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My Life and Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis has coursed through my entire life, pervading my personal and sexual experiences, my family life, my work as a historian, my politics, my innermost questioning of self. Its salience did not arise out of questions concerning neurotic symptoms, treatment, or cure. Rather, I was drawn to psychoanalysis because it seemed to me to offer a superior way of living: deeper, more conscious and more intellectual. At the same time, I had a quasi-catastrophic experience in the course of a ten-year intensive psychoanalysis. I will try to tell this story, as I have tried to live my life, so that particular intense moments, like my experience in analysis, are given due weight but no more than that, and so that the overall picture of my relation to analysis is captured, for in my case it has been an overwhelmingly happy one.

I have often felt almost superstitiously close to Sigmund Freud, and to the people immediately around him, in part because I was born more or less when Freud died—at the outbreak of the Second World War—and in what I imagined to be a similar environment. My parents were Jewish refugees, and we shared a hyper-intense world of inner familial involvement, compared to which the outside world seemed cold and alien. For many years I traced my difficulties in life to my belief that my father had been traumatized by his experience as a refugee from the Russian Revolution. He was around nine or ten when the family fled, his father became incurably ill, and it took a decade for the family to reach America. As a result, my father grew up in refugee camps, where he learned his first trade, as a barber. My father once told me that his greatest professional accomplishment was becoming a beautician, styling women's hair, as opposed to cutting men's. He was a very handsome man, with a somewhat "feminine" side. He loved to give pleasure, and he cared more for the wellbeing of others than he did for himself.

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My mother, by contrast, was a formidable person of great emotional depth, sharp wit and much anger. She criticized my father as well as my two brothers and me unceasingly, and only in extreme old age, after my father died, did she soften and express love easily. She was also the "good daughter" as opposed to her somewhat rowdy, boy-loving younger sister, my aunt Edith. At the same time my mother adored my father with a truly vast passion. She often told me how lucky she was to have married a soft, loving man, unlike the working-class types—painters, printers, taxi-drivers—that the other women in our family married. Her mother told her that the way to choose a husband was to see if he had dirt under his nails. The dirt meant he would be a hard worker and thereby a good provider. My mother felt that she had ignored this advice and found someone better.

Although the name of Freud was probably never spoken in my family when I was growing up, he was a presence nonetheless. For the son of immigrant Jews, living in Brooklyn, the great island of Manhattan always loomed and Manhattan meant Greenwich Village, the enchanted land in which the great modernist figures—Dostoevsky, Kafka, Joyce, and especially Freud—were still vibrant presences. Along with the Torah and the stories derived from it, these giants represented civilization to me, and they were available for only fifteen cents, the cost of a subway ride. That was all it took to walk around the Village, whose very streets seemed to exude the intellectual depth, the intense level of civilization as well as the sexual vitality for which I longed.

Of all the great modernists, Freud spoke most directly and poignantly to me because of his focus on sexuality. Only now, in my seventies, have I found even the beginning of any surcease from the pressure of heterosexual desire that seems to me to have occupied almost the whole of my consciousness throughout my life. Freudian ideas—it would be decades before I read Freud himself—seemed in some way to understand and sanction this. Likewise, it was only in my seventies that I began to see female sexuality as a normal, everyday matter, so obsessed had I been before with my drive to visualize, disrobe, and possess the women I met. This blind spot was perhaps the

result of not having a sister, but I hasten to add that there was little or no "sexism" in it. I always had women friends, intimates, and associates, and it would never have occurred to me to think of them as subordinates, intellectually or otherwise. How could I, given my mother's imposing personality, cutting wit and driving insights?

