psykoanalytiskt Lexikon* (Stockholm: Norstedts Förlag, 1989); I made use of the following edition: *Słownik psychoanalizy*, trans. from the Swedish by J. Kubitsky (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wyd. Psychologiczne, 1996), 201–202.

147 See *ibid.*, 201.

148 In this context, see the reflections of the prominent psychoanalyst Michael Balint as cited by E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 293. For more in general on the system of analytic education, see R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 91–94.

149 This complication has been openly described by those directly involved. In particular, see statements made by several psychohistorians and historians regarding their experiences and problems in psychoanalytic institutes published in a special issue of *Clio's Psyche* entitled “Dual Training in Psychoanalysis, and History, Literature or Another Academic Discipline,” 4 (1997), no. 2. See also J. D. Fisher, *Cultural Theory*, xx–xxx1.

psychohistorians (especially if their “starting point” remained an academic discipline, for example history) completed a full (doctoral) program in psychoanalytic education. It seems that without specific institutional solutions, implemented jointly in coordination with historians on university faculties and with institutions training psychoanalysts, there is no way to change this situation. Unfortunately, such initiatives are rare.¹⁵⁰

Psychohistorians were thus not able to create their own stable and effective tools for “community reproduction,” nor were they able to “master” any of the existing institutions involved with the education of historians. These facts would be of great importance in later years, as interest in psychohistory among historians began to diminish, and as the number of psychohistory courses offered by university history faculties would begin to decline. It turned out that, due to declining demand for such courses, in the absence of stable psychohistorical research and educational institutions (which could possibly employ specialists in this field), the psychohistory specialization does not provide enough academic career opportunities. Psychohistorians who were able to find their place at a university usually had to “function as historians,”¹⁵¹ which often

150 As far as I know, in the second half of the 1990s there was only one center where it was possible – to a large extent thanks to Peter Loewenberg – to overcome organizational, financial, and legal difficulties to organize a comprehensive psychohistorical education program based on institutionalized cooperation between a university and a psychoanalytic institute. This instance involved an agreement between the University of California at Los Angeles and the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute, in which doctoral students in history have the opportunity to pursue some of their studies at the Institute. Even a special scholarship fund was organized for them. Another element of the cooperation program is the possibility to pursue an analytical education, opened by the Institute to academic teachers lecturing at the history department. The University of California Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium, which organizes workshops and research seminars on the application of psychoanalytic concepts in the social sciences and humanities, offers scholars (not only representing the history faculty) an additional opportunity for a psychohistorical education. No wonder that within psychohistorical circles, solutions adopted in Los Angeles are considered exemplary, and those who have “evolved” through the educational system organized by UCLA make up a significant group among psychoanalytically oriented psychohistorians. See P. Elovitz, “A Unique Dual Education: Editor’s Introduction and Personal Commentary,” *Clio’s Psyche* 4 (1997), no. 2: 43. See also B. Lentz, “The Praxis of Peter Loewenberg,” *Clio’s Psyche*, Special Student Edition (1995–1996), 9–10 (interview with P. Loewenberg).

151 Such are the words of Bruce Mazlish; see T. Pawelec, “Bruce Mazlish,” 80.

meant suppressing, and pushing to the margins of their professional activity, their inclinations to pursue this kind of cognitive inquiry.

Debate Surrounding Psychohistory

However, the fact remains that since the early 1970s, the community of professional historians began to feel the “psychohistory challenge” more strongly. In the eyes of some scholars, psychohistory had even become “fashionable,” and – though they did not delve too deeply into its methodological determinants – they began to follow the new trend.¹⁵² However, the best indicator of the new situation was the marked increase in the intensity (and “temperature”) of debates on the cognitive qualities of historical research inspired by depth psychology. Most clearly, the number of psychohistorical publications, and the number and influence of psychohistory practitioners must have already exceeded a certain “critical level,” forcing historians to take more decisive steps to deal with and “familiarize themselves” with the new phenomenon.

The debates that took place at the time may be divided into two groups. On the one hand, we note a series of statements by proponents of very traditionally conceived history, for whom psychohistory was just one of many negative trends “flooding” historical scholarship with “novelties” especially from the social sciences.

On the other hand, proponents of the new, scientifically oriented (i.e. modernist¹⁵³) history questioned the foundations of the psychohistorical paradigm as insufficiently scientific, attacking both its theoretical (i.e. its psychoanalytic) foundations and the properties that characterize the psychohistorical research practice.

A highly important effect of these debates was the identification, specification, precision, and eventual resolution of various difficulties tied to epistemology and technical skills in psychohistory. Regardless of the tendency characteristic of psychoanalytical thinking to perceive opposition and opponents as rationalized psychological resistance (and thus as a “product” of psychological defense

152 This explains why there have even been attempts to pursue, under the psychohistorical label, issues that are not exactly the interests of a typical psychohistorian, such as the philosophy of science or race relations in contemporary America. See, for example, essays contained in *Continuities and Discontinuities: Essays in Psychohistory*, ed. Sh. Sugerman (Madison: Drew University Press, 1978).

153 I am referring here to the understanding of this concept as formulated by W. Wrzosek in *History-Culture-Metaphor*.

mechanisms within professional milieus), the need for debate and discussion, marked by criticism of various kinds, led psychohistorians to deeper self-reflection on the methodological properties of their own paradigm, on its advantages and its scope of application, and finally on its inherent limitations.

The most important attacks by “traditionalists” took place in the first half of the 1970s, and what no doubt gained the greatest publicity – that is, what was most comprehensive (in the form of a large book) – was a work by Jacques Barzun from 1974.¹⁵⁴ We find variants of similar arguments (for and against) in the works of many other more or less outstanding authors. Confronted by psychohistory, traditionalists stated clearly that they would defend the humanistic qualities of the kind of descriptive and narrative history writing that is practiced more as art than science. Thus, as Gertrude Himmelfarb writes with a certain pride:

Conventional history, by contrast [with psychohistory and cliometrics], seems unscientific and imprecise, diffident and oblique. If it does finally answer the “whys” of history, it does so only by way of a circuitous route that takes it through interminable detours into the “hows” of history. And the “why” answers it does finally emerge with are ... complicated and tentative.¹⁵⁵

Barzun adds: “What, then, are the criteria for history? ... Narrative, Chronology, Concreteness and Memorability. History is first of all a story: ‘explanation’ is incidental, ... [a story] intended as truth and it is therefore of a particular time ... in history concreteness prevails over other elements.”¹⁵⁶ This history was threatened by all those who, like psychohistorians (and followers of cliometrics), intended to reorient the discipline along the lines of the social sciences – toward explaining, putting forward and solving problems, testing hypotheses, etc.

Here is a list of psychohistory’s basic sins and the most serious charges raised against the field, based on arguments made by Barzun. Barzun claimed that by using psychological explanations in the study of history, psychohistorians actually proposed nothing that was truly original. Historians had “always” made such attempts, sometimes very successfully. Worse, psychohistorians

154 J. Barzun, *Clio and the Doctors: Psycho-History, Quanto-History and History* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Barzun published an earlier version of his criticism in the *AHR*; see J. Barzun, “Clio: The Muse and Her Doctors,” *AHR* 77 (1972): 36–64.

155 G. Himmelfarb, “The ‘New History,’” *Commentary* 59 (1975), no. 1: 78. Himmelfarb has not changed her views over time. She attacked psychohistory in an almost identical way in *The New History and the Old* (see 33–46).

156 J. Barzun, *Clio: The Muse*, 55.

refer explicitly to a specific psychological theory (Freud's psychoanalysis), which excludes them from the community of historians because psychohistorical "facts" come not from history, but from the "field of psychoanalysis," and the theories and generalizations associated with this new specialization are not derived from analysis of historical events, but from the ahistorical vision of human nature tied to depth psychology. All of which explains why psychohistory is falsely regarded as a new version of history – an interdisciplinary historical science, juxtaposed to the current historical scholarship. In fact, according to Barzun, it is only "psychologizing with the help of history," and the results of psychohistorical investigations belong to that sphere of psychology that makes use – as an empirical basis – of historical material instead of contemporary material.¹⁵⁷

The psychohistorian's greatest sin – Barzun argued – was breaking the history profession's proper rules for justifying claims (the model of judicial use of evidence), which brought in its wake an inability to intersubjectively control one's interpretation. According to Barzun, psychohistorians, convinced of the truth of psychoanalytical theory, believe that their explanations are inherently "deeper" and more fundamental than any other. The harmful consequence of this belief is their focus on the issue of the unconscious motives behind human action instead of the conscious goals of this action.¹⁵⁸ In addition, psychohistory developed no truly unambiguous method (in the sense of subsequent, clearly defined steps in the research procedure); rather they use the metaphors and analogies ("jargon") of Freudianism. An example of the negative consequences of this state of affairs is a "careless" transition in research from the level of individual personality to the level of the collective psyche.¹⁵⁹

Further in Barzun's work, we read that the psychohistorical approach represents a gross deformation of the past. It destroys history's integrity, in which people acted out of motives of various kinds, and in which all events were elements of a complex network of causes and effects. It subordinates the uniqueness and complexity of past phenomena to one deterministic scheme – in the conviction of its universal truthfulness. Which means that historical events can only illustrate certain mechanisms of mental life, and psychohistorical interpretations of personality become exemplifications of specific theoretical models

157 J. Barzun, *Clio and the Doctors*, 4–5, 10, 13–14, 17–19, 23 and *passim*.

158 The latter was given particular emphasis in G. Izenberg, "Psychohistory and Intellectual History," *History and Theory* 14 (1975): 139–155.

159 J. Barzun, *Clio and the Doctors*, 28–29, 39–41.

and do not allow for the actual understanding of a given historical figure in his/her entire uniqueness. This process takes the form of “labeling,” because unlike an analyst in a clinical situation, a psychohistorian has an extremely small amount of material on which to base his diagnosis. Barzun also noticed that the psychohistorian does not intend to talk about the past as historians do; like a naturalist, the psychohistorian strives to establish certain relations between specific states of affairs (and thus to explain). In the broader perspective, the psychohistorian searches for a way to direct history. Therefore, his or her aspirations constitute another variant of Enlightenment optimism and naive faith in the cognitive and causative power of human reason.¹⁶⁰

Opinions like those expressed by Barzun and Himmelfarb were recognized¹⁶¹ and developed by scholars on all fronts. At the same time, allegations were often accompanied by epithets rarely encountered in academic debate; I have already mentioned “cancer,” but other critics wrote about “rubbish” and “stupidity.” We can find particularly expressive condemnation of psychohistorical investigations in the many reviews of psychohistorical works published in the 1970s, in which authors repeated all of the allegations mentioned above in relation to psychohistory’s actual research practices. For example, in the review of B. Mazlish’s *The Revolutionary Ascetic*, we read that Mazlish “commits every error in the book in actually trying to employ psychological concepts in historical research.” Among these errors we find “excessive reductionism, or a seeming sexual monomania,” confusion of psychological interpretation with explanation, abuse of analytical “jargon,” and the random application of psychological concepts wherever possible. Another reviewer argued that Mazlish’s study added nothing to our understanding of Robespierre’s personality (he expressed in analytical jargon what we already knew without such jargon), and that this author’s Freudian speculations are “highly doubtful.”¹⁶² A review in *The Journal of Southern History* described essays contained in *The*

160 *Ibid.*, 64, 78.

161 The review of Barzun’s book in the *AHR* called the work an appealing defense of the profession. R. J. Parks [review of Barzun, *Clio and the Doctors*], *AHR* 81 (1976), no. 3: 557. But such views were opposed by reform-minded historians. In the quarterly *History and Theory*, Barzun’s views were criticized in relation to both cliometrics and psychohistory. R. D. Schulzinger, “Review Essay on *Clio and The Doctors and Style in History*,” *History and Theory* 15 (1976): 94–103.

162 Ch. Johnson, “Pregnant with ‘Meaning!’ Mao and the Revolutionary Ascetic,” *JIH* 7 (1977), no. 3: 502–503; J. I. Shulim, “Robespierre and the French Revolution. A Review Article” *AHR* 82 (1977), no. 1: 37–38.

Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History as “almost totally without value” to the historian. The author of the review argued that psychohistorians either do not involve historical research (they could only interest psychologists and literary scholars), or have basic deficiencies; while one psychohistorian had engaged in “overkill” by offering too many competing explanations for the protagonist’s behavior, another used too much psychoanalytic jargon. The author concluded that “discussions of psychoanalytical concepts should no more clutter up a historian’s pages than descriptions of how he takes notes or arranges his files.”¹⁶³ In turn, reviewers of *Fathers and Children* accused its author, P. Rogin, of not linking the particular psychodynamics of the individual in question (President Andrew Jackson) to the overall historical process. Examining this comparatively widely read work for *Reviews in American History*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese reproached the author for using a poor source basis to reconstruct the protagonist’s childhood, which he replaced with references to contemporary clinical findings on typical patterns of psychological development. The fact that the object of research is dead and thus simply cannot speak and does not provide us with free associations, etc., is what Fox-Genovese considered one of the most serious cognitive difficulties faced by those practicing psychohistory. A reviewer of this work in the *American Historical Review* viewed matters in a similar way.¹⁶⁴

Negative and critical views of psychohistory crystalized with matters surrounding the 1972 publication of a secret report on the mind of Adolf Hitler, which had been commissioned in 1943 by American intelligence services and prepared by Walter Langer and several associates. Although, strictly speaking, this work cannot be regarded as a psychohistorical work (at most it deserves the status of precursor) and it materialized for specific, utilitarian purposes under special war conditions, critics treated it as a model example of psychohistory; thus, it naturally became a focus of attention for critics of psychohistory. The author of a review in the *American Historical Review* accused the study’s authors, while selecting their source materials, of having projected onto their subject

163 D. H. Donald [review of *The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History*, ed. B. Wolman (New York-London: Harpers, 1971)], *The Journal of Southern History* 38 (1972): 111–112. For clarity, I might add that this collection includes texts by such leading psychohistorians as P. Loewenberg and R. G. L. Waite.

164 E. Fox-Genovese, “Psychohistory Versus Psychodeterminism: The Case of Rogin’s Jackson,” *Reviews in American History* 3 (1975), no. 4: 407–417; R. N. Satz [review of M. P. Rogin, *Father and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: A. Knopf, 1975)], *AHR* 81 (1976), no. 3: 658–659.

preconceived hypotheses about his personality structure as derived from the clinical experience of psychoanalysis. In so doing, they broke the “basic rules of evidence that historians, lawyers or for that matter any unbiased person would use to get at the truth.” According to this critic, the authors misinterpreted the text of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* by having pointed to non-existent references to his traumatic childhood experiences. On this unsound basis, and depending (yet again!) on their own clinical experiences, they developed unjustified (even imaginary) conclusions about the dynamics of Hitler’s development. In this context, more conventional allegations tied to an inability to assess the credibility of sources on which Langer and his colleagues based, for example, their analysis of Hitler’s sexual life as an adult, were secondary.¹⁶⁵

Analysis of reviews published by the *American Historical Review* – the most prestigious historical journal in the United States (representing the establishment of academic history) – in the 1970s and 1980s showed that, in this period, around 60 reviews of psychohistorical works appeared in the journal. This is not a very large number, considering that on average there are several dozen texts of this type in each issue of this quarterly, and this fact reveals the mid-level rank at which historians generally treated psychohistorical writings published in the United States. Among these reviews, almost all of which were written by non-psychohistorians, express serious reservations about the field’s methodological assumptions and about at least some of the conclusions contained in these works. In a review of Robert Waite’s *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler*, we read, for example, that “the very great strengths of the book are precisely in the more traditional portions, and the weaknesses in the least traditional.”¹⁶⁶ Quite often, reviews were completely negative. A psychohistorical work received a positive evaluation almost exclusively when the author of the review was a psychohistorian (an infrequent occurrence).¹⁶⁷

165 H. W. Gatzke, “Hitler and Psychohistory. A Review Article,” *AHR* 78 (1973): 394–401 (quote from p. 397). For the same accusations, in a milder form and not as disqualifying, see the review in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* by D. Orlov, “The Significance of Time and Place in Psychohistory,” *JIH* 5 (1974) no. 1: 131–138.

166 G. L. Weinberg [review of R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1977)], *AHR* 83 (1978): 756.

167 An anecdotal illustration of the thesis that all these allegations actually grew out of the truly hostile atmosphere that prevailed at the time within American historiography can be found in B. Mazlish’s recollections of a conference on the usefulness of psychohistory organized in 1971 by the History Department of the City University of New York, in which leading American historians participated. In an atmosphere reminiscent of an inquisitorial trial (the main speaker was J. Barzun),

An equally significant expression of this disapproval was the way in which psychohistorical issues were covered in more general historiographic syntheses – that is, in works presenting the current state of (and trends in) historical scholarship. Here, as a rule, there was no obvious criticism, which was too often replaced by silence. Psychohistory as a term was used in a more general context under the category “psychology and history,” the mention of which was usually tied to references to the psychological interests of the “Annales” school, to works published by “psychoanalyzing” anthropologists (like D. Devereux), etc. The actual term appeared occasionally, along with some of the big names in psychohistory, above all Erik H. Erikson.¹⁶⁸

Subjected to massive criticism, psychohistorians “bit back” at their opponents, publishing arguments that confronted the most severely formulated objections. The first of J. Barzun’s works (an article in the *American Historical Review*) received responses from up to three representatives of psychohistory at the same time. They questioned the legitimacy of all allegations raised there. In particular, they emphasized the unrepresentative nature of the psychohistorical texts that Barzun had quoted, stating that his accusations that psychohistory lacked methodological procedures proved Barzun’s ignorance of the subject literature, and that the “unproductive technical jargon of psychoanalysis” actually enables a conceptual grasp of various aspects of the

Erik H. Erikson was invited to take part in the session but decided not to speak, and only during a lunch break did he reportedly ask – half-jokingly, in a whisper, with a few psychohistory supporters surrounding him: “Should I mention the word ‘unconscious’ to them?” See B. Mazlish, “An Exchange on Psychohistory,” *The New York Review of Books* (3 May 1973), no. 7: 36.

168 For an instructive example, see the standard synthesis from the late 1970s and early 1980s published under the auspices of UNESCO, G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*, 64–72 (see also the epilogue to the second edition of this work penned by Michael Burns, who writes on p. 219 of Barraclough’s “deep skepticism,” and who regarded psychohistory as “bunk”). However, it is worth noting that it was different in the case of historiographic syntheses constructed as collective works, in which specialists presented individual problem areas or research directions. Here we find extensive and competent presentations of the achievements and theoretical foundations of psychohistory (naturally prepared by its representatives): R. Schoenwald, “The Psychological Study of History,” in *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory*, eds. G. G. Iggers, H. T. Parker (London: Methuen & Co., 1980), 71–85; P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory,” in *The Past Before Us*, 408–432. An earlier publication of this type (*Historical Studies Today*) reprinted the above-mentioned article by Frank Manuel.

human personality. Psychohistory advocates also took issue with the arbitrariness and clear inadequacy of the image that Barzun presented of “real” historical science, and they defended their right to use the theoretical achievements of psychoanalysis in the study of history as a way to give hope for cognitive progress in historical studies.¹⁶⁹ In his 1974 philippic (which, in fact, was only a more narrative and extended repetition of previously formulated theses), Barzun ignored all of these arguments, and G. Himmelfarb’s above-mentioned article, which appeared a year later, was basically a repetition of Barzun’s words. An even stronger reaction was triggered by attacks on *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*; as many as four psychohistorians hastened to explain that this work could not be measured by the standards of academic scholarship. It was not history, William Langer pointed out, but a document, one that demonstrated an interesting attempt to apply psychoanalytic concepts outside of a clinical context. Another participant in the debate referred to fundamental methodological issues, stressing that psychohistory’s preconceived research hypotheses are simply an expression of conscious reference to certain theoretical assertions or research assumptions – in a sense, a working hypothesis. The participant also pointed out that the “unauthorized” interpretations of Hitler’s texts based on depth psychology that upset historians were something completely normal. After all, belief in the multilevel nature of the conscious and subconscious meanings of a given set of symbols, whether verbal or visual, are clinically proven. Therefore, it would be a question not so much of error or arbitrariness but of a different theoretical space, a different way of delineating the framework of acceptable research methods.¹⁷⁰

Criticism from supporters of the “new” history came a bit later, although one of its starting points was the view formulated in the interwar period by Karl Popper, according to whom psychoanalysis is a “pseudoscience,” capable of explaining everything, but in fact not falsifiable.¹⁷¹ Modernist critics of

169 “Communications,” *AHR* 77 (1972): 1194–1197 (letters by John J. Fitzpatrick, William Langer and Peter Loewenberg).

170 See “Communications,” *AHR* 78 (1973): 1155–1163 (letters by Walter Langer, William Langer, Robert G. Waite and Geoffrey Cocks).

171 For what is perhaps the most effective and highly developed version of this criticism, in this case comparing psychoanalysis to a religious denomination or church, see E. Gellner, *The Psychoanalytic Movement: The Cunning of Unreason* (Northwestern University Press, 1985). Within the circles of academic psychologists, criticism of this kind has been developed most consistently and thoroughly in the many publications of Hans Eysenck. See, for example, “What is Wrong with Psychoanalysis?” in *Psycho/History: Readings in the Method of Psychology, Psychoanalysis and*

psychohistory, whose best advocate was David Stannard in his *Shrinking History*,¹⁷² believed – unlike traditionalists – that “there is no methodological or thematic connection between psychohistory and quantitative analysis [of history] that justifies treating them as two elements of a single ... phenomenon.”¹⁷³ Having rejected the classic vision of historical scholarships in favor of the “new” history conceived as a social science, they argued that psychohistory did not meet the standards of the reformed Clio, which was intent upon explaining and testing hypotheses derived from consciously accepted theoretical assumptions. They were struck by the psychohistorian’s focus on the individual, and by the fact that psychohistorians did not highlight the social determinants of psychological attitudes and behaviors.¹⁷⁴ In Stannard’s view, the basic problem was not so much in the details of the specific psychohistory research practice but in the set of assumptions constituting its theoretical-methodological foundation – that is, simply, in psychoanalysis (for Stannard, psychoanalytic history was synonymous with the term “psychohistory”). According to Stannard, psychohistory was guilty of the “most serious sins” in four basic areas:

1. Historical fact, where psychohistorians have a tendency to “invent” facts for which there is little or no confirmation in the source material, but whose occurrence turns out to be indispensable for their argument.
2. Logic, because the above-noted “sin” is committed in accordance with the principle *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, which leads to the identification of the temporal succession of phenomena with their causative link; in this particular case, the mistake additionally consists in assuming that if a given phenomenon occurred, then another phenomenon had to occur, the consequence of which was the former; the basis of such reasoning within psychohistory is psychoanalysis; it is on that very basis that researchers consider these phenomena to exist, for which there are no independent, historian-accepted

History, eds. G. Cocks, T. Crosby (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3–16 (first published in 1953), and above all *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* (Harmondsworth – New York: Viking, 1985), chapter 7.

172 D. Stannard, *Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory* (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Later, his argumentation was uncritically repeated almost word for word (despite the fact that defenders of psychohistory had challenged many of his points) by Eysenck in *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire*.

173 *Ibid.*, xiii–xiv.

174 For more on this last matter, see also H.-U. Wehler, “Psychoanalysis and History,” *Social Research* 47 (1980): 519–536.

evidence (this usually applies to childhood, which according to Freud was decisive for the formation of an adult personality).

3. Culture, because psychohistorians are characterized as disregarding the historical and cultural context of phenomena under study; in addition, psychoanalysis, as a system of thought, is a product of a specific cultural context and its possible applicability does not reach beyond its framework.¹⁷⁵
4. Theory, because neither individual psychoanalytic theoretical assertions nor psychoanalytic metapsychology as a whole meets the standards of a satisfactory scientific theory, one could not confirm (or it was impossible to confirm) them empirically. In addition, as Stannard argued, in light of quantitative comparative data, psychoanalysis did not prove effective in psychotherapeutic practice; since it failed in the area of practical application, there was even less reason to treat it as a credible psychological theory. According to Stannard, this last accusation is decisive (the first three, hypothetically speaking, could be overcome by cultivating a “better” kind of psychohistory); it undermines the possibility of any cognitive value as derived from a study of the past based on depth psychology.

Psychohistorians defending themselves against the modernist attacks rejected Popper’s objection (following in the footsteps of anarchist philosophers of science) by pointing out that, in practice, it is extremely difficult to submit any complex system of claims to falsification.¹⁷⁶ They juxtaposed the psychological publications quoted by critics, which showed the experimental failures of these and other theses and analytical concepts, with others that supported opposing conclusions.¹⁷⁷ Given the theoretical chaos prevailing in psychology, both sides of the debate – while they accused each other of ignorance of the psychological literature (and employed the rhetorical strategy of “brow-beating and intimidation”)¹⁷⁸ – could relatively easily find works confirming both the argument

175 This accusation was formulated earlier in D. H. Fischer, *Historian’s Fallacies*, 203–206 and 226.

176 For example, P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*, 62–65. For another strategy to resist this accusation, see S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 16.

177 *Ibid.*, 13–15; P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*, 47–50. W. M. Runyan (*Life Histories*, 219–221) shows, in particular, the bias of the statement made in this regard by D. Stannard, which many authors mistakenly consider as decisive in the debate over psychohistory and psychoanalysis.

178 For more on the “blows” that Gay and Stannard exchanged, see P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*; D. Stannard, *Shrinking History*; D. Stannard, “Grand Illusions,” *Reviews in American History* 14 (1986), no. 2: 298–308.

that psychoanalysis was fundamentally non-empirical and direct (or indirect) empirical evidence to support at least some of its hypotheses and theoretical assertions. Moreover, any theory or – more appropriately – any cognitive perspective in psychology that the historian might employ could be accused of having a low level of systematization and insufficient empirical confirmation.¹⁷⁹ The allegation, which in fact implied that it was impossible to examine history's psychological dimension other than on the basis of colloquial, common sense psychology, was thus reduced to absurdity.

Therefore, psychohistorians tried to defend themselves against the growing wave of criticism, publishing polemics or counter-reviews directed at specific arguments made by their opponents. But this defense was not systematic; occasional skirmishes could not replace a more orderly refutation of charges and more complete articulation of psychohistorians' own position. Hence, the multitude of published articles and methodological treatises as revealed by analysis of William Gilmore's psychohistory bibliography, published in 1984. In the period 1920–1980, there were about 1,700 concrete psychohistorical works published, along with over 400 methodological and polemical works, the vast majority of which appeared after 1970!¹⁸⁰ Almost every author in psychohistory at the time (E. H. Erikson, B. Mazlish, P. Loewenberg, Thomas A. Kohut, F. Weinstein, Charles Strozier, S. Friedländer, R. J. Lifton, P. Gay, G. M. Kren, R. Binion, L. deMause¹⁸¹) felt the duty to defend the field's existence. Representatives of a stabilized paradigm normally do not have to worry about its

179 T. H. Anderson, "Becoming Sane With Psychohistory," *The Historian* 41 (1978), no. 1: 5.

180 W. J. Gilmore, *Psychohistorical Inquiry*. See statistical analysis of the psychohistorical literature in W. M. Runyan, "A Historical and Conceptual Background."

181 See, among others, E. H. Erikson, "In Search of Gandhi: On the Nature of Psychohistorical Evidence," in *Explorations in Psychohistory*, 42–77; B. Mazlish, "Psychohistorical Approach," in B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon*, 149–170; B. Mazlish, "Psychoanalytic Theory;" P. Loewenberg, "Why Psychoanalysis Needs the Social Scientist and the Historian," in *Psycho/History*, 30–44; P. Loewenberg, "Historical Method, the Subjectivity of the Researcher and Psychohistory," *PR* 14 (1985), no. 1: 30–35; Th. A. Kohut, "Psychohistory as History;" F. Weinstein, G. Platt, "The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory;" Ch. Strozier, "Disciplined Subjectivity and the Psychohistorian: A Critical Look at the Work of Erik H. Erikson," *PR* 5 (1976), no. 3: 28–31; S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*; R. J. Lifton, "On Psychohistory;" G. Kren, "Psychohistory in the University;" R. Binion, "Doing Psychohistory;" L. deMause, "The Independence of Psychohistory." Naturally, this list is just a set of examples; for more, see J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 49–82.

legitimacy or return again and again to consider its basic theoretical outlines, and there is usually no need to “repel” attacks with the argument that critics are biased or that they point only to examples of “bad” psychohistorical scholarship. But the fact is that in the 1970s and 1980s, even though psychohistory had achieved many formal features of scientific “maturity” (communication channels in the form of psychohistorical journals and bulletins, the existence of “model” characters and works, relatively adequate access to university programs in psychohistory, even at the doctoral level), the field had not been able to achieve the status of a “normal science,” and its supporters had not been able to formulate unambiguous criteria for scientific exactness within the discipline.

Following this dispute, it is hard to resist the impression that psychohistory found itself in a situation in which it was the “unwanted child” of a distressed Clio. Which is why psychohistory was accused and criticized, and why the paradigm’s theoretical basis and its research practices were put into question at every turn. It is remarkable that these accusations were often in complete contradiction with each other. Psychohistorians were accused of being mechanistic determinists, but at the same time they were accused of using multiple determinants when explaining mental phenomena. They were accused of “forcibly” introducing theory into history, and at the same time were criticized for a lack of adequate theoretical background in psychohistorical investigations. They were condemned for their tendency to explain the psychological dimension of the past, but were at the same time accused of having a predilection for “labeling” the characters under investigation. Critics argued that psychohistorians do not follow proper historical procedures to justify claims, but they also argued that psychohistory does not have empirical evidence susceptible to such justification. One psychohistorian, commenting on this remarkable phenomenon, noted that psychohistory became a kind of “lightning rod” for the historical profession onto which historians project a fundamental sense of uncertainty regarding history’s condition and methodological qualities.¹⁸² Indeed, it has often been pointed out that many of these accusations apply equally to historical scholarship more broadly, or to its significant and long-established offshoots. Such a situation developed no doubt as a feature of that moment in academic history when the psychohistorical paradigm was being established. After all, history was in the midst of fundamental reconstruction – the transition from classical history to the new, diverse and modernist

182 “A lightning rod, able to absorb some of the historical profession’s uncertainty about itself.” Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 337.

(“scientific”) history. Over the course of such change, psychohistory – combining the methodological characteristics of the new and traditional histories – found itself “under fire” from both sides. Attempts to meet the requirements of one side intensified criticism from the other. Although criticism could have positive effects (giving psychohistorians an opportunity to fine-tune their own methodological assumptions), its strength and intensity were serious and did not lend themselves to stability within the field of psychohistory. Repeated attacks perpetuated the conviction – among both historians of various stripes and university administrators – that psychohistory was not a serious cognitive undertaking, a fact that did nothing to help “reproduce” members of the psychohistorical community within the historical milieu; one can imagine that new historians, even if they were sympathetic to the psychohistorical approach, would want to choose another specialization, one that was less controversial and more promising, especially when they were considering their prospects for a career in the academic world.

This criticism had a particularly significant impact on the process which I would describe as the secondary disintegration and fragmentation of the psychohistorical community. Forced to fight on two fronts, psychohistorians, instead of resolving methodological differences within the community, were clearly unable to overcome internal divisions. Indeed, those divisions were exacerbated. The most basic “split” began to appear as early as the mid-1970s, when a significant number of scholars (especially those who were less associated with academic history – that is, who were close to the IPA and *The Journal of Psychohistory*) began to disassociate themselves from the historical profession as a university discipline. Following Lloyd deMause’s lead, they formulated a psychohistory program that was completely independent, an interdisciplinary field of research into human motivation that referred to psychoanalytic concepts but to anthropological, sociological, and historical ones as well. Though this remains an issue of some controversy even among themselves, these psychohistorians understood their discipline as one that respects the methodological standards of the social and natural sciences rather than the humanities (testing hypotheses, formulating general laws that give predictive options for human behavior in the future, for leaders’ decisions, etc.).¹⁸³

183 See note 15. Daniel Dervin described this division differently: “Insofar as distinct psychohistorical schools can be distinguished, most of the above would be considered traditionally modern or humanist, except for Lloyd deMause’s circle, which are radically (but not self-consciously) postmodern in their decentering and destabilizing the subject.” See D. Dervin, *Enactments*, p. 8 and endnote 21 (which includes

The rest of the psychohistorical community maintained its ties to the historical profession, deciding to battle for survival among academic historians. But significant divisions remained among those psychohistorians who took up that battle, and generally speaking there were two dimensions of differentiation.

The first line involved the question of one's relationship with the aforementioned debate between "traditionalists" and "scientific" historians (modernists). Some authors interpreted the evolutionary, narrative, and hermeneutic aspects of psychoanalytic theory and therapeutic practice as being essentially close to historical research practices conceived more or less traditionally.¹⁸⁴ Others emphasized the "scientific" properties of psychoanalysis which, in their opinion, assisted psychohistory – much like social and economic theories assisted social and economic historians respectively (i.e. by providing the basis for conceptualizing the research subject, raising research questions and hypotheses that could be tested, and providing explanatory schemas). In other words, they opted for psychohistory as part of the "new" history.

The second line concerned the problem of psychoanalysis itself. For many critics of psychohistory, what was unacceptable was not so much the idea of psychohistory (as a discipline / specialization / approach directly focused on exploring past human motivation), but rather that it was supposed to be founded on theoretical and conceptual bases borrowed from depth psychology.¹⁸⁵ It is thus no wonder that certain psychohistorians emerged who tried to break psychohistory from psychoanalysis, their goal being to construct a psychohistory that would refer to other psychological theories (perspectives), ideally those derived from academic psychology. Numerous scholars (only some of whom were previously involved in psychohistorical research) formulated specific suggestions and theoretical arguments in this regard. However, compared to the intensity of theoretical debates, relatively few historical studies of this kind have come to fruition – in any case those that "feel" connected to psychohistory.¹⁸⁶

the author's discussion of the methodological virtues of the various "schools"). In light of deMause's methodological ideals previously indicated, this position seems difficult to maintain.

184 Peter Loewenberg wrote: "Psychohistory is a *historical* science concerned with origins and developments, thus providing genetic, adaptational narrative historical explanations." See P. Loewenberg, *Decoding*, x, emphasis in original.

185 D. H. Fischer, *Historian's Fallacies*, 213–215.

186 See, for example, R. MacGlone, "New Orthodoxy in Psychohistory," *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 4 (1974), no. 2: 4–9; T. L. Brink, "History and Depth Psychology. Some Reconsiderations," *The Historian* 41 (1978): 738–753; T. H. Anderson, "Becoming Sane with Psychohistory;" W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 222–230; W. M. Runyan,

Also, those psychohistorians who took the first position – that is, who continued to base their work on psychoanalytic inspirations – remained diverse due to the attitude they took toward psychoanalysis. The first and somewhat natural reaction was to maintain the existing methodological patterns of the psychohistorical research model and to proceed as carefully as possible, the goal being to minimize the danger of criticism directed at the field’s psychoanalytic theoretical foundations. The result of this reaction involved less factual and more “sophisticated” attempts to concretize psychoanalytic ideas in the sphere of past human actions.¹⁸⁷ The essence of the second position was an attempt to review psychohistory’s current theoretical and methodological assumptions in such a way that – while maintaining its essential relationship with the psychoanalytic cognitive perspective – would take into account the fact that psychoanalytic theory is not sufficient for the full consideration of mass phenomena and human activities, which are, after all, the historian’s basic areas of interest.¹⁸⁸ Representatives of this position also sought a theoretical justification for abandoning references to childhood experiences, which are usually considered basic to the psychoanalytic approach.¹⁸⁹ From this point of view, the last position to be noted is one that rejected psychoanalytical patterns of reasoning but retained at least some of the most important concepts and categories of depth psychology (e.g., unconsciousness, repetition compulsion, transference, displacement), which were to be used in a more intuitive and metaphorical way than psychoanalysts had usually allowed. In the opinion of advocates of this

“Reconceptualizing the Relations Between History and Psychology,” in *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, 247–295; G. Stokes, “Cognition and the Function of Nationalism,” *JIH* 4 (1974), no. 4: 525–542. A special issue of *Psychohistory Review* also appeared that was devoted to this matter (1979, vol. 7, no. 3).

- 187 It seems to me that this was the most typical attitude of psychohistorians working in the historical profession on American universities. The manifesto for this attitude is Peter Gay’s *Freud for Historians*. As shown by the rather friendly reaction by historians to the 5-volume *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, which Gay published in 1984–1998, such an attitude is perhaps an effective “survival strategy.”
- 188 As Weinstein and Platt recognized in the early 1970s, psychohistory “must be mediated by a sociological frame of reference before it can be applied to history on any level other than biography.” See F. Weinstein and G. Platt, “History and Theory,” 419.
- 189 See F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory,” F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, *Psychoanalytic Sociology*; R. Schoenwald, “Using Psychology in History.” For more on these endeavors, see W. M. Runyan, “Reconceptualizing the Relationships Between History and Psychology.”

solution, such a move frees psychohistory from rigid psychoanalytic schemes of explanation and, at the same time, allows scholars to maintain the kind of significant insight into human motives offered by the cognitive perspective initiated by Sigmund Freud.¹⁹⁰

Psychohistory's Identity Crisis

The above-described state of affairs suggests that psychohistory has had problems maintaining itself as a stable historical perspective and historiographic paradigm. Its supporters' far-reaching methodological diversity shows that despite several decades of development and maturation within psychohistory, psychohistorians in fact remain uncertain about their identity as historians. Recalling the terminology of E. H. Erikson, we can say that in many respects the psychohistory of the 1980s was like a person who is unable to solve his identity crisis and achieve the level of psychological stability appropriate to adulthood.¹⁹¹ Considering all of the following – the extent to which different groups within psychohistory have been separated from (and even hostile toward) one another; the existence of different theoretical options; separate organizational structures; separate communication channels; and different ways of recruiting followers¹⁹² – we might ask ourselves whether psychohistory at present can still be described as a separate and relatively expressive research field. As Bruce Mazlish once remarked with regret – although psychohistory's basic theses and research findings gained access to the “historical mainstream,” the specialization itself was not in good shape and there was no hope for improvement.¹⁹³

190 Rudolph Binion remained an advocate of psychohistory understood in this way his entire life. See R. Binion, “Doing Psychohistory;” B. Lentz, “The Courage of Rudolph Binion,” *Clio's Psyche* (Special Student Edition 1995–1996), 11–14 (interview with R. Binion).

191 E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), in particular pp. 261–263; E. H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), part IV; E. H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), 108–175.

192 Of course, one cannot fail to notice the ongoing initiatives aimed at overcoming all of these divisions, in particular the above-mentioned activity of the “Psychohistory Forum” in New York directed by Paul Elovitz. Editors of the forum's quarterly, *Clio's Psyche*, eagerly publish work produced by representatives of conflicting psychohistorical groups – in any case, those who advocate on behalf of the relationship between psychohistory and depth psychology.

193 T. Pawelec, “Bruce Mazlish,” 80. We find an even more pessimistic view in F. Weinstein, “Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences,” *History and Theory* 34 (1995), no. 4: 299–319. Weinstein recognized the failure of psychohistory as an

Quite apart from psychohistory's above-mentioned internal problems, one also gets the impression that in the 1980s and especially the 1990s, historians turned their attention in other historiographic directions. In this period, post-modernist tendencies profoundly influenced historical scholarship, and the linguistic turn brought increased interest in the narrative and literary aspects of writing history. Historians "opened themselves up" in particular to inspirations from cultural anthropology, and studies in microhistory and everyday life flourished. The historian's attention was no longer drawn by experiments in depth psychology but by those focused on the limits of historical representation (for example, Simon Schama's *Dead Certainties*). The demands of multiculturalism and the directive to write the histories of neglected groups bore fruit in works on the family, women and ethnic or cultural minorities (e.g. African-Americans in the USA). In the postmodernist era, blurred lines between disciplines favored the development of new interdisciplinary approaches on the margins of history, such as historical sociology, ethnohistory, or history conducted within the framework of gender studies.¹⁹⁴ From the panoramas and syntheses published around the turn of the century in which attempts were made to capture the changes currently taking place in historical writing, psychohistory largely disappeared or was marginalized.¹⁹⁵ We can treat the above-mentioned closure

element of a more general phenomenon – the failure of the modernist (scientific) model of practicing the social sciences, which in his opinion has been clearly visible at least since the end of the 1980s. See also F. Weinstein, *History and Theory After the Fall: An Essay on Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

194 See, for example, J. Appleby, L. Hunt, M. Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York-London: W. W. Norton, 1994), 198–309; *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. P. Burke (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); E. Domańska, *Mikrohistorie. Spotkania w międzyświatach* (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 1999); eadem, *Encounters: Philosophy of History after Postmodernism* (Charlottesville-London: University Press of Virginia, 1997); *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings*, eds. B. Fay, P. Pomper, R. T. Vann (Oxford-Malden: Blackwell, 1998); G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 97–147; *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. K. Jenkins (London-New York: Routledge, 1997); A. Radomski, *Kultura-Tekst-Historiografia*, 13–73, 225–258; J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze i rozumie historię? Tajemnice narracji historycznej* (Warszawa: Rytm, 1996); J. Topolski, *Od Achillea do Béatrice de Planissolles*, chapter VIII.

195 A global review of the current state of the art in history in the year 2002 does not mention psychohistory even in the index. See *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in Global Perspective*, eds. E. Fuchs, B. Stuchtey (Lanham-Boulder-New York-Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). There is also no psychohistory entry in the *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writings* edited by Kelly Boyd,

of the *Psychohistory Review*, which had been addressed to professional historians, as further proof that psychohistorical scholarship was being marginalized in “Clio’s garden.” Paradoxically, this development had not come about because the influence of psychoanalysis on contemporary humanities had ended. One could indeed argue quite the opposite. A kind of “ecumenical” atmosphere within the postmodern breakthrough favored the maintenance of interest at the turn of the millennium in analytical thought within social theory, feminist studies, literary studies, linguistics, etc., including the ideas of Jacques Lacan and at least some of the ideas that emerged from Freudian metapsychology.¹⁹⁶

though almost all other kinds of new history are mentioned; to the extent that psychohistory is mentioned at all, it is due to the biographic entries on Erik H. Erikson and Peter Gay; the biographic entry on Sigmund Freud makes no mention of psychohistory! *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writings*. Ed. K. Boyd (London-Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999), vol. 1, 362–363, 417–418, 440–441. The authoritative *Companion to Historiography* from 1997 edited by Michael Bentley also saw no need to reserve space for psychohistory, though it did so for many other unorthodox currents in historical scholarship in the USA and other Western countries; see *A Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London-New York: Routledge, 1997). The situation is a bit better in the alternative *Companion to Western Historical Thought* edited by Stanley Kramer and Sarah Maza from the year 2002. The chapter there on psychohistory, though written by a scholar familiar with the field, is superficial, around half of which is devoted to neuroscience! See L. Hunt, “Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Historical Thought,” in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, eds. L. S. Kramer, S. C. Maza (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 237–256. The case is similar with Peter Burke’s popular work entitled *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992). Under the term “psychology,” some earlier achievements in this regard (Erikson, Waite, Wolfenstein) are mentioned. Among the more recent authors, Burke mentions only Peter Gay. The psychohistorical content is actually an addition to the discussion of the psychological interests of the “Annales” scholars and the psychoanalysis used by older generation anthropologists (for example G. Devereux). *Ibid.*, 114–118. A somewhat odd example here is the reader covering 20th-century historical trends entitled *The Houses of History*. The relatively competent (though strongly critical) introduction to the field’s developments included there is accompanied – as an empirical illustration of its accomplishments – by the “antediluvian” fragment from Erikson’s *Childhood and Society*, originally written in the late 1940s, as if the editors of this volume could find no more recent work in psychohistory to include. See *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*, eds. A. Green, K. Troup (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 59–86.

196 See, for example, E. Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (London-New York: Routledge, 1990); K. Kearns, *Psychoanalysis, Historiography and*

This state of affairs has persisted ever since, though it has done so practically independently of the current psychohistorical approach, which does not seem to have benefitted especially from the new interest in psychoanalysis, which was still “very much alive as the twenty-first century approached.”¹⁹⁷

Referring to his optimistic report from 1977 after about a dozen years had passed, G. M. Kren noted (in 1990) that the psychohistorical wave at universities had passed, and a course of study in psychohistory was able to attract very few students. The number of such courses had dropped dramatically, as had interdisciplinary seminars for professional historians and representatives of the social sciences.¹⁹⁸ For some historians, psychohistory turned out to be only a “transient” stage in a professional career.¹⁹⁹

Feminist Theory: The Search for Critical Method (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See also *Nieświadomość jako kategoria filozoficzna*, eds. A. Motycka, W. Wrzosek (Warszawa: Wyd. IFiS PAN, 2000), particularly chapters 5, 6, and 7. We continue to find Freudian categories used in certain historical works, particularly those that fall under the rubric of New Cultural History: L. Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London-New York: Routledge, 1994). Psychohistorians often show a desire to “appropriate” such works. See, for example, L. Shiner [review of L. Hunt, *The Family Romance*], *PR* 23 (1994), no. 1: 85–89; see also the term “closet psychohistorian,” which Charles Strozier and D. Offer used while writing about psychohistorical motifs in contemporary historical scholarship, apparently not searching out the opinion of the authors themselves, who in no way show a sense of connection with psychohistory.

197 *Psychoanalysis and Culture at the Millennium*, eds. N. Ginsburg, R. Ginsburg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

198 G. M. Kren, “Psychohistory Today,” *The Journal of Psychohistory* 17 (1990), no. 4: 386–388. Kren wrote from the perspective of a psychohistorian lecturing at one of the higher-ranked universities (the University of Kansas). At community colleges, the situation sometimes looked better, but these are the lowest-ranked institutions in the American higher education system. This view was not shared by J. Szaluta. At the beginning of twenty-first century, he admitted that “psychohistory still has to struggle with becoming established in higher education,” but he claimed that the number of courses in this field was still increasing. J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 13.

199 This applies even to those who have made important contributions to the development of psychohistorical research, including Cushing Strout, Saul Friedländer and Frederick Crews.

Recapitulation

The above review of the history and development of psychohistory was intended to help answer the question of whether psychohistory took shape as a separate historiographic paradigm. Many of the observations and findings formulated here would lead us to come down in favor of such a conclusion. Historians generally have viewed psychohistory as a distinct community, whose members set their theoretical foundations on psychoanalysis; indeed, psychohistorians themselves seem to have shared this belief, thus manifesting a sense of the distinctive nature of their cognitive endeavor. Presentation of the subsequent stages of psychohistory's development revealed growth and expansion, especially in terms of the number of published works, the scale of interest raised within the history circles, and the processes by which the field was institutionalized. However, at some point, a relatively homogeneous research field split into two separate branches, each of which was based on their own organizational structures, journals, and publishing houses. Over time, the gap between the two branches grew. Researchers grouped around one of them increasingly loosened their relationships with academic history, and in the end, they broke off relations almost entirely. Thus, the division between the two branches led to a situation in which, instead of "standing on its own feet" as one of many equal research areas in contemporary historical scholarship, psychohistory began to disintegrate into separate components, all of which took place just as historians were directing their interests elsewhere.

* * *

In the end, looking back from the second decade of the twenty-first century, we must admit that, in a sense, the expectations of the most ardent critics of the psychohistorical enterprise have come true; the "plague" failed to take root in the historiography mainstream. Psychohistory is a research field still practiced today,²⁰⁰ but it is in fact practiced "on the margins" of the historical profession.

200 At this point, it is worth emphasizing once again the role played in psychohistory's survival by *Clio's Psyche* and its editor Paul Elovitz. What draws our attention here is a broad range of measures, consistently undertaken over the past dozen or so years, directed not only at the "reconstruction of bridges" between the field's conflicting branches (as I have already mentioned), but also at deepening the methodological self-awareness of all psychohistory practitioners and at its second "unification." Here, the most important thing seems to be – as implemented by editors with a deeper "sense" (or recognition) of the basic mechanisms of reproduction within a scientific community – a program to generate and disseminate among active researchers the methodological experience of psychohistory and the intentional

Viewed from the perspective of academic history and the social sciences, and as viewed – significantly – from within the general context of depth psychology and its uses in the contemporary humanities, psychohistory (as a field of study) is a niche.

construction among them of a sense of identity/belonging. Especially *Clio's Psyche* uses interviews with prominent representatives of the field (almost a hundred have appeared), conducted along the lines of a special questionnaire focused on fundamental methodological problems and on how to function in a not always friendly academic environment. It has also used texts of these interviews as part of the quarterly's special "readers." Much of that content is available on the Association's website, along with other materials dealing with instruction in psychohistory, including ready-made syllabuses (see www.cliospsyche.org/interviews [accessed 6 August 2020] and www.cliospsyche.org/teaching [accessed 6 August 2020]). On Elovitz's intention to integrate psychohistory and ensure that the community of psychohistorians persists in the face of hostility or indifference within university circles, see J. Ihanus, "Paul Elovitz on the Past, Present, and Future of 'Clio's Psyche,'" *Clio's Psyche* 22 (2015), no. 3: 180–195.

PART II METHODOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN PSYCHOHISTORY

Psychohistory's Methodological Discourse and its Functions

In the previous Part, I pointed out psychohistory's abundant "publication production" in the field of theory and methodology. I indicated how this production came as a result of the fact that psychohistory had not been warmly received by those in academic history. Numerous theoretical publications served to defend psychohistory against its critics; psychohistorians used them as a weapon in the struggle for recognition and acceptance within the community of professional historians. Here, I intend to look at these publications from a different angle: as material that allows us to gain systematic insight into the content that makes up psychohistorians' collective methodological consciousness. After all, each paradigm of historical research, in addition to knowledge (a narrative) about the past, also "produces" a methodological discourse, one which is an expression of the process by which the assumptions guiding the practice of a given research community are recognized and verbalized. This process is carried out thanks to the efforts of the community's individual representatives, who – based on a kind of "self-observation" – formulate statements about what rules are to be followed in their research and what values should be realized (and how).

This discourse is by no means only a "by-product" of the practice of academic research. It plays an important role in the "reproduction" of a given perspective or paradigmatic community. After all, for a discipline to survive, it is necessary for an academic community to constantly educate and "train" new followers who successively replace the generation of old masters. In the course of this kind of academic "socialization," education and training must be carried out in order to build respect for the methodological rules and values characteristic of the group. Such a process is served by, among other things, a methodological discourse developed within the community through which previously accumulated "methodological experience" can be communicated to younger members in the form of rules and directives on "how to be a good researcher."¹

1 I am referring here to the findings of contemporary Polish methodologists, in particular J. Pomorski. See J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, particularly chapter 2; J. Pomorski, *Historyk i metodologia*, 9–23.

Therefore functional requirements for the maintenance of a certain group of researchers as a community – one with shared guiding assumptions – cause individual and somewhat accidental manifestations of these rules (through the above-mentioned “self-observation” of one’s own research practice carried out “incidentally”) to be transformed – over the course of a given paradigm’s development – into increasingly conscious efforts to systematize, reconstruct, and codify those assumptions, to remove internal contradictions, etc. One could say that this process leads to the birth of methodology as a separate field of consideration within the paradigm, at least as viewed by historians engaged therein; hence, the conclusion that methodological arguments emerging in this way should be treated in no way as “theorizing”, something detached from the needs (and the shape) of the research practice. They are an expression of the researchers’ socio-subjective “recognition” of the content of methodological consciousness.² And because the “quality” of this recognition is essential for the survival of a given community, it can be expected that it will conform significantly to the rules actually shared and respected by the community. The history of historiography documents this dependence well; as has been the case with all of the more important research perspectives in historical scholarship, we find groups of metahistorical texts written by eminent representatives that talk not so much about the past itself, but about how the past should be examined.³ These texts usually play a significant role in the training and education of novice historians.

Theoretical-methodological reflections and their results are of paramount importance to the paradigmatic community in yet another respect. Of course, competition with other research perspectives takes place above all at the level

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- 2 Many methodological rules remain, of course, “silent” and they are absorbed mainly through practical training, but if representatives were not able to adequately identify their own assumptions and communicate this knowledge to new supporters, they would not be able to maintain the paradigm.
 - 3 We find such works in traditional history (e.g., *Grundriss der Historik* by Johann Droysen; *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* by Ernst Bernheim; and *Introduction aux études historiques* by Charles Langlois and Charles Seignobos); within the “Annales” school (*Apologie pour l’histoire* by Marc Bloch; *Ecrits sur l’histoire* by Fernand Braudel; *Faire de l’histoire* by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora); New Economic History (e.g. *The New Economic History. Recent Papers on Methodology*), microhistory (*Miti emblemici: morfologia e storia* by Carlo Ginzburg), etc. They always constitute extremely valuable historiographic sources for methodologists and historiographers.

of concrete results produced by relevant research practices, i.e. the knowledge produced within them,⁴ but that competition is experienced (and *articulated*) by historians through a methodological discourse. When a given scholar – that is, a representative of a certain history research model – detects a “material” error committed by a competitor, it usually indicates that that scholar has perceived some kind of deficiency in the methodology used and respected by him/her (for example, the “inappropriate” use of source material⁵).

This issue becomes important especially when – as I suggested in relation to psychohistory – a certain research perspective has problems defining its theoretical and methodological identity, and at the same time is perceived as highly controversial. We can then talk about the methodological discourse and its two closely related but contradictory functions. On the one hand, theoretical statements – as I have already written – quite clearly become weapons of war and serve to (1) “punch” the opponent, and at the same time (2) “discipline” one’s own ranks, i.e. lend the community additional cohesion by making more explicit what we are “for” and what we are “against.”

On the other hand, it might also be the case, especially when what is involved is a community with weak internal cohesion, that the theoretical discourse produced by that community leads to deepened internal differentiation. In debates, quarrels, and controversies concerning various aspects of the community’s methodology and research assumptions, such a discourse highlights the differences in the positions represented by individual sub-groups. In such a situation, these groups are inclined to emphasize what is divisive (and therefore what is controversial and requires debate), and not what binds them within a specific set of ontological, axiological and methodological assumptions.

Thus, my reflections in this Part are not limited to the reconstruction of psychohistory’s theoretical and methodological foundation tied to its methodological discourse. They will also serve as the next stage of the discussion of a more fundamental question, namely to what extent can psychohistory, internally divided as it is, be treated as a distinctive historiographic paradigm?

It could be expected that psychohistory’s particular situation, described above, would favor a disproportionate and quantitative increase in the number of methodological texts. Naturally, it is difficult to provide a precise quantitative index that would allow us to grasp a given paradigm or research perspective’s

4 J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 47.

5 Obviously “inappropriate” from the perspective of the theoretical and methodological assumptions respected by the critic.

“state of internal disharmony” or “strong external conflict” (not to mention the scale or size of any of these phenomena). But in a situation where researchers involved in the community themselves mention an “excess” of theoretical-methodological literature, and when quantitative analysis of its academic “production” shows that such texts actually constitute a significant proportion of the total works, one that does not decrease (but rather increases) over time, it seems that such information should be treated as a serious sign indicating (1) the existence of strong opposition toward a given method for researching the past, and/or (2) the persistence of significant intra-group diversity among practicing researchers.

This is exactly the case with psychohistory; in addition to statements about an “excess” of theoretical literature relative to straight-historical publications put out by psychohistorians themselves especially in the 1970s,⁶ the results of William McKinley Runyan’s analysis in the 1980s of psychohistory’s output are telling.⁷ His findings show that in the years 1960–1969 theoretical-methodological texts (which numbered around 90) accounted for 20.5 % of psychohistorical writing. In the first half of the 1970s (that is, 1970–1974) that percentage was 17.9 (in this period there was a total of almost a hundred publications on theory and research methods). These rather significant figures should not be surprising given that – as we know – the community of psychohistorians had just been constituted, and that therefore some intensification of debate, both among psychohistorians and between psychohistorians and non-psychohistorians, is understandable. However, in the second half of the 1970s, the dynamic growth of theoretical publications clearly outpaced the growth in general of psychohistorical writing; including several bibliographies and “readers” (i.e. anthologies for essentially didactic purposes), about 190 theoretical-methodological texts were published, constituting nearly a quarter (23.6 %) of all psychohistory works published at that time. Quantitatively, this means an increase of nearly 100 % compared to the previous period.⁸ In light of the fact that this research

6 “In fact, it sometimes turns out that psychohistorians consume quite a lot of energy precisely explaining their methodologies and assumptions instead of actually writing history – and in the long run only this type of activity will actually strengthen the discipline,” as G. M. Kren wrote in his article “Psychohistory: A Progress Report,” *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 39 (1977), no. 6: 579. As indicated by his above-mentioned bibliography of psychohistory, W. J. Gilmore shares a similar belief.

7 Other conclusions made by Runyan were cited above in Part I. See W. M. Runyan, “A Historical and Conceptual Background,” 19–33.

8 In fact, the percentages given here are to be considered too low; the basic source of Runyan’s information was the bibliography of psychohistory put together by W. J.

field was supposedly in its stage of stabilization, one would rather expect a reverse tendency, namely that, having survived the initial wave of criticism and controversy, the community would focus on specific studies conducted according to rules that were relatively stable and widely respected by its members. In other words, we would expect that the stage of discussion on the paradigm's theoretical-methodological identity would have been replaced by the phase (as described by Thomas Kuhn) "normal science," during which scholars deal with "solving puzzles" – i.e. "empirical" problems established (and resolved) according to accepted principles.⁹ The above-cited data indicates that psychohistory developed differently, and I would argue that this data clearly shows that psychohistorians were not able to sufficiently agree among themselves on a set of basic norms and directives, and that they were unable to deal with the skeptical attitude many historians had toward the psychohistorical view of the past.

In any case, what all of the above means is that, when it comes to research on psychohistorical methodology, the methodologist and historiographer have at their disposal relatively extensive empirical material, which consists of texts on the ontological assumptions of psychohistorical writing, its axiological premises and social function, and on more or less specific issues tied to research strategies and their detailed methodologies. Other topics particular to this paradigm include those regarding the source base, the legitimacy of psychohistorical hypotheses and conclusions, data analysis and interpretation. One subject of debate is the relationship between psychohistory and history in general and with reference to various, sometimes competing visions of history's research practice. The same is true of the connection between psychohistory and psychoanalysis. As indicated above, scholars have often taken up these matters in the context of the allegations and doubts formulated by skeptics of psychohistory, and in relation to controversies that internally divided supporters of this research approach. The intensity of theoretical and methodological

Gilmore, which covers the subject "extensively." A large part of its contents involves works dealing with family history, life cycle etc., subjects that have little to do with "true" psychohistory, a fact that Runyan noticed. When we eliminate such works, the percentage share of methodological texts as part of psychohistorical literature as a whole increases considerably. We should add to the list a certain number of more extensive review texts with a significant theoretical "charge." I have obtained about 20 such statements from the 1970s and 1980s that came from the pen of psychohistory representatives, most of which are not recorded in bibliographies as separate works, and therefore also escaped Runyan's calculations.

9 See Th. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 78–82.

debates is also reflected in the formal structure of periodicals published by the community. From the very first issue, when it was but a type-written periodical, the *GUPH Newsletter* featured a permanent column devoted to methodological reflections. Later, in the *Psychohistory Review*, editors led discussions of major works in psychohistory, records of which were then published in the *Review*. These discussions were not only about the strengths or weaknesses of a given book, but often touched upon more important methodological problems. Strictly theoretical works were also the subject of such debate.¹⁰ Similarly, *The Journal of Psychohistory* has a regular column devoted to theoretical debates, which often appears under the title "Psychohistorians Discuss Psychohistory." It is no different in the case of *Clio's Psyche*, which often publishes long interviews with prominent psychohistorians sharing their views on important issues in psychohistory and offering insights into their own methodological experience.¹¹ Thus, it is hard to deny that a significant part of psychohistory's research energy has been concentrated in this area.

I once proposed introducing into methodological and historiographic research the concept of "methodological thought," referring to the achievements of those thinkers who have discussed more broadly methodological problems in historical research and whose theoretical reflections have had a significant "specific weight."¹² I believe that this concept can also be applied to the collective effort by psychohistorians to solve conceptual dilemmas and overcome the difficulties encountered in their attempt to creatively employ depth psychology in the study of history. Thus, it is through "methodological thought in psychohistory" that I will view concepts developed by psychohistorians on ontological, axiological and strictly methodological issues from the birth of the paradigm. I include concepts developed in response both to the developing field's internal "needs" and to those that arose in connection with the criticism and accusations directed at psychohistorians by their opponents.

10 Among the works discussed was Rudolph Binion's *Hitler Among the Germans* in *PR* 6 (1977), no. 1; David Stannard's *Shrinking History* in *PR* 9 (1980), no. 2; R. J. Lifton's *Broken Connection* in *PR* 11 (1982), no. 1; Peter Gay's *Freud for Historians* in *PR* 15 (1986), no. 1; and Fred Weinstein's "History and Theory After the Fall," *PR* 20 (1991), no. 1.

11 Their number will soon (as of the year 2017) reach a hundred.

12 T. Pawelec, *Mysł metodologiczna Marcelego Handelsmana* (Lublin: Agencja Wydawniczo-Handlowa AD, 1994), 44.

The Psychohistorical Vision of the World

The ontological perspective is always the most important in historical research. It sets the framework for the field of study; we find here fundamental metaphors that define the contours of the historian's "postulated reality."¹³ In this respect, psychohistorians with a psychoanalytical bent have generally agreed that the view of past reality is determined by the basic theses of depth psychology, and in particular that the sphere of the unconscious overshadows human thinking and action. At most, the subject of any debate could be those categories, proposed by representatives of schools or trends developing alongside one another in psychoanalytical thinking, that have been most useful for the historian in the conceptualization of history. That having been said, although psychohistorians themselves have felt little need to discuss their ontology at great length,¹⁴ it is necessary here to discuss that vision of the world and man that applies to psychoanalysis.

The psychohistorian's psychoanalytically-oriented ontology locates man in a subjective and causative position – as a creator of culture and a history maker, through whose actions he "generates" the reality in which he exists. However, he does so in a particular way, because in accordance with its assumptions this subject (at least to some extent) "is not the master of himself," the reason being, as Freud claimed, most human mental activity is unconscious and – given that the unconscious is the basic determinant of human decisions and actions – is thus beyond the control of his consciousness. Freud initially wrote about three elements of the human mind – the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious (the so-called topographic model of the psyche, proposed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900).¹⁵ Communication between these elements is blocked by "censorship," which prevents the passage of "indecent" thoughts and impulses to the consciousness. Later on, he conceived the psychic apparatus as a complex dynamic structure made up of three basic instances: the unconscious "id," which is the mental exponent of instinctual forces; the "ego," which is the carrier of our consciousness (though it also possesses unconscious components) and

13 See J. Topolski, *Rozumienie historii* (Warszawa: PIW, 1977), 37–42; J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 130 ff; W. Wrzosek, *History-Culture-Metaphor*, 28–40; J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 94; A. F. Grabski, "Problem syntezy w historii historiografii. Uwagi dyskusyjne," *Historyka* 20 (1990): 3–9.

14 An exception may be the debates on L. deMause's "psychogenic theory of history."

15 S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in *SE*, vol. 5 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), chapter 7, particularly pp. 536–541.

is, at the same time, the instance mediating between the other mental structures of the psyche and between the individual's psyche and the outside world; and the "superego," which is the internal representation of society's norms and ideals, which arise in the mind primarily due to the individual's internalization of parental requirements and prohibitions.¹⁶ Speaking in a simplified way, man is under pressure to satisfy unconscious impulses (the "pleasure principle"), which must be reconciled both with the requirements of the external world (the "reality principle") and with the conscious (or unconscious) requirements of the "superego." Attempting to depict the scope of the cognitive and adaptive functions of the "ego" (above all the actions of the subjective-rational man), the German psychoanalyst Peter Kutter used the Platonic metaphor of a horse and rider:

The image of a rider provides two possibilities: when he is able to reign over the horse he becomes (as the ego) stronger by virtue of the fact that he can dominate. Otherwise, the rider (ego) is in a position of having been overcome, he feels powerless, weak, relegated to the horse's will. In the first case ... he/she has control and can actively control the impulses flowing from the sphere of the id.¹⁷

Therefore, the area of "conflict-free" functioning within the "ego" is variable but remains always a kind of "compromise" between the dynamics of the psyche's component parts – this is why conscious and purposeful action can only be a part of the mental and motor activity of man.

As part of psychoanalytic concepts, it is assumed that the instances that come together in the individual's psyche, along with relations between those instances, take shape in an evolutionary manner under the influence of interaction between human psychophysical drives and needs and the broader impact of the social environment, starting with experiences with the first external object – the mother. During this process, certain developmental phases distinguish themselves which determine the subsequent development of the basic components of the personality structure. The type of experiences that, through the participation of the individual, emerge over the course of a given phase should imply a specific development variant of a specific component of this structure.¹⁸

16 Freud worked out the so-called structural model (the second topographical model) of the mind in the 1920s, particularly in his *The Ego and the Id*, in *SE*, vol. 19 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 12–59.

17 P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 75–76.

18 Of course, the best known are the developmental patterns postulated by Freud himself and Erikson's concept. But other prominent theorists of psychoanalysis have

In psychoanalytic thinking, particular importance is given here to negative experiences that traumatize the individual's developing personality. During the birth of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud wrote about "seduction trauma" in a literal sense, i.e. the real experience of sexual molestation, which would invariably condition future neurotic disorders in his patients (especially female patients).¹⁹ The subsequent development of depth psychology – including the evolution of Freud's views – led to the formulation of a more moderate and less unambiguous stance. Experiences that shape personality do not necessarily have to be traumatic *per se*. Sometimes they acquire such properties only under the influence of later secondary traumas. The latter lead to regression – i.e. an unconscious "return" to ways of satisfying that which is impulsive and emotional, establishing relationships, and selecting objects etc., based on those early experiences (i.e. "fixated" on them). In addition to "external" experiences, "internal" experiences connected with impulses and aspirations flowing from the unconscious, the impulsive layers of the psyche, could also play a traumatizing and anxiety-causing role.²⁰ The famous Freudian idea of the unconscious "repetition compulsion" refers precisely to this kind of situation – that is, when a given subject under the influence of real stimuli and/or some internal experiences begins, in a specific area of his activity or emotional life, to function in an inadequate manner, e.g. in the manner he acted as a child. In this sense, psychoanalysts maintain that adult behavior can be an expression of unconscious and symbolic compensation for previously experienced traumas.

Contrary to the claims of many hostile critics, this does not mean that the human personality is thoughtlessly reduced to a set of pathologies which are automatically "played out" by that personality on the stage of history. The concept of psychoanalysis as a "model ahistorical" system, a concept that has been fixed in Polish historiography (in particular by Jerzy Topolski²¹), is thus

proposed their own ideas for the phases of human development (sometimes significantly different from the one proposed by Freud) – including Margaret Mahler, Melanie Klein, Donald W. Winnicott.

- 19 See S. Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, 33–35; P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 30; H. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 487–488; R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 24; P. Gay, *Freud*, 92–96.
- 20 P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 30–32; B. Killingmo, *Psychoanalityczna metoda leczenia*, 54–56. On the subject of conflict dividing followers of psychoanalysis in the context of this issue, see J. Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives* (New York: A. Knopf), 1984.
- 21 J. Topolski, "Co to jest psychohistoria?" in J. Topolski, *Marksizm i historia* (Warszawa: PIW, 1976); J. Topolski, *Świat bez historii* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna,

in fact a parody of the psychoanalytic vision of a human being. In reality, the shape of a given individual's personality is determined by its unique "personal history," understood as special psychological dispositions inherent within that human being and as experiences (in principle culturally conditioned) which contribute to subsequent stages of that person's mental development. What's more, in relation to specific behaviors, such conditioning can have at most a framework nature, can refer only to the repetition of certain general behavioral patterns and emotional responses once developed in connection with the need to "deal with" traumas of one kind or another. In particular, this phenomenon occurs when certain new experiences are perceived (usually unconsciously) as being analogous to older traumatic experiences. Moreover, it always comes with a more or less developed (in some cases even dominant) aspect of conscious thinking and realistic action. Its presence is guaranteed by the existence in every healthy human's psyche of the "conflict-free" sphere of the ego's cognitive and adaptive functions.²²

A separate issue in the psychoanalytic ontology is the individual's relationship with the broader society and culture. Interpreters of Freud's ideas often emphasize the individualistic and, at the same time, naturalistic dimension of his ideas.²³ According to such approaches, Freud concentrated on an abstract human individual, tracing the dynamics of transformation, determined predominantly by drives, within the psyche. In fact, at least since the development of the second topographical model, Freud introduced, to a large degree, cultural phenomena into the research scope of depth psychology. Zofia Rosińska notes that Freud "also includes culture in the human being. By equipping a human with the mechanism of internalization, thanks to which it is possible to internalize often unconscious cultural content, the structure of the human psyche

1976), 150–157. For more, see T. Pawelec, "Psychoanaliza w refleksji metodologicznej historyków polskich," 115–130.

22 P. Kutter wrote: "In such a [psychoanalytic] image of a human being, the individual is not solely the object of drives, nor a creature directed by internalized norms. Man appears here rather as a personality who feels sure of himself (in the very primordial sense of the word), who can face the challenges of everyday life, and creatively, actively shape his own life." P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 88.

23 *Freud: The Biologist of Mind*, such is the title of a work by Frank Sulloway, one of the most well-known continuators of this tradition. For a broad summary of interpretations of Freudian thought, see Z. Rosińska. *Freud* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1993), 8–9 and *passim*. See also P. Dybel, *Dialog i represja. Antynomie psychoanalizy Zygmunta Freuda* (Warszawa: Wyd. IFiS, 1995), 53–58.

into the ego and superego, and the superego into energy, Freud ‘sews’ man into culture or culture into man.”²⁴

So even for the father of psychoanalysis, man became who he is thanks to the culture within which his psychological evolution proceeded. The sphere of culture seemed to him to be almost functionally necessary:

But how ungrateful, how short-sighted after all, to strive for the abolition of civilization! What would then remain would be a state of nature, and that would be far harder to bear. ... It was precisely because of these dangers with which nature threatens us that we came together and created civilization, which is also, among other things, intended to make our communal life possible. For the principle task of civilization, its actual *raison d’être*, is to defend us against nature.²⁵

However, in his social texts, Freud actually employed the same concepts and psychic mechanisms that he applied to an individual’s life, a fact that was tied to his conviction, repeated often, that the psychological evolution of every human being is a kind of “repetition” of the psychological (and cultural) process of maturation through which humanity has passed from its early beginnings.²⁶ He argued similarly when considering the mechanisms of social life. For example, he reduced the relationships that bind people into different collectives to those that are present in the dynamics of the individual’s mental processes, or in the psychological dynamics of family relations. One could say that the family and

24 Z. Rosińska, *Psychoanalityczne myślenie o sztuce* (Warszawa: PWN, 1985), 80.

25 S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* in *SE*, vol. 21 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 15. By the state of “nature,” Freud meant the hypothetical state of free expression and impulse satisfaction. The word “civilization,” as used in the above quotation, was introduced here by James Strachey as an equivalent of the German word “Kultur.” Some older English translations preferred the word “culture” here and, in my opinion, that version is more faithful to the original (not to mention the fact that it makes more sense in the context of the above reasoning). So, the proper quotation should start as “But how ungrateful, how short-sighted after all, to strive for the abolition of culture!” S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, transl. by W. D. Robson-Scott (London: L. & V. Wolff, 1928), 25; *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* (Leipzig-Wien-Zürich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1928), 22.

