

A Whole Climate of Critique: Psychoanalytic Politics between Vitality and Obsolescence

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Undoubtedly, one of the most important post-Freudian psychoanalytic developments was Melanie Klein's theorization in the 1940s of the two "positions," her term for the stages of psychosexual development through which the "normal" infant passes. The first, which Klein termed the "paranoid-schizoid position," is active from the beginning months of life and is characterized essentially by the splitting of things in the infant's environment into good and bad parts: in Klein's paradigmatic example, the mother's breast "is split into a good (gratifying) and bad (frustrating) breast."¹ The world for the paranoid-schizoid is essentially one divided between ideal, flawless, good things and evil, persecutory, bad things. It is only in the second position, the "depressive" position, that this split world gives way to one with more gray areas, where the distinction between good and bad is less pronounced, and where "objects" (the psychoanalyst's unfortunate term for other people) can be perceived as whole. Freed from schizoid projection, the object comes to be regarded in a new, disabused light: neither purely good nor purely evil but rather a complex and inevitably frustrating combination of both.

The depressive position thus signals the developing subject's attainment of a new stage of psychic maturity, one marked by the novel capacity to tolerate moral ambiguity and the ambivalence it gives rise to. An analogy might be drawn here between the Kleinian theory of the two positions and the difficult maturation that

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1. Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 27, no. 1 (1946): 99.

has marked the historiography of psychoanalysis over recent decades.² The challenge of breaking free from the paranoid-schizoid position and the corresponding tendency to advance reductive and exclusivist interpretations has been especially acute with regard to the polarizing figure of Sigmund Freud. During the bitter “Freud wars” of the 1980s and 1990s—a period that significantly coincided with the dramatic erosion of the position of psychoanalysis within the psychiatric establishment and the therapeutic marketplace—a host of avowedly critical histories attempted to dismantle the official idealizing portrait of the founder of psychoanalysis with the help of historical accounts even more one-sided than those they aimed to displace.³

Today, the attempts of the partisans of the Freud wars to vindicate or undermine the institution of psychoanalysis through lionizing or vilifying its founder appear a thing of the past. Two works that definitively signaled the shift away from this mode of historical scholarship were Eli Zaretsky’s *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (2005) and George Makari’s *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (2008).⁴ Above all, the histories that Zaretsky and Makari produced situated Freudianism within a far broader and more complex historical landscape than previous scholarship had done. Whereas Makari’s history paid especial attention to the medical networks and scientific traditions in and through which psychoanalysis was constructed, Zaretsky’s history placed the socio-economic transformations of late capitalism at the crux of the history of Freudianism’s emergence, flourishing, and eventual decline. In seeking, each in his own way, to fashion the “large social, cultural, and intellectual frame necessary to un-

2. As early as 1992, John Kerr discerned a “maturation of Freud Studies,” an assessment echoed the following year by Sander Gilman. See John Kerr, “Epilogue: History and the Clinician,” in *Freud and the History of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Toby Gelfand and John Kerr (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic, 1992), 357–83, esp. 358; Sander L. Gilman, “Freud Studies, 1993–1994: A Field Establishes Itself,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 68 (1994): 691–704.

3. The work of inveterate Freud bashers—Jeffrey Masson, Frederick Crews, and Peter Swales, for instance—was, to a considerable extent, merely the obverse image of the standard narrative elaborated by Ernest Jones, in his three-volume biography of Freud, and later defended by paladins of orthodoxy such as Kurt R. Eissler and Peter Gay. The animus underlying the iconoclastic impulse of the revisionist scholarship, however, produced scholarship far less nuanced than the work of Freud’s admiring biographers. Notably, the most illuminating scholarship to emerge from the Freud wars often took the form of reflections on the controversies themselves. See, e.g., Janet Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives* (New York: Knopf, 1984); Paul Robinson, *Freud and His Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); John Forrester, *Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and Its Passions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Michael S. Roth, ed., *Freud: Conflict and Culture: Essays on His Life, Work, and Legacy* (New York: Knopf, 2000).

4. Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Vintage, 2005); George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008).

derstand a phenomenon so central to our *own* self-constitution,” Zaretsky and Makari broke decisively with the Freud-centered polemics of the preceding decades.⁵ Rather than the isolated achievement of a singular individual, psychoanalysis was inextricably embedded within and intimately related to a host of far-reaching transformations that defined modernity.

By situating Freudianism within these broad frames, Zaretsky and Makari helped establish what has become essentially a new paradigm for the historical study of psychoanalysis. At the time of Freud’s death in 1939, psychoanalysis had become a “whole climate of opinion,” wrote W. H. Auden in an oft-cited phrase; so pervasive and ineluctable was Freudian thought over this period that, in John Forrester’s words, “the twentieth century is unthinkable without it.”⁶ For most recent historians of psychoanalysis, the very permeation of Western (and, to a considerable degree, non-Western) societies by Freudian thought has effectively marginalized the concerns that motivated the belligerent parties during the Freud wars. If the history of psychoanalysis has thus increasingly been recognized as part of the general history of the past century (writing its history, in Forrester’s words, “is rather like writing the history of the twentieth-century cultural weather”), it has simultaneously come to be understood as a vital part of an archaeology of the modern self.⁷ Emerging, as Makari writes, “at a time when Europeans were dramatically changing the ways they envisioned themselves,” Freudianism was a vital catalyst in series of far-reaching transformations in the understanding and experience of selfhood over the twentieth century.⁸

The fact that psychoanalysis has increasingly come to appear as a part of history, if one essential to understanding our present, has enabled historians to take up more balanced and nuanced perspectives on its emergence, development, and legacy. Yet amid the incomparably richer yield of historical scholarship that this shift to a depressive position has generated, it is difficult not to glimpse a danger, one evident in the rise of a predominantly cultural approach to the broad and variegated history of Freudianism and the relative decline of critical historical engagement with psychoanalysis as theory and practice. Confronted with a body of thought that has so profoundly shaped our understanding of subjectivity and of the political and social worlds we inhabit, the questions that dominated the Freud wars—questions concerning the scientific legitimacy of psychoanalysis and Freud’s reliability and in-

5. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 3.

