

PSYCHOLOGY AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Edited by

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University of California, Berkeley

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1988

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A Historical and Conceptual Background to Psychohistory

William McKinley Runyan

There is an underlying tension between the disciplines of history and psychology. The story of their relations in psychohistory is not simply one of cooperation and recognition of mutual interests, but also one of suspicion, misunderstanding, and occasional flashes of hostility. This tension is evident not only in shrill critiques of the accomplishments and potential of psychohistory (Barzun, 1974; Stannard, 1980), but also resonates at a deeper level of significant divergence in intellectual aims and assumptions, formidable institutional barriers to collaborative training and practice, and even temperamental differences between those attracted to history or psychology. There is, in short, a “deep gap between the history-minded and the social-science-minded” (Bruner, 1983, p. 189).

The conceptual logic for utilizing psychology in historical analysis seems unassailable. History is concerned with the study of human action and experience in circumstances in the past; psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and experience. Ergo, psychology could usefully be employed in analyzing the psychological component of historical events and processes, rather than relying solely on implicit and common-sense psychological assumptions. There is, however, a substantial gap between abstract promise and actual performance, as discussed by many historians surveying their discipline (Breisach, 1983, pp. 341–347; Handlin, 1979, pp. 14–15, 270–279; Marwick, 1981, pp. 111–115; Stone, 1981, pp. 40–41, 220–229).

Oscar Handlin (1979), for example, grants that the techniques and

concepts of psychology may be useful to historians, but that “it is far easier, however, to make than to implement such suggestions, for more is required than a simple plastering over of gaps in the evidence with patches of theory” (p. 14) and those efforts to treat the data of the past with psychology, such as Elkins’s (1959) study of the “Sambo” personality of American slaves or Freud and Bullitt’s psychobiography of Woodrow Wilson “have not commanded confidence” (p. 14).

Lawrence Stone (1981) states, “I just do not think that such things as the extermination of six million Jews can be explained by the alleged fact that Hitler’s mother was killed by treatment given her by a Jewish doctor in an attempt to cure her cancer of the breast; or that Luther’s defiance of the Roman church can be explained by the brutal way he was treated by his father or by his chronic constipation” (p. 220). Much psychohistorical work to date “has been disappointing, partly because of the flimsiness of the evidence of childhood experience, partly because of the speculative nature of the causal links with adult behavior, partly because of the neglect of the influence of the great processes of historical change in religion, economics, politics, society, and so on” (pp. 220–221). Finally, in one of the more intemperate critiques of the whole field of psychohistory, Stannard (1980) charges that “from the earliest endeavors to write psychohistory to those of the present, individual writings of would-be psychohistorians have consistently been characterized by a cavalier attitude toward fact, a contorted attitude toward logic, an irresponsible attitude toward theory validation, and a myopic attitude toward cultural difference and anachronism” (p. 147).

Indications of the tensions between history and psychology are discernible not only in published critiques of the field, but also in visceral negative reactions by many historians and psychologists to work in psychohistory, and in institutional barriers to collaborative training and practice. Some understanding of this intellectual, personal, and institutional background is necessary in order to understand the current embattled status of psychohistory. Later sections of this chapter briefly discuss the history of the relationships between psychology and history, and examine several of the intellectual debates affecting the course of work in this field.

Ever since the pioneering work of Freud in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910/1957), through Erikson’s *Young Man Luther* (1958) and *Gandhi’s Truth* (1969), which launched the modern phase of the field, to the literally thousands of publications produced in the past quarter-century, the use of psychology in history has been beset by controversy. Disputes have centered around a number of ques-

tions: What kinds of evidence are needed for psychohistorical interpretation, and can the historian have access to such information without "putting the person on the couch"? Are psychohistorical analyses inevitably reductionistic, whether in slighting external social, economic, and cultural forces; in focusing on pathology rather than strengths; or in attributing too much influence to early childhood experience while ignoring later determinants of personality and behavior? Is it legitimate to apply a psychological theory developed in turn-of-the-century Vienna to people in other cultures or historical periods? What influence does childhood experience have on adult personality and behavior? To what extent should the historian draw on psychoanalysis, neoanalytic theories, and/or other branches of psychological theory? Finally, what criteria and procedures are there for critically evaluating proposed psychohistorical interpretations?

This methodological ferment was the background against which the papers in this volume were prepared. The chapters take a variety of different approaches, from substantive discussions of specific psychobiographical interpretations and the process of constructing them (Robert Tucker on Stalin and Jean Strouse on Alice James), to reviews of the utilization of neo-Freudian and non-Freudian theory in psychohistory (Peter Loewenberg and William Runyan), to critiques of and commentaries on other papers (Alexander Dallin and Peter Paret), to discussions of the status of psychoanalytic theory or methodological issues affecting the field as a whole (Peter Gay, Robert Wallerstein, Fred Weinstein, Frederick Crews and Kenneth Craik). Reflecting the necessarily interdisciplinary character of work in this field, the contributors come from a wide range of backgrounds, with primary affiliations with history, political science, psychoanalysis, psychology, and literature.

This introductory chapter gives a brief overview of the other chapters. This is followed by a selective historical sketch of the development of relationships between history and psychology, by a quantitative analysis of the growth of literature in psychohistory, and by a discussion of the degree of institutionalization of the field. The final section analyzes several fundamental intellectual debates that have a continuing impact on the relationships between history and psychology.

Preview of Chapters

Part I is organized around two psychobiographical case studies, one a study of Joseph Stalin utilizing the neoanalytic theories of Karen

Horney, and the other a psychoanalytically informed study of Alice James, the younger sister of William and Henry James.

In Chapter 2, Robert Tucker details the circumstances surrounding the course of his analysis of Stalin's personality in light of Horney's theory of an "idealized self." Tucker argues that the personality cult surrounding Stalin was not just passively tolerated, but rather was supported by Stalin as a prop to his neurotically inflated vision of himself as the greatest genius of Russian and world history. The paper provides an unusually open statement about the personal and emotional relationship of an author with his subject; the Stalin regime prevented Tucker and his Russian wife from leaving the Soviet Union, and Tucker frankly admits that he came to loathe Stalin the more he studied him. The question is thus forcefully raised of whether such emotional involvement inhibits responsible scholarship or, if properly channeled, can enhance it.

In Chapter 3, Soviet expert Alexander Dallin, in commenting on Tucker's piece, raises several basic interpretive questions, such as the importance of Stalin's identification with Lenin, the relationship between rational and irrational factors in shaping Stalin's policies, and the relative importance of intuition and evidence in assessing interpretations of Stalin's personality.

In Chapter 4, Jean Strouse discusses the relationship between psychoanalysis and biography through her study of Alice James, "a cranky, hysterical neurasthenic who essentially forced the people she cared about to take care of her by having spectacular nervous breakdowns and becoming a professional invalid" (p. 90). Strouse emphasizes the fundamental importance of artfulness, empathy, and intuition in writing a good biography, and then asks what additional contribution psychoanalytic theory can make. After several years of research, Strouse found herself wanting to take care of Alice James, to rescue her from her unhappy years of invalidism. This personal response was used to recognize something important about Alice James—that she wanted to be taken care of and that, given her remarkable mind and latent talents, she wanted to be perceived as someone whose life should have turned out better. Analysis of the psychological undercurrents of this relatively obscure life can illuminate larger issues about nineteenth-century family life, particularly in regard to the restricted roles and opportunities of women.

The chapters in Part II bear on the uses of psychoanalysis and psychology in psychohistory. The chapters move from the application of classic psychoanalytic theory (Gay and Paret), to the use of ego psychological and object relations theory in history (Loewenberg and

Wallerstein), to a discussion of subjectivity in psychoanalytic interpretation (Weinstein), to a critique of psychoanalysis (Crews), and, finally, to examples of nonpsychoanalytic and general personality assessment approaches to psychobiography (Craik and Runyan).

In chapter 5, Peter Gay argues that psychoanalysis and history have an affinity in that both are sciences of the past—psychoanalysis concerned primarily with memories of the individual past, and history with memories of the public past. A central category for both history and psychoanalysis is that of “experience,” experience resulting from an encounter of mind with world, from an “uninterrupted traffic between what the world imposes and the self receives and reshapes” (p. 109). Because experiences have both conscious and unconscious dimensions, psychoanalysis becomes a valuable tool for historians in exploring the subsurface dimensions of experience and in developing a more comprehensive analysis of the individual and collective past. Gay illustrates this multidimensional approach to history with examples of sexual and aggressive material in an early memory of Freud, oedipal and pre-oedipal dimensions in Charles Dickens’s novels, the “rescue fantasies” of William Gladstone and other Victorians toward prostitutes, and the Victorians’ half-veiled interest in nudes. Rather than being reductionistic, psychoanalysis, if properly employed, has the potential of enriching the historian’s understanding of the interplay between rational and irrational dimensions of past experience.

In his commentary on Professor Gay’s paper, Peter Paret finds himself largely in agreement about affinities between psychoanalysis and history, yet also cites several dissimilarities between them. For example, interpretation in psychoanalytic therapy is concerned not primarily with intellectual understanding, as it is in history, but with bringing about changes in the analysand’s functioning and well-being. While psychoanalysis may be a valuable auxiliary instrument for the historian, Paret argues that any particular methodology, whether psychoanalytic or quantitative, is less decisive for the historian than are sympathy, intelligence, and imagination. George Lefebvre’s classic study *The Great Fear of 1789* (1932/1982) was most effective in revealing the feelings and behavior of the French peasants who were frightened in July 1789 by rumors that they were going to be attacked by criminals hired by the aristocracy, but Lefebvre conveyed this understanding without any formal psychological analysis. While psychoanalysis can be immensely useful to historians, it is perhaps best seen as one research instrument among many, invaluable in some areas of study, yet secondary to the historian’s intelligence and sensitivity.

Peter Loewenberg, in Chapter 7, discusses changes in the *kinds* of psychoanalytic theory used in psychohistory, charting a shift from the application of classic libidinal-drive models to the more recent use of ego psychological and object relations theories. The strengths and weaknesses of the instinctual-drive approaches to psychohistory are illustrated with a discussion of Fawn Brodie's *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character* (1981). In an analysis of the extensive psychobiographical literature on Adolf Hitler, Loewenberg points out the limitations of reductionistic interpretations that explain only Hitler's weaknesses and overlook the considerable adaptive capacities that allowed him to obtain and wield power. Since the psychohistorical research on Hitler is so extensive, it provides an excellent arena in which to examine the relative contributions of different theoretical orientations within psychohistory. A second major theme of Loewenberg's chapter is the use of "countertransference," or the historian's subjective reaction to his or her material, not as something to be avoided, but as a source of insight. The value of utilizing the historian's subjectivity is illustrated in studies of Leon Trotsky, Léon Blum, Gustav Landauer, and the American Civil War. Finally, Loewenberg discusses the utility of object relations theory in psychohistory, as in the work of John Demos on witchcraft and of Judith Hughes on relations between British and German statesmen preceding the outbreak of World War I.

Robert Wallerstein, in his discussion of Loewenberg's chapter, raises the question of why psychohistory has had such a slow and uneven development to date. In spite of the logic of a marriage between history and psychoanalysis, stemming from their common concern with constructing narrative explanations of developments over time, problems arise in maintaining the integrity of phenomena central to each discipline and in curbing the tendencies that each discipline may have to eliminate the other. Wallerstein and Smelser (1969) have argued for the importance of developing a "complementary articulation" between adjacent disciplines, in which the simplifying assumptions that each discipline makes about phenomena beyond its borders are gradually modified and made more realistically complex. Wallerstein notes that each discipline can be a generation behind in the theories that it borrows from other fields. Loewenberg has reviewed the contributions of more recent ego psychological and object relations theories to psychohistory, and Wallerstein suggests that these more recent theories effectively supplement rather than replace the earlier drive models. As a future task for psychohistory, Wallerstein argues for the importance of developing more so-

phisticated bridging concepts between the individual and the sociohistorical context (a topic that is addressed in the concluding chapter).