The Sixties dawned for me, as for so many others, as an awakening: a grisaille landscape blossomed into a flowing, Technicolor loveliness. Above all, it was the sprouting of picket lines everywhere that energized me. Born during the Second World War, I was a few years older than the baby-boomers of the 1960s, and thus had some perspective on the New Left, in which I was nonetheless a passionate participant. Meanwhile, although I had not yet read Freud, I was convinced of the idea of the unconscious. For one thing, powerful emotions roiled me. Where did they come from, if not from the unconscious? For another I was painfully aware that I lacked control over myself, because of periodic struggles to lose weight. Then, there were the broader issues of growing up as a man. I went to Mississippi during Freedom Summer 1964 because racial prejudice seemed to me the most ignorant and horrible of all evils, but I can also remember one of my professors stressing to me how important it was for a young man to discover whether or not he was courageous, a question otherwise dealt with in the military. Freudianism implied a deeply positive ideal of manhood to me; one that involved protecting others and that was entirely at odds with machismo.

In 1967 I married and began teaching American History at a women's college. Two years later I resigned my position and moved to San Francisco to edit *Socialist Revolution* (*SR*), a neo-Marxist journal, a successor to *Studies on the Left*. The next several years, which culminated in my entering psychoanalysis in 1976, are crucial to understanding the lens through which I approach Freudianism. In the course of editing *SR* I was exposed to the sophisticated Marxism of figures such as Marty Sklar and James Weinstein, thinkers who had broken with the Communist Party during the 1950s in part because of the party's theoretical and intellectual weakness. These individuals viewed the New Left historically, as reflecting the shift in the locus

of capitalism's contradictions from the factory to civil society, the universities, and the media. They were also keenly aware of the differences between the American and European Lefts, and grasped the ways in which the Communist experience had been distorted by its subordination to the Soviet Union. They stressed the need for a new theory free of the dogmatism and economism of the past.

Studies on the Left had been devoted to forging a radical interpretation of American history, but *SR* was an international socialist journal. Becoming the editor of such a journal was the realization of a great dream for me, centered on my desire to become a writer and theorist. Soon after I began editing *SR* the women's movement exploded and I took on the task of reviewing Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970). Firestone's book centrally challenged the Marxist idea of a dialectic of labor, seeking to supplant it with a dialectic of sex. A central motif was Firestone's gendered reading of Freud's account of the Oedipus complex, according to which all power rested in the father; women and children banded together in a sort of alliance of weakness against him; penis envy was power envy and history reflected the struggle of the sexes.

Within the context of *SR*'s overall project, my particular responsibility was to figure out how a Marxist approach, broadly conceived, could explain women's oppression, as well as to address the broader issues, often connected with psychoanalysis, that the women's movement brought to the fore. To be sure, this required that the Marxist approach be revised. My core revision lay in seeing the family as part of the economic structure of society, meaning social-necessary relations—relations necessary to reproduce society—not reducible to the monetized economy. I can still remember the *SR* meeting in which Ann Snitow illustrated the idea of a division between the public and private through the striking image of an apartment house corridor, with its cold anonymity, and a door opening to the warm light of a family within. In the Marxist context I immediately understood that this "split" or "division," as I then described it, was a historical product, one that could only be understood through the movement of economic production out of the household and the consequent transformation of the family

into the vehicle of personal life. The resulting book—*Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life*–finished in 1972 and published in two parts in *SR* was immediately republished by a Canadian collective, and then as a pamphlet by *SR*. I still remember long evenings in which the entire collective, including my two-year-old daughter Natasha, spent hours stapling its pages. In 1976, Harper & Row published the book and several decades later their editor, Hugh Van Dusen, told me that it was the best selling title in their one-hundred-and-fifty-year history. I have no idea whether this is true.

