Freud and the Historical Imagination
September 29, 2007
2:30 p.m.
The Philoctetes Center

Levy: **Francis Levy**
Armstrong: **Richard Armstrong (moderator)**
O'Donoghue: **Diane O'Donoghue**
Prochnik: **George Prochnik**
Rudnytsky: **Peter Rudnytsky**
Whitebook: **Joel Whitebook**

Levy: Good afternoon and welcome to "Freud and the Historical Imagination." I am now proud to introduce Richard Armstrong, who last appeared at the Philoctetes Center as a member of the panel "The Origins of Freud's Imagination." Richard Armstrong is Associate Professor of Classical Studies and Fellow in the Honors College, University of Houston. He is the author of *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World*. He has also published articles and book chapters on classical studies and psychoanalysis, including "Last Words: Said, Freud, and Traveling Theory," in *Alif*; "Theory and Theatricality: Classical Drama and the Formation of Early Psychoanalysis," in *Classical and Modern Literature*; "Being Mr. Somebody: Freud and Classical Education," forthcoming in *Freud's Jewish World*; and "Marooned Mandarins: Freud, Classical Education and the Jews of Vienna," forthcoming in *Classics and National Culture*. Dr. Armstrong will moderate this afternoon's panel and introduce the other panelists. So I give you Dr. Armstrong.

Armstrong: Well, thank you. First of all, I wanted to thank Ed Nersessian and Francis Levy and Ellen Fertig and everyone else at the Center for making this possible today.

To begin, alphabetically, first we have Diane O'Donoghue, who is Chair of the Department of Visual and Critical Studies at Tufts University, in affiliation with the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She is a member of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and she has been a Silberger Scholar. She was fortunate enough to be a Freud Fulbright Scholar and a Visiting Fulbright Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. And she received the CORST Prize from the American Psychoanalytic Association in 2002. Her most recent publications include articles in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, *American Imago*, and *Visual Resources*. Welcome, Diane.

Next is George Prochnik, author of *Putnam Camp: Sigmund Freud, James Jackson Putnam & The Purpose of American Psychology*. He is in fact a great grandson of James Putnam. His most recent essays have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe* and *Cabinet* magazine. And he's currently working on a book about Stefan Zweig in the Americas.

To my right, here, is Peter Rudnytsky, Professor of English at the University of Florida, another Gulf Coast refugee. He's editor of *American Imago*, and an Honorary Member of the American Psychoanalytic Association. In 2004, he was the Freud Fulbright Scholar in Vienna. He is the author of many books, including the classic works: *Freud and Oedipus*, *The Psychoanalytic*

Vocation, Psychoanalytic Conversations, and *Reading Psychoanalysis,* for which he received the Gradiva Award in 2003. He has also been editor of numerous books, including *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine*.

And last, but certainly not least, we have Joel Whitebook here, to my right. He is a philosopher and practicing psychoanalyst. He is on the faculty of the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research and is writing an intellectual biography of Freud for Cambridge University Press. He's one of four analysts also, as you may know, to participate in a running commentary on Season Three of *The Sopranos* for *Slate.com*, which apparently received more hits than anything. It is still true, if you've seen the latest *Slate.com* history of posterior fashions, but he's our wise guy on wise guys.

So those are today's participants. And I thought we would begin with some introductory comments and move from there, beginning with Diane.

O'Donoghue: Thank you. When I received the invitation to be part of this last summer, I was writing at the time on Freud's construction of the latent and manifest in *The Interpretation of Dreams.* And while that text may not be the first that comes to mind when one thinks about the intersections of historical imagination and psychoanalysis, I actually thought—and probably just by the fortuitous nature of the intersection of this invitation and that work—that in fact, the concept of the dream has been a fairly fruitful and powerful one in notions of history and historical imagination.

Said, whose name has already been present here, in the late 1970s wrote a book—a very important book—*Orientalism*. I'm sure many of you know of it. In it, he posited the concept of the Orient as having emerged as kind of a European Imaginary, rather than an actual place. And one of the ways that he spoke about the Orient was in terms of a dream. Not just any dream, but definitely the Freudian dream. And in fact, he spoke about the making of the historical imagination of the Orient as having a manifest content and a latent one: the manifest being the notion of facts—historical facts, knowledge as objects—that seem to bring the reality of the Orient. But he said that countering these notions of a more traditional history, there was this latent, this world of unconscious activities, of desires, of passions, of projections. This book and the positing of this model of European history as a historical imagination was very, very powerful in creating what has come to be known as the field of postcolonial studies in the 1990s. The work of people like Homi Bhabha and others have really questioned the unidirectional notion that it all just comes from Europe onto the non-European. And then in Said's case, that with the Arab world there's much more of a give and take; there's much more bi-directionality going on between peoples. Even in the later work, you see such a strong indebtedness to a psychoanalytic model of psychic functioning. Certainly there are many critiques of this in studies of difference and ethnocultural difference in colonialism, but I think this is a place where there's still a very vibrant notion of a historical imagination happening.

But on the other side, because I was working on Freud's genealogy within his own work in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, I had a chance to also see how when he was creating the manifest and wanting to have it so different from the latent, that one of the things he did was turn to what he then would have seen as a very respectable, new history discourse—ethnography and even art

history. He appropriated some very interesting concepts to make the manifest a kind of regressed, phylogenic part of our own antiquity. He was very distrustful of the visual imagery of the manifest and saw it as a kind of primitive symbolization. If you read in *The Interpretation of Dreams* the part on regression, the part on symbolization, he really talks about the fact that we are our own mental antiquities. That we carry these relics. But he used a lot of the proofs for this, I think, in his mind, in the ethnographic and art historical literature that he read and copiously annotated at the time.

So in thinking about this whole question brought about by this invitation, how interesting it is that from Said on, we have used these models of psychoanalytic functioning as a way to critique phenomena, let us say, like the historical imagination of the colonial world. Where yet embedded within those are also issues where we could really speak of the historical imagination. So I think instead of negating everything or crossing everything out, it's quite the opposite. It shows a very rich and vibrant exchange—not without their problems, certainly. But I think a forum like this really opens up a group of questions about contemporary discourse.

Armstrong: Thank you very much.

Prochnik: Well, thanks very much for having me here. It's a real honor to be with scholars of this caliber. You know, when I read the last question that's in the sheet that I think most of you have received—about did Freud liberate historical imagination or was his work in some way just the opening up of this novel and interesting theater of projections—I thought, yes, he liberated the historical imagination and *that is* in some way to me a theater of novel and interesting projections. I had some trouble in making the distinction while recognizing, obviously, that there is such an objective history. The telling of that seems always to ask for an intervention.

I think in part of Stefan Zweig's definition of history being like an artichoke, where you keep peeling back leaf after leaf and never getting to the inner core. And this is why he said you need the artistic imagination, the emancipated imagination, to intervene at a certain point. There's a way in which, I think, we can link that idea to Freud's approach to history also through the artichoke. I'm thinking of that moment in the analysis of the dream of the botanical monograph, the moment when he specifically analyzes the folded color plates. These, to him, become the trigger to an actual memory from his childhood, this very strange and wonderful moment—he says that he was about five and his sister about three—when his father presented them with a book, which he notes in passing was a book of Persian travel, some kind of memoir of Eastern travel. He gave it to them specifically for the purpose of destroying it leaf by leaf. Freud remembers this blissful moment where the two of them sat there before their father, taking apart this book. He then meanders from this to say that not only is that memory the only plastic memory of that period he retains, but that he comes back to this memory as the awakening moment of his own passion. His own passion, as he says, is a screen memory or in fact his own bibliophiliac propensities.

But perhaps we have to ask whether he may be letting himself off a little bit easily. Maybe there's a way in which Freud's own manner of reading and of thinking about history carries something of that demolishing artichoke, tearing-apart-like quality. I mean, certainly what he does to figures of authority involves a work of dismantling. He also, as we know, is one of the

most brilliant mosaic artists of citation of any writer. And this, to me, recalls also this kind of leaf-by-leaf separation of these once-monolithic works. And we know that there's some legitimacy in linking this approach to Freud's vision of history, which is a vision of ruins, by the way that he in fact picks up this same story a little bit later on in *The Interpretation of Dreams.* He goes through the chain of associations between favorite food and favorite flower, and he remarks—as he repeats this idea of leaf-by-leaf—"A phrase that must make us think of the dismemberment of the Chinese empire." Again, an unexpected link, but certainly one that shows us, I think, the way that Freud looks at history in the space between the stones and sees these as the opportunities—just like, perhaps, the separation between drive and object. The space of fantasy, the space of imagination.