Fred Weinstein, in Chapter 9, analyzes the problems involved in interpreting subjectivity in history, or in interpreting the perceptions, feelings, motivations, and intentions of historical agents. The inadequacies of purely "objective" historical accounts force us to deal with problems in interpreting subjectivity and with questions about appropriate criteria for assessing such interpretations. Weinstein discusses the current blurred boundaries between history and fiction, as novelists increasingly use historical material and historians draw on fictional techniques in exploring the subjective worlds of their subjects. Although psychoanalytic theory is typically used in psychohistorical studies, Weinstein acknowledges a number of serious problems with Freudian theory, but points out that psychohistory is not dependent on psychoanalysis alone and that regardless of the fate of psychoanalysis, problems of interpreting subjectivity in history will remain. He proposes that statements about subjectivity be made in terms of three criteria: (1) that events be written about in two languages, the language of the actors and the language of our theories; (2) that descriptions of action be consistent with what actually happened, in the sense of including the perspectives on the world and on experience of the actors involved; and (3) that the dynamically and socially *heterogeneous* composition of groups be taken into account. There may well be problems with current theories of subjectivity, including psychoanalytic theory, but the analysis of subjectivity is unavoidable for historians, and the only feasible solution is the development of stronger theories.

In his commentary on Professor Weinstein's paper, Frederick Crews argues that the central issue is not really the problem of subjectivity in history, but rather the intellectual standing of psychoanalysis. Crews, a former Freudian, believes that psychoanalytic theory is fundamentally defective, and thus does not provide an adequate foundation for psychohistory. Crews reviews a number of criticisms of psychoanalytic theory noted by Weinstein, such as that Freud's propositions about drives, psychic energy, and affect lead away from historical understanding; that beliefs in the unity of unconscious perception are unwarranted; that psychoanalysis tends to collapse heterogeneous tendencies and strivings into shared ones; and that there are no solutions to historical problems or sociological problems (except perhaps biographical ones) in psychoanalytic terms.

Crews states that had Weinstein built his whole paper around these

criticisms of Freud, "I could have reduced my critique to a single sentence of praise" (p. 190). Weinstein, however, has also made a number of points defending psychoanalysis, such as that its weaknesses are shared with other social science theories, that it is more likely that academic psychology will develop some kind of theory consistent with psychoanalysis than that psychoanalysis will disappear, and that psychoanalytic concepts of unconscious mental activity and repression can prove useful to historians in interpreting subjectivity. Crews, in his inimitable style, argues that each of these points is unconvincing. Crews also reviews the three criteria that Weinstein has proposed for addressing problems in subjectivity, and finds the first two inadequate and only the third, of attending to heterogeneity, as "unexceptionable." Crews critiques Weinstein's use of the concept of "verification," by which Weinstein means supplying relevant documentation, and argues that it is all too easy to find supporting evidence for almost any assertion. More rigorous criteria for assessing a theory or hypothesis are tests of its predicted factual consequences and of its plausibility relative to rival theories or hypotheses. Crews concludes with a recommendation that we continue to study subjectivity, but, preferably, unencumbered by psychoanalysis.

Kenneth Craik, in Chapter 11, argues that psychoanalysis is only one tradition within contemporary personality psychology and that an examination of the relationships between personality psychology and historical inquiry is much broader than an analysis of the relationships between psychoanalysis and history. Moving away from problems in psychoanalyzing historical figures, Craik focuses instead on the fundamental issue of systematically *describing* the personalities of historical figures, and indicates its similarity to the core issue in personality assessment of how best to describe persons. He breaks down the descriptive process into three analytically distinguishable components: (1) the assembling of source material or information about the subjects; (2) the background and qualifications of the raters, whether informed experts or those relying on the assembled source materials; and (3) the format used in recording descriptions, ranging from free-response descriptions, as in narrative character sketches, to more structured instruments, such as rating scales.

Craik reviews a number of studies that systematically describe the personalities of historical figures, and then proposes a collaborative project for describing the personalities of the 343 men who served as members of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1789. Such a project is related to the traditional historiographic enterprise of "prosopography,"

or collective biography, as exemplified in Sir Lewis Namier's study of members of the House of Commons in the late eighteenth century, although such studies typically focus on sociodemographic factors including family of origin, place of residence, economic interests, education, occupation, and religion. When asked what "Namierizing history" meant, Namier replied that "it means finding out who the guys were." Craik's argument is that applying systematic methods of personality assessment to historical figures can add a valuable dimension to "finding out who the guys [and gals] were."

In Chapter 12, I attempt to survey the contributions of nonanalytic psychology to psychobiography. This is preceded by a brief examination of several basic questions that have been raised about psychoanalytic psychobiography, such as the adequacy of available evidence, problems of reductionism and historical reconstruction, the causal influence of early experience on adult behavior, and the multiplicity of psychoanalytic interpretations. This last issue is illustrated through an examination of the variety of psychoanalytic explanations that have been proposed as to why Vincent Van Gogh cut off the lower half of his left ear and gave it to a prostitute. My survey of the contributions of other branches of personality, developmental, and social psychology to psychobiography yielded a range of examples, including selected applications of social learning theory, trait-factor approaches, phenomenological-existential theory, social cognition, and adult developmental psychology. The yield from other psychological approaches was, though, surprisingly meager, which led to an examination of the relative merits of psychoanalytic and nonanalytic approaches to psychobiography.

The concluding chapter attempts to outline a broader conceptual foundation for work in psychohistory. The argument, in brief, is that history can usefully be conceptualized as being composed of six system levels that interact over time: the history of persons (or aggregates of persons), groups, organizations, institutions, sociocultural systems, and international relationships. The problem of relating psychology to history is understanding how psychological structures, elements, and processes within persons and collectivities of persons are involved in the maintenance and transformation of groups, organizations, institutions, sociocultural systems, and international relationships over time, and, in turn, how each of these system levels is involved in shaping psychological structures, elements, and processes. The uses of psychology in analyzing each of the six system levels from persons up through organizations, institutions, and international relations are illustrated with a set of interconnected examples from Nazi-era psychohistory.

The relationships between psychological processes and these other system levels are analyzed within sociology, anthropology, and political science (and, to some extent, in economics, linguistics, and demography) in subfields such as social structure and personality, psychological anthropology, and political psychology. The relationships between psychology and history are not only direct ones, but also those mediated by contributions from the aggregate-level social sciences of sociology, anthropology, and political science. In many cases, the field is appropriately conceived not solely as "psychohistory," but rather as "psycho-social history," with an analytic focus on the reciprocal interplay between psychology, biography, social structure, and history.

Historical Sketch of Psychohistory

The history of psychohistory and psychobiography has often been told (for example, Africa, 1979; Barnes, 1925; Gedo, 1972; Hoffman, 1982, 1984; Lifton with Strozier, 1984; Mack, 1971; Manuel, 1972; Mazlish, 1977; Strozier and Offer, 1985) and need not be repeated in detail here. After briefly describing several major stages and traditions in the history of the field, this section will provide a relatively detailed quantitative analysis of the growth of publications in psychohistory. This is followed by a discussion of the increasing institutionalization of the field, as indicated by a rise in the number of conferences, professional organizations, specialty journals, academic courses, and dissertations in the field.

The history of psychohistory is traditionally defined as beginning with Freud's study *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910/1957), which was followed by his historical and anthropological studies *Totem and Taboo* (1912/1953), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921/1955), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927/1961), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/1961), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/1964), as well as a number of shorter pieces on Dostoevsky, Goethe, war, and other topics. One other book-length contribution with Freud's name on it, published posthumously, is Freud and Bullitt's (1967) psychological study of Woodrow Wilson, although the literary style of the work strongly suggests that Freud wrote little more than the introduction (Erikson, 1975). A sample of other early psychoanalytic psychobiographies includes analyses of Shakespeare as revealed through Hamlet (Jones, 1910), of the artist Giovanni Segantini (Abraham, 1911/1955), of Richard Wagner (Graf, 1911), and of Amenhotep IV (Abraham, 1912/1935). A number of these earliest psycho-

biographical studies are summarized in Dooley's "Psychoanalytic Studies of Genius" (1916) and discussed in Barnes (1919) and Fearing (1927).

Less frequently, histories of the field contain a discussion of pre-Freudian contributions to psychologically informed history. Manuel (1972), for instance, begins his discussion of the use of psychology in history with Giambattista Vico (1688–1744) and his *New Science* (1725), and traces the story through Michelet, Herder, Hegel, and Dilthey before reaching Freud. Strozier and Offer (1985, Chapter 2) discuss the biblical story of Joseph and Plutarch's *Lives* as examples of early psychological studies of leaders, although these works would fall outside a definition of psychohistory as the application of a systematic psychology.

Perhaps the most detailed discussion of pre-Freudian psychohistory is still that of Harry Elmer Barnes in *Psychology and History* (1925); he reviews the contributions of a number of workers who left no direct legacy and are little cited now, such as Wilhelm Wundt's folk psychology (which has been overshadowed by his pioneering work in experimental psychology) and that of his colleague at Leipzig, the historian Karl Lamprecht, who argued that history should define itself as collective psychology and who provided a schematic and controversial conception of stages in the sociopsychological evolution of Western civilization.

Professor James Harvey Robinson taught an influential course on intellectual history at Columbia University in the early decades of the twentieth century, and his arguments in a *New History* (1912), for the greater use of the social sciences encouraged a number of his students and those influenced by him (including Barnes) to utilize psychology in historical and biographical analysis (see Garraty, 1954; Ross, 1974). In the 1920s and 1930s, much of the work that applied psychoanalysis to history was reductionistic and unsatisfactory and was widely criticized.

The rise of Hitler and National Socialism led to an increased willingness to consider irrational forces in history and biography, and provided material for a stream of psychobiographical and psychohistorical works, beginning during World War II with a psychobiographical study of Hitler commissioned by the Office of Strategic Services (Langer, 1972) and picking up steam in the 1960s and 1970s (see reviews in Cocks, 1979, 1986; Fox, 1979; Gatzke, 1973; Hoffman, 1982; Kren and Rapoport, 1980; Loewenberg, 1975).

The modern period of psychohistory is frequently identified as beginning in 1958, the year of publication of Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* and of William L. Langer's presidential address to the American Historical Association. In his

paper "The Next Assignment," Langer urged his colleagues to deepen their historical understanding through use of the concepts and findings of modern depth psychology. Erikson's book was hailed by many as the first persuasive psychohistorical study (although not without later critiques, as in Johnson et al., 1977) and is still perhaps the single best-known work in the field.

Among those influenced by Erikson were Robert Jay Lifton (with Olson, 1974), in his studies of "shared themes" and of groups of men and women sharing similar experiences, such as survivors of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima (1967), Vietnam veterans (1973), or Nazi doctors (1986); Robert Coles (1967), in his study of children facing the crisis of integration; and Kenneth Keniston (1965, 1968), in his analyses of alienated or politically committed American youth.

Key contributions within group psychohistory were psychological studies of colonial childhood and its consequences (Demos, 1970; Greven, 1970), which were followed by many other studies of the history of the family and of the life course (for example, Demos, 1986; Elder, 1974; Hareven, 1978; Hareven and Adams, 1982; Rabb and Rotberg, 1971).

