

Chapter 4: The Psychogenic Theory of History

CHAPTER 4

FOUNDATIONS OF
PSYCHOHISTORY
by LLOYD DEMAUSE

THE PSYCHOGENIC THEORY OF HISTORY

*"Theories are nets:
only he who casts will catch."
– – Novalis*

1. That psychohistory is the science of patterns of historical motivations and is based upon an anti-holistic philosophy of methodological individualism

IA. Psychohistory is a science, not a narrative art like history.

IA. 1. All psychohistorical research must be comparative, striving toward lawful propositions.

IA. 2. Psychohistory advances like any other science, by the discovery of new paradigms and attempts to disprove them.

IA. 3. Like psychoanalysis, psychohistory uses self-observation of the emotional responses of the

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researcher as its prime tool for discovery; nothing is ever discovered "out there" until it is first felt "in here."

IB. Psychohistory is individualistic, not holistic like sociology and anthropology.

IB. 1. The holistic fallacy that the group exists as an entity over and beyond its individual constituents presumes what it should investigate-the fantasy that the group is really the mother's body and has goals and motives of its own.

1B.2. Sociology, whether Parsonian or Marxist, is based on the holistic statement of Durkheim that "social facts must be treated as things, that is, realities external to the individual" and is, as Parsons admits, "inherently teleological."

1B.3. Anthropology is based on a similar holistic concept of "culture," so that when Steward states that "Personality is shaped by culture, but it has never been shown that culture is affected by personality" the tautological form of the assertion is dependent upon not noticing that the term "culture" has no meaning beyond the term "personality."

1B. 4. All statements of the form "X is socially (or culturally) determined" are tautological and assume a holistic entity beyond the individual.

1B.5. Terms such as "society," "culture," "state," "social structure," and "power are all holistic; their individualistic replacements are "group," "personality," "government," "group-fantasy," and "force."

1B.6. The central method of sociology and anthropology is to establish correlations between two facets of adult personality and then claim causal connection; the central method of psychohistory is to establish causes of motivational patterns in prior personal events and their restructuring within the adult group.

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1C. Methodological individualism is the principle that group processes may be entirely explained by (a) psychological laws governing the motivation and behavior of individuals and (b) descriptions of their current physical historical situation, which itself is only the outcome of prior motivations acting on physical reality.

1C. 1. The diagram below is sufficient to explain all historical processes, "group-fantasy" being the term for shared fantasies of individuals when in groups.

1C. 2. Durkheim's sociological rule that "Every time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false" is replaced by the psychohistorical rule that "All group phenomena have psychological explanations; individuals in groups act differently than individuals alone only because they split their psychic conflicts differently, not because some 'social' force is acting on them."

1C. 3. With the disappearance of the deathless entity society" all group values are revealed as tentative and subject to change each generation; what now seems problematic is not change but constancy.

1C. 4. It is not only the irrational in history that is susceptible to psychohistorical explanation; all of history, its strengths as well as weaknesses, integration as well as disintegration, has childhood determinants and group dynamics.

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2. That the ultimate source of all historical change is psychogenesis, the lawful change in childrearing modes occurring through generational pressure.

2A. Psychogenesis depends upon the ability of parents and surrogates to regress to the psychic age of their children and work through the anxieties of that age better the second time than in their own childhood.

2A. 1. The regression-progression process stems from the innate biological desire of both parts of a previous dual-unity to relate to each other, and thus is the only historical theory to posit love as its central mechanism for change.

2A. 2. The regression-progression process is identical to that which produces change in psychotherapy; thus history can be viewed as the psychotherapy of generations.

2B. The evolution of childhood proceeds at different rates of progress on both individual and population levels.

2B.1. Individual level variations in rates of psychogenic evolution occur because of (a) biological differences (both genetic and uterine events), (b) birth order differences (the later the birth, generally the less intense the parenting), and (c) chance (early loss of parent, injury, other personal life variations).

2B.2. Population level variations in psychogenic evolution occur because of (a) selection and isolation (emigration of a narrow range of parenting modes), (b) immigration (the infusion of new parenting modes into a larger population), (c) non-reproduction (psychotic unfit, or other lower psychogenic modes not as often raising children), (d) culture contact (reinforcing emergent parenting types, providing surrogate parents), (e) material conditions (only as they affect child rearing), and (f) group-fantasy factors (wars and revolutions as they affect children, share of work by mothers, father's share in child rearing, etc.).

2C. The evolution of childhood is a series of closer involvements between adults and children, each advance tending to heal splitting, reduce projection and reversal, and increase empathy.

