

# Psychohistory News

Newsletter of the International Psychohistorical Association

Volume 36, Number 1 – Winter 2017

## PSYCHOHISTORY MEETS LITERATURE

### Finding and Being Found: Thoughts on the Evolution of *Light and Shadow*

by Howard F. Stein

The history of this new poetry book is an intrinsic part of the book itself. Doodle and Peck Publishing (<http://www.doodleandpeck.com/>) released my latest book of poetry, *Light and Shadow*, in August 2016. It had long been my dream to have a book of poetry published by a small press in Oklahoma, my adopted state. Doodle and Peck is located in Yukon, OK, only

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### One's Life Through the Looking Glass of Neuropsychiatric Disorder

by Dolores Brandon

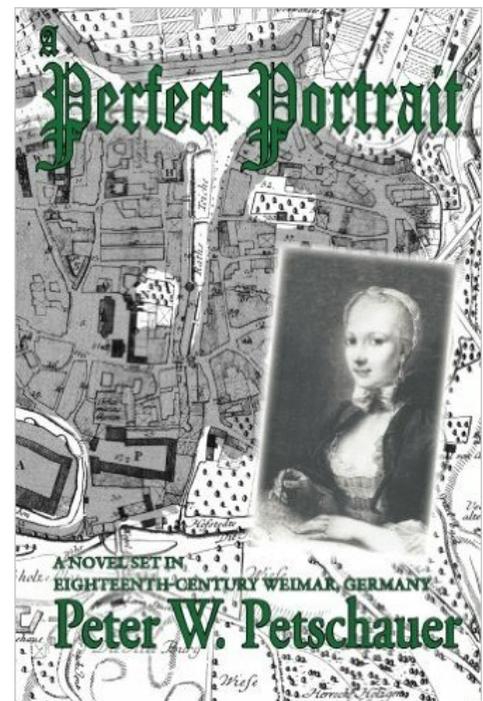
When IPA Member, Inna Rozentsvit, MD, Ph.D. invited me to join her at the 2016 IPA Conference for a session dedicated to the memory of her personal hero, neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks, I couldn't have been more honored. I count reading his luminous collection, *Awakenings*, as pivotal in the evolution of a personal worldview that accepts

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### Peter Petschauer's New Novel on Women in 18th Century Germany: An Interview

*Peter Petschauer was born in Germany in 1939, then came to the United States as a teenager, and earned his bachelors, masters, and then doctorate in history from New York University. He was Professor of History at Appalachian State University in North Carolina from the late 1960s until his*

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IPA 2017 CONFERENCE, page eight

## NEUROPSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

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the element of choice as an option at the deepest level of Being. In all his writings, Sacks perfectly embodied a sense of wonder and articulated a profound, deep respect for the humanity of every patient/person who crossed his path. He saw the richness in “disorder.”

Dr. Sacks was a fellow traveler: he himself suffered migraines and “prosopagnosia” — a neurological disorder characterized by the inability to recognize faces; his brother was schizophrenic. Nothing daunted his exalted fascination for the full spectrum of human experience. And, to our good fortune, Sacks understood the power of story.

*If we wish to know about a man, we ask 'what is his story--his real, inmost story?'--for each of us is a biography, a story. Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us--through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives--we are each of us unique.”*

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*

Dr. Rozensvit invited me to join her on this panel in part to introduce me to the IPA. A woman of many talents and accomplishments, she is a founding director and editor for *Object Relations Institute Academic Press* (ORIAP), which republished my memoir, *The Root Is Bitter, the*

*Root Is Sweet: In the Shadow of Madness*. Although Dr. Sacks was not a direct catalyst to my writing, I do reference him in the Author’s Note to this 2nd Edition.

Like Sacks, I believe:

*To be ourselves we must have ourselves – possess, if need be re-possess, our life-stories. We must “recollect” ourselves, recollect the inner drama, the narrative, of ourselves. A man needs such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his identity, his self.”*

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*

For the IPA Conference session, I chose to counterpoint, read and discuss passages from the memoir that resonate with perspectives expressed by Dr. Sacks:

*Dad’s illness was his most resounding legacy: it gave as much as it took.*

*Every day of our family life required a personal adjustment to his overwhelming, darkly marvelous presence. We laughed and cried at his command.*

*For better, for worse— his illness and the domestic conflict it spawned forever shape the prism through which I view my life.*

Brandon, *The Root is Bitter, The Root is Sweet*

The memoir is the intensely personal psychohistory of my family’s life in the shadow of my father’s manic-depressive illness. The setting is Canada of the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s.

