First Do No Harm

The Paradoxical Encounters of Psychoanalysis, Warmaking, and Resistance

Edited by Adrienne Harris • Steven Botticelli
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Editors’ introduction

Adrienne Harris and Steven Botticelli

This volume takes its title from a most ancient and ethically binding directive to physicians: First, do no harm. We mean to situate this title and this volume of essays in paradox. For over a century, the healing practices that flow from depth psychology and a psychoanalytic theory of unconscious process have been used to offer repair to soldiers and civilians traumatized by war. Psychoanalytic thinking has been crucial to our understanding of the long sequelae of war and war trauma, as they burrow deep into character and collective life. Many of the writers in this collection examine the use of psychoanalytic ideas to explain the impulse for war and destruction, uses that go back to the very beginning of psychoanalysis and to Freud himself.

But what tumbles us into paradox and difficulty is that we must also notice the use of psychology and psychoanalysis to wage war and its most destructive and lethal programs. We must notice with chagrin and horror that psychological theories and concepts underwrite torture. Psychodynamic theories can be tools with which individuals and groups launch attacks on the psychic integrity and on the emotional, mental and physical health, of civilians and soldiers, victims and perpetrators.

There are two interwoven stories here in regard to the destructive and the reconstructive potential for psychoanalytic and depth psychological ideas. There is the potential in the theory for care and damage, as we suggest. There is the potential in analysts or caregivers for transformation from good to bad objects and also there is the perversion of ideas and personnel in the hands of ideologues and forces of domination, which may come in the form of individuals or states (Stein, Chapter 13, this volume). Viewed as technique or instrument, psychoanalysis is morally agnostic. Our examination of this paradox must be undertaken at the social level, the level of state power, and at the individual level. We see the invocation “first, do no harm” as a crucial ethical guide for any mental health worker. We use the phrase with irony, with critique, but also with a moral and ethical imperative, as we explore the recruitment of psychological ideas for damage, domination, and humiliation in circumstances of armed conflict and warmaking, circumstances that may destroy soldier and civilian.
Editors’ introduction

This edited volume was begun in a moment of acute personal and professional crisis experienced by a number of psychologists, engaged in a bitter and increasingly trenchant struggle with the administration and leadership of the American Psychological Association. The continued presence of psychologists at interrogations at the prison in Guantánamo is an outrage so far unmoved by very continuous determined effort and opposition within the APA (see Soldz, Chapter 5, and Reisner, Chapter 6, this volume, for an extensive discussion and timeline for this battle). In the face of an increasing outcry from the membership about the matter, the APA continued to maintain that psychologists’ presence there was necessary to protect the detainees. Many of the leaders in that battle with the APA have chapters in this volume (Boulanger, Soldz, Hollander, Thomas, Altman, Reisner, and Summers).

Far from a small internal battle within a profession, the implications of the APA’s continuous refusal to sign on to clear statements of opposition to torture have been stunning and deeply troubling. The APA leadership has consistently refused to make clear commitments to the ethical stance of any psychologist with regard to interrogations and a broad range of destructive practices. Perhaps our continued surprise is worth some attention. However anomalous or inevitable these leadership strategies may appear, this crisis within the organization has opened a deep inquiry into the nature of modern warfare and the role of psychologists, but more ominously the role of psychology, and by extension, psychoanalysis, in warmaking.

For anyone following this battle within the APA, there are many striking thunderclap moments. It was eye opening to realize that the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychoanalytic Association had much clearer commitments to the Geneva Convention than the American Psychological Association, and each of the former groups established an absolute prohibition on participation or even observation in the kind of “interrogations” occurring at Guantánamo. As more historical excavation of the rise of such interrogations occurred, one realized that many within the military and the Federal Bureau of Investigation stepped back from these procedures, even as the APA continued to claim the utility of psychologists’ presence at interrogations (Mayer, 2008).

Horror and curiosity were mixed together. What was preventing a group of psychologists, usually the more progressive elements within the mental health world, from finding a clear path to a principled stance on torture? There is the conflict. Many psychologists had thought themselves to be the more progressive forces within the mental health and helping professions. Indeed psychology, in a wide variety of contexts, does make progressive contributions. And yet, our dependence on and embeddedness in the military system has been visible to all of us for half a century. However morally or even pragmatically one approached this matter, something seemed very mystifying here. Torture is unethical and destructive. It does not produce
useful information. The harm to the victim and to the torturer radiates out to family, and to the wider society, leaving decades-long, multigenerational effects of shame and rage. As many have argued, these practices, along with many other aspects of American defense policy, have left us radically less safe than ever.