26 The best example here is *Totem and Taboo*. In this work, Freud talked explicitly many times about the “collective” psychology of the “savage” and the psychology of the contemporary neurotic. For instance, he wrote: “Such is our view of those whom we describe as savages and half-savages; and their mental life must have a peculiar interest for us if we are right in seeing in it a well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development.” Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, in *SE*, vol. 13 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 1.

the emotional constellations encountered within it (such as the oedipal relation connecting the child with the father) remained for Freud a conceptual basis for describing and explaining social processes in psychoanalytic terms.²⁷

The tradition of this type of reductionism strongly influenced the continued development of psychoanalysis, which is perhaps why many of the authors who spoke about the value of psychoanalytic inspirations in psychohistory did not fail to point out that, in any case, they constitute an unsatisfactory theoretical foundation for the study of collective phenomena. That having been said, within the framework of the psychoanalytic cognitive perspective, especially after the Second World War, it turned out to be possible to develop various theoretical approaches concerning psychological processes taking place on the supra-individual level in relation to both so-called small groups and to broader collectives (based in particular on the concepts of collective fantasy and so-called common themes of experience).²⁸ We also find numerous references to such approaches in psychohistory's methodological literature.

To summarize the vision of the world and man that stemmed from psychoanalysis, it must be stated that the historian has at his disposal a complex model for the individual and society. Human entities emerge (1) as determined in their actions by a realistic view of reality (i.e. they act according to their own knowledge and values), and at the same time (2) as conditioned by the psychological effects of the "sum" of their positive and negative experiences, which – as the "personal history" of the individual – have "sculpted" the individual's character in a particular way and defined the basic (not consciously controlled) patterns of relating to others. Although the latter process is based on the elementary, culturally invariant mechanisms of psychic life, the concrete result of their "work" depends on the socio-cultural context in which man experiences the world and himself.

In turn, in psychoanalytic ontology, society appears not only as a certain structure or network of social interactions, roles and behavioral patterns. It is also (or rather above all) a certain "spiritual" or mental reality. Its changes and evolution (even if it is viewed *per analogiam* to the psychological processes of the individual and the emotional relationships that characterize family life)

27 Beyond the work mentioned in the previous note, see also *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) in *SE*, vol. 18 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 69–143 and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) in *SE*, vol. 23 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 7–137.

28 See "Bion's Theory," in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, eds. B. E. Moore, B. D. Fine (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 31–32.

take place, in a sense, “over the heads” of the individuals involved. In other words, as a so-called group process it is characterized by its own separate dynamics, maintaining a largely unconscious character. Therein one can recognize the operation of many of the basic defense mechanisms described in the psychoanalytic literature.²⁹

The above comments indicate how scholars present the main subject of psychohistorical investigations. As psychohistorians themselves often say, it is simply the “study of human motivation in history,” an “investigation into why people have acted this way in history, and not another way.”³⁰ But psychohistorical inquiry into the question of why people have acted the way they did has a special character. As Loewenberg wrote, psychohistory “gives due place to the aggression, sexuality, passions, fantasy, and emotional states of the inner world of its subjects.” By following the “unconscious in human behavior,” psychohistorians orient themselves “to dynamic psychology in which the present reality interacts at all times with and is related to the personal and social past of the person in the unconscious ... Psychohistorians ... pursue visible traces of the unconscious and its defenses.”³¹ Thus, it can be said that the proper subject of psychohistory as an anthropological perspective of history is man’s experience with reality – that is, the experience had by individuals and groups, filtered through and included within the unconscious and conscious psychic processes of those individuals and groups, and at the same time understood as a significant or even basic determinant of these processes.

29 Especially projection and introjection. Regarding the ego’s defense mechanisms, see A. Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London-New York: Routledge, 1993). The concept of collective unconsciousness no doubt occupies the most important space in the analytical psychology of Carl G. Jung, who can ultimately be regarded as part of an early “branch” of the “trunk of psychoanalysis.” In this regard, see J. Jacobi, *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), particularly chapters 1 and 2.

30 See L. deMause, “The Independence of Psychohistory,” 85–86. See also themes repeated in various definitions of psychohistory gathered in *Clio’s Psyche*, Special Student Edition (1995–1996), 3–4. For a list of definitions, see “Psychohistory Forum:” www.cliospsyche.org/psychohistory#definitions (accessed 16 January 2019).

31 P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory. An Overview of the Field,” in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 15–16.

The Ideal of Psychohistorical Scholarship

For a representative of any scholarly approach, the question of how to explore a given area of research is no less important than the question of what the subject of that research should be. Every historian, at least implicitly – by referring to this or that model (ideal) for researching the past – determines what kind of history he practices.³² Often, this matter is also a significant subject of theoretical and methodological reflection, because the formulation of conclusions in this respect is highly important in the above-mentioned process of “reproducing” a particular perspective (paradigm) in historical research. It should come as no surprise that these matters were also taken up by the psychohistorical community. Analysis of the methodological thinking among psychohistorians reveals a multitude of sometimes distinctly different inspirations to which psychohistory theorists have appealed in an attempt to determine more precisely what kind of history a psychohistorian cultivates, and in what kind of history he should engage.

First of all, these inspirations are associated with the historiographic revolution that began around the middle of the 20th century. For the ideal of the historical sciences, that revolution meant that classical (traditional) history³³ collided with the scientific models tied to Clio’s “re-education,” promoted by newly emerging research trends in the field of economic and social history, etc. This development took place just as psychohistory was beginning to form as an independent, expressive perspective for researching the past, a fact which forced psychohistorians to take a stand in this historiographic dispute.

Another fact that turned out to be highly important was that psychohistory, in theoretical and methodological terms, remained based on psychoanalytical thinking that pulled in two opposite directions. On the one hand, the spirit of Sigmund Freud – a classical scientist in the sense of nineteenth-century positivism – has continued to “hover over” psychoanalysis and, on the other hand, psychoanalysis has had an unavoidable hermeneutic-critical component that refers to different cognitive standards and philosophical traditions.

Another important point here is the therapeutic function of psychoanalysis. The fact that psychoanalytic insights serve not only a “getting to know” function, but also (or rather, above all) a “treatment” function, contributed a particular

32 For more on this ideal, see J. Pomorski, “Spór o ideał badania historycznego w metodologii historii,” in J. Pomorski, *Historyk i metodologia*, 53–77 (particularly pp. 53–55).

33 Thus, the heir and continuator – albeit not without gradual but significant modifications – of the event history (*histoire événementielle*) model.

“tone” to the ideal of psychohistorical scholarship, one which favored the perception of psychohistory not as a “value free” and “neutral” cognitive undertaking, but as “socially engaged research” which – while “getting to know” – also aims to remove or alleviate the maladies of human life.

Finally, the interdisciplinary character of the psychohistorical venture also turned out to be significant. Scholars, “approaching the topic from various directions,” brought with them visions of research that characterize the disciplines or specializations from which they originated.

Between Tradition and Modernism in Historical Scholarship

No doubt, what was most important in the formation of the ideal of psychohistorical scholarship was the fact that psychohistory made an attempt to “settle” into history precisely when the historiographic revolution was gaining speed. The fundamental result of this revolution involved the transfer of the conceptual achievements of social sciences and their methodological models (themselves based on those of the natural sciences) into the study of history.³⁴ Psychohistorians in the 1960s and 1970s had a sense that they were part of this great current of renewal and reform. They shared the beliefs of those who were working to bring into the scope of historical research theories that characterized such disciplines as economics, sociology or cultural anthropology, whose followers were trying to establish a “scientific” foundation for what had been a predominantly narrative, idiographic and event-driven, traditional history. They emphasized that they were opening up a new field of the human psyche for historical investigations in a manner similar to how economic theory or social theory had opened up new opportunities for historians to study economic or social phenomena in history.

Thus, in the field of psychohistory, at the heart of this “scientific” foundation was the application of psychological theory – in particular, psychoanalytic theories. As Bruce Mazlish wrote in the context of his study of Richard Nixon, psychoanalysis:

claims to have a scientific system of concepts, based on clinical data. This claim I accept. ... Such a conceptualized system offers advantages unavailable to poetic

34 For more on this process, see G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*; E. Breisach, *Historiography*, 323–394; D. Kelley, *Frontiers of History. Historical Inquiry in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 2006); G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*; A.F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*; J. Topolski, *Od Achillesa do Béatrice de Planissolles*.

intuition. Intuition may result in flashes of insight into a character such as Nixon's. But it cannot steadily and constantly provide us with questions to raise about him (or any other such subject). ... The psychoanalytic system of concepts also allows for certain kinds of verification denied to mere intuition ... In addition, psychoanalysis allows us to relate our insights ... and especially important, to relate them dynamically, that is, as describing an ongoing process rather than merely serving as a classification. ... All of this is possible because of the systemized, scientific nature of Freudian psychoanalysis, as it leads to psychohistory.³⁵

In psychohistory's methodological thinking, scholars have emphasized that such a procedure is consistent with current trends both in history and in the broader sphere of the humanities. A psychohistorian, consciously choosing a theory that he considers to be the most comprehensive model for the functioning of the human psyche, proceeds (within his problem area) exactly like any other "new" (or "modern") historian seeking conceptual bases and a more unambiguous reference system for the systematic analysis and interpretation of empirical data. This would allow the formulation of cognitive, explanatory statements about the past instead of the narrative presentation of past events.

However, the ideal that characterized scientific "new history" was still much different from the search for human motivation based on depth psychology; while the former took part in the triumphal progress of quantitative method and established mass phenomena (i.e. 'objective' quantifiable phenomena) as a proper subject of investigation, psychohistorians were busying themselves with the 'esoteric' subject of the human psyche. As the "new" historians were shifting the focus of history's interest to "objective" economic and social processes, psychohistorians remained focused on the more traditional matters of meaning and values. This situation was determined by the particular, individualizing properties of the psychoanalytic explanation: "Freud often compares psychoanalysis to archeology. Both disciplines are doomed to uncertainties tied to their research methods. The psyche and its history are similar to the history of an ancient city. A psychoanalyst, like an archaeologist, attempts to recreate the original shape of the whole by using traces, vestiges and signs, by interpreting

35 B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon*, 154–155. See also P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*, 42–77. For statements by P. Loewenberg attempting to show that psychoanalysis, understood as a research perspective in psychology, is compatible with the description of the scientific paradigm as understood by Thomas Kuhn, see P. Loewenberg, "Why Psychoanalysis Needs the Social Scientist and the Historian," in *Psycho/History: Readings in the Method of Psychology*, particularly pp. 32–35.

them, by reading their meaning and reconstructing other elements,”³⁶ In this context, Mazlish noted that:

Psychohistory, in short, cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas or simple lawlike statements, as the physical sciences can. ... Thus, the whole gives meaning to the parts, just as the parts can be understood only in terms of the whole. ... In relying on what I am calling “density” (which is, it must be added immediately, not mere agglomeration of data but their accumulation in definite configuration) rather than on isolated and lawlike statements, psychoanalysis is much akin to history and its forms of explanations.³⁷

What reveals here is an ambiguity within the psychohistorian’s theoretical reflection; while psychohistorians feel a strong affinity for reformers within historical scholarship, they persist in following their own theoretical foundation and thus distance themselves from many of the most important postulates put forward by the “new history.” But psychohistorians did not perceive this ambiguity; they usually justified the choice of such a concept as psychoanalysis by citing its evolutionary (historical) character (as opposed to the ahistoricism of other theoretical options available in the field of psychology), along with its specific applicability with regard to the complex and ambiguous problems tied to the real human behavior that historians deal with in their research. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that some psychohistorians made efforts to present the practice and theory of psychoanalysis as resembling the practice of history traditionally conceived. They called it “a *historical* science concerned with origins and development, thus providing genetic, adaptational narrative historical explanations”³⁸ – in relation to a patient’s personal history, naturally. As Peter Loewenberg wrote:

Both history and psychoanalysis rely on the arts of interpretation and communication. Psychoanalysis clinically, and history by “immersion” in the vestiges of the past ... share the quality of placing the observer in the midst of the field he analyzes and requiring of him a special mixture of identification and detachment as a prerequisite to interpretation.³⁹

36 Z. Rosińska, *Freud*, 90.

37 B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon*, 153–154.

38 P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, xx.

39 Loewenberg, “On Psychohistory. A Statement on Method,” in Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 3–4. Such arguments refer to the long tradition of drawing comparisons between historiography and psychoanalysis, both by psychoanalysts and philosophers of history. See R. de Saussure, “Psychoanalysis and History,” in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, ed. G. Roheim, vol. 2 (New York: International Universities Press, 1950), 7–65; H. Meyerhoff, “On Psychoanalysis as History,” in *Psycho/History*,

As Loewenberg emphasizes:

Historians study past human actions, thoughts, and motives. This is also what the psychoanalyst studies in his patients. ... When dealing with issues of motivation, both disciplines are committed to the theory of overdetermination. It would be a poor historian who would maintain that a major historical event had only one cause. We must necessarily look to many levels of causation and appraise the significance of each. Freud too insisted upon the overdetermined nature of the affects, dreams and symptoms of psychic life. Thus both disciplines seek multiple explanations for single phenomena ... This distinguishes history and psychoanalysis from the social and natural sciences that seek to fit or subsume individual events under general covering laws of behavior.⁴⁰

Therefore, this “compatibility” between psychoanalysis and history was meant to justify the use of depth psychology in historical research. Thomas Kohut concluded that the psychohistorian “can remain a historian; he can continue to use traditional historical methods and, in doing so, function in a way that is fundamentally compatible with the way in which the psychoanalyst functions as a clinician.”⁴¹

What we see here is a kind of return to an “understanding” tradition as part of historical research classically conceived and tied to names like Robin Collingwood⁴² and Benedetto Croce (and in philosophy, Wilhelm Dilthey and Henri

17–29 (first published in 1962). For more on the subject of psychoanalytic theory as a path toward understanding the past, see M. Roth, *Psycho-Analysis as History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). However, this author distances himself from psychohistory as a form of implementing such a program “in practice.”

- 40 P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory. An Overview,” 16. See also P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistorical Perspectives on Modern German History,” 229–231; A. Besancon, “Psychoanalysis: Auxiliary Science or Historical Method?,” *Contemporary History* 3 (1968): 149–153; R. J. Brugger, “Introduction: The House of Many Gables,” 16–18; P. Gay: *Freud for Historians*, particularly pp. 75–76; N. L. Thompson, “Psychoanalysis and History,” in *Psychoanalysis and Humanities*, eds. L. Adams, J. Szaluta (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1996), 150–154.
- 41 Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 347. Approaching the topic with different premises and critical of the domination of psychoanalytic theories in psychohistory, Faye Crosby also came to the conclusion that psychohistorical explanations are generally a kind of historical explanation, and that good psychohistory is really just a kind of good history. F. Crosby, “Evaluating Psychohistorical Explanations,” *PR* 7 (1979), no. 4: 16.
- 42 We find direct references to his arguments in publications by, among others, Kohut and Loewenberg, particularly in “Psychohistory: A Statement on Method” in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past* (pp. 3–8). For more on this author and his *The Idea of History*, see J. Zdybel, *Filozofia Robina George’a Collingwooda* (Lublin: Wyd. UMCS, 1997).

Bergson⁴³), which vividly illustrates how psychohistorians can “deviate” from postulates stemming from the ideal of “new history.”

However, one can also point to examples of attempts by psychohistorians to more consistently adopt the methodological examples put forward by representatives of the “new” history. In April 1977, at the University of Texas in Dallas, a conference took place under the title “Quantification in History and Psychohistory” in which university historians specializing in these research areas participated. What’s more, the conference was patronized by such prominent representatives of modernist history as Charles Tilly and Richard Easterlin. In the “Introduction” to the post-conference volume of studies, editors Paul Monaco (psychohistorian) and Harvey J. Graff (a specialist in quantitative research in history) wrote, among other things:

Of the many new approaches seized by historians during the past two decades, the employment of quantitative strategies and the application of psychology to historical problems stand out. Each has contributed to the reframing of historical questions, the development of new categories of historical data, and new criteria for the evaluation and use of such source materials. Each of these approaches has, however, with very few exceptions, developed in isolation from the other, and only recently have some serious attempts to integrate them emerged.

They recognized the “necessity ... of the effort to merge the quantitative and the psychohistorical for the benefits of historical scholarship.”⁴⁴ However, as was eloquently demonstrated in the transcript of the final plenary discussion, cliometricists (more precisely, representatives of social history focused on quantification) and psychohistorians seemed to be speaking different languages. Thus, in the closing address, Paul Monaco was forced to admit:

While we have progressed in seeing that quantitative historians and psychohistorians share an interest in common questions, I believe we have not been able to reach an agreement on the nature of what sorts of evidence adequately lead to unconscious, rather than conscious, explanations of events or social processes, and to what extent such evidence is quantifiable.⁴⁵

43 We also find direct references to them in the works of Binion, Kohut, Loewenberg, Manuel and others.

44 P. Monaco, H. J. Graff, “Introduction,” in *Quantification and Psychology: Toward A “New” History*, eds. P. Monaco, H. J. Graff (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1980), 6–7.

45 *Ibid.*, chapter entitled “Toward a Restatement,” 515.

Such a meeting has never been repeated since that moment in 1977, which seems to illustrate the fundamental difficulties involved in actually reconciling the ideal of modernist historical scholarship with how psychohistorians (using psychoanalysis) imagine practicing historical research.

Of course, the situation is different for those representatives of psychohistory who preferred some other theoretical background than psychoanalysis – i.e. concepts in the field of cognitive psychology or social psychology. In statements made by such authors as Peter C. Hoffer, William McKinley Runyan and Peter N. Stearns, we have no difficulty finding affirmation of the values and research procedures characteristic of the scientific ideal of the “new” history, which should come as no surprise given that this is something programmatic borrowed from the field of academic psychology – one of those disciplines whose followers were particularly attracted to the quantitative methodology and experimental research strategies used in the sciences.⁴⁶

The internal diversity of the psychohistorical movement discussed earlier, as well as its not entirely unequivocal attitude toward academic history, made it possible for these matters to remain unresolved and open to new responses. Thus, a completely separate attempt to formulate a psychohistorical investigative ideal referring to the scientific patterns of the natural sciences was taken up by those surrounding Lloyd deMause and *The Journal of Psychohistory* – one assumption being that psychohistory as a discipline could remain conceptually and organizationally independent from academic history. In 1973, deMause wrote:

I wonder ... if psychohistory is not quite a different enterprise from history, with its own methodology, its own independent tasks, and its own standards of excellence. Ever since 1942 when the philosopher Carl Hempel published his essay “The Function of General Laws in History,” it has been recognized by most philosophers of history that history cannot be a science in any strict sense of the term and that history can never regard it as part of its task to establish laws in the Hempelian sense. ... Psychohistory, it seems to me, is on the contrary specifically concerned with establishing

46 See, for example, P. C. Hoffer, “Is Psychohistory Really History?,” *PR* 7 (1979), no. 3: 6–12; P. C. Hoffer, “Psychohistory and Empirical Group Affiliation: Extraction of Personality Traits from Historical Manuscripts,” *JIH* 9 (1978), no. 1: 131–145; W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*; W. M. Runyan, “Alternatives to Psychoanalytic Psychobiography;” W. M. Runyan, “Reconceptualizing the Relationships Between History and Psychology;” W. M. Runyan, “Progress in Psychobiography,” *Journal of Personality* 56 (1988), no. 1: 295–326; P. N. Stearns (with C. Z. Stearns), “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *AHR* 90 (1985), no. 4: 813–836.

laws and discovering causes in precisely the Hempelian manner. The relationship between history and psychohistory is parallel to the relationship between astrology and astronomy.⁴⁷

When further specifying the methodological properties of his discipline, deMause reached directly into the classic concept for cultivating the sciences presented in the works of Karl R. Popper:

As a science, psychohistory proceeds not by patient accumulation of piles of facts, but by first defining problems interesting to its own internal development, then by formulating bold hypotheses from available evidence to solve these problems, and finally attempting to test or disprove ... the hypotheses from new evidence now painstakingly acquired. ... psychohistory stands or falls on the clarity and testability of its concepts, the breadth and parsimony of its theories, the extent of its empirical evidence, and so on.⁴⁸

Although the ideal of psychohistory as a hard science promoted by L. deMause sometimes faced opposition even from among his close followers,⁴⁹ at least some of its elements found a permanent place in their methodological understanding – in particular the belief that psychohistory is “a new field [of research], independent from the traditional disciplines,” one which explores motivation in history, while concentrating on interpretation rather than narrative storytelling⁵⁰

Thus, due to the interdisciplinary character of psychohistory, and because its development came at a time when significant changes were taking place within the humanities (in particular during the revolution in history), answers to questions related to the ideal of psychohistorical scholarship prove to be complex. Advocates of psychohistory remained permanently torn between a vision of psychohistory as a scientific venture and a vision understood in terms of

47 L. deMause, “The Independence of Psychohistory,” 84–85.

48 *Ibid.*, 89–90.

49 For example P. Monaco, “Psychohistory: Independence or Integration,” *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 3 (1975), no. 1: 126–130. For more on discussions held in “radical” circles over deMause’s ideal of psychohistorical scholarship and its more specific methodological directives, see the concluding sections of Part II of this book on childhood history and group psychohistory.

50 H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, 5–6. It is difficult not to notice here a belief in the clearly inadequate formulation of cognitive goals put forward by many contemporary historians (in particular those related to historical anthropology, ethnohistory or the new cultural history), to a large extent focusing on reflections (variously defined) on man’s experience of the world in history.

traditional narrative history-writing. At the same time, different psychohistorians utilize in their work different parts (in various proportions) of these conflicting visions. Therefore, the matter of the ideal of psychohistorical scholarship is one which reflects most clearly the internal diversity of the psychohistorical community.

The Psychohistorian as “Psychotherapist”⁵¹

Accepting (respecting) a certain ideal of scholarship means not only deciding what the research process should look like. The immanent component of each investigative ideal remains the axiological component, expressed in beliefs about what overarching goals are to be realized, according to followers, by the relevant research practice.⁵² In order to complete the reconstruction of the psychohistorian’s ideal, one must ask about the values psychohistorians think are implemented through the practice of psychohistorical research, and in particular what they understand as the social function of psychohistory.

Psychohistorians belong to that group of historians who openly take up this issue, and – unlike many representatives of academic history – they often eagerly point to the non-cognitive values of their work. Most often, they express the belief that a psychohistorian is (should be?) not just a scholar/researcher, but also some kind of social psychotherapist. I have already identified the basic source of such an attitude, which is – I want to remind the reader – the tradition tied to Freud’s psychoanalysis with its focus on therapy and the removal and alleviation of neurotic ailments. It seems to me worth showing in what way the ethics of depth psychologists, both doctors and therapists, were able to penetrate this new application of the Freudian concept.

Sigmund Freud was a physician by profession and education and launched psychoanalysis after finding other existing therapies for neurotics ineffective. For all of what Freud regarded as its cognitive successes, he viewed psychoanalysis above all as a therapy – “a procedure for the medical treatment of neurotic patients.”⁵³ Theoretical constructions that Freud propounded in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which remain the core of psychoanalytic metapsychology,

51 In this passage, I make use of reflections, in a modified form, contained in T. Pawelec, “Historian as Social Psychotherapist (Ethical Assumptions of Psychohistorical Writings),” *Historyka* 34 (2004): 5–21.

52 Here I refer to the concept proposed by J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 130 ff.

53 S. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in *SE*, vol. 15 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 15.

were based mainly on comparative analyses of his numerous therapeutic cases. As Charles Strozier and D. Offer stated, Freud's consulting room was his laboratory.⁵⁴ So, to alleviate human suffering remained the main goal of Freud's everyday activity. This has also remained the central objective of psychoanalytical therapeutic practice in general. For the vast majority of analysts, their professional goal is to treat patients seeking a remedy for their mental sufferings. Cognitive research, the construction and revision of psychoanalytic theory, attracted only a few of them. Analysts viewed themselves as part of the medical profession, sharing the ethical premises appropriate to its representatives and so concisely expressed in the Hippocratic Oath. Also important was the fact that in the US since the 1920s, psychoanalysts were required to hold a medical degree, and in fact the overwhelming majority of them were graduates of medical schools.⁵⁵

And yet the medicalization of psychoanalysis has never been complete. Although Freud approached his patients (and his discoveries) as a physician-therapist, he himself did not consider psychoanalysis, especially in the later phases of his activity, only as a branch of medicine whose task was simply to treat⁵⁶ certain clearly defined disease conditions. Freud understood it rather as a kind of method of cognition and self-discovery; with the aid of an analyst, a person has the opportunity to gain deep insights into himself and the meaning of his own actions, in order to unleash creative powers and foster self-development.⁵⁷ "I did not want," Freud wrote, "to commend it to your interest as a method of treatment but on account of the truths it contains, on account of the information it gives us about what concerns human beings most of all – their own nature – and on account of the connections it discloses between the most

54 Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, "The Heroic Period of Psychohistory," *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 22.

55 See, for example, E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 287–289. I focus on the American case for two basic reasons. First, after the Second World War, it was the U.S. that became the world center of the psychoanalytic movement and set the course of its evolution. Secondly, it was there that psychohistory developed and matured; this process took place in the context of a specifically American variant of the practice and development of psychoanalysis. In Europe, its course was different.

56 In the medical sense of the word. As Freud put it: "For we do not consider it at all desirable for psycho-analysis to be swallowed up by medicine and to find its last resting-place in a text-book of psychiatry under the heading 'Methods of Treatment'." S. Freud, "The Question of Lay Analysis," 248.

57 See J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 233–234.

different of their activities.”⁵⁸ Transgressing the pragmatic framework of medicine, psychoanalysis does not necessarily (and even should not!) remain the exclusive domain of doctors. In his autobiography (1925) and in a work published shortly thereafter, *Die Frage der Laienanalyse*, Freud argued that people without medical training should have the right to practice psychoanalysis. In a famous letter to Oskar Pfister, he even confessed: “I should like to hand it over to a profession which does not yet exist, a profession of lay curers of souls who need not be doctors and should not be priests.”⁵⁹ This explains why, for the rest of his life, he opposed the appropriation of psychoanalysis by medicine on the American continent, which was a message that those who have questioned the above-mentioned restrictions,⁶⁰ and who wanted to maintain at least a modest degree of separation between medicine and psychoanalysis, regard as his legacy. An expression of this approach are cases of individuals without medical degrees who received training and were sometimes accepted by a handful of psychoanalytic institutes. In this way, clinical training and the therapeutic (or rather medical) ethics of psychoanalysis could be disseminated outside of the circle of doctors-psychotherapists.

In developing his psychoanalytic philosophy of man and culture (metapsychology) in the relatively early stages of his work on psychoanalysis, Freud found additional and important points of reference in history, anthropology and culture. By transferring psychoanalytic cognitive categories and strategies of interpretation to this area, he simultaneously referred to the therapist’s ethics hidden behind them. In his metapsychological works (which interpreters, not without reason, have called “social” in nature) he repeatedly used psychoanalytic insights to diagnose society’s deficiencies as a whole, even to design innovations of one kind or another in the sphere of culture. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud asked, among other things:

58 S. Freud, “The New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,” Lecture 34, in *SE*, vol. 22 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 156–157. See also S. Freud, “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” in *SE*, vol. 23 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 216–253.

59 Quote from R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 69. On the last page of his paper on lay analysis he wrote: “Perhaps once more an American may hit on the idea of spending a little money to get the ‘social workers’ of his country trained analytically and to turn them into a band of helpers for combating the neuroses of civilization.” S. Freud, “The Question of Lay Analysis,” 250.

60 These restrictions gradually ceased to be observed in the 1970s. See above, in Part I, the section entitled “Psychohistory in the Seminar Room.”

If the development of civilization has such a far-reaching similarity to the development of the individual ... may we not be justified in reaching the diagnosis that under the influence of cultural urges, some civilizations, or some epochs of civilization – possibly the whole of mankind – have become “neurotic”? ... As regards the therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses authority to impose such a therapy upon the group? But in spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities.⁶¹

Freud “tracked” such pathologies since the beginning of his psychoanalytic activity,⁶² which is why Reuben Fine was right when he wrote that the founder of psychoanalysis “placed his faith for the amelioration of the human lot in a universal analysis which would be offered by lay curers of souls.”⁶³

Some advocates of depth psychology have followed this direction of Freud’s thinking and developed critical studies on the pathology of contemporary culture and civilization. They constitute the most important part of “applied psychoanalysis.” Here, the therapeutic attitude characteristic of psychoanalysis is clearly visible. For example, Herbert Marcuse, accepting Freud’s belief that European culture was founded on the repression of the basic drives of man, asked: “does it allow the concept of a non-repressive civilization, based on a fundamentally different experience of being, a fundamentally different relation between man and nature and fundamentally different existential relation?”⁶⁴ Marcuse believed that it was psychoanalytic discourse which, as the foundation of critical theory, opens up theoretical space for this kind of consideration.⁶⁵

61 S. Freud, “*Civilization and Its Discontents*,” in *SE*, vol. 21 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 144.

62 See, e.g. his early studies on “cultural” sexual morality (1908) where he documented the harm caused by so-called bourgeois morality to modern Europe. Naturally, *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Future of an Illusion* remain classic examples in this respect. In his *The New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933) Freud even ventured to suggest a prophylactic analysis for children widely adopted as a kind of mental inoculation against possible future neurosis. S. Freud, *The New Introductory Lectures*, 148. See also B. Bettelheim, *Freud and Man’s Soul*.

63 R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 70.

64 H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 5.

65 “Freud’s theoretical conception itself seems to refute his consistent denial of the historical possibility of a non-repressive civilization;” *ibid*.

According to Philip Pomper, the preoccupation with an improvement (or “treatment”) of modern society typical of Marcuse and other such thinkers⁶⁶ has “inscribed” them into the long tradition of European intelligentsia that included “those members ... of the educated classes who combine advanced or vanguard ideologies with activism.”⁶⁷ In practice, this preoccupation has often led to the linking of such ideas with leftist and Marxist-like (sometimes directly Marxist) social criticism, and it is difficult to find a better example here than the writings of members of the Frankfurt School. Thus, given the fact that psychohistory referred to an intellectual tradition of this nature, we should not be surprised that certain axiological assumptions from that tradition were adopted by the psychohistorical community.⁶⁸ I have already written that some scholars have listed some of these thinkers (in particular Marcuse and Brown) as psychohistorians. Indeed, many adherents of psychohistory have clearly recognized the fact that their paradigm has remained deeply “rooted” in, as one of them put it, “contemporary therapeutic culture,” deeply imbued with ideas from depth psychology.⁶⁹

The Alleviation of Communal Ills

Psychohistorians have defined their therapeutic mission in various ways, depending on the nature of their methodological approach. At the same time, not all psychohistorians who have spoken on theoretical and methodological topics have been willing to take up this issue. A particularly important factor

66 This is more or less a reference to all those thinkers whom I mentioned in Part I when writing about the formation of applied psychoanalysis and social theory as penetrated by psychoanalysis.

67 Ph. Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*, 4. It is significant that included in this category were such luminaries of psychohistory as Erik H. Erikson and Robert J. Lifton.

68 “Thus, psychohistorians in the analytic tradition – and they are the overwhelming majority of practicing psychohistorians – have tended to think in terms of *neuroses* in human history, whether in the examination of important historical figures or groups; or, if not in terms of *neuroses*, in terms of the shifting balance of power between the id, ego, and superego and its adaptive consequences.” Ph. Pomper, “Problems of a Naturalistic Psychohistory,” *History and Theory* 12 (1973): 371.

69 See G. M. Kren, L. Rappoport, “Values, Methods and the Utility of Psychohistory,” in *Varieties of Psychohistory*, 12. See also the introductory commentary by R. J. Brugger to fragments, reprinted in his anthology, of Christopher Lasch’s “Culture of Narcissism,” *Our Selves/Our Past: Psychological Approaches to American History*, ed. R. J. Brugger (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 385–386.

here involved the question: to which of the psychohistorical factions did a particular researcher belong? In general, one may risk making the following statement: those who spoke most openly about this issue were (1) psychohistorians who were least connected to academia, along with (2) psychohistorians with a background in clinical practice. The more a given psychohistorian felt a bond with academic history, the less important was the role that this matter played in his metahistorical reflections, because – as I have already indicated – acceptance of one’s identity as a professional historian (that is, as an “objective” researcher of the past who maintains a certain distance from his subject) results in the suppression and repression (though not necessarily complete disappearance) of the “competitive” identity of the therapist/researcher who is involved not only in “getting to know,” but also in changing the psychological aspect of reality for the benefit of people alive today and of future generations.

Therefore, the idea that psychohistory should have a therapeutic function has been most broadly and emphatically formulated in the methodological thinking of the “radical” psychohistorians – i.e. those grouped around *The Journal of Psychohistory* and the IPA. The radicals’ leader, Lloyd deMause, has constantly emphasized that “psychohistory is a science in a hurry, racing against man’s spiraling ability to destroy himself.”⁷⁰ Given the degree of human irrationality, the scale of the aggression and destructiveness of man which permeates past events, along with what is happening before our very eyes, psychohistory as a new science should be – deMause claims – no less than an “extension of psychotherapy.” It should be used, for example, to examine contemporary political leaders (in order to isolate possible threats resulting from the pathological aspects of their personalities), to construct family types prevalent in society (with a view toward determining the types of behaviors – especially in the political sphere – that result from childhood experiences in different kinds of families), and to analyze significant events of political life as a kind of (unconscious) group process and the dynamics of the unconscious, irrational group fantasy.⁷¹ Many of deMause’s followers find here the essence of the profession (“our role is in many respects like that of a physician”⁷²), and the socio-subjective reason

70 L. deMause, “Foreword” to *The New Psychohistory*, ed. L. deMause (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1975), 5.

71 L. deMause, “Psychohistory and Psychotherapy,” in *The New Psychohistory*, 307–313. See also D. Beisel, “From History to Psychohistory: A Personal Journey,” *The Journal of Psychohistory* [cited hereafter as *JPH*] 6 (1978), no. 1: 25–26.

72 K. A. Adams, “‘The Next, Next Assignment’ and the Wounded Healer,” *JPH* 17 (1990), no. 4: 367.

for its practice. As S. Rosenman and I. Handelsman emphasized, “the countertransference fantasy of yearning to rehabilitate society ... is a major dynamism recruiting scholars to psychohistory and pushing them to strenuous efforts.”⁷³ We find here an explanation for the fact that such a significant percentage of IPA members are social workers, physicians, and psychotherapists involved in various government and social programs to help families, victims of crime, violence and hatred, etc., and lead private practices in this area as well. For many of them, psychohistory seems not so much a new field of study as a more radical embodiment of applied psychoanalysis – a discipline in which insights into the dynamics of social life, founded on depth psychology, are directly connected to the practical action of eradicating evils present in modern society (violence, hatred, intolerance) along with their “roots” – oppressive practices used in raising children. For them, these issues are part of an agenda.⁷⁴ As one “radical” psychohistorian rightly put it, “we approach our subject as therapists, thinking clinically and imagining that our efforts will have a therapeutic effect on man and society.”⁷⁵

A review of the content of subsequent issues of *The Journal of Psychohistory* shows that the vast majority of activities carried out by deMause’s associates have been focused on the implementation of this program.⁷⁶ Historical studies published there (that is, aimed at researching and explaining human motivation in the past) are clearly outnumbered by studies:

1. Documenting the abuse and sexual harassment of infants and children both in the distant past and in recent times; an extension of these are inquiries

73 S. Rosenman, I. Handelsman, “Psychohistorians Commissioned by Groups Deformed by Catastrophes: Comments on the Field of Psychohistory,” *JPH* 17 (1990), no. 4: 370. For another instructive example, see S. L. Bloom, “Clinical Uses of Psychohistory,” *JPH* 20 (1993), no. 3: 259–266. A long-term collaborator and friend of deMause has written: “For me psychohistory is not only a science, but is always and ultimately clinical (i.e. manifestly or by implication preoccupied with improvement of the ‘human condition’).” C. Schmidt, “The Perilous Purview of Psychohistory,” *JPH* 14 (1987), no. 4: 323.

74 Thus, they refer explicitly to that current in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis represented by such scholars as Alice Miller.

75 H. Lawton, “The Group-Fantasies of Psychohistorians,” in *The Many Faces of Psychohistory*, eds. J. Dorinson, J. Atlas (New York: International Psychohistorical Association, 1983), 166.

76 Of course, this statement applies no less to subjects addressed at annual conventions of the International Psychohistorical Association.

into historic changes in “modes of parenting” and childrearing practices – which, according to deMause’s approach, represent the basic independent variable of the historical process.⁷⁷

2. Interpreting important (as defined, at least, by the mass media) events from politics, the economy and everyday life, together with various products of mass culture, aimed at revealing aggressive and fearful fantasies unconsciously motivating the behavior and emotional reactions of the community.
3. Interpreting specific decisions made, and behaviors exhibited, by public figures (above all politicians), mainly with reference to their childhood experiences.

Similarly, an analysis of reviews appearing in the journal reveals an increasing predilection for literature in psychotherapy, broadly understood, and in applied psychoanalysis (especially in cultural anthropology), and a decreasing share of reviews of works that we might call historical (or psychohistorical in a narrower sense).

From among the three types of issues raised in the pages of *The Journal of Psychohistory*, the most obvious attempts at therapy have come in works that fall into the second of the above three groups. Here, radical psychohistorians try to reveal “group fantasies” – unconscious and regressive feelings and emotions shared by members of a given group regarding the situation in which that group finds itself, its relation to other groups, relationships that a given member has with the broader community, its leaders, etc.⁷⁸ Much like an analyst who tries to reveal repressed feelings, emotions, and experiences to remove symptoms of neurosis, psychohistorians try to reveal these group fantasies in order to understand – even predict not only changes in social moods, fears and expectations, but also possible behaviors on the part of leaders and other individuals acting as persons delegated⁷⁹ by a given group or collectivity. They believe

77 More on this subject below.

78 This idea comes from the work of psychoanalysts concerned with group process theory, such as Wilfred Bion.

79 On the subject of the term “delegate” derived from psychoanalysis-oriented family therapy, see the entry “delegation” in Fritz B. Simon, Helm Stierlin, Lyman C. Wynne, *The Language of Family Therapy: a Systemic Vocabulary and Sourcebook* (Family Process Press, 1985), 83–86.

that, in this way, it would be possible to bring increased rationality to human behavior.⁸⁰

We may find a more subtle and deeper formulation of psychohistory's therapeutic function in the writings of some psychohistorians with a clinical background who "passed" onto psychohistory's territory from the field of psychology, but who remained "distant" from theoretical proposals put forward by the "radicals." Particularly worth attention here are the ideas of Robert J. Lifton, a long-time leader of the so-called Wellfleet Group, where such thinkers as Erik H. Erikson, Kenneth Keniston, Philip Rieff and Alexander Mitscherlich met. As Lifton put it in his preface to a volume containing some of the group's early proceedings:

We struggled with a constant dialectic between responding to the overwhelming national and international events of the late sixties and early seventies and detailed theoretical exchanges. And we held larger evening meetings ... which were devoted to such matters as university uprisings, decision-making processes of the Vietnam War, relationships between My Lai and Nuremberg, the outer space program and the presidential election of 1972.⁸¹

A particular mixture of cognitive stance and therapeutic preoccupation is clearly visible in essays and discussion transcripts published there.

The therapeutic dimension of Lifton's investigative ideal is clearly visible in the postulate (which Lifton has tried to consistently pursue in his own research practice) of so-called "shared themes," or crucial and traumatic experiences shared by communities caught in various historical events,⁸² because such

80 On the idea of group fantasy and research strategies adopted in this context, see, for example, L. deMause, "Historical Group Fantasies," in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 172–243. See also the section below entitled "Group Psychohistory." The "radical" psychohistorians have also run a mailing list devoted to the "psychotherapeutic" view of current politics, and the therapeutic demands of their leader Lloyd deMause have often attracted the attention of such popular American socio-cultural periodicals as *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek* and *The Inquirer*. It should be added here that psychoanalysts generally argue that an individual gradually develops more matured modes of relating to others and more advanced ways of emotional expression, but on a group level the situation is different. Here the most primitive psychological mechanisms are the only ones at work. Hence the need for therapeutic examination and insights.

81 R. J. Lifton, "Preface," in *Explorations in Psychohistory: The Wellfleet Papers*, eds. R. J. Lifton, E. Olson (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 15–16.

82 See R. J. Lifton, "On Psychohistory," in *Explorations in Psychohistory*, 21–41.

experiences of overwhelming power (like Hiroshima, the Vietnam war, genocide, and totalitarian rule) stop the development of human creativity and lead to the “psychic numbing” of victims.⁸³ Then, the imagery of death begins to dominate their psyche, and above all, the ability for creative adaptation to reality, and sometimes even the ability to feel emotions or feelings, disappears or becomes severely impaired.⁸⁴ Lifton emphasizes that it is precisely the modern epoch which has brought such an unprecedented kind of experience:

In every age man faces a pervasive theme which defies his engagement and yet must be engaged. ... Now it is unlimited technological violence and absurd death. We do well to name the threat and to analyze its components. But our need is to go further, to create new psychic and social forms to enable us to reclaim not only our technologies, but our very imaginations, in the service of the continuity of life.⁸⁵

Only in this way – the argument goes – is it possible to restore the creative dialectics of death and life imagery.⁸⁶ Thus, the practice of psychohistory is, for

- 83 This is a psychological reaction to powerful fear caused by a direct experience with death or by a clear threat of death.
- 84 Philip Pomper emphasized that Lifton “has studied more systematically than any major psychohistorian traumatic moments which cause a break in the dialectic and fix the numbed psyche into ... a kind of death in life.” Ph. Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*, 150.
- 85 R. J. Lifton, *Death in Life*, 541.
- 86 This presentation of psychohistory’s therapeutic mission is tied to Lifton’s ontology – i.e. the original concept of the psycho-social process. He attributes particular importance to the imagination as a specifically human ability, thanks to which we can create culture and exist within it. This is done through the development of symbolic systems and complex imagery, and the basis of their dynamics is the dialectics of basic symbolism, constantly present in human thinking – i.e. concerning death and the existence and continuation of life. It sets the course of what Lifton calls the “psychoformative process,” which in his view means the development of human creativity and vitality, both at the individual level and community level. He systematically developed his “psychoformative theory” in *The Broken Connection*. See also P. Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*, 143–165; Ch. Strozier, D. Flynn, “Lifton’s Method,” *PR* 20 (1991), no. 2: 131–141; L. A. Kirsher, “Joel Kovel and R. J. Lifton: Two Psychohistorical Modes,” *The Psychoanalytic Review* 60 (1973), no. 4: 613–619; R. J. Lifton, Ch. Strozier, “Psychology and History,” in *Psychology and Its Allied Disciplines*, vol. 2: *Psychology and the Social Sciences*, ed. M. H. Bornstein (New York-London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1984), 163–184. For more in the Polish language, see T. Ochowski, “Nie tylko psychoanaliza,” 73–78; M. Lis-Turlejska, “Psychologiczne następstwa skrajnie stresowych przeżyć,” *Nowiny Psychologiczne* 11 (1992), no. 2: 65–76. Regardless of the fact that Lifton’s thinking is anchored in the

Lifton, a form of advocacy, a struggle “to bring passion to investigation, and scholarship to political and ethical stands.”⁸⁷ In this way:

A psychohistorian, as a creative survivor [in fact, nowadays everyone is a kind of survivor, at least symbolically – because all of us directly or indirectly meet the experience of annihilation], advocate, and community therapist becomes an agent of the creative formative process which mends the breaks and transforms the experience into renewed vitality.⁸⁸

In other words – as Ochinoski put it – the psychohistorian helps people “tame and subjugate” their own history.⁸⁹ A logical continuation of this understanding

tradition of psychoanalysis (Freud and especially Erikson), all interpreters of that thinking legitimately emphasize the innovative nature of his approach, which is a special variant of the cultural reinterpretation of classic psychoanalytic ontology.

87 R. J. Lifton, *Home from the War*, 15. T. Ochinoski calls it an attempt at “combining intellectually rigorous research with a commitment to and advocacy of broader social principles.” T. Ochinoski, “Nie tylko psychoanaliza,” 77. Many years later Lifton recalled that this was precisely the way in which his study on Vietnam War veterans came into being: “at a certain point during the Vietnam War, after reading about My Lai, I dropped work in the *Broken Connection* which I had been working on for lots of years and devoted myself more intensely to combating the Vietnam War. I did all kinds of things as an antiwar activist but also began the interviews with Vietnam veterans in various ways. In that case activism led to scholarship and the writing of the book on Vietnam veterans.” See P. Elovitz, “The Advocacy and Detachment of Robert Jay Lifton,” *Clio’s Psyche* 2 (1995), no. 3: 45, 56–63 (interview with Lifton).

88 Philip Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*, 160.

89 T. Ochinoski, *Model analizy przeżyć więźniów politycznych na terenie Polski okresu stalinowskiego (1945–1956) w perspektywie psychohistorycznej* (Lublin: KUL, 2000) (unpublished doctoral dissertation). Charles Strozier, who has worked closely with Lifton researching millenary fears widespread in contemporary society, stated: “Historically we’ve always had millennial fears; they’ve been around since the beginning of culture. However, they’ve been assigned to deeply religious people (mystics) and artists ... and to psychotics. Those three groups were assigned the task of thinking about collective death — until the nuclear age. Now, ... you can no longer leave the task of imagining ultimate issues to the margins and to these three assigned groups. Now you have to numb yourself to not think about them. Before, you could live a life having never questioned that there would be your children’s children and that there would be, as Robert [Lifton] says, some kind of immortality of the self. [This allowed you] to lead a rich, vital life. Now, you cannot lead a rich, vital life and not, at some point — if not continuously — imagine human endings. That is such a profound transformation. We’re just beginning to understand it.” P. Elovitz, “A Conversation with Charles B. Strozier,” 124.

of psychohistory's social mission is Lifton's active work in organizations or associations aimed at preventing destructive and traumatic events, such as Physicians for Social Responsibility and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

The same applies to many other prominent psychohistorians with psychological or psychiatric "roots" and a clinical background. They gladly engage in various public initiatives of this kind, even in the sphere of international diplomacy and great politics. Regarding the latter, the most notable example would be the activity of Vamik Volkan, Director of the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interactions,⁹⁰ who – under the auspices of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and the International Negotiating Network – searched for solutions to (sometimes very old) ethnic conflicts in different parts of the globe. Volkan emphasized:

What we are really interested in is reducing ethnic tensions. If you want to use a medical model, you could say we are trying to vaccinate the process to prevent the spread of further disease. Because of past historical markers, the psychological dimensions involved in ethnic or other large-group conflicts tend to promote rigid barriers. If we can somehow modify these barriers, we can "immunize" against future conflict and open doors to communication between opposing groups by eliminating the poison in their respective relationships.⁹¹

90 The Center was active from 1987–2002. Volkan is an example of an interdisciplinary scholar often seen within psychohistory. He is a retired professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia Medical School and combines his competence as a university psychiatrist and psychoanalytical therapist with broad interests in psychohistory (a psychobiography of Atatürk) and political psychology (numerous publications related to the psychological dimension of international relations). He is also a founding member of the International Society for Political Psychology and an editor of its journal, *Political Psychology*, and the Center's *Mind and Human Interactions*. See "Festschrift for Vamik Volkan," *Clio's Psyche* 20 (2013), no. 2: 120–218, particularly material written by M. Castelleo, N. Itzkowitz, I. Kogan, and P. Loewenberg. See also an attempt at a comparative analysis of three influential psychohistorical "therapists" in P. Elovitz, "Psychohistorians Lifton, deMause, and Volkan," *Clio's Psyche* 20 (2013), no. 3: 341–350.

91 P. Petschauer, "The Diplomacy of Vamik Volkan," *Clio's Psyche* 2 (1995) no. 2: 34 (interview with Volkan). One can hardly miss the "medicalization" in Volkan's discourse on the social function of psychohistory, providing yet another piece of evidence of psychohistory's therapeutic function.

Psychohistorical “Therapy” within the Sphere of Scholarly Investigation

The results of psychohistorical investigations could, as many of its supporters claim, mitigate anxiety plaguing society and resolve psychological conflicts. But the therapeutic function of psychohistory also remains – at least in the opinion of some – directly linked to the methodology of historical research. The transfer of the therapeutic model – involving the clinical notions and cognitive techniques of psychoanalysis – to history enriches the historian’s investigative toolbox. He gains the opportunity to take into account (and correctly interpret) such matters as a historical character’s Freudian slips (parapraxes), his/her quasi-free associations, dreams, etc. Such matters are often viewed as unessential, but they could gain new and sometimes great significance in the eyes of a psychohistorian.⁹² There is a therapeutic aspect as well in the very process of choosing one’s subject of study. As Howard M. Feinstein noted:

Creative effort often emerges from very personal conflicts that seek expression. ... though I began my work on [William] James “by accident,” I soon engaged the subject with intense personal concern because both James and I had problems deciding upon our work, and I hoped, by accepting the discipline of imaginatively approaching his past, to clarify my own present and future.⁹³

Similarly, it has been pointed out that Erik Erikson’s studies on religious leaders and geniuses emerged from problems related to his search for his own identity.⁹⁴

The clinical “sensitivity” of a psychohistorian – a derivative of his therapeutic stance (and therapeutic training⁹⁵) – could also allow him to recognize and analyze his own subjective, partly unconscious attitudes toward the phenomena

92 This theme appears in most methodological treatises on psychohistory as well as in numerous concrete studies. Take, for example, dreams: P. Elovitz, “Dreams as a Psychohistorical Source,” *JPH* 16 (1988), no. 3: 189–296; P. Elovitz, “Psychohistorical Dreamwork: A New Methodology Applied to a Dream of Sir Humphry Davy,” in *The Variety of Dream Experience*, eds. M. Ullman, C. Zimmer (New York: Continuum Press, 1987), 253–265.

93 H. M. Feinstein, “The Therapeutic Fantasy of a Psychohistorian,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 69 (1982), no. 2: 225–226.

94 Numerous examples of this kind of interdependence can be found in texts included in the aforementioned publication, edited by Baron and Pletsch, *Introspection in Biography. The Biographer’s Quest for Self-Awareness*.

95 An important sign of the therapeutic view of psychohistorical research is the frequently heard postulate that psychohistorians have the best possible clinical background.

under study, which are the equivalent of analytic countertransference. Peter Loewenberg emphasizes their cognitive value in historical research: they allow the scholar to “salvage” the conflictual (read: important) material within the framework of the examined past.⁹⁶

The issue of extending history’s cognitive possibilities, which opens historians up to therapeutic and psychoanalytic insights, has broader dimensions. Psychohistorians sometimes accuse representatives of traditional academic disciplines of deliberately or unconsciously (either way, it comes to the same thing) avoiding certain kinds of problems (not necessarily psychological) or approaching them in a “distanced” and “objectified” (read: distorted) way. This would be the result of psychological defense mechanisms both on the level of individual scholars and their personalities and on the level of paradigms or even entire academic disciplines; such neglected (often highly important) issues could provoke anxiety or emotional engagement and thus force into the open a painful insight into the world of personal experiences, fears and phobias. And it could make it difficult or impossible to maintain an emotional distance from phenomena under examination – a psychologically safe stance of an “objective” or “neutral” scholar which, as it is supposed, should characterize an academician.⁹⁷ In this regard, Henry Lawton notes:

Traditional scholarship appears to expect psychohistory to process anxiety-provoking materials it cannot handle and return it in such a way that permits better sense to be made of the world. By containing anxiety provoking material and making it less threatening we aid traditional scholars to reintroject the material in less upsetting

96 See P. Loewenberg, “Psychoanalytic Models of History: Freud and After,” 129–135; P. Loewenberg, “Historical Method, the Subjectivity of the Researcher and Psychohistory,” *PR* 14 (1985), no. 1: 30–35; C. Pletsch, “A Note on the Adaptation of the Psychoanalytic Method to the Study of Historical Personalities: Psychoanalyst’s on Schreber,” *PR* 8 (1979), no. 3: 46–50.

97 It should be stressed that this is a different matter than that of, say, one’s own world view, values or ideology. Their decisive impact on research practice is widely acknowledged nowadays. What I have in mind is a subjective world of one’s own deep conscious and unconscious emotions and fears – indeed the dark side of the human soul – which we are afraid to provoke and expose to daylight. For instance, see Peter Loewenberg’s comments on the use of statistics as a defense against the pain and rage that resulted from studying German casualties during World War I and the insightful notes of Aurel Ende on psychological defense mechanisms operating within the field of the history of childhood. See P. Loewenberg, “The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort,” in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 255; A. Ende, “The Psychohistorian’s Childhood and the History of Childhood,” *JPH* 9 (1981): 195–200.

form. Also, the questions we raise, the contexts we explore, often arise from an implied attempt to imaginatively change the past for the better.⁹⁸

Thus, a psychohistorian would be able to “cure” not only society but also the social sciences and humanities; the results of his investigations would have a therapeutic effect in the sense that they would “open the eyes” of scholars in those fields to features and aspects of reality that had been unnoticed, overlooked, negated and repressed for non-cognitive reasons – because they provoked unconscious fears. With this reasoning, we can once again see a clear analogy with psychoanalytic therapy, through which the patient gains insights into the world of his/her repressed experiences and emotions. To work through them under the guidance of an analyst reduces levels of anxiety and enables the individual to function in the real world in a more realistic and creative way.⁹⁹ Similarly, a psychohistorical “working through” of findings in history, anthropology and other fields of the humanities would open up scholars to the prospect of deeper insights into the culture and achievements of man.¹⁰⁰

Criticism

The therapeutic attitude presented by numerous representatives of psychohistory has met with opposition not only from outside the psychohistorical community, but also – and this is particularly noteworthy – from within the community. Indeed, the attitude’s most extreme versions (which can sound messianic when evoked mainly by deMause) have sometimes been the subject of critical debate even among “radical” psychohistorians. As a kind of “self-analysis,” they try to reveal irrational group fantasies shared by psychohistorians themselves, among the most prominent of which are the “therapeutic fantasy”

98 H. Lawton, “The Group-Fantasies of Psychohistorians,” 166.

99 In the view held by some psychohistorians, the field of childhood studies remains the most striking example of psychohistory’s “healing” influence. It is an interdisciplinary field of study shared by anthropologists, historians, psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists, and so on.

100 Here one might notice an echo of deMause’s ideas; he called for a general reform of the humanities, establishing psychohistory as its foundation. L. deMause, “The Independence of Psychohistory.” Compare also postulates formulated by certain philosophizing analysts regarding psychoanalysis as the “all-encompassing science of man” – R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 534–568.

and the “millennial-messianic-apocalyptic fantasy.”¹⁰¹ As Henry Lawton¹⁰² concludes with deliberate caution:

Perhaps psychohistory could be an influence in facilitating the election of more psychogenetically advanced leaders, thereby saving the world from destruction. Because such notions *are not totally unrealistic*, it is perhaps understandable that some psychohistorians may be personally living millenarian fantasies. But such beliefs can also be grandiose, naïve, and utopian, and have to be carefully dealt with to be kept in proper perspective. Is it bad for psychohistory to have millenarian hopes? Yes, if we allow ourselves to degenerate into becoming prophets of apocalyptic world doom; no, if we realize that while psychohistory may help, *it will not save the world*.¹⁰³

In fact, many psychohistorians who remain closely linked to academia experience the idea of engaged research as a threat to their identity as scholars, especially if it is connected with some forms of social and political activism. Some of them have even suggested that “brakes” need to be applied to such research, and particularly that unauthorized “wild analyses” with “irresponsible predictions” made especially by deMause and his supporters could tarnish psychohistory’s reputation.¹⁰⁴

The psychohistorical practice of imitating the clinical model has also provoked criticism within the field, criticism which emphasized the differences (and the “artificiality” of comparisons) between a clinical situation and real life situations experienced by people under examination by psychohistorians. It would follow that cognitive techniques used in the clinical situation may prove to be less than useful in such situations. Fred Weinstein and Gerald Platt – the authors who devoted the greatest attention to this issue – believe that in the

101 In particular, see H. Lawton, “The Group-Fantasies of Psychohistorians,” 162–185. This self-analytic approach – subsequent IPA gatherings included a panel dedicated to the analysis of “group processes” among participants – is a deliberate reference to a custom that was part of the first meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society held in Freud’s own apartment.

102 Let us recall that H. Lawton is one of the scholars most concerned with methodological issues among the “radicals” – see his *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*.

103 H. Lawton, “Psychohistory Today and Tomorrow,” *JPH* 5 (1978), no. 3: 339. Author’s emphases – T. P.

104 For some examples of such criticism, see J. Demos, “Growing up American [review of G. Davis, *Childhood and History in America* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1978)],” *The New York Review of Books* (1977, 24 April): 11, 41–42; P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory. An Overview of the Field,” in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 30. For more on the “brakes,” see “History’s 50-Minute Hour,” *Newsweek* (1977, 18 April): 96–97, 100.

context of psychohistorical investigation psychoanalysis should be seen as a set of “ready-made” statements attempting to describe some mental processes in a systematic way – i.e. to be adopted by any interested scholar. Thus, they questioned the importance and value of a clinical background in psychohistorical research.¹⁰⁵ Of course, the latter conclusion is shared by those psychohistorians who hope to replace psychoanalysis as theoretical support with some other concepts, e.g. cognitive psychology. In essence, as products of academic psychology, they have been “cleansed” of immediate therapeutic references.

The strength of criticism suggests that the idea of a therapeutic function for psychohistory became a troublesome one at least for some psychohistorians, which led to efforts to suppress and deny this element of the psychohistorian’s professional identity. For example, in a study entitled *The Psychiatrist as Psychohistorian*, published by (and on the special request of) the American Psychiatric Association, authors stated authoritatively that psychobiographical and psychohistorical studies focused on contemporary figures (and thus living people) threaten to violate the privacy of those concerned.¹⁰⁶ Pointing to real examples of the misuse of results from psychological or psychoanalytic research, the authors warned that too often a psychohistorian conducting “engaged” research was not able to “rise above his personal values and political biases. ... Indeed, one could hypothesize that in some instances they [the products of such research] may damage the public interest.”¹⁰⁷ Although the report paid lip service to the cognitive value of all psychohistorical investigations as

105 See F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, *Psychoanalytic Sociology*; F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory,” 202–228; F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis,” *JIH* 2 (1972): 419–434; G. M. Platt, “The Sociological Endeavor and Psychoanalytic Thought,” in *Psycho/History*, 237–253.

106 *The Psychiatrist as Psychohistorian* (Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 1976). This is a “Task Force Report” – i.e. a report written on request of the Association’s leaders by a special task force consisting of psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and historians (most of whom had been previously engaged in psychohistorical research). Such initiatives – not necessarily representing views of the officers and trustees of the Association – were nonetheless “considered a substantive contribution to the ongoing analysis and evaluation of problems, programs, issues and practices in a given area” (p. 2 of the report). Although the report was formally addressed to members of the American Psychiatric Association, one could hardly miss its significance for all of those interested in psychohistory and political psychology.

107 *Ibid.*, 9–12. See also Ch. K. Hofling, “Current Problems in Psychohistory,” *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 17 (1976), no. 1: 227–239.

“enhancing the knowledge of mankind” and avoided unequivocally negative conclusions, it clearly seemed to prefer research focused on characters and issues from the past, which by their very nature are more “distanced.” So, the report’s authors opted for psychohistory as another “cool” academic discipline which, realizing particular cognitive values, does not claim the right to change or save the world.¹⁰⁸ Such warnings and admonitions were in keeping with the views of all those who sought to securely anchor psychohistory within academia. In particular, the report referred to those psychohistorians who had come from the field history and wanted to cultivate psychohistory as a component of historical scholarship in accordance with its traditional ideals of criticism and objectivity. It is no wonder then that we find similar attitudes in methodological texts in psychohistory written by professional historians. Thomas A. Kohut, for example, states:

In writing about the psychological in history, the historian should rely neither on the psychohistorical method nor on unsubstantiated psychological speculation. Historians need to exercise the same rigorous scholarship writing about history’s psychological dimension that they exercise in writing about other aspects of the past. ... In other words, the historian should write ... ‘history informed by psychoanalysis’, history that is knowledgeable about people, that is psychologically sophisticated but history that is history through and through. ... Psychohistory will be history and psychohistorians will be historians once again.¹⁰⁹

There is no room here for the therapeutic dimension of psychohistorical activity.

Ultimately, to embrace the identity of a professional historian – and thus a distanced, “objective” student of the past – means to repress and deny the “competing” identity of a therapist-scholar.¹¹⁰ This fact explains why the problem of psychohistory’s therapeutic function remains the domain primarily of its adherents who (1) are less tied to academia and (2) have clinical training; the stronger the links with academic history felt by a given psychohistorian, the less

108 For criticism of the report voiced by an eminent psychohistorian, see R. Binion [review of *The Psychiatrist as Psychohistorian*], *PR* 5 (1977), no. 4: 44–45; for criticism from the “radical” side, see P. Elovitz, “Comment,” *JPH* 5 (1978), no. 3: 422–424.

109 Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” *AHR* 91 (1986), no. 2: 353. For examples of a similar stance, see S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis. An Inquiry into the Possibilities and Limits of Psychohistory*; P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*.

110 An interesting and insightful personal record of this struggle can be found in D. Beisel, “From History to Psychohistory: A Personal Journey.” The author was trained as a historian of modern Germany and became a close associate of Lloyd deMause and an editor of *The Journal of Psychohistory*.

inclined he would be to dwell on this metahistorical matter. Evidently, it was one of the most troublesome elements of intellectual baggage that psychohistory had inherited from depth psychology – the one which seemed to threaten the very foundations of the universally recognized ethos of an academic historian. No wonder, then, that those historians who became psychohistorians, and sought to legalize psychohistory within the historiographic framework, wanted to hide this irritating inheritance. But this task has turned out to be unfeasible and, in the eyes of many representatives of the academic establishment, psychohistory – as an approach engaged in changing the world for the better – has remained “suspicious.” As a consequence, academic historians have come to associate psychohistory with left-wing social movements and the political protests of the 1960s and the 1970s. Historian James Walkup has vividly captured this attitude:

Ask a historian in mid-career to reminisce about the heyday of psychohistory and you are likely to see him (or, more rarely, her) step out of his detached professional role. He will struggle manfully to suppress a grimace Rightly or wrongly, today's feelings about psychohistory overlap with feelings about the sixties so that the two are difficult to untangle. True believers in the ethos of the decade emerged from it embittered, repentant, or still embattled. Those who opposed that ethos watched in triumph or relief as it was abandoned.¹¹¹

Therefore, we may state that the psychohistorian's faith in his field's social role was an immanent part of psychohistory's investigatory ideal, which stood in conflict with beliefs usually held by academic historians, and that this faith was in fact a source of the “split” within psychohistory. The psychohistorian's ideal of a committed and engaged psychotherapist proved to be difficult to accept for many psychohistorians who wanted to carry out psychohistory simply as history, because that ideal stood in opposition to the values of objectivism at the foundation of the historian's axiology. Thus, the directive of the therapeutic approach, expressed in psychohistory's methodological discourse, contributed significantly – after its initial successes – to the field's progressive marginalization within academia. At the same time, paradoxically, it was this directive that allowed psychohistory to expand outside the structures of the academic world, and to attract a great number of people who wanted not only to get to know the world but also to change it – and interpersonal relations – for the better.

111 J. Walkup, “Why Is Most Psychohistory So Bad?” *Southwest Review* 73 (1988), no. 3: 405. For a much more sympathetic (but still critical) treatment of the issue, see L. Perry, “Has Psychohistory Come of Age?,” 401–423.

The Methodology of Psychohistorical Research

Examination of the methodologies and strategies used to conduct psychohistorical research developed gradually and reflected the complexity of the paradigm's evolution and its internal fragmentation. In many respects, it is difficult even to talk about the development of a reasonably uniform and "universal" set of methodological directives that would be obligatory for the entire psychohistorical environment. What seems proper would be to present this issue as a kind of intragroup dialogue within the psychohistorical community. On the one hand, its individual factions (sometimes individual and influential scholars) gradually developed their own principles for conceptualizing the subject of study, for selecting empirical material, and for justifying claims. And it is here where one often sees the increasingly distinct "diverging paths" taken by particular groups; some of them slowly became a kind of sub-paradigm within the broader psychohistorical community, whose research practice is implemented "without looking" at possibly competing "methodological" options. On the other hand, we can identify a number of (often quite fundamental) methodological issues on which all of these groups were forced to take a stand. These include such general questions as:

1. Whether or not should one refer to the achievements of depth psychology in the research practice.
2. If so, what would be the appropriate reference? (a) To psychoanalysis as a theory (in fact: a set of theories with different degrees of generality) and/or (b) to psychoanalysis as a set of procedures and research techniques such as dream analysis, free association, countertransference etc. (in other words, it is necessary to decide to what extent it is possible to model the process of psychohistorical research on the example of the clinical situation).
3. And what should be the character of psychohistorical explanations?

Other issues emerge from the particular challenges faced by scholars within specific research fields in psychohistory (e.g. group psychohistorians have had to work out a conceptual apparatus enabling them to employ psychoanalytic categories on a supra-individual level). And psychohistorians have had to consider methodology in terms of a broader matter tied to chronology – that is, to the influence of the space-time distance between the historian and the object of historical investigation (and his/her psyche).

Discussions on all these issues were carried out in the midst of constant external criticism. In fact, psychohistorians have never been "one-on-one" with themselves in their debate over methodological issues. While examining

the theoretical and methodological foundations of their cognitive endeavors, they have always had to explain themselves, to argue with opponents, and to refute accusations. This dimension of their activity was very important (after all, we are talking here about a field of study that had only just recently “come into its own”) if psychohistorians wanted to establish a place for themselves in study programs and in prestigious journals, and to convince usually conservative university administrations and the academic establishment of their value. Psychohistory’s methodological discourse has been, at the same time, a kind of debate waged constantly between the paradigm’s supporters against their opponents in mainly professional historical circles representing various historiographic perspectives. No doubt, the compulsory defense of their own assumptions encouraged psychohistorians to examine psychohistory’s theoretical and methodological foundations and its overall shape. I would even argue that it is precisely here that one should look for the reasons behind the problems (mentioned above) psychohistorians have had with their own identity, problems which emerged in the late 1970s, and those behind psychohistory’s internal divisions and the field’s eventual breakup; the need to wage battles on many fronts simultaneously inevitably led to the internal disintegration of the psychohistorical paradigm.¹¹²

The Debate Surrounding Theory

One of the most important issues that attracted the attention of both psychohistorians and psychohistory’s external critics was the presence of psychoanalysis in psychohistorical methodology. As we know, “proper” psychohistory had been genetically derived from applied psychoanalysis, and it may well have seemed obvious to the vast majority of psychohistorians that they would borrow further from the theoretical achievements of depth psychology. After all, when William Langer delivered his speech on the “next assignment” and spoke about the use of the “new psychology” in history-writing, he meant “psychoanalysis” and “depth” or “dynamic psychology.” It is no wonder then that in 1975 Robert McGlone admitted that an overview of review articles in psychohistorical periodicals justified the conclusion that psychohistory had become practically synonymous with psychoanalytic history.¹¹³ This claim referred to both

112 I formulated such an argument in T. Pawelec, “Psychohistorycy w debacie z historią,” 157–187.

113 R. E. McGlone, “The New Orthodoxy in Psychohistory,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 4 (1975), no. 2: 5.

the work of the “radicals” and to that of scholars who felt themselves linked with academic history. And while some viewed such a claim as an expression of the special “compatibility” of psychoanalysis with the classical model of historical research, others saw in it an expression of academic reform, just one more example of the fact that history had adopted theoretical models from the “more advanced” sciences.¹¹⁴

From the beginning the various schools of thought within psychoanalysis were reflected in psychohistory’s research practices and theoretical considerations. Among psychohistorians we find supporters of all of the major trends in depth psychology. However, if we look closely at straight psychohistorical works, we see an equal number of examples marked by a certain eclecticism – that is, works whose authors drew inspiration from various psychoanalytic sources regarded, at that given moment, as cognitively useful.¹¹⁵ Undoubtedly, the relationships between these theoretical propositions are often complicated; they have different degrees of generality, oscillating as if between “medium-range theories” (focused only on certain specific problem areas) and new and more holistic approaches to problems posed by depth psychology.

One might also add to this discussion such comprehensive theoretical concepts as those developed within the broader psychoanalytic perspective by representatives of psychohistory themselves, such as Robert J. Lifton’s psychoformative theory and Lloyd deMause’s so-called psychogenic theory of history.¹¹⁶

Only rarely do we find among psychohistorical theoreticians supporters of classical Freudian drive psychology, one reason being that contemporary forms of psychoanalysis (in terms of both theory and clinical technique) significantly deviate from the shape that the Master originally gave it.¹¹⁷ While in the early stages of psychohistory’s development drive psychology was an “option” found

114 See the above section entitled “The Ideal of Psychohistorical Scholarship.”

115 See, for example, the eclectic nature of John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). The references contained in this publication, taken together, would make up rich cross-sectional bibliography of contemporary psychoanalytic literature.

116 On Lifton’s proposals, see footnote 86 above. I will discuss DeMause’s concept below.

117 This is not altered by the fact that their creators usually emphasized their mental affinity with the “father of psychoanalysis,” who in each case was said to have initiated a given trend in thought, and who left it to his successors to “fill out” the initial outline.

quite often in research practice¹¹⁸ and a topic of discussion, its only current and open supporter among leading psychohistorians is Peter Gay.¹¹⁹ Typically, drive psychology focuses on the processes and conflicts tied to the oedipal phase of human development as postulated by Freud, on sexual factors, and on the pathological side of personality. Thus:

Just as the Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex of neurosis, and repressed infantile sexuality is the chief motive force in the formation of symptoms, so these psychic conflicts are played out and reflected in activities in the larger world. The oedipal conflict and the various possible resolutions of that conflict represent the essential substance of external as well as internal reality.¹²⁰

A significant position in psychohistory's theoretical profile was reserved for the so-called ego psychology, in particular because the most prominent representative of this approach, namely Erik H. Erikson, was in the late 1950s the main "founding father" of "proper" psychohistory.

Ego psychology grew out of the works of the "late" Freud, who in studies published after 1920 (above all *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* and *The Ego and the Id*), and having introduced the so-called second topographical model, attached ever greater importance to the role played in the psychic apparatus by the ego, which mediates between the individual's psyche and the world. In later years, psychoanalysts who continued work on this subject, led by Anna Freud and Heinz Hartmann, defended the thesis that ego processes enjoyed significant autonomy in relation to processes tied to the id. In this approach the ego ceases to be completely subordinate to the instinctual drives of the id; it has its own dynamics of development and at least partially operates in the "conflict-free" sphere, i.e. independently of goals that are impulse driven, which according to Freud condemned the psyche to permanent conflict with external reality. In this approach, defense mechanisms at work in the ego partially lose what had been (in Freud's view) their pathological character; they become tools for creative adaptation to the outside world. This view paved the way for studying various adaptive processes associated with the ego, including cognitive

118 I am avoiding here the paradigm's "prehistory," when other theoretical alternatives simply did not yet exist.

119 See Gay's *Freud for Historians*, where he constantly emphasizes the importance of Sigmund Freud's classic concepts. Peter Gay confirmed such beliefs during a conversation I had with him in Waltham, Massachusetts, in March 1996 (I have an audio recording of this conversation with Professor Gay).