I wrote *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* believing that the feminist movement, like the civil rights and student movements before it, were ongoing outbursts of a new kind of diversified, industrial and post-industrial working class, necessitating a new kind of socialist movement. This, however, was not to be. Almost immediately upon the birth of second-wave feminism, most feminists broke with the idea of a "mixed" left (comprising men and women.) While I saw this "separatism" as inevitable and necessary at a mass level, I was distressed to see that for feminist activists too the project of building an autonomous women's movement implied abandoning the idea of a Left, which I considered a decisive negative turn for the country. My disappointment was compounded by personal tragedy. My wife had fallen ill in 1970 when our daughter was born, and her illness isolated us from what had felt like the New Left's collective project, a project that included *SR*. In short, the ground was taken from under me. In 1972, on my thirty-second birthday, my wife told me that I was sadly alone in my life, and urged me to seek some sort of psychotherapeutic or analytic treatment. This precipitated my intense involvement with psychoanalysis.

Not surprisingly, given my character, the beginnings were intellectual. The final chapter of *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* had focused on psychoanalysis, describing it as a theory of the separate sphere of personal life, full of insight but devoid of an understanding of that sphere's imbrication with the capitalist economy. In 1973 I set about reviewing, from the proofs given me by the author, Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974), a far more sophisticated attempt to harness

Freudian thought for feminism than Firestone had provided. I soon realized that before tackling Mitchell's book I needed to read Freud. I read the *Standard Edition* from beginning to end in the medical library at San Francisco General Hospital, where my daughter had been born three years earlier. The effect it had on me was profound. I started as a critic of Freud; I remember, for example, reading the Leonard da Vinci book, and thinking how much it needed to be informed by an understanding of the Renaissance. But I soon got the basic idea. I think it was while reading the Rat Man essay and recognizing in my own mind what Freud called the sexualization of thought—namely, that the mind had to be understood in its own terms before it could be situated historically. At the same time, I learned that the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute offered low cost analyses, especially when they were work-related, and I began interviewing analysts in search of treatment.

Before long I was becoming obsessed with the idea of going through psychoanalysis. But what I sought was less relief from symptoms or from psychical distress than a form of conscious life higher and more developed than I was able to achieve on my own. The disintegration of the New Left and the general antinomianism of the culture made this all the more pressing. Having participated in the highest intellectual point of the New Left, and experiencing the extraordinary waves of optimism, solidarity, and vision that the Sixties had made possible, I could not believe that my comrades would abandon the possibilities of building a radical movement and opt for identity politics, faux-transgression, and alternative life styles. Being deeply steeped in the great British Marxist historians and literary theorists, as well as continental theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, I saw very little in the new and exclusive interest in French theory. Jacques Lacan, in particular, always left me cold. Above all, though, I was seeking to protect my young daughter from a corrosive mass culture as I searched for an internal gyroscope capable of resisting the powerful waves of imagery and sound buffeting her, her mother, and myself. To me, psychoanalysis offered a depth, a profundity, and a humanity that contrasted with the supposedly liberated but actually meretricious culture of 1970s Haight-Ashbury.

I was at this point close to Dante's famous midpoint of life—thirty-five. As an example of what psychoanalysis then meant to me, I heard Peter Selz, the Berkeley art historian, lecture at the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute on the horse and the bull in Picasso's oeuvre. According to Selz—no surprise—the horse represented women and femininity and the bull represented men and masculinity, and Selz sought to demonstrate this by tracing Picasso's relationships to a series of women, as evidenced in his art. What most struck my attention though was Selz's remark that Picasso in his fifties, when he met Marie-Thérèse Walter, was at the high point of his sexuality. Since the culture that surrounded me worshipped youth, and since as always I was grappling with my sexuality and masculinity, this sort of "maturity," as I later identified it in my writing, seemed unique to the Freudian world, and drew me to it. Meanwhile, in my search for an affordable analysis I interviewed many of the famous older San Francisco analysts, such as Ilse Jawetz and Emmanuel Windholz. From each of them I got the message that I was too disturbed for psychoanalysis, but should begin with psychotherapy. That was how I was sent to Dr. Melvyn Schupack, who took me on as a patient.