6. W. H. Auden, “In Memoriam Sigmund Freud,” quoted in John Forrester, “‘A Whole Climate of Opinion’: Rewriting the History of Psychoanalysis,” in *Discovering the History of Psychiatry*, ed. Mark S. Micale and Roy Porter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 174.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Makari, *Revolution in Mind*, 3.

tegrity—have vanished into irrelevance.⁹ As valuable as this shift has been, the relativism and, at times, explicit agnosticism that have replaced the combative scholarship of earlier years pose a threat that extends far beyond the delimited concerns of earlier polemics. With the rise of the cultural historical paradigm in psychoanalytic studies and the corresponding focus on the manifold ways that Freudianism was integrated into and helped shape the worlds of meaning inhabited by historical subjects, something of the difficult, unassimilable character of psychoanalytic thought—and with it, its critical purchase—is in danger of being lost. Equally important, as the “New Freud Studies” has sought to take its stand above the fray of unseemly polemics by situating psychoanalysis more firmly in the past, it has run the risk of losing touch with the ethical and political urgency that animated the psychoanalytic movement (if not always the institution) over the preceding century.¹⁰ Together these developments have given rise to a rather paradoxical situation: as recent historiography has set about reconstructing the centrality of psychoanalysis to twentieth-century culture, it has done so in a manner reflective of (and consonant with) its obsolescence in the twenty-first. Like the cultural turn in historical scholarship more broadly, the opening of novel and enormously fruitful avenues of historical inquiry has been shadowed by an unacknowledged complicity in contemporary processes largely outside of the historian’s purview, ones that, in this case, have contributed to the marginalization and vitiation of the psychoanalytic movement.¹¹

Zaretsky’s recent collection of essays, *Political Freud: A History*, is noteworthy for its resistance to this broad trend of historical scholarship and for the exemplary fashion in which it couples the more “mature” (i.e., distanced and balanced) per-

9. An exemplary statement of this position—and one that begins to transcend its limitations—can be found in the concluding paragraphs of Ernst Falzeder’s authoritative survey of the field: “What percentage of [Freud’s] theses is still valid? For the intellectual historian this matters no longer. There is no need to either defend or attack Freud (or perhaps only when stupid people accuse him of stupid things, or, conversely, when one feels compelled to counter those who sanctify him). He has his secure place in intellectual history. What matters is placing Freud in historical context, in studying the truly amazing history of the ideas he helped to set in motion, and how this shaped and influenced our culture. I am not interested in participating in the heated controversies he can still provoke, but rather in the question of why such a peculiar and untimely phenomenon can still happen. If nothing else, this is a tribute to his ongoing influence.” Ernst Falzeder, “Is There Still an Unknown Freud? A Note on the Publications of Freud’s Texts and on Unpublished Documents,” *Psychoanalysis and History* 9, no. 1 (2007): 201–32, esp. 222.

10. The term “New Freud Studies” is from John Burnham, “The ‘New Freud Studies’: A Historiographical Shift,” *Journal of the Historical Society* 6, no. 2 (2006): 213–33. See also Burnham’s introduction to *After Freud Left: A Century of Psychoanalysis in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1–21.

11. Our reflections on this subject have drawn inspiration from William H. Sewell’s “The Political Unconscious of Social and Cultural History, or, Confessions of a Former Quantitative Historian,” in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 22–80.

spective of recent historiography with the earnest engagement of older scholarship.¹² Rather than hastening the dusk so that Minerva's owl can take flight, Zaretsky's history aims to rekindle an older spirit of radical psychoanalytic thought and activism, to bring a political Freud(ianism) into the twenty-first century. Like his earlier *Secrets of the Soul*, *Political Freud* pursues this project on a number of levels, reconstructing the manifold connections between psychoanalysis and twentieth-century culture while anchoring this complex interaction within a history of the restructurings of capitalist society over the twentieth century. To that undertaking it adds a sustained exploration of the myriad ways that intellectuals turned to and refashioned psychoanalysis to deepen their critical purchase on the social forces and historical processes they confronted. Like W. E. B. Du Bois, who concluded that "he had 'not been Freudian enough' when he observed the body parts of a lynched African American displayed in a local store," psychoanalysis loomed large in the thought of progressive intellectuals, Zaretsky argues, when something "extra" needed to be explained, something that seemed to stubbornly resist their emancipatory hopes and that, in its imperviousness to inherited modes of rational reflection, seemed intimately bound up with the central object of psychoanalytic inquiry—unconscious mental life.¹³

As Zaretsky explains in the introduction, "political Freud" bears a twofold significance in that it speaks to the significance of psychoanalysis as both a product *of* and a reflection *on* history. By attempting to hold onto both senses, Zaretsky produces a history of psychoanalysis marked by a dialectical tension between critique and affirmation, vitality and obsolescence: as essential as Freudian thought has been for grasping conditions of oppression, it appears in his history as itself vulnerable and in constant danger of either lapsing into an uncritical acceptance of the status quo or losing touch with the changing world around it. The contrast between such a perspective and the emphasis on the pervasiveness of Freudian thought that forms

12. Eli Zaretsky, *Political Freud: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Zaretsky, it should be noted, is far from alone in this enterprise. While his work recalls older engagé modes of writing the history of psychoanalysis—perhaps above all Russell Jacoby's attempts to recuperate a radical ("repressed") Freudian tradition—it is, in fact, closer in spirit to a growing number of studies of psychoanalytic politics that have likewise coupled historicization with critical engagement. Russell Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Freudians* (New York: Basic, 1983). See esp. Mark Edmundson, *The Death of Sigmund Freud: The Legacy of His Last Days* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007); Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity: Anna Freud, Psychoanalysis, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Camille Robcis, *The Law of Kinship: Anthropology, Psychoanalysis, and the Family in France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); and Dagmar Herzog, *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in an Age of Catastrophes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

13. Zaretsky, *Political Freud*, 7, 4. Subsequent references to this work are made parenthetically in the body of the text.

the point of departure for many recent approaches to the history of psychoanalysis could hardly be more marked—on the one hand, psychoanalysis appears to be ever expanding; on the other, ever vanishing. If this points to a fundamental paradox, it also indicates Zaretsky's fidelity to the emancipatory movements he studies. For the intellectuals at the core of *Political Freud*, the appropriation of Freudian thought was always bound up with a critique of its limits and its own recurring tendency to lapse into an uncritical acceptance of these limits. The radical Freudian project of the twentieth century was inseparable from—and, indeed, largely constituted by—this endlessly renewed process of self-reflective critique. For the historian committed to reviving a radical psychoanalytic politics, historicizing Freudianism appears less the successor to or replacement of the mode of thought that Freud inaugurated than a vital means of preserving and renewing it in the present.¹⁴

What follows is partly a review of *Political Freud* and partly an overview of the recent historiography of psychoanalysis. More specifically, this article uses Zaretsky's work as a point of entry into broader debates in the rapidly expanding historiography and, in turn, uses these debates to illuminate some of the limits of his consistently insightful and often brilliant project. In each section, we reconstruct the argument Zaretsky develops in each of his five intertwined essays before exploring the points at which it intersects with the broader currents in the recent scholarship on the history of psychoanalysis.

I

The first chapter of *Political Freud*, "Psychoanalysis and the Spirit of Capitalism," is essentially an extended précis of Zaretsky's earlier social and cultural history of psychoanalysis. Yet while *Secrets of the Soul* developed its central thesis through a rich survey of the entwinement of psychoanalysis and capitalist development from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth—in the process, drawing political history, the histories of mass and high culture, and the social history of the family into the discussion—the same thesis, condensed into a single chapter, functions in *Political Freud* as a framework on which the subsequent essays are built.¹⁵ As *Political Freud* moves in the following chapters into the properly political realm, the contextualizing narrative furnished by the first chapter serves to ground these separate histories

14. As Zaretsky has written elsewhere, "To understand psychoanalysis historically, then, is the necessary precondition to making it our contemporary." Eli Zaretsky, "Freud in the Twenty-First Century," in *Freud at 150: 21st-Century Essays on a Man of Genius*, ed. Joseph P. Merlino et al. (Lanham, MD: Aronson, 2007), 158.