120 F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, *Psychoanalytic Sociology*, 2.

processes, character structures, etc. In short, “ego theory tends to place more emphasis on the rational, conscious, constructive aspects of human personality, in contrast to the emphasis placed on the unconscious and irrational by classical psychoanalysis.”¹²¹

It is obvious that this transference of emphasis from unconscious motivation to conscious action, from pathological behavior to behaviors motivated by the realistic perception of a situation, favored the application of ego psychology in historical studies. Psychohistorians who advocated ego psychology thus emphasized that, in this form, psychoanalytic thinking was highly appropriate for use in historical research.¹²² Above all, it allowed historians to overcome the problem (both in theoretical terms and in relation to source material) tied to the earlier Freudian view that it is the experiences and developmental processes of early childhood that determine the shape of the human personality. And it allowed historians to break from what Erikson called the “originology” in psychohistorical explanations – that is, a tendency to point to childhood traumas and fixations as the main, sometimes even only determinants of adult behavior. In the context of the conceptual advantages of ego psychology as they apply to psychohistory, one most often reads of the work on personality development of Erik Erikson, who created “a language with which people in his [Erikson’s] own time and place could interpret the events that affected them.”¹²³ Psychohistorical theorists point to Erikson’s work and its following cognitive values:

1. It proposed a model for conflict resolution and adaptation throughout the entire human life cycle.
2. It focused on the formation of ego features in interaction with both instinctive impulses and (above all!) the socio-cultural environment.
3. It focused on the issue of the construction of identity – the most important developmental task associated with ego formation and the individual’s entire personality.

121 C. S. Hall, et al., *Theories of Personality* (John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 179. For more, see R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 293–359; E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 278–279.

122 C. Strout, “Ego Psychology and the Historian,” in C. Strout, *The Veracious Imagination: Essays on American History, Literature and Biography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 225.

123 F. Weinstein, “On the Social Function of Intellectuals: A Consideration of Erik H. Erikson’s Contribution to Psychoanalysis and Psychohistory,” in *New Directions in Psychohistory: The Adelphi Papers in Honor of Erik H. Erikson*, ed. M. Albin (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980), 5–6.

Psychohistorical theorists have emphasized the fact that the concept proposed by Erikson, which is particularly effective in biographical research – on the one hand – allows historians to overcome the “pathographic” image that biographies have that are written on the basis of psychoanalytical drive theory, and – on the other hand – opens up “theoretical space” for considering the cultural and social variables in whose context the personality described in a given biography developed.¹²⁴

Another important theoretical perspective from depth psychology that we encounter in the psychohistorical literature is the so-called object relations theory, i.e. “a system of psychological explanation based on the premise that the mind is comprised of elements taken in from outside, primarily aspects of the functioning of other persons. This occurs by means of the process of

124 Ibid., *passim*; see also, among others, C. Strout, “The Uses and Abuses of Psychology in American History,” *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 330–332; D. Arzt, “Psychohistory and Its Discontents,” *Biography* 1 (1978), no. 3: 8–9; A. Mitzman, “Social Engagement and Psycho-History,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 87 (1974), no. 3: 426–427; L. Perry, “Review Essay on Michael P. Rogin’s *Fathers and Children. Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian*,” *History and Theory* 16 (1977): 193–194; L. Pye, “Personal Identity and Political Ideology,” in *Psychoanalysis and History*, 150–173; D. Meyer, “A Review of *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*,” *History and Theory* 1 (1961), no. 3: 291–297; F. Manuel, “The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History,” 223–226; J. P. Demos, “Developmental Perspectives in the History of Childhood,” Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “Erik Erikson, Ego Psychology, and the Great Man Theory,” in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 49–58. Erikson formulated a mature form of his concept in *Childhood and Society*, particularly in part III. See also E. H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987). He was more specific on the issue of identity in *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968) and *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York-London: W. W. Norton, 1980). The body of literature on Erik H. Erikson is extensive. See, for example, R. Coles, *Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970); Ph. Pomper, *The Structure of Mind in History*, 81–114; J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 84–91 and 98–110; L. Witkowski, *Rozwój a tożsamość w cyklu życia: studium koncepcji Erika H. Eriksona* (Toruń: Wyd. UMK, 1989). This work, and the bibliography in W. Gilmore (pp. 6–12), contains a comprehensive list of literature. For opposing views on Erikson’s concept, see for example H. I. Kushner, “Pathology and Adjustment in Psychohistory: A Critique of the Erikson Model,” *Psychocultural Review* 1 (1977): 493–506; H. I. Kushner, “Taking Erikson’s Identity Seriously: Psychoanalyzing the Psychohistorian,” *PR* 22 (1993), no. 1: 7–34; P. Roazen, *Erik H. Erikson: The Power and Limits of a Vision* (New York: Free Press, 1976).

internalization. This model of the mind explains mental functions in terms of relations between the various elements internalized¹²⁵ and it places emphasis on the importance of emotional relationships between people and on identifications made at the beginning of life. It was first developed in Great Britain (as part of the so-called British school represented by such scholars as Melanie Klein, Harry Guntrip, William D. Fairbairn and Donald W. Winnicott) and sparked heated debate because of “speculative” interpretations put forward by some its representatives, and because of controversial theses regarding the level of complexity achieved by the mental apparatus of infants and very young children. Scholars in the history of depth psychology emphasize, moreover, that as of the 1950s, the matter of object relations gained a prominent position within the psychoanalytic movement.¹²⁶ The intricacies of theoretical disputes within this field make it difficult to adequately assess the importance of the contributions made by individual researchers.¹²⁷ That having been said, as Louise Hoffman writes:

Object relations theorists find the critical forces shaping personality not in early childhood or adolescence but in the first two years of life. During this time, infants learn to distinguish themselves from their environment (especially from their mothers) and internalize aspects of the external emotional objects in their lives. A mother’s availability and responsiveness are crucial to supporting her infant’s separation without undue trauma. The success or failure of this process, and the conditions under which it occurs, shape the basic personality structure, which then continues to evolve throughout life, guiding the individual’s interactions with others.¹²⁸

125 “Object Relations Theory,” in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 131–132.

126 R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 434–435. It is worth noting that the object relations theory led to a significant modification of the psychoanalytic approach to personality; from this perspective, man appeared to be less oriented toward the gratification of drives (and thus falling into conflict with the cultural sphere, which frustrated these efforts), and more of a being actively seeking relationships with other people (e.g. an infant is not a passive recipient of parental care, but from the earliest moments of life actively seeks and co-establishes relationships with others).

127 For more on this subject, see R. Fine, *A History of Psychoanalysis*, 412–435; J. Grotstein, “The Significance of Kleinian Contributions to Psychoanalysis,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 8 (1981): 375–428 and 9 (1982): 486–534; P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 32–41; J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 129–134; E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 254–275. For a broader discussion of the issue, see “Fairbairn’s Theory,” “Kleinian Theory” and “Winnicott’s Theory” in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 71–74, 106–112, 204–209.

128 L. E. Hoffman, “Object-relations Theory and Psychohistory,” *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 49 (1985), no. 2: 115.

Although it is certainly the case that object relations theory did not attract as much of the psychohistorian's attention as did some of its competitors, it would be difficult – as this theory's proponents would argue – to negate its potential advantages for psychohistorical research as:

A theory in which the mother rather than the father is the crucial parent [and which] offers an opportunity to redress the male gender bias implicit in earlier explanations and to redirect attention toward experiences that previously were given little weight. Investigating the quality of mothering and of infantile emotions is not a panacea for psychohistory ... but it might expand the range of questions and interpretations available to historians and biographers. It is also congruent with current developments in family history. Applied to history and biography, object-relations theory offers another way to explore how individuals' earliest lives illuminate their later relationships – by evaluating the emotional significance of specific loves, hates, and ambivalences, as well as “object loss” through separation or death. This approach goes beyond the older psychoanalytic emphasis on innate drives and offers a way to recognize the uniqueness of particular individuals and events – a quality essential to historians.¹²⁹

This statement explains why references to object relations, despite everything, are found in a large number of psychohistorical works, although object relations more often plays the role of a complementary perspective than an autonomous or even key theoretical foundation.

In the 1970s, some theoreticians and practitioners of psychohistory became interested in concepts tied to psychoanalytic “self psychology” developed especially by Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg. Self psychology focused on narcissism and its evolution, i.e. on the psychological “investing” in man's own self (using Freud's terminology, this term corresponds roughly to the concept of the libidinal cathexis of the ego), which posits that this phenomenon does not have to be (as Freud would argue) pathological in nature, and that in some of its forms (e.g. self-respect, pride in one's own achievements) it is a basic property of a healthy and creative personality. Proponents of this view replaced the classical Freudian scheme of psychosexual personality development with a new one centered on the evolution of narcissism from its primitive forms of early childhood to a mature form, and they considered the self as the basic structure of personality.¹³⁰ Moreover, scholars noticed the peculiar affinity (psychological

129 Ibid., 120–121. Compare J. W. Anderson, “Recent Psychoanalytic Theorists and Their Relevance to Psychobiography: Winnicott, Kernberg, and Kohut,” *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 31 (2003): 79–83.

130 This is the “individual's experience of him or herself as an independent center of initiative, as continuous through time, and as cohesive in space.” The basic components of the structure of self are: “the pole of ambition from which emanate the basic

and ideological) this concept had with trends predominant in our “narcissistic” contemporary culture, focused as it is on consumption and mass entertainment, and with the types of personality disorders – also referred to as narcissistic – widespread in this culture (different from those encountered by Freud).¹³¹

Proponents of this concept try to recognize how – in a child’s interrelations with his guardians – the exaggerated, primitive narcissism of a child gradually changes into a mature form, and its early narcissistic relationships with parents (experienced as parts of the child’s self [“selfobjects”] and at the same time as perfect and omnipotent figures) transform themselves into an individual’s permanent mental structures – whether healthy or pathological. Summarizing self psychology’s main theses, Philip Cushman writes:

Kohut’s theory postulates that the formation of the self in western, postindustrial society develops out of the mutual, cooperative parent-child relations of the preoedipal years. Intimate interactions between parent and child offer the child the opportunity to imitate and incorporate the behavior and the personal style of the nurturing parent. The child, at this time fragmented and nonindividuated, learns not only how to “do” but also how to “be;” how to conceive of itself as a unified, cohesive individual. This is slowly accomplished by being allowed to exhibit in front of or overidealize and

strivings for power and success; ... a pole of values that harbors the basic idealized goals; and ... an intermediate area of basic talents and skills.” See Th. A. Kohut, *Wilhelm II and the Germans: A Study in Leadership* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8; E. S. Wolf, “Psychoanalytic Selfobject Psychology and Psychohistory,” in *New Directions in Psychohistory*, 39. For a full presentation of the foundations of self psychology, see H. Kohut, *The Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut* (New York: International Universities Press, 1978). See also “Self Psychology” (and related entries on subsequent pages) in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 174–180. Parenthetically, the far-reaching reinterpretation of the psychoanalytic theory carried out by Kohut’s followers led to heated debate within the American psychoanalytic milieu in the 1970s and early 1980s. For a synthetic presentation of the (negative) views of “traditional” psychoanalysts toward Kohut’s work, see M. A. Greene, “The Self Psychology of Heinz Kohut: A Synopsis and Critique,” *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 48 (1984), no. 1: 37–53. For a concise presentation of the significant differences between the versions of self psychology represented by Kohut and Otto Kernberg, see M. Shore, “Emerging Paradigms in Psychoanalysis and Related Fields,” in *New Directions in Psychohistory*, 51–53.

- 131 P. Cushman, “History, Psychology and the Abyss,” *PR* 15 (1987), no. 3: 29–45; P. Cushman, “Why the Self is Empty;” Th. Steinberg, “Self Psychology and American Culture,” *PR* 15 (1987), no. 3: 3–28. See also R. Brugger’s comments on fragments, reprinted in his anthology, of Christopher Lasch’s *Culture of Narcissism* – a classic approach to contemporary mass culture as viewed from these categories.

psychologically merge with the parent. By watching the parent act toward the child as if the child is a cohesive entity who is worthy of attention, interest, and respect, children come to regard themselves as such. Children see themselves through the eyes of their doting parents. During these crucial years the parent is experienced not as a separate being but as an actual part of the infant. In order to demonstrate this unseparated symbiotic relationship, Kohut coined the term “selfobject.”

When the parent’s empathic eyes are absent, inaccurate, or hateful, the child does not develop a cohesive, autonomous self; chronic fragmentation and dependence are the result. Some pathology caused by the deprivations of the early years (i.e., disorders of the self) are manifested in adults by long-term character traits or personality styles. These traits are composed primarily of repetitive behavioral patterns that attempt to elicit from the adult’s environment precisely those nurturing behaviors rarely experienced from the caretaking parent during childhood. ... They are composed of grandiosity and the urge to exhibit (i.e., mirroring hunger) or overidealizing and the wish to merge with the other (i.e., merging hunger). When the self of an adult is threatened or fragmented, the individual will often regress by searching for a selfobject to exhibit before or merge with in order to stabilize the self.¹³²

Scholars in psychohistory emphasized the conceptual qualities of this research perspective in terms of both the individual and the group.¹³³ Regarding the individual, we often read that self psychology ensures better – from the historian’s point of view – insight into the mechanisms of how a personality is shaped. First, it shifts the researcher’s attention toward data moments in a person’s life that are later than postulated by classic psychoanalysis (thus, problems tied to a lack of data from early childhood are alleviated). Second:

Freudian drive theory leads the unwary biographer into the very private and largely inaccessible realm of a significant figure’s loves and hates, unconscious fantasies, and symbolic interactions with his/her contemporaries. Kohut’s approach, indeed his whole psychology of the self, on the other hand, permits the observer to interpret what we actually see: a figure’s goals and ambitions, his ideals, and all the complex interactions in his work life.

132 P. Cushman, “History, Psychology and the Abyss,” 33–34.

133 Besides, the creators of self psychology, with Heinz Kohut in the lead, did not shy away – as Freud had done – from “excursions” into historical research as an additional exemplification of their psychological theories. On the needs and advantages of practicing applied psychoanalysis, see H. Kohut, “Beyond the Bounds of the Basic Rule: Some Recent Contributions to Applied Psychoanalysis,” *Journal of The American Psychoanalytic Association* 8 (1960): 567–586. For a broad discussion of Kohut’s historical interests and achievements, see J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 148, 154–156.

In addition (and this issue has become increasingly important since the 1970s given the development of women's history and gender history):

The theory of narcissism ... in psychoanalysis makes no preference between male and female. ... The classic Freudian theory does not provide a very good grounding for the historical study of women. Narcissism avoids this particular trap because it is not dependent on the same anatomic and biological distinctions that classical Freudian theory makes.¹³⁴

In terms of mass phenomena, scholars have found in the propositions of self psychologists tools for interpreting phenomena associated with charismatic or totalitarian-type leaders, those that have characterized mass political and ideological movements in modern times. In this view, the leader's psychological function would be the maintenance of the group members' fragmented or disintegrated self, and in return that group is loyal to him and his actions and demands (for the leader and the group become selfobjects to each other).¹³⁵

Further views on the conceptual application of self psychology, discussed in psychohistory's methodological literature, included studies of group behavior which may reveal a given group's level of cohesion or fragmentation (in relation to specific historical situations) and investigations into mass culture whose motifs (or "icons") – according to the proponents of this approach – can also

134 Ch. Strozier, "Heinz Kohut and the Historical Imagination," *PR* 7 (1978), no. 2: 37; Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, "New Directions: Heinz Kohut," in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 75; "The Self in History: A Symposium Discussion," *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 3 (1975), no. 4: 6. Compare J. W. Anderson, "Recent Psychoanalytic Theorists," 83–93.

135 "It seems that groups, analogous to individuals, have group ambitions, group ideals, in other words one may postulate a group-self. When catastrophes threaten the group-self in its cohesion and survival, the resulting need for selfobjects to shore up the crumbling group-self may be supplied by a particularly outstanding individual. Kohut talks about messianic leaders who strengthen the group-self by being available for idealization and about charismatic leaders who bolster the group by restoring the threatened sense of grandeur and omnipresence of the group. Churchill after Dunkirk played such a role for Britain. And perhaps Martin Luther King did similarly for the American black. ... The strength and cohesion of a group-self is continuously reflected in the group's self-esteem. Self psychology can contribute many illuminating insights into the back-and-forth of the reciprocal psychological needs of the leader for self-confirmation by the group and vice versa." E. S. Wolf, "Psychoanalytic Selfobject Psychology," 44–45.

function as selfobjects, revealing the features of the collective mentality.¹³⁶ An important issue – especially in the context of the recurring accusations of the “innately” ahistorical character of psychoanalysis – remains proponents’ “sensitivity” to the context of time and space, as expressed in the deep awareness that the theoretical perspective they postulate remains permanently rooted in industrial and post-industrial Western culture. Thus, they emphasize that, as a cognitive tool, it can essentially function only in relation to historical issues within its spatio-temporal scope.

These cognitive perspectives in psychoanalysis were decisive in determining the theoretical basis of psychoanalytic psychohistory. Other psychoanalytical proposals have attracted the attention of psychohistorians to a much smaller extent, including concepts widely discussed by philosophers and cultural and literary scholars, namely those of Jacques Lacan,¹³⁷ which affected psychohistory only slightly and very recently (indeed, they began to penetrate the American humanities only in the 1980s).¹³⁸

Thus, psychoanalytical thinking clearly dominated the theoretical basis of the psychohistorical paradigm, and this fact became the subject of the most intense debates within and revolving around psychohistory. And, as I wrote extensively in Part I, followers of traditional, narrative and descriptive history, as well as representatives of the “new history” (practiced as a social science), used it as a basis for their attacks on psychohistory.

Most psychohistorians “took up the gauntlet” in an attempt to defend the value of psychoanalytic perspectives as the theoretical foundation for psychohistory. But some (who accepted the allegations against psychoanalysis) began a search for a different theoretical background. This fact should be treated, on the one hand, as an expression of the deep “split” in psychohistory, of the fundamental doubt that some psychohistorians have had about their discipline’s identity. On the other hand, it may be seen as a “taming” of psychohistory, by

136 For more on this subject beyond the works already mentioned, see L. Walker, “Mentalities: The Hidden Agenda of Stannard’s *Shrinking History*,” *PR* 12 (1984), no. 4: 43–48.

137 For more on Lacan’s thinking, see P. Dybel, *Urwane ścieżki. Przybyszewski – Freud – Lacan* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 208–280.

138 For a negative assessment of the theoretical achievements of the French psychoanalyst as offered from the perspective of psychohistory, see D. J. Fisher, “Lacan’s Ambiguous Impact on Contemporary French Psychoanalysis,” in D. J. Fisher, *Cultural Theory*, 3–26. See also J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 139–148.

which the field was rendered acceptable to academic historians, who have never trusted psychoanalysis.

Some of these search attempts remained within the broad spectrum of “depth psychology,”¹³⁹ but to a large extent they meant reaching for other theoretical concepts, above all those that were developing in the area of academic psychology. Thus, Peter C. Hoffer noticed a shift toward cognitive psychology and trait psychology, writing that:

Cognitive and trait psychohistory would be strongest where psychoanalytic psychohistory is the most vulnerable (at least in the minds of working historians), for the two approaches would: (1) be open to public verification and replication, (2) explain adult motives and mental functions through the use of adult manuscripts, (3) bring insights unavailable to non-psychohistorical methods out of manuscript and documentary sources, and (4) throw light upon the behavior and beliefs of empirical groups.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, William McKinley Runyan and Terry Anderson considered the possibility of making use of behaviorism, developmental psychology (J. Piaget and D. Levinson), the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, and inspirations from social psychology. All the above authors took into account the long list of historical works whose cognitive qualities were enriched by the application of the above-mentioned approaches.¹⁴¹ These efforts were patronized in the late 1970s by the *Psychohistory Review*, which published extensive bibliographical lists alongside programmatic texts and specific samples of non-psychoanalytical psychohistory.¹⁴² However, beyond the intense theoretical discussions on the subject, there were few specific works written in

139 For example, while proposing new paths for psychohistorians, T. L. Brink emphasized the cognitive benefits of referring to the analytical psychology of Carl G. Jung and the individual psychology of Alfred Adler. As he claimed, it was more useful than classical psychoanalysis in the capture of the individual’s developmental processes and the influence on those processes of cultural factors. T. L. Brink, “History and Depth Psychology. Some Reconsiderations,” *The Historian* 41 (1978): 738–753.

140 P. C. Hoffer, “Is Psychohistory Really History?,” 7.

141 T. Anderson, “Becoming Sane with Psychohistory;” W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 217–225; W. M. Runyan, “Alternatives to Psychoanalytic Psychobiography.” See also single-theme issue of the *Journal of Personality* 56 (1988), no. 1 devoted largely to the non-psychoanalytical approaches to psychobiography (this publication is often cited in bibliographies as *Psychobiography and Life Narratives*), particularly texts by L. Carlson, R. Carlson, R. Ochberg, I. Aleksander and W. M. Runyan.

142 W. J. Gilmore, “Path Recently Crossed: Alternatives to Psychoanalytic Psychohistory,” *PR* 7 (1979), no. 3: 43–49 and no. 4: 26–42.

this spirit; years later, the editor of the *Psychohistory Review* described efforts in this area as one of the periodical's least fruitful undertakings.¹⁴³

But the most obvious result of psychoanalytic psychohistory's unfriendly reception was the emergence, at the very heart of psychohistory, of a not exactly strong but definitely stabilized research perspective providing a "more digestible" theoretical background from the field of psychology. Of course, it was "more digestible" only for the "new" modernist historians because – as Quin McLoughlin wrote – psychohistory should be "the comparative study of human beings across time and social conditions in the attempt to construct general laws of psychology."¹⁴⁴

Psychoanalysis – Theory or Research Technique

The programmatic acceptance by the majority of psychohistorians of psychoanalysis as the theoretical basis for the study of the past led to yet another wide-ranging contentious issue, which came as a result of ambiguities within psychoanalysis itself – as I wrote earlier – as a particular psychological theory and, at the same time, as a set of research techniques which consist "essentially in bringing out the unconscious meaning of the words, the actions and the products of the imagination (dreams, phantasies, delusions) of a particular [human] subject."¹⁴⁵ These techniques were developed in order

143 Ch. Strozier, "Autobiographical Reflections on the Psychohistory Review," *PR* 15 (1986), no. 1: 10. One exception should be mentioned, i.e. the above-mentioned "emotionology" of Peter and Carol Stearns. They were able to focus a fairly stable group of colleagues around themselves and, more importantly, their attempts were met with generally favorable reactions from American historians, which can be explained in part by the fact that their initiative managed to free itself from "burdensome" relationships with psychohistory. In addition to the previously cited texts by the Stearns see, for example, *Emotion and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory*, eds. P. N. Stearns, C. Z. Stearns (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988); B. H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *AHR* 107 (2002), no. 3: 821–845; W. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a panoramic view of the further evolution of this field of research, see R. Boddice, "The Affective Turn: Historicizing the Emotions," in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, 147–165.

144 Q. McLoughlin, "History, Science and Psychohistory," *PR* 8 (1980), no. 4: 30. For more on further efforts in this direction, especially those undertaken with new energy in the 1990s through M. Seligman's research, see T. Ochinoski, "Nie tyłko psychoanaliza," 71–73 and 80–82.

145 *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 367.

to apply them in the clinical treatment of neurotics and psychotics. After all, psychoanalytic treatment is primarily a special kind of cognitive process; during therapy, a psychoanalyst attempts to relieve a patient's suffering by trying to "make clear what was unclear, *to make known what was unknown, to reveal what was hidden.*" A psychoanalytic interpretation – Peter Kutter emphasized – aims "*to reveal hidden facts.* Interpretation and explanation should help to understand, to give meaning."¹⁴⁶ In other words, cognition is a fundamental part of treatment, because during a session the analyst explains the unconscious meaning of the patient's actions and symbolic messages; as Freud put it, the analyst "makes the unconscious conscious" and thus brings about healing.

Psychohistorians face a dilemma: to what extent (and in what way) should they make use of the achievements of psychoanalysis? In psychohistorians' methodological thinking, one can find at least two different answers to this question, each of which suggests the need for further decisions regarding research methods and strategies, regarding the training necessary for a psychohistorian, and – in the long run – regarding even the goals and functions of psychohistorical research itself.

According to the first of these answers, psychoanalysis should provide theoretical background in psychohistory in the way that theoretical borrowings from economics, anthropology, and sociology have played a role in the study of history. In other words, they should provide a conceptual basis for psychohistorical investigations, provide specific strategies for interpreting historical evidence, and provide models for explaining examined phenomena, in particular human behavior. Generally, such a position was taken, for example, by all young historians who, in the wake of Langer's 1957 speech, took up the development of psychohistory in the 1960s.¹⁴⁷ In any case, that is how Langer himself viewed the matter. As Fred Weinstein and Gerald Platt write:

Psychoanalytical theory has a remarkable potential for systematically explaining a variety of behaviors In the end, historians have to impute motives to historical actors; they have to explain the fundamental reasons for behavior, not only in terms of

146 P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 175–176. Emphases in original.

147 For an exemplification of such a role for psychoanalysis in psychohistory (relating to the character of Aaron Burr), see J. L. Shneideman and C. Levine-Shneideman, "Psychohistory: Expanding the Parameters of Historical Causality," *JPH* 12 (1985), no. 3: 353–361. See also R. Binion, "My Life with 'Frau Lou,'" in *The Historian's Workshop*, ed. L. P. Curtis, Jr. (New York: A. Knopf, 1970), 295–305.

interest, but also in terms of the emotional bases for compliance or non-compliance. No discipline is as well organized to deal with such processes as is psychoanalytical theory.¹⁴⁸

As such, in a form etched in the writings of Freud and other psychoanalysts, psychoanalytic theory remains a tool for any scholar who wants to explore the psychological dimension of history.¹⁴⁹ Of course, a separate question involves whether psychoanalysis can be applied to the past in its pure form or whether – in relation to certain types of historical phenomena (e.g. collective actions) – it requires certain modifications or additions from other cognitive approaches. According to the latter position, psychohistorian's clinical training in psychoanalysis, although useful, is by no means a *sine qua non* for practicing psychohistorical research. In general, this position regarding the role of psychoanalysis could be found more often among those scholars who had “arrived” at psychohistory from history.

The second answer draws its reasoning from the quite common argument that psychoanalysis very much resembles history (see text tied to note 184 in the section of Part I entitled “Debate Surrounding Psychohistory”). On its basis one can argue that the cognitive situation for the historian is highly similar to the situation in which a psychoanalyst receives a patient in his office – after all, in order to achieve a therapeutic effect, he must explore in some way the (personal) history of that patient.¹⁵⁰ During therapy, the psychoanalyst explores the psychological dimension of this personal history, and the same could be said about the psychohistorian in relation to the historical process. Because the psychohistorian's position relative to examined phenomena does not differ greatly from the analyst's relation to the patient, it is important – the argument goes – that the psychohistorian employ in

148 F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “History and Theory,” 419. On Langer's intentions, see W. Langer, “The Next Assignment,” 283–304 and B. Mazlish, “Introduction,” in *Psychoanalysis and History*, 2.

149 “Our own opinion on this issue is that the body of theory exists for anyone to employ. A personal analysis is no guarantee of superior insight At the same time, the lack of a personal analysis does not automatically doom any effort to failure.” F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, “History and Theory,” 432, note 33.

150 “Psychoanalysis, if not a branch of history, has very close affiliations with history. Moreover, those affiliations are neither accidental nor negligible. They are an essential aspect of psychoanalysis as a ‘science.’” H. Meyerhoff, “On Psychoanalysis as History,” 18. Virtually all later supporters of a methodological “kinship” between psychoanalytical and historical inquiries refer to arguments cited in this text (originally published in 1962).

his research psychoanalytical methods and techniques, indeed (in a more radical version of this position) that he model his work as much as possible on clinical procedures. The reference here, quite clearly, is to applied psychoanalysis. Such a position is most often taken by psychohistorians with a psychoanalytic (or at least psychological) “pedigree,” a consequence of which being the argument (or even the requirement) that scholars acquire psychoanalytic training or at least that they “go through” personal analysis. This approach stems from the thesis (formulated by Freud) that it is impossible to properly understand and master psychoanalysis “from books” – i.e. if it remains an exclusively intellectual endeavor. In order to understand psychoanalysis adequately, one needs an intimate experience that affects many aspects of one’s personality; hence, the need to undergo the analytical process.¹⁵¹ As Erikson puts it, with a certain delicacy:

Even as we demand that he who makes a profession of “psychoanalyzing” others must have learned a certain capacity for self-analysis, so must we presuppose that the psychohistorian will have developed or acquired a certain self-analytical capacity which would give to his dealings with others, great or small, both the charity of identification and a reasonably good conscience.¹⁵²

On the one hand, such an approach leads to questions related to the therapeutic dimension of psychohistorical investigations (discussed earlier); on the other hand, it opens up an extensive debate on the use of specific cognitive techniques in psychohistorical research (including their adaptation to the requirements associated with studying the past), and the possibility of obtaining relevant source materials that would serve as an equivalent to the data available to the analyst in a clinical situation.

In this debate, there are “external” critics of psychoanalytic psychohistory, who are joined by psychohistorians who are themselves skeptical about attempts to emulate the clinical situation in the study of history. The essence of their position may be expressed very succinctly: The dead cannot be put on the couch and psychoanalyzed, and because they are no longer alive, they cannot be party to a psychoanalytic encounter. Such an objection could be challenged by pointing to the fundamental dissimilarity between the therapist’s goals and those of the psychohistorian. As Peter Loewenberg points out, “the historian

151 See, for example, S. Freud, “*Introductory Lectures*,” 19; S. Freud, “The Question of Lay Analysis,” 198–199.

152 E. H. Erikson, “On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi,” *Daedalus* 97 (1968), no. 3: 709. See also R. Pois, “The Case for Clinical Training and Challenges to Psychohistory,” *PR* 18 (1990), no. 2: 169–187.

seeks merely to understand the story, whereas the psychoanalyst seeks also to help his patient change the story's ending."¹⁵³ While therapeutic intentions obviously require the patient to be "on the couch," such is not the case with purely cognitive intentions.¹⁵⁴

However, skeptics point to the fact that in psychoanalytic therapy one seeks to "get to know" a particular type, to reconstruct a patient's subjective "mental reality" – that is, his experience of the world and of himself, which does not necessarily have much to do with reality *tout court*.¹⁵⁵ The clinical cognitive techniques of psychoanalysis would thus be irrelevant to the research tasks of a psychohistorian wanting to study his protagonists in the context of a real past, not just a fantasized one. In the end, opponents of the therapeutic model emphasize that the clinical situation itself is so different from people's experience in the "real world" that the behaviors and reactions evoked by therapy have little relevance to real human activities. For example, Weinstein and Platt write:

Psychoanalytic therapy occurs under unique, specially contrived conditions deliberately organized to evoke the expression of intrapsychic conflict and the study of that conflict, in order to account for symptomatic expression. Normal aspects of development, or the capacity of individuals to act routinely in everyday life are only of marginal interest in the psychoanalytic situation. Hence, 'the analytic situation is an artificial, tilted one.'¹⁵⁶

Thus, they argue that the cognitive strategies formulated in relation to psychoanalysis, in particular those founded on the phenomenon of transference (e.g. free associations), have no place in a psychohistorical study. Psychohistory applies to human behavior in the "real world," where – as Weinstein and Platt claim – transference does not occur, and instances of unconscious regression occur always along with a (more or less preserved) ability to engage in realistic action.

153 Quote from Th. A. Kohut, "Psychohistory as History," 347, note 20. Of course, such a change would be possible as a result of the modification of the patient's personality (which is the direct goal of therapy).

154 Here, I am setting aside psychohistory's possible therapeutic goal, discussed above, in connection with contemporary society and to the psychohistorian himself.

155 It is at the point when Freud began treating his patients' (sometimes shocking) stories as fantasy, rather than as memories of real events, that the history of psychoanalysis begins.

156 F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, "The Transference Model in Psychohistory: A Critique," *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 4 (1977), no. 4: 12–13. Emphases in original.

However, supporters of the “clinical model” have an important argument to make. Sigmund Freud noted that psychological phenomena whose presence he recognized in his neurotic patients, through analysis, may also be found in the psyche of so-called healthy people, and that the study of psychopathology simply reveals particularly intense, or the most extreme, processes that apply to *every* human psyche. That having been said, it so happened that the therapeutic function of psychoanalysis contributed to a focus, above all, on the pathographic connotations of concepts and categories tied to depth psychology, not only within the psychological-psychiatric discourse, but also in all other fields where psychoanalytic thought was applicable. Thus, processes described by analysts were contrasted (sometimes against analysts’ intentions) with “healthy,” “normal” or “rational” thoughts and actions. Let us take the classic example of Anna Freud’s study of the ego’s so-called defensive mechanisms. We can conceive their compulsive and unconscious effects in terms of certain types of neuroses and their aetiology (of course, we found this approach in Anna Freud’s argumentation), but we may also conceive them (and this approach is just as strong in her work) simply as unconscious ways the individual copes more or less effectively with fears evoked by experiences with the external world and within the individual’s own psyche:

But the ego is victorious when its defensive measures effect their purpose, i.e. when they enable it to restrict the development of anxiety and unpleasure and so to transform the instincts that, even in difficult circumstances, some measure of gratification is secured, thereby establishing the most harmonious relations possible between the id, the superego, and the forces of the outside world.¹⁵⁷

Briefly put, in psychoanalytic thinking the strict separation between pathological phenomena studied in a clinical setting and such phenomena examined in the psychological processes of an “average” human being is unjustified. In contrast to what Weinstein, Platt and others have maintained, Peter Kutter emphasizes that “the phenomena of transference and countertransference occur in all kinds of interpersonal interactions. ... Early patterns of relations are repeated, for example, in all intimate relationships, even if only when we demand that a partner treat us as an ideal father (mother).”¹⁵⁸ So from the point

157 A. Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, 176. It is precisely for this reason that more recent psychoanalytic literature prefers the phrase “the defensive and adaptive mechanisms (functions) of the ego.” In this context, see E. H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, 83 ff.

158 P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza*, 175–176. Emphases in original.

of view of psychoanalytic theory of personality, a psychohistorian exploring the psychological dimension of history (human motivation in history) faces the need to study the same kind of phenomena as those that the therapist analyzes in his clinical practice – such as transference, fantasies, fears, traumatic experiences, dreams, resistance and models of behavior in specific types of situations (including regression cases). The similarity of the object of investigation (field of study) would therefore imply a need to refer to the same methods and research tools.

Scholars verbalized these controversies in psychohistory's methodological discourse (as, for example, Thomas A. Kohut did) in the form of criticism of the "psychohistorical method." Erik H. Erikson presented the model example of this method in the first part of *Young Man Luther* and in his methodological article "In Search of Gandhi."¹⁵⁹ As viewed by its opponents, this method violated the standard principles of historical research. Once one recognizes the similarity between the psychohistorian's research procedure and that of the analytical therapist, the problem of evidence indeed arises. On the one hand, the psychohistorian cannot deny the fact that he is not able to put the subject "on the couch" and that he cannot make use of free associations or dream recollections. Nor can he appeal to instances of transference and countertransference that develop during a psychoanalytical session. On the other hand, the argument can be made that a psychohistorian usually has a variety of source materials at his disposal that, at one level or another, document the entire life cycle of the character of interest. In this regard, William Saffady writes:

The kinds of information needed for the study of personality can be found most readily in three groups of items: (1) familiar manuscript materials, commonly found in collections of personal papers, (2) verbatim and nontextual records, and (3) memorabilia and similar miscellaneous materials. Generally, psychohistorians have made most effective use of familiar manuscript materials containing information dismissed by more conventional researchers as unimportant. Autobiographies, diaries, and letters have formed the nucleus of most of the psychohistorical research done to date.¹⁶⁰

As many authors have noticed, the course of a given individual's life and achievements tells us more about the essence of that individual's personality than

159 E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), 13–22; E. H. Erikson, "On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi."

160 W. Saffady, "Manuscripts and Psychohistory," *The American Archivist* 37 (1974), no. 4: 554.

facts from childhood.¹⁶¹ That having been said, lacking transference in relation to oneself, the researcher may nonetheless attempt to examine the relationships (including transference) that this individual has in relation to other people significant in his life.¹⁶² Beyond that, scholars often highlight the presence in sources of dream descriptions¹⁶³ and other kinds of material which historians usually disregard as irrelevant, but which can be used as a substitute for information that can only be obtained during the analytical session – free associations (Isaac Newton’s language exercise notebooks, caricatures produced by a young Theodore Roosevelt, or notebooks recording conversations that Ludwig van Beethoven had after he lost his hearing).¹⁶⁴ Finally, scholars have also pointed out that in the case of writers and artists of other types, scholars have a variety of materials which, as a product of the artist’s creative processes, can provide insight into his psyche’s dynamics.¹⁶⁵

Skeptics were inclined to view attempts to use psychoanalysis to analyze the “deep” content of such sources as unfounded or even fully fabricated speculation. They believed that, in texts interpreted in this way, psychohistorians

161 For example, Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 339; W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 192–193; J. W. Anderson, “The Methodology of Psychoanalytic Biography,” *JIH* 11 (1981), no. 3: 470–471. In this context, John Cody noticed that the subject of a psychobiography typically “has lived his entire life and has met death. Not only the development and mid-stages of his life are available for inspection but also its ultimate unfolding and final resolution. This means that in discovering the dominant psychological themes of his subject’s emotional evolution the psychoanalytical biographer has at his disposal a broader spectrum of behavior through more decades of life than has the analyst with a living patient.” J. Cody, *After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 5; Cody quoted in W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 204.

162 Saffady emphasized, for example, the usefulness of certain autobiographical materials that often contain “more emotion than fact and [are] therefore neglected by other researchers,” including the “revelatory” qualities of the diary. In this context, letters are often particularly important as they reveal “the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.” W. Saffady, “Manuscripts and Psychohistory,” 555–556.

163 Even in histories of ancient times! See, for example, T. W. Africa, “Psychohistory, Ancient History and Freud: The Descent into Avernus,” *Arethusa* 12 (1979): 5–34.

164 W. Saffady, “Manuscripts and Psychohistory,” 558; J. W. Anderson, “The Methodology of Psychoanalytic Biography,” 472; W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 194.

165 See also W. Saffady, “Manuscripts and Psychohistory,” 556–557. The above-mentioned author emphasized the importance of drafts and rough-copy versions of texts: “Emendations, corrections, and slips of the pen combine with changes in handwriting to reflect moods lost in the cold finality of print.”

find what are in fact non-existent references to, for example, the traumatic experiences of childhood. And on this fragile foundation, based on their own clinical experience, psychohistorians draw fundamental conclusions about historical characters and the dynamics of their personality.

Defenders of this research strategy have emphasized that interpretations based on analyses of the deep content of texts and other works are actually a standard research procedure in depth psychology; they point to clinical proof that symbols, whether verbal or visual, are significant on multiple levels, both conscious and unconscious. The theoretical space of the clinical research model – the argument goes – absolutely allows for such a research procedure.¹⁶⁶

Debate over the application of psychoanalytic techniques and the availability (or absence) of necessary empirical evidence has been going on since the beginning of psychohistory. It has been carried out in dozens of methodological articles, polemical letters, and psychohistorical monographs. Even syntheses have appeared containing arguments raised by various defenders of psychoanalytic psychohistory and outlining doubts and concerns raised by its opponents.¹⁶⁷ Examining these views, one gets the impression that the rhetoric is set in stone, and the same arguments were repeated without major changes from the early discussions of the 1950s through the violent debates of the 1970s and early 1980s. Thus, it seems impossible that anyone in these disputes would be able to convince opponents to change their opinion.

The “Hermeneutics of Suspicion” – Psychohistorical Innovation and Historical Source Critique

The hidden dimension of the debate presented above, an important aspect of which is the psychohistorian’s work with sources, involves the role and consequences of the research stance that I would call the “hermeneutics of suspicion.”¹⁶⁸ In this part of my reflections, I will try to “raise” this issue to the surface, which requires, however, a temporary return to selected elements of the psychoanalytic vision of the world and their epistemological consequences.

166 As an illustration of this matter, see in Part I the description of the debate surrounding *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*. For more on this matter, see below.

167 For example W. M. Runyan, “The Psychobiography Debate,” in W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 192–241; J. Szaluta, “Psychohistory For and Against,” in J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory*, 49–82.

168 This section is a version of T. Pawelec, “The Freudian ‘Hermeneutics of Suspicion’ and Historical Source Critique,” *Folia Philosophica* 34 (2015): 151–184. See also T. Ochowski, T. Pawelec, “Historia psychologiczna a problematyka źródeł.”

The “hermeneutics of suspicion” is embedded in the reality of depth psychology;¹⁶⁹ it is a determining factor in the cognitive attitude of every psychoanalyst, in part because it is tied to the unconscious, a crucial category in psychoanalytical thinking.¹⁷⁰ As we know, according to Freud and his followers, the unconscious “never rests.” Its contents actively attempt to break through to the sphere of consciousness, which the processes of repression (and other defense mechanisms) oppose; the so-called censorship function, in turn, means that eventually they can only succeed in a limited and compromised (and thus inadequate) form. Here, we find the first premise of Freudian epistemology: the symptoms grasped on the level of consciousness (such as parapraxes, free association, dreams) should be studied as *signs* of the processes taking place on deeper levels of the psyche and thus impossible to grasp directly. The point here is something more than the classic indicative (or signal) relations between the “overt” symptom and “hidden” pathology. The symptoms should be examined by the analyst as “marked by intentionality,” i.e. as messages carrying certain (though, at the given moment, veiled) meanings. In his work on Freudian thought, systemizing the hermeneutic tradition of interpreting psychoanalysis, Paweł Dybel writes:¹⁷¹

169 The argument that psychoanalysis is a type of hermeneutics – the art of interpreting what is “symbolic” (or, in a more cautious formula: what can be perceived/practiced as such) has long been present in the philosophical discourse, as well as in the minds of members of the psychoanalytic community. We can cite such names as Paul Ricoeur, Jürgen Habermas, Alfred Lorenzer, and Karl Jaspers (on the philosophical plane), or Roy Schafer, Ludwik Binswanger, H. J. Möller, George Klein, Jacques Lacan (within the psychoanalytic movement). For more, see P. Dybel, *Dialog i represja. Antynomie psychoanalizy Zygmunta Freuda* (Warszawa: Wyd. IFiS, 1995), part II; P. Dybel, *Okruchy psychoanalizy. Teoria Freuda pomiędzy hermeneutyką a poststrukturalizmem* (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), 153–283, 335–386; A. Pawliszyn, *Skryte podstawy rozumienia. Hermeneutyka a psychoanaliza* (Gdańsk: Wyd. UG, 1993).

170 “If Freud’s discovery had to be summed up in a single word, that word would without doubt have to be ‘unconscious.’” For this, see *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 474. For an expanded version of this definition, see *ibid.*, 474–476. Compare L. Chertok, R. de Saussure, *The Therapeutic Revolution: From Mesmer to Freud*, trans. from the French by R. H. Ahrenfeldt (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979), 183–184.

171 The hermeneutic tradition has developed in opposition to the rival “scientific,” “natural,” or “empirico-nomological” traditions. In the Founding Father’s writings, elements are present that legitimize both of these traditions (each has its own more detailed variants).

The oft-returning statement in Freud's works that pathological psychological phenomena ... are *meaningful* means that they are not exhausted in their literal sense (commonly perceived as senseless), but rather refer outside themselves toward the hidden meaning of a scene from the patient's childhood. ... This moment of revelation, the hint of a trace, is usually not present at all on the level of overt meaning of normal phenomena. ... The presence of this moment in pathological phenomena does not say much yet about the hidden meaning itself. Nevertheless, it brings some hope that the analyst can reach – through dialogue with the patient – those layers of his/her psyche in which the sources of his/her illness lie.¹⁷²

As Dybel notes elsewhere in the book:

At the base of Freud's interpretive proceedings lies the assumption that, behind the meanings of patients' behavior or statements, which are seemingly difficult to accept literally (or even completely incomprehensible), an additional layer of meaning [intention] is hidden that they are not aware of, and *which takes on a significant form in its senselessness*. This intention is not given directly ... but makes itself known allusively with the help of various types of empty *signifiants*, whose *signifié* can be found in the wider context of the patient's spiritual biography.¹⁷³

In this argumentation, Dybel accurately captures the fundamental significance of the *suspicious* attitude, a certain *lack of agreement* on the part of the analyst to accept the message directly available to him or communicated "outright," which leads him to undertake *a persistent effort to "look inward," to find the deeper, hidden layers*. Dybel writes:

The process of psychoanalytic interpretation ... consists in ... gradually overcoming the separation of a given phenomenon's *signifié* from its *signifiant* while extracting subsequent *signifiants* of the unconscious from the patient in the course of dialogue with him. The *signifiant* ... of pathological psychological phenomena therefore remains in a *deeply ambiguous (or, to be more precise, dual) relationship* with its hidden *signifié*. This relationship is composed of ... *the masking intention, as well as the unveiling one*. The masking intention attempts to create in the interpreter the impression that *the interpreted signifiant is its own signifié*. It wants to reassure him in his conviction that this *signifiant* means only what it means literally and is therefore completely "meaningless." He is to come to the conclusion that seeking some hidden meaning is unnecessary. The unveiling intention, on the other hand, (1) *is manifested in an exaggerated (thus, "attention-grabbing") attempt to cover up the hidden meaning, and (2) by way of the purely structural features of the overt meaning allusively refers to the hidden meaning*. An interpreter following it is to believe that in spite of appearances, behind the overt meaning of the phenomenon, a covert meaning is hidden,

172 P. Dybel, *Dialog i represja*, 93–94. Author's emphasis - T. P.

173 *Ibid.*, 98. Author's emphases – T. P.

which should be reached by reconstructing the missing intermediate elements. A psychoanalyst ... *does not allow himself to be deceived by the masking intention ... In it, he perceives precisely an attempt to hide and distort something completely different, more essential than what the overt meaning of the phenomenon declares.*¹⁷⁴

As we can see, the “hermeneutics of suspicion” – the directive to search for “deeper meaning,” purposefully hidden and, at the same time, perversely present in the directly available message – constitutes the foundation of analytic proceedings. Since the therapist encounters many levels of meaning tied to certain content or symbolism (in addition to “artfully” hiding one after the other), it turns out to be a *sine qua non* condition for successful psychoanalytic practice.¹⁷⁵ Transferred to the sphere of the sciences of man, it would transform and increase – so the argument goes – the possibilities of insight and analyses available to these disciplines.¹⁷⁶

Psychohistorians appropriated the above-mentioned directive along with other “mental baggage” from the psychoanalytic theoretical perspective, and they did so practically without reflection (automatically), because in its superficial reception the “hermeneutics of suspicions” could appear to them as a kind of powerful variant, or radicalization, of history’s standard skepticism, developed in connection with the critique of the historical source. And yet – as I documented above – both the search for deeper meanings and the resulting insights into sources were regularly met with reluctant acceptance, or even hostile rejection, from the vast majority of historians. So, did psychohistorians step beyond the rules of criticism accepted by other perspectives in historical scholarship, and if yes, in what way?

174 P. Dybel, *Dialog i represja*, 100–101. Author’s emphases – T. P.

175 Noteworthy, as mentioned above, a “proper” history of psychoanalysis usually begins with the moment in which Freud began treating the often shocking stories of his patients (the sphere of overt meaning) rather as fantasies (let us immediately add – meaningful fantasies) than as memories of real occurrences; significantly, it is at this moment that he stood at the threshold of the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” See the literature cited in footnote 19 near the beginning of this Part.

176 “The significance of various psychoanalytical theories for individual disciplines in the humanities consisted (and consists) in the fact that a certain way of looking at what is usually called the ‘human psyche’ was formed. This view ... led to a completely different understanding of all man’s actions and his various cultural products. Contact with classical texts in the psychoanalytic tradition ... teaches us, above all, a certain type of sensitivity. Once acquired, it allows us to turn our attention to a series of seemingly accidental aspects of the investigated phenomena, whose meaning and function had hitherto been rejected.” P. Dybel, *Okruchy psychoanalizy*, 25–26.

Usually, source critique is defined as a series of investigative actions serving to define the origin, authenticity, and credibility of a historical source.¹⁷⁷ Debate has often surrounded the separation or distinction of elements perceived as a “trace” or “remnant” of the past within the source as either authentic, worthless, or unreliable. Older methodological treatises found the essence of the scientific historical method precisely in the critical study of sources.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, detailed sets of rules for external and internal critique (usually communicated by way of a series of examples illustrating specific “model” acts, individual critical solutions) fill the greater part – sometimes even more – of such works as Marcell Handelman’s *Historyka* or Charles Langlois and Charles Seignobos’ *Introduction aux études historiques*.¹⁷⁹ Since the source is to be an empirical “link” to the historical fact sought by the scholar in history, we should ascertain whether it really is what it seems to be in the historian’s eyes, whether it is not deceiving him intentionally or otherwise.¹⁸⁰ Herein lies the essence of the skepticism typical of a classically-understood critical approach toward historical sources. And

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- 177 B. Miśkiewicz, *Wstęp do badań historycznych* (Warszawa-Poznań: PWN, 1985), 210. See also J. Topolski, *Methodology of History*, trans. from the Polish by O. Wojtasiewicz (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976), 431–453. Compare L. Jordano, *History in Practice* (London-Oxford-New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 159–160.
- 178 It is precisely the codification of the “classical” rules of critique of written sources (especially documents, as the most cognitively valuable type of such sources), which occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that is recognized as an essential step from history/”writing” to history/”science.” For more, see E. Breisach, *Historiography*, 171–227; D. R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1998), 188–211; A. F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, 273–289; J. W. Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing*, vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1942), 3–57.
- 179 For example, in the last of the above-mentioned treaties (more precisely, in the 350-page English version, which I used) criticism occupy nearly 140 pages, and the problem of determining facts based on the results of this criticism (i.e. their “extraction” from sources) occupies not quite 20 pages. Viewed from the traditional perspective, this last element clearly appears as not very problematic. Ch. Langlois, Ch. Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, trans. from the French by G. G. Berry (London: Duckworth, 1898).
- 180 That is, whether the informer – the creator of the source transmission – is not deceiving him. The wording used in a modern methodological textbook is significant in this context: “As source critique, we consider such acquisition of knowledge about the source that it [i.e. the source—T.P.] becomes a source of ready-to-use information.” J. Topolski, *Wprowadzenie do historii* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1998), 46.

it is here that we also find its limits. “Suspicion” ended at that moment when a source successfully passed the critique.¹⁸¹ From that moment on, the historian was allowed to accept that the information contained within it¹⁸² “directly” communicated “what it was really like” in the past. Thus, the *signifiant* merged with its *signifié*, and the researcher of history believed that he had gained full (if not necessarily exhaustive) access to past facts by virtue of source information. As Edward H. Carr writes in retrospect (and somewhat sarcastically): “The nineteenth-century fetishism of facts was completed and justified by a fetishism of documents. The documents were the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of facts. The reverent historian approached them with bowed head and spoke of them in awed tones. If you find it in the documents, it is so.”¹⁸³

The psychoanalytic “hermeneutics of suspicion” shares the historian’s classical approach to sources, in that both share an initial mistrust toward evidence. But a fundamental difference soon appears. In accordance with the position presented above, while the historian wants to discern/ascertain whether he can accept the information/data present on the level of literal meaning (“ready-made” source information), the psychoanalyst automatically treats the literal meaning of symptoms as a veil or mask, which we must “look behind.” In the first case, there is a readiness to accept (under conditions defined by the rules of critique) the “overt meaning.” In the second case, the overt meaning, as a rule, is only accepted to the degree that the therapist perceives an allusion in it, a masked reference to an enigmatic covert meaning.

181 It is appropriate to note that this test of critique, in the way it was conducted, was often very complex. Its results did not have to be unambiguous – when, for example, they showed the place and scope of “falsification” of a given document (“here” it is authentic, “there” it is not) or determined the degree to which the author of a given document was informed or partial (“here” it is credible, “there” it is not). The “exemplary” model of presenting the rules of critique served precisely to demonstrate this complexity and ambiguity. Regarding the systematic reconstruction of critical reasoning developed around the source, conducted from the perspective of formal logic and the general methodology of science, see J. Giedymin, *Z problemów logicznych analizy historycznej* (Poznań: PWN, 1961).

182 The traditional conception declared that the source essentially contains “ready-made” information about the past, which historians – after conducting critique – later “extract” from it. For more on the classical concept of the historical source, see J. Kolbuszewska, “Problem źródła w klasycznej XIX-wiecznej historiografii,” in *Historyk wobec źródeł*, 13–21.

183 E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 16.

Of course, it is worth noting that the classical nineteenth-century concept of the source as something ready-made and waiting to be used in research does not adequately express the understanding of history's empirical base as shared by later generations of historians. Over the course of the twentieth century in particular, the conviction that the historian plays an active role in the process of examining sources became widespread. This role was no longer reduced simply to the act of "pulling" given material (sources in a potential sense) into the framework of historical research, and then of critically "reading" the information contained therein. Rather, historians "interpret sources;" they "pose questions to them and seek answers to those questions."¹⁸⁴ In this way, they "valorize" the sphere (presented now as a creative "space" for the historian's cognitive activities) of the historian's reasoning surrounding (and on the basis of) direct source data.¹⁸⁵ The data itself was also increasingly perceived as being epistemologically dependent on the historian (or, in a more radical version, as being created by the historian over the course of work with a source within the boundaries of non-source-based knowledge.)¹⁸⁶ In this context, the idea

184 A paraphrase of Adam Kersten's statements from his study, *Na tropach Napierskiego* (Warszawa: PIW, 1970), 25. Regarding this issue, John H. Arnold (among others) wrote the following: "The sources do not 'speak for themselves' and never have done. They speak for others, now dead and forever gone. Sources may have voices – plural – which can suggest directions and prompt questions, leading to further sources. But they lack volition: they come alive when the historian reanimates them. And although sources are a beginning, the historian is present before and after, using skills and making choices. Why this document and not another? ... Which questions to pursue, which paths to take?" J. H. Arnold: *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 77.

185 The attempt at a holistic methodological reconstruction of interpretive practices, developed with reference to historical sources, can be found in a series of works by Tadeusz Buksiński. See especially T. Buksiński, *Zasady i metody interpretacji tekstów źródłowych* (Poznań: UAM, 1991); T. Buksiński, *Interpretacja źródeł historycznych pisaných* (Warszawa–Poznań: PWN, 1992). For more in general on interpretation in the humanities, see W. Wrzosek, "Interpretacja a narracja," in *Metodologiczne problemy narracji historycznej*, ed. J. Pomorski (Lublin: UMCS, 1990), 129–156.

186 J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 256 ff. The most radical position in this context states that the "source-character" of the said materials (not so much the fact of being a source "to," as of being a source "in general" – also a potential source) is established by historians within the boundaries of the culture in which they participate. W. Wrzosek, "Źródło historyczne jako alibi realistyczne historyka," in *Historik wobec źródeł*, 23–38.

appeared of “transcending the source perspective,” reaching its “deeper” or “hidden” layers; at that point, source information that is more directly “graspable” (let us say: available on the “surface” – that is, created with the minimal participation of the researcher’s “non-source-based” knowledge) functions as indicative information relative to information not directly within one’s grasp.

It seems that such a view of the historian’s source work dovetails nicely with the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” A researcher’s skepticism – one could argue – does not end at the moment when he successfully conducts an external and internal critique of a source. The data made available, thanks to this critique, is only a point of departure for further cognitive penetration of the source, penetration based on the suspicion (or rather the conviction) that “surface” information can/must lead to other information that makes up a source’s “hidden reality.” The latter may inform us about deeper levels of the historical process¹⁸⁷ that are inaccessible to direct human perception.¹⁸⁸ In such a process, it turns out that the historian’s creative interpretive effort, which attempts to transcend the perspective of the literal message and see “beyond it” (beginning with questions guided by non-source-based knowledge/theory), is key.

However, a fundamental difference in relation to psychoanalytical hermeneutics remains. The “literal message” of the source emerges here as an indicator of content contained in its deeper layers, but it is not assumed that it realizes (or even must realize) some “masking intention” (to be “overcome” hermeneutically), all the less so given that within its framework some dialectics of hiding and simultaneous revealing would have to occur in parallel with the dialectics of masking-revealing which an analyst studying a patient’s symptoms encounters (as an obstacle and a key at the same time). Therefore, though the “hermeneutics of suspicion” appears, superficially, to be compatible with the historian’s standard critical approach toward sources, in the end it goes noticeably beyond that standard. The procedures and insights spawned by the “hermeneutics of suspicion” and thus available to psychohistorians were undoubtedly something quite new in the field of historical sources and their critique. That having been said, as we know, none of this raised the position of psychohistorians in the eyes of those within the profession. All too often, they were perceived as doing

187 For a representative of modernist social history, this would be, for example, the structural dimension of reality; for an economic historian – the sphere of “impersonal” economic relations and processes; and for an “anthropologizing” historian – cultural patterns or the mental instruments that apply to given societies of the past.

188 That is inaccessible to the perception of the informer – the “creators” of the source.

something too blatantly different from what could, and should, be done in “Clio’s garden.”

Explanation in Psychohistory

In discussions about psychohistorical methodology, another important issue involves that of explanation, an issue that contained several basic dilemmas tied to psychohistorical method.¹⁸⁹ Faye Crosby and Travis Crosby, considering the decades-long tradition of practicing psychobiography and psychohistory, identified two competing (though sometimes employed within the same work) explanatory models which they referred to as (1) the causal explanation and (2) the coherent whole explanation.¹⁹⁰

The Crosbys state that psychohistorical causal explanation essentially means tying an (adult) individual’s behavior with childhood experiences as part of a search for answers to such questions as: “Why was this person the way he was? Why did this group behave the way it did?” On the other hand, coherent whole explanations are aimed at constructing an integrated overall model that would involve diverse data relating to the behavior of an individual or individuals, in response to such questions as: “What was this person like? What was this group like?”

Therefore, a causal explanation in psychohistory would have a deductive and diachronic character. On the basis of defined, generalized relationships, it would connect early experiences, traumas and developmental processes with subsequent general personality traits (character, inclinations toward specific patterns of emotional and cognitive responses) and types of relationships with other people established by examined individuals and groups. In a more extreme form, it would lead to the direct explanation of specific human behaviors through the influence of specific past experiences. The basis of reasoning here is the thesis that psychoanalysis is conceived as a theory – that is, a set of general theorems describing the regularities by which the human psyche

189 “What I explain and how I explain it depends not only on the knowledge of these or other research techniques, but first and foremost on how I imagine the world and its relationships. This knowledge determines which components of the world should be explained in its light, and one way or another offers up a pool of explanatory factors.” J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 371.

190 F. Crosby, T. Crosby, “Psychobiography and Psychohistory,” 195–254. Here, the authors emphasized that these models are a “variant” of explanatory models that generally characterize history. F. Crosby, “Evaluating Psychohistorical Explanations,” 13.

functions and develops. The tradition of such a causal explanation model goes back to Freud's psychohistorical exercises and early works in the field of applied psychoanalysis.

For supporters of such a model of explanation, this was an expression of psychohistory's scientific nature; in this way, as in the social sciences and emerging trends within the "new history," psychohistory could refer to an explicitly formulated theoretical background. Thanks to this, psychohistory would be able to recognize the regularities of the reality it had penetrated and, in effect, to find the hidden order of things behind the external chaos of phenomena.¹⁹¹ This belief found its most radical form in the ideas of L. deMause regarding the nomothetic character of psychohistory as a new type of science, but it was typical – in less extreme variants – for all those psychohistorians who were willing to see in psychoanalysis the theoretical basis for general human psychology.

However, such an explanation raised concerns among both psychohistorians and "external" critics. Above all, these concerns involved methodological issues, and especially the problem of empirical evidence. In the above-mentioned study, Faye Crosby and Travis Crosby recognized the basic difficulty that the causal model posed when the matter at hand is the shortage of source material from childhood, which means both the lack of factual data and the inability to determine the affective and emotional significance that certified (source-confirmed) facts and events had in the context of particular figures under examination. In their opinion, such data seems to be necessary when a scholar refers to psychoanalytic theories as the basis for explanation. However, most importantly, the authors' negatively assessed the strategies used by psychohistorians to overcome such shortcomings. What they point to are tendencies on the part of researchers to carry out a "substitute" operation by applying general claims derived from clinical knowledge to the specific mental processes of historical figures,¹⁹² and to concur with the thesis that there are regularities in unconscious processes, which allow for deductive reasoning and thereby for explanations for "why people in adulthood are the way they are."¹⁹³ Taken

191 This is, after all, a variant of Carl G. Hempel's classic deductive-nomological model of explanation.

192 "In so doing, they misapply the legitimate use made by analysts of clinical studies as supplementary guides to the therapeutic dialogue." F. Crosby, T. Crosby, "Psychobiography and Psychohistory," 200.

193 "This pulls the unconscious out of its psychoanalytic context, where it is regarded far more tentatively as only a part of a larger therapeutic process and where it functions mainly as a broad canvas for the trial-and-error sketches of the analyst." *Ibid.*

together, these two tendencies bring in their wake two related consequences. First, reductionist “originology,” within which (contrary to the principle of multiple determinants) there are specific reasons that lead (in the unconscious), by virtue of “unchanging psychic laws,” to specific effects.¹⁹⁴ And second, a situation in which modern clinical data replaces concrete, source-based information about the past that psychohistorians otherwise lack.¹⁹⁵ Which is why so many psychohistorians have been accused of “unfounded speculation.” For example, one scholar wrote that in *Young Man Luther*, Erikson “literally invents little Martin’s relation to his mother, using as a basis (as a ‘document’) the behavior of Luther the man.” The reformer’s famous “fit in the choir” was equally “invented.”¹⁹⁶ Critics argued that on a similar basis, R. Waite tried to justify the conclusion that Adolf Hitler underwent particularly rigorous toilet training in infancy, and Alexander and Juliette George argued that Woodrow Wilson had unconscious feelings of hostility toward his father.

In this context, doubts raised in relation to the credibility of psychoanalytic theories themselves are no less important, especially in their “genetic” dimension – that is, those parts of these theories that depict relationships regarding the ways, and extent to which, childhood traumas and other experiences determine the adult character and behavior. It is sometimes said that this aspect of depth psychology theory is one of its weakest. Critics argue that even if many psychoanalytical concepts (such as those describing how defense mechanisms work) have gained at least partial acceptance (and both clinical and experimental confirmation) even among skeptics within academic psychology, the same cannot be said about claims regarding the relationship between childhood experiences and adult behavior.

However, defending themselves against these allegations, many psychohistorians argue that:

194 For example, the loss of, say, a younger brother in childhood inevitably causes unconscious guilt in the subject.

195 This would be the case when the psychohistorian, for example, draws conclusions about the occurrence in the hero’s childhood of specific experiences only on the basis of certain patterns of behavior in adulthood. The major (often “silent”) premise of deductive reasoning (i.e. syllogism) is the theorem on the occurrence of dependence between a given experience and a given behavior pattern formulated on the basis of modern clinical practice.

196 S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 27; Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 338–339.

Psychoanalytic theory has discovered conflicts and motives believed to be operative to some degree in all lives, and that when many pieces of evidence are available the theory can sometimes be used to perceive relationships among the authentic bits of evidence, and to make inferences about the rough structure of missing pieces of evidence.

As John Cody puts it:

Psychoanalysis is not alone among sciences in providing a means whereby the existence of what is not directly perceptible can be inferred. Thus, the psychoanalytical interpretation of the life of a historical figure is in certain respects comparable to the reassembling of a fossil skeleton. And when the life under consideration has been rent by a psychological cataclysm, the interpretative reconstruction is not unlike the piecing together of the fragments of an aircraft that has exploded in flight. In the first instance the paleontologist dovetails, the scattered bones according to the laws of comparative anatomy; the progression of vertebrae, for example, have a known and more or less constant relationship to each other throughout the animal kingdom. In the second example, the engineer assembles the shattered metal of the aircraft on a scaffold corresponding to the known dimensions of the type of place to which the wreckage belongs; when all the available pieces are laid out in this way, a sequence of stresses becomes discernible whose concentric waves lead back to and establish the point of origin of the explosion. In either example, what provides the gestalt and guides the interpretation placed on each discrete particle is a body of general knowledge – the laws of bone structure in the one case, the structure or blueprints in the other.¹⁹⁷

According to its advocates, the coherent whole explanation¹⁹⁸ (which I would call a model of structural and contextual explanation) would allow scholars to avoid all these problems. In this case, the psychohistorian should strive to identify repetitive patterns of behavior and emotional responses alongside the broader contexts in which they occur. The psychoanalytic perspective allows him to classify personality traits and to suggest relationships between them. As Joseph Woods notes with regard to research on the individual:

197 Cody's statements (*After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson*, 1–2) are quoted in W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 207. One might notice that Marc Bloch also called for such reasoning in his *The Historian's Craft* (a retrogressive transition from the result to the search for the causes and origins of examined phenomena).

198 In fact, one may wonder whether this model is closer to a certain form of qualified description (which Topolski sometimes referred to as a structural explanation) than to an explanation *sensu stricto*. In any case, it undoubtedly remains within what Wrzosek called interpretation. See W. Wrzosek, "Interpretacja a narracja," 129–156; J. Topolski, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 414–418.

Psychoanalytic theory enables the biographer to see, in examining the mature life of a character, behavior that he might not otherwise notice: alteration between active and passive states, how he relates to people, or whether his behavior indicates that he has not relinquished fantasies of omnipotence, whether he is burdened with an unconscious sense of guilt; and to show how these constructs enable us to understand the character more deeply. One does not, in short, have to know the earliest reasons why a character seems incapable of regarding other people except as “there” to meet his needs, in order to notice that he does relate to people in such an infantile way.¹⁹⁹

In other words, a certain type of *Gestalt* (when we talk about psychobiographical studies) or personality modal (in the case of group psychohistory) is constructed, which is expressed in psychoanalytic terms, and which becomes the basis for interpreting specific behaviors of examined historical figures.²⁰⁰

In this case, of course, difficulties disappear that are associated with childhood issues and the lack of material that the psychoanalyst has at his disposal during therapy.²⁰¹ Here, the risk of “reductionism,” “originology,” and ahistoricism seems to be reduced as well, because it is no longer necessary to replace the source material (in the historical sense of the word) with current clinical data.

The use of psychoanalytic theory also looks different in the coherent whole explanation. Here, it is not treated as a reservoir of major premises for deductive reasoning (i.e. syllogisms), but rather it:

Provides a set of conceptual tools that can be used in a flexible and partly idiographic way; they are flexible enough to be used to construct interpretations of a wide range of particular patterns of individual behavior. ... The theory identifies a large number of mechanisms and processes, which can then be used in constructing interpretations of the particular patterns found within the individual case.²⁰²

199 J. Woods, “Some Considerations on Psycho-History,” 729.

200 See F. Crosby, “Evaluating Psychohistorical Explanations,” 9–13; F. Crosby, T. Crosby, “Psychobiography and Psychohistory,” 218–226 and 240–242; A. L. George, J. L. George, “Preface to Dover Edition,” in A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House*, v-xiv.

201 Alexander and Juliette George, moreover, emphasize that the psychoanalyst needs such material not so much in order to make a diagnosis, i.e. to “understand the patient,” as how to conduct therapy, i.e. to remove pathological symptoms and modify the patient’s personality. *Ibid.*, vii.

202 W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 221. Compare Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 351, footnote 26.

Adopting such a strategy is tied to the preference for a hermeneutic rather than a scientific understanding of psychoanalysis, which leads to the vision of psychohistory as an idiographic and understanding (i.e. *verstehen*-type) discipline, based on empathy.²⁰³ In the wider perspective, a preference for the coherent whole explanation is an expression of faith in the fundamental, methodological affinity that psychohistorical investigations have with traditional, idiographic, and narrative history, which remains close to the hearts of many of those psychohistorians who feel attached to the historians' guild.

Psychohistorical Reductionism

One question closely tied to the issue of explanation is reductionism²⁰⁴ (understood in various ways) in psychoanalytic psychohistory. It is sometimes said, for example, that a proponent of psychoanalysis in history reduces the historical character under examination to true or supposed symptoms of psychopathology arising from unresolved complexes, fixations on traumatic childhood experiences, etc.²⁰⁵ For the most part, psychohistorians manage this accusation quite easily by reasonably pointing out that contemporary psychohistorical

203 Unlike what is often the case in the humanities, where empathy is considered a flawed variant of humanistic interpretation, empathy in psychoanalytic thought is defined as a full-fledged cognitive procedure – namely as a “mode of perceiving by vicariously experiencing (in a limited way) the psychological state of another person. ... The capacity to empathize is thought to be developmentally related to preverbal mother-infant interactions in which there is a concordance of wish, need, and response. It is an essential prerequisite for the practice of psychoanalysis. In the analytic situation empathy derives in part from the analyst's evenly suspended attention and the developed autonomy that is part of his or her work ego. Analysts do not view empathy as a mystical or transcendent experience. ... Empathy, therefore, is a temporary, partial ego regression in the service of the analytic process, permitting an easily reversible trial identification with the analysand. ... Empathy is pre-conscious, wordless and automatic. ... From the perspective of psychoanalytic self psychology, empathy means a suitable and appropriate perception of the patient's feelings and needs.” See “Empathy,” in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 67. For more on psychohistory as an “empathetic” discipline, see Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History.”

204 For more on the “reductive fallacy” in history, see D. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (London: Routledge, 1970), 172–174.

205 For a list of such voices, see W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 208–209 and J. W. Anderson, “The Methodology of Psychological Biography,” 456–458.

writing has already departed far from the pathographic profile that characterized the early psychobiography and psychohistory of the interwar years.

A more difficult problem involves this same accusation in another form, one which identifies a “reductive fallacy” in the widespread explanatory strategy based on references to childhood experiences as the basis for understanding human activities in history. Following the theses put forward by Sigmund Freud and several later theoreticians of depth psychology, many psychohistorians have seemed to assume that “the child is father to the man.”²⁰⁶ As Peter Loewenberg writes: “Today it is widely recognized that the emotional constellation of the childhood years is decisive for the future psychological health and normality of the adult. ... Imbalance in the fulfillment of essential psychic and bodily needs in childhood results in lasting psychological malformations.”²⁰⁷ According to critics, this minimizes the significance of all subsequent processes and experiences – in the sense that the role they play both as determinants of character or personality and as sources for the explanation of a given character’s specific actions is minimalized. In an attempt to blunt this criticism, defenders of psychohistory have emphasized the probabilistic nature of the relationship between childhood experiences and adult personality and behavior and the usefulness of that relationship as a framework. At the same time, they point to the fact that, despite the great emphasis that Freud originally placed on the role of childhood experiences, psychohistory’s contemporary psychoanalytical theoretical basis (see comments on Erikson’s stage concept or Kohut’s self psychology) leaves wide theoretical space to capture determinants of human personality and human action not tied to early-childhood and traumatic experiences.²⁰⁸

206 On this matter, Freud claimed, among other things: “Analytic experience has convinced us of the complete truth of the assertion so often to be heard that the child is psychologically father to the adult, and that the events of his first years are of paramount importance for his whole later life.” See S. Freud, “An Outline of Psychoanalysis,” in *SE*, vol. 23 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 187.

207 P. Loewenberg, “The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort,” 257. And as Frank Manuel pointed out: “... while life experiences modify and alter a basic structure, the earliest impressions and traumas are the most potent and pervasive.” F. Manuel: *A Portrait of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 5.