The field of psychohistory has not developed within one unified and coherent stream, but has evolved within several partially independent traditions and lines of influence. These semiautonomous subtraditions cluster in part within traditional disciplinary boundaries, with the relevant groups including those in psychoanalysis and psychiatry, history, political science, academic psychology, literature, the deMause group, and an assortment of others with backgrounds in religion, education, the humanities, and so on. At this point in our historical sketch of the discipline, several contributions may usefully be viewed in light of these disciplinary traditions.

These disciplinary traditions, or loosely ordered streams of work, are identifiable by patterns of formal education and subsequent employment, by student-teacher contacts, by personal contacts and networks, by primary professional affiliation, and, to a lesser extent, by previous works cited, journals published in, and subsequent lines of influence.

Consider, for example, the publication in 1956 of Alexander George and Juliette George's *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*. This work originated in a paper prepared in 1941 by Alexander George for a graduate course, "Personality and Politics," taught by Nathan Leites at the University of Chicago, and was indebted to the theories and personal encouragement of Harold Lasswell, also at Chicago. Thus the book fell within a tradition of psychological analyses of

politics, going back at least to Lasswell's *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930). Subsequently, the Georges' book has been central within the political science community, often cited as perhaps the most effective political psychobiography (see Elms, 1976; Freidländer, 1978; Greenstein, 1975), while it is cited substantially less frequently by psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and literary scholars. Recently, the work has again become prominent with a debate over the relative merits of psychodynamic and medical explanations of Woodrow Wilson's personality and behavior (Weinstein, Anderson, and Link, 1978; Post et al., 1983; George et al., 1984).

There is, in any case, a tradition of work within political science applying psychology to political phenomena that contributes substantially to the broader field of psychohistory. This tradition includes the work of Harold Lasswell (1930, 1948); Alexander and Juliette George; Robert Lane (1972) and those in the political psychology program at Yale; Jeanne Knutson, with her editing of the *Handbook of Political Psychology* (1973) and her organization of the International Society of Political Psychology in 1977; Arnold Rogow, with his study of America's first Secretary of Defense, *James Forrestal: A Study of Personality, Politics, and Policy* (1963); Fred Greenstein on political socialization (1965) and *Personality and Politics* (1975); Betty Glad, with psychobiographical studies of Jimmy Carter (1980) and others; Elizabeth Marvick on *The Young Richelieu* (1983); Irving Janis (1982), with his studies of psychological and group factors affecting the decision making of political leaders; Stanley Renshon, with *Psychological Needs and Political Behavior* (1974); Lloyd Etheredge (1978), on psychological influences on American foreign-policy decisions; Robert Jervis, with his comprehensive *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976); and many others who have contributed to political psychology (see reviews in Cocks, 1986; Davies, 1980; Elms, 1976, 1984; Glad, 1973; Greenstein, 1975).

A second partly autonomous tradition contributing to psychobiography and psychohistory is the work of those academic psychologists influenced by Henry Murray, Gordon Allport, Robert White, and others at Harvard in the 1930s and 1940s. Earlier academic psychologists had been involved in psychological interpretations of biography or history, such as Morton Prince's *Psychology of the Kaiser: A Study of His Sentiments and His Obsession* (1915) and "Roosevelt as Analyzed by the New Psychology" (1912), and G. Stanley Hall's *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology* (1917), but these were isolated works that fell on infertile soil, leaving no enduring legacy. The group around Murray

and others at the Harvard Psychological Clinic has been described in some detail by Levinson (1981), Sanford (1980), and White (1981), all of whom were active in or influenced by that tradition.

Among academic psychologists who have published contributions to psychohistory or psychobiography, many of whom have had some connection with the Harvard Psychological Clinic, are Robert White (1972, 1975); Silvan Tomkins (1965), with his emphasis on affect theory and script theory; David C. McClelland (1961), in his studies of the influence of achievement motivation and economic development in different cultures and historical periods, and his research on power motivation (1975); Alan Elms, with psychobiographical studies of Freud (1980), Skinner (1981), Allport (1972), and others; James W. Anderson, with methodological writings on psychohistory (1981a) and on William James (1981b); Faye Crosby on methodological issues (1979; Crosby and Crosby, 1981); Dean Simonton on quantitative archival studies in *Genius, Creativity, and Leadership* (1984); Stolorow and Atwood (1979) on personality theorists; and a good many others, although the total number of psychologists contributing to this field seems smaller than that from history, political science, or psychoanalysis. One group of academic psychologists contributing to this field that is particularly apparent to me from my own association with it is at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, University of California, Berkeley, with psychobiographical or psychohistorical studies by its director, Kenneth Craik (Historical Figures Assessment Collaborative, 1977); Gerald Mendelsohn (1978–79, 1985), Ravenna Helson (1984–85); Philip Tetlock (Tetlock, Crosby, and Crosby, 1981); and myself (Runyan, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1988).

Among psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, in addition to the work of Freud, Erikson, Lifton, and others discussed earlier, those making notable contributions in recent years include John Mack (1976), with his study of T. E. Lawrence; Erik Erikson, with his later study of Gandhi (1969) and other writings (for example, 1975, 1987); a study of the field by a task force of the American Psychiatric Association (1976); Margaret Brenman-Gibson (1981) on the playwright Clifford Odets; and psychiatrist Vamik Volkan with historian Norman Itkowitz (1985) on Kemal Ataturk. One group of psychoanalysts particularly active in psychohistory is connected with the Institute for Psychoanalysis in Chicago, including John Gedo (1972, 1983), George Moraitis, who has collaborated with a number of biographers and historians (Baron and Pletsch, 1985), and George Pollock (Moraitis and Pollock, 1987). Charles Strozier, a historian and former editor of the *Psychohistory Re-*

view, also had long-term connections with the Chicago group (Strozier, 1982; Strozier and Offer, 1985) before moving to New York in 1986.

A fourth group is clustered around Lloyd deMause and his Institute for Psychohistory in New York, the International Psychohistorical Association, and the *Journal of Psychohistory*. This cluster includes David Beisel, Caspar Schmidt, and Henry Ebel, and has been quite active in the past decade. While many academics are extremely critical of the logic and reasoning of at least some of the work done by this group (for a sample of the more vitriolic criticism, see deMause, 1982, pp. 300–301), it has received a good deal of public attention and is, to the regret of many other psychohistorians, often seen as representative of the field as a whole. The *Journal of Psychohistory* contains some well-done articles and reviews, but so many deeply flawed ones that it has been a public relations embarrassment for the wider field of psychohistory (which is better represented in the *Psychohistory Review* and *Political Psychology*). A sample of their work is contained in deMause's *Foundations of Psychohistory* (1982), deMause and Ebel's *Jimmy Carter and American Fantasy* (1977), and deMause's *Reagan's America* (1984).

To turn to the world of academic historians, a sample of the most distinguished or influential contributions made in recent years would include Fred Weinstein's theoretical elucidation of relationships among history, sociology, and psychoanalysis (Weinstein and Platt, 1973) and his *Dynamics of Nazism* (1980); Peter Loewenberg's classic article "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort" (1971), his review of psychohistory for Kammen's survey of the state of the historical discipline (1980), and his book *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach* (1983); Bruce Mazlish's psychobiographical studies of, among others, Richard Nixon (1972/1973) and James and John Stuart Mill (1975); Robert Waite's (1977) psychobiography of Adolf Hitler; Saul Friedländer's *History and Psychoanalysis* (1978); Cushing Strout's psychobiographical and psychohistorical studies in *The Veracious Imagination* (1981); John Demos's (1982) synthesis of biographical, psychological, sociological, and historical approaches in analyzing witchcraft in early New England; critiques of the field by Jacques Barzun (1974) and David Stannard (1980); Charles Strozier's utilization of Kohut's self-psychology in a study of Lincoln (1982) and in an edited collection of psychohistorical approaches to the leader (Strozier and Offer, 1985); Philip Pomper's (1985) analysis of the structural principles of development of mind and history used by five leading psychohistorians; William Gilmore's (1984) comprehensive research bibliography of psychohistory and psychobiography; and Peter Gay's psychohistorical

study of Victorian culture, psyche, and sexuality, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud: Vol. I. Education of the Senses* (1984), and his defense of the use of Freudian theory in history (1985). The field of psychohistory has been defined in part through the publication of readers, and several of the most important collections edited or co-edited by historians are those by Mazlish (1963, 1971), Kren and Rapoport (1976), Brugger (1981), and Cocks and Crosby (1987). Of the many readers edited by non-historians one of the more influential ones was done by Lifton with Olson (1974).

Within the discipline of history, one group that potentially might make some use of psychology is the *Annales* group in France. Beginning with the publication of *Annales* in 1929 by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, there was an interest in uniting history with the social sciences and a concern with *mentalités*, or with the range of thought and emotional experience in a group, as one of the components of a more comprehensive approach to history. Although Bloch occasionally mentioned the importance of psychological factors in methodological statements, psychology was never a significant part of his substantive work. Febvre had a much greater interest in the study of *mentalités*, but a limited knowledge of psychoanalysis (Marvick, 1985) and a strong conviction (at least during part of his career) that contemporary psychology is of no value in understanding the radically different psychology of persons who lived in the past. In Febvre's (1938/1976) view, it is a "psychological anachronism" to apply present psychology to history, and "it is obvious that we shall be unable to accept for the historical period in question any of the descriptions or statements made by psychologists of today working on the basis of data provided for them by our own age" (p. 9).

The evolution of views on the use of psychology within the *Annales* school is a complex affair, influenced by the Durkheimian anti-individualistic tradition in France, the personal experiences and professional associations of individual historians, and the changes in their individual views over time (see Bizière, 1983; Burguière, 1982; Marvick, 1985; Ratcliffe, 1980); but in general, the *Annales* tradition has had only a minimal interest in the use of psychology, with far more attention paid to alliances with geography, demography, economics, and anthropology. There are indications of a revival of interest in *mentalités* and of the psychological experiences of individuals and groups (Stone, 1981), with current historians of *mentalités* interested in sexuality, conviviality (as in ritual and festivals), and the lives of marginal citizens such as the poor, vagrants, criminals, and prostitutes (Bizière, 1983). However, this increased interest in the emotions and experiences of people in the past

is typically *not* pursued with the aid of any systematic psychology, but rather with informal or intuitive psychological assumptions. If psychoanalysis or academic psychology is ever a significant influence in the *Annales* school, it will be a thing of the future, rather than the past or the present.

A sixth tradition, which will only be mentioned here, is that of literary psychobiography. Eminent examples of this genre include Leon Edel's five-volume study of Henry James (1953–72/1985), Walter Jackson Bate's biography of Samuel Johnson (1977), Frederick Crews's study of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1966), Jean Strouse's biography of Alice James (1980), and a large number of other works (see the extensive bibliography in Kiell, 1982). A seventh and final category includes all those with training and employment in other fields, including sociology, anthropology, religion, education, social work, musicology, the history of science, and others who contribute to psychohistory.

To summarize, this section has argued that the history of work in psychohistory and psychobiography can usefully be analyzed in terms of developments within seven or so partially autonomous traditions, each corresponding roughly to a particular discipline or profession. Contributions to psychobiography or psychohistory were discussed within the areas of political science, academic psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the deMause group, history, literary psychobiography, and, finally, a miscellaneous category including all other contributors. These traditions are, of course, not wholly independent of one another, yet still, many individual works can be identified as belonging more closely to one or two of these traditions than to the others. Current work in psychohistory is dispersed across a diverse range of disciplines, and the structure of the field may be better represented as a set of partially autonomous streams of work rather than as a single tightly organized tradition.