At first, as is apparently sometimes the case, everything went well. Being in psychotherapy once or twice a week lifted my spirits. Within a year I solved many of my basic problems. I left my marriage, found a new job, wrote a Ph.D. dissertation, lost a lot of weight, and ran a marathon. Above all, I transformed my relations with my father. These had often been fraught and conflictual; I often felt he was criticizing me, and I did not fully respect him, struggling, rather, against seeing him as weak, partly because he did not confront and subdue my mother's criticisms of him, and also because I felt he did not stand up to others in business. On one occasion my father cried to me, "I am a beautician; you are a college professor: how can you think I would look down on you?" Within a few months of psychotherapy, however, my relations with my father became extraordinarily tender and loving, as my relations with my mother had also almost always been, in spite of her critical nature. This gain lasted until my father's death over two decades later. After a year, though, my analyst suggested that

I start analysis with him, four times a week, using the couch. That, as the father of Art Spiegelman's Maus said of Auschwitz, is when my troubles began.

I do not fully understand why the idea of going through psychoanalysis meant so much to me. If you had asked me I would have said I could not stand the idea of lying to myself, of not knowing who I truly was and what I stood for. Because it was such a hard time in my life, I was undoubtedly down on myself; I wanted a "makeover." It would be too easy to say that I was "searching for a father": this was true, but superficial. I felt bereft of all the guidance and direction that would have been available to a young man in a traditional society, and found no alternative in the surrounding culture. Most important here was my father's traumatized childhood, and my mother's harshness. In any event, my wish was a deep one. Much earlier, when I was about seventeen, I had had an encounter with the first psychoanalyst I had ever met: Dr. William Pike, the father of a friend and a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. After a conversation with him, I decided that I would go into analysis when I was thirty-five years old, which at that point seemed impossibly distant. I only remembered this incident after I began analysis—at the age of thirty-five.

Once the analysis began everything seemed to go wrong. Every session took the same form. I would talk for about thirty-five or forty minutes in a hopeless effort to "free associate," after which my doctor would offer an "interpretation" that would undo what I had said, or tried to say, an interpretation that would convey to me that I was lying to myself, that I did not know what I was feeling or what I believed. Understandably, this angered me so that my free associations started to be interrupted by Tourette-like intrusive thoughts such as "bull shit" or "asshole" or "this is complete crap." Reader, this went on for nine more years. Later, I read Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel, *Never Let Me Go*, which focuses on three schoolchildren being raised unknowingly as clones. They are meant to grow up to become "carers," bred so that the middle classes can harvest their body parts. One of the children, Tommy, is angry all the time, but he has no idea why. When I read that—many years after my analysis—I thought that the most important

lesson in life is to always trust your own anger. No doubt the question is a complicated one but I still think something like this must be right.

During my analysis I supported myself by part-time teaching. Earlier, psychoanalysis had been taught in universities like the University of California, Berkeley, but in the early Sixties the analysts were ousted and responded by establishing stand-alone graduate schools, which trained therapists. Because these schools required their students to learn something about the history of their profession, I could easily support myself teaching some version of the history of psychology and of psychoanalysis, as well as courses on Freud. Having been trained as a historian, and having a background in Marxism, I began thinking about psychoanalysis historically. For example, I could see the moments in Freud's texts, in Lacan's and others, where they were grappling to understand the historicity of psychoanalysis. I always loved learning new things and at that point always needed money, so I wound up teaching a bewildering number of other courses, such as film theory, group dynamics, and the relations between science and art. Freud remained central to my thinking as I explored these new realms too, and in spite of the frustrations of my analysis, I was so excited about psychoanalysis that an amazing thing happened: Freud began to speak through me. There is no other way to describe it; he became an introject, not fully assimilated, living and speaking within my mind.