208 Which even some “outside” skeptics tended to admit – like Lawrence Stone as cited by Runyan. In his statement, Runyan extracts an additional sub-variant of this version of reductionism, writing – as Mack did – about “eventism” – that is, “the discovery in some important episode in a man’s life of not only the prototype of

However, a different variant of the accusation of reductionism posed the most serious difficulties, one that came in the form of the argument that proponents of psychohistory, focusing on the past's psychological dimension, necessarily ignored its other aspects. In this case, psychohistorians' common defense boiled down to arguments pointing out that this type of reductionism was gradually weakening, and that the profession was thus on the path to "overcoming" it. Others emphasized that this problem is only an expression of a kind of "division of labor" within the historical profession, one that comes as the result of the fact that historical phenomena are multidimensional and have multiple determinants. As part of this division and the desire to achieve a comprehensive historical explanation, psychohistory – with its exploration of the psychological side of history – adds its own "brick" to a structure that is complementary in nature but does not replace alternative perspectives and explanatory models.²⁰⁹ That having been said, at least some psychohistorians accepted the underlying charge of overt or hidden psychologism; on the basis of a particularly defined activism and the thesis about the subjective (i.e. active) role played by man in history, they defended the legitimacy of conceiving the historical process as one that is completely mediated by the mental apparatus of the human being – the creator of history.²¹⁰

Psychohistorical Ahistoricism

The issue of "ahistoricism" in psychohistorical research was an extremely sensitive aspect of the dispute over method in psychohistory. According to the less ambitious (but more commonly articulated) version of this accusation,

his behavior but *the* turning point in his life from which all subsequent events and work are derived." W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 209. Precisely in this case, we can easily dismiss this allegation by recalling numerous psychological studies devoted to the effects of traumatic injuries powerful enough to indeed permanently "mark" the personalities of people affected (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder – PTSD).

209 This argument was made primarily by those psychohistorians who sought to develop psychohistory as a component of academic historical writing, such as Kohut, Loewenberg, Mazlish, and Schoenwald.

210 See for example R. Binion: "Doing Psychohistory," in R. Binion, *Soundings*, 116–126; R. Binion, "Reductionism," *Clio's Psyche* 2 (1996), no. 2: 73–75. See also arguments made by L. deMause, who postulated "setting Marx on his head and Hegel back on his feet," along with the predilection of his supporters to study the transformations of "group fantasy" perceived as a key determinant in the actions of both individuals and large human groups.

psychohistorians tend to insufficiently take into account the specific historical context of phenomena under examination. While one could certainly point to Freud in this regard, who in his studies of Leonardo da Vinci was unable to view some of Leonardo's behavior as a reflection of habits exhibited by Renaissance artists in general, psychohistorians today, who usually have university training in history, reasonably treat this accusation as biased and unfair.

The case is different with a more sophisticated form of the ahistoricism allegation, according to which adepts of the psychoanalytical study of history refer in their studies to culturally (and thus historically) invariant determinants of individual and collective actions. This allegation also appeared in a more specific version, which was that the psychohistory's psychoanalytical-theoretical basis is "incurably" rooted in a specific historical and cultural era, that it actually reflects a certain aspect of self-knowledge within the *fin de siècle* middle class (or more broadly, in the Western industrial and post-industrial era). Thus, investigations carried out on this basis inevitably lead to cultural imputation – the projection of the motifs and psychological dynamics of one particular era onto another. Both forms of this accusation pointed directly to the practice of referring to contemporary clinical evidence as a glaring manifestation of psychohistory's lack of sensitivity to the context of time, place, and culture. Taking up the gauntlet, psychohistorians realized that something fundamental to historical scholarship was at stake. Probably every historian would subscribe to the following statement by D. Stannard: "Perhaps the single most important achievement of modern historical thinking has been the growing recognition on the part of the historian that life in the past was marked by a fundamental social and cognitive differentness from that prevailing in our own time."²¹¹ Responding to such criticism, Th. A. Kohut notices, however that "every historical interpretation, even the most traditional, presupposes the existence of certain human regularities and is based on contemporary assumptions and even contemporary evidence."²¹² Let us remember that contemporary meta-historical and philosophical reflection has still not given up the search for the possibility of "breaking free" from the cage of cultural limitation in examining the world (e.g. by exploring categories of "experiences," the "other," and

211 D. Stannard, *Shrinking History*, 151.

212 Th. A. Kohut, "Psychohistory as History," 342. See also P. Gay's reflections on the historical limitations of the motivating interests that historians use so widely in their explanations of human actions based on a simplified humanistic interpretation. Gay, *Freud for Historians*, 99–115.

“dialogue”).²¹³ Psychohistorians are “absolved” by the presence of quite analogous problems within for example cliometric economic history, what with its ahistorical idea of participating freely in the *homo oeconomicus* market game.

Methodological Issues in Psychohistory's Basic Research Fields

The above-mentioned methodological problems specific to psychohistory as a whole notwithstanding, the psychohistorical community has confronted many other issues, especially those arising from the nature of its particular research fields; each of these fields has generated certain difficulties or “challenges” in the theoretical sphere. This part of my reflections will therefore focus on:

1. Discussion of the possibilities, conditions, and goals of psychohistorical (psychoanalytical) biography.
2. The significance, tasks and source foundations of the history of childhood understood as a component and/or foundation of psychohistory.
3. The challenges of group psychohistory, i.e. primarily ways to conceptualize this area of inquiry in a psychoanalytical perspective.

Psychobiography

No doubt, theoretical and methodological discussions have focused most on psychobiographical writing, which in large part is due to the fact that psychobiography is the oldest “branch” of psychohistory. Psychobiography has also been an area in which the field's interdisciplinary character was most clearly visible. Thus, political scientists, art historians, literary historians, psychologists, psychoanalysts, and historians, spoke about the methodological problems associated with writing psychological and psychoanalytical biographies and the importance of such works in a given academic discipline. Many issues or questions of fundamental importance for the methodology and research practice of psychohistory in general were initially articulated and discussed precisely as problems related to psychobiography. It was only the further development of psychohistorical inquiries and the expanded scope of psychohistorians' interests that raised them to the rank of issues concerning not just a no longer separate field of research on the human individual in history but rather the psychohistorical undertaking *tout court*. Thus, it was first here that the issue of reductionism in psychohistorical explanations (understood either

213 In this context, see E. Domańska, *Mikrohistorie*.

as “originology,” or as a tendency to take a pathographic approach, or as ignoring non-psychological determinants of a given process) was raised. In discussions about the psychoanalytical biography, critics also raised the issue of ahistoricism in such inquiries. Another important issue for the entire paradigm that “emerged” in the psychobiographical debate was the matter of the selection of psychological theory: scholars considered the relative value of various psychoanalytical “options,” along with the possibility of using theoretical propositions other than depth psychology. They also discussed extensively psychobiography’s source base, the usefulness of cognitive strategies developed in the clinical setting, and the applicability of the clinical conceptual apparatus. These discussions repeated the same *pro* and *con* arguments²¹⁴ that set the contours of the broader debate over psychohistory. Therefore, we may state that the theoretical and methodological discussion about the possibilities and conditions for writing psychobiography determined the shape of the debate over psychohistory and, to a great extent, the overall dimensions of psychohistorical methodological thought.²¹⁵

However, in psychobiography there are challenges more specific to this type of psychohistorical inquiry which naturally found expression in the relevant theoretical reflection. Among the issues discussed here, the one widely considered the “most important methodological issue” was transference developing between the psychobiographer and his protagonist over the course of research and the construction of the biographical narrative.²¹⁶ In this context the

214 Beyond the above-cited texts by W. M. Runyan, J. Anderson, B. Glad, M. Bregman, D. Arzt, H. Gatzke, D. Orlow, J. Mack and M. Shore, let me also mention J. Gedo, “The Methodology of Psychoanalytic Biography,” *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 20 (1972): 639–649; Th. Flanagan, “Problems of Psychobiography,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 89 (1982), no. 3: 596–610. See also texts by W. T. Schultz, D. P. McAdams, A. C. Elms and K. Isaacson contained in the first, theoretical part of *Handbook of Psychobiography*, 3–132.

215 For perhaps the best illustration of this, see a description of the methodological challenges facing the psychobiographer, in H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, 162–168.

216 *Ibid.*, 166. Because what we are talking about here are the attitudes, feelings, and desires that the subject (i.e. biographer) unwittingly develops in relation to the object (i.e. the biography’s protagonist), one should formally talk about countertransference – as in clinical terminology, by which we define the unconscious reaction of the subject (i.e. the analyst) in relation to the examined object (i.e. the patient). The term “transference” is reserved only for the patient’s feelings and attitudes toward the analyst. However, the (usually dead) protagonist of a biography is, of course, unable to develop any reactions to his biographer, so this distinction is unnecessary.

concept of transference was understood quite broadly, referring to the entirety of emotional and psychological bonds that occur in this situation, or – using E. Schepeler words – simply “the psychobiographer’s personal unconscious bias.” Schepeler writes:

The term will include the biographer’s empathic responses to the unusual life histories or writings of brilliant biographical subjects. The biographer’s transference may also encompass the operation of a variety of defense mechanisms. Madness, depression, or suicide of the biographical subject may all evoke anxieties in the psychobiographer, especially if parallel sequences of circumstantial anticipatory events can be seen in the lives of biographer and biographical subject. . . . Defensive mechanisms then lead to selective perceptions, and, as a result, to distortions in the recording and interpretation of biographical material. Because of personal idiosyncrasies in each biographer’s life, episodes that seem neutral to one investigator may trigger strong emotional feelings in another, reevoking unsolved inner conflicts. Also, the psychobiographer may fantasize potential reactions of the subject to his interpretations; these “responses” will nevertheless remain in the realm of the psychobiographer’s own (transferential) projections.²¹⁷

In short, the point is that scholars recognized that the biographer’s personality (psyche), along with his entire life experience, was a factor of primary importance in the process of biographical research. Discussion was aimed at demonstrating that this fact should not be perceived merely as something that disrupts the acquisition of significant knowledge about the human subject under investigation and that thus requires specific “corrective” measures.²¹⁸ Because as John Mack noted, “such ‘countertransference’ reactions to the subject can, if understood, constitute a great asset for the psychologist-biographer, permitting flexible identifications and deepening his insight into the subject’s inner world and the connection between that world and the work or actions that resulted from it.”²¹⁹ As we can see, there are a number of issues involved in

See E. Schepeler, “The Biographer’s Transference: A Chapter in Psychobiographical Epistemology,” *Biography* 13 (1990), no. 2: 114.

217 *Ibid.*, 114–115.

218 Schepeler includes here, among other things, analysis of biographies by a given author to identify the repetition of specific motifs or patterns, a comparison of the point of view of a given psychobiographer with others writing about that same character, a critical study of the life history of the psychobiographer himself. *Ibid.*, 124–125.

219 J. E. Mack, “Psychoanalysis and Historical Biography,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 19 (1971), no. 1: 155.

the “steering”²²⁰ of the research process that have great significance for psychobiography and its cognitive merits, including such basic issues as how to choose the subject of one’s biographical research; the strategies, possibilities and limitations of gaining insight into that subject’s personality; the subjectivity of the biographer’s approach; and the impact that the subject has on the biographer’s personality. Hence the directive for deepening insights into one’s own self (through psychoanalytical training, developing introspective self-observation, cooperation with a psychologist, etc.) that was directed at scholars writing psychological biographies. The ways in which such issues are presented and explored according to psychobiography’s methodological thinking is clearly demonstrated by texts presented at a special closed conference held in Chapel Hill in 1981 under the title of “The Psychology of Biography.” Those who participated were a select group of historical and historical-literary biographers, most of whom more or less clearly identified themselves with psychohistorians. Others also declared the need to explore the psychological dimension of both their subjects and the process by which research on these historical characters was conducted.²²¹ Their reports (often semi-autobiographical) were intended to document the power of the transference ties that determine the direction of the researcher’s interests and the inevitability of “subjectivity” when writing biographies,²²² and that cause – as a result of long-term research

220 I employ this term in the sense given to it by J. Topolski. See, for example, *Teoria wiedzy historycznej*, 113–151.

221 Texts from this conference were published in the book *Introspection in Biography*. This meeting was organized to facilitate penetration of the biographer’s emotional relationship with his protagonist, so that the participating scholars could experience “a sense of relief from the restrictions of a formal academic exchange and a feeling of camaraderie powerful enough to overcome at least some of their reservations about putting their humanity on the line along with their findings. Under the influence of psychological forces from within and forces operating as a result of the group interchange, the participants partially, and probably only temporarily, disengaged themselves from the self-imposed censorship that ordinarily governs their sense not only of what they ought to write, but what they ought to think as well.” G. Moraitis, “The Psychoanalyst’s Role in the Biographer’s Quest for Self-Awareness,” in *Introspection in Biography*, 319.

222 See S. H. Baron, “Psychological Dimensions of the Biographical Process,” in *Introspection in Biography*, 2–24, a synthetic collection of different authors’ experiences. In particular, see J. Wall, “A Second Look at Andrew Carnegie,” in *ibid.*, 209–222; R. Lebeux: “Thoreau’s Lives, Lebeaux’s Lives,” in *ibid.*, 225–248; R. Tucker, “A Stalin Biographer’s Memoir,” in *ibid.*, 249–272; J. E. Mack, “T. E. Lawrence and the Psychology of Heroism,” in *ibid.*, 273–296.

involvement – the historical character to perhaps even become a “part” of the researcher himself (i.e. participate in the construction of his own ego).

One experience shared by a significant number of conference participants involved a particular kind of cooperation they had established with a psychoanalyst in connection with a specific psychobiographical project – during the project or after it was completed. Originally developed in the 1970s by Carl Pletsch (a historian writing a biography of Nietzsche at the time) and George Moraitis (a psychoanalyst from the Chicago Psychoanalytical Institute²²³), this cooperation can be described as a form of psychoanalytical supervision over the biographer in the course of research. Implemented in the form of discussion sessions held periodically over a long period of time, it focuses on the ongoing monitoring of the psychobiographer's emotional involvement in the subject of his research, or – if the monitoring takes place after the project has been completed – on the recognition of relationships that must have existed in the process between the biographer and his protagonist. As Moraitis writes, the main goal is to:

Make [the historian] more aware of the influence of his own personality on his ideas in general and the basic thesis in particular. ... In the field of psychohistory ... the absence of a patient and his responses, combined with possible anticipated personal satisfaction [on the part of the researcher] creates a situation lacking any external controls. The proposed method is designed to provide certain safeguards which should reinforce the investigator's self-analyzing capabilities in a way that is directly relevant to his work.²²⁴

It was important that researchers cooperating in this way avoid the creation of any kind therapeutic patient-analyst relationship or partnership; according to Moraitis, “we proceeded with the understanding that we would not attempt to become experts in each other's fields. I consider myself a visitor in the historian's laboratory and invite him to introduce me to the subject of his research in whatever way he considers feasible within the limitations of time.”²²⁵

223 See G. Moraitis, C. Pletsch, “A Psychoanalytic Contribution to Method in Biography,” *PR* 8 (1979), no. 1–2: 72–74. Moraitis also participated in work at the Chicago Center for Psychosocial Studies (see chapter 1). It is in this forum where the kind of cooperation under discussion here was initiated.

224 G. Moraitis, “A Psychoanalyst's Journey into a Historian's World: An Experiment in Collaboration,” in *Introspection in Biography*, 70–71.

225 G. Moraitis, “A Psychoanalyst's Perspective on Henry Adams,” in *Introspection in Biography*, 143. In the same volume, see also G. Moraitis, “The Psychoanalyst's Role,” 322; G. Moraitis, “A Psychoanalyst's Journey,” 72; C. Pletsch, “Returning to Nietzsche,” 111; C. Pletsch, “Subjectivity and Biography,” 355–357.

As an attempt to deepen the biographer's cognitive capabilities, the Moraitis method²²⁶ also became – and this is most important in terms of my

226 In the opinion of those who participated in the meeting at Chapel Hill, the question of how to gain insight into a protagonist's psyche is perhaps the most important challenge facing the biographer. They were aware of the dangers that come with the kinds of psychological reductionism that sometimes burden attempts, based on psychoanalysis, to examine a historical character's personality and actions in life. At the same time, they understood that an "underdeveloped" psychological aspect in biography significantly impoverishes the portrait that the biographer paints of his protagonist. They thus viewed Moraitis' method as a solution that allowed them, so to speak, to "make virtue out of necessity" – that is, to transform the distorting impact of a biographer's "subjectivity" into a tool that allows him to recognize previously overlooked aspects of the historical character's personality, his choices and their meaning, and his creative activity. Indeed, an experience common to all participants was that recognition of the influence of a certain personal attitude on a conceptualization or interpretation, postulated at a given moment, usually led to the formulation of new interpretations that broadened or deepened one's overall view of the protagonist. These biographers emphasized, in intriguing ways, the cognitive benefits of their shared thinking (all of the below quotes come from the collective work *Introspection in Biography*):

- "I could see what was wrong with my professional views because of my intense empathy for Nietzsche I had come to see the whole collaboration as tending toward completing the 'working through' of my attachment to Nietzsche. ... It seemed to me that a biography based on a more complete working through of the original investment in the subject would have the potential of leading readers to a more differentiated conception of the subject. I hoped that my work on Nietzsche would make the clichés about Nietzsche ... untenable ..., would make it difficult for them [readers] to react to Nietzsche with simple, unanalyzed emotions This, of course, would be the very opposite of what is commonly called the 'reductionism' of psychological studies." (C. Pletsch, "Returning to Nietzsche," 116, 118–119);
- "I learned the extent to which I had seen what I brought to my study of Henry Adams. ... I also learned why I had failed or refused to see some of the material of Adam's life and work that had always been, in some sense, in front of my eyes. ... I began to modify my interpretation ..." (M. Schwehn, "Henry Adams: An Intellectual Historian's Perspective Reconsidered," 140);
- "The historian's sense of the text as a product of history can be enriched by the analyst's complementary understanding of the text as a product of personality. During the collaboration I have frequently had the experience of seeing a text anew and have had to reconsider my initial view of its historical significance." (R. Wortman, "Biography and the Russian Intelligentsia," 166);

considerations here – a tool for the study of the biography's construction and, in particular for the documentation of its transference dimension and the determination of its meaning.

Conference participants pointed out, for example, that transference is already present at the stage in which the research issue is conceptualized. In light of the author's motives in choosing one subject over another as his biography's protagonist, they shifted the emphasis away from conscious factors of a "professional" (i.e. scientific-cognitive) nature toward various psychological factors originating in the life of the biographer himself. Many of them indicated (or noticed during the meeting) that, for example, a significant psychological bond between themselves and their biographical characters dated back to their early youth, even to their childhood experiences. Some even admitted, looking back on their lives, that the bond they had with their (future) biographic protagonist provided support in making important and difficult decisions regarding their choice of profession and career.²²⁷ In this way they all confirmed Erikson's observation that one's choice of biographic protagonist may stem from the biographer's early ideals or identifications.²²⁸ But emphasis in their statements on the importance of transference motifs (idealization, identification, the search for reflecting selfobjects or surrogate parent characters, etc.) as steering elements – i.e. factors determining the choice of the object and the way in which the biography is constructed – does not necessarily lead to a complete negation of the role played by other elements. "Are we to infer then," asks the editor of the post-conference publication, "that the external motives the biographers expressed were only the ostensible ones, a kind of superstructure reared on the

— "In my sessions ... I discovered subjective facets in my own work where I had not thought to look for them. Biography is indeed autobiography. ... It is impossible to portray another human being without displaying oneself." (R. Westfall, "Newton and His Biographer," 188);

— "Had these explorations been carried out earlier, with a qualified collaborator, I am reasonably confident that I would have produced a better book, presenting a more balanced, and perhaps more integrated, portrait of Plekhanov's personality. I might also have more effectively shown how his personal qualities affected his thought, shaped his relationships with others, and helped to determine his life history ... but I do not think that the main contours of the work would have been fundamentally altered." (S.H. Baron, "My Life with G.V. Plekhanov," 205).

227 In particular see (in *Introspection in Biography*) C. Pletsch, "Returning to Nietzsche;" R. Lebeux, "Thoreau's Lives, Lebeux's Lives;" S. Marcus, "A Biographical Inclination," 297–308.

228 He devoted a great deal of attention to this issue in his essay "In Search of Gandhi."

psychic economy that masks the real motives ...? Are the unconscious, inner processes the bedrock of motivation, and the rest merely a disguise?" Based on participants' experiences, he answered this question in the negative: "We insist on the genuineness of both the external and internal motives, and their interdependence. It is perfectly possible to write a biography with the external and professional objectives operating at the conscious level, while much of the energy for carrying out the task stems from unconscious motives. The two function in tandem."²²⁹

The observations collected by Moraitis and other researchers practicing this method documented numerous cases of transference reactions which occurred during the research process and steered that process. For the analyst, such reactions manifested themselves during sessions through, for example, specific statements made by biographers on certain aspects of the biographical character's life, work, and views, statements colored by emotions often also expressed by the biographer's "body language." The very selection of a set defined issues as the object of biographical reflection on a given historical character, especially the dynamics of this set's transformation (which evidently did not entirely fit within the "logic of the cognitive progress," but which clearly often correlated with the course of subsequent sessions) revealed to the analyst the permanent presence of personal emotional attitudes in biographical research practice. The historian, in turn, was also able to observe them by noticing differences between the empathic responses to the examined historical character as provided by the cooperating analyst and his own responses. Generally speaking, the source of these reactions was found in the strong identification felt by the researcher with the biography's subject, although determining the individual sources of these identifications was not important: more important was the need to learn about the personality and life history of the given historical figure, not the personality and life history of his biographer. That having been said, Moraitis formulated a more general thesis regarding the function of transference in the biographical process.

The biographer's systematic, long-term effort to place himself in another's world produces not only reverberations with old memories and experiences, but challenges to the investigator's values and sense of self. The defensive maneuvers that result from this intrusion aim to reduce the sense of novelty that the input creates. The biographer's identification with his subject is a powerful barrier against the realization of the novelty involved. By accentuating the similarities between what he knows

229 S. H. Baron, "Psychological Dimensions," 9.

about his subject and what he knows about himself, the biographer may experience the situation as if it were familiar and overlook important differences. In the case of negative identification, the opposite takes place. Similarities are ignored while differences are defensively accentuated. These transference reactions aim to maintain the stability of the biographer's perceptual world, and to limit or slow down the registration of new perceptions. Transference reactions facilitate adaptation by reinforcing well-established perceptual schemata whose presence maintains the sense of continuity, familiarity, and predictability. ... the biographer experiences a distinct sense of knowing his subject – a knowing that he cannot fully substantiate. Such perceptions could be understood as intuitions or identifications based on a deeper, preverbal level of communication.²³⁰

Cooperation from a psychoanalyst allowed for an increase in the cognitive value of these perceptions, while reducing their disturbing influences. By acting in relation to the biographer as an “ideal” or “special” reader, the analyst made it easier for the biographer to maintain and develop a distinction between his own ideas and the ideas of his protagonist, between himself and his protagonist.²³¹

This example clearly indicates how psychohistorical methodological thought takes into consideration the emotional relationship between the psychohistorian and the object of his research. When examining the problem of transference in psychobiography, scholars have clearly attempted to turn it into a research tool that deepens and broadens the insight a biographer can gain over the course of his studies. No doubt, it is also (indirectly) an important “yes” vote in the debate over the importance of tying psychohistorical methodology to the clinical model.²³²

History of Childhood

Methodological issues connected with the history of childhood – an interdisciplinary field of historical research whose origins have most often been associated with social history broadly understood, and inside that framework with

230 G. Moraitis, “The Psychoanalyst’s Role,” 347.

231 See also, in *Introspection in Biography*, G. Moraitis, “A Psychoanalyst’s Journey,” 103–104; G. Moraitis, “The Psychoanalyst’s Role,” 348–349; C. Pletsch, “Returning to Nietzsche,” 115–116, 118.

232 I am writing here about methodology in psychohistory (not only psychobiography) because similar opinions on the usefulness of transference reactions are also formulated in relation to non-biographical fields of psychohistorical scholarship.

family history²³³ – took a special form within psychohistory, which was the result of changing views on the scope and meaning of such research within the psychohistorical community. Naturally, from the perspective set by the psychoanalytical vision of the world, childhood issues could not help but always appear as an important sphere of inquiry, which became evident even in discussions on the meaning of explanations of childhood as part of psychohistorical explanations (see earlier sections of this Part). Psychohistorical, and especially psychobiographical studies have almost always had to deal with this subject to one degree or another (sometimes to a significant degree). Problems emerged when psychohistorical childhood studies began to stabilize as a separate field of inquiry. Questions have arisen about the specific cognitive goals of such studies, about their place within the overall research practice of psychohistory, and about the source base. The matter of childhood has also become a starting point for broader historiosophical reflections within the radical current of psychohistory and has significantly stimulated the activity of its representatives in

233 See T. Hareven, “The History of the Family as an Interdisciplinary Field,” *JIH* 2 (1971): 399–400; P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory,” 429–431. Equally often – and not without reason – the genesis of childhood research is associated with research trends in social history since the 1960s examining various disadvantaged groups and minorities whose experience and historical role had previously been overlooked by historical writing. H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, 124. Regarding these issues and their “background” – i.e. the multidimensional development of social history – see, among others, G. Eley, “Some Recent Tendencies in Social History,” in *International Handbook*, 55–70; L. Veysey, “The United States,” in *International Handbook*, 164–167; P. N. Stearns, “Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History,” in *The Past Before Us*, 205–230; G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*. In turn, the formation of the history of childhood as a field of inquiry within psychohistory was motivated by the achievements of psychoanalysis-inspired anthropologists from the so-called school of psychoculturalism. References to this school’s achievements may often be found in theoretical-methodological texts from the field of psychohistorical research on childhood quoted below. Under its influence was the first outstanding work by E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* [1950/1963], which in a double sense was the early starting point for these inquiries: (1) it presented the 8-stage concept of psychosocial development in mature form, which proved useful to historians in conceptualizing the issues of children’s lives and development in the past; and (2) it offered samples of specific case studies that were more historical than anthropological in nature (childhood and youth in modern Germany, in twentieth-century America, and in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia). For more, see N. R. Hiner, J. M. Hawes, “Introduction,” in *Growing Up in America*, eds. N. R. Hiner, J. M. Hawes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), xiv–xxv.

spheres distinct from the study of history. Certain claims made by psychohistorians from this group (especially Lloyd deMause) regarding childhood history were among those that most provoked stormy, sometimes spectacular debates within and around the psychohistorical community.

As N. Ray Hiner noted, issues tied to childhood history conceived as a separate field of research can be conceptualized around five basic research questions:

1. What were adult attitudes toward children and childhood?
2. What were the conditions that shaped children's developmental processes?
3. What was the subjective experience of childhood like in the past?
4. How did children and childhood affect adults?
5. What were the social, cultural and psychological functions of children in the family and the wider community?

Among the questions listed above, the most explicit references to psychological issues are found in questions 3 and 4. They are also issues of the greatest importance (especially question 3): "Unless historians are willing to confront this question, they will only be probing the periphery of childhood, not penetrating the heart of the subject itself."²³⁴ Psychohistorical studies of childhood are important because "the best, perhaps the only, avenue to understanding the unique qualities of children's experience in the past is through an empathetic study of their inner lives."²³⁵ The importance of such inquiries grows as more scholars are inclined to perceive the practice of raising children as a historical factor – an independent variable to some degree, not just a reflex to given socio-historical conditions; this is the perspective taken by psychohistorians, in contrast to childhood researchers studying those conditions from the perspective of social history. Indeed, from the beginning, psychohistorians examining childhood have set the goal of studying and reconstructing past childhood experiences. "But what I have in mind," John Demos writes in his programmatic article, "is an effort to find certain underlying themes in the experience of children in a given culture or period in order to throw some light on the formation of later personality."²³⁶ Therefore, Demos proposes distinguishing two dimensions of the problem. The first ("vertical") concerned children's

234 Ibid., xxi-xxiii; N. R. Hiner, "The Child in American Historiography: Accomplishments and Prospect," *PR* 7 (1978), no. 1: 16-17.

235 N. R. Hiner, J. M. Hawes, "Introduction," in *Growing Up in America*, xv.

236 J. P. Demos, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood," 316.

development understood as the process of passing through specific phases or stages, each of which was characterized by specific life tasks, challenges and crises. The second (“horizontal”) was associated with singling out individual areas of children’s experience. “We are obliged,” Demos continues:

To investigate how a culture manages on its own terms to distinguish between different periods of childhood. We cannot be content with knowing that discipline was generally harsh, or that parents were often indifferent to their young. We must try to determine whether such tendencies were more manifest at one stage of development than another, whether there was a kind of uneven curve of repressiveness or indifference with visible peaks and valleys over time. . . . We must also ask whether repressiveness, or indulgence, or indifference was more effective in some areas of the child’s experience than in others. Most cultures do make certain distinctions among the various human instincts, drives, emotions – however they may be named and defined.²³⁷

Depth psychology – not without reason called “developmental” – seems to “fit” particularly well into such demands. Various trends in psychoanalysis – Freud, Erikson, the school of object relations, not to mention the theoretical achievements of child psychoanalysts (like Winnicott, Mahler or Bowlby) – offer alternative and/or complementary conceptualizations of both the stages in a child’s psychosocial development and the particular spheres of that development whose correlates are the specific areas in which the child experiences the world. As expected, this would allow scholars to track the relationship in history between the childhood experience and subsequent adult behavior, or more broadly between childhood and social life and the development of culture – to inquire how and in what sense the child is not only a mirror of a given culture “but also the creator of culture, and, in a sense, a dynamic force in his own right” in history. The use of psychological theory (and modern clinical material) was of particular importance here: since the relationship between factors shaping the child’s past experience and subsequent adult behavior “is not something that we can follow along a visible chain of evidence,” it is theory that allows scholars to tie these two types of phenomena together.²³⁸

While the psychohistorical history of childhood so defined found a certain place in academic history,²³⁹ such was not the case with studies based on the program for cultivating childhood history as formulated by Lloyd deMause.

237 *Ibid.*, 318.

238 *Ibid.*, 325–327.

239 Indications of this are publications that appeared in serious historical periodicals and were often favorably received by such clearly psychohistorical scholars of childhood as Hiner, Illick, Demos, and Marvick; naturally, these works are not limited

DeMause's proposal, referred to as the "psychogenic theory of history," emerged (genetically) from psychoanalytical thinking, though many of the latter's important categories were significantly transformed, which is precisely what opened the way to its particular view of children and childhood. Therefore, the theory may be considered a kind of post-psychoanalytic hermeneutics of history, despite the fact that its creator and many of his followers argue that deMause's claims fit into the universe of contemporary psychoanalysis. Evidence for this argument can be found, for example, in the replacement of the drive/defense model with a model based on the idea of re-experienced trauma.²⁴⁰ In a special way, it combines the features of a systematic collection of research hypotheses of varying degrees of generality (and legitimacy) regarding the nature of childhood in the past with a speculative historiosophical structure regarding the role of childhood in history. Here, childhood is treated as the only source of historical change (motor of history). The entire concept has strong axiological connotations; it has inspired many "radical" psychohistorians to engage in various cognitive and practical activities not related to historical study, often having more or less explicit "therapeutic" implications.

Thus, deMause claims that the evolution of the relationship between parents and children is an independent source of historical change, one that is more important than social and technological factors. This evolution arises from the ability of subsequent generations of parents (and, at the same time, their requirement – that is "generational pressure"), in the educational process, "to

to exploring only the psychological aspect of the matter. One critical observer even noted (undoubtedly, however, with exaggeration) that these types of texts are often essentially "good, conventional history that reports straightforwardly what the sources say ..." in which the psychological or psychoanalytic perspective plays a less important role. See C. Griffin, "Oedipus Hex," *Reviews in American History* 4 (1976), no. 3: 305–306.

- 240 See D. Dervin, "Critical Reflections on Key Aspects of Lloyd deMause's Seminal Psychohistory," *JPH* 24 (1996), no. 2: 186 and *passim*; L. deMause, "Reply to Dan Dervin," *JPH* 24 (1996), no. 2: 194–199. See also T. Pawelec, "Psychohistoria a psychoanaliza." On the other hand, a reevaluation of the significance of real trauma (especially childhood trauma) has actually occurred to some extent in contemporary psychoanalysis, one contribution to which being, among other works, Mussaief Masson's controversial work *The Assault on Truth: Freud and the Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, in which the author accused Freud of abandoning his seduction theory without merit. See also, in the above section "The Psychohistorical Vision of the World," references to the ambiguous understanding of the role of real trauma in psychoanalytical ontology.

regress to the psychic age of their children and work through the anxieties of that age in a better manner the second time they encounter them than they did during their own childhood". Therefore, the history of childhood may be seen as a gradual progress in the area of childcare, as "a series of closer approaches between adult and child," one which, however, causes fear in adults: attempts to reduce this fear are the main source through which childrearing practices suitable to a given era develop. The shape of such practices was determined by specific psychological mechanisms to which adults referred in their relations with children:

1. The projective reaction (one's unconscious aspirations and emotions are projected onto the child).
2. The reversal reaction (the child is unconsciously identified with significant adults from one's own childhood).
3. The "double image" (constant jumps between projective reactions and reversal reactions).
4. The empathic reaction (focused on recognizing the child's real needs and based on regression without admixture of projection reactions), which historically is the latest to develop.

A correlate to the above statement is the argument that the further we look into the past, the more defective and dangerous the parents become in terms of children's proper development and even their physical survival. As a result, childhood in past centuries was highly traumatic, or as deMause puts it, "a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken." However, the main historiogenic role of childhood would result from the fact that child rearing practices shaped in the presented way determine the new generation's mental structure and constitute the only channel through which all cultural components are transmitted. Thus, they set the boundaries for what (at a given historical moment) can be achieved in all other spheres of the historical process. The fact that throughout history (although to a slowly decreasing extent) these practices have actually traumatized subsequent generations of children means that (in reference to Freud's idea of repetition compulsion) the historical process appears as the "acting out" of these child traumas, beginning with the trauma of birth and (often emphasized in later versions of the concept) injuries associated with fetal life. DeMause identifies six basic modes for raising children, with the help of which he periodizes all of human history, claiming that all significant cultural and historical changes can be correlated with a given child-rearing mode's achievement of dominance: the infanticidal mode (dominant to the fourth century); the abandonment mode (to the thirteenth

century); the ambivalent mode (the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries); the intrusive mode (eighteenth century); the socialization mode (nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries); and the helping mode (beginning in the mid-twentieth century). According to deMause, the evolution of childhood resembles Darwin's biological evolution: in favorable (culturally, geographically, socially, etc.) conditions, individual ("incidental") parental attitudes of a particular type have a chance to spread within a given population, thus forming the basis for a new parenting mode, which then leads to the emergence of new types of historical personalities and new "psychoclasses."²⁴¹

Thus, for supporters of deMause's proposal, childhood studies became the primary and most important field of psychohistorical inquiry,²⁴² while the task of psychohistorians would be to test individual aspects of "psychogenic theory" in light of materials on childhood in history. In practice – when we assume that childhood in the past must have been a "nightmare" – it means that psychohistorians promised to develop research focused primarily on the history of children's suffering, on the harm inflicted on them by adults in the child-rearing process, harm that ranged from deliberately (or otherwise) causing a child's death, through various forms of physical abuse and sexual harassment, various forms of intentional and unintentional psychological abuse, to

241 A given psychoclass is made up of individuals who have experienced a certain type of childhood and therefore operate in history in a characteristic way (conditioned by the mode of parenthood that shaped their personalities) and different from other psychoclasses. I based this synthetic discussion on a number of deMause's publications; I also referred to various attempts to capture and present this concept which can be found in publications created in the IPA circle and on the association's website. For more, see particularly L. deMause, "The Evolution of Childhood," in *The History of Childhood*, ed. L. deMause (Northvale-London: Jason Aronson, 1995), 1–73 (first edition: New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974); L. deMause, "The Psychogenic Theory of History," in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 132–146; L. deMause, "The Role of Adaptation and Selection in Psychohistorical Evolution," *JPH* 16 (1989), no. 4: 355–372; L. deMause, "On Writing Childhood History," *JPH* 16 (1988), no. 2: 135–171; L. deMause, *The History of Childhood*; L. deMause, *The Emotional Life of Nations* (Karnac: New York 2002), particularly chapters 5 and 7; H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 125–129; K. A. Adams, "The Dream Animal," *JPH* 10 (1982): 94–99; see also T. Ochowski, "Nie tylko psychoanaliza," 67–70.

242 We see an indication of this fact also in the original title of a periodical published by "radicals," namely the *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*. Regarding the place of childhood history, as postulated by deMause, in the structure of psychohistory, see L. deMause, "The Independence of Psychohistory," 88–89.

ordinary neglect. Parenting practices were also to be investigated in order to identify their basic common properties within a particular mode of child rearing at work in a certain era and in certain societies.

As part of deMause's approach, problems tied to the source base for childhood research gain particular attention. Academic historians of childhood (including those with a psychohistorical inclination) emphasized that materials most commonly used here – above all, literature devoted to child rearing – allow us to examine socio-cultural ideals of child rearing, which find themselves, however, at a great distance from real parental attitudes and real children's development conditions, let alone the real children's experience of the world. Therefore, challenges remained with regard to inadequate sources (even scarce sources, when we are talking about earlier eras), and scholars set their sights on developing methods for the use of alternative types of materials (autobiographical, demographic, iconographic, judicial, education-related, etc.) so that, on a theoretical basis, they could provide indirect insight into childhood issues.²⁴³ However, from the perspective of deMause himself and many of his followers, the most important problem was located somewhere else and was associated with the fact that the childhood historian's main task would be to explore children's misfortunes themselves. They emphasized that, in fact, there is no lack of source material documenting the darker sides of childhood in past centuries, and that such materials are much easier to access than commonly believed, even if, for psychological reasons, most childhood historians are unwilling to use them. H. Lawton claims that "deMause's conclusions are simply too unpleasant for many of us to face." Too much knowledge about the pitiful reality of childhood, Lawton concluded, evokes fear.²⁴⁴

DeMause's program attracted the attention of scholars conducting childhood research. A collection of studies edited by deMause was published under

243 This methodological thread, for example, takes up a great deal of space in virtually every text contained in the volume *The History of Childhood*, edited by deMause, although they focused on "concrete historical" issues.

244 H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 132. It is characteristic that deMause perceives objections to his theoretical claims and empirical evidence gathered in support of them only in terms of conscious and unconscious resistance to truths that are too painful, i.e. as a psychological defense reaction. L. deMause, "On Writing Childhood History," *passim*. The problem of psychological resistance occurring during the practice of childhood history was noticed not only among associates of *The Journal of Psychohistory* (see J. P. Demos, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood," 327–328), though here it took a particularly extreme form.

the title *The History of Childhood* (the introduction to which was the essay "The Evolution of Childhood," which presented the outlines of "psychogenic theory" along with extensive supporting empirical material); it has appeared in four countries (twice in the United States, initially through the prestigious Harper & Row publishing house) and it was reviewed many times in leading historical periodicals. Even skeptical commentators from the community of historians seemed moved by the breadth of deMause's proposals, asking – as a surprised Lawrence Stone did – how should one "regard so bold, so challenging, so dogmatic, so enthusiastic, so perverse, and yet so heavily documented a model?"²⁴⁵ But the list of serious allegations turned out to be long: a naive faith in linear progress; a simplified approach to emotional relationships between parents and children and the relationship between children's experience and adult attitudes; an avoidance of the historical-cultural and social context of educational practices; psychologism; conceptual confusion; exaggerated emotional involvement; a denial of any positive aspects of childhood in the past, etc.²⁴⁶ Reactions of psychohistorians themselves also varied. Joseph E. Illick pointed to the indelible historiosophical component of the concept, saying that it belongs to those that can neither be proven nor refuted. Miles Shore pointed out its overly bold generalizations, its simplified "black and white" view of parenthood, and its unfounded defense of permissive variations of parenthood. He also questioned deMause's approach to parental regression.²⁴⁷

In retrospect, it is easy to see that "psychogenic theory" significantly influenced the fate of psychohistory, which was mainly due to the research, organizational and publishing activity of the "radical psychohistorians" – supporters of deMause, who adopted his theory as the basis for both their vision of

245 L. Stone, "The Massacre of Innocents," *The New York Review of Books* (14 November 1974), 29.

246 *Ibid.*, *passim*; C. Pletsch [review of *The History of Childhood*. ed. L. deMause (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974)], *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975): 336–338; J. F. Kett [review of *The History of Childhood*], *AHR* 85 (1975): 1296. See also the presentation of the opinions of many other historians/reviewers in H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 129 and L. deMause, *On Writing Childhood History*, 144–146. I omit here many of the more colorful and emotional epithets thrown at this concept by particularly fervent critics.

247 J. E. Illick, "Does The History of Childhood Have a Future?" *JPH* 13 (1985), no. 2: 160; M. Shore, "The Child and Historiography," *JIH* 6 (1976), no. 3: 495–505; M. Shore, "The Psychogenic Theory of History," *JIH* 9 (1979), no. 3: 517–523.

the world and their methodological approach.²⁴⁸ Their activity was so significant that observers increasingly treated deMause's views as representative of the entire psychohistorical community.²⁴⁹ Criticism directed at the "psychogenic theory" by academic historians could henceforth be easily extended to concepts and achievements of the broader community, which did little to facilitate the establishment of psychohistory as a field of inquiry. This fact played an important role in the emergence of divisions within psychohistory that eventually grew deep. Many psychohistorians tied to history departments viewed "radical" inquiries based on deMause's program as controversial, and they tried to distance themselves from that program at all costs.²⁵⁰

Group Psychohistory

Scholars who carried out methodological discussions on the possibilities and goals associated with the practice of group psychohistory were aware that biographical research was located near the "periphery" of history. A field of research that does not investigate mass phenomena is inevitably condemned to the status of secondary approach.²⁵¹ Most often, psychohistorians based their work on arguments tied to psychoanalysis, even though – according to at least some theoreticians of psychohistory – the Freudian heritage seemed unpromising in this respect. It is obvious, of course, that in one way or another Freud associated the individual with society and culture (even through the concept

248 Even scholars within the "radical wing" of psychohistory have raised concerns about some aspects of deMause's program; see for example Lawton's comments in *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (p. 131–132); K. A. Adams, "The Dream Animal," 104–106. In particular, see critical remarks from a historian's perspective in P. Petschauer, "The Childrearing Modes in Flux: A Historian's Reflections," *JPH* 17 (1989), no. 1: 1–34.

249 In any case, subjectively his supporters consider themselves "real" psychohistorians.

250 See the comments of such "luminaries" of the paradigm as Demos, Strozier, and Mazlish: J. P. Demos, *Growing Up American*, 41–42; Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, "Growth of Psychohistory," in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 63–64; T. Pawelec, "Bruce Mazlish: Pioneer Psychohistorian." It is significant that by initiating the publication of *History of Childhood Quarterly*, deMause brought in for cooperation all the leaders of the psychohistorical community that were important at the time. Within the first few years of publication, most of those who maintained ties with the academic history establishment gradually disappeared from the list of editorial board members.

251 See J. P. Demos, "Psychoanalytic Theory and History: Discussion," *Annual of Psychoanalysis* (1978), 57.

of the development of the “superego” or the Oedipal relation), and even that he developed a kind of “rudimentary ... social psychology”²⁵² which could serve here as a starting point. However, scholars emphasize that the creator of psychoanalysis invariably transferred the mechanisms of the individual's mental functioning directly to the level of collective life, i.e. reduced the collectivity to an individual.²⁵³ Therefore, Bruce Mazlish wrote that “we do not have a satisfactory theory of group psychology.”²⁵⁴ Hence the search for a conceptualization that would “make use” of Freud and yet would be able to exceed the limits of his approach. Peter Loewenberg postulates:

The psychohistorian must strive to comprehend not only primitive aggressive and libidinal drive behavior and universal infantile fantasies, but also their varied expressions at given times and places in history by men and institutions. *The methodological link between universal models of the unconscious and the particular social setting must be made.* Historians need studies on groups of leaders and activists of how the life experiences, political constellations, critical personal traumas ... conditioned the style of leadership and the nature of group functioning.²⁵⁵

Inquiries of this kind by the above-mentioned Weinstein and Platt (with reference primarily to the functionalist sociology of Talcott Parsons) deserve particular attention for their search to connect:

252 What Peter Gay, who is quoted here, had in mind of course was the ideas contained mainly in the book *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, where Freud considered social ties of a community (crowd) in terms of processes of mutual identification of community members and their identification with the leader, as well as the impact of the experience of being a member of such a community on the weakening of defense mechanisms that suppress forbidden impulses and desires. See P. Gay, *Freud for Historians*, chapter 5, particularly pp. 177–178. Few researchers, however, seem to share Gay's enthusiasm for the conceptual usefulness of these ideas for the modern historian.

253 For example S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 31–32.

254 See B. Mazlish, “Leader and Led, Individual and Group,” in B. Mazlish, *The Leader, the Led and the Psyche*, 253 and *passim* (this text originally appeared in *PR* 9 [1981], no. 3). See also B. Mazlish, “Group Psychology and Problems of Contemporary History,” in *Psycho/History*, 225–236 (first printed in *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 [1968], no. 3: 163–177), in which Mazlish showed the uselessness of many concepts employed in academic psychology; and B. Mazlish, “Psychoanalytic Theory and History: Groups and Events,” *Annual of Psychoanalysis* (1978), 41–57.

255 P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory. An Overview of the Field,” 422. Author's emphasis – T. P.

External reality with internal dynamics ...; to integrate in a systematic frame of reference ego-oriented, relatively controlled behavior with rigid, violent, regressive behavior; to deal in a consistent way with both the social and psychic levels of reality without reducing one to the other – that is, without the conceiving of social structure as merely a function of wish, fantasy, and projection and without eliminating the unique idiosyncratic features of personality or of single historical events. Above all ... we want to organize a frame of reference that can deal in psychosocial terms with mass and group phenomena as well as with individual behavior.²⁵⁶

In the various publications (the most important and the most representative being *Psychoanalytic Sociology*, to which I am referring now) Weinstein and Platt introduced a methodical reinterpretation of subsequent psychoanalytical categories (in addition to Freud, they employed in particular ego psychology) so that they could refer to the social world beyond the individual.²⁵⁷ This led them to the argument that:

The priority of cultural and social systems is explicit, and this is theoretically both necessary and advantageous. ... Reductionist psychological explanations cannot make intelligible the relationship of human individuality to the social order. In a similar way, theory that stresses particular object relationships cannot adequately explain concerted or collective action; each individual in this context must appear as the idiosyncratic product of his private experience. Furthermore, theories that emphasize one institutional reality – the economy, the family, or the political order – by the same token reduce all responses and variation in action in the differing realms to reflections of action in the assumedly more fundamental realm.²⁵⁸

Finally, they emphasize the importance of the idea of a “symbolic control system of human action” as one that combines psychological and social elements,

256 F. Weinstein, G. M. Platt, *Psychoanalytic Sociology*, 15.

257 Some interesting examples include an attempt to capture the Eriksonian identity as one that may be redefined “in any stage of life” in relation to “social-structural changes which affect the implementation of values and norms in a society” (p. 72). Weinstein and Platt tried to show the involvement in the social process of not only the “superego” but also the other levels of the personality structure (thus they claimed that the level of unconsciousness – i.e. the “id” – depends on that process’s influence, as well as the “ego” properties). They therefore believed that internalizations acquired earlier maintain themselves as a stabilizing element of personality as long as the cultural and social reality in which they developed remains stable. When, in the event of social change, internalization ceases to be effective, it can lead to transformations of the personality structure. In particular, the book’s chapter 3 is devoted to this topic.

258 *Ibid.*, 89.

which reveals their proposed depiction of the conditions of change and/or social stability:

Until the emotional bases for compliance have been threatened or eroded by social events, no systematic, codified social action can follow. Thus, the primary and indispensable task of the investigator is to examine the effects of social events on obligated expressions of emotion and on internalized standards and expectations. The answer to the question of why social structures remain (relatively) stable – even when subordination and exploitation are evident – lies in the identification of the kinds of emotional gratification that inhibit critical insight into one's social position (and thereby make dependence tolerable). The answer to the question of when subordination, for example, comes to be viewed as illegitimate and intolerable lies in the identification of changing social conditions that interrupt or terminate particular patterns of emotional gratification. In these psychosocial terms there follows the necessity of understanding both the nature of reality orientations (which requires relating the psychoanalytic ego psychology to sociological formulations of symbolic control, values, norms, patterns of appropriate action, and so on) and the implications that wishful and distorted behavior have for action. Both realistic and regressive types of behavior must be accounted for.²⁵⁹

In methodological literature written by psychohistorians allied with academic history, Weinstein and Platt's works are often described as highly promising sources of theory built for the needs of group psychohistory.²⁶⁰ That having been said, it is difficult to point to researchers who followed in their path. In practice, psychohistorians seem to be content with much poorer conceptual models. The most common pattern for seeking social references for mental processes are the various concepts based on "shared themes of experience," associated with specific human groups or even entire communities. For Lifton, one of the most prominent supporters of this model, the:

Approach of ... shared psychohistorical themes, as observed in men and women exposed to particular kinds of individual and collective experience ... is based on a psychoanalytically derived stress on what goes on inside of people. ... All shared behavior is seen as simultaneously involved in a trinity of universality (that which is related to the psychological quests of all persons in all historical epochs), specific cultural emphasis and style (as evolved by a particular people over centuries), and recent and contemporary historical influences. ... Any shared event is all of those

259 Ibid., 113–114, emphasis in original.

260 Opinions on the value of these inquiries in terms of psychohistory are reflected in discussions published in *Psychohistory Review* 20 (1991), no. 1 as part of a symposium on another Weinstein book, *History and Theory After the Fall*.

[universalities]. The weighting of the components may vary, but nothing is purely universal or cultural-historical or contemporary-historical.²⁶¹

The basis for developing such inquiries is the psychoanalytical (but not therapeutic) interview, which encourages the “widest range of associations, and includes detailed life histories and explorations of dreams. But it focuses on the specific situation responsible for bringing interviewee and interviewer together ... and takes the form of something close to an open dialogue.”²⁶²

Using such concepts as generation or, more precisely, cohort, supporters of this model argue that it allows us to overcome the uniqueness of individual mental reactions, because the basis for such experience is usually a collective trauma (which “equalizes” everyone) or a permanent historical “challenge” faced by certain people collectively and in a certain period of time.

Theorists of psychohistory also pointed to the usefulness of achievements in psychoculturalist anthropology along with its concept of the “modal” personality.²⁶³

Another important area of research was the leader-supporters relationship. However, inspirations widely considered theoretically satisfying here were those formulated by Harold Lasswell (on the leader as an individual who transferred personal – sometimes pathological – motives for acting into the public sphere and rationalized them as serving the public good) or (more often) Erikson, who posited that a leader (such as Martin Luther or Mahatma Gandhi), by solving his own psychological problem (e.g. conflicts about power and authority in terms of an identity or creativity crisis), solves at the same time an analogous problem experienced simultaneously by many others in both the psychological and political dimension. In this context, scholars regarded as promising theses at the heart of self psychology which proposed that the leader and his supporters be treated as those who mutually experience each other as self-objects, along with Mazlish’s concept of a group’s “psychic repository:” recurring

261 R. J. Lifton, Ch. Strozier, “Psychology and History,” 172–173.

262 Ibid.

263 At the same time, scholars sought theoretical solutions to allow for the use of this concept not only in the study of stable and “homogeneous” communities (this was the nature of the primary cultures studied by these anthropologists), but also in the study of heterogeneous and unstable communities, given that these are most often the subject of historical inquiry. See S. Friedländer, *History and Psychoanalysis*, 31–39, 81–119.

motifs, ideals, values, fantasies, symbols, myths and legends, which a potential leader can "activate."²⁶⁴

Against this background "radical" psychohistorians stand out, drawing inspiration from studies on group dynamics developed by several psychoanalysts (e.g. Wilfred Bion, Didier Anzieu). These authors explore the mental dimension of group functioning, i.e. the dynamics of unconscious and (most often) regressive feelings and emotions shared by group members. But radical psychohistorians are not content with "borrowings" from approaches developed by psychoanalysts; they rather construct their own approaches with psychoanalytical concepts in mind. In particular, I am thinking here about the concept of group fantasy developed by L. deMause as a kind of "complement" to the above-mentioned "psychogenic theory of history." DeMause writes:

Historical group-fantasies are defined as those shared fantasies which are (1) massive displacements onto the public stage of feelings connected with the individual's search for love, (2) allowing people to use groups to relieve shared private feelings and (3) to act out and defend against repressed desires, rages and prohibitions which have their origins in childhoods common to the group, (4) using the same ego mechanisms of splitting, condensation, reaction formation, etc., as in personal fantasy formation, only (5) forged in public discussion (6) out of materials provided by recent historical events, (7) distributing group roles by psychoclass, and (8) producing group dynamics which can lead to a breakdown of group-fantasy, a period of paranoid collapse, and an attempted restitution through the formation of a group-delusion, (9) which result in a group-trance state which may require discharge in violent historical action.²⁶⁵

According to deMause and his supporters, the mental "being" defined in this way was the basic subject of group psychohistory. Group fantasy, they maintain, develops somewhat "over the heads" and beyond the awareness of participating individuals and entire groups, and yet, in their opinion, it is a direct determinant of group action in human history. They find its presence, or rather its domination, in all group activities, the psychological dimension of the institution of group life, etc. Therefore, they accept the belief in the essentially irrational nature of social life.²⁶⁶ However, the dynamic, irrational and unconscious

264 For more, see B. Mazlish, *The Leader, the Led and the Psyche*, 254–266. On efforts to conceptualize H. Kohut's proposal for psychology, see the various studies in the volume *The Leader*.

265 L. deMause, "Historical Group-Fantasies," 172 and *passim*.

266 "Since one is always immersed in historical processes both personal and public," Daniel Dervin writes, "my own inclination is to start not with a body of data or theory, but with the craziness easily observed all around as well as within oneself. Superficially as well as profoundly, human events do not coalesce into rational

process by which collective fantasy develops is subject to certain regularities; according to deMause, it takes place in cyclically repeating phases, whose properties are determined by the way in which a group, dominated by a given fantasy, experiences the leader.²⁶⁷

Teaching Psychohistory

While analyzing the successive elements of psychohistorians' methodological thought, one should not ignore their views on the issue of university instruction in psychohistory. Admittedly, this is not a primary aspect of the psychohistorian's reflections, but its very presence is nevertheless quite distinct from the situation that typifies the academic study of history. Academic history pays practically no attention to such matters, because research conducted as part of the didactics (or teaching methodology) of history basically focuses on passing historical knowledge on to students at the stage of primary and secondary education, shaping their historical thinking, etc.²⁶⁸

The peculiar nature of psychohistory in this respect was based on several premises recognized by psychohistory's representatives who were themselves

or logical groupings." D. Dervin, *Enactments*, 39–40. For more on the concept of group fantasy, as well as the specific methodology of its study based on analysis of the emotionally colored vocabulary of public discourse and the graphic and visual symbolism present in the mass media, see the works of L. deMause mentioned in the previous section, as well as: H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 177–192; P. Elovitz, H. Lawton, G. Luhrman, "On Doing Fantasy Analysis," *JPH* 13 (1985), no. 2: 207–228; J. Hartman, "Evidential Basis of Psychohistory in Group Process," *Clio's Psyche* 13 (2006), no. 1: 1–5 (followed by a discussion of a number of prominent representatives of the field). There you can find a detailed discussion of these at least debatable research propositions and strategies. It is also worth adding that statistical tools designed to study group fantasies based on the analysis of the content of publications in the mass media, analysis of the symbolism of illustrations and caricatures in magazines, etc. are available on websites belonging to this branch of psychohistorians.

267 For a broad overview of group process concepts developed by psychohistorians, see the record of a debate on this topic organized by the editors of *Clio's Psyche* in 2000 (Group Psychohistory Symposium, *Clio's Psyche* 7 (2000), no. 3: 102, 141–155). The main speaker was R. Binion ("Group Process"), as commented afterward by P. Loewenberg, L. deMause, P. Elovitz, D. Beisel, H. Stein and J. Gonen.

268 See J. Maternicki, Cz. Majorek, A. Suchoński, *Dydaktyka historii* (Warszawa: PWN, 1993), 10–26. For a slightly different view on this issue, see H. W. Hertzberg, "The Teaching of History," in *The Past Before Us*, 474–504.

teaching at universities. Most historians and social researchers treated the newly emerging paradigm of historical research with suspicion.²⁶⁹ Their biases were also transferred to students, so it was necessary to work out ways to dispel initial skepticism and distrust. Another matter involved the question of what specific issues were to be raised in class. Most students enrolling in psychohistory courses were not prepared for them theoretically (e.g. they often lacked basic knowledge of psychological and psychoanalytical theories). Very often, they were not prepared personally and psychologically for classes which sometimes used materials that induced strong emotional reactions. Thus, psychohistorians in the classroom faced the need to develop rules and solutions relating to the presentation of psychohistorical interpretations (or reinterpretations) of historical phenomena, the need to immerse students in the principles of psychohistorical methodology, and – perhaps above all – to convince students of the need for, and the legitimacy and value of, a psychohistorical approach, which in many respects served as an alternative to other courses offered to students of history and the social sciences. These “alternative” or “new” courses might involve subject material, methods, cognitive techniques and didactic methods that were very different than those that students had previously known, and psychohistory courses often came with intentional references to the dynamics of the student’s own psyche, emotional childhood experiences, etc.

Thus, from its first issue the *GUPH Newsletter* contained a section entitled “Teaching Methods and Materials,” whose editor undertook to collect and publish in the newsletter psychohistorical course syllabi in the hope that they would facilitate the circulation of information on psychohistorical didactics and, in the long term, would stimulate discussion about goals in teaching psychohistory and assessments of the value of individual approaches.²⁷⁰ By the end of the 1970s (when this section disappeared), more than 20 syllabuses of psychohistory courses and seminars had been printed in *Psychohistory Review* for both undergraduates and graduate students. Topics included such issues as family history, the history of childhood, introduction to psychohistory, an overview of psychohistory, psychohistory and historical scholarship, psychoanalysis and history, psychology and politics, etc. Some of these courses

269 See the comments of Charles Strozier, “Rationale for Teaching Psychohistory,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 4 (1975), no. 1: 8–10 and his debate with Patrick Dunn in the newsletter’s next issue (4 [1975], no. 2: 10–12).

270 J. Fitzpatrick, “Teaching Methods and Materials, etc.,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 1 (1972), no. 1: 4.

covered psychohistorical issues within a broader perspective – e.g. the history of Western civilization or models and methods in history.²⁷¹ Among the instructors were people whose research and publications had little to do with the practice of psychohistory, which confirms the point I made above (in Part I) about instruction in psychohistory in the early years being “fashionable.” But the fashion passed quite quickly, and many of the people who had initially worked to put courses together gave up. Those who stayed on were forced to deal with the above-mentioned difficulties. Editors of psychohistorical periodicals (somewhat later in *The Journal of Psychohistory* in particular²⁷²) repeatedly had to allow space for psychohistorians to describe not only their own experiences with students, but also the broader principles of teaching psychohistorical issues. Lawton devoted a separate chapter to these matters in *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*.

According to published statements on this topic, one problem frequently experienced by instructors in psychohistory was the unrealistic and inadequate attitude of students. On the one hand, students expected the classes to provide them “brilliant psychological syntheses” or “a working knowledge of the use of psychology in history.” Some even believed that “psychology had the answers.”²⁷³ In this context, certain students were afraid of the (possible) psychotherapeutic abilities of their instructors, who could, for example, expose or manipulate a student's psyche.²⁷⁴ On the other hand, teachers had to face skepticism about the value of psychoanalysis (or psychohistory) in studying the past or studying contemporary political and social phenomena, which instructors usually interpreted psychologically in terms of resistance.²⁷⁵ As Barbara Finkelstein notes:

271 For the complete list of published syllabi, see H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 229–232.

272 What I have in mind here are issues devoted in part or in whole to instruction in psychohistory: vol. 5 (1978), no. 3; and 15 (1988), no. 4. This matter was continued in the pages of *Clio's Psyche* (e.g. special issues on instruction in psychohistory in the years 2005 and 2006: vol. 13, no. 3 and no. 4) and on psychohistorical websites, where one can find plenty of further suggestions for syllabi and various teaching materials.

273 D. F. Musto, B. M. Astrahan, “Strange Encounter: The Use of Study Groups with Graduate Students in History,” *Psychiatry* 31 (1968): 275.

274 P. Elovitz, “Psychohistory in the Classroom,” *JPH* 25 (1998), no. 4: 343.

275 *Ibid.*, 342–344; D. Beisel, “Introducing the Joys of Psychohistory,” *JPH* 25 (1998), no. 4: 330, 335–338.

The assumptions that psychohistorians make – that human behavior is both irrational and rational, that social institutions can be understood as psychologically as well as economically meaningful, that leaders can be described as psychologically as well as economically motivated and understood, that events can be psychologically as well as economically defined and analyzed, that change over time can be psychologically, as well as economically explained – all of these propositions are unfamiliar, if not frightening to most students.²⁷⁶

Hence the call to “demytify” psychohistory – the first major challenge confronting its instructor.

How should the instructor do this? For example, by demonstrating – as Robert Pois advised – that every historian who attempts to explain human decisions must do so by practicing amateur psychology, which is often disappointing (it is not difficult to find examples) and leaves the historian in “total confusion” regarding actions taken by many historical figures that are at odds with rational and common sense motives. At this point, one can suggest explanations in the subject literature that are imbued with psychology or psychoanalysis in order to demonstrate how they allow researchers to escape the dead-end of “incomprehensible character, bizarre personality,” etc.²⁷⁷ As far as depth psychology itself is concerned, one should (to the extent that the framework of a particular course allows) indicate its fundamental affinity with the study of history tied to the fact that it “deals with the individual as history” – i.e. the study of the personal history of a human. Pois also emphasized the need to discuss historical issues that provide examples demonstrating the superiority of interpretations, proposed by psychohistory, that connect the individual with the “general forces” of history, as compared to interpretations encountered in traditional

276 B. Finkelstein, “Teaching Psychohistory: Some Nostrums and Suggestions,” *JPH* 5 (1978), no. 3: 395. Other psychohistorians also write about the need to “demythologize.” See R. Pois, “Laying a Foundation for the Use of Psychohistorical Materials in the Classroom,” *History Teacher* 17 (1984), no. 4: 512.

277 In turn, Martin Quitt proposes making use of students’ own experiences. He writes: “And then I ask my kids if they always act reasonably ... Have they ever done something that they did not think that they should have done, have they ever said something to anyone that they believed at the same time should not have been said. ... Invariably each student says yes. ... I laud them on their recognition that they have psyches, a fancier but more accurate word than mind, because it suggests that a complex of feelings operates on human beings that cannot be understood if we follow traditional historians in assuming that we behave strictly in line with the dictates of an objectively rational intellect.” Quoted in B. Finkelstein, “Teaching Psychohistory,” 398.

history courses (such as “zeitgeist” or “climate of opinion”). Finally, referring to his own experience as a teacher, Pois claimed that the student would thus be able to “at least consider” the possibility that the psychohistorical approach “can ... be seen as asking new questions of previously examined materials and problems.” In the longer term, this would show that “this approach can ask, if not necessarily answer, questions which necessitate examination of new materials, and which, by virtue of their being asked, suggest recognition of new problems.”²⁷⁸

One difficulty with which all instructors struggled was the emotional side of the issues discussed in class. Beisel writes:

Psychohistory provokes emotional reactions to the material. ... When we look at the history of childhood, for example, we cannot help but think of our own childhoods, and, if we are parents, what we’ve done to our own children. ... these feelings can be intense and uncomfortable, and an immediate rejection of what we’re hearing can be a signal of our own denials.

He notes cases in which students dropped out of the course because the subject matter was “too uncomfortable” and difficult to bear.²⁷⁹ According to some psychohistory instructors, this situation is nevertheless useful didactically – the instructor can use those feelings to demonstrate to students on a practical level the dynamics of mental processes that control human behavior, to show the power of the unconscious, the operation of defense mechanisms, and the phenomena of transference and countertransference. At the same time, one had to always remember that classes cannot turn into a form of psychotherapy, even if that is what some students, turning to psychohistory, are unconsciously looking for. For this reason, one needs to be careful with “the exploration of psychological processes as they occur in classrooms as a way to enhance our understanding of history.” B. Finkelstein warns that such strategies threaten to violate the students’ right to privacy.²⁸⁰

Assuming that traditional didactic methods are insufficient when exploring the psychological dimension of the past, psychohistory instructors have tried to develop new strategies never seen before in teaching history. Probably

278 R. Pois, “Laying a Foundation” 520–521. See also his experience in teaching the history of the Third Reich based on the psychohistorical approach, in R. Pois, “Introducing Nazi Germany to Undergraduates,” *Clio’s Psyche* 3 (1996), no. 3: 75–76.

279 D. Beisel, “Introducing the Joys of Psychohistory,” 336. P. Elovitz, “Psychohistory in the Classroom,” 343.

280 B. Finkelstein, “Teaching Psychohistory,” 396–397.

the most original and most interesting are attempts at “role-playing” or quasi-theatrical re-productions of certain behaviors or human reactions in connection with particular past events. During such classes, after examining source materials containing statements of given characters and studies introducing their profiles and a broader cultural and historical context, students “play” the roles of specific historical figures or (in another variant of this method) an anonymous character portraying in generalized form a certain type of historical actor (e.g. a Jewish shopkeeper in the Third Reich, an activist in the Bund Deutscher Mädel). Certain scenes are then played out in dialogue form, or an “interview” with a given historical figure is carried out during which the student responds using the actual words of a real historical figure. The recorded material can then be discussed in a group. This “historical re-creation” method, which has been discussed in the literature,²⁸¹ may best reveal to students the difference between the cognitive goals of the psychohistorian (especially the “radical” psychohistorian) and those of the classical historian. This is not about reaching the “truth in a factual sense” (despite the emphasis on consistency between the words or behaviors used by the players and those documented in the historical record), but about “motivational truth” – i.e. revealing the “mental reality” of people acting in a specific historical context that would determine their behavior and reactions. It is assumed that, by experiencing psychological processes that resemble those experienced by real historical figures, students would be able to gain empathic insight into those figures and their motivations²⁸² and to better understand the dynamics of the human psyche. As Paul Elovitz notes:

By acting out the lives of certain historical figures, such as Hitler and his family, students are forced to think about issues that they might otherwise avoid. As they identify with a boy who is frightened by his pompous father, they are reminded that Hitler was a human being before he became a destroyer of humanity. They, like all of us, need to ask themselves what could make a human being systematically annihilate millions of people. ... After seeing Hitler as a hurt and frightened child, devoted son, Jew hater, betrayer of humanity, warmonger and suicide [.] students

281 P. Elovitz, “Psychohistorical Teaching,” *JPH* 15 (1988), no. 4: 438–445; Ch. Strozier, “Springfield Über Alles: Role Playing and the Teaching of History,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 4 (1975), no. 2: 13–24; H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 225.

282 The problem of cultural relativism naturally arises here, though it is minimized by, among other things, the fact that the subject of instruction is a matter of recent history.

are ready to discuss the impact of childhood trauma, projection, regression, repression, splitting, *et cetera*, in a much more meaningful way than at the beginning of the course.²⁸³

The fact that students were not really aware of the concepts behind psychoanalysis was usually a significant barrier in the conduct of classes. Hence, in psychohistory's didactic reflection, the question arises as to whether, and if so how, to introduce students to the (usually psychoanalytical) theoretical foundations of the paradigm. With few exceptions, psychohistorians urged great caution in undertaking this task. It was not about the (unquestioned) fact that Freud's theses and the specific "jargon" used by analysts were alien to the students' experience and could intensify their resistance to, and distrust of, psychohistory. Rather, it was about the conviction established by practicing psychoanalysts that theory cannot be fully understood without going through psychoanalytical training or at least having personal experience with analytical therapy. Instead of engaging in the direct instruction of theory, psychohistory teachers were more inclined to recommend the "case study method" – analysis of a specific problem in class requiring psychological resolution by which students can, to some extent, be "guided" toward certain concepts or fragments of theories.

Thus, the debate around teaching psychohistory reveals, above all, a clear preoccupation on the part of its representatives with the issue of "accustoming" students to the issues involved, gaining their confidence in the value and legitimacy of the paradigm. As Beisel puts it, psychohistory is most often about developing ways to show students "what it means to think psychohistorically" and how this ability could broaden their understanding of the world and themselves. It is significant that the problem of training new experts in the paradigm is almost entirely absent in this context,²⁸⁴ a fact that indicates that psychohistorical courses usually remain focused on the widest possible dissemination of

283 P. Elovitz, "Psychohistorical Teaching," 444. It is worth quoting a statement made by one student participating in a course led by Ch. Strozier: "Perhaps the hardest thing to realize about Nazi Germany is that it actually happened. It always has seemed too horrible to be real. In trying to figure out the 'why's' of that period it is important to keep in mind the 'average' German ... and how he was able to come to it. The role playing brought this sharply into focus." Ch. Strozier, "Springfield Über Alles," 23.

284 Except references to those few cases when a more interested student is "fished out" and referred to a leader in the psychohistorical community enjoying a good position at the university, where that student could possibly complete a doctorate. See for example R. Pois, "New Wine in Old Bottles: Psychohistory in Traditional Settings," *JPH* 15 (1988), no. 4: 449–452.

psychohistorical perspectives in interpreting historical phenomena to students of history and other humanities, rather than on the education of future psychohistorians.

Therefore, when considering didactic issues, psychohistory does not deal with the issue of “reproducing” its own research community, but rather with the question of how to effectively reach students who will probably not become professional psychohistorians.

Recapitulation

The analysis of psychohistorians’ methodological thinking contained in this Part was intended to reveal the main components of their theoretical and methodological assumptions, while at the same time justifying (or falsifying) our initial thesis that the psychohistorical approach is a coherent whole that fundamentally satisfies the properties of a historiographic paradigm.

It seems that the community of psychohistorians has been able to maintain fundamental unity in terms of ontology: their vision of the world and of human being, along with the resulting community’s “postulated reality,” continue to be modeled on the perspective of psychoanalysis. Only a few researchers who view themselves as psychohistorians decided to replace arguments from depth psychology with some other theoretical perspective from psychology. However, rejection of psychoanalysis most often led to one’s removal “outside the parentheses” of the community.

At the same time, the complexity and theoretical diversity prevailing within psychoanalytical thought meant that the interested psychohistorian had several concrete and complementary (sometimes exclusionary) “options” in terms of theory, several bases for conceptualizing given types of issues or for employing particular theoretical constructs. The consequence of this fact was less uniform methodological thinking among psychohistorians than would be expected in the case of a paradigmatic community. Earlier, I analyzed (or at least indicated) important dimensions of this diversity: the status of psychoanalytical thinking in psychohistory (“Ready-made” theory? Theory requiring specification and reinterpretation? A set of research techniques? A set of concepts and categories for “free” use?); the status of psychohistory as a research discipline/specialization (A part of history? Independent learning? Based on empathy? Seeking/establishing some [which!?] regularities in mental processes?); the social function of psychohistory; preferred explanation models (Causative? Referring to childhood experiences? Structural and contextual?), etc. Meanwhile, these basic disputes were by no means completely separate and independent from each other.

In addition, psychohistorians were faced with a dilemma about the place to which psychohistory should aspire within the field of history (One of many sub-disciplines? A basic perspective? Part of a new, scientizing history? A continuation of traditional writing?), about which there was constant debate. Attacks, often coming from opposing positions, prevented psychohistory from shedding its status as scientific “heresy” and from gaining for itself a position as a universally accepted perspective in researching the past.

All these dilemmas led to divisions that had an “external” sociological and institutional dimension in the form of the existence of competing associations and magazines. Psychohistorians formed themselves into groups that fought against each other more than they shared the same discipline. On this basis, in this Part and the previous Part, I wrote about the “split” within psychohistory and its identity crisis, about different groups splintering off from each other and developing communities or lower-order paradigms (most evident in the division between “radical” psychohistorians around L. deMause and the rest).

Despite these differences, I am inclined to say that psychohistory is a separate paradigm, because all of the above-mentioned debates and controversies take place within a vast field of thinking driven by depth psychology (and thus of the psychohistorical worldview). Even if it has been unable to produce a uniform methodological approach, psychohistory has established for itself broad but clear boundaries, which – it would seem – the vast majority of psychohistorians does not intend to cross.