**PARADOX**

In a sense, this volume emerged as one way of speculating on the stasis within the profession and the professional organizations of psychology. Looking both historically and currently, one sees that psychology is the creature of the military (Zaretsky, Chapter 9, and Gaudillière, Chapter 2, give us a historical picture). Without military research and defense interests, there would be no APA and no professional discipline of psychology of the scale it currently operates at in the United States and perhaps also internationally.

But there is an even more difficult paradox here. The theories and practices of psychology and psychoanalysis are in a sense morally agnostic, equally deployable for peace and growth on one hand, or destruction and malignant practices of domination on the other. This is true whether the theory is behavioral or depth psychological. The depth psychologies, all officially or unofficially indebted to and linked to psychoanalysis, offer the most powerful ideas into how character is formed, how influence is promoted, and how people are induced to act in particular nonrational ways. (Stein, Chapter 13, explicates in psychoanalytic terms the basis for the effectiveness of mind control techniques, as these have been deployed by cult leaders, totalitarian regimes, and others.)

The insight in Jane Mayer’s first *New Yorker* piece (2005) may have been startling but once thought about, one can see that the contradiction between psychology and psychoanalysis as handmaidens of war and destructiveness and of peace and healing is obvious and ubiquitous. Mayer’s most significant finding, for our purposes, was that a program designed to protect soldiers, by arming them with techniques to avoid breaking down under interrogations, could simply be inverted and reversed to break down our enemies. The theory is in this way ethically agnostic, of utility for purposes benevolent and malign.

Looking over the history of mental health, of psychological research and practice and in particular over psychoanalysis, this contradiction repeatedly surfaces. There might be different ways to describe this. Inevitably, one cures with contaminated tools. The more deeply we understand human character, human defenses, and human reactions to trauma, the more we realize that within the same theoretical/clinical enterprise there is the capacity to both help and hurt.
That said, for all the supposed sophistication suggested by the notion of “reverse engineering of SERE techniques,” the actual methods of torture used by interrogators that have been most reported in the media—waterboarding, sleep deprivation, stress positions—hardly required knowledge of the theories (e.g., Seligman’s learned helplessness) that were said to have inspired them, and have been used by torturers for centuries (see Mayer, 2008). By contrast, the interrogation methods that rely on building rapport with a criminal suspect, eschewed under the recent American intelligence-gathering program and reportedly more effective than torture in gleaning information, actually require a degree of clinical skill and training. In this sense, it seems the Central Intelligence Agency enlisted psychologists less for their supposed psychological expertise than for the gloss of professionalism their participation lent to the grisly proceedings. As one source told Mayer (2008), psychologists were desired “because they [the CIA] wanted some kind of psychological justification for doing what they were doing. They wanted a theoretician to tell them that they could go hard but not seem like brutes” (p. 163).

In a self-reflexive mode, we wonder at the meanings of our invocation of a directive to physicians to introduce this group of essays, most of which have been written by non-MD psychologists. Although a 2008 referendum on the question of psychologists’ participation in military interrogations aimed to change this, the code of ethics for psychologists (unlike that for psychiatrists and other physicians) has been porous enough to allow such participation. Might there be elitism (in addition to our justly credited moral concern) in this move to identify ourselves with physicians as we condemn the behavior of some of our psychologist colleagues? Would we, collectively as a group of concerned psychologists, have taken this vocal moral position if our livelihoods were linked to the military, as the livelihoods of so many psychologists currently and historically have been (see Summers, Chapter 8; also Altman, Chapter 7). Might there be other, less apparent motives at work in our wish to identify ourselves, especially perhaps in this particular moment of economic anxiety, with the prestige of medicine, at the same time as we disidentify with our psychologist colleagues? “We’re like these people, not like those” (see Botticelli, Chapter 16, on matters of identification and disidentification as they pertain to politics). Rozmarin (Chapter 15) visits these conflicts between the collective and individual level in another context.

