PSYCHIATRY & HISTORY

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Psychiatry per se has been defined as the medical study, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illness. Since most of the individuals and groups studied by historians cannot be classified as "mentally ill," and are certainly not amenable to treatment, psychiatry would appear to have little applicability to history, even as a diagnostic aid. Only when psychiatry itself is broadened beyond mental illness into a kind of general psychology can it, even in principle, become available for significant use by historians and social scientists.

Presumably such broadening has taken place in the development of psychoanalysis by Freud and his followers. As one standard history of psychiatry has put it, "In our century a scientific revolution has taken place: psychiatry has come of age. . . . This advancement . . . became possible only after Freudian discoveries transformed psychiatry and penetrated general medical thought."

Freudian psychoanalysis has two outstanding features that make it highly attractive for the historian who attempts to use it in his own work.

First, although originating in psychiatry, it claims to be a general psychology whose observations apply as much to normal as to abnormal people, to mentally healthy as well as to ill personalities. Discovering unconscious mental processes, and the "laws" that hold good in that realm, in the course of offering treatment and therapy to patients, Freud extended his findings to nonpatients: in short, to all humanity. Historians can feel comfortable with such a conclusion.

Second, Freudian psychoanalysis is itself an "historical" science. That is, many of its procedures and methodological assumptions are similar to historical ones. In fact, it has often been noted that psychoanalysis deals with *personal history.* In any case, as Hans Meyerhoff has so well illustrated, both psychoanalysis and history deal with materials from the past, seek to "reconstruct" a pattern of events from fragmentary data, offer an "explanation" based on the totality of this reconstruction rather than on general laws, and are essentially retrodictive rather than predictive disciplines.

Nevertheless, with all their similarities psychoanalysis differs from history in one essential aspect: it does claim to be a generalizing science. Although its explanations are not offered in lawlike formulas, but rather in terms of a holistic reconstruction, psychoanalysis approaches its materials with a general theory of its own (initially derived, of course, from clinical

observations), while history does not. The postulate of an unconscious, the dynamics involved in repression, resistance, and transference, the mechanisms of defense and adaptation utilized by the ego, all these and many other processes made familiar to us by psychoanalysis constitute an effort at a systematized science.

As a new kind of science or, to pitch the claim lower, as a discipline offering a more cogent and systematic way of understanding personality, it can give the historian a means other than his mere intuition or common-sense psychology by which to explain the motives of historical individuals or groups. And since motive is a key factor in much historical explanation, the historian finds himself more and more drawn to the use of psychoanalysis in his work. When to this is added psychoanalysis' concern for unconscious as well as conscious thought processes, which is unavailable to any other psychological or psychiatric school, we can see why historians have concentrated almost exclusively on some variant of psychoanalysis when they have come to "apply" psychology to history.

In its "applied" form the conjoining of psychoanalysis and history is nowadays frequently referred to as "psychohistory." A number of scholars are unhappy with the term—it seems, for example, to exclude other social scientists—and the names psycho-social science and psycho-social history have been suggested; but psychohistory appears to be gaining general if

reluctant acceptance. In any case the new discipline, or interdiscipline, is misleadingly thought of as the mere "application" of psychoanalysis to history, for, to a great extent, psychohistory turns to the sociological, demographic, and economic fields as well for its materials and theories. Ideally, too, psychohistory allows for the "application" of history to psychoanalysis, in an effort to reexamine the validity and variability of the latter's concepts and theories in an historical context. In short, though emerging out of the application of psychoanalysis to history, psychohistory claims to be a true fusion and intermingling of the two.

Freud's Work in History

Freud himself pioneered the application of psychoanalysis to history. Apparently around 1910 his interest in the subject came first to flood tide, culminating in the publication of *Leonardo Da Vinci* in that year and *Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (The Case of Schreber)* in 1911.