PART III THE APPLIED METHODOLOGY OF PSYCHOHISTORY

On the Concept of “Applied Methodology”

In the previous Part, I tried to identify psychohistory’s basic steering principles, starting with an analysis of methodological thought. Following the reflections of psychohistorians themselves on the principles and conditions of their own research practice and the polemics and controversies related to this field within history, I was able to delineate in particular how they (and their opponents) perceive psychohistory’s main theoretical and methodological assumptions and cognitive possibilities, along with its various weaknesses, limitations and internal dilemmas. Indirectly, I was thus able to systematically reconstruct the convictions central to psychohistorians’ social-methodological consciousness, and to demonstrate the legitimacy of treating psychohistory as a paradigmatic community within history, despite its internal splits. This last statement validates the directive to study psychohistory’s specific historical investigations as a collective undertaking, i.e. one in which *individual* researchers, during their *individual* cognitive investigations, share – in a significant way – certain methodological principles and research strategies.

In this Part of the discussion, I intend to look at psychohistory’s real social research practice. The idea is to show how the above-mentioned convictions “manifest themselves” in specific studies written in this paradigm. J. Pomorski defines the “manifestation” of these convictions as “applied methodology,” writing that:

‘Applied methodology’ is an integral part of every research practice. ... Every [historian] ... assumes a methodology; specific standards and directives guide his research practice. Most often it is a methodology taken from training received in an existing tradition within history or a ‘spontaneous’ methodology developed through trial and error in the course of accumulating one’s own experience. Such a methodology is used by all historians, even those who are averse to methodology as a scientific discipline, not realizing that he is ‘speaking through prose.’¹

Ultimately, the properties of the applied methodology, implicitly contained in given academic works, determine the theoretical and methodological face of

1 J. Pomorski, *Paradygmat*, 41–42.

the particular current in historical scholarship and decide on the qualities of its “products” – i.e. specific historical works. Therefore, although the rivalry of individual schools and paradigms is often articulated through methodological discussions, it actually takes place at the level of research. During academic debates, representatives of these groupings must “defend themselves” in terms of the depth and consistency of their interpretations, the value of their theoretical background, and the power of the evidence used. Which is why reconstructing the applied methodology of a given paradigm based on its research practice remains a necessary element of historiographical research conducted on that paradigm.

In addition, the results of such inquiries will help verify conclusions formulated in the previous Part because, through the analysis of selected psychohistorical works, I will be studying not the “ideas” about rules governing the psychohistorical paradigm (as expressed in the methodological “social experience” of the psychohistorical community and psychohistory’s methodological thought), but rather the rules’ real impact – in other words, the rules “in practice.”

Difficulties with Choosing the “Canon”

The empirical basis for this analysis is a select group of outstanding psychohistorical works which, I would argue, exemplify the most important properties of psychohistorical applied methodology and research strategy. I include works in both psychobiography and group psychohistory, and also those that relate to the history of childhood. The question of what principles and criteria I used for their selection requires commentary, which is tied to certain properties of the psychohistorical paradigm. Studies on the paradigm’s methodological thought have shown that the psychohistorical community is a rather special one, internally heterogeneous and deeply “split.” Because of this relatively extensive fragmentation, one could expect that it would not be an easy task to identify works that are unanimously recognized as exemplary by “all” or even by a clear majority of psychohistory’s representatives. The difficulty of this task was quite clearly suggested by the results of surveys conducted in the 1970s within the community by those psychohistorians who were involved in documenting the paradigm’s progress and development. Answers to questions about what respondents thought are psychohistory’s most important works, and which works the respondent would prefer to use when teaching psychohistory in university courses, showed that Erik H. Erikson (in particular his psychobiographical *Young Man Luther*) was most popular, but it was otherwise

difficult to detect which authors and works were preferred more clearly than others.²

In the psychohistorical literature, we can find several lists aspiring to contain “the best of psychohistory.” Richard Schoenwald suggested one such list in a review article about the psychological study of the past. Others can be constructed on the basis of the footnotes in an extensive historiographical study by Peter Loewenberg and in a work by Jacques Szaluta.³ In *The Psychohistorian’s Handbook*, when discussing individual research fields within psychohistory, Henry Lawton suggested lists of outstanding achievements in each of those fields, and also – at the end – a list of the most outstanding (in Lawton’s view) achievements within all of psychohistory. Less important proposals in this regard may be found in many other texts discussing the development of psychohistorical literature.⁴ However, a closer look at these lists reveals both how clearly different they are from one another and how “incompatible” they are, a result primarily of authors’ differing beliefs about what psychohistory is and in which direction the psychohistorical paradigm should go. For example, Schoenwald wanted to “extricate” psychohistory from its overly strong dependence on psychoanalysis, while he also programmatically ignored the circle of scholars surrounding *The Journal of Psychohistory*, a move which clearly reflected his own conceptual approach to the field. In turn, Loewenberg, a strong supporter of psychoanalytic psychohistory, was motivated by, among other things, a desire to show how wide the chronological and substantive range of psychohistorical study is. Hence, his tendency to include many controversial “borderline cases” from the fields of applied psychoanalysis, cultural history, social history, etc.⁵ Loewenberg, who was interested in “legitimizing” the

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- 2 P. Dunn, “Methodological Issues,” *GUPH Newsletter (PR)* 3 (1974), no. 1: 6–8 and no. 2: 8–10; H. Lawton, “Psychohistory Today and Tomorrow,” *The Journal of Psychohistory* 5 (1978), no. 3: 334–335.
 - 3 R. Schoenwald, “The Psychological Study of History,” 83–85; P. Loewenberg, “Psychohistory,” in *The Past Before Us*, 408–432; J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*.
 - 4 The most recent such compilation can be found in *Clio’s Psyche* (17 [2010], no. 1–2). Such a list (seemingly a “mutation” of Lawton’s list) is also posted on the official website of the International Psychohistory Association (www.psychohistory.us/bibliography.php [accessed 21 May 2020]).
 - 5 Charles Strozier and Daniel Offer also moved in this direction by searching for “closet psychohistorians,” or “masked” psychohistorians, even among scholars who were explicitly most hostile toward the psychohistorical venture. Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “The Growth of Psychohistory,” in *The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays*, 60–63.

psychohistorical enterprise within academia (especially history), was inclined to diminish the importance of achievements of psychohistorians who remained distant from academic history (the same may be said about Szaluta's work). The works proposed by Lawton in his book – which was published as the first psychohistorical textbook “of real events” – were even more “engaged.” When considering Lawton's list, it is difficult not to notice that the aforementioned work, although addressed to everyone interested in psychohistory, actually represents views characteristic primarily of “radical” psychohistorians, whose publications dominate its bibliography. Although Lawton made some effort to include “noteworthy” works written by psychohistorians who did not belong to this group (he mentioned, for example, the more important texts of Demos or Loewenberg), he no doubt viewed their achievements through the prism of “radical” psychohistory. Therefore, minimizing the contributions made to psychohistory by professional historians, he emphasized psychohistorical achievements studying the traumatic aspects of childhood, “psychoanalyzing” current public figures, and revealing group fantasy dynamics in contemporary society. His list not only lacked the names and works of many professional historians involved in the practice of psychohistory, it is marked – particularly surprisingly – by the almost complete absence of the achievements of Robert J. Lifton, a psychologist and psychiatrist widely regarded as one of the most important theoreticians and practitioners of the field. Instead, we read about many works that certainly qualify as examples of applied psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic cultural anthropology and the like. Therefore, we may regard Lawton's list at most as a kind of starting point when trying to select psychohistory's most outstanding works.

Similarly contentious is the content of psychohistorical anthologies, a number of which appeared in the 1970s and 1980s. Published by individual groups or offshoots within psychohistory as representative choices of significant achievements, they could often appear to other psychohistorians as editions of “dubious value.”⁶

6 Such an opinion was expressed, for example by Strozier in the context of such anthologies and collective works as deMause's *The History of Childhood* and *Foundations of Psychohistory*. Referring to R. J. Brugger's *Our Selves/Our Past* (disseminating the achievements of professional historians in the field of psychohistory!) he wrote that this work “illustrates the problem of collections without a theme.” Ch. Strozier, D. Offer, “The Growth of Psychohistory,” note 1, 68–69. Lawton described *Explorations in Psychohistory* by R. J. Lifton as “rather bland by modern standards,” *Varieties of Psychohistory* by G. M. Kren and L. Rappoport as a “reader of uneven quality,” and

Therefore, it would perhaps be closer to reality to claim that there is a tendency for representatives of different branches of psychohistory to treat different works and authors as exemplary, the divisions being not entirely separable, and that the content of co-existing "canons" changes over time as newer works appear that are viewed as outstanding. Such a claim would seem to be confirmed by the results of a survey I conducted in the mid-1990s mainly among scholars associated with *The Journal of Psychohistory*, thus among scholars tied to the "radical" branch of psychohistory. Respondents consistently pointed to Lloyd deMause's publications as those that most fully and adequately express psychohistory's basic theoretical and methodological assumptions and that best address the field's most important cognitive issues. Most respondents also preferred deMause's works for instructional use.⁷ On the other hand, references to deMause's achievements were practically absent in responses given by those psychohistorians outside the "radical" circle whom I managed to reach with my survey.⁸

Despite the above-described difficulties involved in determining the canon of psychohistorical literature, the texts I will analyze below were not chosen by accident. First of all, I selected works written by prominent psychohistorians, by which I mean scholars whose personal contribution to the development of psychohistory has been clearly recognized (including within the community itself), with *contribution* being defined by the following: the scale of their concrete historical research and published results along with their active participation in theoretical and methodological debates and (possibly) in organizational work, even when the quality of this contribution would be disputed by part of the community of psychohistorians (for example certain concepts or

Psycho/History by G. Cocks and T. Crosby as being marked by an "anti-psychoanalytical bias." See H. Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*, 19, 26 and 91.

- 7 Above all what we are talking about there are the studies collected in *Foundations of Psychohistory*. For example, as Lawton put it in his handbook: "In recent years, Lloyd deMause has been perhaps the leading trail blazer in group psychohistory. His ideas are often provocative and unsettling, even radical, but always based on sound scholarship. Even when I disagree with him, I usually find his logic quite compelling." *Ibid.*, 201.
- 8 It should be noted that due to the relatively low percentage of returned questionnaires, the results of this survey cannot be considered fully reliable and representative. That having been said, the expression of criticism of this author's views on various other occasions seems to confirm my hypotheses.

characters from the “radical” camp as viewed by psychohistorians associated with academic history).

Second, I chose historical works – i.e. those that deal with the past, because I consider psychohistory as primarily a paradigm of *historical* research, and in so doing I have, to a certain extent, avoided the works of those focused on contemporary phenomena.

Third, I focused on psychohistorical works which *at least some* of the most prominent members of the community openly regarded as having high cognitive value, and I have done so based on opinions expressed in reviews and on references made in methodological texts (including their bibliographies⁹). I have also used published interviews with several well-known psychohistorians and, in a few cases, opinions communicated to me in private conversations. The sometimes serious divergence of views on which works represent psychohistory’s greatest achievements (and its greatest failures) provides important testimony to what I recognized above, in my discussion of methodological thought, as the paradigm’s “split.” But the fact that certain works¹⁰ have been received positively by scholars from across the spectrum would indicate that, despite deep divisions, we are correct to view psychohistory as a community.

Here I must stress two points. First, in the light of what I wrote above, it should be clear that the choices I made were not self-evident or obvious. In fact, every attempt I make to escape this jungle of contradictory positions and to propose some workable “canon of model psychohistorical works” must inevitably be exposed to accusations of arbitrariness from one side or the other. But I do not see a better solution, and therefore I must honestly warn the reader that this exact set of works for analysis offers testimony to what is for me (as a historiographer and historical theorist) the proper reading of what is methodologically most important in psychohistory’s research practice. Second, an undertaking such as a collective reconstruction of the theoretical-methodological assumptions and research strategies present in these works must necessarily focus on

9 In this context, Gilmore’s partly-annotated bibliography also proved useful. Moreover, the earlier bibliography edited by deMause is equipped with a notation system indicating more outstanding works, though its rules are quite vague.

10 Undoubtedly, the most obvious are the texts of Peter Loewenberg. I have discussed some features of his research in T. Pawelec, “Ludwik Fleck i psychohistoria,” in *Nauka i społeczeństwo w stulecie szczególnej teorii względności Alberta Einsteina (1905–2005)*, ed. B. Płonka-Syroka (Warszawa-Wrocław: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2006), 191–201.

what they share in common, pushing to the background differences that would express the internal diversity of the psychohistory paradigm.

I will base my reconstruction of the psychohistorian’s applied methodology mainly on psychobiographies, which represent the branch of psychohistory that is most developed and for decades dominated psychohistorical research practices; its “products” were most well received by critics.¹¹ In addition, as I demonstrated earlier, in the sphere of psychohistorical methodology scholars devoted the greatest amount of space to psychobiographical debate, the focus of which was not only issues specifically related to the study of an individual’s life history, but also (and actually above all!) the implications of the psychobiography for the whole of psychohistorical methodological thought and research practice. Thus, most of my statements below, although formulated on the basis of analysis of psychobiographical studies, remain valid also in relation to applied methodology as found in other types of psychohistorical literature.¹² I will refer directly to the latter (i.e. the history of childhood and group psychohistory) only in so far as (1) they manifest methodological issues particular to them as separate types of psychohistorical study or (2) they employ elements of applied methodology already recognized in the area of psychobiography but in a new, changed form.

Psychobiography as a “Model” Field of Psychohistorical Inquiry

When studying psychobiographical texts, one gets the impression that the most important features of such writing seem to coincide with the rules that apply to biographies of *all* kinds, which, according to Gwidon Zalejko, include: (1) the integral representation of a person’s existence (based on the most important

11 “The forte of psychohistory is biography. For this category in the field of psychohistory, the others being childhood, the family, and the group, the theory is the most developed, and it is in this category that the most psychohistorical work has been done. Moreover, it is in the study of the individual that the superiority of the psychohistorical approach is clearly demonstrated over that of the traditional approach. The insights, the depths, and the dimensions that this approach affords just cannot be duplicated by the conventional methods of history.” J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 171.

12 This applies in particular to claims about the function of psychoanalytic theory (tools for conceptualization, explanation and interpretation), the role of the concept of trauma, the search for formative experiences, strategies for seeking interaction between psychological and socio-cultural factors, the use of psychoanalytical schemas on life cycle development, etc.

elements of his life); (2) individualization of the described character; (3) a search for motives behind behavior exhibited by the character or personality (variously understood) of the individual under examination; (4) the search for meaning in his life in the world, among other people.¹³ That having been said, psychohistory interprets the research directives that emerge from these rules in a special way, which gives a specific quality to biographies written in the psychohistorical paradigm.

This is particularly evident in relation to the biographer's most basic goal, which is to understand the protagonist, to explain his/her decisions and actions. As Zalejka's findings show, the biography has been understood since ancient times as more than just a series of "external" facts making up a person's life and achievements. The examined individual was regarded rather as a specific psychological entity carrying out a specific life cycle, which is precisely why readers have encountered so much "psychologizing" in historical biography. Confronted by the various behaviors and reactions that historians saw in their protagonist, biographers have tried to "supplement" a rational explanation of a specific behavior based on a more general model of his personality and using "common sense" – that is, based in practice on the colloquial knowledge of human psychology. As Erik H. Erikson noted: "Biographers categorically opposed to systematic psychological interpretation permit themselves the most extensive psychologizing – which they can afford to believe is common sense only because they disclaim a defined psychological viewpoint. Yet there is always an implicit psychology behind the explicit antipsychology."¹⁴ The author of a psychohistorical biography breaks with this attitude programmatically. He begins to work with a deep conviction that old approaches based on more or less mature forms of rational explanation and on colloquial, common-sense psychology, are insufficient. In the introduction to his biography of Hitler, Robert G. L. Waite writes:

Common sense tends to assume that people act rationally, that they behave, by and large, as they intend to behave, and that they are consciously aware of their motivations. But when as with Hitler, the subject refuses to be sensible and behaves strangely, irrationally, perversely, the historian relying on common sense finds himself in difficulties. His inclination will be to skirt such issues. But are not irrational, apparently nonsensical acts also a part of the biographer's data? Is it really enough to label them "strange" or pronounce them "unimportant"? Is it not the responsibility of the

13 For more, see G. Zalejko, "Biografistyka historyczna – zarys ewolucji gatunku," *Historyka* 18 (1988): 37–55. For a list of the basic rules of biography, see p. 45.

14 E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 35–36.

historian to try to explain such behavior, particularly when the consequences are great, both for the subject and for others? Are we not obliged to recognize the power of the irrational to motivate human beings? To conclude that a person's conduct – for example, Hitler's orders to kill all the Jews of Europe ... was “irrational” should not terminate a discussion; it should rather initiate the most serious inquiry into the irrational bases for such historical decisions.¹⁵

Waite even states that an individual as obviously irrational as Hitler all but begs for the help of a psychologist: “it seemed prudent to consult specialists who have devoted their training and talents to understanding pathological personalities.”¹⁶

A similar sense of incomprehensibility, a kind of amazement regarding the behavior of the character under examination is present in many other psychobiographies and often serves as a convenient starting point for the biographer's considerations, in both large studies and journal articles. Alexander and Juliette George were intrigued by Woodrow Wilson's behavioral patterns leading to political disaster during his leadership at Princeton University and then during his Presidency (especially those which provoked the US Senate's rejection of the League of Nations treaty), and by the special, symbiotic nature of his long personal and political relationship with Edward House.¹⁷ Charles Hofling, studying General George Custer's behavior before the Battle of the Little Big Horn, asked: “What was hindering Custer's effectiveness, i.e. preventing him from making correct decisions and leading him to move headlong into an impossible situation?”¹⁸ And Peter Loewenberg investigated the reasons for the strange behavior exhibited by British Prime Minister William E. Gladstone, who for 40 years, returning from Parliament in the evenings, accosted prostitutes standing on London streets in an attempt to return them “to the path of honor.”¹⁹

However, none of the above necessarily means that the psychobiographer always assumes the role of a tracker of psychological pathology. For example, in his study of Florence Nightingale's personality, Donald Allen emphasized

15 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), xvi.

16 *Ibid.*, xiii.

17 A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, passim*. See also by the Georges “Some Uses of Dynamic Psychology in Political Biography: Case Materials on Woodrow Wilson,” in *Psycho/History*, 132–156.

18 Ch. Hofling, “General Custer and the Battle of the Little Big Horn,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 54 (1967): 117.

19 P. Loewenberg, “Gladstone, Sin, and The Bulgarian Horrors,” in P. Loewenberg, *Fantasy and Reality in History* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 93–107.

that his work emerged as a kind of response to the fact that “in an age when rationality, insight, and creative social invention are in urgent demand, little has been provided in the way of systematic case records of great fortitude, rare heroism, or special success in grasping and solving important social issues.” Hence his interest in the fact that Florence Nightingale “achieved greatness through her efforts to control the basic conflicts of her personality which affected her finding her niche in society. Her success in accomplishing this objective was only reached at high cost in each of the stages of her life, but the result was a unique and personally satisfying contribution of no small measure.”²⁰

Ultimately, in order to understand his protagonist, the psychobiographer tries to construct a portrait of his psyche, expressed in a more or less open psychoanalytic discourse. This portrait then becomes the basis (i.e. major premise) on which to explain the protagonist’s actions (and non-actions) and the type of relationships he/she had with other people and, generally speaking, with the entire “external” world. As the biographers of General Sir Henry Clinton, a British commander during the American Revolutionary War, put it:

Various aspects of Clinton’s record ... indicate that his behavior was shot through with contradictions. At times, he showed the skill and insight that circumstances required, and at times he did not; at times he was intent on serving his own self-interest, and at times seemed willfully to betray it. After the war he was thoroughly honest in describing all his campaigns except the last, and about that he lied. His conduct challenges the investigator to find some unifying pattern that will embrace and explain the contradictions.²¹

Nelson H. Minnich and W. W. Meisner express it more succinctly in their study of Erasmus of Rotterdam:

[Until now, only] a few explicit attempts have been made to understand the complexities of Erasmus’ character. ... The following collaborative study of a psychiatrist and a historian seeks to resolve the seeming contradictions of Erasmus’ character and arrive at a psychoanalytically intelligible configuration consistent with the historical data.²²

20 D. R. Allen, “Florence Nightingale: Toward a Psychohistorical Interpretation,” *JIH* 6 (1975), no. 1: 23.

21 F. Wyatt, W. B. Wilcox, “Sir Henry Clinton: A Psychological Exploration in History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 16 (1959): 10.

22 N. H. Minnich, W. W. Meisner, “The Character of Erasmus,” *AHR* 83 (1978): 598–599.

The Functions of Theory in Biographical Research

Constructing the portrait of their protagonist, psychobiographers usually employ some variant of the psychoanalytical approach for the required theoretical background, and they take this step fully aware that they are referring to a systematic theory that originates from outside the area of historical scholarship, one which is transferred into a foreign land. In his book on Richard Nixon, Mazlish states: “in using psychoanalysis the psychohistorian is employing a scientifically conceptualized approach to certain materials, an approach that is foreign to the nature of history itself.”²³ Recognition of this fact has sometimes led to a situation in which the historian, not confident in himself as an expert in psychological theory and its application, has sought the assistance of a specialist – a psychoanalyst, psychologist, or psychiatrist. It has occasionally turned out that such an expert gained the status of an equal collaborator in a given research project and a full-fledged co-author of publications.²⁴ However, most often, psychobiographers have believed that they were able to effectively use the conceptual tools of depth psychology on their own, a fact tied to the ubiquity of psychoanalysis, as mentioned above,²⁵ in the lives of Americans and in the intellectual atmosphere of the second half of the twentieth century.²⁶ Thus, even if only some scholars had (even incomplete) formal psychoanalytical education,²⁷ a much larger number (probably the majority) had contact with psychoanalytical therapy in some form. Freud argued that such “intimate” communion with psychoanalysis is essential for a person to be able to “think psychoanalytically.” Everyone has dealt in one way or another with texts produced by Freud and many other leading representatives of depth psychology. In

23 B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon*, 155.

24 Two examples of such a situation (involving works on General Clinton and Erasmus of Rotterdam) have just been cited. A well-known example of stable “tandem” research involved psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Vamik Volkan and historian Norman Itzkowitz. See also my reflections above on the method of cooperation initiated by Moraitis and Pletsch.

25 See my thoughts on the therapeutic dimension of the ideal of psychohistorical scholarship in Part II.

26 For more see J. P. Demos, “Oedipus and America: Historical Perspectives on the Reception of Psychoanalysis in the United States,” in *Our Selves/Our Past*, 292–306.

27 In addition, some of them started such training only a certain time *after* engaging in psychohistorical research; take, for example, the case of Victor Wolfenstein. See Wolfenstein, “Dual Careers and the Burden of Pain,” *Clio's Psyche* 4 (1997), no. 2: 56–57.

addition, in everyday life they came into contact with numerous applications and manifestations of psychoanalytical thinking in the field of mental hygiene, social work, raising children, etc.

Psychoanalytic theory has four basic functions in psychobiography: (1) conceptualization; (2) interpretation of empirical data; (3) explanation; and (4) the retrodictive reconstruction of experiences and events in a given person's life. We should remember that the concept of theory in psychoanalysis does not quite fit the classical, scientific sense of the term as a "methodologically and conceptually coherent system of theorems describing a certain class of objects," theorems that "should relate to a certain general relationship, not an individual fact."²⁸ Of course, psychoanalytical theses can also be included – as in psychoanalysis textbooks²⁹ – in systems of general theorems deductively connected (as it is usually done with "the laws of science"). However, there are two issues to be aware of:

1. In connection with the thesis adopted in psychoanalysis about multiple conditioning of mental phenomena, its theoretical claims most often denote only framework relationships, so they have the character of nomological formulas, not unambiguous laws. Thus, the "application" of theory usually entails the need for an "individualizing" interpretation of a given case involving the possible occurrence of a specific relationship.³⁰

28 For more on theory in the sciences, see "Teoria," in *Filozofia a nauka. Zarys encyklopedyczny* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź: Ossolineum, 1987), 704–708.

29 For a good example of a popular textbook, see Ch. Brenner, *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis* (Garden City-New York: Anchor Books, 1974) and an attempt at synthesis by David Rapaport, *The Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory: A Systematizing Attempt* (New York: International Universities Press, 1960).

30 See J. Kmita, who states that "what a nomological formula predicates about variables of the lowest order are not constants, but variables too. ... Certain constants are predicated only about those variables of a higher order." He noted in this connection that "concrete substitutions for higher-order variables in nomological formulas must be made by an analysis of given situations in which the fact to be explained occurs." J. Kmita, *Problems in Historical Epistemology*, trans. from the Polish by M. Turner (Dordrecht-Boston-Lancaster-Tokyo: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1988), 10–11. The fact that some psychohistorians overlooked this basic property of their chosen theoretical system is what attracted accusations that they produced "mechanical interpretations" or "pressed complex human personalities into ready-made, rigid formulas."

2. In psychoanalytic clinical practice, theory “represents not so much a compendium of general laws as a systematic attempt to organize and communicate the concrete clinical experience of many different analysts,” that is a kind of “abbreviation.”³¹ This approach highlights the heuristic function of theory as opposed to its role in building a structured and orderly picture of the world.³²

Conceptualization and Interpretation

As a basis for conceptualization, psychoanalytical theory first suggests a certain initial picture (model) of the examined individual’s personality and the types of relationships he has established with his environment. For example, Robert Tucker, in his monumental psychobiography of Joseph Stalin,³³ initially accepted that the Soviet dictator’s character corresponds to Karen Horney’s neurotic personality model.³⁴ In an essay documenting the years spent studying Stalin’s personality, he writes:

One Saturday afternoon in 1951 [at the time, Tucker worked at the American Embassy in Moscow] I had what struck me as a momentous thought in the form of a question: What if the idealized image of Stalin, appearing day after day in the party-controlled, party-supervised Soviet press, were *an idealized self in Horney’s sense*? If so, Stalin must be a neurotic personality along the lines portrayed in her book, except that he possessed a plenitude of political power unprecedented in history. In that case, the Stalin cult must reflect Stalin’s own monstrously inflated vision of himself as the greatest genius of Russian and world history. The cult must be an institutionalization of his neurotic character structure. So the Kremlin recluse, this ruler who was publicly so reticent about himself, must be spilling out his innermost thoughts concerning himself in millions of newspapers and journals published throughout Russia. He must be the most self-revealed disturbed person of all time. Finding out

31 Th. A. Kohut, “Psychohistory as History,” 344.

32 To better illustrate what this is about, it would be worth pointing out a certain analogy to a completely different field, namely law, which can be based on a meticulous code (a “set of general laws”) or on precedence, in which case the basis for adjudication in given types of cases is, to a large extent, prior decisions in cases of a similar type (“previous experience”).

33 R. C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), *passim* (see in particular chapter 12); R. C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above 1928–1941* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990).

34 In particular, see K. Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950).

what was the most important about him would require getting him onto a couch; one could do it by reading *Pravda*, while rereading Horney! I began to do just that, and in the process grew more and more convinced of my hypothesis.³⁵

Naturally, none of this meant that Tucker simply “pressed” Joseph Djughashvili’s personality into diagnostic categories derived from Karen Horney’s concepts. His arguments lead the reader through the social and cultural conditions of Djughashvili’s particular experiences, from the family life in Gori in the Georgian province (personalities of parents in the context of local, established behavior patterns, career models, value systems, etc.), through seminary years in Tiflis, until the moment he found (or rather constructed) his identity as a professional revolutionary – Stalin. In this context, Tucker considered, among other things, the principles of the Bolshevik party inherent in the traditions of Russian radicalism and the way the party’s leadership functioned, which determined Stalin’s most important life identification – with the person of Lenin as the revolutionary movement’s all-knowing, charismatic, and relentless leader. As the author himself puts it, “instead of dealing in such abstract categories from a book of psychology, ... I was now using that book as *guidance* [author’s emphasis – T. P.] in a *biographer’s* effort to portray his subject as an individual.”³⁶

A closely-related issue involves the function of psychological theory in the interpretation of empirical data. In light of such theory, the scholar “reads” the psychological meaning of (and possibly formative role played by) a given source-documented experience, stimulus, behavior or cultural pattern in the protagonist’s life. This is exactly what, for example, Thomas Africa did in his psychobiography of Marcus Junius Brutus. Africa took note of the strong (though not legally formalized) position held by women in the highest strata of Roman society, in connection with which he pointed out that “a surprising number of prominent Romans were products of matrifocal childhoods in which the mother played both parental roles. ... The widow devoted her energies to grooming her son to be a model of success according to the standards of the Roman elite; her efforts were aided by relatives and family pride, but the woman herself was the dominant force in the young man’s life, who was a “perennial mama’s boy” (Africa was referring here to an archetypal figure in Roman

35 R. C. Tucker, “A Stalin Biographer’s Memoir,” in *Introspection in Biography*, 251–252, emphasis in original.

36 *Ibid.*, 262. If not stated otherwise, emphasis in original. For more, see R. C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary*, 3–180.

tradition, Coriolanus). Brutus – Africa noted – grew up without a father, developing unrestrained ambition and self-confidence (which, according to Freud, was typical especially for men brought up in such a family constellation), and he must have experienced strongly ambivalent feelings toward the “substitute” father, namely Caesar, his mother’s longtime lover.³⁷

In turn, Robert G. L. Waite tried to determine the psychological significance of Adolf Hitler’s anatomical deformity (the absence of one testicle), confirmed by a postmortem conducted by Red Army doctors examining the dictator’s half-burned body. Citing psychoanalytical pediatric clinicians, Waite states that such a deformity often generates severe anxiety (castration) in affected boys and a whole range of behavioral and emotional symptoms: “hyperactivity,” “mobility disturbance,” “learning difficulties,” “a sense one’s own uniqueness,” “passive feminine tendencies,” or (as a reaction-formation aimed against the latter) emphasis on “hardness,” “masculinity,” “ruthlessness,” and a “mania for building and rebuilding,” among others. “At one time or another in his life, Adolf Hitler exhibited *all of these symptoms*. Reading the clinical literature dealing with disturbed boys having genital abnormalities, the student of Adolf Hitler must keep reminding himself that the American analysts are discussing their own patients and not Klara Hitler’s young son.” Thus, Waite concludes that Hitler’s experience with this deformity not only undermined his sexual self-esteem, but also “contributed to his general psychological ‘modes’ of mistrust and shame.”³⁸

The specific shape and scope of interpretation obviously depends on a biographer’s chosen theoretical background. While Africa, for his exploration into the personality of Marcus Junius Brutus, referred to the classical Oedipus complex as conceived by Freud, Charles Strozier employed Erikson’s concept for identity formation and Heinz Kohut’s notion of the coherent self in order to establish the psychological significance of young Abraham Lincoln’s relationship with Joshua Speed in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Having documented (based on preserved correspondence between the two men) how Lincoln projected onto his friend his own problems with male identity and having examined Lincoln’s fear and difficulties regarding intimate relations with women, Strozier states that “Speed provided an alternative relationship that neither threatened nor provoked Lincoln. ... Their intimate maleness substituted for the tantalizing

37 T. W. Africa, “The Mask of an Assassin: A Psychohistorical Study of M. Junius Brutus,” *JIH* 8 (1978), no. 4: 602–603, 609–610.

38 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 150–161, emphasis in original.

but frightening closeness of women.” He observes the twists and turns in Lincoln’s relations with women (two engagements broken off shortly before the wedding, then Lincoln’s marriage to a previously rebuffed woman) clearly correlated with the dynamics of his friendship with Speed. And on that basis Strozier concludes that Speed’s “patient friendship during these crucial years at first aggravated Lincoln’s conflicts, then served as the vehicle for their resolution.”³⁹

The Procedure of Explanation in Psychobiography and Psychohistory

Of course, explanation could be considered just one of several variants of the procedure of interpretation broadly conceived,⁴⁰ but for two reasons it is appropriate to treat this subject separately. First of all, it is usually in the context of explanation that the role of theory is studied within the framework of a given scientific paradigm; and secondly, from the modernist perspective, which constituted an important context for the creation and development of psychohistory, explanation was considered, as Jerzy Topolski puts it, “the very heart of the historical science.”⁴¹

Several phenomena in psychobiography and psychohistory could be subject to explanation, including persistent and general patterns of behavior, reactions and references to others as manifested by the protagonist, as well as specific actions and decisions taken by him/her (in particular, though not exclusively, those that seem “strange” or irrational). The subject of explanation can also be the protagonist’s creative activity and its products broadly understood (meaning explanation of the fact that they possess certain properties).

The latter category includes the explanation proposed by Charles Strozier regarding why one of Abraham Lincoln’s most important political speeches, namely his House Divided Speech delivered during his Senate campaign in 1858, was dominated by a paranoid, unfounded fear of a conspiracy of Southerners who allegedly wanted to impose slavery on the entire country. To determine what prompted the usually gentle, realistic, and empathizing Lincoln to perceive reality in such an untypical (and completely wrong!) way, Strozier pointed to the psychological dimension of the deep social and ideological division and conflict that marked the American political class, indeed all of

39 Ch. Strozier, *Lincoln’s Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings* (Urbana-Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 43–49.

40 W. Wrzosek. “Interpretacja a narracja,” 130–132.

41 J. Topolski, *Rozumienie historii*, 5.

American society, in the mid-nineteenth century, a time when it was common for people to hold extreme attitudes, and engage in extreme actions, based on the conviction that one’s position was totally correct and the position taken by one’s opponent was totally wrong. Recalling the assumptions behind Heinz Kohut’s self psychology, Strozier states that the American group self at that time was beginning to split and fall apart. He writes:

One of the many clinical signs of a disorder in the self is the patient’s grandiose isolation: the cold, detached, uninvolved individual, whose brittle grandiosity serves to protect the vulnerable nuclear self against crumbling. ... This idea also has relevance for the group as well. For the endangered group self and the individuals who make up such a group, exaggerated notions of absolute rightness help hold together – with a Band-Aid, so to speak – the fragmenting nuclear self.

At this point we are not far from paranoia, since;

One response of the endangered self is to stake out an emotional territory that far exceeds its legitimate rights. And having made such a grandiose claim on the world, one is open to, and wary of, anticipated encroachments and attacks on the self. ... Lincoln’s apparent paranoia fed on and reflected a widespread, indeed rampant, paranoia throughout the land. ... It is clear [that Lincoln] sensed the crisis and made it his own. He articulated its latent meanings as few others could. ... The fact is that paranoia pervaded people’s minds. Lincoln responded empathetically to their deepest fears.⁴²

An attempt to explain a more general pattern marking a character’s reaction can be found, for example, in one of Peter Loewenberg’s “Austrian portraits.” Studying the personality of Otto Bauer, a prominent Austrian Social Democrat from the interwar period, Loewenberg notices an interesting phenomenon:

Otto Bauer showed frequent and specific inhibitions of aggressiveness in his political life. ... He withdrew politically and emotionally from confrontations with the opposition. When the actual political situation demanded sharp and immediate measures to defend Austrian democracy and the Social Democratic movement, Bauer was unable to call upon enough anger to mobilize his combative skills and take action. The overall impression gained by a close examination of Bauer’s behavior and speeches

42 Ch. Strozier, *Lincoln’s Quest*, 182–198. Regarding complementary oedipal interpretations of Lincoln’s erroneous perception of the sources of the crisis in the late 1850s, see G. B. Forgie, “Abraham Lincoln and the Melodrama of the House Divided,” in *Our Selves/Our Past*, 179–204. Forgie noticed in Lincoln’s reactions a symbolic play (structured by Shakespearean drama) in the conflict between his generation and the generation of the Republic’s Founding Fathers. We should note that the indicated examples also quite clearly touch upon issues tied to group psychohistory, in particular the relationship between the leader and society as a whole.

during periods of crisis is his avoidance of rage. His behavior is conspicuous for its apathy, lack of initiative, and reaction-formative moralizing and ethical preaching.

Pointing to the fact that this response pattern on the part of an important leader seriously contributed to the defeat of the Social Democrats in Austria, Loewenberg attempted to explain this pattern's origin and significance using Freud's basic clinical and theoretical concepts (identification, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Oedipal conflict), along with concepts from family therapy.⁴³ Thus, Loewenberg was able to connect "the thought and behavior of Bauer the political figure to their psychodynamic origins in his family." The presence of a "family myth" that held the Bauers in a neurotic balance (everyone pretended to be a harmonious family in the face of the father's extramarital relationships and the mother's psychotic behavior) led to the fact that "what Otto learned ... was avoidance of perceiving the real events, morally rationalizing and intellectualizing his denial." At the same time, the basic object of his identification was not his father (who was deceitful and dishonest), but rather his mother – who had an extreme case of obsessive-compulsive disorder – which resulted in Otto exhibiting similar personality traits:

Otto's own obsessional neurosis was marked by his tendency to worry and speculate, overcautious behavior focused on avoiding all conflict, omnipotence in his thought, obsessive confessing as if he had committed the crimes of others, elaborate intellectual doubting when it came to action The underlying dynamics were strong repressed rage against his mother. ... This anger and defiance ... was defended against by reaction formations of high ethical standards, the martyr psychology of duty and obedience to the imperatives of conscience.

In this regard, Loewenberg concluded, "Bauer not only never resolved the oedipal conflict ... an oedipal character would have acted in a conflict situation ... He retreated from competition and confrontation in the political sphere and, psychodynamically, from the oedipal phase."⁴⁴

43 Incidentally, Loewenberg also used Freud's clinical materials here, since his patient "Dora" – one of Freud's most famous published clinical cases – was in fact Otto Bauer's sister. Through his treatment of "Dora" and two other relatives, Freud gained insight into the dynamics of the Bauer family; Loewenberg obviously made use of these observations. For the Dora case, see L. Appignanesi, J. Forrester, *Freud's Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 146–167; P. Gay, *Freud*, 246–255; K. Pospiszył, *Zygmunt Freud. Człowiek i dzieło* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1991), 71–74; E. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 53–55.

44 P. Loewenberg, "Austro-Marxism and Revolution: Otto Bauer, Freud's 'Dora' Case, and the Crises of the First Austrian Republic," in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 161–204 (particularly pp. 186–191).

The Procedure of Retrodiction in Psychohistorical Research Practice

A common theoretical function in many psychobiographies is the retrodictive reconstruction of life events, in particular those from the examined character’s childhood,⁴⁵ which reflects the psychobiographer’s faith in the regularities of both mental processes as such and their relation to the sum of human personal experiences.⁴⁶ Typically, in the minds of most psychobiographers, such faith coexists with the conviction that the dynamics of each individual case require individualized analysis.

The retrodictive procedure can occur in two variants: strong and weak. In order not to further lengthen the already long list of examples, I will focus on the first of the two variants as the one that is more expressive (and, from the historian’s point of view, more controversial) on the basis of two cases: the classic, model example of retrodiction performed by Erik H. Erikson in *Young Man Luther* and a controversial attempt by Robert G. L. Waite to demonstrate that Adolf Hitler experienced in his early childhood “primal scene trauma.”⁴⁷

Erik H. Erikson thought that Martin Luther, at the age of about 25 when he was an Augustinian monk, experienced a “fit in the choir”⁴⁸ and that this experience was of fundamental importance for the formation of Luther’s personality as a theologian and reformer. From the perspective of the justification

45 In short, the essential goal of the retrodictive procedure is, in this context, to determine what real, formative events *must* have taken place in the earlier period of the character’s life given that he/she later exhibited particular behavioral and personality traits. The major premise for reasoning is a suitable fragment of theory (possibly supported by contemporary clinical experience in psychoanalysis), while the minor premise is a theorem or set of statements constituting personality characteristics (in their entirety or in terms of specific features or “symptoms”). In the case of retrodiction, the researcher basically relies solely on theory; he either has no independent empirical evidence at all about the occurrence of certain events, or he considers such evidence to be a secondary, confirmatory element.

46 John Cody has expressed this notion with particular clarity; see his statement cited above in Part II.

47 For more on the concept of the primal scene – that is, a child’s memories (or fantasies) about sexual intercourse between parents and the possible traumatic impact of such an experience when this act is interpreted as an act violence – see S. Fhanér, *Słownik psychoanalizy*, 222–223; “Primal Scene,” in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 148.

48 In Erikson’s description, Luther “suddenly fell to the ground in the choir of the monastery at Erfurt, ‘raved’ like one possessed, and roared with the voice of a bull: ‘*Ich bin’s nit! Ich bin’s nit!*’ or ‘*Non sum! Non sum!*’ [It isn’t me, or I am not].” E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 23.

procedures used in the field of history, this claim would be difficult to justify because its only source base is vague suggestions from several sixteenth-century anti-Lutheran pamphleteers. But Erikson writes:

Judging from an undisputed series of extreme mental states which attacked Luther throughout his life, leading to weeping, sweating, and fainting, the fit in the choir could well have happened; and it could have happened in the specific form reported, under the specific conditions of Martin's monastery years. If some of it is legend, so be it; the making of legend is as much part of the scholarly rewriting of history as it is part of the original facts used in the work of scholars. We are thus obliged to accept half-legend as half-history, provided only that a reported episode does not contradict other well-established facts; persists in having a ring of truth; and yields a meaning *consistent with psychological theory*.⁴⁹

From the perspective of Erikson's stage theory of man's psychosexual and social development,⁵⁰ the occurrence of such an event seemed both real and significant. Erikson writes: "the words 'I am *not!*' revealed the fit to be a part of a more severe identity crisis – a crisis in which the young monk felt obliged to protest what he was *not* (possessed, sick, sinful) perhaps in order to break through to what he was or was to be."⁵¹

The way in which psychohistorians usually approach retrodiction, a procedure deeply rooted in psychoanalysis, is shown by Waite's above-mentioned investigation,⁵² which could naturally provide no direct evidence that little Adolf might have ever observed his parents in the act of sexual intercourse. Therefore, Waite was able to refer to:

1. Conclusions drawn from analysis of the symbols and associations contained in *Mein Kampf* in accordance with the psychoanalytic argument that when a patient constantly repeats an image or association or has the same recurrent

49 Ibid., 37. Author's emphasis – T. P.

50 We should recall that according to this concept, the key developmental phase is the period marked by the youthful search for identity, a period in which the individual is faced with the task of overcoming an "identity crisis" – the deepest and most significant of all developmental challenges – with the crisis usually manifesting itself clearly at behavioral and emotional levels.

51 E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 36, emphasis in original.

52 It should be noted that this investigation refers broadly to arguments made earlier by the psychoanalyst (and non-historian) Walter Langer, who in the mid-1940s prepared a psychological portrait of Hitler for the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was published, after declassification, as W. Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report* (New York: Basic Books, 1972). See in particular pp. 148–150.

dream, it indicates a depth of experience and the urgency of what the patient wants to communicate.

2. Statements based on psychoanalytical theory about the psychological consequences of the traumatizing experience of the primal scene (which does not necessarily have to be traumatic); psychoanalysts maintain, based on clinical experience, that these consequences are expressed in the subsequent occurrence of specific psychological symptoms in a given individual.

In the first case, Waite found relevant passages outlining violent imagery of a drunken father's attacks on a mother in a way that allows for the interpretation that they could have involved sexual acts. Such descriptions would naturally typify the dramatic conditions of existence experienced by children in working-class families in general. But Waite noticed the clear compatibility of many key elements of this imagery with the realities in which Hitler himself lived as a child, and with his explicit statement that he was describing scenes he witnessed, even if it is clear that he would never have been able to observe such scenes anywhere other than at home with his own parents. Waite additionally pointed out that this evidence seems to fit into the more general model of family relations between Alois and Klara Hitler as suggested by other empirical data.

In the second case, Waite tried to show that the symptoms and symbols enumerated in the psychoanalytical literature (as a consequence of surviving such a trauma) clearly manifested themselves in Adolf Hitler's psyche and in his attitudes toward others, including women and representatives of minorities, in order to come to the following conclusion: “It seems more likely ... that he had relived the terrifying event hundreds of times in his imagination.” Waite went on to explain why he focused on this early childhood experience:

The way the mature Hitler remembered his parents' sexual relations reveals modes of thought that had historic consequences when he established his dictatorship. The words, images, and phrases he used in describing the event – or the fantasy – show a clear development of the mistrust and hatred that would determine all his interpersonal relations. His mental picture of the incident reveals that to his mind sexuality, power, aggression, and cruelty were all fused together in a dangerous, pathologic union: terror, brutalization, and ruthless power were to him the primary features of sex and life.⁵³

Unlike the strong variant, weak retrodiction is intended not so much to “recreate” specific events from the subject's past as to reconstruct the general emotional atmosphere which the subject purportedly experienced in the past

53 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 162–168.

and which “contributed” to the shaping of significant aspects of his personality. The researcher then avoids adjudicating on the occurrence (or not) of specific facts in the protagonist’s life exclusively (or almost exclusively) on the basis of theory and contemporary clinical evidence. A weak retrodiction variant is commonly found in psychobiographical and psychohistorical literature.

Building a Psychological Portrait

The strategy and stages of building a psychological portrait may be different in individual psychobiographies, depending in part on which variant of psychoanalysis the author chooses to guide his theoretical assumptions. But comparative analysis allows us to highlight key features of that procedure that are commonly repeated in psychobiographies. Taken together, they constitute the framework model for constructing a psychobiographical portrait.

Above all, it is typical for psychobiographers to accomplish this task by moving into a “space” whose dimensions are determined by two types of problems: (1) formative events within the protagonist’s individual life story and (2) permanent behavioral patterns and responses manifested by him or her.

Solutions to the first problem usually begin by establishing childhood experiences and attempts to determine their psychological and formative significance for the protagonist’s personality. Very often, the researcher’s attention focuses on what is usually regarded as most important, namely parental figures, to determine what kind of relationship existed between them and the child and what kind of psychological heritage that relationship left behind. One object of examination is thus parental attitudes and behaviors toward the protagonist, as in, for example, Vamik Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz’s work on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. When considering the issue of the mother, they notice that:

The psychological environment encompassing the mother and her infant was stressful. Zübeyde [who was only 20 years old at the time] had already lost three children. She had been uprooted from her own family at a young age, had endured long periods of separation from her husband, and had undergone hardships while living with him in the bandit-infested forest [her husband was a customs official in the forest area along the Greek border, and then he conducted risky timber trade in that area, with varying degrees of success]. Her milk had been insufficient to meet her infant’s needs.

The family’s volatile fate, dominated by the memory of recent losses of previously born children, shaped the mother’s attitudes toward the next child, whose moment of birth coincided with a significant, though temporary improvement in the family’s economic status:

She would certainly try to protect the new child from the fate that had befallen the others, but she might also have been psychologically prepared for a similar fate for her newborn son. This may account partly for what has been described as her acid disposition and rather callous responses at the time. She has been remembered as having a character almost dual in nature, bright and merry in her attire and socially independent, but severe in her religious devotion and the honoring of traditional Muslim customs.

The authors thus came to the conclusion that “Mustafa grew up without the benefit of what he termed ‘good enough’ mothering at the time he was building his sense of self, and defensively Mustafa established a precocious and vulnerable sense of autonomy.” Accordingly, in their view, Mustafa created:

Two durable images (representations) of his mother: the one in which she was *not* a “good enough” mother, and the other in which she saw her little boy as something special and nurtured this specialness. This specialness was due to Zübeyde’s perception that little Mustafa embodied the family’s new life-style of prosperity and, more important, by replacing his dead siblings, he was the savior of the grieving mother. The blond boy, in turn, developed two basic senses of self; on the one hand, he was deprived, dependent, and emotionally hungry; on the other hand, he was omnipotently self-sufficient and special.

As for the father, he also affected his son’s personality deeply, even if he was rarely at home because of his work in the lumber business. Volkan and Itzkowitz emphasize that Mustafa’s oldest memory (which reveals many features of a screen memory⁵⁴) involves the father who pushes, against the mother’s wishes, the idea to send the child to a secular, western-style school. The idealized father, sultan official and enterprising hinterland adventurer “provided him [Mustafa] with a way to extricate himself from the possessive relationship with his mother” despite the fact that the following years were marked by the father’s failures, drunkenness, and premature death. Volkan and Itzkowitz try to determine how the previously-formed narcissistic properties of Atatürk’s psyche grew stronger in connection with the boy’s need, at the age of seven, to deal psychologically with the loss of his father:

He dealt with the loss of his father in a similar fashion by keeping two images of him. The first father image was that of an idealized, adventurous man on the

54 In psychoanalysis, this term refers to childhood memories with trivial content but with special clarity. In fact, as a product of compromise between defense and repression, screen memories conceal important childhood experiences and unconscious fantasies that can be revealed as a result of analysis. For more see “Screen Memory,” *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 173.

Ottoman border; the other one was the degraded, drinking, and depressed man. Mustafa attempted to identify with the idealized father while constantly trying to distance himself from the “bad” image of the father. His father’s death further increased, defensively, his belief that he was above hurts (he had, after all, psychologically effected the death of his rivaling parent⁵⁵) and that he could, by identification with the selected (idealized) part of his father, chart his own destiny alone and without dependence.⁵⁶

Although focus on parental figures seems to be a characteristic feature of any psychoanalytical biography, many authors take it step further by attempting to show how the reaction patterns or personality traits formed in the earliest years are strengthened, modified, or even replaced by new ones as a result of subsequent experiences in the child’s increasingly expanding world. In relation to the future Henry VIII, King of England, Miles F. Shore notes

The upbringing of royal children had a number of special features. Surrounded by adults whose livelihood and chances for lucrative gifts lay in ingratiating themselves with the King, royal children were subjected to a combination of extravagant adulation and brutal discipline that provided excellent preparation for the crown, for it fostered the grandiose sense of uniqueness which would become the psychological concomitant of royal status. Yet sudden brutality at the hands of the same individuals must have caused wide swings and vulnerability in self-esteem, as well as wariness in making emotional relationships. ... In that royal childhood was so public, all of its aspects were greatly magnified. Time filled with exciting ceremonials and pageantry was interspersed with long periods of boredom and loneliness. Contacts with other children were limited. ... Undoubtedly the children must have endured numerous separations from their parents, which may have contributed to a pattern of transience in important relationships.⁵⁷

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- 55 What Volkan and Itzkowitz meant here was that the father died in the middle of the boy’s Oedipal phase of development, when the parent of the same sex becomes the subject of strong ambivalent feelings, among which are veiled wishes for that parent’s death. Because of limited space, I do not refer here to the biographers’ considerations regarding the formative significance of this coincidence, i.e. the fact that, having experienced the loss of his father at the very time when he unwittingly wanted it, Mustafa subjectively (and unknowingly) could have felt guilty for “causing” the parent’s death.
- 56 V. D. Volkan, N. Itzkowitz, *The Immortal Atatürk: A Psychobiography* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), chapters 2 and 3 (quotes from pp. 26, 24, 27–28, 29, emphases in original).
- 57 M. F. Shore, “Henry VIII and the Crisis of Generativity,” *JIH* 2 (1972): 362–363.

The element of dynamic personality modeling that is brought to bear through this last procedure took a more mature form when psychobiographers began to study in a more systematic way their protagonists' subsequent stages (and crises) of development and its results. After all, the evolutionary and gradual perception of the process by which the human psyche is shaped has been "built into" psychoanalytic theory since Freud, and psychobiography has repeatedly emphasized the cognitive value of such a model for studying the human life cycle. It offers both a conceptual and chronological axis. Therefore, when R. G. L. Waite constructed that part of his biography of Hitler that focused on the formation of the dictator's psyche, and following the example of many other representatives of the psychohistorical paradigm, he pursued this issue methodically by "passing through" subsequent stages of Hitler's psychosexual and psychosocial development. Waite referred both to the classic stages of development of a small child as presented by Freud and to Erikson's stage theory. Thus, White first attempted to link (based on sources and hypotheses) the early childhood experiences of Hitler's oral phase with his particular behavioral and reaction patterns revealing an "oral fixation" (a compulsion to speak, an increased tendency toward verbal aggression, and the compulsive consumption of sweets) and the presence in his psyche of a fundamental distrust of the world and of people. Then Waite did the same thing with Hitler's anal development period, in an attempt to demonstrate how adverse interactions in that period led to a failure to develop a sense of autonomy, achievement, and self-control, which left in its wake an unfortunate legacy of shame and guilt which manifested itself later in difficulties in making decisions, a tendency to humiliate others, and above all the development of a set of traits that make up what Freudians call an "anal character." In a similar way, he analyzed the subsequent developmental moments in young Adolf's life in order to reach, in the end, the phase of crisis and identity formation which (according to Erikson) is particularly crucial for personality consolidation, and which lasted from the death of his mother to the end of World War I. Here, in turn, he considered the next stages of the construction of Adolf Hitler's identity, starting from indications of who he did not want to be (e.g. experiments with the "false" or negative identity of a metropolitan dandy in Linz), through analysis of periods of moratorium, when Hitler in various ways "avoided" deciding who he would become (while at the same time assimilating various important influences and experiences to which he would later refer – his years in Vienna, his "escape" to Munich, service on the Western Front), to a demonstration of how, in the postwar turmoil,

his identity ultimately took shape as a radical anti-Semitic demagogue and an extreme-right political leader.⁵⁸

As part of the application of a particular developmental scheme, scholars can also focus their attention simply on those stages of an individual's development which, in the light of this scheme, appear to be the most determinative; with reference to the other stages, they would have to settle for a cursory consideration of the formative significance of experiences acquired during them. This is precisely how the structure of Erikson's *Young Man Luther* looks, in which the overwhelming majority of the arguments concerns the construction, at the end of adolescence and in early adulthood, of Luther's identity as a Christian, theologian, preacher and German. Similarly, Richard L. Bushman, in his portrayal of the eighteenth-century American reformer and preacher Jonathan Edwards, focused mainly on his protagonist's identity crisis, while Miles F. Shore argued that it was the experiences of the middle phase of life that shaped Henry VIII as he is remembered by history, so Shore focused mainly on the symptoms and effects of this ruler's "midlife crisis" (i.e. crisis of generativity).⁵⁹

The study of formative experiences usually takes place in direct relation to the study of an individual's permanent behavioral patterns. The "postulated reality" of psychohistorians tells them that these elements are interconnected – in short, these patterns are the effect of the impact of specific experiences such that the presence of the former is testimony to the latter's previous occurrence. This premise is important because psychobiographers are often forced to work with a scarcity (or even lack) of source materials that can document the protagonist's early experiences, especially his reactions to these experiences. And it is precisely these reactions that would allow (in the light of the theory applied, of course) the scholar to draw conclusions about the formative significance of these experiences. However, it is different matter, when we are talking about source material reflecting more permanent attitudes, behaviors, and reactions in adulthood; the relative abundance of various materials of this kind of testimony usually makes it possible for the scholar to formulate statements on this subject on a relatively broad empirical basis. Thus, through the aforementioned retrodictive procedure based on theory, psychobiographers indirectly attempt to "reconstruct" or "establish" previous formative experiences. The

58 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 124–219.

59 R. L. Bushman, "Jonathan Edwards as Great Man: Identity, Conversion and Leadership in the Great Awakening," in *Our Selves/Our Past*, 48–74; M. F. Shore, "Henry VIII and the Crisis of Generativity."

direction that the result of their reasoning takes turns out to be the reverse of the assumed direction by which mental phenomena are determined, which was in agreement with the chronologically oriented narration of the protagonist’s life cycle. In other words – the scholar starts by defining these (later) patterns to formulate on their basis statements about what (earlier) could have “carved” a given personality in one way and another, and when that could have happened. In the next step, he “returns” to adult personality traits (as shaped on the basis of these experiences), and these traits then serve the scholar as a way to expand on explanation of the protagonist’s specific actions and decisions. In this way, his conclusions take a circular form (or rather a spiral one, because the considered relationships involve phenomena that are both stretched in time and superimposed on one another).⁶⁰

This kind of reasoning is present in many psychobiographical works, though to varying degrees, depending on the condition of the source database about earlier periods of life and on the relative importance that a given scholar places on the various periods in the process by which the protagonist’s psyche is shaped. Quite apart from statements made by critics who attacked this reasoning as an expression of unacceptable and unfounded speculation or fantasy,

60 E. W. Marvick puts it this way: “In biographical inquiries these [psychoanalytical] approaches are used to follow the course of a life or lives by identifying motivational patterns that begin at birth. Psychoanalytical methods for ascertaining these patterns do not necessarily depend on extensive direct evidence concerning early behavior. They draw on warranted hypotheses formed on the basis of thousands of case studies of adults and children that do show connections between patterns of adult conduct and childhood experience. In biographical research, as in clinical research, facts of distinctive adult behavior are juxtaposed against probably relevant developmental constructs which may or may not be apparent in the child’s experiential history but which lead to additional lines of inquiry into the adult’s personality and its dynamics. Elsewhere I have called this approach ‘spiral analysis’ ... Spiral analysis depends on identifying unexplained inconsistencies, emphases, or repetitions in the statements or other behavior of the subject. Words – in writings, speeches, or conversation – that deviate from the usual forms for the occasion are clues; they suggest latent meanings that prompt a search for nonobvious motives. Propositions about these motives and their unconscious sources may not only apply to the unexpected behavior already identified but also point to other, previously unnoticed, distinctive patterns. In the course of this exchange between past and present, hypothesis and evidence, the original propositions are refined, differentiated, and revised.” E. W. Marvick, “Psychobiography and the Early Modern French Court: Notes on Method with Some Examples,” *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996), no. 4: 943–944.

psychohistorians themselves have sometimes highlighted the danger and uncertainty that accompany such cognitive intervention. Otto F. Pflanze warns:

One of the dangers in using a psychoanalytic model is the temptation to extrapolate from the known the unknown and unknowable. This a psychoanalyst may feel free to do, but not the historian. ... The value of the model is not that it permits us to peer into the depths of a personality beyond the limits of the evidence available, but that it enables us to make more sense out of the evidence we have by establishing interrelationships, both actual and possible, that might otherwise go unobserved.⁶¹

Which is why more than one author actually “settled for” the study and psychological (psychoanalytical) interpretation of patterns whose presence was revealed through analysis of source materials documenting the thoughts and actions of the character under study, the argument being that empirical material simply did not allow for more. One such author was the above-mentioned Richard L. Bushman, who during his inquiries into the personality of Benjamin Franklin noted:

The critical point is that personal traits do affect public actions and deserve the historian's attention. So long as he concentrates on patterns of adult behavior and, where the evidence is skimpy, restrains the desire to find the origins of character, he can fruitfully use psychology. Then insights derived from theoretical conceptions can be verified in the historical record. As an added advantage, this method does not require extensive, formal training [in psychoanalysis]. ... If the aim were to reconstruct the subject's past or his unconscious, the neophyte might go far astray. But if he carefully checks his results against the available facts, as historians are trained to do, he will not err grossly. His conclusions may lack subtlety, but they will not be unreal.⁶²

Returning to the ways in which psychohistorians examine the above-mentioned patterns, we note that scholars usually strive to establish a basic model (or basic models) by which they can relate the researched individual to other people in connection with the specific types of situations or goals that individual is pursuing at a given moment. Psychological theory helps to capture

61 O. F. Pflanze, “Toward a Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Bismarck,” *AHR* 77 (1972): 428.

62 R. L. Bushman, “Conflict and Conciliation in Benjamin Franklin,” in *Varieties of Psychohistory*, 95. Under a separate category we find the works of such authors as Rudolph Binion, who programmatically rejected the argument about the formative significance of childhood, and who interpreted given behavior patterns as arising from (usually traumatic) experiences in adulthood, referring not only to individuals (in biography) but also to groups (group psychohistory). For more on this subject, see sections below.

its (their) function within the “psychic economy” of the individual. Bushman, quoted earlier, puts it this way:

Confronting his materials, the historian’s task is to create a coherent picture. Psychology sensitizes the researcher to new connections and draws into a pattern data normally regarded as insignificant. ... Psychological theory raises a number of questions that might not normally occur. For example, how does the subject characteristically respond to authority? Does he perceive it as helpful and friendly, as cruel or domineering, or as distant and uninterested? Does he react to control by submitting, rebelling, reasoning, or pandering to authority? A similar set of questions might be asked about relations to women or to equals, about methods and success in achieving intimacy, about attitudes towards emotions of hate and love and towards the exercise of power. Merely pursuing the questions will disclose patterns; knowledge of certain observed psychological syndromes will suggest others. Discovery that a subject’s tendencies are schizoid adds little knowledge in itself, but one may learn that schizoid personalities have difficulty relating to other people and thus be alerted to conduct previously neglected. Similarly, the somewhat outdated notion of an anal character, while not specifying a fixed set of qualities, may draw attention to a disposition to alternate strict restraint with periods of letting go.⁶³

In this way, Bushman identified a key pattern in Benjamin Franklin’s behavior, present in both the young man’s “private life” and in the public activities of the mature statesman. The essence of this pattern was a desire to avoid conflict, and when conflict did break out, his desire was, instead of fighting, to eliminate conflict through an attempt to find compromise solutions.⁶⁴ In another case, an examination of the personality of Otto von Bismarck, Pflanze noted that Bismarck’s “dominant characteristic” was “his will to power, the unremitting drive to master men and events that made him the dominant statesman of his time.” He pointed out that this pattern characterized the overwhelming majority of Bismarck’s relationships with other people in a variety of situations and social roles in which the Iron Chancellor had found himself since youth. Recognition of this pattern allowed Pflanze to find meaning even in such surprising behaviors as the convergence of Bismarck (called the “mad Junker” at the time

63 *Ibid.*, 83–84.

64 *Ibid.*, 85–95. Here, Bushman proposed the following approach, permeated with psychoanalytical thinking, to Franklin’s aforementioned reaction pattern: “1. *Franklin was concerned about how to get supplies. ... 2. Franklin feared he would hurt [someone] in the process of getting supplies and therefore avoided hostilities ... 3. Franklin looked for ways to obtain supplies without hurting [anyone]. ... 4. Franklin needed to justify his actions when involved in hostility, or at least to determine how much to blame he was*” (pp. 89–90, emphases in original).

due to various excesses) with the strict principles of pietism: "God was the one higher authority to which Bismarck found he could subject himself. What he could accept from no other man, not even the king, he accepted from God. Pietism appealed to him because of its undogmatic character, its reduction of religion to the unmediated relationship between man and God." Moreover, Pflanze viewed from this perspective several other manifestations of Bismarck's object relations, for instance in the case of his last physician, Dr. Ernest Schweningen, who was the only person able to maintain the status of "master" toward the statesman and to enforce for fifteen years Bismarck's strict regime of a healthy lifestyle. Describing how the doctor put the chancellor to sleep every night by sitting at his bedside and holding his hand, Pflanze formulated the thesis that the doctor owed his position to the skillful role he played as Bismarck's "surrogate parent ... Whatever the doctor lacked as a physician he made up as a practical psychiatrist who knew instinctively what the patient required."⁶⁵

Issues of importance here also include inquiries into permanent emotional attitudes and their dynamics in relation to different types of variables. In the case of Hitler, Waite demonstrated, among other things, the dictator's permanent sense of his own worthlessness and guilt, as indicated by the imagery he employed in both his public speeches and private conversations.⁶⁶

The matter of studying patterns may also include recognizing permanent patterns and symbolism in the protagonist's utterances or in the products of his/her creative activity broadly understood. In his study devoted to Heinrich Himmler, Loewenberg documents a particular emotional pattern characterizing notes entered in the diary he kept as a youngster:

In contrast to the typical adolescent diary, Himmler's diary is flat, virtually emotionless, and colorless. ... The youthful Himmler was addicted to detail. He made a written accounting of the mundane details of his life – showers, shaves, baths, mealtimes, and the totaling of his expenses at the end of the day. A historian encountering these diaries must regret the lack of substantive intellectual content and emotional response. Himmler relates, for example, that he read the newspaper but does not tell how he felt about the events of the time.

Loewenberg's inquiries nicely demonstrate psychohistorians' beliefs regarding the cognitive possibilities offered by pattern reconstruction procedures tied to a particular psychological theory, so I will now look at them a bit more extensively.

65 O. F. Pflanze, "Toward a Psychoanalytic Interpretation," 420, 423, 437, *passim*.

66 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 16–17; R. G. L. Waite, "Adolf Hitler's Guilt Feelings," *JIH* 1 (1971): 229–249.

Loewenberg notices that diaries pose a problem for traditional-minded (in this case, non-psychological) historians; to them, young Himmler’s notes indicate that he is a completely normal human being, one who shows no signs of cruelty or inhuman behavior, which seems impossible to reconcile with the image of Himmler as an adult – the psychopath and “writing-desk murderer” on a mass scale. By contrast, Loewenberg promises: “Using the adolescent diary as a source, I shall attempt to show that psychoanalytic theory and clinical insight can be utilized to demonstrate an emotional coherence and internal consistency of personality between the adolescent and the adult Himmler.” So “armed,” he argued that:

The diary itself was an obsessional object whose purpose was to guard against feelings. The proposition that dreary details of life are easier to recall after a few days than either the feeling of experience or the content of conversation seems highly questionable; rather, the contrary would appear to be normal. What the diary reveals is that its author was a rigid, repressed character who experienced only weak and limited feelings. ... Himmler’s adolescent diary, taken as a whole, shows him to have been a schizoid personality who was systematic, rigid, controlled, and restricted in emotional expression in a pattern that is consistent with what psychoanalysis defines as the obsessive-compulsive character. ... Himmler’s object relations indicate few mature introjects. He identified and his identifications were total. Identification is the original and most infantile form of relation to, and dependence on, objects. Himmler could be as loving or as aggressive as the person with whom he was identifying. Beneath the identification ... he lacked emotional structure. His expressions of feeling were transient identifications and imitations rather than genuine emotions. They had the rubber-stamp quality of one who sees and feels what he is expected to see and feel. His emotional life was barren and impoverished, and his expressions were artificial, lacking real relationship. *He was, however, precisely what one should expect of the subordinate of a dictator and the head of a vast police network.*

Thus, Loewenberg concludes that “if historians look at character structure they will indeed find a consistency in Himmler’s adolescent and adult emotional attitudes and behavior.”⁶⁷

67 P. Loewenberg, “The Unsuccessful Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler,” *AHR* 76 (1971): 612–641. Author’s emphasis – T. P. Quotes are based on a modified version published in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past*, 210–214. It may be worth quoting further from Loewenberg’s text on the schizoid personality, which seems to be consistent with the personality of the Reichsführer SS: “He is emotionally self-sufficient and feels superior to other people because he does not need them, because they are dispensable. He presents a picture lacking in affect, excluding feeling from relationships with other people. ... He is emotionally inaccessible, apathetic, cut off. ... He builds up

Cultural Context and Portrait Construction

Opponents have routinely accused psychobiographers of ignoring the context of place, time, and culture. While this accusation was indeed justified in the early years of this type of literature (Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci, A Memory of His Childhood* is a classic example), the case is usually different when we are talking about more contemporary literature. A good psychological portrait of a protagonist as proposed by a psychobiographer, especially when that portrait is painted within the framework of a development model, takes into account, to a greater or lesser extent, the cultural variables that make up the historical context in which a given personality is formed and functions. In Erikson's view:

We cannot even begin to encompass the human life cycle without learning to account for the fact that a human being under observation has grown stage by stage into a social world; this world, always for worse *and* for better, has step by step prepared for him an outer reality made up of human traditions and institutions which utilize and thus nourish his developing capacities, attract and modulate his drives, respond to and delimit his fears and phantasies, and assign to him a position in life appropriate to his psychological powers. We cannot even begin to encompass a human being without indicating for each of the stages of his life cycle the framework of social influences and of traditional institutions which determine his perspectives on his more infantile past and on his more adult future.⁶⁸

In the practice of psychobiographical research, several very different elements come into play, including family constellations that characterize a given community or cultural (or ethnic) group and that determine certain types of object relations or emotional attitudes. Volkan and Itzkowitz considered, for example, the simultaneous occurrence of many maternal figures⁶⁹ in an extended family that typified traditional Turkish society, which favored the consolidation of a split tendency within the human psyche (and a characteristic narcissistic personality as formed by Atatürk): "Being raised in a home with multiple mothers," they write, "makes it difficult to blend the contradictory frustrating and pleasing images of important others. This psychological phenomenon may appear later in life as a tendency to see people in terms of black and white, as all good

a repressed, robot-like, mechanized personality. ... He does the 'correct and necessary thing' without any feeling entering into the action" (p. 215).

68 E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 20.

69 This term refers to all persons performing maternal functions on the child and experienced by the child as a mother (they can be e.g. aunts, grandmothers, nannies, nurses).

or all bad, and to have difficulty in appreciating grey areas.”⁷⁰ Erikson began *Gandhi’s Truth* with a comparative analysis of the Western life cycle model⁷¹ and life cycle concepts developed in the Hindu tradition that set the psychocultural framework for Gandhi’s understanding of himself and his own life mission.⁷² In this light, during his analysis of Gandhi’s early years, Erikson was able to take into account the impact of such factors as his family’s particular caste position, his father’s socio-professional position (minister at the courts of local Rajahs in Gujarat), the emotional dynamics of a typical extended Indian family, the influence of religious traditions brought by the mother (who belonged to a small sect syncretically connecting the teachings of the Koran with the holy scriptures of Hinduism), and many other factors that co-defined Gandhi’s psyche and relationships with the most significant figures in his childhood.⁷³ In *Young Man Luther*, in his attempt to capture Luther’s particular oedipal conflict with his father, Erikson reflected on the importance of socio-professional advancement at a time of increasing social mobility and political and religious tensions in Germany at the end of the Middle Ages and the start of modernity. Luther’s father, having moved from the family farm in the countryside to a thriving metal ore mining and processing center, achieved “the negative goal of avoiding the proletarianization which befell many ex-peasants ... and the positive goal of working himself up into the managerial class of miners.” Erikson found in the father’s persistent climb up the social ladder the basis around which family aspirations were shaped, especially the aspirations that the father formulated for his son: to get an education, to attend university, “to become a jurist and, maybe, a Buergermeister.” Erikson emphasizes that Hans Luder⁷⁴ “wanted his son to serve princes and cities, merchants and guilds, and not priests and bishoprics.” Thus, we come here across one of the culturally-socially defined circumstances of the conflict between Hans Luther and his son. Noteworthy, Erikson also searched for a “cultural” component in other, seemingly purely psychological indicators of this conflict, e.g. when he argued that the parents’ personalities (a fundamental determinant of a child’s psyche) were marked by qualities which, on the one hand, were conducive to making the above-mentioned social “leap” and, on the other hand, were strengthened by

70 V. D. Volkan, N. Itzkowitz, *The Immortal Atatürk*, 17.

71 As conceived within the framework of his eight stages of psychosocial development.

72 E. H. Erikson, *Gandhi’s Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 33–39.

73 *Ibid.*, 103–140.

74 Such is the spelling of his name in the original.

that leap. Erikson worked in a similar fashion when he analyzed, for example, the significance of the anal symbolism in Luther's writings and speeches and the "anal" properties of his character: in addition to psychological determinants, he considered Luther's childhood experiences among miners and metal smelters – that is, those who "work in the mud."⁷⁵ I have already mentioned the fact that Robert Tucker also viewed the formation of Stalin's personality in the broad context of ethnic, cultural or religious conditions.