*There is no family life without strife; introduce mental illness and you have family life of mythic proportions, a life in which bitterness and sweetness are forever intertwined, an emotional environment where the sands are constantly shifting. From the perspective of a child, a parent with mental illness is more a force of Nature than a person, and the fear and wonder one feels in the presence of the afflicted*

*can be as mysterious as it is overwhelming.*

Brandon, *In the Shadow of Madness*

I am neither neurologist nor psychologist. My deepest aspirations were theatrical and literary. My approach to storytelling reflects techniques — dialog, lyrics of songs and oral history — I learned working professionally in theater and media.

Both my parents were musically gifted and I was exposed to operatic works from infancy. My mother, a mezzo-soprano (of French Canadian heritage), specialized in the French operatic repertoire — *Carmen, Samson & Delilah, Mignon*.

*Very young children love and demand stories, and can understand complex matters presented as stories, when their powers of comprehending general concepts, paradigms, are almost non-existent.”*

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*

Indeed, the narratives in those libretti had profound impact on my developing psyche; they would become my psychology texts:

Always that song  
That voice  
That tongue.

*Connais-tu la maison où l’on m’attend là-bas?  
La salle aux lambris d’or, où des hommes de marbre M’appellent dans la nuit en me tendant les bras?*

Yes, I know the room, Maman, where the setting sun casts rays of gold and Daddy’s arms still call to me in the night

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*Et la cour où l'on danse  
à l'ombre d'un grand arbre?  
Et le lac transparent où glissent  
sur les eaux Mille bateaux légers  
pareils à des oiseaux!*

Yes,  
I dance in the shadows  
of that great tree that is  
you and Daddy

*Hélas!*

I remember

When night falls a sadness blackens  
the day.

I lie outside and  
hear crying. Maman,  
why does your tenderness  
scorch him?  
Why does Dad's passion  
leave burns?

*Chassant ma tristesse, S'il revient un  
jour, À lui ma tendresse Et la douce  
ivresse Qu'un brûlant amour Garde  
à son retour!*

I go with you in life  
I go with you in love  
I go with you in death

My father wrote poetry (as do I) and my mother was a wonderful storyteller. Dad's poetry, the songs they sang and oral history interviews I conducted with Mum via telephone became the scaffolding upon which the story of our lives *in the shadow of madness* was told:

*In the shadow of each word  
is the story of a mother and daughter,  
discovering what's been lost,  
recovering what was denied.  
Like algae on the surface of a great lake  
robs the body of precious nutrition*

*leaving other life forms to starve,  
so Dad's illness abducted my mother.*

*In the act of my asking her questions,  
questions that took us back  
through the hours and days  
of our morning, noon and night,  
we reclaimed our love.*

*With the telling of this story  
she heard my anger and sorrow,  
her tears asked forgiveness  
the veils are drawn  
the masks are removed  
intimacy is achieved  
communion is once again shared.*

Brandon, *The Root is Bitter,*  
*The Root is Sweet*

*Diseases have a character of their own,  
but they also partake of our character;  
we have a character of our own, but we  
also partake of the world's character:  
character is monadic or microcosmic,  
worlds within worlds within worlds,  
worlds which express worlds. The  
disease-the man-the world go together,  
and cannot be considered separately  
as things-in-themselves.*

—Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings*

Certainly this was true for my father who grew up in a home where there was both domestic violence, and mental illness. He came of age in the Great Depression and saw many personal ambitions crushed.