2C. 1. The six psychogenic modes and their dates of evolution in the most advanced countries are:

INFANTICIDAL	Mother: "I wish you were dead, to relieve my fear of being killed by my mother."	Child-sacrifice and infanticide, child as a breast-penis, intolerance of child's anger, hardening, ghosts and magic, child sale, child sodomy
ABANDONING	Mother: "I must leave you, to escape the needs I project into you."	Longer swaddling, fosterage, outside wetnursing, monastery, nunnery and apprenticeship
AMBIVALENT	Mother: "You are bad from the erotic and aggressive projections put in you."	Enemas, early beating, shorter swaddling, mourning possible, child as erotic object precursor to empathy.
INTRUSIVE	Mother: "You can have love when I have full control over you."	Early toilet training, repression of child's sexuality, end of swaddling and wetnursing, empathy now possible rise of pediatrics
SOCIALIZING	Mother and Father: "We will love you when you are reaching our goals."	Use of guilt, "mental discipline", humiliation, rise of compulsory schooling, delegation of parental unconscious wishes
HELPING	Mother and Father: "We love you and will help you reach your goals."	Children's rights, de-schooling and free schooling, child therapy, birth without violence.

2C. 2. The "ambivalent mode" is a watershed in the evolutionary series, because up until then progress is achieved by internalization and repression of previously projected parts of the personality (magic), whereas after ambivalence is able to be

tolerated (the Kleinian "depressive position"), progress is achieved through the reduction of repression and the increase in ego autonomy.

2C. 3. Progress at each mode depends on overcoming anxieties specific to that mode; for instance, a shortage of wetnurses will have a greater effect when abandonment is the crucial modal issue than at another time, and so on.

2D. The end result of man's biological evolution produced a helpless baby whose instinct is to form an intensely personal relationship, challenging the parent to regress and relate rather than repress and be alone.

2D. 1. Freud's idea that civilization proceeds by "progressively greater renunciation of instinct" was precisely backward; civilization proceeds only through progressively greater acceptance of the drives of children, allowing them to mature without defensive distortion.

2D. 2. Hegel's idea that history is "man's nature achieving itself" is closer to the truth, but only because each generation tries to help their children achieve their own desires, so that new values are generated evolutionarily rather than teleologically.

3. That the evolution of new psychogenic modes produces new psychoclasses which threaten the group – fantasies of earlier psychoclasses and are expressed in historical periods of rebellion, triumph and reaction.

3A. Group-fantasies are formed in order that individuals may play roles to defend themselves against childhood anxieties.

3A. 1. Intra-psychic defenses are not effective in groups, so group-fantasies are substituted as shared defenses which prevent regression to childhood traumas.

3A. 2. The larger the group, the more the threatened regression, so the earlier the source of

group-fantasy and the more primitive the splitting.

3A. 3. Man does not, in a group, become an animal – he becomes a frightened baby.

3B. What is usually called “social structure” is actually the splitting of large groups into smaller delegate-groups which play specific roles within group-fantasies.

3B.1. Delegate-groups act out ambivalent feelings common to all members of the larger group but which the rest of the group wish to deny and project into them.

3B.2. What are usually called “social institutions” are historical delegate-groups: the Church as a group-fantasy of dependency, the Army as a group-fantasy of birth, the Government as a group-fantasy of nurturance, Capitalism as a group-fantasy of control, Revolution as a group-fantasy of counterdependency, the Class System as a group-fantasy of obeisance, the School as a group-fantasy of humiliation.

3B.3. Delegate-groups are made up of individuals who share defensive styles, and form themselves into hierarchies in order to contain fantasied group violence.

3C. Leaders are personalities able to become containers for the bizarre projective identifications of group-fantasies.

3C. 1. Projective identification, the central means of communication in group life, is the fantasied forceable thrusting of repudiated parts of one’s psyche into another.

3C. 2. Leaders are not just parents – they play the defensive roles required by whichever stage of group-fantasy is operative, becoming stern fathers when group violence is being denied, nurturant mothers when abandonment is defended against, rebellious sons when authority is decaying, and paranoid siblings when group violence is being projected.

3C. 3. Leaders are always containers for the group’s feelings of humiliation – the depersonalization or stripping away of intra-psychic defenses which occurs in a group producing the threat of being made a helpless baby again-so leaders always conduct foreign policy while filled up with feelings of near-humiliation.

3D. Historical group-fantasies result from the interaction of different psychoclasses.

3D. 1. Psychoclasses are groups of individuals with the same childhood mode within a given population.

3D. 2. Psychoclasses require different group defenses, and these are often intolerable to other psychoclasses.