A Quantitative Analysis of the Growth of Literature in Psychohistory

The most succinct way of presenting the history and growth of the field of psychohistory is through a quantitative analysis of the increase in publications over time (Runyan, 1987).¹ A rough quantitative assessment of the number of articles, books, and dissertations on psychohistory

1. I would like to thank Betsy Locke for her exceptionally helpful work on the quantitative analyses and associated tables.

and psychobiography from before 1920 to 1980 is presented in Figure 1.1.

These figures are derived from a quantitative analysis of 1,723 items in William Gilmore's extremely useful *Psychohistorical Inquiry: A Comprehensive Research Bibliography* (1984).² This bibliography, which contains more than 4,000 items, was intended to provide a relatively comprehensive list of English-language publications in psychohistory through 1981, as well as selected studies in other languages, with a substantive focus on methodology and on American and European studies. The bibliography includes a section on The Life Cycle, including historical works on childhood, adulthood, old age, and death—works that bear on the history of the life cycle, but not necessarily on psychohistory in the sense of the use of psychology in historical analysis. Thus my analyses excluded these items and are based on 1,723 items in the psychohistory and psychobiography categories. An additional 400 or so methodological items in psychohistory from Gilmore's bibliography will be discussed later. Other definitions of the scope of psychohistory and other procedures for locating citations may, of course, yield somewhat different results, but it is hoped that the analyses discussed here provide at least rough indicators of trends in the literature, and can be a starting point for other quantitative analyses of the development of the field.

Figure 1.1 indicates that the number of publications (including dissertations) was at a fairly constant low level through the 1950s, with a gradual increase in the 1960s and a sharp increase in dissertations,

2. Gilmore identifies his sources in constructing this bibliography as earlier bibliographies in psychohistory and related fields; his own bibliographical contributions to the *Psychohistory Review* and items encountered as co-editor of the *Psychohistory Review* and the *GUPH Newsletter*; a card file from bibliographer Normal Kiell; a systematic search of citations in *Psychological Abstracts*, *Sociological Abstracts*, *Abstracts in Anthropology*, *Dissertation Abstracts*, *America: History and Life*, and *Historical Abstracts*; and a search of the contents of the *History of Childhood Quarterly*, *Journal of Psychohistory*, the *Psychohistory Review*, the *I.P.A. Bulletin*, the *GUPH Newsletter*, and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. The search yielded more than 4,000 items, which Gilmore classified according to geographical area, historical period, and the three topical categories of general psychohistorical studies, studies of stages of the life cycle, and psychobiographical studies of individuals. Studies of the life cycle included items such as *Antiques of American Childhood* and *A Critical History of Children's Literature*, which bear on the history of the life cycle, although not on psychohistory defined as the explicit use of psychology in historical analysis. Thus, my analysis excludes these items on the life cycle, and is based on an analysis of all items within the psychohistory and psychobiography categories. Undoubtedly, some relevant items were also excluded from my analyses, so the quantitative estimates are on the conservative side. Finally, Gilmore's bibliography contains items that appeared through the end of 1981, but my analysis indicates that the listings for 1980 and 1981 are quite incomplete, so I analyzed studies done through the end of 1979.

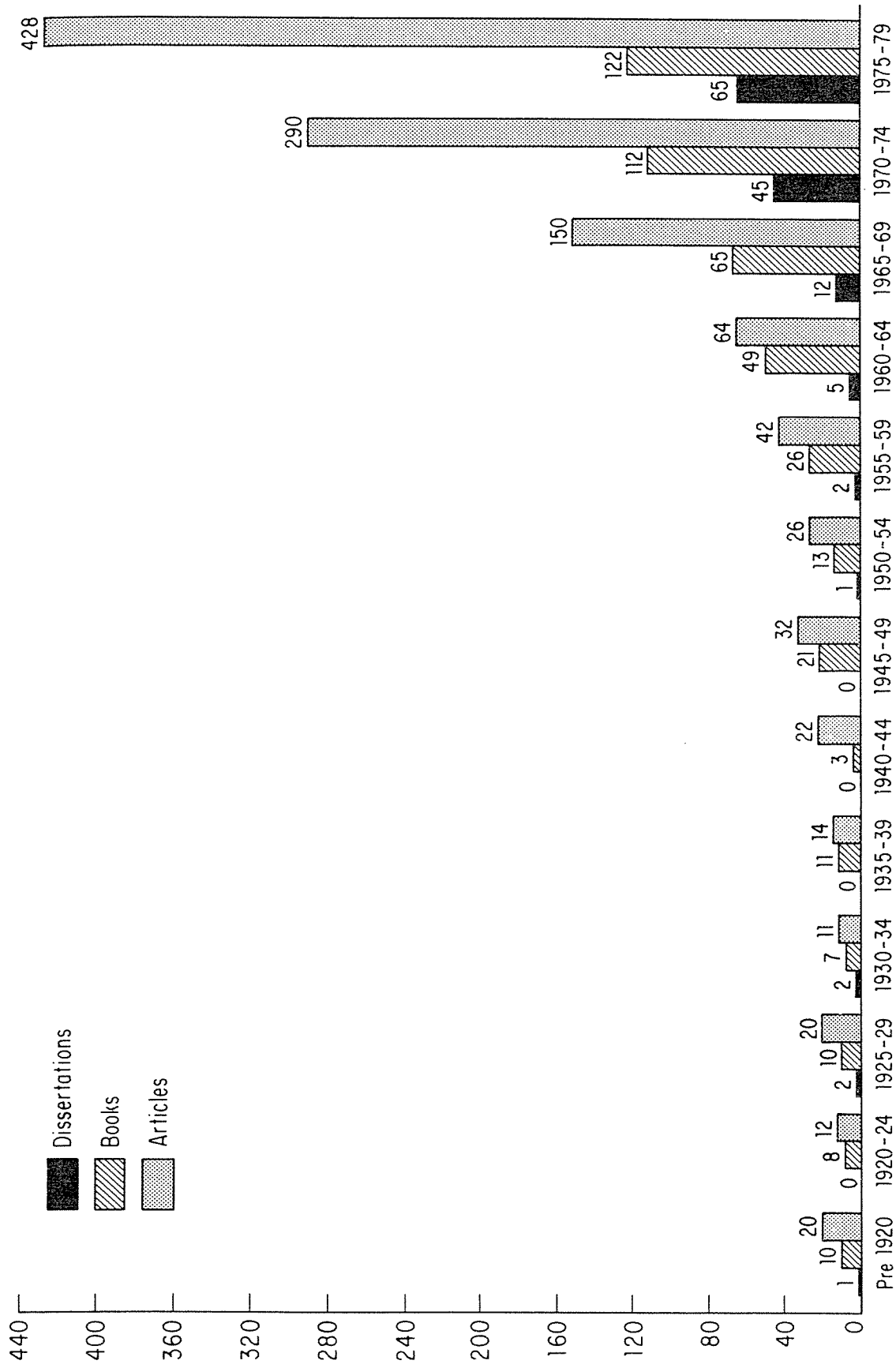


FIGURE 1.1. The growth of literature in psychohistory.

books, and articles in the 1970s. The right-hand column indicates that between 1975 and 1979, 428 articles (including chapters and book reviews) and 122 books were published, and 65 dissertations were completed.

A pattern consisting of a highest number of articles, followed by books, followed by dissertations, held without exception in each of the time periods from 1975 to 1979 back through before 1920. The number of dissertations is important as an indicator of the extent to which psychohistory has been institutionally accepted within universities, and also as a harbinger of future growth in the field. In these figures, there were 110 dissertations in the 1970s, compared with a total of 28 before 1970. A far greater number of graduate students are working in psychohistory and psychobiography, which suggests that the number of psychohistorical books and articles in future years should continue to rise.

The growth in the number of doctoral dissertations in psychohistory can be compared with the growth of doctoral dissertations in history as a whole. Across all areas of history, there was an increase from 201 dissertations in 1958 to 862 dissertations in 1978, or more than 4 times as many dissertations (Darnton, 1980). In psychohistory for approximately the same time period, there was an increase from 2 dissertations between 1955 and 1959 to 65 dissertations between 1975 and 1979, or more than 30 times as many.

In all history dissertations from 1968 to 1978, there was a growth from 754 to 862 dissertations, or an increase of 14 percent. In psychohistory for approximately the same time period, there was an increase from 12 dissertations between 1965 and 1969 to 65 dissertations between 1975 and 1979, or more than a 500 percent increase.

To compare psychohistory with several other subfields of history, the number of dissertations in political history declined by approximately 20 percent from 1968 to 1978 (252 in 1968 to 204 in 1978), and the number of dissertations in intellectual history remained relatively stable between 1968 and 1978 (approximately 72 in 1968 and 76 in 1978). The number of dissertations in other growth areas, such as labor history, black history, and history of women and the family, increased from 2 to 3½ times from 1968 to 1978 (Darnton, 1980). In contrast, during the same time period there was more than a fivefold increase in the number of dissertations in psychohistory, with 12 dissertations between 1965 and 1969 and 65 dissertations between 1975 and 1979. These calculations may be fairly rough estimates, but the general point is that the number of dissertations has been increasing more rapidly in psychohistory than in history as a whole; than in more established areas, such as

political and intellectual history; or even in other growth areas, such as labor, black, and women's and family history.

The growth in the number of publications is also reflected in Table 1.1, which gives the total number of publications (books, articles, and dissertations) per five-year period, broken down by geographical subject area. Table 1.1 reveals a relatively constant low level of publication from before 1920 through 1944, with approximately 20 to 30 total publications per five-year period, a gradual increase from 1945 through the 1950s (perhaps sparked by the attention to Nazi Germany), and an accelerating increase from 1960 through the 1970s.

Of all 1,723 publications from before 1920 through 1979, 1,062, or 62 percent, appeared between 1970 and 1979. In other words, more than three-fifths of all studies were published in the last decade. Within the most recent 15 years, from 1965 to 1979, there were 1,289 publications, or 75 percent of the total.

Table 1.1 also indicates the relative emphasis within English-language psychohistorical publications on the United States, or on Europe and the Soviet Union (abbreviated in the tables as Europe), compared with the Third World (defined here as the rest of the world). It is clear that studies of Europe (and the Soviet Union) and the United States constitute the bulk of English-language psychohistorical works, with Europe being the subject of slightly more studies than the United States in every time period. Summed over all time periods, the total number of studies of the United States is 665, or 39 percent of the total; of Europe and the Soviet Union, 897, or 52 percent of the total; and of the Third World, 161, or 9 percent of the total.

This general overview of the growth of publications in psychohistory can be broken down more finely. Table 1.2 indicates the number of dissertations, articles, and books within psychohistory and psychobiography on subjects in the United States, Europe, and the Third World by five-year time period. With this more detailed chart, readers can investigate questions of their own interest about the history of psychohistorical literature. To direct attention to one feature of this table, it can be seen in the far-right-hand column of the bottom row that there was a total of 135 dissertations, 457 books, and 1,131 articles during this time period. Thus there are more than twice as many articles as books, and more than three times as many books as dissertations.