My own interest, in my book and in a lot of my thought, is the way that these things play out in America. And the problem with the American historical imagination, the problem of America for Freud, and I wonder—and I hope we can speak a little bit about it today—about the ways that perhaps issues of the historical imagination can give us clues as to why he would have made such famous remarks as, "America is a mistake. It's a gigantic mistake, to be sure, but nonetheless, a mistake." There's a remark by Karl Kraus, along with the famous one, where he said, "Psychoanalysis is the disease that purports to cure." He also, apparently on first hearing of the popularity of psychoanalysis in America, said something like, "No wonder it's a big hit. The Americans love everything they haven't got, especially antiques of the soul." My own feeling is that, in some way, what the Americans took was more to do with the soul than perhaps the antiques.

But Freud was clearly anxious about the ways that America's own anti-authoritarian tendencies would do to his own work what he did to the works of others. That's one area that I'd like to hear other thoughts on. It gets into his own issues with what we do with our leaders. And there's a curious small note, which I'll end on. It's from *Civilization and Its Discontents*, where I think he actually says, "Worse than the situation of a culture that doesn't properly restrain its instincts is a culture where the members of the group are over-identified with each other," where there's not a real leader—that this leads to this psychological impoverishment of groups. He specifically invokes America when he says we can learn a great deal about the sort of degradation of American civilization if we think about this further. So much of Freud's historical vision is a vision of overthrowing the leader, from Oedipus through Hamlet, et cetera, et cetera. He saw in America, perhaps, a ground already too leveled. The overthrowing had happened; it's something that predates him. Where was the narrative arc going to be built if there wasn't anything left, any father left to kill? And this comes back to the father, perhaps, with the book, allowing the destruction of the *Persian Book of Travel.*

Rudnytsky: That was very interesting. I almost felt I should throw it right back to Diane, since she's written on the botanical monograph dream and might be able to address some of George's comments at some point in our conversation. It's really a great honor for me to be here, as well. I saw the piece in the *New York Times* about the Philoctetes Center, in which it was remarked that at no point during the entire symposium was there any mention of Freud or sex. And it occurred to me that we would not have that problem here today.

I wanted to talk a little bit about Freud and sex because, as you probably saw last December, there was an article in the *New York Times* concerning the discovery of the hotel log by the German scholar Franz Maciejewski, who found in a Swiss hotel the register of the book in which Freud had signed in with his sister-in-law as his wife. We made front-page news when we published this in our journal in English. The question of Freud's relationship to his sister-in-law is one that has interested me specifically, and it's a question that has its own level of specificity, but it raises, I think, lots of very general questions. Our conversation will probably range from the macro, broad cultural sphere to the personal space and we'll see how deeply connected they are.

For me, the question we're really talking about is the role of subjectivity and personal experience in theory formation. And related to that is the question of the epistemological status of psychoanalysis. I personally do think that psychoanalysis has a scientific dimension and is underpinned, or should be underpinned, by scientific thought. However, as a former therapy, and in its hermeneutic dimension, I think it's intimately connected to personal experience and the subjective realm. It's precisely the interplay between those two dimensions that particularly interests me. So that in asking the question about Freud's relationship to his sister-in-law, it's part of the broader question of the role of Freud's own life history, his personal experience, in his thought as a whole.

What I'm really trying to do here is to extend a project that's been part of my work from the beginning, which is to turn psychoanalysis back on Freud, and to see Freud as a kind of exemplar of the theories that he's proposing, on the theory that Freud too is a human being. Even if it's not true about the human condition in general, if Freud said something that's interesting and true about himself, that's at least worth building on. So it's the self-analytic dimension of Freud's work that I'm still thinking about. Peter Lowenberg said in a little article he wrote on the 150th anniversary of Freud's birth that "a typical nineteenth-century biography with no reference to the body, sexuality, dreams, or articulated private fantasies is unacceptable and virtually unthinkable today." And I think most of us who work within a psychoanalytic paradigm would have absolutely no quarrel with that statement. That this is precisely the stuff of our intimate lives, our fantasies as well as our acts, are things that could be trivialized and disparaged as mere gossip, but they are the stuff of our lives and of our experience. That's precisely what the psychoanalytic inquiry asks us to focus on. The problem is then if we extend this general principle back to Freud himself and really take seriously the possibility that he engaged in an affair with his wife's sister. And even though I think psychoanalysts have shown considerable degree of emancipation from the previous tendency to idealize Freud, this is still a subject that I think makes a lot of people uncomfortable, and where there's a deep tension between the commitment to a kind of unprejudiced inquiry into the truth—whatever it might be—versus the sense that this really takes us in a place where we really don't want to go.

I'm actually not going to try to persuade you that there was such an affair, although I think there is overwhelming evidence for it, but really just to engage in the thought experiment of what if there was such a relationship? What difference would it make? It's kind of the so what question that I'm asking. Would it change anything in our understanding of psychoanalysis as well as of Freud's life?

Kind of in counter to what I think is still a resistance against taking this question seriously, one other source that has been helpful is an article we published in the spring issue of *American Imago* by Maynard Solomon, the musicologist, called "Taboo and Biographical Innovation." He was dealing with Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, and pointing out how, very often, there were things having to do with the life of these famous composers that had been readily available on the surface of the documentary record and once someone put them together, the consequences seemed to flow with a certain inevitability and obviousness. But it had been very difficult for someone to come along and do this, and in a certain way I think this is actually the case for the Minna situation. Solomon points out that there is in biography a taboo against doing this kind of work, that "gravitates," in his words, "to the dominant issues of personal knowledge and surrounds every effort to demonstrate that human beings are destructive and deeply sexual creatures." So psychoanalysts, being human, and loving and taking Freud as seriously as we do, understandably are made uncomfortable by this. I mean, I don't think that that's something to criticize in people, but I think we want to try to get past it.

A kind of representative statement that shows me the direction that I don't want to go is what Peter Gay wrote when the Minna letters were first made available for inspection in the Library of Congress. They're now published and available in German. He wrote an article called "The Dog That Did Not Bark in the Night" that was originally published in the *New York Times Book Review* and then included in his collection called *Reading Freud.* He said that, "In writing my biography of Freud, I could of course not ignore the provocative Minna question. I knew that Freud's possible love affair was immaterial to any appraisal of the validity of his ideas." Now, I'm taken aback by that last statement because it prejudges the very question that I want to ask today. How can he say that? And if he says that about the Minna affair, isn't he really saying that Freud's life in general is immaterial to the appraisal of the validity of ideas? Whereas I would say that his thought flows in some profound and radical way from his life experience and that's precisely what makes it so rich and valuable.

What Gay has said about the Minna question is, I think, a particular instance of what James Strachey said about the important paper, "Screen Memories," which has been mentioned by George and is a fundamental paper in the development of Freud's thought. But of course, as you know, it has in the central section a dialogue. After Freud's death it was established by Siegfried Bernfeld that the interlocutor with whom Freud was speaking was actually himself in disguise. And so there is, in what Freud called in the preface to the second edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* a further subjective significance to the paper that we now are in possession of. In fact once we see how obviously it is all about Freud, this is one of the prime sources of information about Freud's early years in Freiberg and his history. We kind of see this as obvious now, but it's paradigmatic of how our perception of a text by Freud changes once we see that is deeply autobiographical on one level. Strachey wrote in his editorial note to this paper that "the intrinsic interest of this paper has been rather undeservedly overshadowed by an extraneous fact, namely that we know that it's Freud." Again, he's calling what I think is the most important thing about the paper "extraneous," and trying to separate that out from what he calls "the intrinsic interest," which is the theoretical. I think that's profoundly un-psychoanalytic, fundamentally.

I'll just wrap up here by saying that we know this paper was written in 1899, and in this autobiographical part, the disguised patient, who is in reality Freud himself, is fantasizing about

various women in his life that he could have married instead of his own wife, and the metaphor of snatching away the flowers is, of course, deflowering. He mentions two important women in his past: his half-niece, whom he calls his cousin, Pauline, whom he'd met when he revisited his half-brother in Manchester; and the girl upon whom he had a crush in his adolescence, Gisela Fluss. He had seen both of them again after having had feelings toward them in his early childhood. And what I would propose to you is that whether or not Freud and Minna actually consummated their affair by 1899—I don't necessarily think that they did until 1900, where I think there's good evidence for that—we know that they roomed together and that Freud signed in with his sister-in-law as his wife, so they must have had a fantasy of being married; at least the thought of an intimate relationship certainly must have crossed their minds. Therefore, when Freud speaks about the fantasies of various women that he could have married, to me the paper must be about Minna Bernays, who is the woman in his life at the present, you see—coming back to the question of the latent and the manifest. That is the present circumstance of the paper: that it goes unspoken. That must have been the driving force behind his whole construction of the narrative and his fantasy. And that's radically changed my understanding of the paper. It doesn't exclude the role of the infantile in determining the unfolding of the structure of his desire, where the mother and the nurse in his childhood play out in the two women in his adulthood. So it doesn't contradict the fundamental discoveries of psychoanalysis, but it shows how deeply embedded Freud's own life experiences are in his theories. Therefore, I would propose that we reflect on the role of subjectivity in the formation of theory and in creativity more generally.