15. Both works, it should be noted, build fundamentally on the argument developed in Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

by situating them within the ambiguous relationship between Freudianism and capitalism.

Following the schema established in Max Weber's seminal essay *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–5), Zaretsky argues that psychoanalysis was for late capitalism what Calvinism was for early capitalism: its spirit, its driving ideology. At the end of the nineteenth century, in the midst of the second industrial revolution, psychoanalysis emerged as “the practice and theory of personal life”—that is, of the historically novel “experience of having an identity distinct from one’s place in the family, in society, and in the social division of labor” (20). Divested of its function as the primary locus of production and reproduction and reduced to a sphere of domestic intimacy, the family increasingly forfeited its traditional capacity to furnish individuals with a secure and stable identity. Suspended between the family (a shrunken residue of its former self) and the impersonal mass-market society, individuals were effectively turned back upon themselves. In this new context, personal identity became both “a problem and a project for individuals” (20), one expressive of both the anxiety-inducing disorientation caused by far-reaching social transformations and the emancipatory hopes awakened by the declining authority of the traditional patriarchal family.

By investing the aspiration for personal identity with new meaning, Freud’s creation served, Zaretsky argues, to reconcile individuals to the changing world of late capitalism. Reflecting the increasing detachment of private, family life from social, economic existence, the fundamental discovery of psychoanalysis—the personal unconscious—was predicated on the absence of a direct connection between the external world of everyday lived experience and the inner world of fantasy and desire. In marking a “lived sense of disjuncture between the public and the private, the outer and the inner,” the discovery of the unconscious opened a space for individuals to pursue the introspective investigation and creative fashioning of personal life by relating “more affirmatively to their depths,” a phrase Zaretsky borrows from Philip Rieff.¹⁶ By giving voice to the aspiration to be free of traditional constraints, to have a life of one’s own, psychoanalysis valorized the possibilities opened up by the transition to late capitalism. Where the old spirit of capitalism had anchored the individual within a mundane world of family-bound labor and communal responsibility, psychoanalysis—the new spirit of capitalism—pursued the objective of “defamilialization,” of liberation from “unconscious images of authority originally rooted in the family” (21). As the practice and theory of this project of personal life, psychoanalysis thus offered a way out of the iron cage that enclosed the bourgeois

16. Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*, 6, 21.

subject. Both an “immanent critique” of the asceticism, compulsiveness, and hypocrisy of the old ethic and a project of autonomy that assisted the individual (and, in the first instance, the bourgeois male individual) in his emancipatory aspirations, psychoanalysis—Zaretsky argues—acted as both a solvent on the old spirit of capitalism and an active ingredient in the crystallization of the new.

The history of psychoanalysis is thus fundamentally paradoxical and ambiguous for Zaretsky: by postulating an “infinitely desiring” subject, Freudianism not only struck at the root of Calvinism but also helped facilitate the creation of a mass, consumerist democracy that would erode the very individuality that psychoanalysis sought to cultivate. More fundamentally, in assisting in the individual’s liberation from antiquated compulsions and demands (above all, those anchored in the “family-based community”), it helped prepare the way for new, more impersonal and encompassing forms of social control. While, over the early history of psychoanalysis, the emancipatory and critical dimension of Freudianism outweighed its affirmative and disciplinary aspects, in the 1930s—a period that witnessed the destruction of continental European psychoanalysis, its transplantation to the United States and England, and the death of the founder of the movement—the balance began to tip decisively.

Over the middle decades of the century, as psychoanalysis increasingly colonized (and was colonized in turn by) the “normalizing agencies” of medical psychiatry and social work, it was converted into what Zaretsky, quoting Weber, describes as a “this-worldly program of ethical rationalization” (19). Embedded at the heart of the postwar welfare state, psychoanalysis played an integral role in the flourishing of the Fordist-Keynesian system of organized, state-directed capitalism, exercising a form of what Michel Foucault described as “productive power” (30), a power, that is, that works not by constraining from the outside but by guiding from within. In the bipolar global order created by the Cold War, psychoanalysis (and particularly American ego psychology) represented a “maturity ethic” premised on the “rejection of radical politics and the insistence that freedom resided in the private realm” (30). Through their absorption into the Keynesian welfare state and their reduction to a “form of social control,” analytic institutions were increasingly removed from their “charismatic, anti-institutional origins” (32).

Desiccated and fragile, psychoanalysis was left vulnerable to the attacks that emerged at the close of the Fordist-Keynesian period, attacks that “contributed to a final mutation in the spirit of capitalism” (33). In opposition to the emphasis of psychoanalysis on individuality, autonomy, and oedipal tension, the 1970s saw “the birth of an ideology of intersubjectivity, the validation of narcissism, and the emergence of feminism as what might be called the Calvinism, or ‘the psychoanal-

ysis,' of the third industrial revolution" (36). The asceticism, compulsivity, and hypocrisy of the old capitalist, after passing through a brief stage of psychological insight, had become the narcissism, flexibility, and empowerment of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. In the final estimation, psychoanalysis appears to Zaretsky to have offered a "crucial but temporary mediation" (36) in the protracted process that led to the erosion of the old spirit of capitalism and its replacement by a newer spirit, one better suited to a regime of flexible accumulation.

Zaretsky's argument over this chapter elegantly reframes the history of psychoanalysis and poses a decisive rejoinder to the tendency to portray the replacement of "outmoded" terms and concepts simply as theoretical progress. Yet in doing so, it raises almost as many questions and problems as it answers. The first of these stems from a rather uncritical reliance on Weber's thesis and on the schematic periodization this entails, one in which a prevailing asceticism is dismantled and supplanted by a new spirit championed by psychoanalysis. Here Zaretsky's contention that personal life as a "problem and project" emerged only amid the transformation of the social division of labor at the close of the nineteenth century sits awkwardly with a growing body of historical scholarship on selfhood and individuality in early capitalism. Perhaps beginning with the rapid growth of autobiographies in seventeenth-century England and at least since Romanticism, a persistent cult of individuality both challenged and complemented the first spirit of capitalism.¹⁷ Marx himself understood how strong this challenge to ascetic acquisitiveness was, noting the development "in the breast of the capitalist [of] a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment."¹⁸ "Personal life" no doubt became more widely pursued at the close of the nineteenth century and the dawn of the twentieth—a phenomenon that Zaretsky's thesis helps explain—but it was far from novel at the moment in which psychoanalysis emerged.