Thus, psychobiographers have usually viewed their protagonist's attitudes, reaction patterns, and specific actions as a resultant effect of psychological factors related to a psyche's formation and of factors that make up the "external context." For example, in his examination of Hitler's monstrous and pathological anti-Semitism and how it took shape, R. G. L. Waite referred to both the genesis of his personality and to the long tradition of anti-Semitism in Germany, which, as Waite attempted to document, had an impact on Hitler especially during his stay in Vienna. Waite argues that "Anti-Semitism was deeply satisfying to Hitler for psychological as well as historical and philosophical reasons."⁷⁶ Psychohistorians have seen the importance of the problem of "external context" even when the cultural and space-time distance between the biographer and his protagonist was not as pronounced as in the examples cited above. Bruce Mazlish, writing about his contemporary Richard Nixon, emphasized the "significant" connection between the formative experiences specific to Nixon (more precisely: his individual variants of experiences specific to every human individual) with various "external" conditions: "his Quaker religion, his rural, California culture, his maturation in twentieth-century American society, and so forth."⁷⁷

75 E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 49–97, particularly pages 50–63.

76 R. G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 90–123 and 186–191 (quote from page 187). See also R. G. L. Waite, "Adolf Hitler's Anti-Semitism: A Study in History and Psychoanalysis," in *The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History*, ed. B. B. Wolman (New York: Harpers, 1973), 192–230. This example retains its value regardless of whether or not one accepts the early chronology of Hitler's anti-Semitism proposed by this author. For a different and purely psychological approach to the origins of Hitler's anti-Semitism in psychohistory, see R. Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans* (New York: Elsevier, 1976), 1–35.

77 B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon*, 152.

The Psychological Portrait as an Explanatory Prerequisite

Thus, the psychological portrait constructed in the manner described above becomes a prerequisite (or premise) – tacitly assumed or explicitly invoked – for explaining a protagonist’s particular behavior or decisions. Its significance as a basic element of explanation is even greater given that the psychohistorical biography attaches particular importance to the protagonist’s inner world (“psychic reality”) as an arena in which he acts and makes decisions. In other words, when the psychobiographer reflects on the circumstances in which his protagonist found himself and had to act, he devotes less attention (which does not necessarily have to be the same as omission or disregard) to what those circumstances *actually were* and more to how they *appeared* to the protagonist (consciously and unconsciously). This is clearly demonstrated by the above-cited work on President Wilson. At one point, the Georges wrote:

Once Wilson had emerged with a decision on an issue particularly one which mobilized his aspirations for high achievement, his mind snapped shut. In such cases, he felt that his decision was the only possible one morally as well as intellectually. Having conscientiously put himself through a laborious examination of relevant facts, he categorically identified his view with righteousness and would not permit himself or anyone else to question it. ... A dogmatic insistence upon a particular viewpoint frequently followed a protracted period of indecision on the questions. Once he had evolved his position, he was impatient of any delay on the part of others He seemed determined to deny the complex interests which lay back of public issues, shadings of viewpoints and the bases of them. For Wilson, there were only right and wrong, black and white: and he understood to judge on which end of the spectrum various positions belonged.

It was in this way, which is both simplifying and highly evaluative, that Wilson perceived reality while making many of the key decisions in his career as president of Princeton University and President of the United States. Of all of these decisions, the most historically significant were those related to the peace treaty ending World War I and the establishment of the League of Nations. Several chapters of the Georges’ work show in detail how the indicated features of his perception (resulting, as they argued, from the properties of his psyche) co-determined Wilson’s view of reality and thus his knowledge of the conditions and possibilities of his own action, all of which led to one and not another (in some cases of extremely inadequate) understanding of his opponents’ motives and his and their room for maneuver, of chances for carrying out his own plans and the most appropriate strategy for success, and

finally of the scale of social support for his program.⁷⁸ Regarding the latter, the authors note for example that:

The instant he took his position on an issue which was emotionally charged for him, he represented it as an expression of what was in the minds and hearts of “the people.” When he was battling in behalf of one or another of his programs, Wilson’s fine intuitive insight into public sentiment became distorted. For in order to justify his aggressive treatment of his opponents, he needed to regard himself as the best interpreter of the people’s true aspirations. His estimate of public opinion became distorted by his need for rationalizing the aggressive tactics through which he sought to impose his will. He tended to oversimplify trends of opinion and to exaggerate public support of his own position. His tragic delusion that the public would rise in wrath against the Republican nominee in the 1920 presidential election, in protest against the defeat of the League of Nations [by the Republican majority in the Senate], was only the supreme flowering of this ever-present inclination.⁷⁹

Is Psychobiography “Pathography”?

The above-cited example suggests that we consider another important issue in psychobiographical writing. An interpretation of the decision-making process and actions of a political leader which emphasizes various flaws in his “reality testing,” which lead in turn to other failures both large and small and sometimes to traumatizing defeats even for the protagonist himself, seems to suggest that psychobiographers tend to concentrate on phenomena that are – so to speak – “pathological” in nature.⁸⁰ This impression is deepened by the constant presence in the psychobiographical discourse of diagnostic categories or concepts related to various psychological “symptoms.” We cannot help but remember that Freud also indicated that his investigations into Leonardo da Vinci’s psyche were based on “pathography.”⁸¹

Having studied a considerable number of psychobiographies, I find this suggestion misleading. Psychohistorians writing biographies have usually understood that a focus on diagnosing or describing the psychotic features of

78 A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson*, chapters 13, 14 and 15. Quote from *ibid.*, 120.

79 *Ibid.*, 121. In this regard, see also the Research Note at the end of the second, expanded edition of this work, p. 322.

80 I have previously pointed out that opponents of psychohistory have often raised this accusation.

81 S. Freud, *Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* in *SE*, vol. 11 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1959), 130–131.

a protagonist’s psyche or his/her neurotic symptoms produces a caricature of both history and biography.⁸² After all, regardless of whether or not the protagonist exhibited this or that abnormality, he or she was usually able to function effectively in the real world, demonstrating the ability to adapt to existing circumstances and/or somehow alter those circumstances. A typical psychobiography deals with precisely such issues, focusing on how the protagonist, whose psyche has particular properties and who acts with a specific socio-cultural environment, was able to respond (or not) to changing circumstances and challenges. All of which means that the investigator emphasizes processes indicating adaptability and the ability to act on a realistic rather than a neurotic basis. The need for such an approach was expressed by psychohistorian R. G. L. Waite in his criticism of the portrait painted of Hitler in the aforementioned secret report on the dictator’s mental condition in the early 1940s:

The emphasis in this book ... is on the pathological aspects of Hitler’s life. And it is a side, I have been insisting, that needs very much to be emphasized. But the unaware reader may get the notion ... that Hitler was so mentally disturbed he could not have functioned effectively. On the contrary, Hitler could act with high rationality and paralyzing effectiveness. ... Hitler was a consummately able political and military tactician. ... Hitler was also highly effective in social situations. He had the charm and intelligence to captivate and impress philosophers and farmers; architects and laborers; artists and housewives; generals, ambassadors and American co-eds. He was a perceptive, capable and many-sided person. Indeed, he was far more complex than this [Langer’s] analysis suggests.⁸³

This is how Volkan and Itzkowitz approached Atatürk: although we can no doubt find in their narrative “diffuse” elements of psychopathological “diagnosis,”⁸⁴ the question on which they focused most was the extent to which Atatürk’s numerous and spectacular military and political successes were directly or indirectly conditioned by his narcissistic personality. The authors emphasized the occurrence (in their view, a kind of historical “accident”) of a certain kind of “fit” between the basic demands of his inner world and the external world in which he lived.” Thus, they were able to demonstrate that in many cases, it was his belief in his own uniqueness and ability to understand a situation in

82 One can cite dozens of such declarations made in introductions to psychobiographical works.

83 R. G. L. Waite, “Afterword,” in W. Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*, 233. See also P. Loewenberg, “Psychoanalytic Models of History: Freud and After,” 132–138.

84 In fact, they even formulated this diagnosis in concise form explicitly in the book’s postscript.

depth that turned out to be the basic element in making decisions that were risky and unconventional, but also fortunate. One such decision came during the battle against the Entente on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915, when “without waiting for orders from headquarters, he committed his men to the battle [he commanded the only reserve division in the region] ... to halt the advance of the British forces. Mustafa Kemal derived the confidence to act in this manner, without hesitation and without authority, from his own grandiose self. This action was *his alone* and based on *his own* assessment of the situation.”⁸⁵

On “Traumatic Interpretations”

The clear presence of therapeutic-diagnostic psychoanalytical concepts in the psychobiographical discourse is at least partly conditioned by the genesis of psychoanalysis itself, which – as I emphasized earlier – was originated as a therapeutic practice before it ever aspired to the status of psychological theory. It was in this therapeutic-diagnostic (and thus medicalizing) context that its conceptual apparatus was first shaped. Arguments for the use of such categories outside of the clinical context were provided by Freud himself, both through his practice of applied psychoanalysis and through his emphasis on the “fluidity” between what is “healthy” and what is “pathological” in the human psyche. He maintained, among others things, that in terms of the human psyche, a state of disease (neurosis) is nothing more than an intensification of the symptoms encountered (to a lesser extent) in individuals considered healthy.⁸⁶ As part of the psychobiographer’s vision of the world, imbued with depth psychology, the “pathological” thus became an immanent part of the “normal,” and the psyche’s mechanisms that Freudians described in their disturbed patients appeared simply as variants of more universal mechanisms by which the human psyche functions and develops. We can illustrate this fact by pointing to two ways in which the categories of trauma function in psychobiographical writing. In the first instance (in accordance with beliefs expressed by Freud), traumatic experiences can be regarded as leading to permanent “damage” to the personality,

85 V. D. Volkan, N. Itzkowitz, *The Immortal Atatürk*, 356, 86–87. Author’s emphasis – T. P.

86 As Freud wrote: “They [neuroses] shade off by an easy transition into what is described as the normal; and, on the other hand, there is scarcely any state recognized as normal in which indications of neurotic traits could not be pointed out. Neurotics have approximately the same innate dispositions as other people, they have the same experiences and they have the same tasks to perform.” See Freud, “An Outline of Psychoanalysis,” 183.

which manifests itself in later years of life in connection with new experiences perceived as analogous to those earlier traumatic experiences. The scholar could examine these processes through reference to the classical Freudian conceptual apparatus (childhood trauma, fixation, regression) or to one of its subsequent modifications. For example, for A. and J. George, what lurked in the “background” of President Wilson’s particular attitudes and decisions were pathological fixations caused by the complicated relationship between Wilson (as a child and young man) and his father.

In psychobiographical literature, there are also such works in which scholar’s programmatically consider the protagonist’s “traumatization” in isolation from the context of childhood events that typifies psychoanalytical thinking. This is especially so in the case of the variant concept of “traumatic reliving”⁸⁷ developed by Rudolph Binion, on which all of his psychobiographies (except for an early study of Lou Andreas-Salomé) are theoretically based, as well as his

87 In Binion’s view, the mechanism of traumatic reliving is as follows: “The normal mode of coming to terms with a traumatic experience, or rather of endeavoring to come to terms with it, which is to relive it – to contrive a new experience that is unconsciously taken to be the old one even while consciously the connections between them go unnoticed. Every emotionally charged component of the old experience enters into the new one vicariously – starkly overdrawn as a rule, and with key relational elements reversed, such as east and west, or before and after. The point of reliving a traumatic experience seems to be to will, to control, to master it after having been overcome by it the first time, and to inure oneself to it so that it will ‘pass’ after all.” The immense power of traumatic reliving triumphs over any resistance put up by external reality. It overrides all of the individual’s “instincts, interests and ideals. ... And all one’s inhibitions will fall before it: anyone suitably traumatized can massacre innocents, especially by remote control. The afflicted ego reverts to earliest, purest self-will. A corrective tendency, prominent in traumatic reliving, is to ward off the traumatic blow, which is redelivered nonetheless. But another corrective tendency can win out if enough guilt is felt: to convert the blow into a punishment due, to make the misadventure over into a misdeed that is then expiated. When this succeeds, the whole enterprise of unconscious reliving defeats itself. Otherwise it is commonly just futile and hence repetitive – a lifelong desperate, senseless routine.” R. Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans*, xii-xiii. The Freudian idea of repetition compulsion was detached here from its genetic and developmental context, and Binion, on its basis, formulated the concept of an autonomous psychological mechanism that can “start” at any given time in an individual’s life – if he suffers a sufficiently serious trauma – in order to conclusively determine his key decisions and actions. See also R. Binion, “Traumatic Reliving in History,” *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 31 (2003): 237–250; R. Binion, “Group Process,” *Clio’s Psyche* 7 (2000), no. 3: 102, 141–144.

works in group psychohistory. From this perspective, he examined in “Repeat Performance” Belgium’s internally contradictory and disastrous policy of neutrality before the Second World War as introduced personally by King Leopold III (in violation of the country’s constitutional order), along with decisions the King made in the days leading up to the German invasion. Binion viewed this policy as an expression of a re-living of the greatest (Binion claimed) trauma in the King’s life: the death in 1935 of his wife (Queen Astrid) in an accident involving a vehicle driven by the monarch himself. Binion drew an equivalency between the King’s experience tied to Belgium’s political situation in the years 1936–1940 (and his perception of his own role in these cases) and the King’s experience in the tragic incident on the mountain road near Küssnacht in Switzerland:

He relived them on the level of his sovereign charge. His private tragedy having been nationalized and internationalized at Küssnacht already [the royal couple’s accident attracted the attention of all Belgians as well as the world press], he now re-enacted it nationally and internationally. In the back of his mind, his realm stood for his sometime Queen. The Küssnacht catastrophe would be repeated when Belgium would be “hurled all at once into a war of unheard-of violence.” He was himself to drive Belgium to that catastrophe by taking over irregularly from his responsible ministers, who yet went along with him – just like his chauffeur before them. He was to drive Belgium that way incognito: in the name of Paul Henri Spaak [Belgium’s prime minister at the time]. And he was to draw the same ignominy upon himself after the new mortal catastrophe as after the old. Here, then, was the “mission” he nominally assigned to *Belgium* on October 14, 1936, but actually assigned to himself, as he expressed it at Wynendael after the fact. This was the inside story of his insisting that the catastrophe would not, could not, must not come to Belgium – while half-consciously expecting it and unconsciously contriving it.⁸⁸

Similarly, Binion perceived in key aspects of Adolf Hitler’s public activity the repetition of a series of traumatic experiences, among which were, above all, the trauma he experienced after the death of his mother, who had been suffering from breast cancer and was unsuccessfully treated by a Jewish doctor with iodoform (a poisonous and harmful chemical substance, which presumably increased suffering and accelerated death) and mustard gas poisoning he experienced on the Western Front. Hitler “repeated” these experiences with his anti-Semitic program and policy up to the Final Solution using gas chambers. Binion also pointed to the trauma of the national defeat in November 1918

88 R. Binion, “Repeat Performance: Leopold III and Belgian Neutrality,” in R. Binion, *Soundings*, 38 and *passim*.

(shared along with Hitler by masses of Germans), relived in the form of a new and more tragic end to his program to conquer the world.⁸⁹

However, very often, in addition to (or rather instead of) the indicated approach, we find scholars taking another approach to the role and meaning of traumatic experience. Seen from a different perspective, traumas become a somewhat normal (actually necessary!) element in the formation of human personality, one which allows us to talk about their role in terms not only of pathology and destruction, but also of adaptation or even creative adaptation. J. E. Mack points out:

The struggle to deal with the continuing effects of a traumatic experience goes on long after its occurrence, sometimes for the rest of a person's life. Depending upon the range of psychological strengths and skills available to him this struggle may take differing forms: shifts in the direction of his way of life (abandonment of a profession, withdrawal from society); the development of symptoms of mental illness; and various efforts to integrate the experience through creative activity or other forms of communication that give evidence of the continuing inner conflict.⁹⁰

Precisely for this reason, for example, Andrew Brink associated the meanders of Bertrand Russell's early literary output with the psychological “task” of overcoming the trauma he had experienced through the early loss of his parents, which took the form of an unsuccessful, unfinished mourning. While putting together his “The Pilgrimage of Life,” Russell – in Brink's view – was working through the repressed feelings of love, anger, loss and rebellion that he was not allowed to experience at the right time in his childhood. This process provided the minimum mental stability necessary to get through the difficult break-up of Russell's first marriage and his writing of *Principia Mathematica*.⁹¹

John E. Mack, a biographer of T. E. Lawrence, basically perceived the formation of his protagonist's personality and activities in a similar way. In an article about his study's methodological assumptions, Mack writes:

My interest has remained in the integration, in the creative surmounting of pain or guilt, in the adaptation of a personal need to the sociopolitical realities of another

89 R. Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans*, 1–35 and *passim*.

90 J. E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T. E. Lawrence* (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1976), 226–227.

91 A. Brink, “Bertrand Russell's ‘The Pilgrimage of Life’ and Mourning,” *JPH* 10 (1983), no. 3: 311–331. Compare A. Brink, *Russell: A Psychobiography of a Moralist* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1989), chapter 3.

people. ... The interest in the childhood ... of Lawrence's adaptations has been to obtain a more complex picture of the pearl, not to reduce it to its mineral or chemical origins.⁹²

An eloquent example of this are Mack's reflections on the role played in Lawrence's life by trauma tied to his illegitimate origin.⁹³ Mack thus notes the unusual level of parental psychological "investment" in the children (especially in Thomas Edward, who was distinct by virtue of his activity, intelligence and overall abilities), whose achievements were to somehow "redeem" the parents from their sin, a consequence of which was Lawrence's internalized belief in his own uniqueness and destiny to fulfill a special mission. At the same time, Mack documents two important mental processes within his protagonist:

1. Internalization of his parent's guilt, which led to an unconscious belief that no personal achievement would offset the fact that he was the fruit of sin;
2. Development of a "hero fantasy" – a variant of family romance⁹⁴ in which a child's fantasized heroic achievements restore proper dignity to the humiliated parents.

Against this background, Mack considered how specific properties of Lawrence's psyche were shaped – e. g. a tendency toward risk, altruism, a willingness to sacrifice, the ability to lead people, to stand back in the shadows. Under

92 J. E. Mack, "T. E. Lawrence," 276.

93 Naturally, the status of being an illegitimate child does not necessarily have to be traumatic. The trauma of illegitimacy is primarily determined by the cultural context in which this fact occurs and by the relationship between parents. In the case studied by Mack, however, it meant middle-class people in Victorian England, "spouses" who lived outside of marriage and for years pretended (toward society and toward their own offspring) that they were a legal, "decent" family, and (maybe based on the principle of psychological compensation for their own "guilt") they instilled high religious ethical standards in children. Only gradually did the children themselves discover the truth. For more, see J. E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, 26–34, 418.

94 "Family romance" involves "a variety of fantasies expressing a corrective revision of the identity of the subject's parentage. The child becomes disenchanted by the discrepancy between the idealized image of the parents he or she held in childhood and the more fallible portrait that emerges in later years. ... on a deeper psychological level it is an attempt to reinstate them to their erstwhile idealized status, recalling 'those happy vanished days,' as Freud put it, when the father 'seemed the noblest of men and the mother the dearest and loveliest of women.'" "Family Romance," in *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 74.

the special conditions of World War I in the Middle East, these properties provided him “an extraordinary capacity to adapt himself to a great range of situations and challenges,” for example, to effectively contribute to the success of the Arab uprising against Turkey in 1916–1918 and to secure his place in history.⁹⁵ In the psychological dimension, according to Mack, this also meant that Lawrence was able to actually act out⁹⁶ this fantasy: “Lawrence has left little doubt that his engagement in the Arab campaigns was for him the apotheosis of the hero fantasy, in which he would restore not his family to its proper status, but another people, a downtrodden race, to its original noble place in history.”⁹⁷

This approach is evident even when Mack discusses experiences that were unambiguously destructive to Lawrence’s personality, including a night of torture and sexual assault during his time in Turkish captivity in 1917 in Dera, and participation (leadership role?) in the massacre of Turkish prisoners of war at the end of the campaign. Of course, Mack noticed various deeply devastating effects of these experiences, e.g. Lawrence began to perceive his role in the Arab uprising and national movement as a hoax based on deception, and his own motives as purely selfish, which was associated, Mack argued, with the rise of a “powerful need for penance through degradation and humiliation, a need that was accompanied by a permanently lowered self-regard. In addition, he was left with a compulsive wish to be whipped, attributable directly to the Der’a experience, which was the source of much later misery.” And yet Mack viewed the subsequent course of his protagonist’s life – above all, his years of service in the RAF (under an assumed name as a private mechanic developing, among other things, prototypes for aviation rescue equipment) and writing-literary activity – as an expression of Lawrence’s attempt through creativity to overcome the consequences of such injuries:

95 J. E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, 105–106. Mack wrote: “Lawrence’s claim on our attention as a contemporary hero lies in the genius of his courageous leadership in a modern guerrilla war of national liberation, his idealistic self-sacrifice in the service of the freedom of a colonized people, his ‘absolute unwillingness to sell out’ ... in the peace settlement, his renunciation of all personal gain for his efforts, and finally his willingness to face fully the psychohistorical complexities of his own role.” J. E. Mack, “T. E. Lawrence,” 283–284.

96 “Acting out” refers to an “action in which the subject, in the grip of his unconscious wishes and phantasies, relives these in the present with a sensation of immediacy which is heightened by his refusal to recognize their source and their repetitive character.” See *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 4.

97 J. E. Mack, “T. E. Lawrence,” 289.

He regarded himself as guilty, not simply because he felt that his leadership had ended in the betrayal of his Arab followers, nor because he had given in to unacceptable sexual and aggressive impulses during the campaigns, but more fundamentally because he continued to be aware in himself of desires, ambitious and erotic, which, to his exacting conscience, were totally repugnant. He entered the ranks to cure himself of wishes, to do penance But Lawrence was not simply a twentieth century ancho-rite seeking a monastic existence and solitary escape. He remained a creative person, with a need for companionship and a powerful drive to be useful and to be engaged in meaningful work. What he required, therefore, was a situation that could meet his dependency needs, shackle his sinful self in chains, and yet provide opportunities for work he could value, while remaining at a lowly level that offered few conventional worldly rewards. The RAF ... fulfilled all these requirements splendidly. ... During his thirteen years as an airman and a private, Lawrence succeeded, in his view, in transforming himself into a person without desire or ambition, yet capable of useful work.⁹⁸

Approaching Sources: Empirical References in Psychohistory

The basic problem while writing psychobiography remains the issue of the source basis. In the eyes of “conventional” historians and biographers, much of the reasoning and many of cognitive measures cited here can appear to be unfounded speculation or mere “inventions,” a fact that I documented above. So, to what materials do psychohistorians refer, and how do they use them to validate their theses and arguments?

First of all, we should note that scholars most often use sources which have long had a place in the historian’s research workshop, and which allow them to document behavior and statements made by the characters under examination. Among them, we find memoirs, diaries, letters, autobiographies, official documents, interviews, etc. A special feature of psychobiographical writing would not be so much the choice of empirical materials, but rather the way they are used, i.e. the questions that psychobiographers ask of their sources. The psychobiographer “approaches” those sources equipped with his own, usually psychoanalytical theoretical assumptions and interpretation strategies. The sources (step I) “prompt” him to look for repetitive symbolism in words, images and topics, the longer-term forms of behavior (and the relationships between them) of the examined individual, including those that can be described as phobias or quirks. Together, they constitute (in the light of given theoretical assumptions) indicators, on the basis of which (step II) scholars make inferences about personality traits, elements of psychopathology, emotional states,

98 J. E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, 242, 321.

the causes behind a given motivation, etc. (as a result of certain dynamics in the protagonist’s psyche and how he/she perceives “the real world”).

Thus, psychobiographers (like all other psychohistorians) ask, above all, “why?” Which is the reason behind the fact that they are interested primarily in the examined individual’s personality and the motives behind his or her decisions and actions, and not in a mere “factographical” depiction of the course of that individual’s life. These decisions and actions occur as a result of a special plexus of interactions between the “external context” (socio-cultural-historical) of the protagonist’s existence and psychological or personality factors. Which explains, among other things, the psychobiographer’s special predilection⁹⁹ for materials directly produced by the examined individual – the products of his or her creative activity, broadly understood, in which the protagonist’s emotional states and the dynamics of his/her psyche are communicated in the most direct, conscious and unconscious way. Mack writes, for example, that Lawrence

Seemed to me unique among men of action ... in his need to explore himself and the motives for his action. Other soldiers have written their personal memoirs, but none, I believe, has ever probed so deeply, with such psychological acumen, in published works or in letters, in the inner sources of his actions, or revealed so fully the consequences of the actions upon his subsequent mental state.

Moreover, Lawrence’s writings:

Reveal his continuing struggle to overcome the destructive experience of the war, whose persistent effects he sought to surmount through creative writing. His writings are filled with the swings of self-esteem from heights of egoism and confidence to depths of despair and self-contempt, and with other paradoxes of feeling, contradictions of attitudes, and contrasts of emotion that are the characteristic substance of inner conflict. The wish to make himself known stands for Lawrence alongside the desire to hide or deceive; unusual candor and factual honesty exist side by side with secrecy and distortion; and a desire to evoke sympathy appears to war with unusual stoicism.¹⁰⁰

Such material would allow a scholar to gain insight into the ways in which the protagonist experienced reality, into his response patterns to reality – in the sphere of feelings, emotions and actions. Attitudes and relationships developed

99 In the sense that they are recognized as material that is most cognitively valuable.

100 J. E. Mack, “T. E. Lawrence,” 273–274; J. E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, 228. It is not difficult to see that many of the examples cited on previous pages, taken *inter alia* from the works of Strozier, Loewenberg, Waite, Binion, and Bushman, are associated with the use of such sources.

toward various characters significant in the protagonist's life are considered psychologically significant. Therefore, sources that allow a scholar to reconstruct those attitudes and relationships are particularly valuable, especially correspondence.¹⁰¹ In this context, third-party accounts of the character's behavior are also important, especially if they seem to reveal that character's more persistent attitudes, or cognitive or emotional gestalts. Even better, if the author of such an account tried to formulate some kind of (even fragmentary) psychological interpretation of the protagonist's attitudes and behaviors. Although based on colloquial psychology, such accounts are often a convenient starting point for an interpretation developed by the psychobiographer.

In connection with the possibility of using the retrodiction procedure, researchers often treat all of these types of materials as potentially useful also in determining the essential moments in the protagonist's personal history, i.e. those that can answer questions about the formative experiences that shaped his or her character, especially those from childhood. Regarding this last matter, however, researchers seem to prefer (if possible) materials directly related to these early events, but as in other cases, source-based information potentially obtained from them¹⁰² can prove significant only through the mediation of theory (because theory states that a given type of conflict or personality trait is determined by this type of experience).¹⁰³

101 See, among others, comments by Minnich and Meissner in response to criticism of their study of Erasmus of Rotterdam ("Communications," *AHR* 84 [1979]: 907–908) and the text itself in *The Character of Erasmus*. From among other examples already cited in which this element was more clearly visible, one can recall Strozier's work on Lincoln, Mack's on Lawrence, etc.

102 Concerning both the occurrence and impact of "individual facts/events" in the traditional sense, and the more general impact of a set of cultural rules within which the protagonist's socialization took place.

103 In the case of Woodrow Wilson, for example, data indicates that the father (from early childhood) played an extremely active role in the boy's upbringing and education, and that methods used to discipline Wilson were harsh, that expectations had to fulfilled to perfection, and that the boy's failures were treated mercilessly. Other data, in turn, document clear delays in Wilson's (especially intellectual) development; for example, he (a son of a scholarly intellectual pastor!) learned to read only at the age of 11. Theory allows the Georges to suggest a relationship here, as well as to determine the formative meaning of such experiences for the future: "Perhaps the Doctor's [father's] scorn of fumbling first errors was so painful (or perhaps the mere expectation of such a reaction was so distressing) that the boy renounced the effort altogether. Perhaps, too, failing – *refusing* – to learn was the one way in which the boy dared to express his resentment against his father. ... One can imagine the effect

In psychoanalytical clinical practice, most of the empirical evidence through which the therapist gains insight into the patient's psyche is obtained (or rather constructed) interactively, as a result of therapeutic meetings between patient and analyst. The patient communicates to the analyst the meanders of his stream of consciousness in the form of free associations, he talks about his dreams, and transference and countertransference reactions develop. The patient's responses to the proposed interpretations provide the therapist with further data, because they modify these phenomena.

At the same time, while the psychobiographer understands that he is unable to put his protagonist "on the couch," he may – if the clinical situation remains a model to some extent for learning about the human psyche (as we know, not all psychohistorians share this belief to the same degree) – look for materials that are some way an equivalent of clinical data. At this point, the psychobiographer tries to broaden the scope of historical sources with materials that, to others, would seem insignificant or at least insignificant in the context of the biographical study. What we are talking about here are materials that he could consider products of unconscious processes occurring in the protagonist's psyche, which for example recorded content of dreams or information about the protagonist's peculiar behavior – behavior, say, that falls within the scope of Freudian slips (i.e. parapraxes).¹⁰⁴ But the most important data would be that which could be considered a substitute for free associations and thus the product of mental activity that remains uncontrolled (or controlled the least) by the conscious functions of the ego. Such material was used, for

on a boy of such mockery. Indeed, one does not need to resort to imagination. Wilson's own recollections of his youth furnish ample indication of his early fears that he was stupid, ugly, worthless and unlovable. These feelings had rich opportunities for elaboration in his [Calvinist] religious convictions concerning the fundamental wickedness of human nature. It is perhaps to this core feeling of inadequacy, of a fundamental worthlessness which must ever be disproved, that the unappeasable quality of his need for affection, power and achievement, and the compulsive quality of his striving for perfection, may be traced." A. L. George, J. L. George, *Woodrow Wilson*, 6–9. See also by the Georges "Some Uses of Dynamic Psychology," 141.

104 The methodological reflections of psychohistorians indicate that scholars can use such materials even when examining earlier eras. For particularly interesting examples from antiquity, see T. W. Africa, "Psychohistory, Ancient History and Freud;" R. Rousselle, "On the Nature of Psychohistorical Evidence," *JPH* 17 (1990), no. 4: 425–434; J. D. Hughes, "Psychohistorical Dreamwork: Dreams from the Ancient World," in *The Variety of Dream Experience*, 266–278.

example, by Glenn Davis in his biographical study of Theodore Roosevelt, in which he examined drawings and caricatures that the teenage Roosevelt sketched in his diary during his stay in Dresden and sometimes included in letters. In some of them, Roosevelt depicted himself and other members of his family first with human traits and then with an evolving set of animal traits. Others illustrate Teddy's conflicts with female members of a German family in whose home the boy lived for 5 months. Analysis of these images led Davis to speculate about Roosevelt's psychological dynamics and about his understanding of himself. Regarding the former, Davis noted that Theodore decided to

Picture his interpretation of the Darwinian theory of evolution, and in so doing presented a symbolic representation of his self-concept and that of his young brother Elliott. Theodore dominates. ... Though in one [of the pictures] Elliott was transformed into a bull, he is staring up at Theodore (turned stork), trying to follow him.

According to Davis, Roosevelt also symbolically communicated a tendency to direct his aggressive impulses outward (he portrayed himself as being transformed into the form of birds with a long beak or of a giraffe, reaching for something or devouring something). According to Davis, sketches from the second group, in which Teddy, holding mice by the tail, is attacked by female characters with sharp tools in their hands (a reference to Teddy's habit, frowned upon by his hosts, of frightening the girls with the bodies of dead mice), had "several levels of meaning:"

For one, it is clear that Theodore gains great delight in proving his bravery, showing the courage to go near what frightens others. Also clear is forward, assertive and combative behavior. The enemies come, but Theodore is ready for them with a mocking grin. On a deeper level, there is something else in action here. Just as the development of the beaks attract attention in the evolution pictures, the objects of defense ... are also significant. The developing adolescent is being attacked for his mischievousness. The phallus is being attacked by women yielding sharp instruments. ... The reaction is important. Theodore proudly presents his object of virility and struts forward; the women are turned back in fear and their sharp instruments are dropped. In other words, Theodore's activities are preserved and generated by assertive and forward action rather than shame or fear.¹⁰⁵

105 G. Davis, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Era: A Study in Individual and Group Psychohistory," in *The New Psychohistory*, 263–268. This is a modified version of the text "The Early Years of Theodore Roosevelt: A Study in Character Formation," *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 2 (1975), no. 4: 461–492.

However, it is clear that this kind of fragmentary and ambiguous evidence may possibly take on a certain confirming value only in the context of other data¹⁰⁶ suggesting the protagonist’s specific emotional life pattern. Therefore, ultimately, in the absence of the amount of clinical material that the psychoanalyst accumulates over the course of weeks, months and years of therapy, and lacking the “explanatory power” that comes with that abundance of material derived from psychoanalysis, the psychobiographer must usually treat available data of this type as secondary and complementary, a fact which does not necessarily have to be detrimental from the point of view of (psycho) historical research. By getting “out of” his protagonist only a fraction of what the clinician discovers, the psychobiographer can gain only a fragmentary and less comprehensive insight into the protagonist’s “psychic reality.” That having been said, by examining other, more standard source materials, he gains an opportunity (one which is completely unavailable in the case of therapy) to test his conclusions in light of “external” information. In short, historical evidence compensates (at least it can compensate) for the lack of clinical-type materials.

Psychologism and Psychobiography

Biographical writing – centered on an individual’s life cycle – always comes with the risk of a personalistic or even heroic perception of history. Concentration on a single protagonist’s life and achievements seems even to inevitably lead to an unintentional treatment of other characters, processes or aspects of history as a bit of “decoration.” As I have already pointed out, psychobiography, which focuses more on the protagonist’s “psychic reality” than on the “real” one, is confronted by the problem of psychologism as expressed in the tendency to find the main determinants of the historical process not so much only in characters, but rather “in the heads” of the heroes of biographical study. Sometimes, particularly insightful biographers explicitly refer to this problem, usually stating that psychological explanations regarding, say, the protagonist’s decisions are “complementary” in so far as they give a “new dimension” to previously proposed interpretations of a different nature. However, it is impossible not to get the impression that, despite all the incantations and reservations, from the perspective of psychohistory’s “postulated reality,” psychological determinants usually seem to be the most decisive ones. For example, Strozier announced that he would only “complement” the story of Edward Dembowski’s transformation

106 Of course, Davis strove to provide such data using more “standard” materials: letters, memoirs, etc.

into a radical revolutionary with a “psychological and more personal dimension.” And yet, as Strozier concluded:

Dembowski’s personal crisis of 1843 cannot finally be isolated as the sole explanation of his turn to revolutionary political activity. Thus, Edward’s political radicalization was not a unique phenomenon for a young Polish noble in this period ... To be a “good” Pole in the first part of the nineteenth century ... meant in fact a certain degree of political radicalization. Nor can one minimize the importance of Dembowski’s reading of German philosophy. The same ideas that influenced the young Marx stirred Dembowski as an adolescent ... There was also a large degree of objective reality which the sensitive young Dembowski perceived. Poland was politically oppressed, and *szlachta*’s [noblemen’s] exploitation of the peasantry had reached crisis proportions in many areas by the 1840s. These factors clearly contributed to Edward Dembowski’s political radicalization in the period after 1843. But aside from the fact that the psychological dimensions of his development have never before been noticed, *I would argue for a certain primacy of these factors* [author’s emphasis – T. P.] in an overall assessment of why Dembowski became a revolutionary. Such a psychohistorical approach takes *full account of the complexity of historical phenomena while offering a suggestive alternative* [author’s emphasis – T. P.] to the traditional *kind* of explanation for familiar events.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most extreme attitude in this respect was represented by Rudolph Binion, who in the above-cited psychobiography of King Leopold put it this way:

We have seen that Küssnacht was in fact behind the King’s policy of 1936–1940 and that this policy was decisive for the course of Belgian history – indeed that it was integral to the prehistory of Hitler’s war. Then, here is a clear-cut, solid example of how, even in history, great effects can follow from small causes: of how *la grande histoire* can follow from *la petite histoire*. ... The going conception of how history works allows that individuals may indeed act out private motives to public effect; the catch is the corollary that their historical efficacy comes of their doing the work of their times. ... However, Leopold was not reacting to the general European situation at the same time as he was abreacting Küssnacht; he was abreacting Küssnacht within the context of European politics, which is quite another matter. In his own ever so apt words: “As against the most solid logical or political considerations, there are reasons

107 Ch. Strozier, “Psychopathology and Agrarian Radicalism: Edward Dembowski in Russian Poland, 1837–1843,” in *Psychopathology and Political Leadership*, ed. R. Robins (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1977), 168–169. If not stated otherwise, emphasis in original. The cited Strozier work, based on his unpublished doctoral dissertation on Dembowski defended at the University of Chicago in 1971, is a unique case of psychohistorical research involving Polish history. For more, see also T. Pawelec, “Psychobiografia a biografia Edwarda Dembowskiego. Studium porównawcze,” *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 48 (2004) no. 5: 95–111.

of sentiment that cannot be got around.” ... In any case, sage scientific procedure – and here I am drawing Occam’s razor – calls for excluding the problematical explanation in favor of the single, simple, sufficient explanation. If the King’s policy, and hence Belgium’s neutrality of 1936–1940, followed from Leopold’s accident at Küssnacht, that neutrality did not follow from the failure of Locarno or the remilitarization of the Rhineland or the contest between Fleming and Walloon, let alone from the world spirit’s dialectical self-development.¹⁰⁸

History of Childhood

When looking for the methodological assumptions behind the psychohistorical study of childhood, one should pay attention above all to the process by which this subject is conceptualized. As Elizabeth Wirth Marvick points out:

A new interest in applying conceptual frameworks from ... psychoanalysis to traditional objects of historical research has led recent historians of childhood to raise novel questions about families in earlier eras. The methods that have been brought into use direct attention to aspects of family life unnoticed in the past and lead to the hope of illuminating discoveries. These new approaches have tended to focus on the *quality* of relationships between parent and child rather than, as before, on the outward forms of family life. Typically, emphasis has been put on *contrasts* between belief and attitude patterns of distant cultures and those of contemporary society.¹⁰⁹

The most characteristic question regarding the psychohistorical study of childhood (as opposed to what is being practiced in this area by representatives of other history research specializations) revolves around this sub-field’s psychological dimension. Psychohistorians are interested in everything contained within this sphere of human existence primarily because it reveals how children in the past experienced the world and the attitudes that adults held toward children, topics I introduced in the previous chapter while discussing methodological issues at the heart of the paradigm. Here, one can observe the role

108 R. Binion, “Repeat Performance,” 42–44. See also his comments on the historical role of the psychological identification of Archduke Franz Ferdinand with the person who before him held the title of successor to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Archduke Rudolf, who committed suicide in Mayerling), the result of which was behavior in which Franz Ferdinand placed himself in the path of the assassins’ bullets and bombs, which amounted to a search for death – “had he not courted that fate, our world would be incalculably different.” R. Binion, “From Mayerling to Sarajevo,” in R. Binion, *Soundings*, 85.

109 E. W. Marvick, “Nature Versus Nurture: Patterns and Trends in Seventeenth-Century French Child-Rearing,” in *The History of Childhood*, 292, emphasis in original.

that psychoanalytic theory plays in conceptualizing childhood matters as a tool particularly useful for recognizing its subjective dimension. While examining childhood and family life in the New England Puritan colony of Plymouth, John Demos views such theory's function in this respect (the cited example refers to Ego Psychology) as follows:

My overall model of individual development is the one presented in the work of Erik Erikson – what he has called the “eight stages of man.” This scheme tries to bring together important aspects of growth and conflict in the biological, the psychic, and the cultural settings. Each of the different stages relates to some particular issue, some fundamental “psycho-social” task and its resolution both in the individual person and in society as a whole. ... we may still hope to derive important advantages from using a developmental perspective. Consider, as a general point, the study of children and their role in society at large. The relatively few historical works on this subject have for the most part applied static and undifferentiated views of childhood. They have missed what I see as the really essential task – the need to discover the dynamic interconnections between experience at an earlier and a later stage, to appreciate that a child is *always* developing, according to influences that proceed from within as well as from the wider environment. It makes, in short, a very real difference that a particular event occurs earlier or later, that love or fright or encouragement or restriction enters the child's world at one time rather than another. His experience of “outside” pressures locks together with his own *internal* developmental necessities at any given moment, and the outcome may be of lasting consequence for his future.¹¹⁰

As we see, psychoanalysis here defines the general framework of the phenomenon called childhood. Thanks to psychological theory, the researcher can perceive childhood as a phased, diverse and dynamic process, one which consists of various interactions between the child and its socio-cultural environment. Theory then “suggests” which of these interactions – and to what extent and at what moment in its personal history – may have had a formative significance for the child, i.e. these interactions may define certain significant contours of his/her emerging personality. In this way, theory suggests how to distinguish certain basic areas of children's experience as possible research topics for the historian of childhood. At the same time, it postulates the existence of specific connections between, on the one hand, the types and quality of these experiences and, on the other hand, the character and personal attributes of adults. This allows the researcher – starting from the motifs that dominate the life of adults or, more generally, in a given culture – to identify those stages of

110 J. P. Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 129–130, emphasis in original.

development and areas of experience that were crucial in a given case. In addition, it creates the opportunity for scholars to study childhood as a causative factor (independent variable) in the historical process.

Indeed, this was precisely what Demos did when he reconstructed the rearing practices of the Plymouth Puritans and examined the resulting experiences of Puritan children at particular stages of their development as defined by Erikson's theorems. By emphasizing the dominant role played by the motives of shame, aggression, and hostility in many basic areas of Puritan culture and everyday life, Demos was thus able – as he believed – to identify the formatively most important period in the lives of Puritan children, namely the time between the end of the first and the second year of life, when (in sharp contrast to the preceding strategy of indulgence), the child suddenly experienced a series of deep losses (starting with the loss of the breast and of mother's attention). At the same time, the child was now subject to the kind of strict discipline that focused on crushing the child's assertive and aggressive aspirations (as expressions of the formation of the will) and thus on the child's sense of autonomy. Demos notices that:

The developmental theory of Erik Erikson ... suggests quite powerfully certain additional lines of connection between infant experience and Puritan character structure. The time between one and two years forms the second stage in Erikson's larger developmental sequence, and he joins its characteristic behaviors under the general theme of "autonomy." "This stage," he writes, "becomes decisive for the ratio between love and hate, for that between freedom of self-expression and its suppression." Further: while the goal of this stage is autonomy, its negative side – its specific vulnerability – is the possibility of lasting "shame and doubt." It is absolutely vital that the child receive support in "his wish to 'stand on his own feet' lest he be overcome by that sense of having exposed himself prematurely and foolishly which we call shame, or that secondary mistrust, that 'double-take,' which we call doubt." If a child does not get this type of support – if, indeed, his efforts to assert himself are firmly "beaten down" – then a considerable preoccupation with shame can be expected in later life as well.¹¹¹

This example, though it dates back to the early phase of the development of psychohistorical childhood studies (*A Little Commonwealth* was published in 1970), demonstrates the conceptual function of theory in a particularly

111 See *ibid.*, 131–139 (quote from p. 138). See also J. P. Demos, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood." In the final part of this article, Demos offered up – by way of example – a synthetic discussion of the results of his research on childhood in Plymouth and his methodological assumptions.

elaborate and mature form when it structures the historian's overall picture of childhood both as a key period in the lives of particular individuals and as an important part of the existence of the entire community and its culture. Authors of many works on this subject – even works published later – satisfied themselves with a much less in-depth and “freer” references to depth psychology, and they often got little beyond the common-sense level in their understanding of the phenomenon of childhood. Quite typical are situations in which such references boiled down to “seizing” individual intuitions or concepts regarding which children's experiences (and which aspects of adult treatment of children) are “significant,” derived primarily from the writings of various psychoanalysts – mainly Freud, but sometimes Erikson, Winnicott, Klein, Horney, and others.¹¹² This way of referring to psychoanalysis allowed psychohistorians dealing with earlier stages of children's development to perceive as “fundamental” such problems as breastfeeding, swaddling, toilet training, ways of disciplining children and various other behaviors toward them, emotional attitudes and expectations imposed upon children. The underlying assumption was that gaining knowledge about issues of this kind would “somehow translate” into a general understanding of the shape and quality of childhood in specific places, social groups or entire historical periods. This is clearly demonstrated by Daniel B. Smith's studies on childhood in Virginia and Maryland in the eighteenth century and Elizabeth W. Marvick on raising children in seventeenth-century France. In turn, these authors considered parental practices and attitudes as they manifested themselves in various developmental moments in a small child's life (from birth to breastfeeding, teething, weaning), which led them to ask questions about what beliefs about a child's nature determined the prevailing techniques in a given society used to imbue children with respected norms and behavioral patterns, and then how these beliefs were reflected in the personality traits of children and in the types of bonds those children established with important adult figures.¹¹³

112 Sometimes these psychoanalysts and their ideas are so trivialized and simplified that they seem closer to common sense psychology than depth psychology in the proper sense of the word. Of course, this is associated with the fact that colloquial thinking of various psychoanalytical motifs, including those related to childhood, have been widely disseminated.

113 D. B. Smith, “Autonomy and Affection: Parents and Children in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Families,” *PR* 6 (1977/1978), no. 2–3: 32–51 (as an example of a “model” study of the history of childhood, this article also found its way into the anthology *Growing Up in America* by Hiner and Hawes, cited earlier); E. W. Marvick, “Nature Versus Nurture.” Marvick, for example, studied how the gradual transformation of

We observe a similar situation with research involving later stages in children's development. For example, the psychoanalytical concept of latency as a stage in a child's life (conditioned both psychobiologically and culturally), together with a "psychoanalytic theory of morality,"¹¹⁴ allowed Dominick Cavallo to investigate how the development of pre-school education (especially its "progressive" version, cultivating a "pro-social attitude"), in the USA at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, contributed to the creation and promotion of a "version"¹¹⁵ of this stage of childhood particular to the last century.¹¹⁶ In particular, it resulted in a model by which a superego and ego ideal was formed in children which promoted a tendency to shame. Since "in the shame-prone superego the peer group is internalized as ego ideal," and "parental prohibitions are replaced by peer-group ideals," morality so constructed turned out to be functional in view of the needs of twentieth-century mass industrial society.¹¹⁷

disciplinary strategies, i.e. the transition from those based on coercion and domination to those based on manipulation and stirring up feelings of guilt and shame (and thus striving to establish mechanisms of control within the child's psyche), was reflected in prevailing types of children's fantasy (pp. 279–281).

- 114 In fact, by this term the author understood the dynamics, postulated by depth psychologists, of such punishing feelings as guilt and shame in relation to the "style" of the superego: "Guilt most often erupts when the person violates a specific aspect of his prohibitive (thou shalt not) moral code, while shame frequently appears when he falls short of ego ideal aspirations." D. Cavallo, "The Politics of Latency: Kindergarten Pedagogy, 1860—1930," in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children: Education in Psychohistorical Perspective*, ed. B. Finkelstein (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1979), 173–174.
- 115 For the author it is all about how children themselves experienced this period of life and how society understood and recognized it.
- 116 "Although the maturation of cognitive and verbal skills during latency is biologically determined, there is no physiological basis for the *promotion* of the relative emotional calm, psychological plasticity, and general educability which characterize latency in American society. These elements are promoted by society. ... In short, the imposition of latency is a political act undertaken on the assumption that the interests of family, child, and society are served by placing the latency-aged child in community-controlled education institutions where society, rather than the family, plays the key role ... in shaping his moral and cognitive styles." *Ibid.*, 161, emphasis in original.
- 117 See *ibid.*, 171–180 (quotes from p. 177). Examples of conceptualizing various developmental periods in a child's life as psychobiologically determined on the one hand, and culturally and socially constructed on the other, can be found in the relevant literature. See, for example, J. M. Hawes, "The Strange History of Female

However, it should be emphasized that this way of constructing childhood research issues did not necessarily have to lead to scholars viewing them from within a deeper psychological dimension. The fact that such a situation is not uncommon in the childhood-related psychohistorical literature is illustrated by the collective volume *The History of Childhood* edited by Lloyd deMause. Put together as the flagship manifesto of “truly psychohistorical” history of childhood (which is still the way it is perceived by many),¹¹⁸ this volume contains – in addition to deMause’s programmatic article on “psychogenic theory” discussed above – texts about which one reviewer writes, not without reason: “It is fair to say that very few [of the essays] are really psychohistorical.”¹¹⁹ For example, the essay by M. J. Tucker on childhood in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries deals mainly with such matters as childbirth, the physical care of children, the process of their education, and children’s play from an “external” perspective – that is, material and behavioral – in practice negating the psychological dimension (the actual attitudes of parents and the actual experiences of children).¹²⁰ Such writing basically “melts” into the sea of childhood studies conducted in recent decades by social historians and family historians. It is “psychohistorical” in so far as it reaches the columns of psychohistorical periodicals and psychohistorical collective publications.

Thus, Tucker and his study can be placed on the opposite end of the spectrum from the one occupied by Demos and his work, discussed earlier; more typical, however, is a kind of middle-ground populated by investigations that gain inspiration in one form or another from psychoanalysis and that generally recognize the psychological dimension of the problem. For example, the importance of the separation experience in a child’s life inspired James Ross to examine as a basic research problem the development and breaking of emotional bonds in childhood in his study of childhood in Italian bourgeois families

Adolescence in the United States,” *JPH* 13 (1985), no. 1: 51–63; V. Demos, J. P. Demos, “Adolescence in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 31 (1969): 632–638.

118 DeMause’s original research project, submitted to the Association for Applied Psychoanalysis, simply assumed research into childhood as a determinant of historical change.

119 C. Pletsch [review of *The History of Childhood*, ed. L. deMause (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974)], *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975): 337. See also M. F. Shore, “The Child and Historiography,” *JPH* 6 (1976), no. 3: 498.

120 M. J. Tucker, “The Child as Beginning and as End: Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century English Childhood,” in *The History of Childhood*, 229–257.

in the late Middle Ages and early modernity. In this context, Ross studied such issues as a small child's functioning within the institution of the *balia* (a paid wet nurse who cared for a newborn baby under her own roof for a period of 1–2 years), competition over motherly affection and care between a child and other children with varying degrees of kinship within an extended family, out-of-home schooling and apprenticeships among strangers. Analyzing the details of relevant educational practices, Ross writes:

The life of the ... child ... seems to have been marked by a series of severe adjustments, both physical and emotional. The first and most significant of these was the almost immediate displacement of the infant from its mother's bosom to that of a *balia*; the second was the return of the young child ... to a strange mother and an unknown home; the third was the projection of the boy of about seven into the classroom, and later the shop, and of the young girl at nine or ten into a nunnery or, often before sixteen, into marriage. These major displacements of the child might be supplemented by minor ones, of flight with one's family from the plague into another house, to the country or to another city, or departure from the native city with one's exiled father.¹²¹

In turn, Mary McLaughlin framed her narrative on the subject of medieval childhood (in so far as she discusses its psychological dimension) largely around the dynamics of guilt feeling, longing and the possessive search for love that dominated the childhood of Guibert of Nogent (as revealed by her extensive study of the case). Guibert's autobiographical writing, unique at that time, became for McLaughlin a "window" into the sphere of emotional relations between child and parent, or substitute parent, in the Middle Ages.¹²²

Research on other important questions posed within the history of childhood may also be structured by psychoanalytic theoretical concepts in a way that resembles the above-mentioned examples, including the matter of parental attitudes. For example, Peter Slater's work was guided by the theory of mourning developed by psychoanalysts (primarily John Bowlby). So conceptualized, the process by which New England Puritans grieved the death of infants and young children revealed, according to Slater, beliefs and emotional matrices within this culture reflecting adult attitudes toward offspring.¹²³ In N. R. Hiner's

121 J. B. Ross, "The Middle-Class Child in Urban Italy, Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century," in *The History of Childhood*, 183–228 (quotes from pp. 215–216).

122 M. M. McLaughlin, "Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries" in *The History of Childhood*, 101–181.

123 P. G. Slater "From the Cradle to the Coffin: Parental Bereavement and the Shadow of Infant Damnation in Puritan Society," *PR* 6 (1977/1978), no. 2–3: 4–24. This work was also included in the anthology by Hiner and Hawes.

studies, a similar role was played by the concepts of projection and identification used to capture the relationship between parent and child. This example is perhaps worthy of broader discussion because it demonstrates how interpreting a given research issue in terms of psychoanalytic discourse enables psychohistorians to make significant progress in scholarship.

The problem as formulated by Hiner concerns the mechanisms of influence that children exert on their parents' personalities and their attitudes toward each other. Embarking on research into how and why continuous parental experience altered the views and attitudes of Cotton Mather, the Puritan clergyman, moralist and educator from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Hiner asks: "Why are parents so susceptible, so vulnerable, to the influence of their children? What is the source of this enormous power?" Depth psychology tells him what questions to ask and where to look for answers. Referring to conclusions drawn by child psychoanalysts, Hiner notes that:

Parents are influenced by their children because they consciously and unconsciously identify with them. They look at their children, they interact with them, and they are confronted with themselves – either as they think they were when they were children, or, through a process of projecting onto the child their own ideals or aspirations, as they hope to become through their children's development. This process of identification and interaction normally enhances the self-esteem of healthy parents, but ... as children pass through each critical stage of development, they may revive (usually unconsciously) their parents' own unresolved developmental conflicts. If these conflicts are severe, the process can produce pathological manifestations in the parents, which lead to bad parenting and almost guarantee that the children will not become more fully integrated persons than their parents. On the other hand, ... this fresh awakening of unresolved conflicts also provides new opportunities for parents to work through their problems, achieve a higher level of integration, and thus provide their children with better care and nurturance than they themselves received.¹²⁴

Hiner tracks the conflicts that marked Mather's youth and brought him to a point, in his relations with the outside world, at which he "eventually ceased stammering, but obsessive-compulsive defenses persisted as his preferred style of dealing with stress, and he never escaped the tyranny of the should. It was in this psychological context that Mather's development as a parent began."¹²⁵ The adopted assumptions then allow Hiner to search for relationships between critical moments in the lives of Mather's sixteen children, (1) in periods in which

124 N. R. Hiner, "Cotton Mather and His Children: The Evolution of a Parent Educator, 1686–1728," in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children*, 24, 25.

125 *Ibid.*, 29.

the psychological symptoms of his dysfunctions worsened, which in turn – for example – contributed to the fundamental educational failures that occurred in the relationships with his eldest son, Increase; and (2) during processes of psychological maturation that eventually made him “less obsessive, less compulsive in some areas, less grandiose, less inclined toward magical thinking, more relaxed, more self-accepting, more realistic about his own capacities, more creative in his work, more effective as a parent.”¹²⁶

The “Psychogenic Theory of History” and the History of Childhood

At this point, it is worth giving greater consideration to the role played by Lloyd deMause and his historiosophical proposals in the study of childhood history. According to deMause, “psychogenic theory” offered a comprehensive, radically different conceptualization of childhood research issues; deMause put forward arguments regarding the main determinants in the historical process and establishing a hierarchy of causative factors that negated both colloquial experience and assertions that were fundamental to the modern social sciences.¹²⁷ In short, deMause developed a new ontology that competed with beliefs hitherto at work in the realm of historical reflection.

A review of the psychohistorical literature on childhood reveals that some scholars have indeed attempted to refer to arguments contained within psychogenic theory, above all – of course – deMause himself with his texts on the subject.¹²⁸ One of the most consistent in this regard was Glenn Davis in his *Childhood and History in America*, in which Davis addressed both childhood specifically and history in general directly in terms of the deMausian scheme. Davis wrote:

The psychogenic theory of history upon which this book is based involves the ... premise that the evolution of childhood within the family is the root *cause* of the evolution of society. Empirical testing of this radical causal notion is complex and multifaceted, involving (1) an analysis of the stages and processes of the evolutionary history of childhood, (2) a description of the resulting personality types, (3) a conception of broad historical movements as a function of the personalities produced in childhood, and (4) the realization that the embryo of social change is encased within

126 Ibid., 31–37 (quote on pp. 34–35).

127 The text that expresses this most clearly is “The Psychogenic Theory of History.”

128 Instructive examples include “The Formation of the American Personality through Psychospeciation,” in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 105–131; “The Gentle Revolution: Childhood Origins of Soviet and East European Democratic Movements,” *JPH* 17 (1990), no. 4: 341–352.

intergenerational dynamics, and that these in turn are the psychic “genes” of historical evolution.

Therefore, Davis announces that:

This book seeks to directly apply the psychogenic theory and, in so doing, to illustrate that its power lies in the fact that it is not an invention but a discovery. [It] seeks to understand the evolution of American childhood from 1840–1965, thus placing deMause’s socializing mode [of parenthood] under a microscope.¹²⁹

Thus, Davis was looking for an answer to the question of how, within various spheres of interaction between parents and children, processes develop in “childhood training,” in “directing” the child along correct paths, in teaching the child to “respect norms” (strategies, according to deMause, that characterize the socializing model of childrearing). Davis writes:

The evolution of American childhood that I have outlined will be documented by isolating various cultural parameters – the child and religion, fiction, education, infant training practices, maternity-paternity, child sexuality, and, most importantly, the concrete area of actual parental behaviors and perceptions.¹³⁰

Referring to deMause’s claims, Davis also defined his work’s second fundamental research task – to identify causal relationships between the experiences of “socializing childhood” and the historical process. In this regard, he attempted to interpret the most important processes in American history from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s as derivatives of the childhood experiences had by members of successive “psychoclasses” – that is, the generation that experienced subsequent varieties (submodes) of the above-mentioned model of childrearing. In chronological order, they are: “psychic control,” “aggressive training,” “vigorous guidance,” and “delegated release.” Therefore, Davis argued that “four major periods of twentieth-century American history are logical outgrowths of the four submodal childhood experiences Just as different species of seeds grow into distinct plants, so the four psychoclasses of individuals may be seen to create distinctive social conditions.”¹³¹ On this basis, Davis sought a correlation (in his approach, resulting from the existence of a determining relationship) between, on the one hand, the functioning of social institutions and the main problems of collective life and, on the other hand,

129 G. Davis, *Childhood and History in America* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1976), 12–14, 27, emphasis in original.

130 *Ibid.*, 30.

131 *Ibid.*, 173.

the leading motifs of childhood experienced by the corresponding generation (“psychoclass”) 20–30 years earlier. Moreover, Davis argued that these motives were best reflected by political leaders:

A leader ... if he is to be effective must literally represent his psychoclass, which remains his hardest core of support. This psychic constituency may be understood in terms of what psychoanalysts have called “projective identification.” Masses of individuals of the same psychoclass share similar projections and propensities for action in specific directions, creating a source of power which a leader acts upon.¹³²

Furthermore, Davis argued that the greatest collective traumas and moments of social destabilization, occur during periods of transition, i.e. when the reaction models and behavior patterns of a given “psychoclass” begin to give way to reactions and patterns of a new “psychoclass” (when its representatives enter adulthood).¹³³

However, the research practices of many other “radical” psychohistorians show that the significance of “psychogenic theory” has proven, in practice, to be limited. Most often, it simply boiled down to directing researchers’ attention toward issues (previously unnoticed or minimized) of infanticide and various negative experiences (such as violence or sexual harassment broadly understood) involving children in history, along with their direct psychological consequences on children’s personalities.¹³⁴ Attempts were also made (with a greater or lesser degree of precision) to decide whether childrearing practices encountered in different places and at different historical moments were suited for the typology of the six childrearing modes postulated by deMause. In fact, one may speak here more about this proposal’s heuristic function than its conceptualizing function.

132 Ibid., 176.

133 Ibid., 173–176.

134 For examples see W. Langer, “Infanticide: A Historical Survey,” in *The New Psychohistory*, 55–67; W. Langer, “Further Notes on the History of Infanticide,” *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 2 (1974), no. 1: 129–134; A. Ende, “Battering and Neglect: Children in Germany. 1860–1978,” *JPH* 7 (1980), no. 3: 250–279; L. deMause, “Schreber and the History of Childhood,” *JPH* 15 (1987), no. 1: 424–430; L. deMause, “The Universality of Incest,” *JPH* 19 (1991), no. 2: 123–164; B. Kahr, “The Sexual Molestation of Children: Historical Perspective,” *JPH* 19 (1991), no. 2: 191–214; R. B. McFarland, “Infant Mortality as a Guide to How Nations Treat Children,” *JPH* 17 (1990), no. 4: 417–423; R. C. Trexler, “Infanticide in Florence: New Sources and First Results,” *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 1 (1973), no. 1: 98–116.

Group Psychology

Earlier, I discussed applied methodology in the psychohistorical history of childhood, emphasizing the problems of how to conceptualize and define the subject of cognitive inquiry for scholars working in this field. It is no accident that the further we move away from psychobiographical issues, the more ambiguous is the answer to the question: on what basis does one practice psychohistory? The concept of “group psychohistory” suggests that it would be about studying all phenomena (and, more specifically, their psychological dimension) above the level of biography, i.e. above and beyond issues tied to the individual human being.¹³⁵ It is difficult not to notice how indefinite this approach is. After all, what we are talking about here are such diverse phenomena as social or religious movements, ideologies, cultural and literary currents, economic processes, wars, revolutions, catastrophes and traumas affecting entire communities, decision-making processes within leadership groups, etc. This list could be extended, and each of these issues would require further definition and clarification. Which is why group psychohistory is much less uniform in terms of methodology than psychobiographical writing. In the latter case, it turned out to be possible to construct a kind of “ideal type” of psychobiography, whose basic elements were more or less clearly manifested in the vast majority of such works. But in terms of group psychohistory, such a procedure is more problematic. Of course, works produced in this field are connected by the fact that their authors respect the fundamental ontological and methodological assumptions about which I wrote in the previous Part, but – as attempts to penetrate the psychological side of history – they constitute a set of separate (in principle) undertakings in terms of their conceptualization, their use of empirical materials, and their interpretative and explanatory strategies. We can regard them as a series of efforts to reconcile the individualistic (indelibly, in the opinion of many) cognitive perspective of psychoanalysis with the need to penetrate “mass” phenomena – i.e. those whose dynamics in one way or another exceed the dimension of the individual experience.

The Idea of Group Biography

In their search for a transition from the level of individual biography to the level of group psychohistory, researchers made attempts, for example, to create group biographies. Such was the case with Judith Hughes, who studied the

135 Perhaps excluding, as a separate field, research in childhood history.

psychological dimension of political relations between Germany and Great Britain before the First World War. She wrote: “what has struck me ... is the mutual, if not complete, incomprehension between British and German leaders – the fact that people separated by no insuperable barrier of language or concepts still missed nearly totally each other’s mental track.”¹³⁶ The problem thus seemed to concern “differences” between the two groups of leaders, not so much in terms of knowledge or conscious political goals as on the level of deeper mental responses determining fundamental attitudes toward the world and other people. Directing her attention there, Hughes formulated her research goal in the following way:

To gain insight into why the British and Germans spoke past each other, one must first understand how they spoke among themselves. Speech in this instance refers to privately constituted meanings which limit or facilitate personal interaction. How such meanings were shared among the British and among the Germans is crucial to the task I have set myself: the delineation of dissimilarities in personal relations at the summit in late nineteenth-century Britain and Germany.¹³⁷

Therefore, Hughes was interested in studying the network of interpersonal relations¹³⁸ (in particular their emotional dimension) between leading figures among the power elites in Germany and Great Britain. However, she notes that “such a study of personal relations can be done only by focusing on selected individuals.” Therefore, Hughes chooses the ten most important leaders in both countries: “three statesmen whose long tenure as leaders made them architects of political cohesion” (Gladstone, Bismarck and the Marquess of Salisbury), “their key collaborators” (the Marquess of Hartington, Friedrich von Holstein and Balfour) and “the heirs of the statesmen who initially dominated the scene” (alongside the last two from the previous group are Wilhelm II, Philipp zu Eulenburg, Bernhard von Bülow and Joseph Chamberlain), and she constructs their psychoanalytical and developmental portraits starting from their earliest childhood experiences,¹³⁹ through their fears and relationships established

136 J. Hughes, *Emotion and High Politics: Personal Relations at the Summit in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain and Germany* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 1–2.

137 *Ibid.*, 2.

138 Above all, interactions between leaders and their colleagues and the reconstruction of mutual bonds as part of the process of leadership change.

139 Because she prefers preoedipal theories of object relations developed in the “English school,” she considers these years (in particular the relationship with the mother established at that time) to be crucial for achieving emotional balance.

later, in order to determine how their “tempers so deeply rooted in childhood experience” could become fixed and “give rise to expectations about interpersonal behavior” and to “privately constituted meanings.”¹⁴⁰

The starting point in building a portrait is always the self-image drawn by a given politician in his or her letters and diaries. According to Hughes, this image expresses more or less clearly his basic emotional condition. She writes: “The method of proceeding, then, is from a self-image constructed in maturity to the emotional experiences of childhood and then back to adult life.” While examining the experiences of these people, their family constellations, their losses, fears, and frustrations, along with their ways of dealing with various events that confronted them from birth to adulthood, Hughes found recurring motives and response patterns among members of one group that were distinctively different from those present in the second group. This statement is of fundamental importance because, as Hughes writes:

The tension between inner and outer worlds carries with it an implication that should be spelled out: there is no sharp separation between public and private life. If the emotional universe of childhood is transferred onto adult relationships, it follows that the realm of the family and the realm of public affairs cannot be viewed as neatly compartmentalized. In brief, the oppressiveness of the public sphere – not as abstraction but as personal experience – derives some of its power from reactivating internal persecutors already produced within the “security” of family life.¹⁴¹

However, Hughes is aware that:

One should not, of course, reduce political beliefs to mere manifestations of psychic conflict. Yet at the same time one cannot make a sharp division between strictly rational and irrational mental phenomena. The line becomes blurred once one admits that certain beliefs are impervious to factual evidence and are held on grounds other than observation and logical inference. It certainly seems correct to stress the rootedness of a person’s intellectual stance in his deepest psychological concerns.¹⁴²

According to Hughes, the conclusions derived from her analysis of self-references within groups of top leaders in Great Britain and Germany – in terms of dependencies and official and semi-private connections, along with formal and informal relations – consistently point to the same emotional patterns that their biographies revealed: conflict, predatory rivalry, mutual fear and suspicion among the Germans, and the importance of compromise and respect for

140 J. Hughes, *Emotion and High Politics*, 2, 14.

141 *Ibid.*, 13.

142 *Ibid.*, 79.

others among the British – i.e. respectively, a fatalistic temper vs. a scrupulous temper. The author writes:

For the German protagonists of this study, both spheres were marked by an absence of trust, and, accordingly, interpersonal relations offered scant reassurance to the individuals involved. Fear, which acquired its force from a desolate inner landscape, was never far below the surface. It made men willing to accept a leader's authority; it also made their dependence on him irksome. From this dilemma, from the dilemma of a soul torn between dread and self-aggrandizement, there appeared no obvious means of escape. For the British protagonists, trust in oneself – and in others – facilitated the passage to interpersonal relations based on mutuality and forbearance. Colleagues proved able to find reassurance in their association in large measure because they expected to find it. Among men so equipped, dependence and independence stood not as polar opposites but as necessary complements.¹⁴³

In this way, a research problem within the field of group psychohistory – that is, the question of what role emotional attitudes played in international politics – was “translated” into a set of problems within the field of psychobiography (why were subject X and subject Y and subject Z characterized by a particular emotional matrix?). At the same time, as Hughes showed, explanations as to why people belonging to a certain group were not able to understand the motives and intentions of people belonging to another group were tied to claims formulated and based on the essentially idiographic¹⁴⁴ study of the individual¹⁴⁵ biographies and personalities of great politicians. Hughes writes:

That tempers deeply rooted in childhood, more particularly in contrasting experiences of maternal care, set the parameters for interpersonal behavior among British and among German statesmen – such is the argument I have advanced. The resulting incomprehension between the leaders of the two countries – their missing of each other's mental track – need no longer be wondered at. The British were perplexed; the Germans were frankly distrustful. Where the British hoped that patient negotiation might dispel suspicion, the Germans viewed a lack of ready compliance

143 *Ibid.*, 13–14.

144 In this context, Hughes makes an important declaration: “But I am not writing family history; my purpose would not be advanced by trying to match data about the domestic environment and social milieu of individual protagonists with fragmentary, and possibly dubious, generalizations [regarding more general patterns of family life and child rearing in these countries].” *Ibid.*, 6.

145 Such a “resolutely and uncompromisingly individualistic” approach was “based on the assumption that psychology cannot be derived from social institutions, that knowing an individual's social or professional position, for example, does not grant automatic access to his inmost being.” *Ibid.*, 3.

as a sure sign of enmity. In short, diplomatic discourse ... echoed the clash of two dissonant tempers.¹⁴⁶

The Generation and Life Cycle

The next step in the search for a conceptual transition from the level of biography to the level of mass phenomena was associated with attempts to apply some psychoanalytical, developmental scheme of shaping individual personality (throughout the entire life cycle or one of its separate parts) to a certain generation, "a set of people" who, "their individual life histories notwithstanding ... do indeed share a critical experience ... and are aware of sharing it."¹⁴⁷ Therefore, they also share the same preoccupations and developmental tasks. Loewenberg puts it this way:

Human motivation and behavior are infinitely complex. Any choice of action by a single individual may be attributed to a multiplicity of unique and idiosyncratic causes that could be clarified only after an extensive psychoanalysis. The appeal of a generational approach is that it deals with probabilities – with the law of averages on a macroscale – thus canceling out any of the many individual variables that determine conduct. Whereas it can always be said that in a particular case there are other variables that have been overlooked, such an objection does not hold when we deal with a demographic scale of events affecting a population. In the latter case we have responses of an entire society to events that, while they may be confirmed in many particular cases, are not limited in their general impact by the idiosyncratic developments of a single life.¹⁴⁸

In this way, group dynamics can be studied using the same concepts that are applied to the individual.

An example of this kind of inquiry can be found in a publication by Peter Hoffer in which – referring to Eriksonian model of eight stages of life – he studied the "historical vision of the generation 1776" in America. In Hoffer's opinion, this generation was shaped by shared personal experiences that came with active participation, at the beginning of their adult lives, in a fundamental process of historical change. Therefore, Hoffer's work covered "those men young enough in 1776 to have been deeply influenced by the crisis [the war for independence] and old enough to have taken some part in it, but not those patriots already established in their ways and identities before the crisis swept over them."¹⁴⁹ Hoffer interprets their conscious and unconscious motivations,

146 *Ibid.*, 213.

147 R. J. Brugger's introduction to G. B. Forgie, "Abraham Lincoln," 180.

148 P. Loewenberg, "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," 245.

149 P. C. Hoffer, *Revolution and Regeneration: Life Cycle and the Historical Vision of the Generation 1776* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1983), 5.

communicated through extensive historical writings,¹⁵⁰ not so much as a response to the requirements of the current “external” situation, but as a sign of the needs and developmental tasks appropriate for their psyche at a given stage in the life cycle:

Applying modern concepts of life cycle to their thoughts should reveal patterns of motivation and response among them which went deeper than immediate commitment to policy and party. Through the prism of personal growth and adjustment, partisan pronouncements appear more cohesive and urgent; they merge with the search for self-worth, self-respect, and meaning in life and work.¹⁵¹

This allows Hoffer to interpret their programs and strategies for activity in the years 1763–1840 as a struggle successively with identity,¹⁵² intimacy, creativity and ego integrity both on a personal level and at the level of the state and national institutions to which they contributed.

Even the classic Freudian model of the oedipal struggle, used for example by George B. Forgie in his study of the psychological dimension of the American Civil War and its causes, proved useful in this kind of research. I am referring here to the interpretation of Forgie’s *Patricide in the House Divided* as proposed by Robert Brugger, who in my opinion accurately captured the conceptual

150 It is noteworthy that the author focused on analysis of the historical creativity of these characters instead of their political writing. He justified this focus as follows: “First, their conception of history went far beyond the content of chronicles. In their public and private historical discourses, they touched on philosophy, government, law, family, religion History was a way of thinking for them, not just a body of information. ... Second, they loved history Their passion for reading, discussing, collecting, and writing history ... amply documents their feelings and makes possible a study of the present sort. Finally, ... they were a generation who preened themselves in history’s mirror, conscious always of the figures they would cut in the eyes of future generations. History was a metaphor for their lives, a *reflector* of their aspirations and identity.” *Ibid.*, 12–13. Author’s emphasis – T. P.