3D. 3. The wider the range of psychoclasses in a given population, the more the conflict between their defensive styles.

3D. 4. The higher the psychogenic mode of the psychoclass, the less it is necessary for it to act out its conflicts.

3D. 5. Psychoclass is only partially related to economic class, depending on historical period.

3D. 6. Political and religious movements correlate more closely to psychoclass than to economic class.

3E Each generation brings a new psychoclass to the historical stage, disturbing the group-fantasies of the older psychoclasses and producing periods of rebellion, triumph and reaction.

3E. 1. Only that portion of the new generation which shares the new child-rearing experience makes up the new psychoclass.

3E. 2. A period of rebellion occurs when the new psychoclass is young, first mainly in the artistic spheres.

3E. 3. A period of triumph occurs when the new psychoclass becomes dominant in the group's goals, even though they are still a numerical minority.

SE. 4. A period of reaction occurs when the older psychoclasses clamp down on the goals and lifestyles of the newest psychoclass.

3F. Psychogenic change is the ultimate source for all technological change; technological change is not, as often assumed, automatic, nor does it drag the psyche in its wake.

3F. 1. *The reason childrearing styles correlate with technological levels somewhat is that the former produce the latter, not the reverse.*

3F. 2. *Low level parenting is always dysfunctional to all technological levels early toilet training did not help early capitalists accumulate money, it made them neurotically unable to invest it productively, as it does today.*

3F. 3. *No economic system "requires" any specific psychogenic types-capitalism and socialism have both functioned with both sadistic and mature personalities-and no economic system "requires" any specific childrearing.*

3F. 4. *The invention and spread of new technologies occurs when new psychoclasses reduce the projective identification of parts of their psyches into things-so that deep plowing can replace scratch plowing when "mother Earth" is decathected, gears can be invented and used when they are separated emotionally from teeth, and the whole of modern science can be invented when the Aristotelian notion of "real essences" is discarded.*

3F. 5. *Economic systems change when new psychoclasses can reduce the use of the group for projective identification -so that early market economies can develop when earlier reciprocal gift-giving is less needed as a defense against primitive death-wishes,*

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late medieval expansion of commerce could come about when feudal bonds were not needed as defenses against abandonment, and capitalistic ownership of goods could appear with the decathexis of property from its "historical" (group-fantasy) ties.

3F. 6. *Even supposedly "purely physical" historical phenomena turn out to be determined psychogenically Even plagues are dependent on the Christian love of dirt to sustain the rats whose fleas were its carriers.*

3F. 7. *Psychogenesis, not "social need," defines the order of invention-otherwise, scientific astronomy would not have preceded the invention of the flush toilet.*

3G. *Primitive tribes are not magical thinkers because they are technologically primitive-they long ago experienced psychogenic arrest and thereafter did not develop technologically, but only elaborated their group-fantasies.*

3G. 1. *Primitive tribes lies somewhere in the first two psychogenic modes of childrearing, as evidenced by the lack of depressive (guilt) illnesses which are the achievement of the ambivalent mode.*

3G. 2. *Primitives did not adapt their personalities to their harsh environments-they migrated to harsh environments because they matched their inner life.*

4. That psychogenic modes determine the level of personality which can be attained, and establish the typical conflicts and defenses of each historical period which sustain the art, religion, politics and economics of each age.

4A. Psychogenic modes correspond to specific sets of personality types, using typical defensive patterns and growing in ego strength with each mode:

Infanticidal Mode	Schizoid Personality	Primary-process thinking, symbiotic omnipotence, gender/zonal confusion, splitting and projective identification, sado-masochistic disorders
Abandoning Mode	Autistic Personality	Unrelated, narcissistic, exploitive, parasitic, distrustful, oral rage, self weak or grandiose, psychopathic, unable to tolerate delay, lacking in remorse, idealized mother, timeless
Ambivalent Mode	Depressive Personality	Guilty and depressed, insatiable in needs for love, status, sex, enormous superego demands, reality of time
Intrusive Mode	Compulsive Personality	Pseudorational, cold, detached, self critical inwardly, phobic, obsessive-compulsive and conversion symptoms
Socializing Mode	Anxiety Personality	Less rigid character armor, free-floating anxiety and dissatisfaction with life due to delegating, loss of individuality in group, incomplete feelings
Helping Mode		None yet adult

4B. *These personality types can range from "normal" to "abnormal" within each mode, depending on the degree of integration within the personality and the degree of support given by others in the historical period:*

RANGE OF PERSONALITY TYPES BY PSYCHOGENIC MODE

	Infanticidal	Abandoning	Ambivalent	Intrusive	Socializing
n	Schizoid	Autistic	Depressive	Compulsive	Anxiety
o	Personality	personality	personality	personality	personality

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Impulse disorders and sado-masochistic defenses	Anaclitic (neglect) depressive disorders and psychopathic defenses	Introjective (guilt) depressive disorders and manic defenses	Obsessive-compulsive disorders and conversion defense	Hysterical disorders and psychosexual defenses
Catatonic and hebephrenic	Paranoid schizophrenia	Manic-depressive psychosis		

4B.1. The leaders of every historical period – those who launch wars, repression and revolution in a considered and careful manner – are only those most integrated into the group-fantasies of the age.

