

# Psychohistory News

Newsletter of the International Psychohistorical Association

Volume 37, Number 1 – Winter 2018

**Report of a Book Party at NYU:**

**THE DANGEROUS CASE OF DONALD TRUMP**

**by Ken Fuchsman**

On Friday, October 13, 2017, New York University Law School hosted a book party for *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*. The book had its origins at The Duty to Warn Conference at Yale University Medical School on April 20, 2017 organized by Dr. Bandy Lee, Assistant Clinical Professor in Law



*psychiatrists question President Trump's fitness for office*

and Psychiatry, Yale University Schools of Medicine and Law, and editor of the book.

The speakers at the book party were Dr. James Gilligan, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, NYU School of Medicine and Adjunct Professor, NYU School of Law, author, *Violence: Reflections on a*

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## **DIGNITY, HUMILIATION, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

**by Brian D'Agostino**

"The Nature of Dignity and the Dignity of Nature," a conference co-sponsored by the Morton Deutch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution with Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS), was held at Columbia University

Teachers College on December 7th and 8th 2017. HumanDHS co-founders Linda Hartling and Evelin Lindner convened the event. Its entire proceedings were videotaped and are posted at: [www.humiliationstudies.org](http://www.humiliationstudies.org)

A unique feature of this annual meeting, the fourteenth one at Columbia, was the opportunity for all participants to process ideas and information collaboratively by formulating discussion topics, breaking into dialogue groups, and then reporting summaries from each group to the whole conference. Four topics were selected on the first day: "How to Reach the Unreachable About the Marginalized," "Education for Dignity," "How

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### 41st ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOHISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Co-sponsored by: *The New York University Silver School of Social Work and The Object Relations Institute*



### Conference Theme: The Self in Psychology, History and Culture Sub-theme: Retrospective on the Work and Career of Robert J. Lifton

The International Psychohistorical Association is currently accepting papers for its 2018 annual conference to be held **May 30 - June 1 at New York University**. Interested scholars are invited to submit your proposed presentation title, abstract of 75 words and a brief biography for possible inclusion in the IPA 2018 program. Papers are expected to focus primarily on the intersection of psychology and history. Students are encouraged to submit proposals for student panels.

**Due date for proposals:** February 10, 2018. Please submit paper proposals to IPA President and conference chair Ken Fuchsman at [kfuchsman@gmail.com](mailto:kfuchsman@gmail.com).



### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

#### Carol Gilligan

New York University Professor of Humanities and Applied Psychology, author of *In A Different Voice*, and founder of ethics of care.

#### James Gilligan

Psychiatrist, NYU Professor, and author of *Some Politicians Are More Dangerous Than Others* and the *Violence* book series.

### PLENARY SPEAKERS

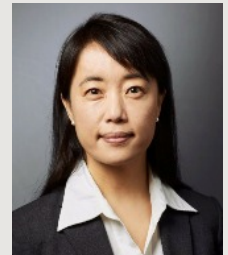
#### George Makari

Director of Institute for History of Psychiatry, Cornell-Weill Medical Center; author of *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* and *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind*.



#### Bandy Lee

Assistant Clinical Professor Yale Medical School, Co-Founder Yale University's Violence and Health Group, and editor, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump*.



#### Brian D'Agostino

Political scientist, educator, author of *The Middle Class Fights Back*, and past president, International Psychohistorical Association.



#### Daniel Shaw

Faculty, Clinical Supervisor, and Training Analyst, National Institute for the Psychotherapies; author, *Traumatic Narcissism: Relational Systems of Subjugation*.



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### DONALD TRUMP

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*National Epidemic, Preventing Violence, and Why Some Politicians Are More Dangerous Than Others*, followed by Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, Lecturer in Psychiatry, Columbia University and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of John Jay College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, author, *The Nazi Doctors, Destroying the World to Save It*, and *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*. Dr. Lee then spoke. Other contributors to the book were present in the audience, and participated in the discussion that followed.

Before the event started, Jim Gilligan told me that *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump* would debut on *The New York Times* best-seller list, where it remained for four weeks. One of the central themes of the talks and the discussion was the conflict between mental health professionals' duty to warn about a public official's dangerous mental state and the American Psychiatric Association's "Goldwater Rule," which prohibits psychiatrists from making public diagnoses of people they have not treated. The APA adopted this rule shortly after Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater won a lawsuit against a magazine that cited some psychiatrists' evaluation of his mental disorders.