151 *Ibid.*, 9.

152 For example: “The frank recognition of their potential role in history marked the way to a successful resolution of the young revolutionaries’ identity crisis. The young men of the Revolution impressed that identity upon the face of reality. They drew from the history they had created before 1776 the materials for new political systems after 1776 and thereby mastered the challenge of identity as few generations have throughout history. ... If the young revolutionaries’ nationalism lay not in the reality of a shared history before 1776, it could be found in these men’s shared effort to define American identity, a common wish for a new kind of nation, based upon their own newly confirmed identity.” *Ibid.*, 38–39.

“skeleton” of Forgie’s book. Brugger (in the introduction to the extensive parts of the work that he included in his anthology *Our Selves/Our Past*) wrote that Forgie:

Framing it in father-son conflict (while denying that nations undergo oedipal crises), ... observes that the Founding Fathers’ legacy carried benefits and burdens alike. One burden was the oft-discussed debt of gratitude to the Revolutionary heroes; another was the delicate balance of union, an admonition to the “sons” not to quarrel despite regional differences. Forgie’s thesis is that men like Lincoln’s generation faced the problem of venerating the Found Fathers while somehow winning fame for themselves: preserving the Republic was hardly as exciting as the earlier challenge of establishing it; searching for something “heroic” to do, they nonetheless had to be careful that their ambition, like the Founding Fathers,’ be selfless.

For Jefferson Davis and the Southerners, such a heroic act turned out to be an attempt to fight for independence (imitating the Founding Fathers and at the same time rejecting what came in their wake, i.e. the Union). For Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans, such an achievement was the defense of the Union (the work of the Founding Fathers), which in essence meant the creation of a new nation (thus imitating the Founding Fathers and taking their place at the same time).¹⁵³

A special variant of this approach is the examination of “shared themes.” In a work quoted earlier, Loewenberg states:

Intensive experiences ... if they are of a massive traumatic nature, can supersede both earlier influences and individual predispositions. This means that a major catastrophe will have an impact on all ages who are subject to its blows. It will necessarily affect the very young most because their egos are the most fragile. But it will also affect children in latency and adolescence and even adults, each according to his ego strength – that is, according to his ability to tolerate frustration, anxiety, and deprivation. In other words, if the adult trauma is great enough, for example an economic depression or a lost war, it does not matter who the parents were or how democratic they may have been.¹⁵⁴

Thus, an intense experience marks everyone, while Loewenberg’s reference to the psychoanalytical model of individual development¹⁵⁵ allows him to determine more precisely what the formative meaning of this experience can be in

153 G. B. Forgie, “Abraham Lincoln,” 179–180.

154 P. Loewenberg, “The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort,” 244.

155 “A theoretical mode of development, an ideal typology of the psychodynamics of personality development,” Loewenberg writes, “will be useful as a heuristic device against which to test empirical and cultural data.” *Ibid.*, 260.

relation to the variables of age and an individual's phase of development. In this way Loewenberg studied the impact of trauma experienced during the First World War by young Germans (including hunger and scarcity, loss of a father fighting on the front and a mother who had to work outside the home, war propaganda, and finally the national disaster that "turned socio-political reality upside down"). Loewenberg posited that this experience had to result in certain fixations which determined that this cohort,¹⁵⁶ after having experienced a secondary trauma in the Great Depression, turned out to be (with the Freudian regression mechanism in force here) susceptible to the call of the Nazi movement:

It is postulated that a direct relationship existed between the deprivation German children experienced in World War I and the response of these children and adolescents to the anxieties aroused by the Great Depression of the early 1930's. This relationship is psychodynamic: The war generation turned readily to programs based on facile solutions of violence when they met new frustrations during the depression. They then reverted to earlier phase-specific fixations in their child development marked by rage, sadism, and the defensive idealization of their absent parents, especially the father. These elements made this age cohort particularly susceptible to the appeal of a mass movement utilizing the crudest devices of projection and displacement in its ideology. Above all, it prepared the young voters of Germany for submission to a total, charismatic leader.¹⁵⁷

In Search of a Sociological Reference System

As Fred Weinstein and Gerald Platt suggested in their theoretical works, psychohistorians were also in a position to search for a "sociological reference system" to be used in the kind of psychological analyses being developed. Such was the perspective of John Demos, who studied witchcraft and witch hunts among New England Puritans in the seventeenth century. Demos sought to embed his postulated interpretation of the psychological dimensions of this phenomenon in a network of several types of variables (sociological, demographic, cultural and historical) related to the existence of Puritan communities in America. In this way, he defined the "boundary conditions" (a kind of "social matrix") under which some people could (had to?) "experience" witchcraft and accuse

156 Loewenberg prefers this demographic category as more precise than "the loose term 'generation.'" In his view, a "cohort" is an "aggregate of individuals in a population who have shared a significant common experience of a personal or historical event at the same time." See *ibid.*, 245–247.

157 *Ibid.*, 279.

other people of its use. At the same time, this specific community recognized and, in a certain sense, sanctioned this phenomenon – that is, “recognized” given individuals as “witches” and “sorcerers” and initiated “witchcraft” trials against them.

Within the framework of numerous elements of this matrix, Demos distinguished above all the “historical environment,” i.e. sequences of significant events in the life of a given local community and/or all of New England,¹⁵⁸ and the “shapes and structures of group-life.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, Demos inquired into what properties (age, gender, family and social situation, patterns of behavior toward others) rendered an individual vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft.¹⁶⁰ It was only in relation to such variables that he considered the psychology of witchcraft, i.e. above all, the question of why certain people felt they had fallen victim to a witch and experienced specific, sometimes drastic psychophysical suffering.

Model Analysis in Group Psychohistory

The example quoted above reveals another aspect of the strategy psychohistorians use to move from the level of individual to the level of group. Demos studied the psychology of a victim of witches/a prosecutor in the witch trials (in practice, these two categories overlapped) understood not as a specific individual but as a “generalized type.” In other words, Demos constructed a model of

158 “*Predisposing factors* (i.e. favorable to witchcraft proceedings): (1) a combination of ‘harms’ [epidemics, fires, poor harvests] in a given year and/or the year immediately preceding; (2) a major ‘sign’ [a natural disaster or a shocking event interpreted as a sign of God’s wrath] during the given year and/or the year immediately preceding; (3) a major internal ‘controversy’ [some kind of social, religious or political conflict] concluded one to three years previously. *Inhibiting factors* (unfavorable to witchcraft proceedings): (4) a major internal ‘controversy’ during the given year; (5) a major external ‘controversy’ during the given year.” J. P. Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, 386 and *passim*.

159 The accumulation of suspicions and accusations was fostered by, for example, certain types of conflicts over the exchange of goods, services or mutual assistance (opposition between “neighborliness” and “individualism”), as well as certain types of social ties (always “concentrated” in small communities). Demos also identifies the functions of accusations of witchcraft in terms of maintaining the community’s existence (hence the specific “demand” for witches) – strengthening the community’s important values, sharpening borders, etc. See especially *ibid.*, 275–312 (quoted fragment on p. 14).

160 *Ibid.*, 57–94.

mental processes within a person experiencing witchcraft based on the theses put forward by psychoanalysts:

Distinctions *among* persons are henceforth put out of view; the argument turns on a general psychology of witchcraft, assumed to embrace (in varying degrees) the entire population of seventeenth-century New England. The aim is to pull out recurrent themes and essential preoccupations, wherever they may appear in the material. Thus, the focus moves from the visible surface of behavior and feeling to the sometimes invisible world of inner life – from those parts of the witchcraft story which the participants themselves directly articulated, to others which involve inference and interpretation on *our* terms. The issue throughout is the experience of the victims, and of their supporters in the community at large.¹⁶¹

As part of his model, Demos thus developed a profile of the victim at the level of experienced symptoms (“symptoms” of the influence of witchcraft), the witch’s perception (“fantasies” and images about the witch’s properties, behaviors and intentions), manifested emotional symptoms,¹⁶² and the ego defense mechanisms to which victims appealed in order to deal with their feelings. His goal was to determine, through an interpretation based on theory, which conflicts those elements of that profile might express¹⁶³ and how they might be associated (even if not in a clear, “causal” way) with childrearing patterns in Puritan culture.

Such a model analysis is not uncommon in works from the field of group psychohistory. Model construction may be a “starting point” in research that

161 *Ibid.*, 166, emphasis in original.

162 Interest/elation, worry/anguish, fear/horror, anger/rage, disgust/condemnation, shame/humiliation, surprise/shock.

163 Above all, those from the pre-oedipal period, expressed in terms of object relations, the birth of the “self system,” and the development of autonomy: “To recapitulate: (1) ‘Projection’ was everywhere central to witchcraft accusations. And projection, with its ‘oral foundation,’ rates as one of the earliest of all the psychological ‘defenses.’ (2) Witchcraft belief displayed important elements of ‘magical thinking,’ especially with respect to implicit stereotypes of women. And these have their roots in the ‘preverbal’ substrate of infantile experience. (3) The symptoms and fantasies associated with witchcraft suggest a certain vulnerability in the ‘self system.’ Here, too, the genetic line leads far back toward infancy. (4) The same evidence, considered from the standpoint of ‘ego qualities,’ underscores the issue of ‘autonomy’ (and its negative correlate ‘doubt’). And this issue is said to belong especially to the ‘second stage’ of psychosocial adaptation, encompassing roughly the second and third years of life. (5) The extreme symptoms of one particular victim-group, the ‘afflicted girls,’ denote unresolved conflicts in relations to ‘maternal objects.’” *Ibid.*, 206.

enables the comparative study of a number of individual and unique “cases.” It may also be a “point of arrival” that allows scholars to find repetitive motifs, relationships and dependencies amidst that ambiguous chaos of mental phenomena. The above-cited example referred to the second of these variants. Similarly, Seymour Byman examined individual cases of Anglican martyrs in the sixteenth century to find repetitive coping mechanisms exhibited by those facing the ultimate threat, death at the stake.¹⁶⁴ Some of Bruce Mazlish’s studies exemplify the first of these variants. In his research on revolutionary leadership, Mazlish constructed (recalling the Freudian concept of libido) the model of the “revolutionary ascetic,” which allowed him to examine a diverse range of historical leaders of revolutionary movements, starting with Oliver Cromwell and ending with Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong. Mazlish writes:

Our revolutionary ascetic is an ideal type to which any existing individual will only partially correspond. The ideal, however, prods us to keep a sharp eye out for the traits exhibited by a given revolutionary leader, as well as by particular revolutions. The concept ... is made up of three parts. First, the ascetic traits must be placed in the service of revolution. ... The “ascetic” part of our “revolutionary ascetic” is itself made up of two components. One is the traditional cluster of traits associated with the word “ascetic:” self-denial, self-discipline, no “wine, women, and song,” and so on, all in an effort to reach some high spiritual state. ... In addition ... the individual has few libidinal, or loving, ties to [other] individuals, but has displaced them onto an abstraction, in this case revolution.¹⁶⁵

Group Psychohistory as a Study of the Group Process

This final category involves a conceptualization that explicitly addresses the psychological aspect of mass phenomena as possessing a dynamic that is quite separate and independent from the individual psyche – i.e. as a group process. In this case, the researcher examines various forms of social discourse (most often artistic – in literature, film, etc.)¹⁶⁶ as an involuntary form of expression of basic emotional and existential concerns and dreams shared by members of a certain community (residents of a given country, people living in a certain era,

164 S. Byman, “Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior: The Pattern of Tudor Martyrdom,” *AHR* 83 (1978): 625–643.

165 B. Mazlish, *The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 5–6. For more on the construction of this model, see pp. 22–43.

166 Certain types of collective products of human creativity such as philosophical thought, scientific works (or rather their socio-moral-philosophical implications) may also come into play.

etc.). The researcher thus looks for repetitive motifs, images, perceptions and associations. Through empathizing interpretation, the researcher then attempts to find unconscious meanings that are imperceptible in the dimension of a single work, but – the argument goes – is clearly legible when we analyze that work as part of a larger whole – as a product of the group.

It was precisely in this way that Rudolph Binion examined the “innermost feelings” of Europeans about the changing family model (from one involving many children to one involving a very limited number of offspring) and the dissemination of birth control and contraception in marriage, something that Europeans have experienced on a mass scale since the second half of the nineteenth century. As Binion wrote: “This collective demographic doing by Europeans, and especially their innermost feelings about it, are my subject. Both show through Europe’s fictional case against the family when that case is seen as a whole and seen as social fantasy.”¹⁶⁷ Therefore, Binion reconstructs content about family as reflected in the works of European artists (from leading playwrights and novelists to authors of popular literature), stating that although they “do not add up to a coherent indictment,” one cannot help but interpret them as representing an unprecedented and decidedly “antifamilial” trend – “like so many swipes taken at it [the family] from various standpoints and different angles.”¹⁶⁸ In some works such swipes were quite explicit, while in others – more often – they were part of the more hidden dimension of interpersonal relations (as an allusive indication that the described evil has roots in the institution of family, or in particular features of family). Binion notes that the family portrayed by artists in such dark colors is almost always a family of the new type: reduced in size, developing strong emotional ties, controlling

167 R. Binion, “Fiction as Social Fantasy: Europe’s Domestic Crisis of 1879–1914,” *Journal of Social History* 27 (1994): 679.

168 It may be worth citing the basic accusations against the family identified by Binion within this literature’s dominant motifs: the family restrained the freedom of the human individual (it is against nature); it is an institution that inevitably objectifies and oppresses women; the essence of marriage is a ruthless struggle for power and/or the satisfaction of corporeal lust falsely sanctified by the marital “sacrament;” a child within the family inevitably becomes a victim of adults: it is a weapon in the parents’ struggle for dominance, and moreover, as a rule, the child is not understood by parents (the emotional and intellectual impenetrability of the worlds of children and adults), which is a constant source of suffering; the intensity of emotional bonds developed in the family and the strength of mutual dependencies are so great that they have a destructive effect on its members’ personalities, etc. See *ibid.*, 692 and *passim*.

the number of offspring, practicing “sex without procreation.” Furthermore, Binion claims that “their grievances against it took shape fictionally, which is to say imaginatively rather than logically, or more in the way of dreams than arguments.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, Binion proposes the following interpretation of the dynamics of feelings among Europeans toward the expanding “modern” model of family life:

Europe’s dismal, depressive, mud-splattered fictional image of the family ... was mildly nightmarish – or rather, in a nonword, daymarish. It was the reverse, or the negative, of the exalted official image of the family that then held sway in Europe. It conveyed a deep undercover malaise felt inside the family and toward the family in Europe. And in its routine bleakness and catastrophism it was a guilty vision. The source ... is evident. Marital contraception crashed a huge moral barrier. ... sex outside of marriage was naughty enough; unnatural sex within marriage, sex deflected from its reproductive end, was wicked still – an obscene abuse of the marital sacrament. ... Europe’s fiction thereafter tended to justify¹⁷⁰ and to punish the contraceptive revolt against the family at one and the same time by both blackening the family and visiting it with doom. ... The first generation of Europeans to practice prophylactic sex ... broke with the family as it had been known from time immemorial. If deep down that felt as though they were breaking with the family *tout court*, well might Europeans of 1879–1914 be haunted by visions of the seemingly snug and cozy birth-controlled family potentiating evils belonging to the family as such.¹⁷¹

In a similar way, Paul Monaco studied French film productions in the 1920s (fifty films shot in French studios between 1919 and 1929):

Latent collective meanings of films reveal themselves through analysis of manifest film contents. On the conscious level, movie-goers are, and have been since the advent of cinematography, primarily interested in the content of a movie – that is, the film story and its cinedramatic development. Hence, attention to the cinematographic devices through which that content is portrayed is minimized. Still, the repetition of certain such devices in the popular films of a national cinema may reveal psychologically important tendencies.

Films (especially silent films) offer particularly valuable material here, because just like dreams, they “express themselves primarily through images.”¹⁷² Analysis

169 Ibid. This would indicate that we are dealing with a manifestation of an irrational and illogical group process.

170 After all, Europe in this era simply *had* to deal somehow with limiting the birth rate.

171 R. Binion, “Fiction as Social Fantasy,” 693–694.

172 P. Monaco, “The Popular Cinema as Reflection of the Group Process in France, 1919–1929,” in *The New Psychohistory*, 154, 152. The author adds: “A movie is usually ‘essentially a group production.’ And for this reason alone a popular film likely bears

of basic motifs (the orphanage, loneliness), references to water and a peaceful landscape (expressing, according to Monaco, the ideas of birth and rebirth), ways of communicating violence and evil (the aggressive brute, blood images), and a strategy for developing film action as a vehicle for all these images, gives us a window – according to Monaco – into a “group obsession” of the French of this era, and in particular into their relationship with the political conditions of that time. Among other motifs, Monaco pointed to an “obsession with children” as one that was reflected in cinema both openly and in hidden ways. “The meaning of this obsession with children and birth can be understood best,” Monaco writes, “in light of the demographic situation in France after World War One.”¹⁷³ At the same time, the theme of the orphanage was associated with public perceptions of France’s political situation after the war:

France had been abandoned. She was a diplomatic orphan. This is the main group psychological meaning of the orphan theme in French movies of the decade following World War One. The orphan films present a recurrent, dream-like working off of the French national trauma of having experienced in short order the disintegration of those very alliances which had meant victory instead of defeat in the First World War, and which were assumed to be the necessary guarantee of French security for the future. Like the orphans and other heroes of her most popular movies, France found herself abandoned, for all practical purposes alone in the world, and up against big odds. The message in those films is almost always the same – the orphan is recognized for what he or she is, and is reunited to those who love him or her most, be it parents (i.e. the rightful guardians) or a true love (i.e. the proper partner). On the group unconscious level the wish-fulfillment is that France should be recognized for what she truly is, whereupon she would be reunited (that is, re-allied) to her old protectors England and the United States.¹⁷⁴

Similarly, Monaco associated the motif of blood in these films with experiences from France’s recent past; on an unconscious level, that motif represented the “bleeding” of France in the war since, in the 1920s, “the collective national psyche was obsessed with the memory of that bleeding.”¹⁷⁵ In the end, Monaco concluded that “the interpretive analysis of the French popular cinema of the

a closer relationship to the group process within society than an individual artistic creation. The term ‘mass culture’ does have meaning, and that meaning is accented in the cinema. The high unit costs of feature films mean that they must appeal to a broad cross section of society, rather than to an elite in society.” *Ibid.*, 151–152.

173 *Ibid.*, 163.

174 *Ibid.*, 165–166.

175 *Ibid.*, 170.

1920s discloses disguised patterns of reference to the shared trauma of World War One and its immediate post-war consequences for France as a whole.”¹⁷⁶

Both examples – Binion and Monaco – demonstrate how a psychohistorian, applying basically common-sense psychology to motifs and content captured in empirical material, seeks their “rational” meaning and significance in relation to the assumed real historical group experiences. However, within the framework of this model it is possible to modify and deepen psychological reasoning through careful use of selected concepts from depth psychology. Which is precisely what Binion did through his study of the secularization and de-Christianization of European culture as a group process. He attempted to demonstrate the surprising durability of certain beliefs fundamental to Christianity, which (although in a difficult-to-recognize “disguise”) were to survive its decay and fall, and which still persist in European thinking. The dynamics of the transformation of these motifs in the collective consciousness and unconsciousness (above all life after death, original sin and the idea of a higher order of reality as opposed to the contingencies of “this” world) are explained on the basis of fundamental categories of analytical discourse, such as sublimation, projection, repression, compulsive repetition etc.¹⁷⁷

Moreover, the group process is often studied as one that is almost entirely detached from the current experiences of the community¹⁷⁸ and characterized by certain internal regularities. Such studies constitute a kind “specialty” among “radical” psychohistorians and – on the basis of the concept of collective fantasy mentioned in Part II – are essentially conducted in relation to contemporary society and thus go beyond the scope of my considerations here.¹⁷⁹

176 Ibid., 172.

177 For more, see R. Binion, *After Christianity: Christian Survivals in Post-Christian Culture* (Durango: Logbridge-Rhodes, 1986).

178 The only form of dependence on those experiences is that they draw their material from them in more or less the same way in which (according to Freud) the “work” of a dream refers to the remnants of the dreamer’s daily memories.

179 The regular nature of the group process as a group fantasy assumed within the framework of deMause’s postulates would allow for a forecast of its dynamics and thus an ability to anticipate actions taken by group leaders (e.g. starting wars) because in their decisions, they remain determined by that group fantasy. For a representative example, see L. deMause, “Jimmy Carter and American Fantasy,” in L. deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 157–173. What is important for inquiries about the past conducted by psychohistorians associated with the IPA is that they are inclined to recognize all phenomena from the sphere of social consciousness as dominated by or subordinate to some kind of group fantasy. From this perspective, a collective fantasy (i.e. a regressive, infantile group process) would be, for

Recapitulation

My considerations to this point have been devoted to the applied methodology of psychohistorians, to the “real” manifestation of the methodological principles they respect and recognize in the practice of psychohistorical research. As for psychobiography – the most commonly pursued field of inquiry – it turned out possible to recognize the presence of a certain general model for research strategy, under which various elements of applied methodology operate related to, among other things, the way by which the subject of a biographical inquiry is conceptualized (e.g. the search for formative experiences, or patterns of action and emotional response), and to various forms in which theory is employed in research. It was clearly visible how psychohistorians struggled in practice with issues that, in a fundamental way, found quite explicit expression in the methodological thinking and discussions surrounding the entire paradigm,¹⁸⁰ including the applicability of clinical concepts and cognitive strategies, the struggle with a predilection for diagnosis, the search for ways to take into account the cultural context of phenomena under examination. We have seen how the research practices of psychohistorians writing biographies remained torn between “scientizing” and “understanding” approaches, how they remained suspended between faith in the regular nature of mental phenomena and the belief that each person’s psyche is individualized and unique. It can be said that the internal diversity of the psychohistorical community when viewed from the level of methodological discourse is confirmed when viewed from the level of actual research practice. And yet – on both levels – the scale of this diversity remains limited: this is the framework of psychoanalytical thinking.

This statement essentially applies to psychohistory research practices in general. Admittedly, in the other basic fields of inquiry – and in particular group psychohistory – it turned out to be impossible to identify a more uniform pattern of conduct. The wide variety of phenomena that researchers attempted to penetrate here did not favor standardization in research strategies. However, it was perfectly clear that, by trying out various conceptualizations or approaches to group issues, psychohistorians – in the final analysis – employed the same conceptual tools and methodological directives with which they

example, nationalism. See D. Beisel, “The Group Fantasy of Early German Nationalism, 1800—1815,” *JPH* 8 (1980), no. 1: 1–19.

180 This indicates a significant level of agreement between psychohistorians’ methodological thought and applied methodology.

constructed psychobiographies, in the extreme variant trying to even reduce the former to the latter.

Moreover, the presented analyses clearly show that – thanks to psychoanalysis – psychohistorians are able to ask questions that historians of other persuasions cannot pose, and that they are able to assimilate into historical writing new categories of sources and/or use previously known sources in non-standard ways. In most cases, they take great pains to meet the standards of academic historical scholarship.¹⁸¹

181 This is precisely what Szaluta communicated by writing: “In conclusion, all the genres of psychohistory may be characterized as being both more advanced than traditional historical studies, and in need of continuing methodological work.” J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 213.

PART IV PSYCHOHISTORICAL CASE STUDIES

Introduction

In this last Part of my book, I would like to demonstrate how the theoretical and methodological assumptions discussed above operate within the framework of specific psychohistorical studies, and how, in their light, psychohistorians implement a typical psychohistorical research strategy. I will analyze in detail three works penned by representatives of psychohistory because my assumption is that an indispensable element of any methodological analysis of the paradigm as a whole must involve a demonstration of how method is implemented “in practice” at the level of a single topic or research undertaking. In other words, after looking at psychohistory “from a bird’s eye view,” I will now try, probing in a few selected spots, to view the field “through a magnifying glass.” It is my opinion that this kind of procedure is necessary when constructing a methodological-historiographic monograph of this kind. Only when the slightly abstract categories of methodological description used to build the generalized characteristics of the paradigm *tout court* get “translated” into a concrete examination of a few selected “cases”¹ can the reader get a sufficiently clear picture of what research practice in this field really looks like.

The list of psychohistorical works that would meet the minimum necessary level of representativeness with respect to the paradigm’s basic properties is, of course, long. Therefore, the selection of the few works that I will use as examples here, from among all of those that would qualify for detailed analysis, is somewhat a function of their structural clarity (which facilitates critical analysis and assists in pointing out various key assumptions and elements of research strategy), as well as – last but not least – my personal (aesthetic, psychological, thematic?) preferences as the author of this book. In each specific case, I will

1 In this context, it is worth recalling the concept at work in the area of psychology known as “the case study method,” which “involves the presentation and interpretation of detailed information about a single subject, whether an event, a culture, or ... an individual life.” W. M. Runyan, *Life Histories*, 121. For more on this concept, see *ibid.*, 123–127. It is important here to focus on Runyan’s comments on the properties of a given, individual (so conceived) object of inquiry.

nonetheless attempt to provide a thoughtful and substantive reason for why I chose to use a given example.

Isaac Newton Painted with a Psychohistorian's "Brush"

As I pointed out earlier, among the numerous controversies surrounding psychohistory, one of the most significant is the dispute over the relationship between psychohistorical research and "proper" historical inquiry. Which is why I have chosen to study examples of psychohistory that are programmed *as history*, and which strive to meet the standards of academic writing. First, I will examine the work of Frank E. Manuel, a professor of history at many leading American universities who was one of those researchers who openly addressed the psychological dimension of history using the achievements of psychoanalytical thought. At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, Manuel participated in the debate over psychohistory, and his words were given great credence, as evidenced by, e.g., reprints of his most important theoretical article in various psychohistorical and historical anthologies.² Manuel's *Portrait of Isaac Newton*³ comes from this period. This book is obviously neither the first nor the last attempt at a biographical approach to the personality of the genius thinker, and in many respects, it appears not to depart from the patterns of classical, event-oriented historical scholarship. It seemed so "embedded" in standard historical literature that Faye and Travis Crosby, in their analysis of psychohistorical works, even questioned whether it belonged to psychohistory, noting – not without reason – that it did not actually refer explicitly to psychological theory and terminology.⁴ However, apart from the Crosbys, probably no one really doubted that this book is an example of an extremely successful psychobiography, whose author, as another psychohistorian noted, "arrived at a penetrating and profoundly empathetic understanding of the subject. Manuel

2 I am thinking here about his study "The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History" published in *Daedalus* 100 (1971): 187–212, which was included in the collective works *Historical Studies Today* and *Varieties of Psychohistory*.

3 F. Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*. The Polish edition: *Portret Izaaka Newtona*, trans. from the English by S. Amsterdamski (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 1998). As far as I know, this was the first American psychohistorical work published in Poland. I published an analysis of this work in *Historyka* 30 (2000): 177–187.

4 They took this criterion – perhaps somewhat arbitrarily – as the basis for determining whether or not the work in question represents psychohistory. See F. Crosby, T. Crosby, "Psychobiography and Psychohistory," 197.

has presented a picture that is suggestive, subtle, evocative, and plausible; his study is strikingly judicious and balanced The portrait is not weighted toward the pathological, and the portraitist is mindful of Newton's creativity."⁵

With its introduction and eighteen chapters, this work was divided into three basic parts, arranged chronologically: "The Lad from Lincolnshire," "The Lucasian Professor," and "In London Town." As in any traditional academic historical biography, we find in Manuel's *Portrait* a chronological account of the life of Isaac Newton supported by a meticulous analysis of the existing literature on the subject and the source material – above all, the enormous body of writings left behind by the scholar. This convergence with event-oriented historical writing should come as no surprise; the basic rules of biographical writing stabilized just as the event-oriented model of historical research was achieving dominance, and the subject of the biographer's inquiries – an individual's life cycle – appears to be particularly susceptible to the descriptive, narrative and chronological approach. However, Manuel consciously focuses in his work on the reconstruction of Newton's psychological portrait based on specific theoretical assumptions:

On more than one occasion I steered my way between a Scylla of historians of science and a Charybdis of psychoanalysts. The existence of an unconscious with a symbolic language different from that of conscious everyday life and of the great rational systems of Western thought is a fundamental assumption of this study. Should the unconscious perchance not exist, one of the underpinnings of the book collapses.⁶

Thus, it is clearly visible that Manuel intended to construct a portrait based on psychoanalytic theory – which so characterizes psychobiographical writing – but the fact is that this theory is practically "invisible" on the surface of his *Portrait's* discourse; it lies in its deeper layers. Beyond that, as is most often the case in psychohistory, there is no consistent use in *Portrait* of a single perspective in terms of depth psychology (despite the fact that Manuel himself explicitly mentions the intellectual debt he owed to Erik H. Erikson); what we see rather are eclectic references to various currents within psychoanalytic thought. As David Fisher rightly points out:

Manuel is more deeply influenced by the Freudian than the Eriksonian school, and even closer to the English object relations schools and those theoreticians and clinicians who have studied the dynamics of narcissism, the mother-child dyad and the

5 D. J. Fisher, "Narcissistic Themes in a Psychobiography of Isaac Newton," in D. J. Fisher, *Cultural Theory*, 258.

6 F. Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*, ix.

significance of themes of attachment, traumatic separation anxiety, and profound, nonrecuperative loss.⁷

In my attempt to reconstruct the main elements of the psychobiographer's research strategy in the previous Part, I identified three basic levels of study: a description of the activities and achievements of a given historical figure leading to their explanation through reference to a concrete personality model, which in turn (the need to clarify its genesis) requires reference to that figure's childhood experiences. It could be expected that Manuel's attention would turn to Newton's early years, because it was in this phase of the thinker's life where Manuel would look for the roots of Newton's personality in adulthood. Manuel writes:

Without presuming to unlock the secret of Newton's genius or its mysterious energy, I aim to depict and to analyze aspects of his conduct, primarily in situations of love and hate, and to probe for the forces that shaped his character. ... There is no implication that the young man delineated in the early chapters of this book had to develop by an ineluctable destiny into the Cambridge recluse who constructed a system of the world, the psychically disturbed middle-aged man of the black year 1693, the authoritarian Master of the Mint, the dictatorial President of the Royal Society ... But while life experiences modify and alter a basic structure, the earliest impressions and traumas are the most potent and pervasive *Only an acquaintance with the adult Newton provokes one to raise basic queries about beginnings, to delve in the junior part of his life for the roots of the consuming passions of the mature man.*⁸

Therefore, it is clear that Manuel in fact sought determinants of personality development primarily in the individual's early psychological experiences, especially in contacts established with the first significant figures of childhood – the mother and other family members. In particular, Manuel noted that “Newton's mother is the central figure in his life. ... The trauma of her original departure [Isaac was three years old at the time and was left with a grandmother], the denial of her love, generated anguish, aggressiveness, and fear. After the total possession – undisturbed by a rival, not even a father [the father died before the boy was born], almost as if there had been a virgin birth – she was removed and he was abandoned.”⁹ The response patterns produced during these primal experiences, Manuel argued, then became the basis for behavior in later life, perceived as analogous to those first traumas:

7 D. J. Fisher, “Narcissistic Themes,” 247; see also pp. 257, 260, 261.

8 F. Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*, 2–5. Author's emphasis – T. P.

9 *Ibid.*, 25.

The loss of his mother to another man was a traumatic event in Newton's life from which he never recovered. And at any moment in his later experience when he was confronted by the possibility of being robbed of what was his, he reacted with violence commensurate with the terror and anger generated by his first searing deprivation. He saw all his later inventions and acquired dignities as part of himself, and the mere threat of their being torn away overwhelmed him with anxiety.¹⁰

We note that, for Manuel, it was not about determining Newton's specific behaviors in some unambiguous way, but rather about indicating a certain "framework" style of the thinker's activity, revealing with remarkable consistency that Newton perceived experiences in various circumstances in terms of a threat of some kind of loss, such as in his dispute with Gottfried Leibniz over who discovered calculus first, in the defense of his prerogatives as the Master of the Royal Mint, in his management of the Royal Society, and many others. Noting every concrete (often viewed in terms of a rational action) condition behind Newton's behaviors, Manuel revealed the specific, permanent emotional constellation behind them.

Another example of a traumatizing childhood experience, one that often has a formative influence on the human personality, was young Newton's lack of a father (in fact, the lack of any real "father figure"):

When a child is told of the death of his father before he was born, an almost metaphysical anguish may seize him. Often the quest for the father continues in a thousand guises through life. ... In Newton's case the search would be rendered even more anxious by the absence of his paternal grandfather Newton was absorbed in his genealogy He gave himself strange ancestors Fantasies of royal and noble birth are common among fatherless children. There are among Newton's euhemeristic historical and chronological papers in Oxford literally scores of genealogies of the gods and of the kings of all nations. In addition to their pragmatic utility for revising world chronology, they may mask an unconscious search for a line of ancestors.¹¹

For Manuel, this trauma also had consequences for the dominant (instrumental) pattern in Newton's relations with other people and for the formation of his most basic beliefs and enduring attitudes, especially in the sphere of religion. For example, Manuel pointed to Newton's firm (though concealed) Unitarianism, which the thinker tried to justify in theological treatises written throughout most of his life but never published, and to his deep faith in the notion that he was given a special kind of bond with God the Father, the father that Newton lacked on earth. It was this "personal contact through no intermediary" with

10 *Ibid.*, 26.

11 *Ibid.*, 30.

the Creator which revealed to Newton the ideas from which his great discoveries, and his entire concept for a new world system, flowed. Perceiving here the premises for Newton's numerous conflicts with contemporaneous thinkers (the battle with Leibniz is just one of many examples), Manuel writes:

Among contemporaries he and he alone had access to the significant truths about God his Father's world. God revealed himself to only one prophet in each generation, and this made parallel discoveries improbable. ... He often felt that the findings of his fellow scientists were of no consequence, or only ancillary to his system, or else outright thefts from his 'Garden.'¹²

The Puritan moral code in which Newton grew up and matured was equally significant for the formation of his neurotic and repressive personality:

The scrupulosity, punitiveness, austerity, discipline, industriousness, and fear associated with a repressive morality were early stamped upon his character ... He had a built-in censor and lived ever under the Taskmaster's eye, as the divines had it. He whom Milton's Eve called "Our great Forbidder" was with him the more constantly because of the very absence of the traditional forbidder in the household. The Decalogue he had learned in childhood became an exigent conscience that made deadly sins of lying, falsehood, Sabbath-breaking, egotistic ambition, and prohibited any expressions of violence and breach of control. The Bible was the guide to conduct.

These principles extended naturally to the sphere of science: "Corruption of a Scriptural text and the faking of an experiment, or slovenliness in its interpretation, were not only violations of scientific method, but sins, like the bearing of false witness. Such lies were in many respects the blackest of crimes because they violated and distorted the truth of God's creation."¹³

These analyses led Manuel to paint a specific portrait of Isaac Newton's psyche. Newton appeared to him as a person marked by the traumatic experiences of loss and loneliness, unable to make emotional contact with people, overwhelmed by fear and depression. At the same time, Newton was – in Manuel's view – chained down by strict Puritan morality, which ruthlessly imposed extremely high ethical standards and, at the same time, seriously limited the ability to express and pursue the aggressive and destructive tendencies present in the personality dynamics of any person, especially one living under the pressure of this type of moral code. According to Manuel, it was precisely the dialectical tension between the internal forces of aggression and the forces

¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 54 and 55.

of suppression (guided by ethical censorship) that constituted the emotional matrix of Newton's behavior.

Manuel stressed that he did not intend to do what psychohistorians are often criticized for doing, namely to "denigrate" the genius thinker. He believed that what he had written about Newton "brings the humanity of genius closer to us and is its own justification." Instead, Manuel intended to draw connections between Isaac Newton's personality, his scientific views and the world system the thinker built:

The characteristic components of its [science's] great, form-imprinting practitioners are by no means a matter of indifference in understanding the nature of Western science itself. ... One has an inkling that a closed scientific system like Newton's, which was consonant with his personality, must in some measure have affected the evolution of Western science ... When Europe adopted Newtonianism as its intellectual model, something of his character penetrated to the very marrow of the system.¹⁴

Manuel emphasizes that it was Newton's constant "anxiety before and his fear of the unknown" that were at the root of his insatiable thirst for knowledge: "When he learned the laws of his God he was able to allay those fears; but his anxiety often kept pace with his discoveries and was perpetually renewed. The intense, personal character of Newton's struggle with nature can be grasped at moments of self-revelation in his manuscripts." Manuel pointed out that neurotic personalities do not tolerate uncertainty well, and he thus agreed with those researchers who were inclined to associate, for example, Newton's notion of absolute space with a "metaphysical fear," describing it as a "surrogate for the psychological security lost when the finite universe of Aristotle and the Schoolmen was shattered Newton had two such refuges," Manuel argues, "a great blessing for a man in his state of everlasting tension: one was the Bible literally interpreted as historical fact ...; the other was mathematical proof. Knowledge that could be mathematicised ended his quandaries. The discovery of his mathematical genius was his salvation; that the world obeyed mathematical law was his security." In another place, Manuel writes:

To force everything in the heavens and on earth into one rigid tight frame from which the most minuscule detail would not be allowed to escape free and random was an underlying need of this anxiety-ridden man. ... The system was complete in both its physical and historical dimensions. A structuring of the world in so absolutist a manner that every event, the closest and the most remote, fits neatly into an imaginary system has been called a symptom of illness, especially when others refuse to join in

14 Ibid., 18 and 17.

the grand obsessive design. It was Newton's fortune that a large portion of his total system was acceptable to European society as a perfect representation of reality.¹⁵

Manuel was convinced that he had at his disposal empirical evidence that in various ways confirms the kind of conclusions mentioned above. To those who argued that since the psychobiographer cannot put his protagonist "on the couch," there is no way for him to gain useful psychoanalytical insight into that protagonist's personality, Manuel responded as follows: "The historical study of great dead men has both advantages and disadvantages over the efforts of those who cure souls. Historians can rarely check their intuitive guesses with the subject, but on the other hand they have a completed life before them, and the end always tells much about the beginnings."¹⁶ Ultimately, Manuel reduced this issue (as happens with any historical study) to the existence or non-existence of documentary evidence regarding the protagonist's behavior and statements. But such evidence was needed here not just for the "factual reconstruction" of the protagonist's life events or his demonstrably "observable" attitudes, views or emotions. Because in the context of psychoanalytical assumptions, this kind of information could also provide indications (as suggested by depth psychology) regarding unconscious dynamics and structures and the constitutive elements of personality.

However, above all, Manuel was looking for materials that would allow him to replace, to some extent, cognitive techniques used in an analytical setting. Thus, Manuel analyzed his protagonist's various "inconsequential" or seemingly "absurd and pointless" notes and activities, which as a substitute for free associations can reveal unconscious mental processes. Thanks to the enormity of Newton's body of written work, including thousands of pages of strictly personal notebooks, language exercise books, and works with his own handwritten marginal notes, Manuel found himself in an opportune situation:

These notebooks and manuscripts, the best guides to an understanding of his personality ... allow us to make conjectures about his temper, his moods, his emotions, his character. They may even be a window into his fantasy world. The notebooks can be read with different prepossessions. ... They are documents that also pose perplexing psychological questions, and suggest some answers. ... If the data are read with an awareness that theorizing about them involves speculative leaps and analogical thinking, a new dimension in the understanding of young Newton can be explored. ... While conscious of recent abuses in the interpretive extension of the boundaries of meaning in historical scholarship, a man of the late-Freudian era *cannot put on*

15 Ibid., 64–66, 380.

16 Ibid., 5.

*blindness, refraining from an examination of psychological facts and from making hypotheses about them merely because they are not subject to traditional forms of verification.*¹⁷

Take, for example, one of young Newton's notebooks from around the year 1659 containing "long excerpts and paraphrases" from contemporaneous popular science works, the recorded contents of a church calendar, and a list of "twenty-four hundred words" under the title "The several things contained under these generall heads." Manuel showed that although the list was basically created as a result of the rewriting and alphabetical re-ordering of fragments and phrases from a popular textbook and an English-Latin dictionary, Newton "departed from its text, disregarding the alphabet and inserting his own additions, and then the document becomes provocative – a series of words that are free associations around a subject and can be interpreted for their psychological content." This and other similar notes and texts written by Newton revealed to Manuel, among other things, the dynamics underpinning the ambivalent feelings Newton had toward the mother who had "abandoned" him and his hostility toward his half-siblings. It was primarily this kind of analysis that revealed to Manuel the "darkness" of Isaac Newton's soul:

In the notebooks ... one can read the fear, anxiety, distrust, sadness, withdrawal, self-betittlement, and generally depressive state of the young Newton. ... When the word and phrase associations in these documents are free, they can, *faute de mieux*, serve as a rather primitive objective personality test. ... No single text in isolation is conclusive, and their evidence is proffered with a measure of skepticism; but in their total effect these records are compelling.¹⁸

Frank Manuel's work seems to avoid the shoals of psychological determinism and ahistorism, accusations which critics eagerly direct at less successful psychobiographies. Manuel was constantly aware that his psychological reasoning could help him identify, at most, the "framework" relationships between young Newton's experiences, his personality structure, and his achievements. Manuel repeatedly emphasized the hypothetical nature of his findings, while trying to take into account the cultural context in which specific mental relationships occurred. Reflecting on what led the young Newton to discover the laws of motion and universal gravitation, Manuel writes:

To relate the invention of the law of gravity, defining universal attraction, if not yet successfully proving it mathematically, to Newton's psychological history is a

17 *Ibid.*, 9–10. Author's emphasis – T. P.

18 *Ibid.*, 12–13, 57.

hazardous undertaking. ... We have located the discovery in his mother's garden, and from there we should let everyman's fancy roam where it listeth. ... To assert that the child Newton spent many hours longing for the absent ones, his dead father and his remarried mother, is to affirm something within ordinary experience. To posit a relationship between this longing and a later intellectual structure in which a sort of an impulse or attraction is a key term descriptive of a force is more problematical. ... But the fact is that Newton, who made the last leap, was in a critical period of childhood powerfully drawn to distant persons, that he was hungry for communion with the departed ones in an elementary, even primitive sense. Since this yearning never found an object in sexuality, it could have achieved sublime expression in an intellectual construct whose configuration was akin to the original emotion. ... But the coupling of the emotions of a child being drawn to distant and absent ones with the idea of a natural force that as an adult he could never define cannot be received without a heavy dose of skepticism. Newton knew of the common metaphoric description of the attractive power of a magnet as love and he and others wrote of the "sociability" of liquids in connection with alchemical experiments. But the chasm which most of us would establish between the nature of psychic and physical power did not exist in the mid-seventeenth century. The translation of longing, one's passion for persons, into a systematic inquiry of a mathematical-astronomical character is a giant step; and yet, on one level of existence, Newton lived in an animistic world in which feelings of love and attraction could be assimilated to other forces.¹⁹

In Manuel's extensive argument cited here, we do not find a simplified, explicit relationship. The intellectual climate of the era – the kind of "theoretical space" in which Newton moved along with other contemporary scholars – turned out to have as great an influence on the genesis of the discovery as his baggage of personal experiences and the psychological dynamics of his personality. It was this climate that enabled such a "translation" of internal experiences and longings that ultimately led to the discovery. This strategy of proceeding typifies the reasoning used by Manuel in his *Portrait*. Manuel always tried not to forget about the social and cultural context of the phenomenon under examination and to avoid the temptation to offer an easy psychological interpretation without taking into account possible alternative explanations. Here are two other telling examples:

But this psychological foundation for his creative scientific genius might have remained mere narcissistic play if the wider world in which he grew up could not have been assimilated to his inner experience. ... the social environment of Newton's boyhood ... the unusual addition of "Sciences," with a specifically modern meaning, shows a remarkably early interest in the potentialities of this new intellectual domain.

19 Ibid., 83–85.

It reflects a climate of opinion in the countryside that was unique to England If the scientific genius of a yeoman's son was not to be stifled or die unobserved, at least an embryonic appreciation of the potentialities of science had to be fairly widespread. Newton's way with a mouse [in addition to many other devices, young Newton built a model of a mechanical windmill driven by a pet] later stood him in good stead when he became a great manipulator of men. A psychologist might be tempted to relate the young Newton's concentration upon mechanical objects that he could control with certainty to a flight from intimate human ties where love was either problematical or forbidden. But the play with mechanical instruments was fairly common in this period and we read similar reports in the biographies of Wren, Hooke, and Flamsteed.²⁰

Manuel believed it was both necessary and possible to practice psychobiography and psychohistory, although he was fully aware that it was not possible to provide the kind of evidence to support his theses that members of the historical guild were used to. However, abandoning such a cognitive undertaking would mean abandoning research in a fundamental dimension of human history. Manuel writes:

The innermost secrets of Isaac Newton have not been uncovered. Though the curtain may be raised briefly, one goes away burdened with doubt about what has actually been seen in that fleeting moment. And yet the historian can hardly refrain from trying to construct the deeper meaning of acts and words. If the reader can accept an avowal that an element of speculation is consciously interwoven in this portrayal, part of the misunderstanding associated with studies of this character may be dissipated. The goal here is not mathematical truth but general plausibility, which is, after all, what the historian has to offer.²¹

A Ruler and his Childhood: The Early Years of Louis XIII

Childhood studies conducted by psychohistorians were met with a diverse – to say the least – set of responses on the part of historians, especially when authors of such studies based their arguments on the controversial claims made by Lloyd deMause. However, we can find works that – despite having penetrated the hardly accessible sphere of early and formative children's experiences based on the debatable (for many) value of psychoanalysis – gained recognition from historians as a “hit.” Without a doubt, these include Elizabeth Wirth Marvick's examination of the childhood of Louis XIII, King of France.²² The publication

20 Ibid., 47, 39.

21 Ibid., 18–19.

22 E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII: The Making of a King* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1986).

of this work resonated in a remarkable way; it soon received a great number of reviews in prestigious American and European historical journals, and it gained mention in periodicals in psychohistory and political sciences, even in some journals devoted to psychoanalysis (!).²³ Although not everyone shared the enthusiasm of the scholar whose review appeared in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*,²⁴ Marvick's book was generally well received; typical was the following commentary published in the *American Historical Review*:

Marvick has written a perceptive and sensitivity study of the formation of Louis's character ... In addition to providing a context for understanding his conduct as prince and later as king, the book conveys the texture of court life in the early seventeenth century and offers valuable insights into medical and child-rearing practices in that era.²⁵

Marvick herself exemplifies the complicated paths taken by the psychohistorical history of childhood. Her activities in this research area²⁶ began in collaboration with deMause, in whose publications she published her early works on childhood in seventeenth-century France, but she distanced herself from

23 The most important include *AHR* 93 (1988), no. 2; *History: Reviews of New Books* 15 (1987), no. 5; *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988), no. 3; *JIH* 19 (1988), no. 2; *History* (June 1988), no. 138; *Biography* 12 (1989), no. 1; *The French Review* 61 (1988) no. 5; *The Renaissance Quarterly* 41 (1988), no. 4; *The Library Journal* (December 1986); *Nyt her Historien* 36 (1987); *PR* 16 (1988), no. 3; *Political Psychology* 9 (1988), no. 3; *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 17 (1988), no. 4. However, it should be noted that we find this generally positive reception in English-language periodicals. French historians responded to this work with complete silence.

24 "Professor Marvick has now written a book that will make a believer out of even the most incredulous skeptic. ... I cannot remember when I have enjoyed reading a book more; nor can I recall when I have learned so much from one book." M. P. Holt [review of E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*], *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988), no. 3: 474.

25 A. N. Hamscher [review of E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*], *AHR* 93 (1988), no. 2: 426.

26 E. W. Marvick was a political scientist by education, essentially trained within a circle of researchers engaged in political psychology influenced by depth psychology, such as Harold Lasswell and Nathan Leites. She chose a career as an independent researcher; she lectured (mainly political science) at many American universities but avoided any long-term connection with them. Much of her research activity focused on historical and contemporary political leadership, which was one of the most important starting points for her study of Louis XIII. See P. Elovitz, B. Lenz, "Elizabeth Wirth Marvick: Half a Century of Childhood," *Clio's Psyche* 9 (2002), no. 1: 26–36 (an interview conducted by the journal's editors with E. W. Marvick).

his theoretical approaches and historiosophical schemes from the beginning.²⁷ Subsequently, Marvick also worked with other journals in the field of psychohistory and with periodicals devoted to modern history; her topics were the childhood of various figures belonging to elite French political circles from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and the psychological dimension of their activities.²⁸ Her study of Louis XIII, the fruit of 20 years of source research, is considered Marvick's most important contribution to the field of psychohistorical studies on the history of childhood.

The main purpose of the work was to construct an explanation (indication of reasons) for the fundamental character contradictions of Louis XIII, who – Marvick notes – was called “the Incomprehensible” even by his contemporaries. She emphasized that these contradictions, due to Louis's political position, weighed deeply on the life of the country which he ruled – in terms of both domestic and foreign policies. She posited that the results of psychoanalytical research on the development of infants and children could be particularly helpful here, because they “have perhaps provided the most illuminating insights into the structure and dynamics of character.”²⁹ Thus, the theoretical bases of her inquiry:

Are founded on the hypotheses Freud developed as a result of his basic discoveries. They are generally representative of what has come to be called “classical psychoanalysis,” although what they exemplify are the elaboration, enrichment, and revision of early psychoanalytic theory that have come about as a result of a half century of

27 E. W. Marvick, “Nature versus Nurture: Patterns and Trends in Seventeenth-Century French Child-Rearing;” eadem, “Childhood History and Decisions of State: The Case of Louis XIII,” in *The New Psychohistory*, 199–244.

28 E. W. Marvick, “Beyond the Narcissistic Leader: Toward Comparing Psychopolitical Roles,” *Mind and Human Interaction* 8 (1997), no. 2: 62–81; eadem, “Favorites in Early Modern Europe: A Recurring Psychopolitical Role,” *The Journal of Psychohistory* (10) 1983, no. 4: 463–489; eadem, “Psychobiography and the Early Modern French Court;” eadem, *The Young Richelieu: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Leadership* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1983). This last study was written in parallel with the work on Louis XIII and, by contrast, gained some attention in France, perhaps because of the subject matter, which was “attractive” in the eyes of French historians (this is the opinion expressed Marvick in the interview for *Clio's Psyche*). An expression of Marvick's psychohistorical interests are also her inquiries into the beginnings of psychoanalytical history and the reception of psychoanalysis within the “Annales” school. E. W. Marvick, “New Lives,” 3–26; eadem, “The ‘Annales’ and the Unconscious.”

29 Marvick, *Louis XIII*, 1–2.

research into infant and child behavior. The literature that has resulted from this research represents a variety of directions taken in recent years by psychoanalytic inquiries. ... The case material produced by all these inquirers includes a careful testing of new hypotheses against observed stages of normal child development. ... Given the frequent appearance of references to *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* in my notes, I conclude that the annual, now in its forty-first year of publication, represents rather well my perspective on child-development research.³⁰

Marvick emphasizes that this type of inquiry is developed in relation to important political actors, and that “few will argue against making an effort to understand a political leader’s feelings and behavior by tracing their manifestations from the earliest possible moment.”³¹

Such studies are as popular as they are controversial. The shortage of source materials regarding the childhood of historical figures often leads to extensive use of retrodiction based on psychoanalytic theory, and because many scholars question the empirical value of the latter, they also remain skeptical of the results of such retrodiction. In addition, historians are often inclined to criticize as mere speculation statements about facts from the past that, because of a lack of direct empirical evidence, are based primarily on theory. As I have already pointed out, such allegations directed at psychohistorical research focusing on the psychological aspect of history – which is difficult to grasp and often only vaguely conceptualized – are very common.

However, in the case of reconstructing Louis XIII’s childhood experiences and determining their formative significance, the situation is unique, given the fact that the journal of his personal physician, Jean Héroard, has been preserved; the doctor kept this journal from the day the future king was born until his twenty-sixth year of life.³² It is a series of thick volumes in which the doctor, with meticulous accuracy, recorded – on a nearly daily basis – the boy’s every physiological and emotional behavior and reaction, along with details about

30 Ibid., xv-xvi. In this context, Marvick listed such various authors as Donald Winnicott, Phyllis Greenacre, René Spitz, Margaret Mahler, and Anna Freud as her main sources of inspiration. She emphasized the “sensitivity to empirical data” inherent in the work all these researchers, which she contrasted with the “tendency to speculate” that characterizes (in her view) Melania Klein or Heinz Kohut’s process for constructing theory.

31 Ibid., 2.

32 The original records are missing for the first three years, and while studying this period, Marvick used an abbreviated (but still 4-volume) copy of the original journal. See P. Elovitz, B. Lenz, “Elizabeth Wirth Marvick: Half a Century of Childhood,” 30.

the care given to the young royal. Héroard took note of the content of Louis's dreams and of his conversations (including to whom he spoke and under what circumstances). He described what associations Louis exhibited (including gestures, facial expressions, etc.), the games he played, and the content of the instruction he received. As a result, these journal records capture the process by which specific behavior patterns and emotional attitudes toward specific people were formed in Louis and the circumstances that initiated and perpetuated them.³³ The author was well aware of the uniqueness of this opportunity: Marvick writes:

No ruler's (and probably no individual's) childhood has been chronicled with such care and completeness as his. This gives the historian a resource the psychoanalyst rarely enjoys. The process of psychoanalytic discovery, like archeology, usually strives to bring the long-buried and mutilated relic of infantile feelings to the light of day and to reconstruct from such fragments some idea of the original experience of a living patient. But in the exceptional case of Louis XIII, the record is more nearly complete for the early years of life than for the later, and we can follow in detail the formation of the adult king's mental life from its beginnings in the experience of the neonate. When Louis is unaware at a conscious level of the roots of his behavior, the reader can reach into the past, as it were, to supply what has been forgotten by the subject himself. Since the events of this king's long and momentous reign are also abundantly and reliably reported, no leader's early history seems to offer a better foundation for examining the relationship between personality and political decision making.³⁴

33 "We have, for example, the testimony of several persons that Louis ceased to show feelings of rage toward his father on several occasions where he had shown it before and instead showed signs of fear and apathy – or presented symptoms such as stuttering or an upset stomach. We can observe how patterns of such responses change over periods of weeks, months, and years; and the inferences that are made about the interconnection of outside stimuli, outward responses, and inner states can be evaluated for their meaningfulness and on the evidence for them." E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*, xiv-xv.

34 *Ibid.*, 2. The value of Héroard's records for E. W. Marvick's psychohistorical investigations were accurately expressed by Jacques Szaluta: "Whereas the dynamic meaning of this diary has been largely neglected by historians, Marvick uses it to explain Louis' socialization; another historian, not untypically, dismissed the detailed diary because it consisted of volumes 'in which you will find nothing except that at what time he (Louis) awakened, breakfasted, spat, pissed, crapped, etc.' But for psychohistorian Marvick, this information is grist for the mill." J. Szaluta: *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 201.

The directive to search for the earliest possible signs of given mental properties, along with the early childhood formative experiences determining them, seems to reveal the author's "originological"³⁵ attitude. However, the specificity of the source material leads her to believe that an attempt to empirically (almost "directly") trace the chain of relationships between these early childhood influences and the adult's character – a chain that psychohistorical childhood researchers usually establish mainly or exclusively on the basis of psychoanalytic theory – becomes feasible.³⁶ Héroard's records offered Marvick the opportunity to study "intermediate links" and their modifying or reinforcing interaction simultaneously on several planes: external influences affecting the boy's body and psyche, his outward-directed behavioral and emotional reactions, and internal mental processes revealed by Louis's various psychosomatic symptoms, by associations present in his utterances, and by the content of his dreams. Marvick attempted to identify the bonds that little Louis established with the objects surrounding him, in an attempt to show that the features that characterize these relationships in the early stages of the child's development were "reproduced in a more complex way" at all subsequent stages of his life and in relation to an increasingly rich and more diverse set of people and phenomena. In other words, Marvick tried to prove that indeed the "little" Louis that emerges from the pages of Héroard's journal is the "father" of the "adult" Louis.

At the same time, Marvick attempted to show that the fundamental methodological properties of her study do not differ from those characterizing all historical scholarship.³⁷ "This work," she pointed out, "is not presented as 'psychohistory'; it is history – an account of what happened in one important public figure's life from birth to adolescence. No principle should distinguish good method in writing such an account from good method in writing the history of an institution, a group, or an aspect of culture." In her view, investigations into Louis's childhood are comparable to writing the history of a political institution:

Just as a history of ... the British Parliament may describe how, through time, changes in the interior arrangements of that body interacted with the exterior setting – with king and country, for example – so the inner life of our present subject, a dauphin who

35 For more on this, see Part II above.

36 In this context, see John P. Demos's comments on the methodology of childhood history cited in Part II above.

37 Defined rather traditionally: "Any history consists of statements of fact ... supported by the preponderance of reliable evidence." *Ibid.*, xiv.

became king of France, was changed through time by what was done to him by others. What he did in turn affected those others and the world beyond.

The basis for such statements is the belief that the mental phenomena that her work addresses have (as the subject of cognition) an ontological status that is similar to “classical” historical facts, and that they should be studied in the same way.³⁸

The narrative of the work – which is no doubt a result of the abundance of source material – has the character of a “thick description” used not so much to *reconstruct* various seventeenth-century childrearing practices as such, but to *identify their effects* in relation to a particular child. Writing about various ways in which Louis’s body and psyche were handled (in terms of both emotional and cognitive processes), Marvick emphasized not only these treatments and techniques,³⁹ but how Louis might have experienced them and what kind of man he thus became.

Marvick followed each stage of Louis’s psychosexual development and examined each stage’s specific challenges and conflicts, though she focused primarily on identifying and analyzing those areas of the boy’s experience that – given his particular position (as the son of a king, a child living in the seventeenth century, one who had reduced contact with parents, who was subjected to

38 “Statements like ‘The King dismissed Parliament’ or ‘The dauphin was whipped’ usually refer to events sufficiently public for their veracity to be easily accepted. On the other hand, statements like ‘Many in Parliament despaired of the monarch’s adaptability to reality’ or ‘The dauphin repressed his rage at his father’s treatment’ refer to invisible feelings as well as visible responses. In these statements subjective events are inferred from what is reported or recorded [in the sources] to have been said or done by performers in the story. They are, nevertheless, statements of fact like the first kind” *Ibid.*

39 This does not mean, of course, that Marvick did not describe them in her work – quite the opposite; and the author often indicated that she was aware that the royal descendant’s unique position may have significantly influenced the exact nature of at least some of these practices. For example, she considered the importance of a specific constellation of maternal figures in little Louis’s life – the existence of a separate “good mother” (wet nurse) and “bad mother” (governess). Usually these are just certain mental images, a product of the splitting reaction of a child who is not yet able to integrate into one image the contradictory aspects of a complex real mother figure, though in this case they were real people (and yet separate from the biological mother): the gratifying wet nurse who remained under the boy’s complete command for years, and a punishing/disciplining governess. For more, see *ibid.*, 13–15 and *passim*.

certain culturally conditioned care and educational procedures, etc.) – turned out to have the most important formative significance for him.

Among these areas of experience, it was the sphere of autonomy that turned out to be most significant; adult Louis was a ruler who jealously guarded his royal prerogatives, and yet he was unable to make effective use of them without the help of favorites, above all Cardinal Richelieu. Marvick recognized Héroard's role as being particularly important here, because the doctor was ubiquitous in the prince's life, especially in the boy's first years, and because:

His physical contact with the baby was extensive and intimate. ... He monitored and controlled, as far as he could, the baby's intake of food and output of waste. In these months too he frequently prescribed and administered lotions, potions, unguents, compresses, and – regularly – suppositories. It was as though Louis's body belonged to him. In addition to dominating and manipulating Louis's physical process – functions sometimes fulfilled by a mother – Héroard mediated, as a mother does, between the maturing child's inner and outer worlds. Like a parent, he aimed to be protective or educational. He warded off dangers, real or imagined, to the dauphin's health and safety and instructed him on what precautionary measures to take.⁴⁰

Based on Héroard's journal entries, Marvick presents how "Louis's growing stubbornness coincided with a growing obduracy to intrusions from Héroard." Héroard interpreted the child's malice, stubbornness and caprices (according to the consistent testimony of others, Louis was a true *enfant terrible*) as being a result of the influence of "bad humors" (i.e. bad substances) inside the child, and he intensified the control of those digestive and excretory processes that he thought were tied to the removal of bad substances and to their replacement with good ones. His journal notes give us a view into an early – and, in the classic approach to psychoanalysis, key – field of battle, namely toilet training:

Louis often overtly resisted these adult attempts to toilet train him by refusing to give up, at the place and time desired, what others attempted to extract from him or by compelling them to accept his faeces when and where they did not wish to do so – defecating at inconvenient times or obliging others to clean him afterward.⁴¹ Less obviously, however, he expressed his obduracy to manipulation and intrusion into his digestive tract by developing traits and symptoms such as teeth gnashing, tongue chewing and biting, making staccato ("drum") sounds with his tongue against the palate or with other instruments, and stuttering to express the anal focus of conflicts going on inside him.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴¹ Marvick emphasized that Louis learned to use the potty only when he was 5½ years old, even though his intensive toilet training began at the end of his first year of life.

Marvick posits a cause-effect relationship here based not only on contemporary psychological literature, but also on a temporal correlation of phenomena in the child's life and associations and fantasies communicated by the boy himself.⁴² It is the presence of such associations that Marvick used to justify the thesis that the young Louis began to experience objects important to him much like he experienced the contents of his intestines, which remained the object of so much attention and so many treatments related to its retention or expulsion: "these [objects] then became parts of himself, to be treasured and cared for or expelled or cut off. Such objects were '*les siens*' (possessions), whether things or persons – property, servants, and kin – that belonged to him or owed him obedience."⁴³ The experience of a lack of autonomy and being subject to control in the physiological sphere – generally speaking – led to the underdevelopment of the child's sense of autonomy and to the formation of a lasting sense of anxiety. Marvick concludes:

It seems plausible that Héroard's exceptional assiduity in controlling the eating, digestion, and bowel movements of his young charge were connected with this anxiety over losing beloved possessions – not only persons but parts of his body and things inside and outside it.⁴⁴

The "originological" character of this reasoning is significantly weakened by the fact that Marvick was able not only to further document the constant presence of a given characterological feature in Louis's behavior and reactions,⁴⁵ but also to identify subsequent experiences that led to its consolidation in various spheres

42 For example, the first recorded (and immediately very strong) symptoms of stuttering occurred in the second year of life, two days after the first application of laxatives, and "on being reproved for gnashing his teeth, he [Louis] explained: 'It's because I want to make caca.'" See *ibid.*, 18–21 (quote on pp. 20–21).

43 *Ibid.*, 21. Of course, what is important here is not a literal association (although demonstrating its presence is a starting point in Marvick's psychoanalytical reasoning), but rather the recognition that a specific way of establishing relations with the world begins to take shape here, a certain – as Erikson put it – "social modality" referring to basic biological functions (and built upon them). See E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 51–113; E. H. Erikson, *The Completed Life Cycle*, 34–39.

44 E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*, 3.

45 On the one hand, repeated instances of opposition to the demands that "*les siens*" of one kind or another be "given away" and, on the other hand, numerous behaviors that could be interpreted as a sudden "abandonment" combined with complete withdrawal of emotional engagement. In addition, there are statements made by Louis himself in which he communicated relevant associations and symbolism.

of reference to reality. In this context, what played an important role was, for example, discipline techniques used on the boy which regularly referred to the ghosts and bogeymen who would take from the boy, “as a punishment,” toys and other objects, or even deprive him of various body parts. Contacts with the father often had a similar significance in that the father would force his son to behave in a certain way under the threat that something symbolic or real would be withdrawn (an object, a person from the royal environment, the father’s own love and attention). Finally, Marvick notes, Louis experienced almost the entire period of his nominal exercise of power (i.e., during the regency of his mother, Marie de Medici, before Louis came of age and a few more years after that, when real rule was still in the hands of her favorites) as a period of actual loss (or the threat of loss) of *les siens*: people from his personal court (starting with his sister, who was given over to Spain through marriage), friends, resources from the royal treasury squandered by the queen mother, even the monarch’s prerogatives taken over by Marie de Medici’s favorites.⁴⁶

Another important area of Louis’s experience which, according to Marvick, could be followed “developmentally” involved his psychosexual identity. The specificity of Louis’s experience in this area – Marvick argues – was determined in large part by his position as heir to the French throne and a member of a dynasty whose continuation depended on his procreative possibilities. The boy’s experience was marked, on the one hand, by “phallic grandiosity” and, on the other hand, by a permanent inability to develop a male identity modeled on his father. The former came as a result of an open interest at the court in his genitals (on a scale that would be shocking from today’s point of view), which led to the boy’s very early sexual stimulation. Various people took efforts to make the child aware of “what it was all about.” Little Louis had broad opportunities to study the anatomy of female children in his surroundings, and the genitals of adult women – his wet nurse, servants, and maids. He was witness to various behaviors of adults of a more or less explicitly erotic nature (sometimes they were directed at him⁴⁷), and by the age of three-and-a-half years – as Héroard meticulously described – Louis was able to imagine what intercourse with the Spanish infanta would be like. The material cited by Marvick is also intended to indicate that Louis had a wide range of emotional responses in this regard, in particular various forms of increased castration anxiety.⁴⁸

46 E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII, passim*, particularly chapters 3, 9 and 11–13.

47 The information provided by Héroard shows that these behaviors approached the border of sexual harassment – and sometimes even went over it.

48 E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*, chapter 3, *passim*.

Marvick located the source of Louis's problems with his male identity in his relations with his father, King Henry IV (who also played a significant role in the boy's early sexual stimulation, sometimes requiring him to accompany him in bed and participate in "games" with erotic overtones, and demonstrating to him in various ways the "strength" of his reproductive organ). According to Marvick's psychohistorical interpretation, a special model of father-son relations developed here, which according to Marvick "came to resemble a stormy love affair;" the king alternately demonstrated tenderness and violence toward his son, evoking in him warm feelings or rage, to which the father responded with further violence: "While Henri could on occasion blanch with pleasure at his son's infatuation with him ..., he could also oppose Louis's masculine assertions by variously teasing, deprecating, or physically maltreating him, often capriciously." There were dramatic confrontations in which:

Louis's self-assertion and rage were dangerous to himself. He finally controlled them only by turning them against himself, winning out in the end by deriving pleasure from a punishment he himself had commanded. Such a pattern became habitual. After this scene [one of the more drastic episodes of this kind that the doctor ever witnessed] Héroard noticed increased lassitude and passivity in the dauphin's behavior. The doctor writes that at the sight of Henri, Louis "no longer wears that bold, gay expression he used to have.

Marvick emphasizes that Héroard noted, increasingly often, various psychosomatic signs suggesting (to the psychoanalyst) the presence of suppressed rage and aggression, along with cases in which Louis vented such feelings onto surrogate objects.⁴⁹

Therefore, all attempts to emulate the father figure turned out to be futile and dangerous, the only safe strategy in relations with the king being a passive role as "papa's little valet." As Marvick points out:

The conscious aims of those at court, not least among them Henri and Héroard, were to encourage Louis's heterosexual interests and to foster in him a bold virility. But ... Henri was foremost among those who unintentionally encouraged the little boy to adopt a passive homosexual role. The danger of castration entailed in this role that Henri often implicitly offered Louis caused the child to react against it, repressing desires his father aroused in him. At the same time, too, the king provoked rage in the little boy. The rage was as dangerous as the desire. Freud writes that "the child's first years are governed by grandiose overestimations of his father. Kings and queens in dreams and fairy tales always represent, accordingly, the parents." How much more grandiose must have been the estimation of a father like Henri, a powerful and

49 Ibid., 34–37. See also endnote 76.

admired king who vaunted his genital superiority over his son at almost every opportunity and imposed fearsome sanctions for insubordination. And how dangerous the threat of losing such a father's support, perhaps leaving oneself open to surprise attacks of the kind already perpetrated by him and those in his service. ... Targets for the rage as well as for the forbidden love he inspired were better sought elsewhere.⁵⁰

As in the previous example, after recognizing the "beginnings" of a particular emotional constellation, Marvick attempted to show that, going forward, that constellation remained constant and revealed itself in various spheres of Louis's activity, "coloring" e.g. his relations with the Spanish infanta whom he married at the age of 14, and influencing his selection of significant male characters who became friends, confidants or favorites to the young heir to the throne, and later king.

Analyzing individual spheres of Louis's experience, Marvick strove both to present the direct, formative significance of traumas in the boy's life, and to identify areas in which he was able to creatively adapt to the emotional, social and cultural challenges faced by a child of royal blood.

An opportunity to study the influence of trauma – in the context of the above-mentioned problem of autonomy – arose at the very beginning of Louis's life. On his second day out of the womb, a surgical procedure was performed on his tongue as ordered by Héroard, who – though he had no experience with young children – believed that the baby was experiencing problems with proper sucking. "Recent research in comparable cases," Marvick writes, "suggests that flooding the neonatal sensory system with such a stimulus is likely to be a setback to normal development." By actively intervening in the process by which the child was fed, the doctor prevented the formation of a correct relationship between the baby and his first wet nurse, which led to a rapid deterioration in the boy's health and eventually to the need to find a new nursemaid. From the beginning, the doctor completely controlled the baby's excretory functions through the use of suppositories. Based on clinical literature, Marvick concludes:

Héroard's control through the rectum not only prevented the baby from gaining a sense of power over his own internal process; it probably also helped determine the importance of the anal zone as a later focus for the prince's relationship to the outside world. Such rectal intervention, at a stage when an infant first becomes aware of the

50 *Ibid.*, 43. We gain insight into the boy's feelings and attitudes toward his father especially through his dreams from this period, the content of which was recorded by Héroard.

boundaries of his body and develops his earliest sense of potency, can significantly alter the child's outlook on life.

Marvick finds here the origins of "the future king's morose pessimism, his sense that life lacked joy." Of course, it was not only these first experiences that determined Louis's particular character traits, but "there seems little reason to doubt that the more primitive the early sensations of pain and disappointment, the more pervasive they may be for later development, and the more likely to color reactions to later joys and sorrows."⁵¹

The trauma of the sudden loss of his father, who was murdered before Louis turned nine years old, had a similar significance:

Had Henri lived through Louis's adolescence, it is possible that conflicts in the son that impeded his development of feelings of autonomy and impaired his capacity to take pleasure in his adult role might have been worked through. Instead, Henri's sudden, violent death dramatically revived, without resolving, longings and fears in the eight-year-old prince that had earlier been so intense.⁵²

Beyond indicating the adverse impact of various traumas, Marvick attempted to provide a detailed diagnosis of the effects of various defense and adaptation mechanisms, including descriptions of the ways in which Louis "coped" with, among other things, the threatening influence of his father. Beyond the above-mentioned suppression or transfer of aggressive feelings onto surrogate objects, Marvick points to, for example, Louis's acting out of negative experiences, in which the boy remained a passive object. Louis thus treated, for example, his dogs, his attendants and other people whom he was able to manipulate at any given moment, in the same way that others treated him, or he played out toward them feelings and problems with which he struggled in real relations with his surroundings.⁵³ Here Marvick perceives the formation of a more general model of confronting reality, one which was later highly characteristic of Louis, which she defines using the term "mastery through activity." According to Marvick, Louis transformed his anxiety reactions into their active opposite – as was the case with the fear evoked by his father; his adaptive response led to the development of "aggressively warlike tastes" – i.e. such "male" interests as horse riding,

51 E. W. Marvick, *Louis XIII*, 12, 13, 3.

52 *Ibid.*, 4.

53 See *ibid.*, including pp. 46 and 70.

hunting and the art of war,⁵⁴ which later counted among his most important spheres of adult activity.