What about the claim frequently made that the field of psychohistory is dominated by psychobiographical studies of individuals? At least as indicated by this analysis of the literature, that statement does not hold up. A comparison of the number of psychobiographical versus group

TABLE 1.1. Books, Articles, and Dissertations by Geographical Subject Area

	Pre- 1920	1920- 24	1925- 29	1930- 34	1935- 39	1940- 44	1945- 49	1950- 54	1955- 59	1960- 64	1965- 69	1970- 74	1975- 79	Total
United States	5	7	7	6	5	9	13	12	26	41	86	183	265	665
Europe	25	12	13	11	19	14	34	24	40	63	118	221	303	897
Third World	1	1	12	3	1	2	6	4	4	14	23	43	47	161
Total	31	20	32	20	25	25	53	40	70	118	227	447	615	1723

psychohistorical works on subjects in the United States or Europe and the Soviet Union was abstracted from Table 1.2 and is highlighted in Table 1.3. Examining the totals in the far-right-hand column, the number of group psychohistorical works on subjects in the United States is 428, compared with 237 psychobiographical studies. For Europe and the Soviet Union, group psychohistorical works outnumber psychobiographical studies by 517 to 380. Summed over the United States and Europe and the Soviet Union, group psychohistorical works outnumber psychobiographical studies by 945 to 617, or approximately 50 percent more psychohistorical than psychobiographical studies. The greater frequency of psychohistorical over psychobiographical studies holds within books, articles, and dissertations.

In addition to the 1,723 substantive studies analyzed in Table 1.2, Gilmore lists 417 methodological or theoretical studies written through 1979 under the title, "Models; Approaches; and Methods." The majority are from a Freudian or psychodynamic viewpoint, with 43 from an Eriksonian approach and 21 following the "psychogenic" approach of deMause and his colleagues. The rate of publications on models and methodology has also increased dramatically, from 2 published before 1920, 6 in the 1920s, 11 in the 1930s, 17 in the 1940s, 33 in the 1950s, 91 in the 1960s, to—the biggest jump—257 in the 1970s. In the 1970s, 98 of these studies were published between 1970 and 1974, with another 159 in the second half of the decade. There are also 26 readers, overviews, and bibliographies up through 1979, with another 6 since 1979.

In summary, the current rate of substantive publications in psychohistory as assessed from Gilmore's bibliography indicates that from 1970 through 1979, there was (in addition to more than 200 methodological publications) a total of 718 articles, 237 books, and 110 dissertations, yielding an average of more than 70 articles per year, 20 books per year, and 10 dissertations per year, which suggests the difficulty of keeping up with the field. If current trends continue, as the increasing number of dissertations suggests they will, the number of publications within psychohistory and psychobiography will continue to rise. In retrospect, this may be seen as a golden age, when it was relatively easy to keep up with the flow of literature in the field.

Institutionalization

The proliferation of publications in psychohistory has been accompanied by, and in part made possible by, an increasing institutionalization of

TABLE 1.2. Dissertations, Articles, and Books in Psychohistory

	<i>Pre-</i> 1920	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1935-39	1940-44
United States						
Psychohistory						
Dissertations	0	0	1	0	0	0
Articles	1	1	0	3	1	5
Books	3	0	0	0	2	2
Total	4	1	1	3	3	7
United States						
Psychobiography						
Dissertations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Articles	1	2	2	2	2	2
Books	0	4	4	1	0	0
Total	1	6	6	3	2	2
Europe						
Psychohistory						
Dissertations	0	0	0	1	0	0
Articles	0	5	2	4	3	9
Books	3	2	2	2	3	1
Total	3	7	4	7	6	10
Europe						
Psychobiography						
Dissertations	1	0	1	0	0	0
Articles	17	4	5	1	7	4
Books	4	1	3	3	6	0
Total	22	5	9	4	13	4
Third World						
Dissertations	0	0	0	1	0	0
Articles	1	0	11	1	1	2
Books	0	1	1	1	0	0
Total	1	1	12	3	1	2
Total: All categories and geographical areas						
Dissertations	1	0	2	2	0	0
Articles	20	12	20	11	14	22
Books	10	8	10	7	11	3
Total	31	20	32	20	25	25

1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	Total
0	1	1	3	6	18	29	59
8	4	8	10	27	71	104	243
3	3	7	11	16	38	41	126
11	8	16	24	49	127	174	428
0	0	1	0	0	7	18	26
1	2	7	12	30	30	58	151
1	2	2	5	7	19	15	60
2	4	10	17	37	56	91	237
0	0	0	1	2	13	10	27
11	12	10	20	45	91	130	342
7	6	14	18	24	24	42	148
18	18	24	39	71	128	182	517
0	0	0	1	4	5	5	17
9	5	13	15	31	67	102	280
7	1	3	8	12	21	14	83
16	6	16	24	47	93	121	380
0	0	0	0	0	2	3	6
3	3	4	7	17	31	34	115
3	1	0	7	6	10	10	40
6	4	4	14	23	43	47	161
0	1	2	5	12	45	65	135
32	26	42	64	150	290	428	113
21	13	26	49	65	112	122	457
53	40	70	118	227	447	615	1723

TABLE 1.3. Publications in Group Psychohistory and Psychobiography

<i>Group Psychohistory</i>														
	Pre-1920	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1935-39	1940-44	1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	Totals
United States	4	1	1	3	3	7	11	8	16	24	49	127	174	428
Europe	3	7	4	7	6	10	18	18	24	39	71	128	182	517
Total	7	8	5	10	9	17	29	26	40	63	120	255	356	945

<i>Psychobiography</i>														
	Pre-1920	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1935-39	1940-44	1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	Totals
United States	1	6	6	3	2	2	2	4	10	17	37	56	91	237
Europe	22	5	9	4	13	4	16	6	16	24	47	93	121	380
Total	23	11	15	7	15	6	18	10	26	41	84	149	212	617

the field, particularly since the early 1970s. Throughout the history of the field, one can see a growing degree of institutionalization, from pioneers working in relative isolation, through the formation of networks of peers and the organization of conferences, to the establishment of professional organizations and publication outlets in which psychohistory is a central rather than a peripheral concern. There has also been a modest degree of academic institutionalization of the field, through the establishment of courses, the writing of dissertations, and the possibility of specializing within this area.

To illustrate this process of institutionalization, one can conceptually distinguish six aspects of it, each aspect temporally overlapping with and affecting the others. The process of institutionalization can be visualized as progressing (1) from the original lone worker at his or her desk, without a surrounding network of colleagues working on similar problems and without a prior tradition to draw on (although in psychohistory, it is difficult to identify such a pure "state of nature," since even the original pioneers had at least some minimal external support, such as Freud from the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society by the time he was working on *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* in 1910, Alexander George beginning his work on Woodrow Wilson in a course on personality in politics with Nathan Leites in 1941 at the University of Chicago, or Erik Erikson working in the context of the psychoanalytic community while writing *Young Man Luther* at Austen Riggs in the 1950s); (2) to the establishment of informal contacts, discussion, correspondence, and exchange of manuscripts; (3) to the organization of single conferences or conventions, such as the conference on psychohistory at the City University of New York, organized by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and held in April 1971; the conference "Psychohistory—Present State and Future Prospect," organized by William J. Gilmore and held at Stockton State College, New Jersey, in October 1976; the Adelphi Conference on Psychohistory honoring Erik Erikson, held in October 1977; the conference on history and psychoanalysis emphasizing the work of Heinz Kohut, organized by Charles Strozier and Daniel Offer, and held at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago in June 1979; the conference "The Psychology of Biography," organized by Samuel Baron and Carl Pletsch, and held at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in November 1981; and the conference "History and Psychology: Recent Studies in the Family, Biography, and Theory," organized by Nathan Hale, Jr., and held at Stanford University in May 1982, which provided the background for this volume; (4) to groups meeting on a regular basis, such as the Wellfleet Group, organized by Robert Jay Lifton and meeting on

Cape Cod since 1966; the Los Angeles Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Study Group, which met regularly from 1966 to 1970 and included Alexander L. George, Peter Loewenberg, E. Victor Wolfenstein, Fawn Brodie, and Robert Dorn, and an interdisciplinary study group meeting at UCLA since 1984, including Robert Dallek, Peter Loewenberg, Elizabeth Marvick, Victor Wolfenstein, and others; the Group for Applied Psychoanalysis in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which met from 1965 to the early 1980s; and the Group for Applied Psychoanalysis at Cornell University; (5) to the establishment of formal professional organizations and societies, which may lead to the founding of journals and publication outlets, from Freud's Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1908 (emerging out of the Psychological Wednesday Society, formed by Freud in 1902); through the Group for the Use of Psychology in History, an affiliate of the American Historical Association that was organized by Richard Schoenwald and inaugurated in 1972, the same year in which it started its own newsletter, the *GUPH Newsletter*, changing into the *Psychohistory Review* in 1975, and edited from 1973 to 1986 by Charles Strozier (Strozier, 1986); the establishment by Lloyd deMause of the Institute for Psychohistory in 1972, the International Psychohistorical Association in 1976, the *Journal of Psychohistory* (changing to that name in 1976, after being called the *History of Childhood Quarterly* since its founding in 1973), and the Psychohistory Press, which publishes its own books in the field; to the foundation by Jeanne Knutson of the International Society of Political Psychology in 1977 and the launching of its journal, *Political Psychology*, in 1979; (6) and, finally, to academic institutionalization of the field, including the establishment of courses, the production of dissertations in psychohistory, and employment possibilities. In spite of the rapid growth in publications and other facets of institutionalization, the academic institutionalization of psychohistory has been very partial to date. It should be noted that it is possible to have substantial professional and intellectual development of a field, with little or no penetration of academic institutions (Shils, 1972). As for the number of courses offered in psychohistory, Mazlish (1966) stated in 1966 that only he and Erikson taught psychohistory courses at that time, but a little over a decade later (Mazlish, 1977), more than 200 courses in psychohistory were listed in college and university catalogues in the United States. This estimate of 200 courses has been repeated in other publications (Kren, 1977; Lawton, 1978; Lifton with Strozier, 1984), but another current survey of course offerings would be of value.

Another indicator of the growth of psychohistory within academia, and of the extent to which it is being pursued by younger generations of

scholars, is the number of doctoral dissertations, which reflects both the interests of students and the extent to which faculty members are willing to serve as chairpersons and committee persons on dissertations in this area.

I made a computerized search of *Dissertation Abstracts* from its beginning through 1984 to identify all dissertations that have the term *psychobiography*, *psychobiographical*, *psychohistory*, or *psychohistorical* in their titles or abstracts. This search of *Dissertation Abstracts* yielded a total of 60 items, with 41 dissertations describing themselves as psychohistorical and 19 as psychobiographical. If the abstract indicated that the topic is discussed in a peripheral way—for example, that a psychobiographical approach would not be pursued in the dissertation—the item was deleted, leaving a total of 56 dissertations. This is unquestionably a subset of all dissertations in the field, since many psychobiographical or psychohistorical dissertations do not include those specific words in their title or abstract. For example, UCLA has produced at least 7 dissertations in psychohistory, only one of which has the word *psychohistorical* in the title. Gilmore's (1984) bibliography yielded a total of 135 dissertations through 1979 under the sections of psychohistory and psychobiography, not including those on the life cycle. My search was more limited in scope, but also more up to date, in that it covered the literature up through 1984.

Each dissertation in *Dissertation Abstracts* is classified as belonging to a primary field or discipline. I would have expected a substantial proportion of dissertations in psychohistory or psychobiography to be associated with the field of history, but only five of these 56 dissertations were listed with their primary descriptor as history. One might quarrel with the classification of particular dissertations, and a different classification procedure might well yield different results, but given the nature and limitations of this coding scheme, the distribution across fields was as follows: psychology, 29; literature, 11; history, 5; education, 4; political science, 3; religion, 3; and 1 each for economics, fine arts, American studies, and sociology. If nothing else, this distribution suggests the interdisciplinary spread of those engaged in psychohistory.