A word about the latter first. It is usually not mentioned in the context of Freud's historical reconstructions, but it definitely should be. In the summer of 1910 (thus, just after completing his Leonardo manuscript), Freud's attention was caught by Schreber's *Memoirs* (published in 1903). By the end of the year he had finished his new manuscript. In this work Freud made his

first analysis of an actual "historical" figure on the basis of an extensive autobiographical document, thus anticipating a fundamental procedure of psychohistorians working on life histories (for example, Erikson using Gandhi's *Autobiography* in *Gandhi's Truth).* He also gave an instance of how one could use such materials, penetrating through their censored and distorted nature. While Schreber was essentially a "patient," that is, mentally ill, Freud showed how to work with materials removed from the clinical situation itself.

Leonardo, of course, to which almost all attention has been directed in this context, also appealed to a "memoir," but this was only a short childhood memory, inserted almost accidentally into Leonardo's scientific notebooks. The memory concerning what Freud called vultures, added to various books on Leonardo (such as Merezhkovsky's study and Scognamiglio's monograph on Leonardo's youth) and to Leonardo's own paintings, served as the documentary basis for Freud's historical analysis. It embodies, as James Strachey" observes, not only the first but "the last of Freud's large-scale excursions into the field of biography" (though we might wish to qualify this statement by adding the controversial work, in collaboration with William Bullitt, on Woodrow Wilson).

Freud's psychobiographical study of Leonardo is too well known to need summarizing here. Unlike the Schreber that followed, it dealt with a

dead person as well as a historically famous one. It has also aroused a good deal of controversy. For example, Freud made the mistake of accepting as the translation for *nibbio,* Italian for "kite," the German word for "vulture," and then proceeded to offer recondite myths about vultures to confirm his general analysis. So, too, as the eminent art historian Meyer Schapiro has pointed out, Freud took as particular to Leonardo's paintings (for example, the raised finger of John the Baptist) what was, in fact, common to all the iconography of the period. In his *Leonardo Da Vinci,* however, K. B. Eissler has sought to respond to these and other criticisms, and the interested reader must be referred to that magisterial book. For our purposes we need not pass final judgment on Freud's work here, but merely note that it was a pioneering effort (along with similar attempts at psychological biographies by Hitschmann, Sadger, Stekel, and so forth) to establish the possibility of psychoanalytic study of historical figures, illustrating at the same time the numerous difficulties and problems attending such an effort.

It must be mentioned here, nevertheless, that the limitations of Freud's approach are highlighted in the last work in this genre to which he lent his name. *Thomas Woodrow Wilson: A Psychological Study'* by Freud and William Bullitt first appeared in 1967, long after Freud's death. It purported to be a collaboration begun around 1932 and finished by the end of Freud's life in 1939 (though held back from publication at that time). Most commentators are willing to agree that the Introduction is by Freud and that the rest is

based on conversations Freud had with Bullitt; they also feel that Bullitt, in the writing, distorted some of Freud's views and removed all the subtlety of his interpretations.

Nevertheless, Freud must be held partly responsible for a work that treats its subject—a highly creative political leader—as if he were *nothing but* a clinical patient. By its emphasis on the pathological, the book shows how such efforts to apply psychoanalysis to history can lead to sheer reductionism.

The weaknesses of the *Woodrow Wilson* book must not, however, obscure the fact that Freud not only discovered the science of psychoanalysis but also pioneered its application to historical materials. One other work of his, the essay on *A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis* (1923), should be mentioned since it inspired a whole host of further researches concerning witchcraft, millenarian movements, and so forth. In sum, whatever the particular and understandable lapses in Freud's historical work, he opened the way for others to learn by his work and to carry on further in the direction he had set.

Disciples and Developments

Most of the initial attempts to carry on Freud's work were undertaken by his disciples, who, while professionally trained in psychoanalysis, had, not

surprisingly, only amateur interests in history. Thus, quite naturally, they always teetered on the edge of reductionism. The next thing to note is that the shift in emphasis in psychoanalytic theory, from concentration on id processes to ego and superego processes, and from infantile sexuality to adolescence or adulthood, seemed a necessary prelude to further advances in the direction of psychohistory. We can best illustrate these two points by brief comments on some of the disciples and developments in psychoanalysis that followed Freud.