Having hung out with psychoanalysts before entering analysis I was familiar with the view that the analyst is always right, and that all questioning is resistance. Nevertheless, over the years I could not help periodically asking my analyst whether my analysis was "working" or whether I was making progress. In every case, these questions were pooh-poohed, and my analyst would characterize me as someone who wanted to "burn up the world," or in some other way achieve inordinate success. Naturally, the fact that I could not "free associate" without insulting my analyst made me feel ashamed, as did the continuous undermining of my perceptions achieved through each day's cutting interpretation. In the last years of my analysis I became quite depressed—just as it depresses me to write

these words today—but every plea for guidance went unheard. Once I nearly fell off a mountain on a camping trip, but when I told my analyst about it I felt that somehow I must be lying, though I could not imagine how or why, as I had come close to death. After nearly ten years, in part because my daughter began living full time with my ex-wife, I left San Francisco to take up a job teaching history at the University of Missouri, Columbia. I naturally assumed that this would mean the successful completion of my analysis, but when I expressed my hope for some mark of success or achievement, Schupack told me that my problems were so severe that I might well be unanalyzable.

In short, my experience in analysis devastated me. My marriage had collapsed and I had not remarried. I had written one of the most important and influential books of our time—as I knew from its constant use in law, social science, and the humanities, and of course, history—but my career had been derailed, and I had not followed up its success. I had not really read, drawn, gone to museums, theater, or opera, or in any other way enriched my life for ten years, with one important exception. Soon after beginning analysis, I began studying the piano, which I had studied as a child for about three years and stopped abruptly after a bitter, even explosive fight with my father, who was insisting that I practice. I had no idea why I took up the piano at the same time as I began my analysis, and I am not especially musical, but I think in retrospect I needed to preserve some part of myself, something that was me, apart from my analysis. The piano—which I practiced assiduously during and after my analysis—provided that. In addition, though, I can see now that this was of course an act of reparation and reconnection with my father.

Coming to grips with my experience in analysis has been central to the rest of my life, and I may still have not wholly succeeded in doing so. At the most immediate level, there was the parting itself. My final day in analysis, when I could stand up from the couch, shake my analyst's hand, and look at him with something like parity was one of the great days of my life. The experience left me breathless. For several years after that, I felt that my analysis had been essentially positive; indeed, I was proud of it. Then, doubts arose. I moved to the feeling

that I had been left with a marvelous ambiguity, a great problem to puzzle over for the rest of my life, a gift in the form of a mystery. Only in recent years have I been able see it for the betrayal and great injustice that it so obviously was. This is not to say that I derived nothing from it.

For one thing, from putting myself in such a vulnerable position and standing up against someone so much more powerful than I, I did strengthen my ego, even if this was not easy for me to see in the wallow of self-pity and masturbatory terror to which the experience reduced me. Whether this greater depth and confidence developed because I resisted, or because my analysis set in motion self-reflective processes that continued afterward, or because I was for so long relatively isolated from other, everyday currents of life, or some combination of all three, I am still not sure. However, whatever the cause, my experience in analysis did strengthen my sense of independence, which had been my goal when I entered analysis in the first place.

For another, my reading of Freud in the context of my years in analysis gave me an indisputable sense of unconscious mental life. I see unconscious processes in myself, in those around me, in broader interpersonal circles, in groups, such the school where I teach, in politics, and in history. To me, it is like knowing a language, and I am always shocked to learn that most people do not know that language: they have little awareness of unconscious motivation; they do not think of other people in terms of their childhoods and their parents, siblings, and internal conflicts; they look at politics as the play of interests, ignoring the role of passions and fantasies and unconscious wishing; they do not understand the unconscious dimension in works of art, in culture, and even in science and philosophy; they are not even very interested in their own inner lives. My sense of a vibrant, active unconscious mental life has informed my experience of every film I have seen, every novel I have read, every moment of history I have studied, every moral, social, or political theory I have learned about. As I shall explain, the culture's loss of that sense of the unconscious since the 1970s is central to my understanding of contemporary history. Taken along with my independence, my sensitivity to the unconscious comes pretty close to saying who I am.