17. Although any overview of the historical scholarship on selfhood and individuality in the West before the emergence of psychoanalysis would consume several pages, a few recent exemplary works deserve to be mentioned, namely, Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France 1750–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Charly Coleman, *The Virtues of Abandon: An Anti-Individualist History of the French Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014); and George Makari, *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015). Of more specific relevance to the origins of psychoanalysis, see Joel Faflak, *Romantic Psychoanalysis: The Burden of the Mystery* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008); Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher, eds., *Thinking the Unconscious: Nineteenth-Century German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Matt Ffytche, *The Foundation of the Unconscious: Schelling, Freud, and the Birth of the Modern Psyche* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

18. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976), 741.

Perhaps a deeper problem for his argument, however, stems from his insistence on the affirmative and liberatory character of the turn inward that Freudianism reflected and deepened. As Carl Schorske has shown, the investigation of the interior world that Freud undertook at the fin de siècle was motivated less by utopian emancipatory aspirations than by a need to work through a catastrophic conjunction of bereavement, disillusionment, and anxiety.¹⁹ Although Zaretsky identifies Schorske's work as an essential point of departure, he fails to adequately address the challenge that the latter's thesis poses for his own. For Schorske, the creation of psychoanalysis was a product of the profound historical disillusionment and deepening sense of vulnerability that afflicted members of the liberal bourgeoisie following the catastrophic political reversals of the 1890s, in particular the destruction of liberal political dominance in Vienna at the hands of anti-Semitic, petty bourgeois rabble-rousers.²⁰ While Zaretsky is entirely correct to take issue with the limits of Schorske's thesis (especially his reading of Freud's discovery of the unconscious as a retreat from politics into an inner world of fantasy), in neglecting the traumatic origins of psychoanalysis in favor of its emancipatory promise, his account produces a one-dimensional understanding of the project of autonomy that Freud pursued.

Psychoanalytic politics were internally divided from the outset, with a liberatory ethos and telos set against a fundamentally defensive project. If from one perspective the unconscious was primarily a locus of authenticity to be reclaimed in a project of emancipation qua self-realization, from another it was a site of violence, transgression, and alterity. And if the unconscious, as Zaretsky argues, marked a lived sense of disjuncture between public and private—one that opened up new realms of interiority and depth waiting to be claimed by the individual—it also reflected an anxiety-inducing confusion of both: outer and inner, self and social. Viewing the destruction of liberal political ascendancy and the rise of a virulent, incendiary mass politics (events that signified a reversal of the rational course of history for Jewish liberals), Freud was chiefly anxious about the power of social and political forces to mobilize regressive longings and infantile dependencies and to

19. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981).

20. Schorske's thesis has been deepened and enriched by William J. McGrath, *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986). For an appreciative critique, see John E. Toews's excellent review essay, "Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time," *Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 3 (1991): 504–45. On Freud's peculiar liberalism, see also John W. Boyer, "Freud, Marriage, and Late Viennese Liberalism: A Commentary from 1905," *Journal of Modern History* 50, no. 1 (1978): 72–102; Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

overwhelm and expunge rational authority entirely.²¹ What he recognized, however, was that it was no longer enough to one-sidedly reinforce constraint; one also had to open to and affirm the threatening depths. In this respect Zaretsky is entirely correct. Keeping things in their proper place was thus contingent on opening and releasing, and thus on a kind of emancipation.

Attempting to reconcile Zaretsky's and Schorske's accounts points directly to a basic paradox of psychoanalytic politics over the first decades of Freudianism's existence: while a central aspect of Freudian politics was the attempt to root out the psychical vestiges of familial authority in order to emerge emancipated (or at least inwardly liberated) into an expanding democratic mass society, another aspect was geared toward warding off the intrusive pressures of this same democratic mass society by working through one's attachment to the authority figures from one's past.²² For the historian of psychoanalysis, this poses the difficulty of conceptualizing the emergence and expansion of Freudianism as a consequence both (and simultaneously) of an opening of new possibilities and of catastrophic reversals, a conjuncture perhaps most evident over the three decades between the outbreak of the First World War and the end of the Second. Although his history is indispensable for thinking about the relationship between Freudianism and the social transformations of modernity, by integrating the history of psychoanalysis directly into that of capitalism, Zaretsky's account leads to a short-circuiting of the political, one that prevents the problems that psychoanalysis confronted from emerging in their full complexity.

II

The subsequent chapters of *Political Freud* serve as a vital corrective to the limitations of the first. The second chapter, "Beyond the Blues: The Racial Unconscious and Collective Memory," for instance, is both rich and compelling and cogently demonstrates a key thesis of Zaretsky's work, namely, the utility of psychoanalysis in radical cultural and political struggles to explain something "extra" about oppression and domination. Zaretsky picks out three moments—the Harlem Renaissance, the Popular Front, and the Black Atlantic, as represented by the work of Du Bois, Richard Wright, and Frantz Fanon, respectively—when psychoanalysis was

21. See on this subject, Toews, "Historicizing Psychoanalysis," 529–35.

22. Yet another dimension—and one that perhaps furnishes the rudiments of a middle way between these positions—is suggested by the work of Peter Homans and Joel Whitebook, who interpret the creation of psychoanalysis as part of a process of mourning the loss of religious and cultural traditions brought about by the social transformations of modernity. Peter Homans, *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Joel Whitebook, *Freud: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

used “not just to probe the damage to the inner world left behind by slavery and colonialism but to turn that reconstructed memory toward politics” (7). His point of departure, however, is the blues, a “secular descendant of the spirituals, a lower- and working-class response to the African-American community’s continued history of bondage, exclusion, and violated dignity” (40). In the effort to keep “a brutal experience alive,” in Ralph Ellison’s words, the blues “placed memory at the center of all human strivings toward freedom” (41). What psychoanalysis offered was a way to make sense of the shame, rage, and guilt that obstructed the process of mastering the past and thereby reconstructing collective memory. When Freudianism entered African American culture after World War I, many writers, including Du Bois, Jean Toomer, and Zora Neale Hurston, began to focus on “the element of internal conflict that ran through the African American experience of memory” (45).

Although critical of the Harlem Renaissance, Wright shared this attentiveness to internal damage: “I’m convinced,” he wrote in his diary, “that the next great area of discovery in the Negro will be the dark landscape of his own mind, what living in white America has done to him. Boy, what that search will reveal!” (55). Recognizing that racism translates into psychopathology, Wright joined forces with psychiatrist Fredric Wertham to open the Lafargue Clinic in Harlem in 1945, a brief triumph of progressive Freudian politics. Working with a sociocultural etiological model, the clinic was “a pioneering experiment in ‘mass therapy’” that charged patients only a nominal fee and relied on the pro bono work of psychiatric therapists (59). Like Fanon, Wertham would conclude from his time at the Lafargue Clinic that “segregation was ‘a massive public health problem,’ creating ‘in the mind of the child an unsolvable conflict’” (61).

Although Fanon was confronting problems similar to those of Du Bois and Wright, his place in this chapter as a “third moment in the relations of Freudianism and African American memory” (66) is a bit jarring, given Fanon’s distinctly different background (as a colonial subject of France born into a middle-class family from Martinique and later educated in the metropole). Zaretsky nonetheless does an admirable job of situating Fanon in his own intellectual context and of highlighting two lines of inquiry so important to his work: the relation between race and sex (powerfully articulated in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*) and the appearance of racism in mundane personal encounters. In Fanon’s work, the “psychopathology of everyday life” takes on whole new underpinnings.