Whitebook: First I'm going to tell a story. I can't resist. The comment about the artichoke reminded me of an experience I had with Joyce McDougal, whom many of you may know, and who is one of the French analysts who adheres very strictly to drive theory and the importance of sexuality. I said to her once when I was a little boy that the only vegetable I would eat was artichokes. And she said, "I know. It's so much fun to pull back the skirt and see what's underneath." So she thought she knew what was behind the latent content. It was very clear.

It's both an advantage and a disadvantage to come last. It's an advantage because I had a chance to hear what everybody said, but it's a disadvantage because I feel like I have to scuttle the remarks I prepared in my head and address myself to what's been said so far. I could approach that by saying something about my dual background as a philosopher and a psychoanalyst. I spent seven years in graduate school at The New School, studying philosophy. As a philosopher, in a particular tradition, what is beaten into your head is you can't make the naturalistic fallacy. There has to be a distinction between what the philosophers call the "realm of genesis" and the "realm of presentation." All we can deal with, insofar as we're rationalists, is the way a theory or a concerto or a novel is presented. Mozart's biography has nothing to do with one of his piano concertos, for example. There's sort of a strict content view that you get in many philosophical departments in this country. The "realm of presentation" is also the "realm of validity." That's the important part I missed. The genesis of a work has no bearing on the validity of the work, whether it be aesthetic, scientific, philosophic, or what have you.

Then I went to do my psychoanalytic training and I discovered that all the analysts talked about what genesis. Genesis, genesis, genesis. So-and-so did such-and-such because X, Y, and Z had happened in his background. Or so-and-so wrote the—you know what it is. During this period, it

occurred to me that the really interesting but also crucial question as far as the status of psychoanalysis as a theory and an enterprise is concerned, is the relationship between genesis and validity. Hans Loewald said we have a genetic theory, but it's not reductionistic. How are works of art, scientific theories, and mathematical theorems produced out of this "slime of history," as Sartre called it, out of all the sexual, subjective content and details of an individual's life? How do they nevertheless achieve some sort of claim to validity? How does a cultural object get detached from the conditions that produced it and achieve a certain degree of freedom so that we can say it has validity in its own realm?

Which leads us to the question of Freud. How can we say that everything we know about his development, about his sexual fantasies, about his relation to his father, about the relationship to his mother that he wanted to hide, about his crush on Frau Fluss, and so on—taking all that into consideration, and the more we know about it, the richer our understanding is—how can we explain how he nevertheless created a theory and a practice which has achieved a certain degree of freedom vis-à-vis those biographical and genetic sources? Because if we can't say that, then there is no validity to what we say or do. Freudian theory would be on the same level as Freud's fantasies. Psychoanalytic practice would be on the same level as counter-transference. There would be no room for validity.

Now that brings me to disagree with what Peter said about the Minna episode. It may be one detail which is important in studying Freud's biography, but I think the amount of emphasis that's been placed on it is not only ridiculous, but sort of infantile. I think Peter Gay and Peter Swales are sort of the two poles of this infantilism. Peter Swales thinks that if he can prove that Freud slept with Minna, the whole edifice of psychoanalytic theory comes tumbling down. But Peter Gay accepts the assumption—at least in what he wrote in the *Times* when the registry from the hotel was found. He feels like he has to prove that Freud *didn't* have sex with Minna because if he did, then the whole edifice would come tumbling down. They both shared the same assumption and this goes to George's point, because I think they both are really infected by a certain American Puritanism. If Freud the Master had this flaw—"flaw" in quotes—and acted on it, then he suddenly becomes de-idealized and everything he did doesn't count.

Peter said that Freud talks about things that we gossip about. Jonathan Lear, in one of his latest books, said something like "Freud talked about things the ladies talk about in the kitchen or in the beauty parlor." There's this very famous quote from Aristotle, which Charcot quoted to Freud, and which Freud quotes with respect to Charcot. It's about understanding that hysteria, this sort of lowly pathology, which has to do with all these crazy lower class women, is a place where scientific discoveries about human nature can be made. The story from Aristotle, I believe, describes Heraclitus sitting in the kitchen by the stove when a couple philosophers come walking by. They look down on him and say, "This is not a place for philosophers." And Heraclitus says, "Come in here, for there are gods in here, too." You'll find gods in the kitchen, too. In our clinical practice and in our theorizing, we talk about the stuff of the kitchen, the stuff of the bathroom, the stuff of the bedroom, the stuff of the nursery, and so on and so forth. But what separates our discussion of it from mere gossip? To use a metaphor, how can we say that there are gods in here, too, but what we're after are the gods and not the gossip?

Armstrong: Well, as you can see, we have a remarkable range of opinion here, and interest. I'm not trying to put the peels back on the artichoke, but I'm just going to suggest an avenue based on what's been said for the rest of the discussion, and that is to go back for a moment, to consider to what extent is the really incisive contribution when we look at specific historical research and investigation and critique? At the level of critique the psychoanalytic insight leads us to look at precisely those things that previously were not considered worthy of consideration. Or is it the level of synthesis, which is to say, precisely how do the elements of the subjective contribute to what is historically significant? We might think about it in terms of the very concrete scenarios that we brought up. That is, America on the one hand, and on the other, precisely the role of Freudian biography, as we think of not only the practice of psychoanalysis, but the way we look at twentieth century history as well, since Freud seems to loom so large when we think of the scenario of fantasy, Vienna, the twentieth century, the First World War, the Holocaust.

Whitebook: I'll say what I wanted to say the first time. I think the rap on Freud is that he was an a-historical thinker and almost ontological thinker. That he discovered all these scientific theories, which he thought were transhistorically and transculturally valid, and that history was just a few medleys on some old themes, as somebody put it. And there's truth to that.

But at the same time, I think to understand Freud and locate him historically, and to understand the historical nature of his thinking, we have to realize that maybe the break with tradition was the most important thing that occurred in his life culturally. In the course of three generations, from his grandfather Schlomo to Sigmund in Vienna, the Freuds were a family that started out as Orthodox, perhaps even Hasidic Jews. Two generations later, Freud was a secular, bourgeois European living in one of the great capitals of Europe. I think the break with tradition runs right through Freud's father Jakob. He had one foot planted in tradition and one foot planted in modernity and I think that's all encapsulated in the Phillipson bible, which he read with Freud when he was six and then gave to him on his 39th birthday or whatever. He wants to pass on tradition to Sigmund, but to pass it on in a post-traditional way. The bible was in German and in Hebrew; it had illustrations. To an Orthodox Jew it would have been heretical. But more importantly, it had enormous scientific apparatus as footnotes. It talked about anthropology, the history of mythology, medicine in the ancient Near East, and so on and so forth. In this scientific apparatus—footnotes—was a commentary on the bible, which means it objectified the text that defined traditions scientifically. It was taken as just dogmatically handed down from generation to generation. It said, now we can step outside of tradition and reflect on it. We can step outside tradition and understand it scientifically.

I think one of the ways you might understand Freud's project in general is that psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic project was supposed to be a way to live in a post-traditional world, after the twilight of the idols. He thought for better or for worse that science and history—our scientific understanding of history—was going to provide us with some means for living that replaced traditional ways of going on. I think this is so important today because all the issues that come up with Freud and the break with tradition—the role of science, the role of the enlightenment, the role of secularism—bear directly on the big debates we're having today. Said's book, for example, tries to extrapolate Freud's ideas for the third world or the non-European and non-white world, And I highly recommend Mark Edmundson's book, which just

came out, on Freud's last ten years, where he really shows how far from being obsolete, how relevant Freud's cultural writings were.

O'Donoghue: I'm just thinking to the next step of those comments about the Phillipson bible. The one dream that Freud had about the Phillipson bible was the one in which his mother is carried with these bird-headed figures. Following a very recent article in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* by Kimberlyn Leary, there's this notion of the particularization of a phenomenon. So you're absolutely correct about the power and the significance of the Phillipson on many levels, certainly on Freud's visual imaginary, too. Then the use of that for something highly specific, relating to the death of his mother's father, among other things, may be getting us closer now to what is it about Freud's contribution. It's not just about the particularization of that incident, but creating a history of particularization within broader constructs, of course. We can argue about those, the Oedipus, et cetera, et cetera. But it is placing the notion of subjectivity—I guess this is now back to Peter—in a very different context. So that's the addition to the imagery of the Phillipson that seems to just work with your thoughts, too.

Rudnytsky: I think we also might mention here the importance of the archeological metaphor, because as any archeologist can tell you, one of the joys of it is that they deal with the particular, very much so. That's one of the reasons why archeologists always feel that they're on firmer ground than people like philologists, who have to work by always extrapolating meaning from texts. And yet archeology requires considerable interpretation. Going back to what I was saying about critique or synthesis, this is sort of the interesting question to me, since I work, again, from the perspective of the influences of historical sciences dealing with antiquity on the genesis of psychoanalysis.