A notable example of Louis's creative adaptation to the reality of exercising power, one that Marvick examined extensively, is the process by which he internalized "royal virtues" – i.e. the qualities of a good ruler, the constant demonstration of which was supposed to also characterize his reign.⁵⁵ In discussing this issue, Marvick attempted to track the interaction between certain cultural factors (whose products were both the "virtues" themselves and the methods of instilling them in the future ruler) and the "mental equipment" that Louis took from his early childhood. "Of concern here is what meanings they [the so-called royal virtues] had for Louis himself, and how his own resources set limits on his capacity to achieve them."⁵⁶ The latter is visible in, among other things, the process by which "clear judgment" developed within the future ruler, who became known in later years for his suspicion, his secretiveness and, at the same time, his usually strong grasp of matters that confronted him as king.

From the very beginning, Louis' everyday life was marked by experiences in which he was cheated; disciplinary techniques used by those around him were often based on this reality. "Louis' frequent infantile disappointments," Marvick pointed out, "no doubt played a part in convincing him that others were likely to deceive him, expectations that were continually confirmed by daily experience. His suspicions were stimulated by the diffuseness of the dangers he was told were menacing him. As these multiplied, they became more fantastic and less credible." A modality established in another area proved helpful for a child seeking truth:

54 *Ibid.*, chapter 5. The author postulates the relationship between one and the other as follows: "Yet these new tastes and skills retained signs of their origins. He [Louis] increasingly made use of those props for which early inner conflicts [which previously existed in the context of manifestations of these conflicts, e.g. in his associations and dreams] had given him an affinity – drums and guns, certain animals and types of persons – and neglected or rejected others of less emotional value to him." *Ibid.*, 4. Marvick also cites many other cases in which Louis applied this strategy to various anxiety-ridden situations of lesser or greater importance both in early childhood and later.

55 In the light of the summaries provided by Marvick, the most important of them were: "piety," "justice," "integrity," "moderation," "courage," "clear judgment," and "compassion toward his subjects."

56 *Ibid.*, 92.

The prince's increasing reluctance to swallow stories resembled his hesitation to ingest new substances. Héroard supported his caution in both cases, encouraging him to seek good authority for statements of fact. ... For ... myths, as for foods, Louis developed a very sensitive stomach. In Héroard's words, "He noticed the slightest things," a critical faculty the doctor considered admirable. ... Information that Louis received critically or with suspicion he might store up for a long time, reflecting on it in silence. But there was always the danger that he would react explosively to news. Cautious ingestion, slow and finicky digestion, and prolonged retention, followed by sudden and violent expulsion, formed a pattern that others were to recognize as characteristic of the way in which Louis dealt with communications.⁵⁷

In turn, the influence of the strategy, discussed above, of "mastery through activity" significantly colored his perception of another important royal virtue, namely justice. Marvick wrote: "... like his piety, his sense of justice did not emphasize internal monitors; rather, it was a matter of performance – equitable administration of rewards and punishments." At the same time, young Louis' personal tendencies, demonstrated when he had the opportunity to practice the "dispensation of justice" in relation to e.g. his servants or pages, led him toward "sternness rather than mercy on most justiciable issues." The author indicates specific determinants of this attitude, including Héroard's active support in this regard and the influence of his ambivalent relations with his father: "Louis ... discovered that clemency, potentially in conflict with justice, was a virtue for which his father was particularly noted."⁵⁸

The chronologically ordered narrative of the subsequent years of Louis XIII's youth allowed Marvick to then demonstrate the durability of previously shaped features of the king's psyche. As the author herself believes, she was able "to follow the way in which the king's responses to public actors and events were linked to, and given meaning by, the vicissitudes of his early development." She emphasized that they "evoke in Louis sentiments whose origins in childhood can be identified with some confidence."⁵⁹ Within the framework of this part of Marvick's considerations, a particular event served as a kind of "test" for her previously established findings, namely the murder in April 1617 of the Marquis d'Ancre, a favorite of the queen mother, who had so far actually ruled the kingdom. Emphasizing that the murder of an inconvenient marquis without a trial and the exile of his mother under strict supervision to the provinces does not fit Louis's position as sovereign and steward of justice, Marvick wondered

57 *Ibid.*, 100, 101, 103.

58 *Ibid.*, 97–99.

59 *Ibid.*, 4–5.

what role Louis played in the murder, and suggested that the “light [that] has so far been thrown on Louis’s character should contribute something further to our understanding” of this event.⁶⁰

In Marvick’s view, the test was successful through her study of how Louis, having been “sidetracked,” experienced – in the emotional and cognitive dimension – the dozen or so months preceding the murder of the Marquis d’Ancre (by that time, the Marquis’s political position had reached its zenith; he almost literally took the place of the deceased king Henry). Marvick revealed the symptoms and reaction patterns known from his earlier years, e.g. feelings of suppressed rage manifesting themselves in dreams (according to Marvick, there were associations suggesting the unconscious process of identifying the Marquis with Louis’s late father) and acute psychosomatic symptoms, the culmination of which was the king’s serious illness. Based on distrust and suspicion, Louis’s cognitive pattern meant that he perceived actions taken by the queen mother (who was genuinely concerned about her son’s condition and who therefore attempted, among other things, to dismiss his current doctor, i.e. Héroard) as being motivated by bad will and as threatening his health and life. He perceived many other events at the court in similar ways. When he assumed power, his view (only partly justified) was that his mother and the Marquis d’Ancre were depriving him of the *les siens* due to him: they removed from his environment persons whom Louis trusted, and took decisive political actions on behalf of the Crown without taking into account the opinion of the king himself – “Thus Louis’s growing mistrust of his mother’s motives toward him could find reinforcement from his ... fear and hatred of Ancre, and his suspicions of the new government leadership.”⁶¹ Marvick shows how even the nuances of the Marquis’s behavior caused the king (always sensitive to “details”) to continue to develop feelings of anxiety, rage and anger, which – we will recall – he had learned to control through action.

The concrete explanation that Marvick proposes for the king’s decisions regarding this conspiracy and murder is basically rational; ultimately, the ruler acted based on his knowledge of the situation within the court, which was threatening his position, and according to his professed values. However – and here is foundation of her reasoning – it was his way of relating to the world and his patterns of emotional response (both of which were derived from his

60 Ibid., 186.

61 Ibid., 183.

experiences in childhood) that influenced his actions, determined the content of his knowledge, and gave shape to the order of his values; that is, they turned participation in the plot and preparation for the murder of the Marquis into Louis's most appropriate "option" in this situation.⁶² In other words, the psychological factor – the king's personality as reconstructed by the psychohistorian – became a basic element of explanation. Without an understanding of this factor, Louis XIII's conduct before, during, and after the assassination would prove incomprehensible.⁶³

Examining Marvick's work, one gets the impression that it is a piece of traditional historical scholarship that (almost in the style of Leopold von Ranke) "tells it how it (really) was." Such an impression is created by the "factographical" and largely chronological narrative in *Louis XIII*. Given the versatility and ubiquity of "direct" evidence on Louis's physiological, behavioral and emotional responses to various situations and experiences, the reader hardly notices the use of psychoanalytical interpretation in constructing the image of Louis's psyche, despite the presence in the text of clinical concepts. Therefore, perhaps, one of the reasons for the book's obvious success is the fact that Marvick was able to "mask" the fundamental role played by psychoanalytic theory in psychohistorical studies of childhood (with which historians have so often been unable to reconcile themselves) with empirical data, which seemingly "speaks for itself" in the text. That having been said, for Marvick, theory remained crucial. Even when the empirical evidence is rich, it is theory that allows the scholar to view the available data in a certain way, to tie it into a significant configuration so that, based on what can be observed, we can deduce what cannot be observed.

62 *Ibid.*, chapters 13, 14 and *passim*.

63 Of course, on a deeper psychological level such an act also had to have significant meaning for the king, irreducible to the requirements of the current political situation. It is worth quoting the interpretation suggested here by Marvick: "Few youths can have had the opportunity to participate in the destruction of a man who was felt to have usurped a murdered father's position. Fifteen-year-old Louis had this opportunity, and took it. The assassination of the maréchal d'Ancre, Marie de Medici's powerful counselor, seems to have helped Louis to discharge, without guilt, the anger he still felt toward his dead father against a man who almost certainly represented that father in his unconscious mind." *Ibid.*, 5.

A Beloved Symbol of the Nation: Wilhelm II and his Subject's Psychological Needs

Above, we discussed works by psychobiographers and historians of childhood who referred freely (“eclectically”) to the achievements of various schools of psychoanalytical thought. Thus, it is worth looking at a work based more consistently on a single theoretical perspective in psychoanalysis, namely Thomas A. Kohut's *Wilhelm II and the Germans*,⁶⁴ which was published in 1991 and thus belongs to recent works exemplifying the more current achievements in psychohistorical writing. At the same time, Kohut is one of those relatively few representatives of the younger generation of psychohistorians who was able to secure for himself a serious professional position *among* historians just as psychohistory's influence in academic history was declining (which is reflected in, among other things, his position as professor at a good college and his publications in prestigious historical periodicals).⁶⁵ Peter Loewenberg emphasized the virtues of *Wilhelm II*, claiming that it is “a study in German national fantasy, symbolism, and policy”⁶⁶ and in fact could be used to demonstrate the methodological properties of an important inquiry model being developed in the area of group psychohistory. It is a study of leadership in which the main subject of inquiry is the relationship between a leader and the broader community of his supporters. The issues of the personal experiences, decisions and actions of a given individual (i.e. leader) stand out more clearly in relation to “context” – i.e. other elements of the historical process in which that individual was entangled. In this case, the subject of the author's considerations was a political leader, a German emperor, and German society during his reign. This topic implied, in particular, the need to consider – in light of the author's chosen variant of depth psychology – the way in which this leader's personality “meshed” with contemporary events and expectations in terms of the exercise of power, the formulation of a political program, and the development of ideology.

Therefore, the author warned readers at the outset that: “The purpose of this book is to explicate the historical significance of Wilhelm II's personality, to

64 Th. A. Kohut, *Wilhelm II and the Germans*.

65 In this context see Th. A. Kohut, “The Impact of Psychoanalytic Training on My Work as a Historian,” *Clio's Psyche* 4 (1997), no. 2: 44–46. In addition, Kohut is actively involved in maintaining and developing the bond between psychohistory and academic history; I mentioned his arguments in this regard several times above.

66 Quote from the fourth page of the book's dust jacket.

define the impact of that personality on the Germans and the impact of the Germans on that personality.”

Hence the work’s “two-part” structure. The first part shows how Wilhelm’s personality traits were shaped by the history of his childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, and also by the “historical forces of the time” – for these influenced his personal history. Kohut called this process the “politicization of personality,” which came as a result of the fact that the Kaiser’s early years were marked by certain “crucial personal issues” having to do with “Wilhelm’s interaction with his parents and the others who influenced his psychological development.” In the second part, Kohut dealt with the “personalization of politics” in Wilhelmine Germany, presenting how and why, “despite Wilhelm’s political incompetence,” Wilhelm II was able to function as the symbolic leader of Germany – i.e. the “emotional and spiritual personification of the German nation and the German people, giving exalted expression to national ideals and popular aspirations.”⁶⁷

In general, emphasizing that the psychoanalytic model remains most appropriate for exploring the psychological dimension of history,⁶⁸ Kohut proceeds to programmatically choose one of the many theoretical “options” available here:

The present investigation has been informed by various psychoanalytic models ... Nevertheless, the most important theoretical influence on this study ... has been the psychology of the self. This psychological approach to narcissism helps explain the impact of history on the Kaiser’s personality and the impact of his personality on history. With the aid of this kind of model, it becomes possible to reconcile Wilhelm’s insubstantiality and his grandeur, his political ineffectuality and his symbolic appeal.⁶⁹

In this light, I will try to determine what functions theory actually performs in (1) the study of Wilhelm II’s personality and (2) the study of his relations with the masses of subjects.

67 Th. A. Kohut, *Wilhelm II and the Germans*, 3–5.

68 In addition to recalling, in this context, the standard arguments made by supporters of psychoanalytical history (which I analyzed in previous parts of this book), Kohut notes that the thesis regarding the decisive impact of childhood experiences seems particularly relevant in the case of the personality of this future ruler; as a member of ruling dynasty, Wilhelm was raised in a special, isolated world, and the consequences of these early influences could thus not have been modified by the kind of later life experiences particular to “ordinary” people.

69 *Ibid.*, 7.

Kohut did not intend to carry out the kind of psychoanalytical “diagnostic” that characterizes many works in applied psychoanalysis or even “proper” psychohistory. Hence, Kohut emphasizes above all that:

Theory cannot substitute for traditional historical understanding and explanation. There is no place here for psychological theories that are used to substitute for historical evidence, no place for theories – supported by contemporary evidence – that are used to prove historical interpretations. The interpretations advanced here ... must stand on their own and must be convincing on the basis of evidence from the past. ... It is hoped, however, that ... readers will simply keep the model of self psychology in the back of their minds where it can facilitate a thoroughly historical understanding of Wilhelm II and the Germans.⁷⁰

Admittedly, Kohut in fact tried to avoid “projecting” a contemporarily developed theory (i.e. self psychology) onto historical material. Thus, the starting point for his considerations were Wilhelm’s personality characteristics as derived directly from documented accounts provided by the Emperor’s contemporaries,⁷¹ who described his specific behavioral patterns and emotional responses in various circumstances, and who often proposed interpretations which were formulated in colloquial psychology but which – Kohut emphasized – were very often penetrating and “compatible with the formulations of self psychology.” Kohut’s initial hypothetical model of the Emperor’s psyche was thus created with minimal psychological theory, which “intervenes” more clearly only in the next stage of Kohut’s study in order to better systematize data and deepen its meaning. In particular, theory offers the psychohistorian a personality model that could correspond to the psyche of the character under examination, and then suggests what traits should characterize parental behavior such that it proves formative for a personality of a given type. In this connection, Kohut writes:

If the parents provide appropriately empathic care, if they allow themselves to be idealized by the child, if they are able to respond to the child’s grandiose exhibitionism with affirming and mirroring pride, and if, at the same time, they provide “optimal frustration” of these idealizing and exhibitionistic needs, the child develops a cohesive and well-integrated self, able to deal effectively with narcissistic tension and life’s inevitable setbacks and disappointments As the child gradually and gently becomes aware of the limitations on his power and perfection, his grandiosity matures into healthy self-esteem and realistic expectations.

70 *Ibid.*, 15.

71 The introduction to Kohut’s book (especially pp. 9–14) contains an entire collection of such statements made by Wilhelm’s closest associates, his friends, various people associated with the imperial court, etc.

However, Kohut adds that if parents do not provide any of the above-mentioned items, then:

The individual does not develop a strong and cohesive self. His ideals and ambitions are not fully internalized and integrated in the self ... Therefore, the narcissistically disturbed adult continues to experience other people as primitive selfobjects;⁷² ... he continues to crave relationships with others in order to make up for defects in his self. ... the individual's infantile grandiosity does not gradually mature into healthy self-esteem. He remains childishly exhibitionistic, vulnerable to real or imagined slights and rejections, to which he responds with shamefaced withdrawal and depression or with outbursts of rage. He craves selfobject relationships with those who will affirm and mirror his grandiosity, who through their praise and admiration can supply the esteem externally he lacks within himself. ... the individual's infantile idealizations do not gradually mature into a well-integrated set of guiding ideals. Instead, he remains unstable and insecure and craves selfobject relationships with those in whom he can find the external strength and security he lacks within himself.⁷³

Thus, theory functions as a heuristic tool: by organizing the research field, it offers directives regarding what research questions to ask, what issues to explore, and what kind of source testimonies to look for when attempting to explain the origins of a given personality. Noteworthy, the self psychology concept used here prompts the scholar not so much to search for specific and concrete early childhood traumas, but to pursue a sequential analysis of the significance of the *overall* relationship between the examined individual and his parents and other significant people from an early age through early adulthood. Nor does it specify what particular behaviors these significant people would have to exhibit; it indicates only their possible psychological significance. To determine these behaviors, the historian must refer to the source data – that is, empirical material (documenting the behavior and emotional attitudes exhibited by these people and, in turn, changes that it caused – referring to Kohut's work – in Wilhelm). So, it is this material – not theory – that remains the basis of interpretation. We must also keep in mind that Kohut's interpretation of narcissism

72 That is as parts of oneself. According to self psychologists, the world experienced in this way dominates early childhood and should be gradually overcome in the course of normal development. It occurs in a parallel way in two variants: (1) one experiences oneself as part of the perfect and powerful parent; (2) one experiences the parent as an extension of oneself, i.e. a tool and, at the same time, a reflection of one's own power and perfection.

73 *Ibid.*, 8–9. Naturally, the alternative developmental possibilities presented here represent, in Kohut's understanding, only the two ends of a certain continuum that covers the diversity of people's real personalities.

requires no reference to clinical-like data such as free associations (or their substitutes); “classic” source information, more readily available, suffices here.⁷⁴

Thus, starting from the unfortunate circumstances of the future emperor’s birth (a very difficult birth which led to a permanent disability in the boy), Kohut analyzes the complicated attitude his mother, Princess Victoria (the oldest daughter of British Queen Victoria) had toward her firstborn son. He points out that the ideal Wilhelm was supposed to match was her father, Prince Albert: “Victoria’s choice of Prince Albert ... reflected more than her homesickness and idealization of her father. Prince Albert also seemed appropriate because he was a liberal Anglophile and a German prince. Wilhelm was to be like her father: a German devoted to England and to English institutions.”⁷⁵ The reverse of such high expectations was Victoria’s constant fears about her disabled child’s physical development, about his mental capacity, and about the quality of her own motherhood in general. Kohut meticulously documented the constant presence of contradictory feelings and emotions expressed in letters to her mother written almost every day. More importantly, he specifies violent leaps and fluctuations of emotion and feeling in the details (noted by sources) of Victoria’s behavior and how she related to her eldest son (and younger children). He eventually pointed out Victoria’s deep disappointment that Wilhelm lacked the physical and intellectual abilities to match her ideal man. Psychologically, to her it meant that she could not “reproduce” Prince Albert. Kohut claims that during Wilhelm’s childhood and most of his adolescence:

Victoria had not yet reconciled herself ... to the fact that her eldest son would not realize the dream of her life. Until well into the 1870s [when Wilhelm turned 18 years old], she continued to hope that he might achieve the “perfection” that was her father and to fear that he would not. ... The Albert of Victoria’s dreams never existed but had always been the romanticized image of the flawless man who had died at the height

74 It is worth quoting Kohut’s comment on the rules of confirmation that should be followed here, which the author included in one of his endnotes: “In a psychological investigation, a single piece of evidence cannot by itself prove a particular interpretation. Unfortunately, people are able to have very different, indeed contradictory, feelings at the same time. Therefore, the investigator must demonstrate the existence of tendencies or patterns.” Kohut made this remark in the context of his inquiry into whether Wilhelm’s mother had any positive feelings toward the child during infancy – the answer was *yes*, because Kohut finds expression of such feelings in “at least thirty-five letters” written by her and addressed to various people “during the first year of his life.” *Ibid.*, 32, endnote 11 (p. 258).

75 *Ibid.*, 31.

of her youthful idealization. That image became the standard by which the crown princess measured her son and herself, measured her success as a mother and as the daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Wilhelm's experiences in this regard helped "sculpt" his personality in a particular way:

For Wilhelm, his mother's exaggerated hopes and fears were a psychological legacy that he would have to deal with throughout his life. Wilhelm internalized his mother's confusion about him. Just as Victoria could change her opinion of her son in the space of a single sentence, Wilhelm's mood could change from elation to despair in a matter of seconds. Victoria's dream that her son could attain her image of perfection became Wilhelm's unrestrained grandiosity; Victoria's dismay at his failure to realize her dream became his underlying depression. The inconsistency of his mother's response to him became the inconsistency of Wilhelm's self, his inner disjointedness, his want of "rightly coordinated [internal] organization." Wilhelm's exquisite sensitivity to his environment as an adult was also a product of his mother's emotional unreliability. Seemingly trivial events, slight shifts in the way he was responded to, could affect Wilhelm profoundly. What an outside observer heard as tiny sounds were to the Kaiser deafening echoes of his mother's voice. ... Given the immanent memory of his mother's precipitous global shifts in attitude, given the ease with which the environment could exhilarate or devastate him, Wilhelm sought to adapt himself to his surroundings or to adapt them to him. The relationship with his hopeful and fearful and dissatisfied mother gave fractured shape to Wilhelm II's personality and left him with a sense of insecurity, anxiety, and self-doubt and a craving for the affirmation and reassurance that had been missing in his early life.⁷⁶

Another aspect of Wilhelm's relationship with his mother was no less formative, one that was tied to Victoria's "possessiveness," which – according to Kohut – resulted from her constant dependence on her parents, especially her mother (Queen Victoria). Despite her status as the wife of the heir to the throne of a great power with her own children and strong personality, thanks to which (according to the justified opinion of contemporaries) she dominated her husband, Victoria constantly needed her mother's emotional support and advice, which is revealed through the content of her extensive correspondence with the Queen. Victoria saw the reality of Germany around her through the eyes of an "Englishwoman" and, despite the growing reluctance of Germans, she stubbornly cultivated the values and patterns adopted from her parents in Windsor.⁷⁷ She attempted to duplicate that same model of relations with her

76 *Ibid.*, 46–47.

77 Kohut – it could not be otherwise! – also attempted to reveal the psychological dimension of these behaviors, which, after all, seriously complicated Victoria's situation in

own children, whom she experienced – Kohut documented – as a “reflection” or even a “part” of her own self, and she therefore tried to keep them in a state of childhood dependence. While examining Wilhelm’s subsequent years of growth, Kohut described his repeated efforts to establish some emotional separation from his mother, efforts which she almost always actively opposed and which – as indicated by her correspondence with the Queen and a few friendly representatives of the German aristocracy – were psychologically difficult for her to bear:

Wilhelm was only able to break away from his mother with difficulty. Indeed, Wilhelm’s emotional separation from Victoria occurred over a period of years ... and appears to have been accomplished in three steps: first, through his attachment to at least three older women; second, through his engagement and marriage to Dona [Princess Augusta Victoria, wife of the future emperor]; and third, through his sudden and violent rejection of his parents. ... In part because of her controlling personality, Victoria had been unable to allow her son to grow gradually apart from her, to take step by incremental step toward psychological independence, to internalize a sense of independent strength and initiative. As a result, what Wilhelm achieved through his rebellion against his mother was not true autonomy but rather diversification of his dependence. Still in need of guidance and support and yet fearing that he would again

her husband’s country, and in turn were associated with the emotional constellation of her own family in England. Here he offers two related interpretations:

- (1) “Victoria’s tenacious efforts to recreate England in Germany and duplicate the family of her parents in the family she was raising in Berlin become understandable psychologically as an attempt to end her painful separation from her childhood home. If she could reproduce her English home in Germany, she no longer need feel apart from it” (p. 26).
- (2) “Victoria’s sense of inadequacy manifested itself in relation to her mother. ... [Her] anxiety can be attributed to her sense that what she could achieve on her own would never prove satisfactory either to her mother or to herself. She anticipated that Queen Victoria would find her ‘exceedingly ugly and uninteresting,’ interpreted her mother’s expressions of concern as reproaches, and was convinced that because she and the family she was raising were not in England neither she nor her children could ever be as important to Queen Victoria as her English relatives. Her English family, her English home, her English motherland were all models of perfection she and Friedrich could never hope to equal in Germany. Therefore, to win her mother’s approval and make up for her inadequacy, Victoria sought to recreate in Berlin the environment of the English house and family that she experienced as perfectly protective and nurturant and to recreate in Prussia/Germany the political environment of England that had always been held up to her as ideal” (ibid.).

become enmeshed [in an undesirable dependence] and controlled, Wilhelm attached himself not to one but to a number of very different individuals.

The consequences that this would have for Wilhelm in the future were remarkable. Kohut noted:

Although he gained psychological support and some sense of independence, since he never relied on any one individual for very long, Wilhelm paid a price for this solution. On the one hand, the support he received was fragmentary; and, as he adapted himself to an ever-changing external environment, his inconsistency increased. On the other hand, his relationships were superficial and transitory, including even that with his wife. He flitted from one dependent relationship to the next, traveling from estate to estate, from town to town, from friend to friend.⁷⁸

Another element of Wilhelm's family constellation led in a similar direction, namely neglect on the part of his father (the Prussian-German successor to the throne, Prince Frederick), who also appeared to be dominated by his wife; he was guided by her opinions and sympathies in almost all matters (including politics), and he left in her hands all decisions regarding home, family, and children. This issue also illustrates well the fundamental phenomenon that Kohut called the "politicization" of the future emperor's personality which – as indicated by certain aspects of his parents' marriage – began "even before his conception." As contemporaries noted, and as Kohut tried to document, it was a marriage based on love. However:

Friedrich, given what England represented in Germany in the 1850s, implicitly turned away from the conservative, Prussian political philosophy of his father and from the more traditional German marriage of his parents by marrying an English princess with strongly held liberal political views and a forceful personality. By taking the political action [dynastic marriages always have a political dimension] of marrying a liberal English princess, Friedrich made a personal statement to his father. By taking the personal action of marrying Victoria, he made a political statement to the Prussians.⁷⁹

Similarly, the behavior of all those with whom young Wilhelm had contact, along with subsequent educational steps by the parents (such as the choice of a teacher who would be able to familiarize the boy with the bourgeois values close to the mother's heart) and their changing attitudes toward their son, had a more or less direct political dimension or meaning. An example of this is Kohut's interpretation of adolescent Wilhelm's failures with his father:

78 *Ibid.*, 56, 64.

79 *Ibid.*, 121.

Friedrich was devalued in Wilhelm's eyes because of Victoria's obvious domination of the family and of her husband and because of the denigration of Friedrich implicit in her political outlook. With her outspoken contempt for the Prussian military, the crown princess belittled the tradition that Friedrich embodied as the titular commander of Prussian forces in the wars of 1866 and 1870. By surrounding Friedrich with artists and intellectuals instead of army officers, she had transformed the hero of those glorious Prussian victories into a civilian. With her outspoken preference for English over German values, Victoria denigrated her German husband. ... Wilhelm was faced, then, with the task of becoming a Prussian man in the absence of sustained interaction with a strong and secure and admirable father, whose confident pride in himself, in his Prussian heritage and German identity, Wilhelm could internalize as his own securely consolidated masculine German self. Victoria's determined program of Anglicization had undermined Friedrich as an ideal after which Wilhelm could pattern himself in making the transition to manhood.⁸⁰

This situation led to a deepening separation between father and son. As Kohut notes, the latter was forced to build his identity in opposition to his parents' liberal and Anglophilic values and behavior patterns. In terms of court politics, this came as Wilhelm began establishing close ties with people in conservative militaristic circles around Chancellor Bismarck and the old Emperor Wilhelm I, all of whom became young Wilhelm's model father figures. In turn, the aged monarch's resulting preference for his grandson (Wilhelm) over his son (Friedrich) led to Friedrich's political marginalization. For example, as soon as Wilhelm officially entered adulthood, he was called upon to take part in various political and diplomatic missions that should have been the responsibility of his father, the official heir to the throne. Feeling that Wilhelm was a growing threat to his own position at the court (the political dimension), Friedrich reacted by further rejecting Wilhelm's behaviors and attitudes and sometimes even Wilhelm himself (the personal dimension). Ultimately, therefore, young Wilhelm's public rejection of his parents and their liberal ideals, along with his growing admiration of traditional Prussian values (the political dimension) should be understood, Kohut argues, as an attempt to resolve problems arising from Wilhelm's personal relationships with his parents.⁸¹

80 Ibid., 69.

81 Ibid., chapter 4, *passim*. Kohut also documented Wilhelm's numerous (and ultimately unsuccessful) attempts to "find" in his father, despite everything, the features of a Prussian-German man – the heroic model that young Wilhelm so persistently sought.

One of the many consequences of Wilhelm's developmental path was the problem of his own national self-determination. Born to an Englishwoman as the heir to the Prussian throne and the German imperial crown, he:

Had not been able to integrate his two national identities. Instead, he could only shift between the identity of his mother and the identity of his father. ... Nor was either identity established securely enough to dominate his personality completely. For his English self to dominate, it would have to overcome the entire pull of Wilhelm's environment that existed outside of his mother's orbit as well as the pull exerted by his future as King of Prussia and German Kaiser. Ultimately, it was impossible for Wilhelm to have been an Englishman on the German imperial throne. But, as a result of his father's absence, weakness, and domination by Victoria and her belittling of Friedrich's and his own Prussian identity, Wilhelm's German self was not firmly anchored either.⁸²

Finally, in his book's first part, Kohut – using selected concepts from self psychology as a heuristic tool (a model for the genesis of the narcissistically disturbed personality) – proposes an explanation as to why the “product” of a particular concurrence of Wilhelm II's life experience as a child and as an adolescent had to result in a personality with a “constant need for reassurance”⁸³ – i.e. unstable, internally incoherent, lacking a sense of security, sensitive to insults and rejections, and susceptible to the influence of others, whose affirmation maintained the future emperor's confidence and intensified his propensity for self-presentation (exhibitionism).

Now let us look at the role that theory plays in the second part of Kohut's book, in which the historian asks: What did Wilhelm II's leadership in Germany consist of? And why did he prove to be such an effective leader for so many years, i.e. one that remained recognized and accepted as a leader within numerous circles of German society?

As it turns out, self psychology provided Kohut with the conceptual foundations to build a model for the relationship between the Kaiser (with his personality's more durable properties along with specific emotions, decisions and actions), the German masses, and more broadly the overall external context of his activities. Kohut put thought into both elements of this relationship – that is, the leader himself and those who recognized his leadership. The first element was determined primarily by the properties of Wilhelm's psyche. As we have seen, Kohut described the origins and functioning of that psyche in terms

82 *Ibid.*, 73–74, 30.

83 *Ibid.*, 143–144.

of self psychology, which is why this theoretical model suggests what kind of relationships with people would characterize the emperor's activities in the public sphere during his adulthood, along with how he could experience these relationships and various other phenomena in the sphere of politics, economy, social life etc.

Therefore, the starting point of Kohut's argument is the claim that a disturbed individual with narcissistic tendencies develops self-object relationships with his environment (i.e. he experiences external objects as part of himself). Following the Kaiser's reaction to various public events, Kohut then documents the nature of his reference to both domestic and foreign reality. As for the latter, he states that:

His [Wilhelm's] fortunes and those of his country were indistinguishable for Wilhelm II. On the one hand, increases in the military or economic power of the Reich, expansions of Germany's diplomatic influence, even cultural or scientific advances, enhanced Wilhelm's self-esteem and self-confidence. International setbacks for Germany increased his anxiety and self-doubt. On the other hand, blows to Wilhelm's pride increased his sense of the vulnerability of the nation. And when he was more confident about himself, he felt confident about Germany's international status as well.⁸⁴

Such perception of the world lent specific features to the German emperor's policies, causing him to be unable to effectively exercise political leadership as traditionally understood, as the consistent implementation of a certain rationally-defined "raison d'état." By experiencing the country he led as part of himself, he personalized it as the subject of a political game. He perceived other countries involved in that game in a similar way. The model for his manner of cultivating politics was thus tied to his particular relationship with other people, as determined primarily by his own emotional needs. Kohut cites with approval the term "policy of feeling," which Wilhelm's own contemporaries used to describe the emperor's foreign policy. Kohut writes:

The Kaiser believed other leaders and especially other sovereigns to be politically decisive. He was convinced that their policies, like his own, were determined primarily by personal considerations. ... Consistent with his personalized view of politics, Wilhelm regarded countries as if they were living, breathing, and above all emotional individuals. From this perspective, policies were the organized expression of feeling, and it was the duty of the leader to pursue a course compatible not with the national interest but with the national character. ... It was the fundamental aim of Wilhelm II's foreign policy that the German Reich and the German Kaiser be treated with

84 *Ibid.*, 118.

“respect” and “as equals” by the other European powers, especially by Britain with its world empire. Despite the efforts of the Kaiser’s advisers to wrap it in the rational interest of the state, the realization of this essentially emotional objective underlay not only Wilhelm’s foreign policy but also, to a not insignificant degree, that of the Reich. ... it seems clear that Wilhelm’s personalization of politics contributed to the emotionally reactive conduct of the government during his reign. Certainly what frequently passed for foreign “policy” in Wilhelminian Germany can be attributed to the “touchiness” of the Kaiser and to the “touchiness” of his advisers and subjects, as they and he reacted to what were experienced as blows to the fragile honor of Kaiser and Reich. Wilhelm’s typical response to such “insults” was anger followed by the effort to restore the self-esteem of the Kaiser and country through some bold and dramatic action.⁸⁵

One could say that, by formulating such an interpretation, Kohut proposed a kind of “psychological supplement” to other explanations or interpretations present in the literature regarding what determined the Second Reich’s foreign policy.

While he remained highly sensitive to opinions, attacks and insults coming from abroad, Wilhelm – in Kohut’s view – was “vulnerable” in an identical way “to the responses of his subjects; their adulation increased his self-esteem; their reprobation reduced it.”⁸⁶ Thus, at all times while acting in the international or intra-German arena, the emperor felt that he was under the watchful eye of the German people. One of the more important consequences of this sensitivity was Wilhelm’s unprecedented interest (or rather preoccupation) with German public opinion, as expressed by the mass media, i.e. the press, an interest that was completely incomprehensible to advisers and politicians carried over from the Bismarck era. So, the emperor preferred to study the newspapers, writing hundreds of comments in the margins, rather than official reports and documents.⁸⁷ Kohut identifies the psychological significance of this phenomenon as follows:

The principle function of press and public opinion for Wilhelm was to offer the external affirmation he required to make up for the affirmation and approval he had never

85 Ibid., 149–153.

86 Ibid., 118.

87 In terms of international issues, this also meant, Kohut noted, a preoccupation with statements in the foreign press and public opinion in neighboring countries. Thus, for example, regarding Britain’s actions and political plans, or Britain’s response to actions taken by Germany or the Kaiser personally, what interested the German emperor at least as much as reports from his own ambassador in London were editorials in *The Times*.

received as a child. In relation to press and public opinion, the Kaiser was like an actor who derives little satisfaction from his performance until he hears the applause of the audience, who waits anxiously for the reviews of the critics, who only feels emotionally alive in the positive responses of others to him.

Therefore, Kohut concluded that the Kaiser was in fact “at the mercy of the Germans’ responses to him.”⁸⁸

This dependence had more than just an emotional dimension. Kohut writes:

Wilhelm generally relied on his environment to help him define his attitudes and direct his activities. It was difficult, perhaps impossible, for the Kaiser to develop a position of his own. Like iron filings which only assume a recognizable pattern in the presence of a magnetic field, Wilhelm formed his opinions in reaction to the opinions of others. At times the Kaiser simply adopted the views of those around him as his own. But even on those not infrequent occasions when he adopted a view diametrically opposed to that of the person with whom he was speaking, Wilhelm needed the structured position of another to which he could impulsively react in defining his

88 Th. A. Kohut, *Wilhelm II and the Germans*, 132–133. However, I do not want the reader to get the impression that Kohut, while focusing on revealing the hidden, emotional dimension of Wilhelm’s sensitivity to public opinion, completely negates the “overt” – political or rational – aspect of the matter. For example, Kohut points out the real need for governmental actors to take into account public opinion in the age of modern industrial (mass) society, of which the emperor (according to various statements by the emperor, cited by Kohut) undoubtedly realized: “Because the Kaiser believed that the modern leader’s actions must be based upon an appreciation of public opinion, it became one of his principal obligations to follow the press, both foreign and domestic. As a medium between ruler and subject, the press occupied a critical position, simultaneously influencing and reflecting public opinion.” *Ibid.*, 130. The point is that, in Kohut’s view, the matter had a “double bottom;” Wilhelm’s explicitly formulated beliefs on the subject were both a recognition of the actual state of affairs and a rationalization for a specific, hidden psychological need. The fact that the latter is more important would result from the narcissistic nature of Wilhelm II’s personality: “From his parents’ unpopularity and failure to achieve significant political influence, Wilhelm had learned the peril of disregarding public image. ... the successes he achieved in the 1880s were due in part to his sensitivity and accommodation to the popular mood. And yet, the importance that Wilhelm attached to public relations was not simply a product of his experience and awareness of the importance that press and public opinion had assumed in contemporary political life. His preoccupation with the ‘interests and wishes of the German people’ – often to the neglect of the interests of the state – was also a result of his vulnerability to popular responses to him. Because public opinion played such an important role in his personal life, Wilhelm appears to have naturally assumed that it played an equally important role in political affairs.” *Ibid.*, 131.

point of view. He did not have the capacity for solitary contemplation. The impulsiveness, the tactlessness, the indiscretion so lamented by his advisors were for Wilhelm a *psychological and intellectual necessity*.⁸⁹

This claim refers not only to Wilhelm's interaction with advisers and other persons with whom he came into direct contact. Kohut found such a reactive pattern of action and thinking – the consequence of previously identified personality traits, he argued – in practically every sphere of the emperor's activities. He could thus attempt to psychologically explain Wilhelm's special habits, such as the infamous "marginalia:"

The intense reactivity that characterized Wilhelm's conversations was also evident in the other principal ways the Kaiser developed and articulated his ideas: that is, in letters, telegrams, and marginal comments to reports and newspaper articles. ... Wilhelm felt compelled to respond immediately to the discussions he had had and to the reports, letters, and article he had read. It is significant in his context that so many of the Kaiser's telegrams and letters were essentially accounts of his conversations with others, his point of view only formulated in his descriptions of his own replies. But most often, Wilhelm made his positions known to his advisers by circulating newspaper clippings and government reports covered with marginal comments. As his court marshal for many years, Count Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler, recognized, these marginalia were a manifestation of Wilhelm's reactive personality.⁹⁰

Therefore, in Kohut's view, the narcissistic properties of Kaiser Wilhelm's psyche were clearly visible in all areas of his public activity. Wilhelm's search for sympathy, approval and support, his perception that all reactions – positive and negative – to matters of state were references to him personally, his problems with autonomy in judgment and action, etc., were thus a hidden, and at the same time key, psychological dimension of his leadership role in Germany. Why then, Kohut asks, did Germans accept such a leader?

In answering this basic research question about his work, Kohut points to those attitudes, moods, and emotions dominant in German society that served as an expression of the social, political, cultural and economic condition of the Second Reich, an empire that "was a very recent and, to a degree, even an artificial creation ... Germans found themselves in fundamental disagreement over their state and society."⁹¹ Therefore Kohut suggests that the broad masses

89 Ibid., 131–132. Author's emphasis – T. P.

90 Ibid., 132. Let us note that, as in the first part of his work, Kohut's starting point for interpretation is a colloquial interpretation offered by one of the Kaiser's contemporaries.

91 Ibid., 155.

of Germans experienced the surrounding reality as fragmented and full of contradictions, and he agrees with those historians (cited in Kohut's text) who emphasized that "lacking a tradition of nationhood, the Germans yearned for symbols to give concrete expression to the idea of the Reich." After examining statements made by public figures of the Wilhelmian era, opinions reflected in widely-read newspapers and in popular pamphlets and propaganda publications, Kohut made the following statement regarding the emotional dimension of the "mental reality" in which Reich citizens lived at the time:

Germans under the Kaiser ... exhibited the brash arrogance and the anxious insecurity of the recently wealthy and the suddenly powerful Lacking the self-assurance derived from a tradition of the responsible exercise of economic and military power, Wilhelmian Germany ... was uncertain of its position in the world, eager to assert its newly acquired wealth and power and yet "touchy," ever ready to see a denigration of its status in the slightest rebuff.⁹²

In short, Kohut described the existence in Wilhelmian Germany of a particular correlation between the ruler's incoherent personality, marked by sensitivity and a lack of confidence, and the general mood and psychological needs of the broad masses of his subjects. Interestingly, just as the emperor blurred the psychological border between himself and his country, the German people "can be described as having blurred the distinction between themselves and their Kaiser" Kohut writes and continues:

In an age of nationalism people define themselves to a greater or lesser degree in terms of the nation to which they belong. Thus, a nation's defeat or victory may be experienced with a sense of personal humiliation or exhilaration by its citizens even though that defeat or victory does not affect them directly. Defining themselves as part of that collective identity called Germany, Germans were emotionally invested in their country's fortunes and invested in the personal symbol of that collective identity. ... in other words, Wilhelm II was experienced by his subjects as an extension of themselves.⁹³

92 *Ibid.*, 166, 175. Kohut was aware of the speculative and hypothetical nature of such statements, which he expressed, e.g. when considering the issue of attitudes manifested by the Germans toward Wilhelm: "Generalizing about popular attitudes, feelings, and opinions is one of the historian's most important tasks, yet one invariably undertaken with misgiving. Needless to say, given present historical methods and the available evidence, it is impossible to determine the Germans' response to Wilhelm II precisely. ... Lacking quantitative measures of the popular mood, the historian is forced to rely upon the comments of contemporary observers to get a sense of what the Germans thought and felt ..." (note 43, p. 297).

93 *Ibid.*, 163.

Thus, when each side perceived the other as part of itself, they could meet each the other's psychological needs. Kohut's investigation into the ways in which Germany and Wilhelm were able to do this is, in my view, probably the most fascinating element of his entire study; here Kohut observed the phenomenon called the "personalization of politics," and what he found – he believed – is the answer to the question: what explains Wilhelm's success as German leader? Kohut indicated that the Kaiser's various forms of public activity, which in psychological terms allowed him to cope with his own emotional problems, simultaneously met the emotional needs of the broad masses of his subjects. A kind of feedback was involved here. Wilhelm obtained the gratification he expected and needed thanks to the positive reactions he received from his subjects, who could react in such a way because the emperor's actions met their own expectations and needs – i.e. those actions were also gratifying to them. The author offered two examples:

1. Wilhelm's ceremonial journeys, entrances and speeches.

For Kohut, it is psychologically significant that throughout his reign, Wilhelm II constantly traveled around the country, participating in hundreds of ceremonies in which monuments were unveiled, cornerstones were laid, public institutions opened, etc., where he usually gave speeches that were received enthusiastically by officials and gathered crowds. However, during these trips

The centerpiece ... was his ceremonial entrance into German villages, towns and cities ... the life of driven self-display relieved his sense of inadequacy. Entering a city at the head of a column of soldiers, the Kaiser could experience himself as a powerful and heroic ruler to whom adulation and homage are due; the cheering crowds lining the city streets confirmed him in that role.⁹⁴

In this way, the emperor gained the psychologically necessary affirmation and a (momentary) sense of internal coherence, but what did the Germans gain? As Kohut puts it, the Germans were to develop a "sense of national *Zusammengehörigkeit*" (national togetherness, belonging):

In the masses that gathered to welcome Wilhelm, individual distinctions and identities were submerged. Through the common ceremonial expression of enthusiasm for the personal symbol of the nation, Germans were to develop a national group identity bridging the regional, social, political, and religious divisions that so often kept them apart. ... As a figure continuously celebrated, Wilhelm became the cynosure of nationalistic strivings, the brilliant symbol of a proud, glorious, and united Germany.

94 Ibid., 164–165.

... The Kaiser's speeches, parades, maneuvers, and entrances were demonstrations of power designed less to make his subjects feel safe and secure than to overcome *Reichsverdrossenheit*, national malaise, by increasing the Germans' sense of national pride, power, and enthusiasm. The cheering crowds identified with the Hero-Kaiser. In their cheers for Wilhelm II, the Germans were also celebrating themselves, celebrating the dynamism, independence, and strength of the Reich.⁹⁵

2. The "policy of feeling" in the international sphere.

An emotional and reactive foreign policy, one that was full of momentum bordering on adventurism, corresponded to the psychological needs of a vulnerable German emperor who was insecure with his position. Exaggerated and heroic poses concealed an internal fear. At the same time, however, such gestures met the Germans' expectations; they reflected "the emotional needs of an immature, *nouveau riche* country, uncertain of its status and eager to show off its wealth and importance" Kohut writes:

The Krüger telegram, the campaign in China, the naval building program, the drive to become a *Weltmacht* were ... all expressions of the demand of this economically and militarily powerful yet internally divided and uncertain nation that it be recognized, appreciated, and respected. ... The program for the man had become fused with the program for the nation. It was hoped that the national voice of the Kaiser would submerge the discordant babble of German voices all speaking at once on behalf of their own narrow interests. ... In this fragmented country, in this recently and insecurely consolidated nation, the emotional goal that the voice of Germany, of the German Kaiser, be listened to throughout the world was perhaps the only goal that Germans could agree upon.⁹⁶

Kohut was not content simply with constructing a particular psychological interpretation, based on the psychology of narcissism, of the emperor's symbolic role or the relationship between Wilhelm and his subjects. Kohut also attempted to test the explanatory power of his concept in relation to one of the most widely discussed issues in German history at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, namely the construction of a high seas fleet that threatened Britain's naval hegemony and helped push Britain into the anti-German camp at a time of potential global conflict. In this connection, Kohut noted that the dominant position taken in the literature on the subject – according to which naval reinforcements were primarily a function of the Reich's internal

95 *Ibid.*, 165–167, 171–172.

96 *Ibid.*, 175–176.

political and economic problems (on the one hand, as an expression of a compromise between the interests of the ruling Junker elites and the leaders in big industry aspiring to influence, and – on the other – as a tool for maintaining social peace and gaining mass support for the prevailing order) – is not sufficiently supported by the evidence, and most importantly ignores the problem’s psychological dimension.⁹⁷ Kohut argues that the “perplexing” development of the German fleet “becomes readily intelligible if world politics are understood from the perspective of *Gefühlspolitik*, the Wilhelmian politics of feeling.”⁹⁸

Therefore, Kohut first asked what psychological significance naval matters could have had for Wilhelm, and he documented the psychological fact that, for him, warships were associated with strength and stability: “Like the military entourage, which enabled Wilhelm to merge with its masculine strength, ships, particularly naval vessels, increased his sense of security; like entering a town at the head of a column of soldiers, command of a naval flotilla increased his self-confidence.”

On the one hand, considering the Kaiser’s “personalization of politics” and his blurring of the psychological boundaries between himself and the Reich, and

Since ships were associated with power and stability, Germany’s lack of an imposing fleet became connected with insecurity and instability for the Kaiser. Without a mighty navy, Wilhelm’s authority and prestige were diminished and the Reich was exposed to hostile naval action and international humiliation. It is not surprising that when Wilhelm felt threatened or belittled he clamored for an increase in naval strength.

97 “In translating the domestic purpose of naval and world policy into the language of *Sammlungspolitik* [bringing together policy] and social imperialism, however, historians frequently use the words ‘cynical,’ ‘strategy,’ ‘self-interested,’ and ‘manipulation.’ The attitude suggested by these words does not reflect – indeed it distorts – the self-experience of the historical participants. Certainly Wilhelm II, almost certainly Bülow, and probably Tirpitz did not understand the domestic purpose of naval and world policy in these terms. Their support of *Weltpolitik* ... was based not on a cold-blooded assessment of the economic and political advantages they would derive from these policies or on a concern for their political, economic, or physical survival. ... The idea of using world and naval policy to increase national cohesion and social integration and to rally the Germans behind the monarchy was not a cynical strategy or a self-interested manipulation on the part of the leaders of Germany but derived from their most basic beliefs and values, from their understanding of history and of what made life worthwhile.” *Ibid.*, 197.

98 *Ibid.*, 177.

On the other hand:

As naval vessels increased Wilhelm's sense of strength, harmony, and cohesion, so he assumed that the construction of a powerful navy would increase the strength, harmony, and cohesion of the Reich. ... For Wilhelm, the "struggle for the fleet" was ennobling, sustaining, and integrative: bringing together North and South, Protestant and Catholic, capitalist and worker, aristocrat and farmer. The navy was modern and liberal; it served the economic interests of industry and to a degree the middle class as a whole The navy was authoritarian: it was the weapon of a conservative and militaristic state. The navy was imperialist: it was an instrument of colonial expansion. The navy was "*kaiserliche*:" it embodied monarchical-imperial power. As the integration of the Reich would be increased by focusing popular attention on the person of the Kaiser, Germans would be brought together in their support for the construction of this massive, mighty national symbol.⁹⁹

For Kohut the most significant was that Wilhelm pushed the idea of a fleet construction program not by lobbying parliament – i.e. "rationally" persuading party leaders and individual deputies to support it (key decisions regarding military financing lay with the Reichstag) – but rather, to the dismay of influential people in the ruling elite, through a propaganda campaign directed at the masses of Germans, the main themes of which revolved around the Reich's unity, strength, honor and international prestige; having a fleet would mean a significant strengthening of all these values. The emperor referred to the feelings and emotional needs of his subjects that he experienced within himself. According to Kohut, the fact that, in an extremely short period of time, he gained broad, effective support for the fleet program, which "swept aside" the initial resistance of politicians, "confirms:"

That Wilhelm and the Germans understood naval and world policy in essentially the same way. Less economic or political self-interest and more feelings of power and glory, purpose and pride inspired the enthusiasm for world and naval policy. Both the Kaiser and his subjects felt personally enhanced by the possession of a battle fleet that increased the power and prestige of the Reich to which they belonged and with which they identified. In their emotional response to naval and world policy and in their understanding of its emotional purpose, Wilhelm and the Germans had become indistinguishable from one another.¹⁰⁰

In other words, this confirms the claim that there was a fundamental correspondence between the needs of the emperor and those of his subjects, and that by solving problems arising from his own personality's narcissistic disorders,

99 Ibid., 178, 184.

100 Ibid., 193.

Wilhelm also solved, symbolically, the problems that haunted his subjects. At the same time, he gained – thanks to their approval – psychologically necessary gratification. And it was precisely for this reason that, by both tuning his actions to the psychological needs of the German people and expressing them in accordance with the needs of his own psyche, Wilhelm could remain an accepted leader, the symbolic embodiment of German power and glory.

It is worth emphasizing that, basically speaking, Kohut did not negate the usefulness of previous explanations regarding the fleet matter. He does not deny the significance of certain “real” determinants or effects of the fleet construction program, at least some of which were adequately perceived by contemporaries. That having been said, Kohut wanted to demonstrate that decisions made by people who formulated and implemented the program and by those who enthusiastically supported it, were equally influenced by issues of a mental nature, which we can grasp precisely by studying the psychological ties between the Kaiser and his subjects. Thus, Kohut’s work adds a psychological dimension to interpretations previously developed by other historians.

Kohut justified his examination of the psychological dimension of Wilhelm’s decision to push a naval armaments program by the fact that, in his view, it is thus possible to reveal the political consequences of another fundamental aspect of the Emperor’s psyche, namely the presence in his incoherent personality of incompatible German and English identities. Kohut showed that this was a pressing political and psychological problem for Wilhelm:

In England, he became an Englishman; in Germany, he became a German once again. As the two countries grew further apart politically, his inner disharmony can only have increased. On the other hand, he also found himself in a difficult political position. When ... his attitudes and actions were in tune with the Germans, he antagonized his English relatives and the English people whose affection and appreciation he craved. When ... his attitudes and actions were in tune with his English relatives and the English people, he antagonized the Germans whose support he required for his political and psychological survival. ... Unable to deny either aspect of himself for long, requiring positive responses from both the English and the Germans, and yet experiencing severe personal and political tension as a result, the Kaiser was confronted with a dilemma: how to harmonize these two parts of himself and achieve the reconciliation of these two countries and peoples to whom he was so attached and on whom he was so dependent.¹⁰¹

Hence, Kohut argues, the creation of the fleet can be understood “in part” as an attempt to solve this dilemma, much like the Kaiser’s mother, Princess Victoria, who in her time tried to cope with her longing for mother England

101 Ibid., 207–208.

through an attempt to “recreate” it in Germany: Wilhelm sought to “Anglicize the Germans by awakening in them a naval passion” and to “recreate the Royal Navy in the German fleet.”¹⁰² This would render futile any attempt to stop the naval arms race: Wilhelm, who had a significant personal influence on maritime policy, regarded these attempts not only as “offensive”, “insulting” and “humiliating,” but also as depriving him of the only tool by which he believed he could reconcile Germany and Great Britain and resolve his fundamental personal and political dilemma.¹⁰³

“Whereas Victoria’s dream of Anglo-German friendship had been dashed,” Kohut recapitulates with irony, “in part because she failed in her campaign to Anglicize Germany, Wilhelm’s dream of Anglo-German friendship was dashed in part because his campaign to Anglicize Germany succeeded only too well.”¹⁰⁴

As we can see, the psychological theory that Kohut employed in the second part of his work led him to no new and previously unknown facts. Nor did it lead him to new source materials. Kohut pivoted around a series of testimonies and data already known and used by historians which constitute the “traditional” empirical basis of historical scholarship. However, Kohut viewed these materials in a different configuration from those previously identified. In other words, theory sensitized Kohut to a new and different network of relationships between already well-documented phenomena. This network, Kohut argued, existed alongside the others. In this sense, by referring to psychoanalytic self psychology, he “supplemented” the image we have of Wilhelm II and Wilhelminian Germany with an additional dimension containing the leader’s personality and his psychological bond with the German masses.

102 To support this claim, Kohut presented a noteworthy list of similarities, drawn up by Wilhelm (often personally), between the rules and practices followed by the German fleet and those followed by its British “prototype.”

103 The fact that Wilhelm genuinely believed, subjectively, that a German fleet would lead to a German-British agreement, and not a conflict, is documented by his many statements and emotional reactions to opposing views. Kohut also eagerly noted statements made by German politicians and others surrounding the Kaiser that confirm that this was his belief.

104 *Ibid.*, 210–211.

Conclusions

The empirical material having been analyzed, it is now time for conclusions to be drawn from my examination of the history of psychohistory and its methodological thought and research practice.

The analyses conducted in the above parts seem to lead to the conclusion that the psychohistorical community should indeed be treated as paradigmatic, because it is clearly guided by a defined worldview. The postulated reality of psychoanalysis (its different variants are accepted by the overwhelming majority of psychohistorians) is a fundamental, unifying force within psychohistory on the key level of ontology (its vision of the world and man). At the same time, on other levels of psychohistory's social-methodological consciousness, one can undoubtedly speak of a sometimes far-reaching differentiation in terms of respected methodological directives focused on the application of theory, procedures for checking and verifying, and the use of source material. Questions involving psychohistory's ideal of scholarship were (and remain) objects of dispute as well. These matters have been observable in terms of methodological thought and the psychohistorian's methodological experience and on the level of applied methodology present in the paradigm's specific research practices. At the same time, they were reflected in "splits" within the community that were sometimes visible to the "naked eye."

However, this diversity has its limits. Almost all "options" – both those that were a matter of discussion and those that were put into practice – remained within the universe of psychoanalysis; in other words, they were generated by the perception of reality derived from depth psychology. Therefore, methodological diversity masks the unity that exists on the more fundamental level of world view.

In its time, psychohistory was one of the most promising trends in contemporary historical scholarship. However, it was not able to reach the level of success that many other research fields achieved in the wake of the academic revolution in twentieth-century, such as the "Annales" school, cliometrics, historical sociology, microhistory, and gender history. Thus, it is impossible for us not to ask why this happened. Questions of this kind are often answered in terms of the "internal logic of development" within psychohistory. The reasons for psychohistory's successes and failures, its "ups and downs" are then sought in the dynamics of how its theoretical and methodological assumptions developed, and in the properties of its research practice. Attempts are then made to

identify its strengths and weaknesses. Looking at psychohistory in this way, it would be difficult, for example, to negate its cognitive fruitfulness, its ability to generate new issues to be addressed within broader historical scholarship. In terms of biographical writing, psychohistory put forth a remarkable model for conceptualizing and studying phenomena belonging to the sphere of feelings and emotions, whether conscious or not – and therefore all those that make up the “psychological dimension” of the life and activity of an examined historical figure – with regard to that figure’s personality, the existing circumstances of his/her activity, including the broader socio-cultural context. The effects of such efforts are also visible outside of psychohistory. After all, scholars who write biographies today no longer limit their narrative to a “simple” description of the protagonist’s life or to providing only the “rational” premises for his/her decisions and actions. The situation is similar in studies of mass phenomena. The psychological effects of experiences affecting entire communities, the ideas, emotions, and desires that concern (overtly or otherwise) a group, the psychological aspects of decision-making processes within groups of leaders – all of these are just some of the important issues that psychohistory introduced into the broader discourse of academic history. Perhaps the most striking example here is childhood history. In fact, psychohistorians were the precursors of this entire field of research, one that is very much alive today, especially in terms of the examination of childhood and its historical significance.

By constructing new and important problem areas, supporters of psychohistory also demonstrated an ability to construct a source base necessary to penetrate those areas. The examples cited above demonstrate, I believe, the richness and diversity of materials from the past that psychohistorians recovered from academic “non-existence.” By formulating questions different than those asked by other historians, psychohistorians were also able to make use of previously known but “used up” sources in new and creative ways, thus revealing the considerable cognitive possibilities for those who would take up the challenge of studying the subjective dimension of history.

The psychoanalysis-based theoretical background of psychohistory obviously played a decisive role in these successes. It provided the intellectual “tools” to conceptualize the issues under examination, the assumptions behind research questions, research strategies, and patterns of explanation and interpretation. Psychohistorians made several serious concrete achievements in historical scholarship (some of which were also appreciated “outside” of the psychohistorical community), but – as I have emphasized several times – they were, as a group, unable to work out a relatively uniform methodology. Ultimately, this turned out to be one of psychohistory’s greatest weaknesses. The disputes that

divided the community significantly reduced psychohistorians' ability to *persuade* historians of a different stripe about the value of their approach. For how could the latter accept a research field whose representatives were still arguing about fundamental questions of theory and method? Psychohistorians were unable to fully convince their fellow historians about, for example, their use of theory in psychohistory's actual research practice, and they were unable to fully allay fears about the ability of psychohistorians to properly take into account cultural context, to avoid unjustified reductionism, psychological determinism, and a too-narrow focus on the pathological. All of this significantly limited the possibilities for psychohistory to flourish within academic history.

Another significant weakness of psychohistory was its inability to take root in universities. The psychohistorical and psychoanalytical discussion-research groups of the 1970s, marked by their impressive spontaneity and dynamism, barely "translated" into more durable institutional solutions that could provide a stronger foundation for training and professional careers for psychohistorians. Deprived of a strong organizational and financial base, psychohistorians remained "at the mercy" of changing academic fashions and trends.

As Bruce Mazlish noted, within the psychohistorical community there was an insufficient "accumulation of research achievement" on particular concrete historical topics; a psychohistorian's scholarly contribution to a given historical issue rarely triggered the kind of further research into that issue on the part of fellow psychohistorians that would result in cognitive progress. Without this kind of accumulative contribution, the lonely ("heretical") voice was usually ignored by non-psychohistorians who specialized in the issue at hand and who were usually the ones who decided on the dynamics by which scholarship would move forward.¹ Thus, psychohistorical insights did not gain sufficient "weight" and influence to impact those dynamics. Here, psychohistory's paradigmatic

1 Mazlish wrote about a "lack of cumulative power of work in the field, a kind of dead end built into the very practice of psychohistory itself. ... In most historical work, a subject is taken up by a number of historians, who work it back and forth. ... Interpretations ... give rise to other interpretations, and the bringing to bear of new evidence as well as theory. ... Contrast this with what takes place in psychohistory. Erikson publishes a book on Luther or Gandhi. His work is not followed up by Luther or Gandhi scholars, except perhaps by a passing reference. ... And almost all psychohistorians, not being Luther or Gandhi scholars, can hardly engage with it on other than the most theoretical, psychoanalytic terms." B. Mazlish, "The Past and Future of Psychohistory," *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 31 (2003): 254–255.

distinctiveness, which is often conceptually incompatible with interpretations developed by other researchers, “took revenge.”

A more complete examination of the reasons why the field of psychohistory had this particular fate, and not another fate, requires taking into account the “external” context of its formation and development.

My deliberations in this book lead me to argue that, in my judgment at least, we should view the history of psychohistory primarily in terms of a process (at least an attempted process) by which this community “took root” in the “soil” of academic historical scholarship. At its inception, this process coincided with the beginnings of the revolution in academic history in the United States, and therefore it was, for some time (from the late 1950s to the early 1970s), rather successful in an atmosphere of relative tolerance for experimentation in depth psychology. Psychohistorians could feel that they were part of a larger movement of renewal in historical writing, in which historians’ acceptance of the theoretical-methodological and conceptual achievements in economics, sociology, anthropology, and – last but not least – psychoanalysis and psychology, played such an important role. In subsequent years, the situation changed and (probably also due to the thoroughly visible increase in the paradigm’s importance and influence) its opponents became clearly active; resistance to psychohistory increased sharply. I tried to show the scale and intensity of that resistance by examining the polemics and debates that surrounded the paradigm. I showed that psychohistory was “under fire” from both influential supporters of the traditional model of historical scholarship and from many prominent representatives of new research trends in history. But this difficult situation did not discourage psychohistorians (apart from the significant exception of those in the “radical” camp) from strenuously indicating “in theory,” and demonstrating “in practice,” that the psychohistorical approach could meet the methodological standards of academic historical scholarship, or (to use wording that is perhaps less ambitious but more skillful and, at the same time, more accurate) that it simply shares the same basic difficulties and theoretical and methodological dilemmas faced by academic historians of any persuasion. The problem arose when scholars were asked what these standards would be like in the diverse and deeply pluralistic practice of contemporary historical research. In an attempt to please everyone, psychohistorians all too often satisfied no one, and attempts to take into account critics’ opinions only inflated the paradigm’s internal disputes and methodological dilemmas, weakening its internal cohesiveness. In turn, all of this provoked further criticism and attacks. In this regard, one can probably speak of an endless feedback loop. Ultimately, it would be difficult to decide conclusively which of the above-mentioned elements turned out to be the root

cause of psychohistory's difficulties, and which one was the secondary cause. But there can be no doubt that the hostile attitude of a large part of the academic-history establishment played a highly significant role here.²

Thus, despite the efforts of those outstanding psychohistorians who managed to "win" for themselves a serious position within academic history, the paradigm was unable to free itself from the unfavorable label of "heretical." Thus, as the fashion of exploring the psychological dimension of history declined, psychohistory began to experience marginalization both in the practice of historical scholarship and in university instruction.

It is difficult not to notice the frustration that supporters of psychohistory felt with this state of affairs given that they felt (not unjustifiably, in my view) that psychohistory had taken up issues that could not be explicated (at least in any adequate way) using other models for historical research, and that they had therefore significantly broadened the existing basis for conceptualizing historical inquiry and expanded both the questions that historians must ask and the source base for their research. In his work's conclusion, Jacques Szaluta writes:

After the above discussion of the field of psychohistory, one is led to conclude that *good history is psychohistory*. Psychohistory has grown enormously in the last several decades, despite the opposition to it, because it offers a more profound and fuller understanding of man and his past. ... The departure from traditional history was psychohistory's initial promise, and this has been realized. ... Psychohistory is a field in ferment, in which different approaches flourish, and it is in the vanguard of historical thought. It has been instrumental in providing a new conceptual framework and in advancing the scientific method in the study of historical events. The psychohistorical vision demonstrates that it is more insightful, more empathic, more encompassing, and more humane than other previous approaches to the study of man and society.³

Which is precisely why, in 1995, after almost thirty years of practicing psychohistory, Peter Loewenberg felt the need to once again recall the fundamental importance of the psychoanalytic approach to our understanding the past.

History is not problematized the way psychology is. Material history and the phenomenology of culture are assumed to be explanatory of all thought and behavior. There is a "historical consciousness" at given time-specific contexts, but there is no granting of a psychological emotional presence in all historical phenomena. Emotions

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- 2 I have tried to justify arguments about the fundamentally important fact that representatives of numerous influential circles of American historical scholarship have taken an irreconcilably hostile stance toward psychohistory and psychoanalysis, in particular in the article "Psychohistorycy w debacie z historią," 125–135.
 - 3 J. Szaluta, *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, 227, 239–240, emphasis in original.

may color, infuse, or highlight an historical event ... but emotions are not recognized as driving forces of history that initiate, create, and shape historical meanings. Academic History dismisses as reductionism anything that is suggestive of psychological or emotional determinism. But we hear no apology for rational, material interest, social or intellectual determinism or reductionism. They are taken for granted as merely one perspective that enriches history. This should also be the case for emotional variables in the past. The psychological and emotional is just as irreducible as the structures of social and economic power relations and has just as much force and explanatory power in shaping historical life, and the two are quite complementary. ... Historians should accord as full attention in constructing their explanations to psychological as to material forces. Psychoanalysis shows how intention, fantasy, motivation, and adaptation work in history, and how these may be recognized and interpreted by students of history⁴

On the basis of the scientific belief (a typical psychohistorian shares this belief equally with a typical “ordinary” historian) that a researcher of the past can and should, in all possible ways, “approach” the multidimensional and complex truth about history, such debates should have been decided in favor of psychohistory. Meanwhile, psychohistorians note bitterly that many of their theses, views and fundamental research findings “penetrated” – as Bruce Mazlish put it in a 1996 interview cited at the end of Part 1 – the “historical mainstream,” but that reality did not bring in its wake recognition for psychohistory itself, which in fact remained on the periphery of academic historical scholarship.⁵ This situation is not a matter of concern only for those psychohistorians for whom ties to university history departments have always been secondary or even marginal.⁶

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- 4 P. Loewenberg, “Introduction to the Transaction Edition,” in P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past. The Psychohistorical Approach*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick-London: Transactions Publishers, 1996), xv-xvi.
 - 5 Mazlish expands on this thought in an article published a few years later: “It is important to note that psychohistorical understanding has entered the general awareness, even though psychohistory itself has fallen into somewhat extended disrepute. In this sense, the field has been a success. No biographer can fail to hint at the unconscious motives of his or her protagonist and hope to escape criticism Whatever battles are lost in the dismissive treatment of individual works of psychohistory or psychobiography ... the war itself has been largely if silently won. ... It is simply that psychoanalysis and its handmaiden psychohistory have become the vital, if often unacknowledged, context for all present-day thought. They have done what the editors of the French *Encyclopedia* did in the eighteenth century: changed the way of thinking.” B. Mazlish, “The Past and Future of Psychohistory,” 254 and 256.
 - 6 The above paragraphs reflect the state of affairs (and the state of mind among psychohistorians) at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A dozen or so years

Of course, we cannot help but ask the question: looking forward, what is psychohistory's fate? It is difficult not to take a stab at an answer to that question, even if that answer inevitably involves a certain level of speculation.

Despite the competition between psychohistory and the "history of *mentalités*" as developed by the "Annales" school, and regardless of all the internal disputes and external objections from critics about which I wrote at length above, psychohistory in its prime seemed to be an almost certain, indeed "natural," candidate to "develop" the broad issues associated with the subjective side of history or, in other words, the motivational aspect of history. The subjective is, after all, an essential – even fundamental – dimension of the human experience, both in the past and today. Psychohistory brought to the examination of this human experience a "theoretical instrumentarium" permeated with psychology (after all, psychoanalysis was one of the most important theoretical perspectives in psychological thought in the twentieth century), which was to be a guarantee of psychohistory's cognitive and institutional success. As we know, this optimistic scenario did not come true and, in my opinion, today's psychohistory remains permanently doomed to a marginal and peripheral status within the historical profession.⁷ This situation is likely to be expressed in the continued decline in the number of psychohistorical articles published in professional historical journals and fewer career opportunities for psychohistorians in academic history.⁸ Change can come only through a clear

later, it can be said that nothing has changed in this regard. See "Psychohistory at the Crossroads Symposium," *Clio's Psyche* 22 (2015), no. 1–2: 1–61 (a large group of influential and prominent representatives of psychohistory took part in this debate, including D. Beisel, P. Elovitz, J. Gonen, D. Lotto and P. Petschauer).

- 7 Which by no means excludes a further increase in its importance and influence beyond the sphere of institutionalized academic studies. The climate and "spirituality" of "New Age" thinking, along with the interest in psychological issues among consumers of "mass culture," seem to be extremely favorable to this. All of which is greatly facilitated and accelerated by the dynamic development of the internet. In addition to portals run by serious psychohistorical centers/associations, we find on the web a huge number of websites containing psychohistorical content and presenting it in various contexts (including psychotherapy, child abuse, current international politics, violence, migrations), widely visited and often commented on by various users. In general, we can talk here of a kind of feedback. The more successful psychohistorians are in this area, the more "suspicious" and "dangerous" they appear in the eyes of historians and other representatives of the academic world – the activities of Lloyd deMause are all too clearly proof of this.
- 8 Naturally, the most prominent representatives of psychohistory, scholars with a stable personal position in the community of historians, will still be able to "train" students

and definitive parting-of-ways between the psychohistorical community and psychoanalysis, which in the eyes of a significant number of historians (and many other representatives of academia, including numerous contemporary psychologists) remains something dubious, debatable, and “suspicious.” However, I doubt such change will happen because, as I have tried to show in this book, the vast majority of psychohistorians have a clear and lasting “attachment” to the assumptions underpinning depth psychology.

That having been said, the marginalization of the community of psychohistorical scholars does not have to mean that issues tied to the psychological dimension of the past – an area of research which psychohistorians have done so much to define – will be automatically removed from the historian’s field of vision. There are historians who are skeptical of the theoretical assumptions and/or research practices of psychohistorians to date, but who are vitally interested in further exploring such issues, especially in connection with the efforts of a small but noticeably growing group of academic psychologists.⁹ It should probably be expected that the further development of theoretical approaches and an increase in the number of concrete studies serving as “alternatives to psychoanalytic psychohistory”¹⁰ will eventually lead to the formation of a specialization that is stable and relatively widely accepted within academic circles (A research orientation? A sub-discipline of history? A borderline discipline?), one that engages programmatically in empirical studies of the subjective aspect of the historical process. There are even potential names “in circulation” within academia: “historical psychology” and “psychological history.”¹¹ The condition

and help them start their academic careers, but the latter will probably have to function as (repeating Mazlish’s words cited earlier) historians rather than *psychohistorians* – i.e. either marginalizing their interests in the psychological dimension of history or at least dressing them in some new “theoretical costume” (i.e. conceptualizing them in a different way than psychohistory used to do).

- 9 Beyond the above-cited works of M. Dymkowski and T. Ochowski, see also C. Tileagă, J. Byford, “Conclusion: Barriers to and Promises of the Interdisciplinary Dialogues between Psychology and History,” in *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, 284–297; T. Ochowski, T. Pawelec, “Historia psychologiczna a problematyka źródeł,” particularly pp. 56–69; M. Dymkowski, *Szkice psychologa o historii* (Kraków: Avalon 2016).
- 10 I paraphrase the wording used by W. M. Runyan in the context of a search for “alternatives” to “psychoanalytic psychobiography.” Compare W. M. Runyan, “Alternatives to Psychoanalytic Psychobiography,” 212–244.
- 11 Especially the first proposed name seems significant. “Historical psychology” originally meant the branch of psychology that had been developing since approximately

of contemporary psychology seems to substantiate the argument that, in the theoretical dimension, this specialization will be particularly eager to refer to the so-called cognitive perspective. There is no doubt that the achievements of psychohistorians so far – theoretical and methodological studies, along with concrete historical studies – will constitute a fundamental point of reference for this undertaking and an important component of its intellectual heritage. However, it is unlikely to adopt the actual name “psychohistory,” which is too closely “associated” with academic controversy and too “entangled” in its relationship with psychoanalysis.

the 1970s and was concerned with the study of the historical (temporal) scope of psychological notions and theoretical concepts. It was therefore a variation of so-called intercultural psychology, which deal with the issue of the “locality” (cultural limitation) of the analytical categories used by a psychologist. The clearly noticeable conversion of the term’s semantics suggests the potential of all of these still scattered but growing undertakings in the field of studying the psychological side of history which refer to various perspectives of contemporary academic psychology.

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