Dr. Gilligan in his talk and his article in the book stressed that the issue concerning the president is not mental illness, but the danger he poses. Gilligan says that psychiatry is a branch of public health and preventive medicine, and that psychiatrists have an obligation to warn fellow citizens when a leader endangers the nation's public health. Donald Trump, to Gilligan, is such an individual. He lists what makes President Trump dangerous, including possibly using nuclear weapons, advocating torture against prisoners of war, promoting use of the death penalty against New York African-Americans falsely accused of murdering a woman in Central Park, boasting about sexually assaulting women, urging his followers at rallies to beat up protesters, and insinuating the possibility of assassinating Hillary Clinton were she to become President. To Gilligan, Trump is the most dangerous President in our experience. If psychiatrists do not publicly warn about the danger he poses, they are "either incompetent or irresponsible, or both."

Dr. Robert Lifton said the concept of "malignant normality" that he developed in his study of Nazi doctors applied to President Trump. While all societies have standards for what is considered acceptable and normal, some of these can be destructive, even evil, hence "malignant." Since his study of Hiroshima survivors in the early 1960s, Lifton has come to believe in disciplined, responsible advocacy. To him, Trump's malignancy is exhibited in how the President creates his own reality, does not have the mentality to manage crises that inevitably appear, and threatens democratic institutions. It is a danger to our nation to have as its chief executive someone who is "the bearer of profound instability and untruth."

Going beyond the case of Donald Trump, both Gilligan and Lifton argued for a broader concept of professional ethics that includes responsibility to society, not only to individuals, and which applies to all professions, not only psychiatry.

The mental health professionals' "Duty to Warn" is based upon a 1976 California court decision, *Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California*. The court ruled that if a client is a danger to other individuals, therapists have a duty to warn the individuals who could be endangered. In cases where the danger is posed to an entire nation, if the nation is similarly under threat, the duty to warn is imperative. Dr. Lee says that as a medical professional who is required to step in with other dangers, she should not "remain a bystander in face of one of the greatest emergencies of our time." This concern is both why she worked to organize the Yale Conference last April, and why she has edited this book. All three of the panelists then focused on the civic and professional duty they have to speak out when the nation faces danger.

Dr. Gilligan noted that some states have adopted the Goldwater Rule as part of their own professional standards for doctors, exposing those who choose to warn about Trump to possible serious consequences. Any of the contributors to either the Yale Conference or this book could be questioned by state medical boards for violation of the Goldwater Rule and could even put their medical licenses in jeopardy. Dr. Lee said she consulted legal counsel about these possibilities, and is keenly aware of the dangers. One of the participants in the Yale Conference started receiving hate mail afterwards, consistent with the abusive zeitgeist of recent years.

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## DONALD TRUMP

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Mindful of the Goldwater Rule, panel participants make a point of saying they are not diagnosing Trump. However, the Goldwater Rule itself raises constitutional problems, as noted by Harvard Law Professor Jeannie Suk Gersen in a *New Yorker* article in August. Dr. Lee invited Professor Gersen to the book party and called upon her to speak. The Law professor then said that the Goldwater Rule likely violates the First Amendment and the Twenty-fifth amendment has a provision for removing the President when he or she is unable to fulfill the duties of office. Having mental health professionals use their expertise to evaluate the mental fitness of the Commander in Chief may be highly pertinent and make the Goldwater Rule outdated.

Still, it is clear that the Goldwater Rule hung heavily over the whole enterprise of prominent psychiatrists and other specialists publicly warning of the dangers our chief executive poses to public health and safety. Dr. Bandy Lee and the other contributors to this Duty to Warn movement show not only conviction, but knowing the risks they face, also courage.