Unlike Gabriel Mendes’s *Under the Strain of Color*, a more in-depth study of the formation of the Lafargue Clinic, Zaretsky is quite attentive to the socialist underpinning of the turn to psychoanalysis by black intellectuals in America (captured

strikingly in the very naming of the Lafargue Clinic after Paul Lafargue, revolutionary socialist and nephew of Karl Marx).²³ He emphasizes, for instance, the importance to Wright's intellectual formation of his early commitment to communism, which "helped bring the subterranean violence of African American life into the foreground and give it a systematic and structural focus" (55), one further illuminated by psychoanalysis. The young Ellison similarly turned to psychoanalysis to make sense not simply of racist ideology and its effects but of racism and fascism as parts of the "irrational sea" formed by the contradictions of capitalism.²⁴ Even James Baldwin, who later both played down the importance of his "life on the Left" and claimed to have been "not even remotely tempted by the possibilities of psychiatry or psychoanalysis," saw the intolerability of "the idea of a genuine socialism in America" as the reason why "Huey [Newton] sits in prison and the blacks of the nation walk in danger" and often turned to the language of depth psychology to make sense of this danger.²⁵ Keeping in mind the broader context of these authors' thinking helps situate racism as a psychoanalytic problem within the larger story Zaretsky tells in the first chapter.

"Beyond the Blues" is representative of a more general trend in recent histories of psychoanalysis to chart the migration of Freudian ideas and their reception in sociocultural contexts that earlier scholarship tended to marginalize. According to Joy Damousi and Mariano Ben Plotkin, "although it is true, as historian Carl Schorske has argued, that psychoanalysis is a child of its time and place, the fact is that it soon became a transnational system of beliefs and thought."²⁶ As psychoanalysis diffused throughout an increasingly connected world over the first half of the twentieth century, it underwent a process of continual translation and modification. Like *Political Freud*, the works that explore this transnationalism often emphasize the ways in which psychoanalysis was both made attractive by the complexity of larger social concerns and applied toward revolutionary struggles. In each context in which it was

23. Gabriel Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

24. Barbara Foley, *Wrestling with the Left: The Making of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 92.

25. James Baldwin, *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1998), 834, 826, 461, 461.

26. Joy Damousi and Mariano Ben Plotkin, eds., *The Transnational Unconscious: Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2. A comprehensive overview of this current of scholarship exceeds the scope of this article, but a sense of the breadth of this work can be gleaned from the following exemplary studies: Rubén Gallo, *Freud's Mexico: Into the Wilds of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010); Joy Damousi, *Freud in the Antipodes: A Cultural History of Psychoanalysis in Australia* (Kensington: University of New South Wales Press, 2005); Christiane Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Omnia El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

taken up, psychoanalysis was reframed and reconfigured to make sense within a new sociocultural environment and to respond to domestic political problems.

James Rice, Alexander Etkind, and Martin A. Miller, for instance, have all told the story of psychoanalysis in Russia, whose “longing for a world culture” was satisfied in the prerevolutionary years by the free travel of people and ideas, prominent among which were those of Freud.²⁷ Psychoanalysis moved out of the clinic and became a “popular fad,” to quote Lenin, after 1917, but its fashionableness as an ideology spelled its own doom, as a debate soon ensued about the compatibility of psychoanalysis with Marxism. Although many Soviet Freudians, with support from Trotsky, stepped up to defend the cause, the Bolsheviks “caught the opinion that psychoanalysis is hostile to their system,” and by 1930 “the concept of the unconscious was attacked as though it were an enemy of the state.”²⁸

Although the rise of Stalinism spelled the end of a psychoanalytic culture in Russia, the fall of Péronism in Argentina was, according to Mariano Ben Plotkin, the inciting condition for the reception and rapid diffusion of psychoanalysis in Argentina, where today questioning “the existence of the unconscious or of the Oedipus complex at a social gathering in any large Argentine city” is like “denying the virginity of Mary before a synod of Catholic bishops.”²⁹ Anxious and uncertain in the midst of a violent legitimization crisis that followed the fall of Péron, psychoanalysis was in Argentina “not only a therapy but a tool to help [people] understand reality and their own place in it,” providing “a belief system that could bring order out of chaos.”³⁰ Plotkin thus attributes the entrenchedness of psychoanalysis in Argentina to the traumatic situation to which its reception and development was a response.

Just as recent scholarship has explored the role of psychoanalysis in contexts that were previously regarded as peripheral, it has also—like “Beyond the Blues”—examined the relationship of Freudianism to forms of difference that were largely overlooked by earlier scholars, predominantly concerned as they were with the difference of Freud’s Jewishness (discussed in section III). These distinct but related concerns have been most closely entwined in the relationship of Freudianism to European and American colonialism. In posing the question of how the “modern psy-

27. James L. Rice, *Freud’s Russia: National Identity in the Evolution of Psychoanalysis* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1993); Alexander Etkind, *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia*, trans. Noah Rubins and Maria Rubins (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997); and Martin A. Miller, *Freud and the Bolsheviks: Psychoanalysis in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

28. Freud to Nikolai Osipov, February 27, 1927, quoted in Etkind, *Eros of the Impossible*, 215; Martin A. Miller, “The Reception of Psychoanalysis and the Problem of the Unconscious in Russia,” *Social Research* 57, no. 4 (1990): 885.

29. Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1.

30. *Ibid.*, 172, 71.

choanalytic subject . . . [went] global,” how the unconscious became “a mediating discourse of modern civilization, its discontents, and its others,” the recent volume *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonialism, and Global Sovereignties*, for instance, attempts to gauge the extent to which the “psychoanalytic subject . . . is constitutively a colonial creature.”³¹ One dimension of this project, as the editors make clear, involves the reconstruction of the role of “colonial assumptions” and “imperial imaginings” (especially the dichotomy between the “cool exterior of the autonomous bourgeois ego and the inflamed turmoil of the colonized unconscious”) in the creation of the psychoanalytic subject.³² Equally important, however, are the entwined tasks of tracing the deployment of psychoanalytic discourse, from the 1920s on, as a “mobile technology” of rule in the colonial context and its appropriation and transformation by colonized subjects themselves in the service of anticolonial critique.³³ Although Zaretsky’s chapter focuses exclusively on the last of these lines of inquiry, recent postcolonial approaches have complicated this narrative by demonstrating the extent to which the psychoanalytic subject at the base of these critiques was itself a product of colonialism. A testament to its ubiquity, psychoanalysis was implicated in the very historical processes it would later be used to overcome.