FORGETTING: SOCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, PERSONAL

Historically speaking, psychoanalysis has a mixed record when it comes to questions of war and militarism (Zaretsky, Chapter 9, and Gaudillière, Chapter 2, this volume). Freud’s initial response to the outbreak of the First
World War was one of nationalistic enthusiasm. He wrote to Karl Abraham that “for the first time in thirty years I feel myself to be an Austrian and feel like giving this not very hopeful Empire another chance. ... All my libido is given to Austro-Hungary” (quoted in Breger, 2000, p. 234). The war had the effect of cleaving Freud’s professional and personal relationships along the lines established by the clashing powers. He remarked to Abraham of their British colleague Ernest Jones, “Jones, is of course our enemy” (p. 237)—even as he maintained collegial contact with him. As the full extent of the destructiveness unleashed by the war became apparent, Freud was horrified by what had been wrought: “[N]o event has ever destroyed so much that is precious in the common possessions of humanity, confused so many of the clearest intelligences, or so thoroughly debased what is highest” (1915/1957, p. 275). Freud, nevertheless, assimilated this horror as merely reflecting one of the unpalatable truths that psychoanalysis had been urging humanity to come to terms with. In a lecture he gave to his B’nai B’rith chapter in 1916, Freud suggested that the war had broken through the general denial of death that prevailed in peacetime. He urged a realistic acceptance of the reality of death, that such an attitude was necessary in order to make “life ... interesting again,” for it to “recover its full content” (1915/1957, p. 291), and asserted that war could not be abolished.

Attached as he was to understanding emotional disturbances in adulthood as ineluctably rooted in infantile sexual conflicts, Freud was unable to consider the role of trench warfare and other traumatic combat experiences in producing shell-shocked soldiers. He went so far as to maintain that “When the furious struggle of the present war has been decided, each one of the victorious fighters will return home joyfully to his wife and children, unchecked and undisturbed by thoughts of the enemies he has killed whether at close quarters or at long range” (1915/1957, p. 295). In Freud’s case such ideas did not result in the mistreatment of any soldiers, as he treated none. However, given the preeminent influence of psychoanalysis on the profession of psychiatry over the next decades, such ideas contributed to the delayed recognition of the impact of trauma in adulthood. Indeed, it is only in recent years that analysts finally have felt the freedom to do so (e.g., Boulanger, 2007).

There is, actually, an almost lost but important stream of thought and work, inaugurated in the work of Ferenczi and importantly influenced and expanded in the work of various psychiatrist veterans of the First World War. Tausk (1916, 1987), Feigenbaum (1937), Groddeck (1977), and in a different context Bion (1987) add many ideas and insights into the impact of trauma on the mind, ideas that have been somewhat dormant in the treatment and consideration of veterans until the post-Vietnam era. Work on veterans of the Second World War has perhaps been more occluded from contemporary attention. But for an alternative perspective see Kardiner (1947, 1969). Layton (personal communication, August 2009) adds Fairbairn to this list. Tucked into his chapter on the return of bad objects,
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Fairbairn speaks of war neuroses as examples of this kind of ferocious reappearance of repressed bad internal objects, triggered by both intrapsychic circumstances and external reality. His work is drawn on in Ruth Stein’s chapter on mind control, and we quote his thoughts about war and intrapsychic process at some length. Notice his close attention to the phenomenology of what we have come to know as post-traumatic stress reaction:

The spontaneous and psychopathological (as against the induced and therapeutic) release of repressed objects may be observed to particular advantage in wartime in the case of military patients, amongst whom the phenomenon may be studied on a massive scale. ... The effect of such traumatic situations and traumatic experiences in releasing bad objects from the unconscious is demonstrated nowhere better than in the wartime dreams of military patients. Amongst the commonest of such dreams, as would be expected, are nightmares about being chased or shot at by the enemy, and about being bombed by hostile aeroplanes (often described as “great black planes”). The release of bad objects may, however, be represented in other ways, e.g., in nightmares about being crushed by great weights, about being strangled by someone, about being pursued by prehistoric animals, about being visited by ghosts and about being shouted at by the sergeant-major. The appearance of such dreams is sometimes accompanied by a revival of repressed memories of childhood. One of the most remarkable cases of this kind in my experience was that of a psychopathic soldier, who passed into a schizoid state not long after being conscripted, and who then began to dream about prehistoric monsters and shapeless things and staring eyes that burned right through him. He became very childish in his behaviour; and simultaneously his consciousness became flooded with a host of forgotten memories of childhood, among which he became specially preoccupied by one of sitting in his pram on a station platform and seeing his mother enter a railway carriage with his older brother. In reality his mother was just seeing his brother off; but the impression created in the patient was that his mother was going off in the train too and thus leaving him deserted. The revival of this repressed memory of a deserting mother represented, of course, the release of a bad object from the unconscious. A few days after he told me of this memory a shop belonging to him was damaged by a bomb; and he was granted twenty-four hours’ leave of absence to attend to business arising out of the incident. When he saw his damaged shop, he experienced a schizoid state of detachment; but that night, when he went to bed at home, he felt as if he were being choked and experienced a powerful impulse to smash up his house and murder his wife and children. His bad objects had returned with a vengeance. (Fairbairn, 1952, pp. 76–77)