A second issue is the distribution of dissertations across universities. Are there a few key universities with influential professors who are responsible for producing a disproportionate share of dissertations in this field, as has been true in several other subfields of history (Kammen, 1980)? Clifford Geertz (1983) has noted an "exile from Eden syndrome" (p. 159), in which a high proportion of doctorates in a discipline are awarded at a few elite universities, and graduating students

then move down the academic prestige ladder, or away from the center to more peripheral institutions. I do not have information on the career lines of those writing dissertations in psychohistory, but are the bulk of dissertations in psychohistory produced by a few central universities?

As indicated by this search strategy, the dissertations in psychohistory and psychobiography are widely scattered around the country, with the most common pattern being a single dissertation from a given university. Universities having more than one dissertation describing itself as psychohistorical or psychobiographical were University of Chicago, with 3; Adelphi University, 2; Northwestern University, 2; University of Tennessee, 2; United States International University, 2; Yale University, 2; Yeshiva University, 2; University of Alberta, Canada, 2; and, surprisingly, having the most in the country, the California School of Professional Psychology, Berkeley, 7.³

In short, there seems to be a remarkable degree of decentralization in the production of doctoral dissertations in psychohistory. One possible interpretation is that although the field may be gradually becoming an *intellectual* discipline, with a defined set of problems and approaches, it has not yet become an *academic* discipline, with well-defined and well-organized academic training programs (see Shils, 1972). Although a few universities have more systematic training in psychohistory (for example, UCLA and Kansas State University), the bulk of dissertations are apparently being produced by single interested students in conjunction with one or more sympathetic faculty members at institutions scattered across the country.

The two earliest dissertations using the word *psychohistory* or *psychobiography* in the title or abstract were those by Alan Lichtenstein at Indiana University in 1971, "T. N. Granovskii and the Roots of the Politics of Enlightenment, 1813–1844: A Psychohistorical Inquiry," and by

3. Universities with one dissertation each that describes itself as psychohistorical or psychobiographical were Boston University; Brown University; California Institute of Asian Studies; California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles; Carnegie-Mellon University; Columbia University; Cornell University; Harvard University; Indiana University; Loyola University, Chicago; Michigan State University; North Texas State University; Northwestern University; Ohio State University; Rutgers University, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology; Saint Mary's Seminary and University; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; State University of New York, Buffalo; State University of New York, Stony Brook; Union for Experimental Colleges and Universities; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Iowa; University of Minnesota; University of Pennsylvania; University of Pittsburgh; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Wayne State University; and, outside the United States, the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies, Puerto Rico; University of British Columbia; and University of Toronto.

Alvin Ramsey at Harvard in 1973, "A Psychohistorical Analysis of Afro-American Identity: Theory, Hypotheses, Methods for Investigation."

The peak years for production of dissertations in this area were 1976, with 7, and 1983, with 10. During the 1970s, there were 27 dissertations describing themselves as psychohistorical or psychobiographical, and in the first half of the 1980s (1980–84), there were 28, so the rate of production approximately doubled.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that this discussion includes only a subset of dissertations in the field, those explicitly describing themselves as psychohistorical or psychobiographical, and that the results may be somewhat different for the complete set of dissertations in psychohistory. In the following sections, we will examine several basic intellectual issues that have influenced the growth of the field and its limited degree of institutionalization.

Antibiographical Trends Within Historiography

One theme cutting across a number of schools of historiography is a distrust of biography, or a distrust of an overemphasis on individuals. "The spirit of the modern period, with its new respect for collectivism, with its hatred of all individualism, has cried out with great conviction: 'It is not heroes, the few, who make history; it is groups, classes, peoples, races'" (Huizinga, 1934, quoted in Stern, 1972, p. 299). As history moved beyond its initial focus on political, diplomatic, and military affairs ("drum and trumpet history") to a broader concern with economic, intellectual, social, ecological, and demographic history, there has been an increasing uneasiness about what is perceived as an overemphasis on individuals in traditional historiography.

This theme underlies many of the debates about psychohistory (and particularly about psychobiography), and it has pervasive implications for the extent to which psychology may or may not be useful to historians. Whatever else psychology does, it studies motivational, cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes of individuals. If persons have no place in history, then psychology has no place in history. Conversely, if individuals (and detailed biographical studies of individuals) have a place within history, then the prospects of fruitfully using psychology in history are considerably brighter.

The nature and persuasiveness of these antibiographical arguments are worth examining, as they have significant implications for one's be-

beliefs about the relevance of psychology for history. A discussion of anti-biographical trends within historiography is certainly *not* to claim that all historians are uninterested in the study of individual lives, since many of the best biographies have been written by historians and there is an increasing interest in historical studies of the family and of the life course (Demos, 1986; Elder, 1974, 1985; Hareven, 1978, 1982; Hareven and Adams, 1982).

However, influential antibiographical beliefs are shared by a substantial number of historians across different schools of historiography, as in the work of many Marxist, *Annales*, structuralist, and quantitative social historians. The intent of this section is to review a number of expressions of these antibiographical beliefs within different branches of historiography, to disentangle several of their components, and to critically evaluate them with the intent of better understanding the relationships between history and psychology.

According to Marx, for example, social relations and their transformation have priority over the study of individuals. "Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand" (Marx, 1857–58/1978, p. 247), and "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations" (Marx, 1845/1978, p. 145). The apparent influence of "great men" on the course of history is illusory, as the course of history is governed by economic necessity. "That such and such a man and precisely that man arises at a particular time in a particular country is, of course, pure chance. But cut him out and there will be a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found. . . . If a Napoleon had been lacking, another would have filled the place" (Engels, 1894/1978, pp. 767–768).

Although notably heterogeneous, much of Marxist thought has been antagonistic to the study of individuals and their psychological processes. In summarizing some of these views (and subsequently arguing against them), Lucien Sève (1978) states that first, from the perspective of historical materialism, in which consciousness is a product of the material world and of social life, the analysis of objective social life and economic relations takes precedence over the psychological analysis of human subjectivity. Second, scientific socialism is concerned with studying the masses, and the psychological investigation of individuals is subordinate to this.

Within the *Annales* tradition, beginning in France in 1929 with the publication of the journal *Annales* by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, there has often not been much enthusiasm for biography, particularly in

the second generation as Fernand Braudel became a dominant figure (Bizière, 1983; Burguière, 1982; Ratcliffe, 1980). Biography was seen as encapsulating much that was defective in the older tradition of political history, against which *Annales* scholars were reacting—that is, “it was elitist, narrative, short-term, superficial, atomized, and abstracted the individual from his context” (Ratcliffe, 1980, p. 559). In 1972, a leading *Annales* historian, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, stated that “present-day historiography, with its preference for the quantifiable, the statistical and the structural, has been obliged to suppress in order to survive. In the last decades it has virtually condemned to death the narrative history of events and the individual biography” (quoted in Stone, 1981, p. 96). (As we shall see later, this view has subsequently been modified.)

Skepticism about the intensive study of individual lives is shared by a number of quantitative social historians, who believe that the study of individuals is “elitist,” is nonrepresentative, is anecdotal rather than systematic, and does not deal with the everyday experience of ordinary men and women.

Structural linguistics has also influenced historiography and the general intellectual climate, in part through anthropology and the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Its emphasis is on synchronic study of language systems and a search for universal linguistic structures that shape human thought and action. “In this scheme human beings disappeared as acting, deciding, and decisive individuals. All research was now directed toward finding the invisible, impersonal, and timeless structures—the keys to human behavior” (Breisach, 1983, p. 374).

One final illustration of antibiographical sentiments, which does not even require translation, can be presented in the original French: “De tous les genres historiographiques, la biographie est le plus futile, le plus paresseux, le plus arrogant, le plus réactionnaire et le plus irrationnel” (Romano, 1982, p. 43).

What are some of the sources of this antipathy toward biography? There are a number of strands of the argument against biography, which I will attempt to disentangle so that each can be exposed to the light of day and assessed independently. The intent is to initiate a dialogue leading to a defensible position about the study of persons and their psychological processes within historiography.

Many historians look askance at biography because they associate it with a crude “Great Man” theory of history, which overemphasizes the influence of prominent individuals on the course of history, while neglecting the role of populations and the operation of massive economic, cultural, religious, and social structural processes. The classic statement

of the "Great Man" view is by Thomas Carlyle (1840/1972) who wrote that

Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modelers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material results, the practical realisation and embodiment of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these. (p. 101)

It should be clear that in-depth studies of individuals need not be based on this crude theory of history. One can write and read biographies as studies of the perceptions, beliefs, actions, and experiences of individuals, even if it is assumed that individuals had *no* historical influence and were no more than passive perceivers and experiencers of large-scale impersonal historical forces and processes. A biography of Alice James (Strouse, 1980) need not assume that she was a World-Historical figure.

With the assumption that individuals had no influence at all, would biography then be an entirely separate genre, outside the walls of history? No, not if one believes that studying the human meaning or significance of economic, social, political, ecological, and technological changes is part of the historical enterprise.

A more sophisticated stance is to search for the conditions under which individual actors (along with economic, political, social, religious, and other factors) do or do not influence historical events. This is the stance taken in a number of sophisticated biographical studies, which analyze both individual and institutional factors, such as John Mack's study of T. E. Lawrence (1976), Robert Tucker on Stalin (1973), Waite on Hitler (1977), the Georges on Wilson (1956/1964), and the recent debate on the effect of Kaiser Wilhelm on World War I (Röhl and Sombart, 1982).

An instructive analysis of the influence of individuals in history is still Sidney Hook's *The Hero in History* (1943), which attempts "to work out some generalization of the types of situations and conditions in which we can justifiably attribute or deny causal influence to outstanding personalities" (p. xiv). In an analysis of the historical influence of Lenin, Hook persuasively argues that the Russian Revolution had an important influence on the political, cultural, and economic life of the world; that

the revolution was not inevitable; that other revolutionary leaders, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, or Trotsky, would not have been effective substitutes for Lenin; and that Lenin's leadership was crucial to the success of the revolution. Whether or not one agrees with the conclusion of Hook's analysis, he demonstrates the level of detail and subtlety of argument needed to assert or deny claims about the causal influence of an individual on the course of historical events.

A more recent critique of the determinist view that individuals never make a difference in the course of history is presented in Arthur Schlesinger's *Cycles of American History* (1986), which argues that if one applies historical determinism to specific historical episodes, "the results are self-convicting" (p. 421). With figures as diverse as Napoleon, Shakespeare, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Lenin, or Hitler, claims that particular individuals make no difference in the course of history are simply unconvincing.

A second strand of the antibiography position is that the study of individuals is "elitist." The argument is that biographies focus too much attention on kings, queens, political and military leaders, and the privileged, while ignoring the experience of the masses, the oppressed, and ordinary men and women.

One can agree that it is virtuous to get away from an exclusive focus on the elite and to learn more about the oppressed, the inarticulate, and those groups of persons too often neglected in history as well as by society. However, the social class issue should not be confused with the level of aggregation question, which conceptually is an entirely independent issue.

One can do detailed biographical studies of individuals from the social elite, the middle class, or the poorest or most oppressed groups, as is indicated by the substantial and growing number of biographical and autobiographical studies of criminals, drug addicts, psychotic killers, black and Puerto Rican ghetto dwellers, marginal anthropological informants, and so on (Bennett, 1981; Langness and Frank, 1981). Conversely, one can do large-scale quantitative studies not only of anonymous masses, but also of the elite, such as members of Parliament (Namier, 1957) or eminent political, military, and cultural leaders (Simonton, 1984).

In sum, an interest in the experience of ordinary men and women is not an adequate reason for preferring quantitative to biographical studies, since both kinds of analysis can be done and need to be done for all social groups.