Jung and His Influence

In his deviations from Freud, Jung offered an alternate set of terms, although often for the same data (for example *anima* and *animus* instead of bisexuality), and stressed the collective unconscious, especially as manifested in archetypes and symbols. In his own work Jung carried out recondite investigations into the history of alchemy, mandala symbolism, and so forth. Although these studies are "historical" in nature, they cannot be viewed as steps toward psychohistory itself. In principle the stress on the collective unconscious might be useful to historians as they struggle to help create a group psychology applicable to the analysis of group phenomena; but in practice nothing of significance along these lines has emerged. Similarly Jungian analysis might be applied to individual life histories; and it has been done so significantly in at least one book, Arnold Künzli's *Karl Marx.*

Generally, however, historians have not resorted to the Jungian approach when they have used psychoanalytic concepts and theories.

Adler and His Influence

Adler's theories of inferiority and superiority, and especially of overcompensation, and his stress on considering the individual in his social setting has had more resonance than Jung's work among historians and social scientists. Partly this may be because social scientists are much concerned with issues of power and therefore welcomed an alternative to Freud's emphasis on the sex drive. In any case, as early as 1930 the political scientist Harold D. Lasswell pioneered in the study of "psychopathology and politics," to take the name of one of his books. In his work Lasswell used life-history material from patients in mental hospitals and from volunteers with no obvious mental pathology, both, however, involved in politics, to establish a classification of "political types" (for example, agitators, administrators, and so forth) and to try to "uncover the typical subjective histories of typical public characters." Emerging from this data with the postulate that politicians were in search of power and that their "most important private motive is a repressed and powerful hatred of authority," Lasswell developed his famous formula "p } d } r = P, where p equals private motives; d equals displacement onto a public object; r equals rationalization in terms of public interest; P equals the political man; and } equals transformed into."

Exactly how the displacement of private affects upon public objects takes place has turned out to be a more involved problem than was originally thought, with the intervening links difficult to trace in the case of actual, functioning politicians. Nevertheless, Adler's influence, mediated through Lasswell's formulations, has continued to inspire political scientists and, to a lesser degree, historians as well. Thus, Alexander and Juliette George, in their exemplary study, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House,* weave much of their interpretation around the notion that Wilson's repressed hostility toward his father found displaced expression in many of his political struggles, where his "taste for achievement and power" could find satisfaction. Needless to say, the taste for power was rationalized in terms of a lofty idealism: Lasswell's "rationalization in terms of public interest." The Georges conclude that in Wilson's political behavior, "power was for him a compensatory value, a means of restoring the self-esteem damaged in childhood" (p. 320).

In another direction, staying close to the Adlerian notions, but applying them to analysis of group phenomena rather than individual life histories, one can mention the highly suggestive book by O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization.* Mannoni analyzes the interaction of two different personality types—the Western colonizer and the native colonized —as highlighted by the uprising in Madagascar in 1947. He sees the colonizer as asserting superiority to overcome his fears of inferiority and projecting his own unconscious fears onto the natives. The latter, in turn, have a

dependency complex, derived from their cult of the dead, that conditions their relations to the colonizers. The contact of these two personality types, and their mutual incomprehension, makes for the colonial experience, which Mannoni seeks to analyze in detail. Although he claims that "if one had to reduce the psychological theory to one system, I believe one could do it by applying the ideas of Karl Abraham, and especially of Melanie Klein" (p. 33), it is clear that in his borrowing "from various schools of psychology," Mannoni leans heavily on Adler and his notions of inferiority and superiority, especially for the colonizers, though putting these notions very much to his own particular usages.