4B.2. Those considered “neurotic” in each age may often be a higher psychogenic mode than those considered “normal”, only they must stand the anxiety of not sharing the group-fantasies of the age.

4C. The master group-fantasies of each historical period correspond to three defensive levels:

- 4C. 1. The Calamitous Fantasy-corresponding to the basic trauma of each childhood mode.*
- 4C. 2. The Defensive Fantasy-denying this basic traumatic fantasy.*
- 4C. 3. The Desired Fantasy-a further denial, providing the ideal group-fantasies of the age.*

EVOLUTION OF FANTASIES IN THE WEST

- 5. That groups, whether face-to-face or historical, induce a “fetal trance state” in their members, reawakening specific physical memories from uterine and perinatal life.

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5A. Man is a political animal, as Aristotle said, because for most civilized people only life in a group can re-establish contact with repressed fetal emotions.

5B. Only individuals in fetal trance states are able to form group-fantasies, which follow specific rules of fetal life such as:

5B. 1. *Life gets continually more cramped, and growth always requires more physical space through actual expansion of territory (even though any fool can see that the resulting opposition to expansion destroys the group's growth.)*

5B. 2. *Other groups are either nurturant or blood-sucking, poisoning placentas (even though it is obvious that all groups are made up of individuals who have all shades of attitudes towards one.)*

5B. 3. *The proper attitude toward a nurturing placenta is awe toward its "power flow" (even though it may in fact be harming you.)*

5B. 4. *The proper attitude toward a blood-sucking, poisoning placenta is to suck its blood and to poison it in return (even though this may in fact involve your own death through retaliation.)*

5B. 5. *The primary purpose of any group is to preserve its womb-surround, regardless of the cost to individuals within the group (even though a war kills most Americans, it is worth it to preserve "what America stands for.")*

5B. 6. *The "skin" of one's womb-group wholly determines one's relationship to events (even though there is an epidemic in a nearby country, your morning paper features what your leader had for breakfast.)*

5B. 7. *Individuals are connected by umbilical cords to leaders, alternately being fed by and feeding them (even though the leader may be wholly inactive, or detrimental, to the group, power and obeisance "flows" on.)*

5B. 8. *Groups are connected by umbilical cords to other groups, placentas, and must fight for dear life for the "vitality" which flows between them (even though it may be beneficial for two groups to both reduce their armed strength, they cannot do so because it would affect the "balance of power," and so must "stem the turning of the tide" to "prevent the loss of vitality to its system.")*

5B. 9. *Disturbances to one's womb-surround are always the fault of a poisoning placenta, whom one can harm by "putting pressure" on it (even though you in fact increase your neighbors' hostility.)*

5B. 10. *When the group-fantasy of an intact womb-surround fails ("the fabric of society stretches thin, then tears"), the group inexorably slides into a war-as-birth group-fantasy (even though the actual reasons for war at that moment may be minimal.)*

5B. 11. *During the war-as-birth group-fantasy groups pump feelings into their placenta-leaders of being too crowded, asphyxiated, starved and strangled (even though their economic condition may be in fact excellent.)*

5B. 12. *Groups go to war in order to overcome the helplessness and terror of being trapped in a birth canal, through means of a' sadomasochistic orgy in order to "hack one's way out" of the mother's body (even though in fact the most logical solution to most war threats is to do nothing, nevertheless*

violent action is always most compelling.)

5B. 13. Once others plunge into a war-as-birth experience, neighbors feel sucked into a similar fetal trance state (even though Americans realize European wars are irrational, once they start they get picked up by "a force they cannot resist" and jump into their own birth primal.)

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5B. 14. After successful wars, groups feel "reborn" and have a period of vigorous, optimistic cooperation which is viewed as "The Best Years of Our Lives" (even though they are actually economically depleted.)

5C. The extent to which a group sinks into a full fetal trance state is determined by the ability of its current group-fantasy to create the illusion of an intact womb-surround which can contain the traumas of childhood.