Whether a study is "elitist" or not depends not just on the persons be-

ing studied, but also on the interpretation offered. Is every study of an elite individual “elitist”? What about debunking biographies, which reveal the misuse of power and privilege, such as Robert Caro’s detailed critical studies of Robert Moses (1974) and Lyndon Johnson (1982)? Whether a study is “elitist” or not depends not solely upon the subject, but also upon interpretations given and how the individual is related to his or her social, political, and historical context.

In short, it is naïve to argue that a particular level of analysis in itself is “elitist.” It is no more persuasive to argue that the study of individuals is “elitist” than it is to argue that quantitative studies are inherently “progressive,” or egalitarian. There is no substitute for individual, group, and population studies of the entire range of social groups and classes.

A third strand of the antibiographical argument is that it is reductionistic to take a biographical approach to history or to operate on “the assumption that history was the sum of the biographies of a limited number of dominant individuals” (Handlin, 1979, p. 267). Jared Sparks, launching a dictionary of American biography in the nineteenth century, suggested that since social, cultural, and political progress is so dependent on a few eminent individuals, a biographical collection of distinguished Americans “would embrace a perfect history of the country” (quoted in Handlin, 1979, p. 267). In the twentieth century, this view became increasingly untenable as historians have turned their attention to large-scale impersonal forces shaping economic, political, and social institutions.

It is, unquestionably, simplistic to claim that “History = Biography” or that history can be reduced to nothing more than the aggregation of individual biographies, since this leaves out the impact of ecological and demographic factors, ignores the evolution of economic, political, religious, educational, and other institutions, and neglects the complex interactions between institutions and social groups.

It is, however, equally reductionistic to claim that an understanding of individual persons and their psychological processes has nothing to contribute to an analysis of the history of groups, social movements, institutions, and nations. Only a dogmatic reductionism would maintain that the personality and life of Hitler had nothing to do with the course of World War II; of Lenin, with the Russian Revolution; of Gandhi, with India’s struggle with the British; or of Martin Luther King, Jr., with the civil rights movement. Regardless of the trends of intellectual fashion, it is just as reductionistic to exclude the role of individuals and their psychological processes in historical analysis, as it was to naïvely over-emphasize them in the nineteenth century.

A fourth strand of the antibiographical argument, which appears not just in history, but in sociology, anthropology, and psychology as well, is that it is hard to know if any single individual is "representative" of some larger group or population. For many purposes, this issue of "representativeness" is irrelevant because one is often interested in studying individuals who are *not* representative, who because of position, chance, or personal characteristics have unusual interest for us or had an unusually great influence on the course of history. Questions about the representativeness of an Alexander the Great, a Joan of Arc, a Vincent Van Gogh, or an Adolf Hitler are not to the point.

When biographical analysis is used for portraying the experience of a particular historical group, such as American slaves, assembly-line workers, or women in nineteenth-century France, it is often helpful to use a set of biographical sketches to illustrate the diversity of life experiences of those within the group. Analysis of a number of lives can reveal the ways in which a historical period or event was differentially perceived, experienced, and interpreted by a variety of persons in different social locations (Runyan, 1986). For portraying the experience of a group, the representativeness of individuals *is* an important issue, but given the internal heterogeneity of most groups, quantitative group studies are often usefully supplemented with measures of dispersion and with a set of individual portraits.

Two additional strands of the antibiographical argument may be briefly mentioned. A fifth is the view among some historians that biography is too easy a genre, the objection being that biography is "a lazy and easy form, having an obvious shape based on the birth, development, and death of the subject of the biography" (Marwick, 1981, p. 223) and that the biographer could escape the archival complexities of most historical research by working primarily with the collected papers of the subject (Handlin, 1979, p. 268). There undoubtedly are superficial biographies that are quickly and easily written, but a serious biography is extraordinarily difficult to do well (as acknowledged by both Marwick and Handlin), requiring consultation with a great range of sources, extensive knowledge of the subject's social-historical world and arena of professional activity, psychological knowledge for interpreting personality and behavior, and literary skill in presenting the whole. The complexity of these problems is indicated in the extensive literature on the art and science of biography (Bowen, 1969; Clifford, 1962, 1970; Edel, 1984; Garraty, 1957; Pachter, 1979; Runyan, 1982a).

A sixth issue, which sometimes distresses historians, is that biography as a genre is too popular compared with other forms of historiography.

It tends to pander to public interest in the personal, the gossipy, and the sensational, while diverting attention away from deeper historical analyses. One can empathize with the frustrations of historians who see their own laborious analyses of underlying social and institutional forces neglected by the public in favor of cheap and sensational biographies. "The failure of the public to appreciate the professional historical expert—as it appreciated both the popular historian and the scientific expert—rankled deeply" (Higham, 1983, p. 78).

To summarize, antibiographical sentiments can be found in a number of branches of contemporary historiography, including Marxist, *Annales*, structuralist, and quantitative social historians. A number of analytically separable strands of these views were distinguished and critically evaluated, including the views that biographical studies are based on a "Great Man" theory of history, that they are elitist, that they assume history can be reduced to the sum of individual biographies, that individuals are not representative of a larger group, and that the analysis of individual lives is intellectually lazy and panders to a public interest in personality, while diverting attention from deeper historical processes.

To simplify the history of the debate about the place of individuals and psychological processes within history, one can analytically distinguish three separate positions, each partially overlapping in time and each still alive in some quarters and in contention with the others. These three viewpoints, in rough sequential order, are (1) a naïve overemphasis on the role of prominent individuals in influencing and representing the course of historical events; (2) a rejection of the study of individuals, in favor of larger structures, whether in the form of modes of production, class relationships, demographic and ecological processes, or quantitative studies of social groups; and (3) a search for ways of reintegrating individuals and their psychological processes into analyses of their reciprocal causal relationships with broader economic, demographic, and institutional forces.

The movement beyond antibiographical approaches, seeking to integrate individuals into broader historical patterns, is not restricted to any single school, but cuts across branches of historiography and is reflected in general overviews of the field. For example, Lucien Sève (1978) reviews and critiques a number of the common Marxist objections to the study of individual psychology, and attempts to develop a theory of personality and of biography consistent with Marxist theory, while associates of the *Annales* school, long ambivalent about biography, increasingly argue that studies of individual subjective experience can

make contributions to a total history (for example, Bizière, 1983; Ratcliffe, 1980; Stone, 1981).

A synthesis of individual and structural levels of analysis is argued for by a variety of commentators on contemporary historiography. After surveying the history of Western historiography from ancient through modern developments, Breisach (1983) argues that a principal issue is the need to avoid extremes marked by "the chaos of individuals or by the timeless and ahistorical silence of structures" (p. 408). The extreme of expunging the individual element for the sake of quantitative scientific studies of structure is parodied by Chiari (1975) as follows. With the human element, "there is always a residuum of uniqueness which does not fit the abstractions and generalizations in which the scientist would like to enclose it. The human being is thus difficult to handle; the best solution, of course, is to suppress him, or to declare that he no longer exists. In this way, science could really take over and work out theories no human element could contradict" (quoted in Plummer, 1983, p. 1). In Breisach's (1983) view, historians over the past half-century have been torn by a "dichotomy between the realm of the individual's world of purposes, intentions, and acts of will and the concept of a binding order with an all-encompassing structure" (p. 410). Historians must, in his view, pursue the most difficult option of analyzing an order in which the influence of impersonal structures and forces is intertwined with the choices and actions of at least partly free and morally responsible individuals.

Oscar Handlin (1979) uses a theatrical metaphor to represent the relationships between individuals and their sociohistorical contexts. While individuals are shaped by their times, they may also have a "discernible influence" on the course of subsequent events: "The individual takes part in a drama that began long before the birth, that goes on long after the death, of any player. Entering for a brief turn on a scene already set, a stage already crowded, and with the action already in progress, each person confronts a situation that already exists, the product of long preparation. . . . But to some degree, all are free—to move, to alter the wandering of others, even to reshape bits of the set. . . . Institutions that are the results of complex historic forces determine the situation. But the situation does not determine the reaction to it" (pp. 275–276).

One of the most widely known statements on the transition from a focus on structures to one on persons-in-structures is in Lawrence Stone's essay on the return of narrative (Stone, 1981). Stone suggests

that historians of *mentalités*, concerned with using narrative methods in the pursuit of subjective experience, mind sets, and intimate personal behavior, are currently challenging the quantitatively oriented social historians, who focus on impersonal structures. Stone argues that, "There are signs of change in the central issue in history from the circumstances surrounding man to man in circumstances; in the problems studied from the economic and demographic to the cultural and emotional; in the prime sources of influence from sociology, economics, and demography to anthropology and psychology; in the subject matter from the group to the individual; in the explanatory models of historical change from the stratified and monocausal to the interconnected and multicausal . . ." (p. 96).

The interconnections among these different levels of analysis is usefully characterized by Bernard Bailyn (1982) as a tension between manifest history and latent history. *Manifest* history depicts the story of events that contemporaries were aware of, that were perceived as important at the time, even if the actual causes and determining factors were "buried below the level of contemporaries' understanding" (p. 9). In contrast, *latent* history is the story of underlying events and processes that people at the time were partially or wholly unaware of, that they did not consciously struggle over, and that may or may not have been recorded in documentation of the time. Underlying shifts in demographic patterns, in agricultural conditions, in income distribution, in church membership, and in living arrangements may all have important consequences for people, yet may not have been in their awareness at the time, and discovered only centuries later through historical research. These underlying, or latent, events "form a new landscape—a landscape like that of the ocean floor, assumed to have existed in some vague way by people struggling at the surface of the waves but never seen before as actual rocks, ravines, and cliffs" (pp. 10–11).

An important agenda for contemporary historiography is exploring the relationships between these latent and manifest levels, between underlying structures and more easily visible actions and experiences. As expressed by Bailyn (1982), "the essence and drama of history lie precisely in the active and continuous relationships between the underlying conditions that set the boundaries of human existence and the everyday problems with which people consciously struggle. The goal of history is not to separate out events of these different dimensions at a particular point in time, but to show their continuous interaction in an evolving story. The drama of people struggling with the conditions

that confine them through the cycles of limited life spans is the heart of all living history" (p. 5).

To summarize, a central challenge for contemporary historiography is to explore the relationships between manifest and latent events, between human agency and structural constraint, and between the psychological processes of individuals and groups and the maintenance and change of social structures and institutions. Far from being a peripheral or dispensable development within historiography, a psychologically informed history is crucial for addressing these issues.

Antiparticularism and Levels of Generality in Psychology

A key intellectual issue that divides the disciplines of history and psychology is their respective positions on the search for particularity or generality. To put the matter in simplest form, history is concerned with the description and interpretation of particular sequences of historical events and processes, while the science of psychology is concerned with a search for general theories about the mind, experience, and behavior. A classic formulation of this distinction is that history is an "idiographic" discipline, concerned with interpreting specific events and processes, while psychology is a "nomothetic" discipline, concerned with searching for general laws (Allport, 1962; Windelband, 1904). This emphasis on a search for general theories rather than the study of particulars applies particularly to academic psychology, which will be the focus of the following discussion, as psychoanalysis has always had an interest in the interpretation of particular cases as well as in general theory.

These distinctions between nomothetic and idiographic disciplines are, of course, rough simplifications (with a number of exceptions to be discussed later), but there is still a clear difference between history and psychology in their underlying assumptions and in the *bulk* of their practice. The two disciplines differ in their aims, methods, and typical products in that historians aim to understand the histories of particular nations, institutions, or events, depend on methods of collecting and interpreting vast amounts of particularistic information, and traditionally present their research in the form of narrative accounts, while academic psychologists aspire to develop general theories, use quantitative and experimental methods designed to test theoretical conjectures, and present their work in the form of empirical tests of explicit hypotheses.