Sullivan and Fromm

Elsewhere in this Volume (Chapter 40A), mention is made of a line of development seen in Durkheim, Cooley, Mead, Lewin, and Sapir that "reached conceptualization in the work of Henry Stack Sullivan, with its influence clearly revealed in the writings of Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Karen Homey, Clara Thompson [and others] . . ." (p. 843). What was this development, and what were its consequences for psychohistory? We shall take Sullivan and Fromm as the prototypes for what was involved.

For our purposes we need only highlight a few of Sullivan's emphases to illustrate certain developments in psychoanalysis. Sullivan stressed the

following: (1) man must be viewed primarily as a socially interacting organism, although he is biologically rooted; (2) man is "not a fact but an act," that is, he develops and changes in a continuous process; and (3) his psychic states, for example, anxiety, are the result primarily of interpersonal relations (which are determined largely by his particular society and its socialization processes) rather than intrapsychic conflict.

Clearly Sullivan's shifts in emphasis from the classic Freudian position favored the study of man in society and developing over time, in contrast to the analysis of an individual in a relative vacuum. As such it would seem to be congenial to the work of historians. Certainly it influenced other analysts, such as Fromm and Horney, to explore the way particular societies created particular character types, for example, a "marketing character," or a "neurotic personality of *our time* (my italics)." Strangely enough, however, Sullivan's developments seem to have had little *direct* influence on historians per se, although his work undoubtedly affected the climate of opinion in which they worked. Perhaps this was because, in spite of its differing conceptual stresses, it really offered historians no tools or operational theories separate from the orthodox Freudian ones with which to work.

The outstanding example of history psychoanalytically informed along the lines of Sullivan's thinking was the work of an analyst, not an historian: Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom.* The influence of this wide-ranging book

has been rather extraordinary. Published in 1941, and obviously influenced by the Nazi phenomenon of the time, the book has enjoyed numerous reprintings.

Fromm conveniently states both his intention and his thesis at the very beginning of his work. He intends the book to be part of a broad study "concerning the character structure of modern man and the problems of the interaction between psychological and sociological factors." The Sullivanian overtones are clear and later openly acknowledged in various places (although it must be noted that by 1955 Fromm, in his *Sane Society,* turned against Sullivan). Fromm's thesis is that "modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities. Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable and the alternative he is confronted with are [sic] either to escape from the burden of his freedom into new dependencies and submission, or to advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man" (p. viii).

Fromm has been influenced by a number of different sources, and a few of them need to be remarked upon. First, Fromm had studied sociology

(receiving a Ph.D. from Heidelberg in 1922), rather than history, before entering psychoanalytic training. Thus, he had professional competence in at least those two fields. In *Escape from Freedom* he borrowed heavily from sociological theories concerning man's alienation from modern industrial society, and one detects heavy echoes of Tonnies's division of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, Durkheim's anomie, and Max Weber's general analysis of capitalist society and values. (Incidentally a splendid psychohistorical analysis of Weber, bearing on exactly the issues propounded in Fromm's thesis, is Arthur Mitzman's *The Iron* Cage.) However, Karl Marx seems to be the outstanding influence. Passages in *Escape from Freedom* seem to read almost as quotations from *The Communist Manifesto,* as when Fromm talks of how capitalism "helped to sever all ties between one individual and the other and thereby isolated and separated the individual from his fellow men."

To his sociology, strongly Marxist-colored, Fromm adds psychoanalysis, heavily tinted by Sullivanian hues. He begins, however, by postulating a "drive for freedom" that is rooted in the individual's necessary "emergence from a state of oneness with the natural world." Fromm describes this earlier state as involving "primary ties," which, although affording security and a feeling of belonging, must be broken. The result is that the individual now feels his freedom as isolation, as "a curse." Two resolutions are open to him: he may turn to authority and slavishly submerge himself in a group, that is, "escape from freedom"; or he may embrace the "one possible, productive solution for

the relationship of individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual."