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## PSYCHOHISTORY BULLETIN BOARD

- Dr. Robin Stern's landmark 2007 book *The Gaslight Effect* will be published in paperback on January 9, 2018. Gaslighting is the consequence of allowing another person to undermine one's judgment about reality and question the validity of one's perceptions and experiences. The term was inspired by the play and movie *Gaslight*. Dr. Stern, a practicing psychoanalyst, is the Associate Director for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. The book is available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other stores.
- Routledge will publish Paul Elovitz's *The Making of Psychohistory: Origins, Controversies, and Pioneering Contributors*. This first history of psychohistory provides a detailed description of the origin of the field in the Freud Circle and its spread to the U.S.A. It is mainly focused on psychohistory since the creation of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) in 1978. Dr. Elovitz is a past IPA president who has presented at every conference. He has taught psychohistory courses at Ramapo College for 46 years, founded the Psychohistory Forum in 1982, has edited *Clio's Psyche* since 1994 and sponsored the Clio's listserv since 2010.
- *Centre and Circumference* is the eleventh volume of poetry by Howard Stein. The book is divided into three thematic sections that address human love, time, and work. It contains about ninety poems. The book is published by Object Relations Institute Academic Press/Mind Mend Press. It should be available in January 2018. Howard Stein is Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.
- The Object Relations Institute will hold its annual Conference on March 24, 2018 and featured speaker Dr. Harold Blum will address "Is the Wolf in the Man or the Man in the Wolf: A Contemporary Object Relations View of Freud's Wolf Man: Fragile Narcissism and Borderline Dynamics." The Conference will be held at St. John's University, Manhattan campus, on Third Avenue between 8th and 9th Streets. To register go to [admin@orinyc.org](mailto:admin@orinyc.org) or call [646-522-1056](tel:646-522-1056).
- Director of the Object Relations Institute, Dr. Susan Kavalier-Adler, will be conducting a Workshop on February 10, 2018 at the C. G. Jung Foundation for Analytic Psychology from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at 28 E. 39th Street, New York, NY. The topic will be The Demon Lover Complex vs. the Process of Psychic Integration: Two Female Artists: Sylvia Plath and Suzanne Farrell. For more information call (212) 697-6430.
- Among the forthcoming volumes from IP Books is Harvey Kaplan's *Sinatra: The Swinging Narcissist*. This book addresses what in Sinatra's personality enabled him to reach the pinnacle of artistic success. *The Selected Papers of Arnold Goldberg, MD* will also be published soon. Dr. Goldberg is one of the most eminent self psychoanalysts. For more info go to <http://www.ipbooks.net/>.

## DIGNITY AND HUMILIATION

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to 'Do' Dignity—Dignity As a Verb," and "Ageism Goes Both Ways!" There were also poetry readings, movement, and music, including a performance by Fred Ellis and his students.

Evelin Lindner presented on themes from her book *Honor, Humiliation and Terror: an Explosive Mix and How We Can Defuse It*. She noted that from the origins of homo sapiens around 200,000 years ago, the primary mechanism of ultimate conflict resolution was migration by one party to the conflict. Building on political anthropologist Robert Carneiro's work, Lindner highlights the role of "circumscription," the scarcity of fertile land relative to population, which eventually gave conflict no outlet except the domination of some groups by others. Under these dominator societies of the past five percent of homo sapiens' history, the ruling elites monopolize honor and impose humiliation on the ruled.

Against this backdrop, Lindner sees the democratic and human rights revolutions of the 18th century as a major turning point in human history where the masses of ordinary people increasingly reject humiliation and expect to be treated with equal dignity. In our own day, the dynamics of humiliation and dignity are key to understanding the motivation of terrorist movements and destructive conflicts of all kinds. Creating social and political arrangements from the local to the global scales that recognize the dignity of every individual is both possible, and necessary for creating a viable future.

Psychologist and psychohistorian Michael Britton's featured presentation, "We are the Carriers of the Better Possible Future," explored the interplay between humanity's neurobiological heritage, the current global crisis, and prospects for the future. He delineated two instinctual clusters, one negative—centered on predatory and domination behaviors—and the other positive—centered on attachment and nurturing. Superimposed on these hardwired brain functions, which humans share with many other animals, are the distinctively human mental/neural capacities—foresight, inventiveness, and empathy beyond one's own community. Our current political/economic paradigm, featuring nations in the service of a predatory supranational industrial/financial system, gives expression to the negative cluster.

Under this paradigm, plutocratic elites aggressively plunder Earth's resources while creating dead end trash zones in which destructive human and ecological consequences are disproportionately imposed on women, the poor, and people of color. The physical aspects of this system can be viewed as an externalization of toxic psychological dynamics (e.g. resource hoarding as a mirror of esteem hoarding).