However, the most poignant lesson I learned from my analysis is the enormity of the crime that one commits in raising hopes that one cannot and really does not attempt to fulfill. Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" tells the story of a man who goes out seaching for the unpardonable sin. As Mark Singer has written, "He discovers that it's the violation of the sanctity of another person's heart. To use an instrument to open up another person without a loving, terrified humility is the unpardonable sin" (2005, February 14, interview with David Milch). That is what my analysis was like. I had an experience of my own of the same sort, though scarcely on the same scale. While being in analysis I taught an undergraduate course in the humanities with assigned readings from Plato's *Republic*. Because I was teaching so many courses in so many different locations I had no time to prepare and I found Plato impossibly difficult and confusing. Later I spoke to the mother of one of my students and she told me how excited her daughter had been at the thought of reading Plato. She did not mention, but I surmised, how disappointing the experience had been. This is relatively minor, perhaps, but psychologically it echoes my analysis. It is also because of this experience that I have never been able to forgive Obama for raising so many hopes in his 2008 campaign for the Presidency, and then aiming so low in what he sought to achieve. I would never blame an inspiring figure for failing, only for not trying. And in this case, as in many others, I seem to see something that others tell me is not there.

Ultimately, though, my decade-long struggle left me with a project. What had I been fighting for during my interminable analysis—fighting against my own analyst—except for my own idea of analysis, an idea that was closely connected to Freud's original conception? Nor had my personal experience been unique. After all, my analysis unfolded in the context of the overall rejection of psychoanalysis by American intellectuals, by scientists, and by many analysts themselves. From deep experience I understood the truth in Frederick Crews' later condemnation of psychoanalysis: "its deliberate coldness, its cultivation of emotional regression, its depreciation of the patient's self-perceptions as inauthentic, its reckless dispensa-

tion of guilt, its historic view of women's moral inferiority and destined passivity, and its elastic interpretive license, allowing the analyst to be 'right every time'" (1993, November 18). Yet, I could not join this chorus, and I never have.

In part this is because I am constitutionally averse to the role of victim, just as I am not inclined to victimize others. But more deeply it is because I believed in the core validity of the original psychoanalytic idea of looking clearly, non-judgmentally and objectively—analytically—at a person's mind, including one's own mind, much as we can look at a person's nervous system, bone structure or muscles. To be sure, I knew full well that the study of the human mind differs from the study of nerves, bones, and muscle in that, by its nature, the mind is dialogic and the natural world is mostly not. I also recognized that the absence of empathy had been the crux of the problem in my analysis, and that this weakness had roots in Freud himself. Not only in his personality, but also in his thought, which concentrated almost exclusively on the obstacles to self-knowledge ("resistance") and scarcely at all on the motives for self-knowledge, such as desires for mastery and control, ultimately biological in their source. Nonetheless, there is a difference between improving a good idea and rejecting one, and I considered psychoanalysis a good idea.

But there was another reason why I stuck to an essentially positive view of Freud and of the original analytic project. I saw that the rejections of analysis were at root political and that they were integral to the overall rejection of left-wing thought that took shape in the 1970s and that has been so debilitating to moral progress in our time. This was particularly the case with the spectacular feminist attacks on psychoanalysis that exploded with women's liberation, and that coincided with women's liberation's rejection of the idea of a mixed Left. Beginning in the early seventies, and continuing to our day, I have struggled to understand why these attacks had to occur, given the great losses they entailed. To my best current thinking, some massive externalization was necessary to begin to establish a new and profound principle of women's freedom. Freedom in general, and women's freedom in particular, is based on the inviolability of the body, as we know from studying slavery, and

perhaps the exploration of the human mind requires a prior security for the body, which women's liberation has struggled to provide. From this point of view, the feminist rejection of sexual violation and the Black Lives Matter movement, both active as I write in 2016, are closely related.