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Psychoanalytic ideas were able to play a constructive role in devising therapy for the shattered minds of traumatized soldiers, providing a humane alternative to such routinely practiced “treatments” as electric shock that aimed at getting soldiers back to the front as quickly as possible. Working independently of each other, the British physicians William Brown and W. H. R. Rivers came to see shell-shocked soldiers’ symptoms as the products of traumatic experiences in combat that had been sealed off from conscious memory. In this they were drawing inspiration from Freud’s *Studies on Hysteria*, which also suggested a treatment method: “catharsis, the open expression of the sealed off memories with a full range of emotions” (Breger, 2000, p. 257). Not being analysts themselves, Brown, Rivers, and several others like them were free to draw on those aspects of psychoanalytic writing that fit with their own observations and could be useful in their treatment of their patients, without the stultifying requirement of loyalty to the master that Freud imposed on those who wanted to remain in his circle. (See Davoine, Chapter 10, for an analysis of the long hand of trauma in several key figures around the period of the First World War; see also Thomas, Chapter 4, for a consideration of the complex, long-term sequelae to trauma, even when remembered and witnessed.)

There is an interesting symposium that appears in 1919, organized by Ferenczi and introduced by Freud. A note is sounded that will reappear throughout the century. Work on the injuries and psychiatric symptoms of soldiers and veterans heats up during wartime and rather shockingly disappears at the armistice or the end of hostilities. As one of our authors, Jean-Max Gaudilliére, points out, the forgetting is itself symptomatic at a social, collective level. Equally powerfully, there is a consistent low-grade resistance to the recognition of the long-term consequences of war, the facts of postwar trauma, and the long shadow of trauma, including collective attempts to recover from trauma (see also Thomas, Chapter 4, this volume and Boulanger, Chapter 3, this volume).

In a certain way, key evolutions in the healing and the malignant use of psychoanalytic and psychological theory arise in the context of particular wars. Each war brings its own language, specialization, and dilemmas. Faradism, shellshock, hysteria in World War I. “Psychoneurosis” as the narrator of *Let There Be Light* (a documentary film made by John Huston) describes 20% of the injuries in World War II. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the term that emerges after Vietnam, migrates from military to civilian populations. Boulanger (personal communication, August 2009) notes that in thinking of the evolution of the diagnosis of PTSD we should remember that it was never intended simply to diagnose postcombat conditions. Among the original movers for the diagnosis were Vietnam veterans, women afflicted by postrape reactions, and Holocaust survivors.

The periods pre- and post-World War II are particularly interesting as the sites of psychological research and work that promotes the effectiveness...
of propaganda. We can see in the seminal work in social psychology (e.g., Rappaport) that ideas of impression management, rhetoric, and suggestion can take psychology (and the related discipline psychoanalysis) into a dark or a light rehabilitative space. The same theoretical ideas (dynamic depth psychology, unconscious fears and drives, the limits and character of defenses) can serve demonic or heroic forces (Grand, Chapter 11; Stein, Chapter 13).