*That spring Dad bought  
himself a dazzling new maroon  
Monarch coupe, and drove  
south to Miami with "Uncle  
Rosaire." They danced in  
Havana, returned home with  
watermelons and coconuts and*

*tales of Georgia fields where  
Negro workers sang. He  
planned to have us move, to  
own an orange grove, soak up  
the sun among the cockatoos.*

*It didn't happen, though. U.S.  
Immigration wouldn't allow in  
a man who'd suffered a mental  
breakdown in the army at  
twenty-five.*

Brandon, *The Root is Bitter,*  
*The Root is Sweet*

Scheduled late afternoon on the last day of the conference, our presentation attracted only a handful of people. Nevertheless, the reception was deeply attentive and mutually affective. Of particular focus in the Q&A period were passages I read that addressed shame – a topic many felt rarely gets articulated.

*Shame is inherited.  
It lived in my forebears,  
it lives in me*

...

*Shame  
Shame is a spider  
She weaves a web in my throat  
Shame is a scream in the dark  
Shame is a shattering of glass,  
a head smashed through  
Shame is Mum's black eye in  
the morning*

*Shame is asking for help*

Brandon, *The Root is Bitter,*  
*The Root is Sweet*

It bears noting, *The Root Is Bitter, The Root Is Sweet* is the fruit of a long process of therapeutic mourning

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## NEUROPSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

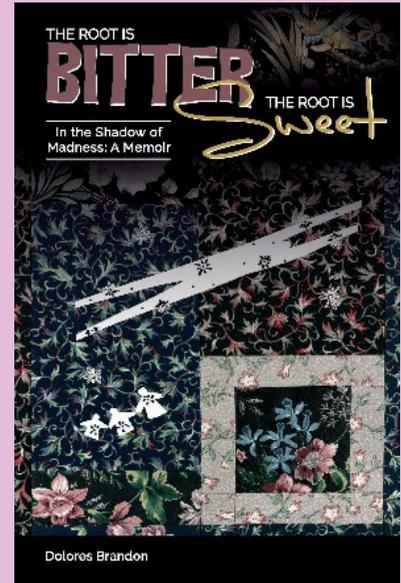
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practiced in group work facilitated by (IPA Member) Dr. Susan Kavalier-Adler whose support and faith in my creative writing impulses enabled full realization of a story *that kept begging to be told*. With the 1st Edition out of print, I am deeply grateful to both her and Dr. Rozentsvit for including this 2nd Edition in ORIAP's *Reviving the Classics* series.

Finally, it occurs to me that memoir has an important role to play in psychohistory — as do all the arts.

I felt welcomed, and quite at home with the mission of the IPA; I think other artists might, too.

*Dolores Brandon is a Brooklyn-based author, speaker and member of both the International Psychohistorical Association and NAMI (the National Association on Mental Illness). She is a naturalist and a poet, currently active in the NYC Audubon and The St. Marks' Poetry Project. Archives and news of her work and appearances are available on her website TRACES@<http://www.doloresbrando.com> and can be reached by email: [brandon.dolores@gmail.com](mailto:brandon.dolores@gmail.com)*



## LIGHT AND SHADOW

*continued from page one*

a few miles down the road from where I live. Its publisher and editor, Marla Jones, was and is a joy to work with.

Several years earlier I had been invited to join a writers' group that met locally most Fridays from about 1-3 PM, for many years at a German pastry and deli shop, and, after it closed, most recently at a coffee, sandwich, and pastry shop in Oklahoma City. I dedicated my book to this extraordinary writers' group of 4-8 members. All are published authors of books largely for children: they write and illustrate them. Many have won literary prizes.

When we meet, we first eat and visit for, say, thirty to forty minutes, and then, as if on signal, bring out our laptops, notebooks, manuscripts, and pads of paper to work, mostly in silence, but in the presence of a deep connection between us. Frequently one member of the group assists another with some story or illustration or computer issue. Marla

Jones had published or was in the process of publishing several of the group members' books.

As I remember it, in early 2016 I mustered the courage to ask Marla whether she would consider publishing a poetry book of mine. She said that her press had never published poetry, but would consider it and asked me to send her a sample of my poetry. I sent her an e-mail attachment of maybe seventy poems. She quickly became enthusiastic and accepted the project for her press. From there through the publication of the book, we worked closely together with wonderful attunement. Insisting that she knew nothing about poetry, she nonetheless selected forty-three poems, edited many



of them with acumen and sensitivity (always eliciting my input), and also submitted the group of poems to a poet for editorial comment.