Michael analyzed industrial practices that have already taken earth's resource systems outside the bounds that can support human life as we know it and argued that we are having to heal structural inequities (centuries/millennia in the making)

in the midst of this eco-catastrophe. Our divided, rapacious and hostility-prone world must pull together and concentrate on restoring the integrity of earth's life systems if any of us is to enjoy a humane existence. He noted a number of promising grassroots initiatives such as worker cooperatives that indicate the possibility of a just and sustainable future.

Law professor Michael L. Perlin, a pioneer in the field of Therapeutic Jurisprudence, and public defender Alexander J. Perlin discussed how marijuana arrest patterns perpetuate a racist criminal justice system that humiliates minority youth. Therapeutic Jurisprudence, by contrast, makes psychological health a desired outcome of legal systems. Cognitive social psychologist Claudia Cohen's presentation "Dignity as a Practice: The Nonhuman Rights Project" argued that our treatment of animals, as co-inhabitants of Planet Earth, should serve as an opportunity to strengthen our relational "practice" of Dignity. Prof. Tony Gaskew reflected on the metaphysical nature of justice, namely how the profound interconnectedness of all humans and life means that every action has consequences that come back to the actor.

Fonkem Achankeng I, an African traditional leader, conflict resolution scholar, and editor of *Nationalism and Intra-State Conflicts in the Postcolonial World* (Lexington Books, 2015), discussed the persistence of colonial arrangements in the developing world with special reference to Cameroon, a postcolonial state currently at war. Entitled "Imperial Dispossession of 'Others' by the Falsification of Dignity," this presentation asked why some ex-colonies have been placed in a situation of eternal humiliation.

In her presentation, "Climate Catastrophe and Political Discourse," Janet Gerson argued that the term "climate change" grossly understates the catastrophic nature of the threat facing humanity, which must be called by its proper name. She discussed the need for a participatory and inter-subjective model of climate justice that recognizes the dignity of every person. Sasha Moore, author of training materials on transgender issues for law enforcement personnel, spoke about the role of ignorance in perpetuating law enforcement practices that humiliate citizens and the difference that appropriate training can make.

Literary theorist and social researcher Zuzana Luckay Mihalčinová, an organizer of the upcoming Vienna Week of Dignity Conference, shared her presentation time with Katha Schinkinger and Martin Rohlathe, Directrice and owner respectively of Habibi and Hawara. This collaboratively managed restaurant in Vienna, which features a fusion of Middle Eastern and Austrian cuisine, was discussed as a prototype of economically self-sustaining enterprise that can create dignity and livelihoods for international refugees. Law professor David C. Yamada, known for his work advancing workplace bullying legislation, spoke about the International Society for Therapeutic Jurisprudence, launched in July 2017

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## DIGNITY AND HUMILIATION

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in Prague by attorneys and law professors mostly from the US, Europe, and Australia. Prof. Yamada is the founding board chairperson of the organization.

Danielle Coon, Associate Director of Columbia's International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, challenged the social construction of wilderness spaces as a domain for privileged white males. She cited Carolyn Finney's book *Black Faces, White Spaces* and discussed the Baden-Powell Service Association, a traditional scouting movement that is inclusive. Organizational psychologist Philip Brown, Director of the New Jersey Center for Character Education and author of *Student Discipline: A Prosocial Perspective*, discussed human dignity principles that should inform schools, and showed a video clip of an evidence-based practice for creating schools that embody such principles.

Doaa Rashed, Director of University of Maryland's (Baltimore County) Masters Program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, spoke about practices that express ethnic iden-

and Forgiveness," "Dignity, Technology and Evolution," "Transforming Power Abuse into Dignity," and "Can Dignity Become a Constitutional Right?"



*Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies conference, 12/7/17*

tity and her work creating cross cultural and international learning experiences. Finally, Theravada Buddhist monk, religion scholar, and educator Bhante Revata Chipamong Chowdhury discussed simple but powerful mindfulness exercises for cultivating dignity that are suitable for both adults and children.