VIETNAM

For many of the generation of the 1960s movements of liberation and social protest (Layton, Harris, Moss, Gaudillière, Zaretsky, Davoine, Boulanger, Altman, in this volume), Vietnam, a war waged on television, a war whose damage to self and other was palpable, was the watershed experience of our young adult lives. PTSD, as a crucial aspect of postwar veteran life, began to emanate to other aspects of psychological and psychiatric care and healing (as so often happened over this century). The late Ted Nadelson, in *Trained to Kill* (2005), wrote a painful memoir of a lifetime healing wounded military minds. One of us (Harris, 2006) reviewed that book:

Nadelson reports an interchange with a marine Vietnam veteran. With a stark clarity, the soldier describes the thrill, the intense arousal, and stream of feelings that attend on destruction, the felt beauty of annihilating another person. Nadelson asks if the soldier could imagine him, the doctor, feeling such satisfaction. The answer is clear. “No. You? You worry ... about people, you would worry about the hole you make” (p. 72). The prose is extremely simple and clear, so the reader feels the moment between the two men as one of terrible recognition. There is an unbridgeable gap between subjectivities alongside a pained connection. Nadelson can feel the chagrin at knowing his own limit. The soldier knows that a crucial human empathy is lost to him. Nadelson frames all his examples within an understanding that wars are rationalized, sanctioned violence, that the mix of masculine socialization and military training and wartime experience has a toxicity, and a potency, that alters everything. Like Kafka’s needle, wartime action, killing and harming, amidst a terrifying and dangerous battle, bites deep into body and soul. (p. 1155)

Nadelson’s conclusions are sorrowful. He links the vulnerability of soldiers to historical forces and the powerlessness inherent in warfare, and also to gender socialization, to the induction of masculinity through shame and disdain for tenderness and vulnerability, a lethal gap in any soldier’s armor. We see this question of identity or interpellation, at the individual level and the collective, in the chapters by Rozmarin, Layton, Hollander, Botticelli, and
Moss. It is also crucial to see, over a century of work on veterans’ trauma, both the paucity of help offered to those afflicted and the chronicity of multiple traumas (Altman, 2009). We live amid layers of recurring trauma.

IDENTITY AND WAR TRAUMA

Working on this project, reading our authors, and delving into the literature on war trauma, genocides, and warmaking, and seeing a century of warfare and its sequelae through the lens of psychoanalysis, one thread can be traced throughout. The long hand of trauma, specific to childhood or adult onset (Boulanger, Chapter 3) or intergenerational came to be visible in many contexts, from the aftermath of genocide (Thomas, Chapter 4), the long sequelae to the Holocaust (Botticelli, Chapter 16; Rozmarin, Chapter 15), to the ongoing treatment of veterans (McGoldrick, Chapter 1). Warmaking, injuring others, repairing, all cohere around the role and presence (disavowed or prominent) of shame. Again, the paradox. Identifications can only be constituted through some encounter with shame, limits, and the culture’s requirements conveyed through the family and powerful others. Yet identity is threatened whenever shame dominates. We know this from the dissociation and trauma literature. We know this from developmental studies (Lewis, 1995). Whereas guilt may target and organize around particular acts or traits, shame is a full body–mind experience. Shamed, the self implodes; identity itself is shattered.

Can we not see shame everywhere in these stories? As medical psychiatry tools up in the wake of industrialization, the mass technologizing of war at the end of the 19th century, the debates about manliness in a soldier, and the unstable status of psychiatric and psychological symptoms and diagnoses often organize around the adequacy of the soldier’s identity, and therefore the threat of shame haunts the enterprise. Nadelson would argue that shame is part of the deep constituting of masculinity, seen in his clinics in the Veterans Affairs hospitals in Boston. And upon injury or trauma, shame accompanies the soldier and his illnesses every step of the way (Grand, Chapter 11; Boulanger, Chapter 3; McGoldrick, Chapter 1).

From Nancy Hollander (Chapter 14) we can see that women are crucial as targets and pawns for warmaking. Through rape and sexual assault, shame with its effects on the collapse of identity, war is waged and trauma is incurred. If the culture colludes, or requires particular formations of self, gendered, racialized, culturally inflected, cultures, through medical and political personnel and through public discourse, have a stake in the maintenance of those identifications. As psychoanalysts, we can both notice the powerful intrapsychic requirements of identification as a deep vulnerability in war, and the social and intrapsychic requirements not to notice this. The cultural amnesias and institutional forgettings are very much the topic of

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Layton’s essay in this volume (Chapter 18). It is very telling that in looking at resistance, some prosthetic for shame may be in place, some capacity to function in opposition to culture and society and often to family has been fostered and survived (Rozmarin, Chapter 15; Botticelli, Chapter 16).