At one Friday group meeting, Marla reviewed and discussed with me all her recommended changes, allowing me to be the ultimate judge of what changes we keep. Marla's suggestions for improving the poems were wonderful: I felt understood. Just as the words in the poems "found" me, I felt personally found as well. She really "got it" in a deep way. Although she was not a poet, she knew this poet's soul.

Soon she gave me a contract. Marla also found a website of free black and white photographs. She chose companions to many of my poems; all the photographs emphasized the theme of light and shadow. (Four of the photos from the book are reproduced here.) Her ability to match the mood of a poem with the mood of a photograph was inspired. Marla did all the book design and formatting, consulting with me at every stage. She likewise designed the front and back covers. From the outset, Marla wanted the book to be hardcover,

hoping that it would be adopted by many people as a “coffee table book.” The photo of sun, clouds, and shadows on the front cover is dramatic. We collaborated through the proofing of the book. I then shifted from poet and collaborator on production, to marketing. It was now my turn to help sell the book! Marla became my mentor in promoting the book. All this happened between January and the following August!

Although this is “my” book of poetry, it is clearly a creative *inter-subjective* project. This relational foundation of the book also links author and reader. Late into the making of the book, Marla said to me something to the effect that while all the poems were from my *personal* experience, they are also *universal* experiences, and would resonate with the lives of readers. To put it into a formula: mine + theirs = ours. Marla selected, and I subsequently approved, the black-and-white photographs that were a kind of ekphrastic comment on the poems. The photographs would not only emotionally amplify the poems, but would also make the shared universe between poet, selector of photographs, and reader easier to bridge.



The poems are arranged in three sections: *In Nature's Realm* (taken from the title of a tone poem by Antonín Dvořák); *Our Handiwork*; and *Life, Love, and Loss*. Dolores

Brandon, a wonderful writer who presented at the 2016 IPA conference, has identified some recurrent themes in the poetry in *Light and Shadow*: “solace found in music, nature (you do love those cottonwood trees); loneliness, compassion



for the common man, nostalgia for romantic love, despair at the loss of deep human connection in this digital age, music as soul food, spiritual hope in the mysteries of a personal G-d.” These ring true for me.

I would add to these: New Mexico monumental geology and the experience of time, seasons of nature and of human life, wheat farming on the Great Plains, busy chainsaws hacking through the thicket of fallen limbs and trees after a devastating ice storm, the myth and reality of transformational leadership (brutal executives who drill their will into the organization), the experience of downsizing and the invisibility of those whose lives are trashed, workers as boxes, frenzy and solitude at an airport gate, the redemptive voice of the telephone in the desert of tweets and texts, meditation on the future of the earth, a Jew's *heimisch* (homey) experience in a German bakery about to close, fear in the darkness of night, the experience of pneumonia, why I keep useless old keys, hope and hopelessness, touch and its absence,

love's yearning, whimsy, loss and grief, and transcendence.

I always look forward to the annual fall retreat of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, where we meet, make presentations, and commune in the company of mountains, mesas, buttes, and spires, all “surfaces of the past,” as my friend Alyssa Tomalino calls them. These all stand beneath an unfathomable sky and upon some 22,000 acres of high desert badlands. Their inexhaustible beauty is uncanny. I end one poem about this dance of imagined permanence and disintegration, with the thought, “Still, I marvel,/ knowing full well/ that erosion is just/another word for time.” In another poem, on the successive blooming of flowers, bushes, and trees in spring, I conclude with “I begin with expecta-



tion,/ but end with astonishment.” The ordinary becomes extraordinary; the old becomes renewed. I become capable of learning something entirely new.