Fromm does not state his insights merely in sociological and psychoanalytic terms; he places them in the context of an historical analysis. In a long chapter on the Reformation, he tries to show how the "capitalist" individual broke his "primary ties" during a specific historical period. Similarly, in a chapter on the psychology of Nazism, he seeks to show how in the twentieth century the escape from freedom into authoritarianism took specific shape in Germany. In short, he offers a sort of psychological history of modern times.

As psychological *history* his work paints with a broad brush in a way that might leave many historians filled with misgivings. For example, Fromm asserts without much real use of hard historical data that medieval man, in spite of many dangers, "felt himself secure and safe." This hardly accords with other views of the medieval period, where anxiety seems endemic. If 1348-1349 is still "medieval" (and Fromm makes no effort to be precise), then one must reckon with the psychic consequences of the Black Death, as William L. Langer so eloquently reminds the historian in his ringing invitation to the application of psychology to history, "The Next Assignment." Fromm seems

also to assume a "middle class" in the medieval period; most historians would judge this as present-minded. On a broader issue, "escape from freedom" in the twentieth century seems less related to highly developed liberal capitalist societies, such as Great Britain and the United States, than to latecomers to capitalism, e.g., Germany; to incipiently industrialized countries, e.g., Italy; or to backward and underdeveloped countries, e.g., Czarist Russia. Such questions suggest that Fromm's work deals more with sociological categories than with concrete historical data, and historians have accordingly resisted following it.

As psychology and sociology, which is what Fromm himself primarily intended his book to be, it has been more successful in instigating further work. Fromm's psychoanalytic interpretation of the escape from freedom into authoritarianism as being rooted in sadomasochistic strivings has found its echo in such large-scale investigations as *The Authoritarian Personality,* by T. Adorno *et al,* and in specific studies such as William Blanchard's book on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Fromm's chapter on "The Psychology of Nazism" has anticipated a flood of studies on Nazism, Nazi anti-Semitism, and Adolf Hitler. His attention to the "person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him," points directly to David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*.

Thus, whatever its own limitations as history and therefore

psychohistory, *Escape from Freedom* has been a seminal book in inspiring related studies. Keeping steadily in mind the injunctions of Sullivan's version of psychoanalysis, Fromm has sought to deal with individuals as interacting with other individuals in a social and historical setting. Above all, he has shown others how to avoid sheer reductionism, where everything becomes translated into psychology. As Fromm comments, "Nazism is a psychological problem, but the psychological factors themselves have to be understood as being molded by socio-economic factors; Nazism is an economic and political problem, but the hold it has over a whole people has to be understood on psychological grounds." An insight such as this, worked out in terms of actual data, as Fromm has attempted it in *Escape from Freedom,* tries to give historical life to the changes in emphasis brought to psychoanalytic theory by Sullivan and his co-workers. It also opens the way for a truer fusion of psychoanalysis, sociology, and history.

W. Reich and Marcuse

A brief word must be added about some contributions spiritually related to Fromm's efforts. Indeed, Wilhelm Reich, whose work has unexpectedly come into prominence recently (see, for example Robinson's *The Freudian Left),* predates Fromm. Reich's contributions to psychoanalysis carried Freud's theories to their two extremes. On one side Reich stressed the biological, that is, the libido, which he tried to measure quantitatively in

biopsychic energy, practically reducing the sexual to the merely genital. On the other side Reich emphasized the social, insisting on the unique importance of social and historical factors in psychic development. Thus, in his theory of "character neurosis" Reich focused attention, not on particular symptoms, but on the patient's total character structure, seen as the result of his entire personal and societal history.

In his major contribution to "historical" studies, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), Reich turned to Marxism as the key to the social factors and tried to fuse Marx and Freud. In this book Reich attempted to delineate an authoritarian character structure, brought into being as a result of bourgeois economic and social developments. Suggestive, the book is generally not judged successful; and it is still almost unknown to most historians.