In “psychologizing” the traumatized soldier or civilian, we are committed to avoiding reduction. The intrapsychic, identificatory aspect of soldiers’ experiences are just one element in a complex multileveled story. Shame, we know from the dissociation and developmental literature, comes from powerlessness. The ultimate powerlessness of the soldier is extraordinarily visible in the trench warfare of the First World War, the time of much professionalization of psychoanalysis and psychiatry in the treatment of war neurosis (Zaretsky, Chapter 9). Shame, if you like, exposes the illusions of autonomy, one lynchpin of masculinity.

Shame is an ingredient in the carrying of memory in a somewhat different constellation in Donald Moss’ memoir (Chapter 12). In tracing a guilt, shame and pleasure-ridden repeating war story told by his father to him, over almost half a century, Moss explores the complex pleasure in aggression and destruction, and the contagious damage of these pleasures over the generations. These transmissions are integral to masculinity and gender construction, perhaps also to patriotism, in unusual, unexpected forms, and to the repetitive installation of trauma in the psyche.

RESISTANCE

Freud (1927/1957) laid down the shibboleth for psychoanalysis as a basis for political resistance when he asserted in “The Future of an Illusion”: “It goes without saying that a civilization which leaves so large a number of its participants unsatisfied and drives them into revolt neither has nor deserves the prospect of a lasting existence” (p. 12). The political power of this position lies in its universalism, its assertion of common human need, the denial of which provokes people to rebel. As Terry Eagleton (1996) put it in a defense of essentialism, “Needs which are essential to our survival and well-being … [are] politically criterial: any social order which denies such needs can be challenged on the grounds that it is denying our humanity, which is usually a stronger argument against it than the case that it is flouting our contingent cultural conventions” (p. 104). The Frankfurt School theorists found in Freud’s drive theory (in its postulation of an opposition between a pleasure-seeking id and the repressive forces of ego and superego) a model for social struggle and transformation. The notion of the id as a repository of animal sexual impulses provided “a psychic and theoretical external point from which to mount a critique of society” (Jacoby, 1983, p. 157). And indeed the work of the Frankfurt School, and of Lacan in France (see Turkle, 1992), provided inspiration for some anti-Vietnam war protesters.
Still, psychoanalysts traditionally have considered themselves to be practitioners of a contemplative discipline, suspicious of action and more likely to pathologize protest than to call for it; consider, for example, Bruno Bettelheim’s dismissal of the 1960s antiwar movement as “oedipal acting out” (Zaretzky, 2004, p. 313). On the level of theory, this tendency was reinforced through the 1950s and ’60s, especially in the United States, by the dominance of ego psychology, which moved the id into the background at the same time that it (as Zaretzky captures it) “lost the view of the ego as the locus of resistance” (p. 278). Instead the ego became the seat of reason and self-control. Nevertheless, antiwar sentiment survived in other precincts within psychoanalysis. Several essays by Hanna Segal (1987, 1995) are significant not so much for the illumination they provide into the populace’s acceptance of the possibility of nuclear war (in familiar Kleinian terms of psychotic fears, paranoid mechanisms, etc.) but more for Segal’s assertion of her right to speak as a psychoanalyst of political matters during a period of widespread quiescence and complacency among analysts. As she put it, “I think psychoanalytical neutrality must not be confused with being neutered” (1995, p. 204).

Although psychoanalysis has never been a major force in the world in opposing war, several recent developments in psychoanalytic theory have made it more axiomatic for individual analysts to take antiwar positions and perhaps to influence others to do so, within the limited spheres in which we operate. One such development has been an ever-expanding and increasingly refined appreciation of the impact of trauma on mental functioning. Contrary to Freud’s blithe assessment of soldiers returning home from war psychologically unscathed, we now understand much more about the mental damage inflicted on soldiers by their experiences in soldiering, part of a broader appreciation of the impact of traumatic experience in adulthood in general (see Boulanger, 2007 and Chapter 3, this volume).