Maybe that is my motto for my life in psychohistory and anthropology and organizational consulting: to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar – to practice what poet John Keats (1817) called “negative capability,” to break the

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## LIGHT AND SHADOW

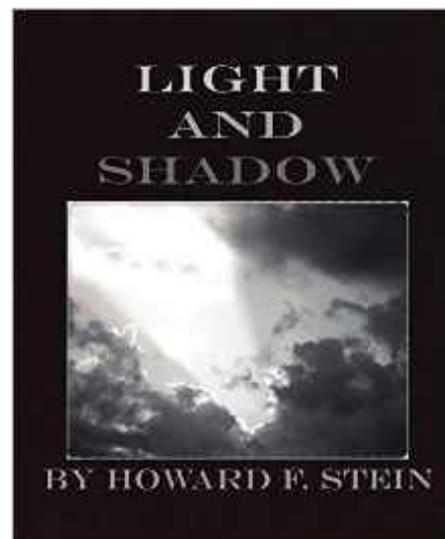
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yoke of what we assume to be true and real, in order to discover what is more true and real about ourselves, the world, and our relationship to them. With this attitude, in our scholarly research, we become willing to discover something new about history and culture.

In both my scholarly psychohistorical work and in my psychohistorical poems, I trust my

unconscious to lead me to where I need to go. If I *find the words*, it is equally true that the *words find me* and I recognize them as right. Finding and being found are partners in the dance of psychohistory, poetry, and life.

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## PETSCHAUER INTERVIEW

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retirement in 2006. Dr. Petschauer is a versatile man and writer. He has written historical works, plays, poetry, a memoir, and a novel. The books of history he wrote include *The Education of Women in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Bending the Ivy* and *The Language of History: a Topical Approach to World Civilization*. A decade ago, he struggled to understand his father's experiences in the SS, mainly as a diplomat in Northern Italy. The resulting book is entitled *Der Vater und die SS (Brixen/Bressanone, 2007)*. To come closer to the life experiences during WWI, WWII and afterward of the four early women in his life, in 2015 he published *In the Face of Evil: The Sustenance of Traditions*.

A year later, his novel *A Perfect Portrait: A Novel Set In Eighteenth Century Weimar, Germany* appeared in print. It concerns the struggles and achievements of Clara Baumeister Neuwirt. In the novel, her beloved mother died while Clara was

young, and she married the innkeeper Johann Neuwirt. She began to draw portraits, her work was praised and supported by an illustrious nobleman, a Count von Adlerhorst. The story follows Clara's development, her meeting other women artists, and the course of her life. IPA President Ken Fuchsman sent Dr. Petschauer a series of questions about *A Perfect Portrait*. Below are Ken's questions and Peter's answers.

**KF:** How did you come across Clara Baumeister Neuwirt?

**PP:** I created the name Clara Baumeister Neuwirt in the following fashion: Clara was/is the family name of the woman who took me in during World War II, Baumeister means something like carpenter or builder in German and fits her father, and Neuwirt is the new owner of a pub or other drinking/eating establishment, a Wirtschaft, in other words her husband.

**KF:** What kinds of sources did you have?

**PP:** My sources in general are that I taught 18th-century Europe and women's history, and that I wrote extensively about women artists of that period. That means that I literally read every autobiography and biography of every woman artist I could discover as having worked then, her family background, her marital situation, the constraints on women becoming professionals, and the limited access to live models. In addition, my wife Joni and I travelled to Weimar in January of 2015 and walked the streets of the city to be sure about distances and landmarks. I also double checked maps and information about the city in the 1740s and 50s. Clara's home would have been exactly where I placed it.

**KF:** Why did you think it was important to write about her and her world?

**PP:** Possibly the best article I ever wrote dealt with women artists of the 18th century. It never was published even though it was critiqued and vetted by some of the best minds in the field. Since I couldn't publish the

material and insights I had collected and gained, including more than a hundred photos of women's contemporary art, I decided to write the story of a woman who fits many of the lives of the women I had encountered.

**KF:** Why did you choose fiction rather than straight history?

**PP:** Said differently, I wrote the article that did not fit the then current ideas for what should be published about art and art history and so I decided that I should elaborate on the material in a different fashion. If early reviews are any indication, this was a more successful attempt.

**KF:** What is different in the way you treat the material as fiction?

**PP:** I wrote a novel, that is fiction, but it is accurate both as to the environment in which Clara lived and the struggles she underwent as a woman with talent and aspiration in her very constrained environment.

**KF:** Have the 18<sup>th</sup>-century women German artists been underreported in history?

**PP:** German women artists have been very much underreported even during the 1970s and early 80s when feminists were rediscovering women who were either artists or were attempting to be artists. Aside from Angelika Kaufmann, hardly any of the women from German-speaking areas were discovered.