Herbert Marcuse is a nonanalyst who has followed in the footsteps of Reich and Fromm, trying to synthesize the work of Marx and Freud. His *Eros and Civilization* (1955) represents the work of a philosopher and a political theorist and makes no appeal to clinical evidence. However, Marcuse holds fast to the Freudian emphases on childhood and on sexual repression and accuses the neo-Freudians (such as Fromm) of watering down or ignoring the fundamentals of psychosexual development. In his very difficult book Marcuse attempts to place repression in an historical dimension and to show that sexual repression under capitalism is *surplus* repression, that is, the

equivalent of Marx's surplus value. He also analyzes the "performance principle" as operating in the service of capitalism by desexualizing the pregenital erogenous zones. (Thus, Marcuse is here also criticizing Reich's emphasis on genitality.) Although accepting the necessity of a bare minimum of repression, Marcuse seems to look with favor upon a return to "polymorphous perversity." In a noncapitalist society sexual repression would no longer be essential to insure social repression and economic exploitation.

Norman O. Brown, in his brilliant excursion into metapsychology, *Life Against Death,* eschews Marcuse's Marxism, but carries even further his eulogy of "polymorphous perversity." The end of repression would mark, it seems, man's release from the nightmare of history. In the last part of his book, it should be added, Brown presents specific studies in anality, especially as it has manifested itself in the Protestant Era.

Ego Psychology and Erikson

Almost all of the post-Freudian developments mentioned above have been more contributions to the philosophy of history, or to metapsychology, rather than the actual application of psychoanalysis to the traditional materials with which historians have worked, that is, precise documents relating to specific individuals and events. With the work of Erik H. Erikson, a

"revolution" in history is occurring, marked by the use of the term "psychohistory." Not since Freud himself has the impact on history been so great.

Sullivan and his school helped prepare the way for Erikson, but it is primarily the developments in ego psychology, associated with Freud himself, his daughter Anna Freud, Heinz Hartmann, David Rapaport, and others, that opened the way in theory for Erikson's work. As is well known, attention was now centered on the interrelationship of id, ego, and superego processes, and stress placed on the defensive and adaptive functions of the ego. Normality and creativity became as interesting and valid as psychopathology and breakdown, and the personality was seen more as a functioning whole than as a bundle of neuroses; hence reductionism was more easily avoided.

With these inspirations, to which he contributed, Erikson turned to the elaboration of what has come to be called psychohistory. In *Childhood and Society,* which has become practically a handbook in the field, he outlined in simple, clear terms his "Theory of Infantile Sexuality." Here he tried to show how id, ego, and superego processes interrelate during all the stages of psychosexual development; they are, in short, corresponding processes. Next he deals with the orthodox stages of oral, anal, phallic, and genital in terms of what he calls "zones, modes, and modalities," thus freeing them from a predominantly biological orientation. Implicit, too, in this essay, though more

fully developed in the later chapter, "Eight Ages of Man," are Erikson's stages of development, ranging through infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, young adult, adulthood, and mature age, where the individual is presented with such antinomies as "trust versus mistrust," "autonomy versus shame," "initiative versus guilt," and so on. Although such stages carry with them the danger of being applied mechanically, they offer, if correctly viewed, merely a useful schema of psychosexual development. In any case, throughout his work, Erikson strives to show how the biologically given stages are elaborated upon by culture, with varied and different results.

Much of *Childhood and Society* is devoted to exemplifications of Erikson's theories in relation to specific case studies: anthropological, as in the study of the Yurok and Sioux Indians; historical, as in the studies of American, German, and Russian national character. In *Young Man Luther* and in *Gandhi's Truth* Erikson really practiced what he preached and gave full-scale examples of what he intended by psychohistory (though at first he did not use the term). Thus, much of Erikson's effect on historians has resulted from the fact that he united theory and practice to an unusual degree, and in a way that they could see themselves following.