The discipline of psychology is devoted to the search for generaliza-

tions about psychological structures, elements, and processes within the domains of cognition, sensation and perception, biopsychology, and developmental, personality, abnormal, and social psychology. As expressed by Levy (1970), the goal of psychology is "the development of generalizations of ever increasing scope, so that greater and greater varieties of phenomena may be explained by them, larger and larger numbers of questions answered by them, and broader and broader reaching predictions and decisions based upon them" (p. 5).

Psychologists are typically *not* concerned with the study of psychological processes of particular individuals in particular historical circumstances, since the study of single cases is seen primarily as a springboard for developing more general ideas and hypotheses. For example, from the study of historical particulars, such as that of Kitty Genovese, who was murdered near a railroad station in Queens without any of thirty-eight bystanders who heard her screams doing anything to help, the psychologist moves to general questions about the relationships among variables that affect the likelihood of bystander intervention (Latané and Darley, 1970). As expressed by Allport (1962), "We recognize the single case as a useful source of hunches—and that is about all. We pursue our acquaintance with Bill long enough to derive some hypothesis, and then spring like a gazelle into the realm of abstraction" (p. 406).

The study of particular historical cases or events is seen as a source of hypotheses that then need to be tested with "more rigorous" correlational and experimental methods. It is important to note, however, that there is a shift in the level of generality of the causal hypothesis. It is no longer a hypothesis about the relationship among factors in a particular case, but rather a more general hypothesis about the causal relationships among classes of variables, such as factors that influence bystander intervention, the persuasiveness of communications, or obedience to authority.

Psychologists are often socialized into a way of viewing the world in which questions about historical particulars are rendered invisible on the intellectual landscape (or if not invisible, at least peripheral). Specific historical incidents may be used to raise a general causal question, but with a few exceptions (for example, Cronbach, 1975; Gergen, 1973, 1982), sustained inquiry into the interpretation of psychological structures and processes in particular historical circumstances tends not to be pursued, or even identified as a worthy objective.

I sometimes ask psychologists whether they are aware of work that applies their theories or research findings to particular historical events

or periods. The response is often one of puzzlement or bewilderment. What would be the point of doing that? If these findings are general, presumably they would apply anywhere, anytime. Why bother trying to apply them to partly known historical circumstances, in which the data are fragmentary, the observations uncontrolled, and the causal variables confounded? From this point of view, there *is* no great value in attempting to study particular historical events or circumstances, as the possibility of rigorously testing general causal hypotheses is usually much greater in controlled experimental settings.

In brief, the view of many psychologists is that the naturalistic study of particular persons or groups in particular social-historical circumstances is not useful if one cannot generalize from it; is valuable primarily as a source of more general hypotheses, which then need to be tested with other, more rigorous methods; and is problematic in that observations are often fragmentary, causal variables are confounded, and general causal questions can be more rigorously investigated under controlled experimental conditions than through the cloudy mirror of history. A number of these beliefs can be grouped together under the label of "antiparticularism," which includes all those beliefs and assumptions downgrading the importance of studying social and historical particularities.

The relative indifference of psychologists to the study of historical issues is indicated in at least two ways: (1) a lack of involvement of most psychologists in work on the use of psychology in interpreting particular historical events and processes (as the bulk of work in psychohistory and psychobiography is done by those from other disciplines), and (2) a lack of concern of most psychologists for testing the transhistorical generality or specificity of their theories. There seems to be far greater interest in the transsituational, cross-subject, and cross-cultural generality of theories than in their transhistorical generality.

A Continuum of Levels of Generality

I will argue that psychology and history can be related more effectively than they have been in the past if we think of a *continuum* of levels of generality, ranging from the most particular and idiographic, through concepts and theories of moderate or context-bound generality, to the most general and universal. I have argued elsewhere (Runyan, 1982a, 1983) that psychology needs to be concerned with at least three different levels of generality, seeking to learn (1) what is true of all human beings; (2) what is true of groups of human beings, distinguished by

sex, race, social class, culture, historical period, and the like; and (3) what is true of individual human beings in particular social and historical contexts. The beliefs and assumptions identified earlier as composing antiparticularism tend to imply that the *important* issues are deep and general ones, while the study of particularities and context-bounded regularities is relatively superficial and unimportant. I submit that it is of both theoretical and practical importance to explore the entire continuum of levels of generality in psychological and social phenomena, and to pursue the difficult and elusive questions of their interpenetration.

In the famous "social psychology as history" debate (Gergen, 1973, Schlenker, 1974; Manis et al., 1976; Gergen, 1982), Gergen drew attention to a number of factors that limit the establishment of general laws in the social sciences, such as that facts and the relationships among them are constantly changing over historical time and that the process and results of inquiry may reflexively alter the social relationships under investigation as people change their behavior as a result of advances in knowledge. On the other side, critics such as Schlenker argued that there are greater transcultural and transhistorical regularities than Gergen recognized, that the reflexive effects of social science knowledge could be predicted or studied as regularities in themselves, and that a few general processes could be found underlying and producing the apparent diversity of human behavior. I will not attempt to resolve that debate here, but rather suggest that it is useful to consider a continuum of levels of generality and to analyze the historical processes that produce, maintain, and change different levels of generality.

There is a continuum of levels of generality not only in the relationships among elements or variables, but also in all the analytic units in the human-social-historical world, including the elements themselves, processes, causal relationships, correlational relationships, meanings, interactions among systems, and the temporal trajectory of systems and processes.

Over time, evolutionary processes produce, maintain, transform, and make extinct each particular level of generality. The processes produce some elements or components that are of quite wide generality, such as atoms; other entities of moderate generality, such as feudalism, slavery, or capitalism; and yet other things that are remarkably specific and idiosyncratic, such as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address or the career of Joseph Stalin. The essential notion is that there is a whole continuum of levels of generality, that they change over time, and that it is important to understand each level of generality and their interrelationships.

From the perspective of a continuum of levels of generality, there is

3) a certain *primacy* in the historical perspective, in that it is more encompassing than the social scientific perspective. Psychology and the other social sciences are devoted to a search for regularities in the world—to developing quantitative measurements, finding correlations, building models of underlying structures and processes, developing general theories of change, and discovering causal relationships that hold across space and time. These are profoundly important tasks, but they are restricted in scope in that they are focused on the search for order and regularity in the world.

3, Historical inquiry is broader in scope, in that in investigating the flow of humanly important events and experiences, it must attend not only to the ordered, structured, and lawlike aspects of human and social reality, but also to the disorderly, the particular, the idiosyncratic, the transient, and the random.

er History is the medium within which the kinds of order, regularity, comparability, and generality sought by the social sciences are formed, maintained, transformed, and extinguished. The historical process is the medium within which phenomenal order is born, lives, and dies. The social sciences study islands of structure and stability within seas of historical change.

at Different research methods, or different strategies of knowledge seeking, are appropriate for revealing different aspects of this unfolding world. Narrative and descriptive—interpretive methods are best suited for representing particular entities and processes over time, while scientific generalization-seeking methods are best suited for searching for order, regularity, structures, and underlying causal processes that hold across space and time. The very possibility of the social scientific enterprise being successful is dependent on the degrees of homogeneity, order, and transtemporal stability which are present in this unfolding historical process.

d The success of each research strategy, the historical and the scientific, will depend on the kind of world we are living in. If the world is, in fact, highly structured, with stable and regular relationships among elements and entities, then, to that extent, the scientific program of searching for broad-ranging generalizations can be highly successful. (Perhaps one reason the physical sciences are more successful than the social sciences is that the physical world does have more of these characteristics than the social world.) On the other hand, to the extent that the social world is disorderly, emergent, and heterogeneous, with elements, structures, processes, and meanings changing over time in unpredictable ways, then the historians' knowledge-seeking strategies will be relatively more effec-

tive. There is, in short, a relationship between the underlying degrees and types of order in the world and the fruitfulness of different knowledge-seeking strategies.

The vision of an ordered, structured world can be called a Model I view of the world, and the vision of an emergent, disorderly, ever-changing universe as a Model II view of the world. What kind of world do we, in fact, live in? The answer to this is not immediately apparent, but can gradually emerge through the process of applying various knowledge-seeking strategies and examining their outcomes. My own reading of the evidence suggests that we live in a Mixed Model World, with some features of order, homogeneity, and temporal stability, and other features of a disorderly world, with great heterogeneity, temporal instability, changes in relationships, and the operation of random factors. If we do live in such a Mixed Model World, this suggests the utility of a combined social scientific and historical approach, with psychohistory as one such hybrid approach.

The prospects for effectively integrating scientific-psychological and historical modes of inquiry have improved somewhat in recent years. Traditionally, psychologists emphasized the search for generalizations, and historians concentrated on the description and interpretation of particular sequences of events, but there are signs that both disciplines are paying greater attention to a wider range of levels of generality.

Historians, particularly those interested in "scientific history," are showing greater interest in measurement, quantification, comparison, generalization, and the testing of explicit hypotheses (Fogel and Elton, 1983; Kousser, 1980; Tilly, 1978), while at least some psychologists are taking into account the historical context and the transhistorical generality of their theories. Over time, both historians and psychologists are coming to occupy a broader spectrum of positions on the continuum of levels of generality, historians working in from the particularistic end, and psychologists in from the generalizing end.

Among the indications that psychologists are paying greater attention to historical dimensions of psychological inquiry, six will be noted here: (1) the "social psychology as history" debate, discussed earlier, which focuses attention on the historically shifting patterns of social-psychological phenomena and on the possibly transformative effects of social inquiry itself; (2) work in life-span development and socialization, which demonstrates historical differences in the shape and pattern of life-span developmental processes for those born in different generations (Featherman and Lerner, 1985; McCluskey and Reese, 1984; Nesselrode and Baltes, 1974; Sørensen, Weinert, and Sherrod, 1986); (3)

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the increasing involvement of psychologists with different aspects of narrative, such as narrative aspects of the self, of cognition and action, and of the life course (Bruner, 1986; Cohler, 1982; McAdams, 1985; Sarbin, 1986); (4) the repetition of sample surveys to study historical continuity and change in attitudes, behavior, and subjective well-being (Campbell, 1980; Veroff, Douvan, and Kulka, 1981); (5) evaluation research, with an increasing emphasis on qualitative, process-oriented, and historically oriented assessments of the effects of programs (Campbell, 1984; Cronbach, 1982; Light and Pillemer, 1984); and (6) empirical research on transhistorical regularities in factors influencing genius, creativity, and leadership (Simonton, 1984). Other areas might also be cited, such as studies of the historically influenced nature of forms of psychopathology such as hysteria or narcissism, research on changes in cognitive-developmental processes over time, and inquiry into changing patterns of personality and national character.

In spite of some trends toward greater convergence between history and psychology on the continuum of levels of generality, the different emphases, on theoretical generality in psychology and on understanding particular sequences of events in historiography, seem unlikely to disappear soon as one of the sources of tension between the two disciplines.

This section has argued that two significant dimensions affecting the relationships between history and psychology are an antibiographical impulse within historiography and antiparticularistic tendencies within psychology. Although both of these have understandable sources, when subject to critical evaluation, neither provides compelling reasons for not investigating the reciprocal causal relationships between the psychological processes of persons and changing social-historical circumstances. Although somewhat abstract, it is hoped that this discussion of background issues may be of use in analyzing the general relationships between history and psychology, and in thinking about specific issues emerging in the papers that follow.

Without further ado, I invite readers to plunge into the diverse viewpoints and examples discussed by the distinguished contributors to this volume. In spite of having attended the conference and heard versions of the papers read at that time, I was stimulated by, informed by, and occasionally provoked while reading the following chapters, and hope that readers will be as well.

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