The process of analysis is fundamentally one of breaking down, of peeling the artichoke, et cetera, again with the notion that the self is a kind of site, an open archeological site. This was a very important metaphor in part because of the dynamics that go on in the process of analysis and the concerns over suggestion—to think of yourself as excavating as opposed to intimidating or cajoling or somehow getting evidence from someone's psyche. It was very important to have that kind of paradigm.

The question is then: what is the role of a narrative synthesis? Just as the archeologist can dig on the site for a considerable amount of time before coming to the conclusions about what he finds, this paradigm of success was very important to Freud. Some of the images are so striking when you truly discover something about the past through archeology. When you have, for example, a wonderful inscription and it will tell you exactly what was there and why it was there. As I've said in my book, this is a paradigm of success that eludes him in some ways. That is, knowing in this constant peeling of the artichoke, in this constant critique of what people remember, what they think they remember, and what is beyond remembering, there will be that point of synthesis—the contribution to the narrative aspect of history that can be made possible.

Prochnik: That's obviously been one critique of the case histories, where he chooses to kind of chisel out the last bit of stone and say, "It stops here." And that's something that's come back against him in some of the more extreme attacks. It's certainly been where he decided we have

that evidence in nature. Because he certainly will say, "This was the moment of revelation. This is the moment where the history falls together."

To return to what you said about the debate and the obsession with that debate about adultery, there's a way in which I think Freud may provoke that kind of concern, at least in a certain level of reading, because of how much the eureka moment is part of certain key case histories. In his own personal story—and this comes out again and again in *The Interpretation of Dreams*—we focus so much on Oedipus as opposed to when the Sphinx doesn't give the answer. And he denies ultimate meaning in these ways that have to trigger certain sorts of deep drives, at least to know more of what his personal history contains. He says, "I'm not giving you the ultimate meaning of this dream. I've taken you up to this point, but I'm not giving you that final layer." That, I think, has got to have been a conscious strategy at certain points.
And there's a way in which he tangles his followers in a labyrinth of very provocative personal biography when he says a story is his own, when he says it's not a story. When, in "Screen Memories," he says, "There may not be any such thing as a childhood memory." And that obviously has such deep repercussions for history as an idea, if all of these memories are constructed or emerge at these different points of story-telling to ourselves and to others.

Whitebook: With respect to your first point, he was always looking for the historical event, whether it was the killing of the father or the primal scene. You can read Freud always on both sides of the question. But in "The Wolfman" he says, "Well, we can't decide whether the primal scene really happened. We'll have to leave the question undecided." And then in the "Screen Memories" paper he says we'll never know whether it's true or not. I don't remember the exact phrase, but he says maybe all we have are memories that are directed towards the past, or something like that.

Prochnik: Or we only have memories *related to* the past, not memories *of* the past.

Whitebook: Yes, something like that. I wish I could remember the exact word. They are related to the past, but they may not be of the past. That's the sense of it.

I think the problem is, with the emphasis on the role of construction and subjectivity in postmodern philosophy and science and recent psychoanalysis, we're in danger of losing all reference to the object. I think the discussion has gone on for a long time now and we have to bring back the question, which John McDowell does in *Philosophy*: how, after the linguistic turn, do our theories still rub against reality? Or how do they rub against the past? We've been concentrating on how they're constructed for so long that we sometimes we fall into a subjectivism, a constructivism, and solipsism. And now the question of how does all this construction relate to some sort of object, I think has to be readdressed.

You know, the prototype for distorting projection is, of course, paranoia. Freud has a quote that not too many people pick up on—Loewald did. Freud says, "Well, paranoidists project but they don't project into the blue." So to explicate the sense of "not into the blue" I think is the really hard task that we have to do.

Rudnytsky: Well, I'm here to learn from the responses of others and I'm eager to have more people join. So much has essentially been put on our table.

Armstrong: Exactly. I was just wondering, since you had raised the Freud and Minna question again—

Rudnytsky: Yes, the provocative Minna question. All the thoughts have really been running together and opening up such wonderful questions. If I refer myself to Joel since I think his comments were the most specifically addressed to the issues that I raised: if the two other Peters are, in your view, agreeing that if Freud had this affair with Minna it would somehow undo the psychoanalytic enterprise. Somehow it seems very important that we not acknowledge this because of the damage it would do, as you said, not simply to Freud's personal reputation somehow, but to the epistemology of psychoanalysis or to the theory. If I can just interject a parenthesis, I think in your more theoretical remarks you raised this interesting question in terms of the dialectic of philosophy and psychoanalysis about genesis and meaning. That's really Grunbaum's point, I think, that whenever we interpret the meaning of a dream or of a psychic phenomenon, our hope is that through the associations we can, as it were, undo the transformation of the latent into the manifest content, if we grant that model. But we can never be certain, of course, that the meaning that we arrive at, even if it seems to be somehow deeply true and moving, successfully accounts for the formation of the dream. That's only going to be an inference. We can never with complete certainty move from interpretations of meaning to explanations of genetic causality.

But my own experience, whether it's in the study of literature and art, intellectual work, psychoanalytic theory or what have you, it always deepens my appreciation and my sense of understanding. It doesn't take anything away from the autonomy of the work of art or the intellectual validity, or the theory. I suppose I would concede that if something is said to be true, if I'm persuaded it's true, then in some ways the subjective origin becomes uninteresting. But any time we're dealing with error, then I want to understand what caused the error, and in that case, the personal factor is relevant. In some ways perhaps, if we're talking about the realm of the subjective, we're always dealing with error. And even though I think there's a dimension of psychoanalysis that is scientific, I think there's an eradicable dimension of it that's subjective, and want to know about it, insofar as I can bring it to bear in my understanding. I think that in every instance it changes the way we see and we understand. That, to me, is enrichment, not a diminution.

So, what troubled me in your remarks was that you simply said that it doesn't matter, that it's trivial. And that in disagreeing with Peter Gay and Peter Swales, you implied that it wouldn't be significant. I don't agree with that.

Here I'm coming back to George's remarks and also his excellent book, *Putnam Camp*, which I strongly recommend to anyone interested in the topic of our symposium today. I'll quote something George wrote—it's just a sentence and it echoes his comments. He says that "Freud's own self-analysis, at least as recorded in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, is less the brutally honest exercise in self-exposure that his followers, like Jones, claimed it was, than a mimesis of a self-analysis." There's always going to be, if we shift our vegetables from the artichoke to the

mushroom, the root of it that grows. We'll never penetrate to the heart of the artichoke completely, or to the root of the mushroom. But we might imagine that Freud, when he's writing his most landmark works in 1900, 1899, and 1901, is dealing with a secret in his own personal life. That it's not simply American Puritanism that retroactively has made too much of this.

In fact, I think not enough has been made of the Minna question. I think it's only begun to be seriously considered, and that the way that our understanding of Freud and the history of psychoanalysis will deeply change once we've integrated this into our thinking has not really been considered in a serious way. We have a very good reason for understanding why Freud stopped short as much as he does. Why he's unable to really tell us what's going on. If we accept the Minna affair—and it could be a fantasy—but if we accept it as something that actually occurred in the real—we're kind of reintroducing into the space of psychoanalysis, there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, the *real*. You see? So we've kind of returned to the dialectic of the real and the fantasy.

Again, I'm going to quote George because I learned so much from reading his book. He speaks about the Viennese Succession Movement, of which Freud was a contemporary if not an admirer. He says, "Where Manet's 'Olympia' defiantly confronted society with the fact that sexuality exists, the Successionists went further, confronting sexuality itself with the inescapability of mind, of trauma, imagination, and memory, in defining what constitutes the erotic." I think the point here is that this is what psychoanalysis does. It confronts us not simply with sexuality's existence, but with the inescapability of mind in sexuality. And I never want to lose that. So nothing I'm saying is meant to diminish the role of fantasy in our understanding of Freud's experience or psychic life or psychoanalysis.

But the brute reality is that sexuality exists in a form that is in the present and would cause one to want to engage in rather radical acts of self-concealment, by contrast, say, with Putnam himself, whose paper on Griselda's fantasies I think is a direct echo of "Screen Memories" in a significant respect. Putnam is much more overt and honest about his masturbation fantasies and, in fact, we know that the way that Freud and his circle read Putnam's paper was precisely to identify a JJP complex. This is part of the history of psychoanalysis. We can't separate the theoretical papers from the correspondence and the role of the inner-subjective life of the people who form the movement. Putnam has, like Ferenczi, gone well beyond Freud in the honesty of his ability to take the tropes that Freud taught and live them in his life in a way that I think Freud was unable to do. The problem of authority that Freud got so hung up on, and his conflict with truth, I think is radically about the secret of the Minna affair, and in my reading of *A Trip to America*, this is when the chickens come home to roost. So maybe this allows us to bring America back into the conversation.

Whitebook: You said that Freud was constantly critiquing authority, and in one way or another killing the father. But there's the other side. He also says take what was your father's and make it your own. So not only kill the father, but you also have to appropriate the tradition.

Prochnik: Right. You have to literally consume it.