Erikson's successful inspiration of a number of historians may be attributed to some of the following factors. First, his psychoanalytic theories, giving due weight to ego and superego processes, allowed him to take

seriously historical materials as telling us what, in fact, was the cultural content of these processes. Second, to understand the historical he used actual historical materials—letters, autobiographies, and similar documentary materials— rather than resorting to large-scale sociological, and generally Marxist, theories; in fact, it is anthropology rather than sociology that has had the greatest influence on Erikson. Third, he studied his historical materials closely (though some historians disagree with the way he does this), adding to the usual historian's insight his own psychohistorical methods derived from a secure base in clinical data; that is, the same analysis of psychological processes, such as projection, displacement, and so forth, are applied rigorously and with great insight to the historical documents. Fourth, he concerned himself with problems of historical method and has shown an unusual awareness of problems of evidence and inference, and objectivity and subjectivity, for example, of transference or countertransference phenomena as manifested in the historian himself. For these and similar reasons many historians have felt themselves at home with Erikson, or at least willing to learn from him. He does not violate their method and materials, but rather adds a new dimension to them.

A few of Erikson's psychohistorical theories ought to be mentioned here. In *Young Man Luther* and *Gandhi's Truth* he calls attention to the way in which the great leader, solving his own problems—primarily an identity crisis —offers a solution also to the problems of many others in his time and

society. The identity crisis, then, has become a heuristic way of looking at leaders and groups, and a number of historians and political scientists have been inspired in their work by this notion. By choosing religious leaders who, in addition, became political leaders, Luther and Gandhi, Erikson has also tried to bridge the gap between psychoanalytic analyses of religious phenomena and of political phenomena; incidentally he has modified Freud's view of religion as merely an illusion and tried to treat it rather as a valid way of symbolically and emotionally ordering the world. Finally, by stressing the concept of mutuality—which he stretches from the mother's initial relation to the child (where a failure here can mean schizophenia) all the way to Gandhi's theory of *satyagraha*, or nonviolence—Erikson has sought to indicate the sort of therapy that psychohistorical studies can offer to mankind.

Such theories as those above, however, give little indication of the actual impact of Erikson's work on historians. The major impact comes not from such large-scale ideas but from Erikson's precise and detailed application of psychoanalysis to history, *and* of history to psychoanalysis. It is his fusion of the two in psychohistory that has opened up a whole new field of endeavor, actively being pursued today by a growing number of historians and other social scientists.

Problems and the Future

Psychohistory is in process of becoming a flourishing field. Starting with Freud's work, it has drawn inspiration from the contributions of some of his disciples, whose efforts rely heavily on shifts in emphasis in psychoanalytic theory; we have touched briefly and selectively on some of these developments in order to indicate, without any pretense at complete coverage, the general lines of evolution. Now we need to consider what lies ahead in the way of both problems and promise.

One problem clearly is in the area of training. A few analysts are turning to graduate work in history; there seems no inherent problem here except time, money, and inclination. Most workers in psychohistory from the psychoanalytic side, however, will presumably "pick up" their history from private reading and study, with all the attendant dangers of amateurism and superficiality. From the social science and history side, the dangers of amateurism and superficiality in "picking up" psychoanalysis by private reading would seem even greater. However, some of the psychoanalytic institutes have now started to give courses in psychoanalysis specifically for social scientists; it remains to be seen how appropriate these courses will be. (In addition, one ought to note the possibility of collaboration between individuals trained in history and in psychiatry.)

Ought the psychohistorian to have had a full analysis himself? Or at least psychotherapy? A good deal of contact with actual clinical cases? Should he

himself have the experience of treating a few patients in therapy, under supervision? Is adequate funding available to the social scientist for these kinds of experience? Such problems as these, and related ones, are not to be taken lightly. Concerted efforts to define what is optimum training in psychohistory is needed. Fortunately such efforts are now being at least talked about.

Much thought must also be given to certain methodological problems. For example, what sorts of materials lend themselves adequately to psychohistorical interpretation? With the psychohistorian's subjects generally dead, or at least out of reach, the clinical analyst's resort to free association and dream analysis, for example, is simply not available. Are letters, memoirs, autobiographies, accounts by contemporaries, and other such documentary remains sufficient evidence for psychohistorical interpretations? Next, how can these interpretations be verified?