As insightful as it is, “Beyond the Blues” is haunted and unsettled by a deeper question that never comes into view: namely, when does the painful but progressively liberating process of mourning (the dominant motif of Zaretsky’s discussion of the African American appropriation of Freud) give way to the self-destructive attachment to the lost object that characterizes melancholia? In Freudian theory it is the centrality of the ambivalently loved and hated object to the constitution of the self that distinguishes melancholy from mourning. With its loss, Freud wrote, “the shadow of the object” falls over the ego, and the ambivalent attachment to the other is reproduced in relation to a self-grown foreign.³⁴ If the prevalence of descriptions of ego disturbance in African American thought and literature

31. Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson, and Richard C. Keller, “Introduction: Globalizing the Unconscious,” in *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonialism, and Global Sovereignties*, ed. Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson, and Richard C. Keller (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 1.

32. *Ibid.*, 3. On this subject, see also Celia Brickman, *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

33. Anderson et al., “Introduction,” 1. On the adoption of psychoanalysis by colonial subjects, see *ibid.*, 8. See also on these subjects, Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

34. Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–74), 14:249.

(e.g., Du Bois's double consciousness, Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Fanon's exploding bodily schema) suggests an undercurrent of melancholic attachment, so too does the fluctuation between self-laceration and explosive violence in the works Zaretsky discusses.³⁵ In melancholia, as Freud wrote in 1923, the superego is given over to a "pure culture of the death instinct" even to the point of impelling the ego toward self-destruction.³⁶ If a consideration of this melancholic dimension might have nuanced Zaretsky's interpretation, it ultimately does little to unsettle his reading, because the very act of theorizing and giving artistic expression to melancholia would appear to implicate a process of "working-through" in which the self-destructive attachment is refashioned for the ends of political critique.

III

Moses and Monotheism (1939) is undoubtedly one of Freud's most idiosyncratic, difficult, and, some might say, hopelessly confused texts, and yet a virtual cottage industry has flourished around its interpretation. Yosef Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses* and Jacques Derrida's response in *Archive Fever* are perhaps the best known of these works, but a panoply of illustrious thinkers have weighed in on Freud's *Moses*.³⁷

35. In addition to Esther Sánchez-Pardo's important study of the "endemic *mal du siècle* . . . that came to the fore in the period between the two world wars" (*Cultures of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003], 7), a study in which the work of Harlem Renaissance poet Countee Cullen figures prominently, a growing body scholarship has explored the dynamics of melancholy and mourning in the history of race. See esp. Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and the Hidden Grief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Ranjana Khanna, "Concluding Remarks: Hope, Demand, and the Perpetual," in Anderson et al., *Unconscious Dominions*, 247–64.

36. Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), in Strachey, *Standard Edition*, 19:53.

37. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Harold Bloom, "Freud and Beyond," in *Ruin the Sacred: Truths, Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 145–204; Daniel Boyarin, "'An Imaginary and Desirable Converse': *Moses and Monotheism* as Family Romance," in *Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Book*, ed. Timothy K. Beal and David M. Gunn (London: Routledge, 1997), 184–204; Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, *Early Freud and Late Freud: Reading Anew Studies on Hysteria and Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Philip Slotkin (New York: New Library on Psychoanalysis, 1997); Michel de Certeau, "The Fiction of History: The Writing of *Moses and Monotheism*," in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 308–54; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, "'From Where Is Psychoanalysis Possible?'" (Part II of 'The Jewish People Do Not Dream'), *Stanford Literature Review* 8, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1991): 39–55; Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 230–59; Edward W. Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (London: Verso, 2004); Eric L. Santner, "Freud's Moses and the Ethics of Nomotropic Desire," *October* 88 (Spring 1999): 3–41; Leo Strauss, "Freud on Moses and Monotheism," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), 285–309; Samuel Weber, "Doing Away with Freud's *Man Moses*," in

Most of these commentators take the book to be about Freud's own troubled relationship to his Jewish identity, and its central thesis—that Moses was an Egyptian and that he was collectively murdered by the Jews—lends itself easily to this reading. However, in the third chapter of *Political Freud*, “In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Rereading Freud's *Moses*,” Zaretsky convincingly argues that *Moses and Monotheism* should be read less as a set of claims about Judaism than as a parable about psychoanalysis itself. “At a deeper and perhaps largely unconscious level,” he writes, “the driving force behind the book was Freud's worry concerning the survival of psychoanalysis” (81).

The basic takeaway from this chapter is well summed up in juxtaposed descriptions with which Zaretsky begins the chapter:

One man, Freud tells us, created Judaism: Moses. He did so by choosing a circle of followers and initiating them into a difficult practice based on instinctual renunciation rather than sensory gratification. His followers, after some enthusiasm, rejected his practice as too demanding, effectively returning to the idol worship from which Moses had rescued them. Eventually his followers killed Moses, and a debased Judaism triumphed. Nonetheless, the repressed memory of Moses's ascetic doctrine survived and was rediscovered centuries later by the prophets.

Now let us make the obvious substitutions. One man created psychoanalysis: Sigmund Freud. He did so by choosing a circle of followers and initiating them into a difficult practice based on instinctual renunciation rather than sensory gratification. His followers, after some enthusiasm, rejected his practice as too demanding, returning to the idol worship from which Freud has rescued them. Eventually his followers killed Freud and a debased psychoanalysis triumphed. Nonetheless, the repressed memory of Freud's ascetic doctrine survived, and its secrets too would be rediscovered centuries later. (83)

In the first stage of this history, Moses/Freud proclaim that God/the unconscious cannot be known directly through graven/dream images and that the triumph of *Geistigkeit* (spirituality/intellectuality) requires instinctual renunciation. In the second stage, the recipients of this new teaching celebrate the “special treasure that raises them above those who are still immured in sensory and empirical knowledge” (84) but simultaneously experience a “gnawing sense of not living up to their

Targets of Opportunity (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 63–89. On Freud's relationship to Moses, see also Jay Geller, *On Freud's Jewish Body* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007); and Louis Rose, *The Freudian Calling: Early Viennese Psychoanalysis and the Pursuit of Cultural Science* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

responsibilities" (89), a growing recognition that their "chosenness" was "inseparable from an internal struggle over guilt and ambivalence" (94). In the third stage, the temptation to escape psychic conflict by embracing a more affirmative worldview lures a growing number of Freudians away from the hard path of analysis to the new "salvation religions" of Soviet communism and American capitalism. Finally, in the fourth stage, the "difficult elite doctrine" undergoes a "dilution and vulgarization" as it assumes a "popular form" (99), a process that, for Zaretsky, was inseparable from the increased influence of matriarchal or maternalist currents of thought. As a coda (a hypothetical fifth stage), Zaretsky poses the question of whether the rediscovery of radical trends or a return to the original message by Freud's successors would serve (in the manner of Old Testament prophets) to renew psychoanalysis or whether it had already been "decisively absorbed in a new popular, eclectic mix of cybernetics, neuroscience, behaviorism, relational analysis, feminist therapy and culture criticism" (107).