Whitebook: Look all of the great avant-garde people of the twentieth century: Shoenberg, Picasso, Joyce. They all consumed the tradition; they cannibalized it. I'm very interested in your question about what bothered him so much about America. I think maybe what bothered him here was that there wasn't enough tradition to consume.

Prochnik: I think that's certainly part of the problem. If we come back to ruins and see how much of his process in an archeological sense is also about reconstituting the absence of this over here, the absence of enough history to sink his teeth into. But also, I think, there's the issue of the difference in the American usage of history and what at least that generation, among whom Putnam was part—wanted from history. Part of what they took from Freud had to do with a reincorporation of ideas of the American wilderness, which were receding at the time. But their interest was more about returning to some prehistoric, paradisiacal state. This was an extreme problem for Freud, obviously. I mean, if the goal was not the reconstruction of Rome, Jerusalem, and some majestic edifice of mind and history; but more to bring us through analysis into a space where we were free of history and lived in a kind of Natty Bumppo, wild-animal-riddled state, but one of innocence and immense potency. I'm just suggesting that Freud was worried about the goal of historical understanding as he took it among that particular generation of New England intellectuals. These people were steeped in historical knowledge as well; they had all studied in Europe. But I think that their interests diverged from his about what you did with that. And this comes into part of why sublimation was so important to the Americans. They said if you dug back far enough that you could sweep it all away. Freud doesn't want to leave that. He wants to linger in the ruins, I think, and that's a sharply distinct aim.

O'Donoghue: George, because you thought so much up about this issue of America, where does modernity come into this? That is, the difference between his concept of seeing himself as a modern subject and the issues of modernity as played out by his colleagues in America at that time?

Prochnik: Can you say a little more?

O'Donoghue: In the United States there was clearly less of a historic precedent on which to build a narrative of the past, and a great impetus towards the progress narratives, I would assume. I'm just curious about where you see the difference in the American versus European notion of the tensions between the historical moment and the modern imperative.

Prochnik: Well, I'm just thinking about this retreat in the Adirondacks that Freud was taken to by Putnam. Something that Freud in his letters home picks up on very, very incisively and strikingly is the degree to which this retreat was a kind of faux rusticity. That it wasn't an actual primitive state. Freud pegs this immediately and understands that he's in a sort of theater of primitivism, which would only be accessible, I think, or he implies, to a certain kind of American self, which is the ultimate urban modern, because the grounding of these retreats was an urban intellectualism. Simultaneous with his critiques of this lack of history was his sense of the Americans running too fast into the future, that they weren't going to incorporate their leaders enough. This maybe returns to some of the ideas in group psychology, with the distinction that Freud draws between the herd instinct and what he wants to call the hoard man. I think he sees America as not crystallizing around a modern self because there's insufficient idealization.

There's a curious remark he made—something that I think is in a letter to Jung, but I wouldn't swear on it—one of his comments on American women. He says that the idealization of the father is insufficient to the point where they can't muster the illusion necessary for marriage.

Whitebook: There's also the quote from "Thoughts for the Timeline: War and Death," where he contrasts a European love affair to an American romance and he thinks Europeans have a tragic sense and they know how high the stakes are when you have a love affair. They know what can happen and the consequences and so on and so forth. But they go ahead and do it anyway. Whereas the Americans don't have a sense of all the tragic potentialities lying behind it and just sort of engage in a superficial flirtation.

Prochnik: The issue of tragedy, I think, is at the heart of a lot of this, and what he saw as an absence of the tragic imagination is maybe close to the problems of the historical one. But I'm interested in what you would have to say about the American visual landscape and the ways that maybe wilderness was constituted in art and what Freud might have—

O'Donoghue: I just went by the Guggenheim and there's this American Spiritual show, which I have not seen, but I assume it includes these immense landscapes. It almost feels like with this primitive, which I mentioned in this concept of the manifest, Freud was really so involved in this ethnography, but in a very different way: the "primitive and the antique." It's almost as though there was not the mediation of the period of the primordial or primitive with the classical in America to get to the modern. I've been reading his annotations in this book from the late 1890s on the origin of art, which was essentially—by Ernst Grosse—a very famous art history of quote-unquote primitive peoples and all of their symbolizations, and all of their imagery and their dance and their rituals. But he was really utilizing that in a phylogenic way to say that we were still carrying those ancient pieces inside of ourselves. It was certainly positing that in a way that was both hierarchal and very judgmental about the higher functions. But the classical occupied a very different realm. Or not, maybe. I'm just curious.

Armstrong: Part of the interest, first of all, is of course when you have this explosion of ethnographic data that gets digested by Europeans, partly through *The Golden Bough* and great works like that, which revolutionized classical studies. At the same time that Freud is interested in writing things like *Totem and Taboo*, there's a group of scholars at Cambridge, the Cambridge Ritualists, who are interested in looking for—not necessarily for the first time, but in a rigorous way—the way in which Greek tragedy, for example, may harbor certain ancient rhythms, very sort of prehistoric aspects of culture, instead of thinking of them solely as these paradigmatic works of art. So it's part of a general trend that you might say the European imaginary has to go through when all of this ethnographic detail is sewn up in part through evolutionary theories and notions of culture that begin to make you think that human culture evolves in a sort of unilinear fashion. The advantage of ethnography is you get a window in the prehistoric before the standard European narratives are there. So there's a certain fascination with the prehistoric that I think is very, very strong in that regard. I think a lot of members of the psychoanalytic movement engage in that sort of thing because, in part, of the newness of the past, when they began to orient towards that.

But there is a certain—I call it an evidentiary quadrilateral—that's important in the way that Freud looks at that. That is to say, one can look obviously in neurotic behavior and children's behavior for these vestiges, these phylogenic vestiges of earlier states of mind, earlier ways in which the pre-civilized human behaved, and find again confirmation in either ancient civilizations or primitive pre-industrial societies. That is to say, societies that are observable or have been observable within the last 100 years by anthropologists. It's precisely that strange group of evidence that can be deployed for theoretical purposes, sort of ad infinitum, that I think we see. To me, it's one of the most fascinating aspects of the early twentieth century. I call it a kind of discursive incontinence because when you think of all the discourses that Freud dabbles in—the history of religion, ethnography, et cetera—I feel tremendously envious. You can't quite get away with that in the same way anymore.

Just to bring Said back in, since we began with him, I found this interesting. One of his very last works was actually given as a lecture at the Freud Museum in London and it was a reading in part of Freud and his interest in the non-European. Again, we go back to the question of what kind of cultural hero is Freud himself for us. Said, who is so critical of the way in which, again, European discourse and the non-Western Other is used, gives a reading of Freud that sort of ignores some of the ways in which you could find problematic his use of aboriginal rituals and all this sort of stuff. That shows you a little bit about the paradox of Freud for us in historical imagination. That is to say, he remains a kind of culture hero in precisely these bold, synthetic gestures and the way in which, again, he forces us to look into the history of human sexuality and culture—the tragic aspects of it. But it's in a way that can often suspend the very critical apparatus that Said himself had sort of created in looking at Orientalism.

I think it's now time for us to have you join in. First question here.

Audience: What came to my mind with this discussion was Marx and capitalism, when he talked about the theory of capitalism. He used England as the example, but he said, "It's not England I'm talking about. I'm talking about capitalism." He used it as an example because it was the most highly developed capitalist country in the world. And he said, if anybody says what about Germany or France, they're going to go through the same thing when they get to it—which turned out to be true. So I'm wondering with Freud, with this question that came up about personal history, that although he used his dreams as an example of how the mind functions, wasn't that objectively because that's the only dreams he could use to bring about the theory of the unconscious?

I would like to add one little thing. They used to say that Marx might have had an affair with the woman who took care of the kids. Was that the reason why Marx's theory was no good? I mean, it's really funny.

This thing about America—and then I'll finish. It's a long question. It seems like in the United States they don't seem to have a sense of history as much. I mean, here's Freud from Europe; there's Marx from Europe; there's others. And yet, you don't see any American of that same stature. And when you hear these people talk about U.S. history—even the leaders now—they revise it in a very immature, superficial way. Maybe they haven't been around long enough in the United States. It's just too young.

Whitebook: Well, I think the point about Marx is well taken because he thought that what happened in England is just an example of what's going to happen everywhere else. And I agree with you that there's a similar structure of thinking in Freud, and I think this is what separates him from Said. I actually had this discussion with Said. Freud had an idea about modernization and modernity, which Castoriadis called the "Project of Autonomy." There had been some special breakthrough in the West, which evolved the idea of individual autonomy, science, secularism, and so on and so forth. He thought that this constellation, this project of autonomy, had happened in the West, and he and a lot of other people, including myself, believed that this was valid for the rest of the world and was going to spread. And so many Western intellectuals now have mud in their faces because it hasn't happened.