A related problem is the role of the psychohistorian's own personality in his interpretations. Historians have long recognized that political or social biases, national or ethnic commitments, may unduly distort a particular piece of work. Now psychohistory seeks to call attention to the role of the historian's personality as well in affecting his interpretation; and this will necessarily be intensified in *psychohistorical* interpretation. Again Erik Erikson, as remarked earlier, has pioneered in trying to work out a careful

consideration and analysis of the role played by what can be called transference and countertransference in the historian's interpretation of his documents.

Even if we assume that a psychohistorical interpretation is possible on the basis of the documents, of what consequence is such an interpretation for *historical explanation*? For example, what is the connection between Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitism, explained as it may be on personal grounds, and the actual political decision to exterminate six million Jews? To link the two we need a general historical explanation, and this may not be easy. In general, a "great man"—a Luther or a Hitler, a Gandhi or a Stalin—can fairly readily be linked to a major event that he has helped create: the Reformation, Nazism, nonviolence, or the 1936 Purge; and this is surely one reason why life histories have attracted the first real efforts in psychohistory. Nevertheless, the general problem of fitting psychohistory into general historical explanation remains.

These and related problems are gradually being subjected to careful scrutiny by historians and other social scientists. Of a different order, however, from these methodological problems is the problem of how one moves from individual psychology and individual life histories to group psychology and group history. Freud's own contributions to group psychology were extremely tentative. Yet most of what historians are

concerned with falls into the realm of group phenomena. How can psychohistory resolve this basic dilemma?

One solution is to proceed with the effort to link the life histories of great leaders with the mass phenomena they seemed to have evoked. In so doing we seek to understand more about the society and history of a period in terms of how it helped create the given individual—Erikson's emphasis on "a convergence in all three processes [somatic, ego, and social]"— and then vice versa: how the great individual helps change his society.

Another procedure is to investigate more closely, and in psychohistorical terms, the history of the family as the intermediate and nuclear group shaping the individual. The family, of course, is itself a changing entity, though it may be analyzed in terms of certain presumably universal constants, for example, the oedipal conflict. To state this incidentally is to raise the methodological problem of the universal applicability of psychoanalytic concepts rooted in a nineteenth-century European context; and one part of psychohistory's task is to shed light on this problem by, for example, reexamining the meaning and significance of such concepts as the oedipal complex. At the moment the best work on this particular subject has been done by an anthropologist, Anne Parsons, but psychohistorians should soon have more to say about it and related concepts. Meanwhile, however, basic work on the history of the family is seriously under way, with Philippe

Aries's *Centuries of Childhood* outstanding in this regard.

As we have suggested, psychohistorical studies of groups and group phenomena are probably the most difficult and certainly the least developed aspect of the new discipline. Lacking a sound group psychology to "apply," historians have been hard put to respond effectively to William Langer's "Next Assignment." Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide* is a pioneering effort to understand an episode in collective psychopathology. Various political scientists have been trying to talk about group identity. Historians have sought to analyze, for example, the eighteenth-century American religious experience known as "The Great Awakening," and an historian and a sociologist have collaborated in an effort to understand the development of autonomy in the modern world, especially in relation to revolutionary activity. Examples such as these, chosen largely for illustrative purposes, suggest a wide diversity of views and approach to the problem of group history.

The task for psychohistory seems, therefore, to develop each of its parts —life history, family history, and group history—to integrate them thoroughly, and to do so with a keen awareness of the numerous methodological problems involved. In developing the group- history aspect, additional support from psychoanalysis, psychology, and psychiatry would seem essential; as in the past, changes in emphasis in psychoanalytic theory

prepared the way for advances in psychohistory. In the future, however, such advances would seem to be most realistically expected from the collaboration of psychiatrists and historians and social scientists—a collaboration that would take the form of a true fusion of thought and effort, reflected in professional training, and manifesting itself in important steps forward in a partially autonomous field, psychohistory.

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