**KF:** How important is the patronage of Count von Adlerhorst to Clara's development? Would you have known her work without the Count's support?

**PP:** Count von Adlerhorst, of the eagle's nest, is a product of my imagination. One of the things I learned studying German women artists of the 18th century is that they needed a patron; Adlerhorst just happened to be a unique nobleman in that he did not seek Clara's physical presence, but rather her unique artistic talent. As you know from novels, it's not unusual that a nobleman comes along and sweeps up some peasant or maybe even middle-class girl and then drops her at the moment she has satiated his needs or has become pregnant.

**KF:** Your portrait of Johann Neuwirt is not terribly flattering. Is this to show the struggles Clara had to deal with to keep her balance and move forward?

**PP:** Neuwirt was an even nastier character early in my writing, but I moderated him a bit to fit better into the story and yet leave him as an example of the "typical" *Wirt* or *Wirtschaft* owner.

**KF:** Clara's ending is not a happy one. As this is fiction rather than fact, what reasons did you have for showing her life cut off in her prime?

**PP:** Clara had to die because accidents, in addition to deaths related to birth, were women's main threat. Her mother's death and the foreboding associated with it, played a role as well. She also had to die before Goethe, Schiller and Herder arrived in Weimar. Their presence would have diminished, potentially anyway, her unique place and aspiration. How to fit her into that heated late 18th century environment?

**KF:** The death of Clara's mother, and her subsequent relation with her

father is central. We can see how this early loss haunts Clara, and yet as an adult Clara is often distant from her father, and he from her. Yet the journey they share together and the temptations both encounter is also central to the texture of the story. Could you speak about these family dynamics some?

**PP:** Men dominated households and even someone as "modern" as Joseph fit into the contemporary mind set. He is torn between his discovery of romantic love, accurate historically, and his paternalistic/patriarchal instincts; thus his marriage negotiations for his daughter, even if he himself had fallen in love with Maria. We cannot express this in English, but Clara would have addressed him formally, that is, not with Du but rather with Sie. She would never have used his name when addressing him. He would not have addressed her by her name, but rather used Du. His final act, throwing out Elisabeth, fits this conflicted world view.

**Ken Fuchsman, Ed.D. is President of the International Psychohistorical Association and a recently retired professor and administrator from University of Connecticut. He is a widely published psychohistorian and a member of the Editorial Boards of *Clio's Psyche* and *The Journal of Psychohistory*. Ken can be reached at [kfuchsman@gmail.com](mailto:kfuchsman@gmail.com)**

**Peter Petschauer, Ph.D. is Prof. Emeritus at Appalachian State University and lives in Boone, North Carolina with his wife Joni. He spends his retirement writing, studying, and traveling. Peter can be reached at [petschauerpw@appstate.edu](mailto:petschauerpw@appstate.edu) or at [peterpetschauer.com](http://peterpetschauer.com)**

# **INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOHISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

## **40<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**May 31-June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 ••• NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**  
to register, visit [www.psychohistory.us](http://www.psychohistory.us)

**MAIN THEME: *Exploring the Intersection Between  
History and Psychology***

**SUB-THEME: *Psychohistory in the Age of Trump***

### **FEATURED SPEAKERS**

**PETER KUZNICK**  
Historian,  
American University

**RACHEL YEHUDA**  
Psychologist, Icahn School of Medicine at  
Mount Sinai Hospital

**JOAN SCOTT**  
Historian, Institute for Advanced Study,  
Princeton

**ARNOLD RICHARDS**  
Psychoanalyst, New York Psychoanalytic  
Society and Institute

#### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*The Presence of the Past:  
Transmission of Slavery's Traumas*

**JANICE GUMP**  
Psychoanalyst, Institute of Contemporary  
Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis



**NATASHA ZARETKSY**  
Historian,  
Southern Illinois State University

**ELIZABETH LUNBECK**  
Historian,  
Harvard University

**HOWARD STEIN**  
Anthropologist,  
University of Oklahoma

**ARTHUR LYNCH**  
Psychoanalyst,  
Columbia University