At the same time, the feminist attacks on Freud paved the way for the Freud-bashing charlatans, as well as for the scientism, neo-liberal cost accounting, and Big Pharma and insurance interests that control "mental health" today. To be sure, feminists reconstructed the practice of psychoanalysis, so that the sort of experience I endured would almost certainly never happen today. But the reconstruction proceeded by exclusively emphasizing the interpersonal or "recognition" dimension of psychoanalysis at the expense of understanding the individual's relation to him or herself. In my experience, too, the "new social movements" that emerged in the Seventies, of which women's liberation was exemplary, were by no means dialogic and the "demand for recognition," as it soon became known under the aegis of such philosophers as Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth, seemed to me self-centered and even childish when compared to the more stoical stress on autonomy that had drawn me to classical psychoanalysis. The "relational turn," the redefinition of the mind in terms of its narcissistic needs, rather than its struggle with objective reality, the almost unthinking way in which the concept of the ego slipped out of fashion, and the concept of the self, or the self and its objects, replaced it—all this seemed to me to contain at least as much regression as advance, though I always recognized that it was both and I struggled for a coherent way to capture the duality.

While many, perhaps most, of my experiences with psychoanalysis may be familiar, what may give my story special interest is that they became connected with the idea of writing a history of psychoanalysis—a project I had originally conceived during my years supporting my analysis by teaching psychology courses typically termed "History and Systems." This became a labor of love as I now had the sense of protecting a precious legacy, otherwise in danger of being lost. Like many books, mine was autobiographical at its core. I had not only formed a deep internal relation to Freud, but also to the people around him,

and to the generation or two of analysts who followed them. Truly, they had lived one of the great intellectual adventures in all history, and I loved working through the specificity of that adventure in concrete detail, settings, and milieus, reading their papers and letters, learning their different languages, their ways of thinking and speaking, and even dealing with their quirks. I felt that I got to know such extraordinary figures as Michael Balint, Wilfred Bion and Melanie Klein, and such earth-shaking milieus as Bolshevik era Hungary and Russia, Bloomsbury London, Weimar Germany, Israel of the Yishuv, pre-Second World War Japan, revolutionary China, and New York and Chicago in the 1920s. I loved studying the close connections between psychoanalysis and Jewish history, the cosmopolitanism of psychoanalysis and its non-Western reach, the attempts to forge connections to radicalism, for example by Wilhelm Reich, Karen Horney, and Otto Fenichel, in the public clinics so well studied by Elizabeth Danto, and in Freud's own writings. I got to ponder the centrality of the Holocaust to the history of psychoanalysis, as to the whole of the century.

As I became an historian of psychoanalysis, my experiences in the New Left gave my work its unity. The deepest problem that I faced in writing *Secrets of the Soul*, published in 2004, was to tell an overall, coherent story while attending to concrete, non-reducible contingencies. On the one hand, I well understood that had there been no Freud there would have been no psychoanalysis. On the other hand, psychoanalysis is inconceivable without the vast changes in family life, urban landscapes, the arts and media, and the economy brought about by capitalism, especially the capitalism of the *second* industrial revolution. Little by little I began to understand the centrality of Freudianism, not remotely reducible to the analytic profession, to twentieth century history. It was in fact the cutting edge of a psychological revolution, a revolution central to understanding and grappling with the European dictatorships, on the one hand, and the spread of American-style mass culture, on the other. My ideas concerning this revolution—the idea of personal life, especially—is of Marxist provenance and follows directly from the broader analysis in *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life*. However, whereas my first book stressed the

way in which the individual was always already "social"—i.e., possessed of a particular religion, ethnicity, national identity, class—*Secrets* stressed the opposite: the ways in which psychology escapes social location.