The question, I think, with Freud and the non-Western world is whether we still adhere to the deep values that underlie his project about autonomy, about rationality, about the critique of idols, and science, and so on, after the postmodern critique and postcolonialism, and the resurgence of religion and fundamentalism. Whether we can still abide by them, whether we're still committed to them. They arose historically for contingent historical reasons, which many people debated about. But once they arose they were there. Freud was committed to them, but are we still committed to them?

Prochnik: I would agree with that in the meme, but then there's something like *Civilization and Its Discontents*, with that kind of deep, deep cultural pessimism about the track of progress, and there's that passage where he systematically undercuts each one of these advances. How do you fit *Civilization and Its Discontents* into that particular problem that Freud himself raises?

Whitebook: Not easily. I actually have a student who once raised the question about his cultural writings—*Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*—being so close to each other. But in *Future of an Illusion* he is articulating this project of autonomy; he's uncharacteristically optimistic, upbeat, and almost Utopian. And then boom, he writes *Civilization and Its Discontents*, where he becomes very skeptical about the whole idea of progress. But then, strange as it may sound, I think there is still something of a progressive note left in *Moses and Monotheism* because I think what he was saying—at least for his followers—is that we're going to continue this critique of the false gods, the critique of the idols that started with the mosaic tradition and got transformed into the scientific tradition, even if it's just a bunch of us huddled around the Torah in London. We're going to keep this flame going.

But what changed between *Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents* was his evaluation of the Superego. In *Future of an Illusion* he thought the Superego was this psychic agency which is going to reconcile people to civilization, as he puts it. But in *Civilization and Its Discontents,* the Superego, because of the internalization of aggression, becomes something which causes the self-vitiating nature of the civilizing process.

Audience: This discussion, perhaps paradoxically, is making me think about my life as a clinician because I'm struggling with the idea that it seemed to me was presented that there is a somewhat clear-cut dichotomy between the scientific and the subjective. I think in the clinical experience, which of course is not the only thing we're talking about here, there's a constant

process of trying to create a kind of science of the subjective. Which is to try to find the ways in which to understand your own subjective experiences as they are aroused and piqued by the material that you're hearing from your patient. One of the things that I certainly took away from my training analysis was the whole process of trying to understand myself, not to get rid of all the things that might come up about myself, but so that I would know what they were when they did emerge. And that they would emerge. They continued to emerge in all the work that I did with patients. And my purpose was to try to see them, look at them, and try to put them in a place where they were interfering as little as possible with the material that was coming up from the patient's life. So I've been sort of struggling with how to position myself as a clinician in this discussion.

Rudnytsky: Well, let me just offer a few thoughts and responses to both interventions from the audience. I appreciated Mr. Cutler's reference to Marx and the housekeeper.

Whitebook: You do have a dirty mind.

Rudnytsky: I think it's an occupational hazard. There's been some work on Einstein and his personal life, but I think the real analogy for me is actually the lost tomb of Jesus where, as you may recall, there is some considerable archeological evidence, which again maybe doubles back to some of our earlier reflections, that Jesus and Mary Magdalen may have had a child together. To me, that is actually a valuable context for our reflections on Freud and his role as the founder of the psychoanalytic movement.

Now, in terms of what you're calling the "science of the subjective," I'm sympathetic in one sense to what you're saying, but I would frame the question differently. I guess it's a matter of how we use the word "science." If we use the German *wissenschaft*, that's a very broad term that can be used to encompass natural science or the social or human sciences. But in my own thinking about psychoanalysis, and as a scholar of the humanities, I'm uncomfortable using the term "science" in the realm of interpretation because the problem that we continually come up against is we can interpret anything from any theoretical standpoint and we can achieve meaning that seems to create a good fit in the dialogic encounter between the two human beings or between the interpreter and the text. So if that's the case, there is no basis other than personal preference, ultimately, for adjudicating competing theoretical claims. Therefore, we have not established the basic prerequisite for a scientific outlook because, in my view, in a rather traditional understanding of science, we have to be able to falsify. We have to be able to discredit and discard conceptualizations that do not stand up empirically to rigorous scrutiny. And in order to do that in psychoanalysis—although I think clinical processes can be usefully studied with scientific methods, ultimately we need to go to extra-clinical realms to sort these things out.

Therefore, if, for example, we don't accept Freud's particular version of drive theory, that's because there's very good evidence from infant research and ethology that that model just doesn't seem to be well-supported empirically. We need to have different frameworks, you see. We're never going to be able to sort that out clinically, but once we have come to that understanding—if we have, from the evidence that is available to us through research—then I think that's likely to make us better clinicians because we're going to be utilizing explanatory frameworks that really don't hold up in what we might think of as a scientific way of thinking.

So in my view there's no contradiction, ultimately, between the theory and the practice; it's just important not to confuse the realms, because then, I think, we do end up in what we might call a muddle.

Audience: Very briefly, I just wanted to say that I think—and you will all think if you think about it—we have some very great American historians, so I don't accept the argument that we're too young or that we don't compare with European historians. We have had a number of great historians in this country. Maybe not Jacob Burckhardt, but pretty good.

The other thing I wanted to say was that in 1909, when Freud made that remark about America being a giant mistake, it didn't mean that he didn't like and admire very much Mark Twain or Thornton Wilder or Edith Jackson or A.A. Brill or Dorothy Burlingham. His life was not constantly a total rejection of America or Americans. He liked American dollars. When patients came, he said, "Yes you can come. If you pay me in dollars I'll find an hour for you."

Audience: I just want to mention, if you're going to have a discussion of historical imagination, somebody, one would hope, would bring up R.G. Collingwood, whose famous essay on reenactment in the historical imagination and the idea of history is probably one of the most brilliant discussions of the historical imagination written, certainly in the twentieth century. The other person I would mention, while not in that category, is Erikson, who had a real sense of psychohistory, and maybe in a certain way took from Freud and developed that even further than Freud. Erikson was the great merger. Not Bruce Mazlish, but Erikson, who merged history and psychoanalysis pretty well, I think. Not without some problems, but anyway. Everybody should read Collingwood's idea of history, if you haven't. You probably have and know about it.

Armstrong: Any comment before the next question?

Audience: I wanted to say a word about the Minna affair. It's something I don't know anything about, but there are models, I think, in history and the history of literature that we can look at to illuminate that, or at least this is what occurred to me when I heard Joel and Peter duking it out over here. First of all, Haydn White came up with the concept of "social buzz" when he was working on the idea of fiction as having historical validity. And that has been interpreted and carried on much more now in Renaissance literature by Glenn Martinez, who also talks about the idea that there's not very much early Renaissance fiction, but what there is has a lot to do with social buzz. In Martinez' opinion, it doesn't matter so much whether something in a fictional or heresy account really happened or not. What matters is that there was this buzz and that this buzz continued through history and people were still talking about it. This has been said already, but just to reiterate—the smoke can be much more important than the fire in the Minna affair. The reactions through history, including that of Jung when he was confided in and one thing and another, is just as interesting, if not more interesting, than actually what happened. You know, whether it was a Freudian slip in the hotel room when he wrote *ehefrau*. Maybe it was a Freudian slip; maybe he was so used to writing that, or something. It could have been.

Whitebook: That's a new one to me. I've never heard that explanation.

Rudnytsky: I have heard that he was unwilling to shell out the money for the extra room so it was purely—

Audience: Right. Well, he didn't check into hotels with his wife that much, but it would have been a formula that could have just come out. A slip of the pen, so to speak. Can I just say one more thing about the concept of wilderness in America? I think that there's this gap between American and Protestantism in the nineteenth century, where the wilderness has a kind of sacral quality about it, and where still to people of my generation winter camping had a kind of sacral quality about it that in all of European history is pretty much absent. Because the wilderness—I'm not saying cultivated farmlands, but the wilderness—was the equivalent of Dante's dark wood and the wilderness of sin. And I think that maybe even the Adirondacks for a European even of Freud's generation, who was a city dweller, like for many Europeans even nowadays, could have freaked him out as being a little bit too much wilderness. Especially since, in Freud's view, New York was a kind of wilderness with its own kind of lack of control.

Audience: People could have traveled from Vienna to London safely at a time when actually you probably didn't want to go from New York to Philadelphia.

Audience: Who would want to go to Philadelphia?

Rudnytsky: Any self-respecting Phillies fan would be proud to be in Philadelphia.

Prochnik: I just want to say very quickly that I think that's incontestably so, and it comes out directly in what he wrote, and Jung also. They think they're seeing wilderness that has never been touched. Jung was even swept away. A real primeval force. As I started to say, Freud starts to get it when he gets in the camp that there are two things going on. He was attuned to that. But it was too much. And Freud, who also thought of himself as a wonderful walker, was very troubled by his first efforts to walk in the Adirondacks.

Levy: I wonder what he would have thought of the Catskills.

Prochnik: It might have been a little more his speed, especially if he could have gone and seen some good comedy somewhere.