Having fleshed out this extended parallel, Zaretsky concludes his chapter by considering how Freud's *Moses* sheds light on the catastrophes of midcentury. In writing the history of his science through a psychoanalytic history of his people, Freud, Zaretsky writes, was "peer[ing] into the looming abyss . . . almost as a dying person might look into an open grave" (108). For Freud, "the endangered state of psychoanalysis" stood as a "metaphor for the endangered state of Western civilization" (108). Beneath his concern for the survival of his science was the deeper question of "the survival of spiritual and intellectual advances in general" (81). Preserving the space in which self-reflective knowledge could be cultivated in the face of forces that threatened to erode or collapse it entirely was conditional on the recognition of psychic conflict, of a resistance at the heart of identity, to paraphrase Jacqueline Rose.³⁸ It was this uncanny experience of self-alienation that linked psychoanalysis and Judaism: for both, Zaretsky suggests, the *geistig* achievements that constituted their universal core were inseparable from an experience of self-disruption that was, in turn, threatened by affirmative faiths and ideologies that sought to transcend or disavow psychic conflict.

If the history of psychoanalysis is the history of splits, as Forrester has suggested, Zaretsky's chapter frames this fissiparous history as a continual (or ever-renewed) falling away from a difficult, elite knowledge.³⁹ Unquestionably, this perspective

38. Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), 91. Zaretsky draws here from Edward Said's argument (in *Freud and the Non-European*) that Freud's *Moses* pointed to the "radical originary break or flaw" (quoted in Zaretsky, 81) at the heart of identity, before consigning Said's contribution to "the truth of postcolonialism" (112).

39. Forrester, "Whole Climate," 175.

captures an essential element of Freud's own attitude toward his creation. As Zaretsky recognizes, Freud saw psychoanalysis as threatened from virtually every side, by Christianity as well as by *völkische* nationalism, by Americanization no less than by communism.⁴⁰ Yet psychoanalysis, for Freud, was far more than an esoteric wisdom tradition guarding the eternal flame of *Geistigkeit*. For all his implacable hostility (captured in his scatological epithet *Abfallsbewegungen*) for apostates and despite the occasional stern reprimand for more loyal adherents, Freud was, on the whole, deeply reluctant to lay down the law in the manner of an authoritarian father (e.g., Moses) and often exhibited remarkable enthusiasm for the innovations of his followers.⁴¹ As grim as the future chances of psychoanalysis appeared in the late 1930s, the overarching declensionist narrative Zaretsky unfolds conceals as much as it reveals regarding Freud's attitude toward psychoanalysis. Not only was he a keen champion of numerous efforts to bring psychoanalysis to the masses (its "dilution and vulgarization"), he was also increasingly confident in the capacities of his followers (above all, his daughter Anna Freud) to lead psychoanalysis after his death.

Zaretsky's unwillingness to critically distance himself from the Freud of *Moses and Monotheism* is most noticeable (and most problematic) in his surprisingly sympathetic reading of the latter's patricentrism. Unlike a number of erstwhile followers (e.g., Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich), Freud, Zaretsky argues, understood the hypothetical transition from matriarchy to patriarchy in human prehistory as a civilizational advance rather than as a loss. For Freud, the privileging of the hypothesis of paternity over the certainty of maternity in the grounding of social bonds represented a gain for intellectuality (*Geistigkeit*) over sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit*). Although Zaretsky traces Freud's view back to the "dual-sphere" family of the nineteenth century, he fails to critically engage its underlying assumptions and indeed credits Freud with intuiting the diluting, vulgarizing impact of "some forms of maternalism" on psychoanalysis. Yet by placing maternalism in opposition to *Geistigkeit* and neglecting the insights of Kleinian object relations theory (a "brilliant Freudian offshoot" [106]), Zaretsky comes uncomfortably close to replicating a troubling dichotomy that pits the immersive intimacy of femininity against the conflictual striving for autonomy and cultural achievement of masculinity. Perhaps more important, by valorizing Freud's own resistance to the early mother, Zaretsky misses

40. On Freud's struggles to defend the identity of his science, see especially Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

41. See Sigmund Freud, "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement" (1914), in Strachey, *Standard Edition*, 14:48.

the opportunity to consider how Freud's patricentric defense of *Geistigkeit* served to shore up his masculine, bourgeois identity.

One of the consequences of Zaretsky's sympathetic reconstruction of Freud's underlying concerns in *Moses and Monotheism* is that it effectively exculpates Freud himself from the debasement of psychoanalytic politics that unfolded over the 1930s. As the political horizons darkened, Freud increasingly insisted on the necessity of keeping analysis independent of any political positions or any worldview whatsoever.⁴² As Stephen Frosh has argued, "the idea that 'psychoanalysis has no part in politics'"—a statement of Anna Freud's but one echoed by her father—would be "a key element in the defence of psychoanalysis against the Nazi critique of its inherently destabilising nature, and was precisely the line taken" by the non-Jewish Freudians who assumed control of the psychoanalytic association in their negotiations with the Nazis. By contrast, radical Freudians, especially Reich, "were prescient enough to see [that] this 'non-political' attitude effectively paved the way for a partial Nazification of psychoanalysis, while depriving psychoanalysis of its crucial critical role."⁴³ Although this traumatic historical continuity might have furnished the occasion for emphasizing the necessity of a critical Freudian politics, Zaretsky's sympathy for Freud's universalist defense of *Geistigkeit*, understandable though it is, leads him to miss the opportunity.

IV

For all the dislocation, bereavement, and trauma they generated, the total wars of the twentieth century were important moments in the expansion of Freudianism. Whatever their immediate effects on the individuals and institutions that composed the psychoanalytic profession, their ultimate impact on the broader movement was powerfully galvanizing. Not only did the century's major conflicts appear to validate the emphasis of psychoanalysis on the "primitive" instinctual base of human subjectivity, they also generated a demand for expert psychiatric interven-

42. The longer-term impact of this stance on the psychoanalytic profession can be gleaned from Herzog's introduction to *Cold War Freud*. Other forces were, of course, at work in the depoliticization of psychoanalysis over the middle decades of the century (on these, see secs. IV and V).

43. Stephen Frosh, *Hate and the "Jewish Science": Anti-Semitism, Nazism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 79–80. On the fate of psychoanalysis under the Third Reich, see also Geoffrey Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Laurence A. Rickels, *Nazi Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, *Only Psychoanalysis Won the War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); and Riccardo Steiner, *It is a New Kind of Diaspora: Explorations in the Sociopolitical and Cultural Context of Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac, 2000). Eileen Brockman-Goggin and James E. Goggin offer a dissenting opinion in axiomatically arguing that psychoanalysis, only possible in a liberal society, did indeed "die" in the Third Reich. *Death of a "Jewish Science": Psychoanalysis in the Third Reich* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2000).

tion that contributed dramatically to the professional growth of Freudianism. Yet although war galvanized the social and professional reception of psychoanalysis, it also transformed it both as theory and practice. In his fourth chapter, “The Ego at War: From the Death Instinct to Precarious Life,” Zaretsky explores an important aspect of this relationship by looking at how the practical and theoretical engagement of psychoanalysts with war gave rise to “something like a theory not just of war but of the twentieth-century subject” (119).