The link between these two emphases—for they are complements, not contradictions—lies in their common focus on the family. In writing *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* I wanted to show how the contribution of women's labor within the family, which was integral to the reproduction of the labor force and in that sense to the capitalist mode of production, had become occluded by the separation of the family from the workplace. But I also wanted to show how the same process of separation laid the basis for a new conception of individuality, freed from the material constraints of the family, a conception of which psychoanalysis had been perhaps the major expression. Overall, however, feminists emphasized the first meaning of my book—the occlusion of women's labor—to the neglect of the second, the rise of personal life. This preference reflected the feminist emphasis on power, which was linked to the rejection of psychoanalysis as an ideology of male power.

Likewise, in writing *Secrets of the Soul* I tried to develop the idea of the separation of the family from the workplace as the source of the modern ideal of personal life, in the sense of freedom from familial determination. As Seventies feminists recognized, this also necessitated a certain freedom from psychoanalysis, but getting the specificity of that freedom right is crucial. Especially in *Political Freud*, published in 2015, I tried to show that Freud's thought came out of a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century anthropological framework in which the creation of a family form in which paternity is recognized and institutionalized was understood to be a crucial advance for the human species, and in which sexual relations between men and women, as well as homosexual relations, were thereby given intense social meaning. Undoubtedly, patriarchal power, as in the ancient Roman theories of the patriarchal family, were not given full weight in classical psychoanalysis, and this called for a feminist correction. Nevertheless, to replace a one-sided stress on sexuality with a one-sided stress on power was wrong. What Augustine said of Pelagius, and Freud said of Adler, I

would say of the neo-liberal version of feminism: there is no room in it for love.

In conclusion, then, much of my life has been formed not just by my childhood but also by a combination of psychoanalysis and Leftism. Taken together they have helped me to retain my drive to attain strength of character, freedom in the use of my intellect, and the ability to resist the powerful emotional currents –interpersonal, mediatized, and politicized—which seem to grow not only more cacophonous but also more tenacious every day. Truly, when I consider American politics since the 1960s, I am astounded at how easily not just the public but especially the intellectuals have been manipulated. 9/11, the Iraq war, the first election of Obama, the Trump movement, of course, but also the mass scapegoating of his followers: these are all striking examples of the power of unconscious group emotions, hysterias, magical thinking, and paranoia. To an enormous extent, too, these have revolved around sexuality and gender. The lowering of expectations, and the willingness to accept the profoundly distorted view of the world that prevails today is still shocking to me, given the expansive hopes and multiple currents of radical thought of my youth. Nor have I experienced in the present-day American psychoanalytic profession any resistance to the overall decline in the critical resources of the Freudian tradition, despite exemplary individuals such as Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, who died in 2011.

Finally, I come back to my love of history. A few years ago I was asked to chair a session at the American Historical Association meetings on Freud's impact on historical writing. Two similarities between psychoanalysis and history struck me. First in the course of individual life as in the course of history, events are not all of equal weight. Certain events, individuals, or movements stand out as having untoward influence, especially events that escape the constraints of logical thought, such as those of religion in history or the traumata of early childhood in the life of the individual (see Freud, 1939[1934–38], p. 76). Related to this is the very different—non-Newtonian—notion of time that historians and psychoanalysts share with each other. For both professions—one may add geologists, archaeologists, and cosmologists here—time is layered or, better, stratified;

events from the past do not disappear, but rather persist, shaping the historical process, which only seems to unfold at the surface of time. Geographers like David Harvey have made us aware that the great adventure of the human species does not unfold in empty space, but in a structured, concrete material space. Similarly, time is not an empty medium in which events occur; time has shape, gravity. History has been formed not only by material constraints, and by the forms of property and class relations that have taken shape within those constraints, but also and very importantly by family and kinship, by mothering, paternity, the pair-bond, and the passing on of a culture in which sexuality and sexual difference have been central to, and intertwined with, authority. So too has my own life been structured and layered; all the important parts of it—infancy, youth, radical politics, psychoanalysis, historical understanding—are still vital, in play. Thinking about my life in this way also helps me to understand that psychoanalysis has a long future ahead of it, and that a life absorbed by it has been by no means misspent.

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