Audience: Maybe you can help me out here a little. Richard Wagner was perfectly willing to admit all the Minnas in his life; he had a real Minna, in fact. He was always willing to talk about sexual experience and to write correspondence about it. But he refused to admit that these women ever had any influence on his work. He refused to allow them into his theory. Theory, he said, had nothing to do with what actually happened to you. In fact, if something really happened to you, you wouldn't be able to write about it. He said, "Do you think that Shakespeare actually had to have gone through what Othello did in order to write about infidelity and jealousy? No." So I'm just wondering why he would have been so against admitting to any kind of importance of his own subjectivity when it came to his music dramas.

Armstrong: Was the question about Wagner or was the question about Freud?

Audience: It's a question about Wagner.

Rudnytsky: This is the famous case of Wagner, as Nietzsche would say.

Audience: I'm not getting an answer.

Levy: They're thinking.

Rudnytsky: I think it may come back in a future roundtable.

Audience: This isn't actually a question. When Freud met Thornton Wilder, he really wanted him to marry Anna. He never knew that Wilder was gay.

Audience: I was wondering if each of the panelists could perhaps just address what you mean by the term "historical imagination" because it seems like we're speaking in many different registers, all of them interesting, but sitting here listening it's a little bit frustrating knowing when to dive in. Because it seems on one hand, you're talking about Freud's interpretation of history. The interpretation of Freud's history, in the case of Peter. There's a kind of elision of the terms "imagination" and the "imaginary." Is the historical imaginary the same thing as the cultural imaginary? Is the historical imagination the same thing as the historical imaginary? So I don't know if others are having that struggle with the terminology, but if you could each sort of address the title of the panel.

Armstrong: Okay. I'll start since I'm somewhat responsible for that mess. But that was part of the idea. Initially, you might think the notion of the imagination and the writing of history is about as desirable as creativity and basic arithmetic, right? Especially when we deal with matters of evidence. Again, when you're dealing with hot-button issues like the Freud and Minna affair, or whatever. So I was first of all getting on to something that is well-recognized by historians, which is that it takes tremendous imagination first of all to bring up the world of the past. You have to consider that I work in ancient studies, so the amount of imagination that it requires to put yourself back in fifth-century Athens is considerable. But that's precisely where there's the connection with the imaginary and questions of fantasy and subjectivity. There's a well-known formula in Classics, which is, "The less the evidence, the more that is written on the topic." If you have a papyrus where you got three words that might be part of a lost tragedy of Sophocles, then the idea is you have people who then quickly write the rest of the tragedy based on the three words. So there's the question of reconstruction. There's the question of constructions and analysis, too, where you find that sort of affinity of the imagination.

Another aspect that we've not touched upon—and in the interest of time, perhaps we shouldn't at this point—is how does a knowledge of a process of history, or assumptions about the process of history, lead you to imagine a future. There's one question about the Freudian Left, for example, that we haven't really talked about. Was there a failure of imagination in Freud's view that made it difficult for him to appreciate a place like America, or to imagine some extension by means of moral authority or actual scientific policy development of psychoanalysis into a public realm, into a future understanding, basically? He did have a fairly clear developmental view, as you mentioned, when you talk about *Future of an Illusion*, a way of thinking in surprisingly positive

terms about the role of reason and science and the development of the human future. So you could extend the notion of the historical imagination to incorporate the future in that regard. But this notion of Freud and the historical imagination also has to do with why is it that Freud is such a figure that returns, like Banquo's ghost, constantly to this discussion. Foucault makes a distinction between what is a discourse and what is a science based on the notion that a discourse has certain foundational texts to which people return. The irony—I suppose we could call it historical irony—that Joel pointed out at the beginning is that psychoanalysis comes from this break with tradition. And yet it constitutes its own tradition with a founding father. This late in the game, 2007, here we are still talking about the minutia of this founding father's behavior. So that's why the three of them were linked on purpose because it's difficult to know where one—for me, conceptually—where one of these areas ends and the other begins, especially when you consider the realm of clinical insight, which is the most significant element of dynamic force in developing psychoanalysis. And its cultural extensions are so closely linked. So that's my ten cents worth.

O'Donoghue: Where is the questioner?

Armstrong: The questioner is over there.

O'Donoghue: Are you a clinician or an academic?

Audience: An academic.

Rudnytsky: A scholar.

O'Donoghue: I was going to go back to your comment and say that I think also the historical imagination and the tensions of history in the historical imagination are connected to the tensions that you brought up between science and the clinical practice. I think they're sort of co-created, and maybe the move from an intra-subjective to an inter-subjective model has also not only been seen within the history of psychoanalysis, but within many other critical discourses, including the postcolonialism I spoke of. They've now allowed a mutual creation of something, as opposed to an abstract entity that something is fit into or something is evaluated alongside. So I think in the notion of the historical imagination, it reflects both by using a notion of some kind of an internal creative process, but also by working on something beyond itself. You can't delineate the two. For me, the historical imagination allows us to really look back through the lens of writing history. Richard said that this is all—history has been created, as Derrida would say, after the text has already been written and the author is long gone. So I think we can't actually parse those things out, but maybe now, in the twenty-first century, we think about them as much more co-creative than we think of them as extremely divided, which certainly was the case in the past. So this may offer no new insight to your question, but I think it tempers the two of them, which I think is what one of the contributions of a panel like this is—to really reflect the speaking of history. Each time we speak it, we are speaking of the discourse of knowledge that exists outside—that we can grasp, rather than something that is being produced and created each time we engage in a text, each time we engage in it with an object.

Audience: It just feels to me that the panel is speaking in different directions about historical imagination. It was less a question than I was just asking for a clear indication of what the topic is. I mean, the one thing that does seem to emerge is this tension between fact and history, and projection. You were saying that there's kind of a cultural lexicon that we all carry around archivally. I would suggest that there's something universally true in that dream book, for instance.

O'Donoghue: Well, I think that Freud was imagining that we carried some kind of antiquity within our psychic processes, that part of the apparatus was actually ancient, was carried forward, a relic.

Audience: Right. Freud was a magical man? Or Freud was positing that as—

O'Donoghue: Well, Freud was looking at what he considered empirical evidence of that in the quote-unquote ethnographic literature of the day, which presented individuals—

Audience: You can't not bring up ideology, for instance. I think this is a very interesting question for psychoanalysis. At least, I get it all the time from my students, about truth conditions. "Well, he just made up that whole myth in *Moses and Monotheism*" or "the Exodus never happened, so how can you talk about Moses being an Egyptian?" Or "he just made up *Totem and Taboo*." So I think that's fascinating, and I think everything that everyone has said has aspects of it. But I'm kind of missing the focus.

Rudnytsky: This is my first opportunity to be part of the roundtable, here, but we of course as individual presenters did not coordinate with each other prior to meeting today. We decided to come together under this rubric that clearly has a considerable amount of elasticity and yet provides a certain frame, I suppose, for us to improvise our remarks. And we're all included, I think, in what is kind of a performance art here. A new way of having a conversation that is more contemporary. So I think it's quite understandable that we would each come with a different inflection of how we approach the topic and yet in some unforeseen way, to quote Derrida, "the glue of the aleatory" makes sense. That out of the spontaneous making of meaning one thing follows another, and therefore one thing is connected to the last and so forth. We together define, in performative ways, what we're talking about.

Your questions simulated to me the basic dichotomy or trichotomy of Aristotle, between poetry, philosophy, and history, which is itself an ancient quarrel. And if we're going to talk about the historical imagination, I think perhaps going back to Joel's observations, being trained as a philosopher, you come from that disciplinary perspective that is looking for the abstract. Or you're looking for things that are not contingent, perhaps, in the traditional understanding of philosophy. Whereas history, of course, in the classical sense, has to do with what happens concretely, the particulars of things. Poetry somehow is between philosophy and history in that it is dealing with a particular sequence of events that forms a narrative, but it's not tied to the historical condition of truth or actuality, so therefore it has some of the qualities of philosophy. So it's almost a paradox to talk about the historical imagination. I have not read Jonathan Lear's book, so I'm going to speak based on what a friend of mine said to me when I asked him to consider it for review for *Imago*. John Kerr, who is a wonderful scholar in his own right, has

written a book, *A Most Dangerous Method*, on Freud, Jung, and Spielrein, which most of you are probably familiar with. What I took from Kerr's conversation was that Jonathan Lear himself is a philosopher, so his analysis of Freud's thought is kind of insulated or removed from the nitty-gritty of the historical specificity, which includes personal biography, but isn't limited to that.

I come from a perspective in which those types of questions remain deeply important to my thinking. When we start talking about science, it becomes a little bit different and tricky. Coming back to earlier remarks—and I'm very influenced by E.O. Wilson's work, personally—there is a fundamental difference between societies that have undergone the scientific revolution and those that haven't. In Freud's own relations, the Enlightenment project, of course, is deeply ambivalent and not simply unequivocally positive. We all have to be mindful of the tragic costs that the quest for knowledge can bring in its wake.

Audience: You have all these facts, but you still have to theorize from it.

Rudnytsky: I absolutely agree.