The conference concluded with dialogue groups on "Restorative Justice

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## ROLE OF AFFECTS

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assessments of danger are sometimes more accurate than "reasoned" ones, perhaps because the former give due weight to data normally squelched by reason. Experimental research on the dynamics of fear may shed light on this kind of process. Shevrin et al (1996) compared neurophysiological correlates of subliminal and supraliminal presentation of stimulus words to phobia patients assessed beforehand by a panel of clinicians. In these experiments, patients exposed subliminally to words that clinicians identified as representing latent (underlying) conflicts for them exhibited true affective reactions, whereas patients given time to process the words consciously apparently squelched these reactions and instead showed a response to the

symptom, that is, to defensively displaced material more accessible to consciousness.

I had an unexpected personal experience of the cognitive power of intuition when a clinic I administered went through a period of financial turbulence and transition. Since I was involved in just about every aspect of our small organization, I was able to "embody" the clinic dynamics and had hunches about our financial problems that took the form of subtle embodiment processes. I was guided by "gut reactions" and noticed the effects on my posture of making certain judgments, notably, I accepted new truths inasmuch as they would allow me to stand up a little straighter.

Affects are important not only for judgment but also for sustaining relation-

ships. Solomon and Tatkin (2011) postulate that synchronous affective interchanges are the basis for satisfying relationships. Association and closeness with others seem to trigger joy (Flora, 2006). Being a sustained part of a group gives us a sense of security, a psychological approximation of being in the womb. I believe that the experience of affective synchrony is the basis for the experience of comfort and allows us to relax and recharge, and conversely that the inability to have this experience in relationships puts people at risk of substance abuse or addictive behaviors as a substitute. Long-term studies have shown that the quality of relationships is the prime driver of happiness ([www.ted.com/.../robert\\_waldinger\\_what\\_makes\\_a\\_good\\_life](http://www.ted.com/.../robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life), also Christakis, Fowler, 2009).

In this context, it is interesting to note that Modern Psychoanalysis uses interventions that formally facilitate affective interchanges. Modern Psychoanalysis was developed to reach people with preoedipal disturbances. Hyman Spotnitz (1987) recognized the importance of interpersonal emotional induction in these disorders, and advocates using the “objective countertransference” (i.e. the analyst’s affective reaction in response to the transference affects communicated subconsciously by the patient) to understand the patient’s experience beyond what s/he is able to communicate verbally. He also developed specific engagement techniques, which echo the formal patterns (though not necessarily the informational substance) of patients’ communication, for example, responding to a patient’s question with another question which may be of unrelated content.

One can look at these interventions as verbal gestures, because the “normal” declarative content of the words is not utilized, but their context and patterning is. Such “gesturing” is reminiscent of gesture in affective expression, which may occur in many species and even across species, as seen in Dian Fossey’s experience engaging primates by “aping” their behavior (Marshall, 1982, p. 71). This fits with Flora’s (2006) observation of spontaneous synchronization of movement in the process of group formation (and may suggest affective camouflage as an explanatory mechanism for identification with the aggressor).

Since affect and movement are so closely correlated, we can understand how child-rearing in teaching children how to move also shapes their emotions. Both are flip-sides of the same coin. Pally (2000, p. 59) links personality/character to procedural learning: by learning what to do we learn who we are. I believe that art is an elaboration of affective experience, a form of knowing based on procedural learning, which explains its intrinsic appeal.

I conclude with three considerations about future theoretical work on this

topic. First, while I have not carefully distinguished among the terms “affect,” “feeling,” and “emotion,” there may be interrelated but distinct phenomena that could usefully be designated with these different words. In fact, Tomkins made exactly this argument and defined affects as the genetically inherited biological substrate, feeling as the conscious experience of affect, and emotion as a feeling with the remembrance of similar feelings in the past.

Second, in sorting out how all this works, it will be useful to look for connections between clinical experience and rapidly expanding scientific research, especially in cognitive neuroscience. One synthesis along these lines, which yields practical implications for therapeutic practice, is Klaus Grawe’s *Neuropsychotherapy: How the Neurosciences Inform Effective Psychotherapy* (Psychology Press, 2007).