Second, analysts increasingly have been asserting the moral dimension of psychoanalysis as a theory and practice (e.g., Cushman, 1995; Alford, 1998; Grand, 2000, 2009), an aspect that was explicitly disavowed by Freud in his insistence that psychoanalysis was a science, not a worldview or a moral philosophy (see Abel, 1989). One salient example of contemporary theorizing in this vein has been Jessica Benjamin’s work (e.g., 2004) on mutual recognition and intersubjectivity. Hers is implicitly a moral theory, one that defines the good as that which supports separate subjects’ recognition of each other as equivalent centers of experience. This position fosters interest in specifying the conditions that facilitate mutual recognition even as it maintains an awareness that such recognition is always at best a temporary achievement, continually subject to breakdown, in which the encounter between two subjectivities degenerates into a struggle for power. With due regard for the caution necessary when moving from the individual to the group level of analysis, this thinking could be taken as a model
for the encounter between two parties to a political conflict, perhaps help-
ing to provide a standpoint from which to attempt to intervene (Rozmarin,
Chapter 15; Harris, Chapter 17). Such theorizing seems of a piece with the
efforts to organize opposition to the war on Iraq (for example, through the
creation of Psychotherapists for Social Responsibility in late 2002, in which
analysts played a leading role) as well as with analysts’ prominence in the
effort to force the American Psychological Association to take an ethical
stand with regard to psychologists’ involvement in CIA and military inter-
rogations (see Summers, Chapter 9; Reinsner, Chapter 6; Soldz, Chapter 5).

In the sphere of cultural studies, Judith Butler (2009) recently has drawn
on psychoanalytic (especially Kleinian) categories in her effort to under-
stand how it is that some lives come to count as human lives, worthy of
mourning if they are lost, while others do not. Contesting the differential
valuation placed on Western and non-Western lives as shown, for instance,
in the conduct and media representations of current U.S. wars, Butler insists
on our interconnectedness as the basis for moral action: “[T]he subject that
I am is bound to the subject I am not … we each have the power to destroy
and be destroyed, and … we are bound to one another in this power and
this precariousness. In this sense, we are all precarious lives” (p. 43).

In preparing this volume of essays over the past year and a half, we have
been mindful of timing and of the time-sensitive nature of some of our essay-
ists’ focus and concern. Perhaps another paradox in this volume is the way
we represent the importance of action and political responsiveness. Some of
these essays allow us to see the tragedy of inaction, the results of neglect of
this topic and of the victims of warfare, civilian and military. Nothing or lit-
tle changes at the social level and in institutional practices. Yet the essays on
the battles with the APA suggest that action and responsiveness are crucial.
Even as this book comes into being, the struggle to secure an ethical stance
on interrogations is ongoing. And in another context, recent accounts and
assessments of sexual violence against women in areas of ethnic or imperi-
alist violence are actually increasing, even as our awareness of the plight of
women has also expanded. This paradox—nothing changes over a century
of modern warfare, and the situation requires immediate action—is still
present as we publish this book. Time stops and time is speeding up. This
perhaps constitutes one of the social dimensions of trauma.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The essays in this collection, all solicited by the editors, wanting to give
a very free hand to authors, have arrived in very different registers. We
want to pay attention to the very different tonal and emotional strategies (if
that is the right term) our authors have chosen. To recite an oft-noted epi-
thet from feminism: The personal is political. Private stories; narratives in
different formats; surrealistic, visionary dreamscapes. Some authors have written powerful, dispassionate essays like legal briefs building the case for the rise of torture and its professional underwriting by psychologists (Soldz, Chapter 5; Reisner, Chapter 6). We find evidence as well of the personal transformations in this professional scandal (Altman, Chapter 7; Reisner, Chapter 6).

There is another aspect of these articles, often subtle, often carried in tone or in footnotes. For the mental health workers treating war trauma, there is the inevitable and bravely borne matter of secondary trauma, adding to the deep costs of care and cure. Writing personally or professionally, our authors track the personal and collective burden, lived in conscious and unconscious processes, of carrying history (Rozmarin, Chapter 15; Moss, Chapter 11; Davoine, Chapter 10; Harris, Chapter 17).

This collection is organized into four sections, though inevitably overlap and interactions occur. We look first at the history and contemporary work on the injuries and repair of soldiers. We look then at the use of psychoanalysis in the service of warmaking and torture, the demonic side. We take up, in a third section, the use of psychoanalysis as a deconstructive tool for understanding warmaking and militarism. Finally, we address, from a sociohistorical, political, as well as a psychoanalytic perspective, the question of resistance.

REFERENCES

Editors’ introduction