Audience: Like the primitive accumulation of wealth.

Rudnytsky: Absolutely.

Audience: It's still got to be figured out what happened from it.

Rudnytsky: I agree. I completely agree with you.

Audience: It's just not, "That's the facts."

Rudnytsky: I agree with you. What I love so much about psychoanalysis is that it gives us a kind of meta-language, a way of thinking with a higher degree of consciousness about the things that happen to us all the time. So I agree with you; ultimately, we need some kind of theoretical distance to understand the things that we're talking about.

Audience: Freud must have known that, too.

Rudnytsky: Absolutely. I wouldn't be spending all my time sending Freud up if I didn't think he made immeasurable contributions. But I just wanted to say one more thing about America, if I might. George has written about this and John Kerr has written about it, too, in his wonderful book. At one time Freud himself, when he was still courting Martha Bernays, thought of moving to America and starting up over here, where he really could do much better than he could back in the old country. And so Jung and Freud both shared a certain fantasy of America as the place where their wishes could come true. So for Freud to come to America was really very much on the model of the acropolis, to refer to Richard's outstanding book. That this was so good it couldn't possibly be real.

He had the fainting episode in Bremen just before they left, and with all the corpses, and Freud quotes the joke that the roofer said. "How's it going? So far, so good, said the roofer as he began

to fall." So in my view, it's at least possible to suggest that some of the reason that Freud was so ambivalent toward America was because of the experience of analyzing his dreams, and Jung's attempt to ask him to open up about the experience with his sister-in-law that Jung had been informed of, and Freud's refusal to do that. We know from Deirdre Bair, who quotes this in her biography of Jung—and there is an interview that Jung gave to Kurt Eisler that goes into this and that is now de-restricted in the Library of Congress—that Freud had a urinary incontinence while he was in the United States that was a neurotic symptom. And we know how Freud theorized about urethral erraticism and all the rest of it, and linked it to ambition.

So I think that one strong contributing factor to Freud's attitude toward America could have been connected with the fact that this was the place where he wanted to go. He was going to be awarded an honorary degree, so he had the experience of being wrecked by success, and the return of all of his survivor guilt, and he connected with the confrontation that remained on some deep level unspoken with Jung, and with Ferenczi as the infantile bystander, who picked up on the telepathy that was going on. I don't mean to reduce everything to the personal—but if we're going to study history, we have to know specifically what we're talking about. We can open up general questions and all make interventions that are interesting and thoughtful, but ultimately, historians have to know the details of their subject, as any scholar does in his or her field. Whether it's Freud or it's Wagner or whatever subject we want to investigate, ultimately to be historians we need to have some mastery of the details of the subject. And I suppose that's true if you're going to be a clinical analyst. Some analysts believe that they can interpret everything in terms of counter-transference and fantasy, but I'm on the side of those who think it's actually important to know something about the facts of the patient's life.

Audience: But I wouldn't interpret Freud's incontinence just because you think it was what it was.

Rudnytsky: How would you interpret it?

Audience: I would wait for Freud to tell me what it was.

Armstrong: Joel wants to respond to this.

Whitebook: I really don't want to hog the floor, but there is a certain sort of urgency and it's not urinary. It's probably obvious from the things I've said that my position goes a bit against the contemporary grain. I think for many years now, not just in philosophy or in psychoanalysis, but in culture in general, we've been living through—we call it the "linguistic turn" or the "hermeneutical turn," however you want to put it—which at one point was very, very important because it undermined the dominance of a certain sort of rigid positivism that dominated the American university and the American intellectual scene. But I think we have spent so much time stressing the moment of construction, of interpretation, of projection, of the episteme of the frame—all these things—that now it's really time to move on to a question that begs to be addressed. Namely, why aren't all of these different interpretative frameworks or episteme or paradigms, as McDowell puts it, frictionlessly spinning in their own conceptual web? How do they rub up against reality? We have to come back to the question of the object. The problem is we can't come back to it and just be objectivists because that position has already been

demolished. The hard question is how to come back to the question of the object and objectivity after we've been through this linguistic turn?

Peter, on the one hand, you said we all have our own personal preferences and that's what makes us choose our theoretical frameworks, and theoretical frameworks are incommensurate and this and that. On the other hand, you said as historians, as analysts, we have to know the facts about our patients' lives. Those two are just completely incompatible with each other. You cannot explain how we can know about the facts of a patient's life if you take this hermeneutical, radical position.

Rudnytsky: I think you misunderstood my position, because I'm actually much closer to your view. I had the privilege of being a graduate student at Yale in the late 70s, which was the most intense period of postmodernism, and I tried to learn as much as I could from it, but I never followed that path. So I too am interested in finding my way back, outside the prison house of language, without minimizing the contribution that that way of thinking has offered. When I observed that within a clinical setting people may use different subjective frameworks that may be successful therapeutically in terms of their interactions with their patients, I was precisely saying that that ultimately is a problem because it's not adequate to sorting out the underlying question of how shall we choose what theoretical framework to adopt. In order to answer that underlying question, we need to adhere to a method that attempts to counter the tendency to invoke subjectivity by employing what is traditionally understood to be a scientific method, which cannot be done in an inter-subjective situation. If one accepts fundamentally the theory of evolution, for example, then Creationism is a discredit to theory, et cetera. So if we extrapolate from that to questions of what do we really know, psychoanalysis of course has had as its bread and butter theories of infancy, but there's the tension between the understanding of infancy and childhood as reconstructed in the clinical setting, and what infant research can tell us, you see.

And so my basic claim is that psychoanalysis—and neuroscience, of course—has kind of built on attachment theory to ask psychoanalysts and those of us who care about psychoanalysis to heed the call to think about what science can teach us, in order to sort out which of our theoretical claims have stood the test of time and which have not. Which then we can bring back into the clinical setting, where, again, the subjective is the heart and soul of it, and we would not want to exclude that. So I'm in agreement, I think, in large part with your critique of the postmodernist turn. But I don't see a tension between the various aspects of a complex position.

Audience: With all due respect, it appears that the conversation was not clarified before the speakers came. That is, that no one was familiar with each other's paper. And so what has resulted, to my way of thinking, has been this roundtable discussion, which is unique in its spontaneity, but I have to say that it somewhat loses me in the course of the afternoon. It's been so abstract and in many ways so abstruse. And what troubles me the most is that there seems to be this need in the *New York Times* to keep on picking away at the historical aspects of Freud. It was a hundred years ago and we're still playing with the ashes. Joel says, I think appropriately, we're just spinning more webs and where does the reality or the real come to the road? There are fifty years of other thinkers and writers and psychoanalysts who have been working in this area, but today's discussion brings in historical amber ashes moving around, it seems to me, and I'm

not quite sure where we've come to. I'm not sure where history really substantiates various claims. I've found this too abstruse for my thinking and I'm reasonably well-read in this area.

Armstrong: Well, one thing that I might say—again, not coming from a clinical perspective at all—is simply that the growth of Freud studies generally has been very important in integrating certain fields within the humanities, precisely on themes that quite often are technically divorced: for example, the history of science and Jewish history and gender studies, et cetera. One of the interesting problems that we face right now is precisely that we're in the midst of a very large interdisciplinary growth that is creating the kind of babble that maybe is part of the problem today. But I think that it would be a serious mistake to think that we shouldn't continue to suffer the babble to a degree, because this is precisely the great moment of integration. So I'm sorry if you feel a bit lost in this, but I think that that's symptomatic of the moment that we're trying to seize. And again, coming from perhaps the farthest distance—that is, from classical studies—into this discussion, the one thing I would like you to carry away today and keep in mind is that sometimes the most important moments, in terms of their intellectual format, can be muddled moments. I go back to this when I think about Freud writing *Totem and Taboo* and knowing, for example, the very strange and eclectic mix of things that go into that book. The sheer audacity of it astounds me, and how his would-be colleagues in a sense—the Cambridge Ritualists—are not really on the same page even though they're using similar data. I don't know if you know this anecdote, that he sent a copy to James Frazer, who wrote *The Golden Bough* and was very influential—a very large part of his reading, in fact, for *Totem and Taboo* came from that—and he never received a response.

Audience: I just wanted to introduce a different metaphor in keeping with Freudian history. I kept thinking this is a ravishing of the implicit. And what I mean by that—the ravishing—is, you know, the sexual, and maybe some of the disturbance or impatience is the American Puritanism, that we don't like things to be at loose ends—there's a pun for you, too, as well. And so my comment is that one of the things I've liked about coming to these meetings is that this frequently happens. I love it. The ones I've been to haven't gotten as close to self-reference about what's happening in the present as we did just now. But I really like that and I think there's no reason why on some level we shouldn't be coming close to the reality of our own experience which we tend—again, using some of the things that were said here—to censor. Or we're concerned about these aspects of the subjective; we put up barriers to things that make us uncomfortable. So I think the discomfort that has been expressed today I would want to applaud in contrast to some people who might want to say, "We should keep it nice."