Third, we need to remember that while clinicians and neuroscientists tend to abstract the individual from her/his social and historical matrix, affect/emotion/feeling is frequently enmeshed with behavioral systems of conflict and cooperation that are more than the sum of their individual constituents, and the emotional configurations of personality and the self are mediated by culture and history. Here sociologists have made important contributions, including David Heise (2007), Kent McClelland (2014) and others (McClelland and Fararo, eds. 2007). Evelin Lindner (2009) presents a pioneering synthesis of recent literature on emotion that takes account of its social and historical matrix and examines the transformative role of emotion in recent history, especially around the dynamics of human dignity and humiliation in the wake of the ongoing human rights revolution.

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# THE ROLE OF AFFECTS, PART II: REFLECTIONS FROM THEORY AND EXPERIENCE

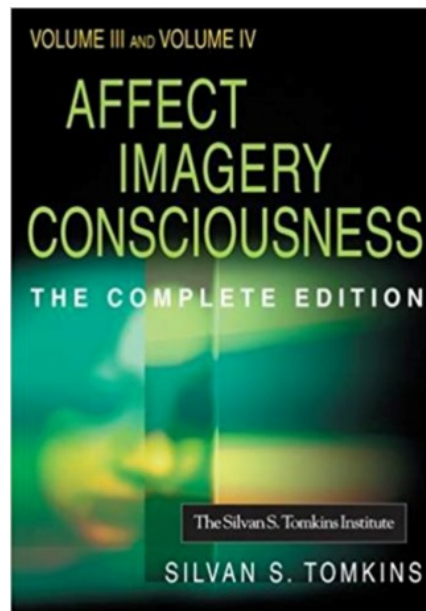
by Dorothea Leicher

In Part I of this essay, published in the previous issue of this newsletter, I discussed the disconnect between the affective functions that humans have inherited from our evolutionary past and the historical conditions under which we currently live in the era of global capitalism. In Part II, which follows here, I present some reflections from theory and from my personal experience that may shed light on the nature of our affective inheritance.

While training to become a psychoanalyst, my interest in biology and gestalt psychology led me to the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins and work by his successors such as Paul Ekman. Part of the attraction to those theories was my experience that when I judged something to be "true" it had a subtle emotional and aesthetic element, and affect theory addressed that. My interest in affect coincided with a re-evaluation of emotions for human functioning in psychology and neurology that has been occurring in the last twenty years.

Under the influence of the European Enlightenment, which persisted into the Twentieth Century, many scientists, psychologists, and philosophers considered emotions as somewhat dysfunctional remnants of our phylogenesis. By contrast, more recent neurological studies (Pally, 2000; Johnson, 2012) have shown that emotions are

essential for decision making. The neurologist Richard Cytovic (1998) considers consciousness as a type of emotion, which makes sense, because consciousness is an indicator of saliency, just as affects are. Neurologists have found that brain centers associated with regulating emotions are related to centers regulating movement (Arnold 2011, p. 15) and so it is not surprising that affects are closely tied to symbolic gestures and expressions.



Tomkins (in Demos ed. 1995, [www.tomkins.org](http://www.tomkins.org)) identifies nine inborn affects, which are powerful signals about the saliency of certain parts of our environment, and which urge us to action: 1. Interest-excitement, 2. Enjoyment-joy, 3. Surprise-startle, 4. Fear-terror, 5. Distress-anguish, 6. Anger-rage, 7. Dismissal (-contempt; after 1990 Tomkins considered contempt a

combination of dismissal and anger), 8. Disgust, and 9. Shame-humiliation. Affects appear to be triggered by patterns/changes in the stimulation we perceive and actually reflect these patterns. For example, a gradual decrease of stimulation results in joy, a moderate increase in interest, a sudden sharp increase in startle, chronic over-stimulation in distress and anger (at higher levels).

It is notable that these triggers are not related to the informational content of situations but to their dynamics (Johnston, 1999), which may reflect the link of affect and movement. In my therapy practice, I have observed a gradual re-balancing of internal and external stimulation: as clients have worked through emotional conflicts and created internal harmony, they often change their environment in a corresponding fashion, for example, by de-cluttering or reorganizing space. Conversely, tormented people can feel at peace in an environment that matches or exceeds their own turmoil, as can often be observed in addiction and self-injury or self-sabotage. This desire for synchrony between our internal and external environments includes the relationships we are drawn to.

While affect and reason can easily clash, intuition may be viewed as cognition based on affect. Intuitive

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