In fact, what emerged from these encounters was not a singular theory of the subject but a succession of theories. During the first stage of this process, in response to the outbreak of shell shock during World War I, Freud developed a new theory of the ego as a fragile contingent agency, one whose greatest strength was its capacity for self-reflectivity and whose greatest weakness (its “Achilles’ heel”) was “its defensive denial of vulnerability” (120). Shifting the scene to World War II Britain, the second stage focuses on Klein’s reconceptualization of the ego in relational, matricentric terms, a development that provided a new mode of justification for war—fighting for the “motherland”—but also for the welfare state and social democracy. For Zaretsky this move was fundamentally ambiguous: on the one hand, it gave depth to the Freudian model, whereas on the other, it began to lose touch with “the idea that reason or rationality was at the core of the individual, an idea espoused by such thinkers as Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Kant, and profoundly extended by Freud” (137). In the final stage, the attempt to make sense of the events of September 11 gave rise, in Judith Butler’s *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2006), to a form of mourning that accepts “injurability” and “disrupts a bounded and protective sense of self” (144). In the passage from Freud to Klein to Butler, one thus sees a progressive decentering of the ego and a greater attention to human vulnerability.

But “in moving from the ego to the self, from autonomy to recognition, and from an ontological to a normative approach to vulnerability, have we advanced or weakened our understanding of war, of politics, and of the human psyche” (122)? According to Zaretsky, who is decidedly of the latter opinion, we see in Butler’s work a normative vulnerability replacing the old Freudian emphasis on a genetic vulnerability, a vulnerability that “explains where we come from, but not who we are” (145). The distinction leads to two political positions. In the first, normative case, our deepening understanding of vulnerability displaces the liberal emphasis on individual rights in favor of a politics of recognition and mutual support; in the second, genetic case it imbues a liberal polity with an awareness of the inherent vulnerability of the subject but without displacing the preexisting paradigm of individual rights. Rather than oppose dependence and independence, vulnerability

and mastery, Freud saw the ego as reaching “down into its earliest, most primal, and essentially immortal dependencies precisely when it is strongest and most independent” (147), a perspective that furnishes the basis for a richer critique of war than Butler can offer: in essence, “we will be in a better position to avert, limit, and ultimately end war if we consider our fellow human beings not only as vulnerable bodies but also as potentially rational coequal participants in creating the binding forces of civilization and resisting the destructive forces, both internal and societal” (146).

Consistent with the overarching narrative of *Political Freud*, Zaretsky’s critique of Butler reflects his sense that the erosion of the emancipatory and socially transformative politics of the early to mid-twentieth century was accompanied by a vitiation of psychoanalytic thought. Running parallel to the argument that the confrontation of psychoanalysis with war gave rise to a new theory of subjectivity is the contention that these encounters contributed to the emergence and flourishing of a culture of progressive psychoanalysis, one that reached its apex in Central Europe between the wars and that had all but vanished by the time Butler penned her response to the attacks of September 11. In developing this broad narrative, Zaretsky’s argument intervenes into a number of problematics at the heart of a rapidly expanding body of scholarship.

The encounter with the war neuroses—where the chapter begins—was a seminal moment in the history of Freudianism. In Zaretsky’s reading, the psychic disturbances caused by the war impressed on Freud and his followers the vulnerability of the ego and the bankruptcy of older martial, aristocratic values, lessons that made the psychoanalytic movement a natural partner of interwar social democracy in its commitment to egalitarian social renovation.⁴⁴ While Zaretsky is certainly right in aligning interbellum psychoanalysis broadly with social democracy, his account occludes a number of problems, not least the persistent strain of bourgeois elitism and liberal circumspection that distinguished Freud himself from the Marxist Social Democrats of “Red” Vienna.⁴⁵ More important, as Paul Lerner has argued, the contributions of psychoanalysts to the theorization and treatment of the mental disorders of war were largely consistent with an apparatus of military medicine that

44. Zaretsky’s argument here builds explicitly on the thesis of Elizabeth Ann Danto’s empirically rich study *Freud’s Free Clinics: Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, 1918–1938* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

45. Freud’s social politics figure prominently in Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalysis* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); and José Brunner, *Freud and the Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 2001). Freud’s understanding of the masses in the interwar period is analyzed brilliantly in Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

placed the burden of pathology on the victims themselves and subordinated their needs to those of the war effort.⁴⁶ The Social Democratic moment in the psychoanalytic movement thus overlapped substantially with a more troubling moment, in which the psychoanalytic profession lent its services to the prosecution of an unspeakably brutal war.⁴⁷ As a more democratic and egalitarian conception of psychoanalysis emerged at the catastrophic conclusion of the war, so too did a novel understanding of psychoanalysis as an expert form of disciplinary social management.

Freudianism experienced a “second birth” in the wake of the war, as a younger, more politically radical generation streamed into psychoanalytic associations.⁴⁸ It also, however, experienced a shift in its social function, albeit a fraught and contested one. To a degree, this shift and its ambiguous political implications were already implicit in the growing concern of analysts with the psychic agency of the ego. If psychoanalysis increasingly became ego psychology at the close of the war, as Zaretsky argues, this shift reflected both a growing recognition of the vulnerability of the ego to social and political violence and a deepening concern for securing its normative adaptation to social demands. As a more self-consciously political psychoanalysis emerged over the interwar years, a number of Freudians strove to push beyond the classical therapeutic setting and apply psychoanalysis to social and political problems.⁴⁹ In the visions for the expanded application of analytic theory and prac-

46. Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009). See also Hans-Georg Hoffer, *Nervenschwäche und Krieg. Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880–1920)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004); and Louise E. Hoffman, “War, Revolution, and Psychoanalysis: Freudian Thought Begins to Grapple with Social Reality,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 17, no. 2 (1981): 251–69. Different (more sympathetic) interpretations of the relationship of psychoanalysis to the war neuroses have been put forward in Brunner, *Freud and the Politics*; Eric J. Leed, *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and Kurt R. Eissler, *Freud as Expert Witness: The Discussion of the War Neuroses between Freud and Wagner-Jauregg*, trans. Christine Trollope (New York: International Universities, 1986).

47. Zaretsky, in fact, commits an unfortunate error in his contextualization of the key event that signaled the emergence of this new conception of psychoanalysis, the Fifth International Congress of the International Psychoanalytic Association in Budapest in September 1918. Far from being held in the wake of the war in “Communist Budapest,” as Zaretsky claims, the congress, which was devoted to a discussion of the war neuroses, occurred more than a month before the end of the war and was, in fact, attended and patronized by military and political authorities of the belligerent states of the Central Powers. On this event and its relationship to the social politics of psychoanalysis, see Phillip J. Henry, “Recasting Bourgeois Psychoanalysis: Education, Authority, and the Politics of Analytic Therapy in the Freudian Revision of 1918,” *Modern Intellectual History*, published ahead of print, October 18, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244317000506>.

48. Karl Fallend, *Sonderlinge, Träumer, Sensitive. Psychoanalyse auf dem Weg zur Institution und Profession* (Vienna: Verlag Jugend & Volk, 1995), 108.

49. The English language historiography on the emergence of this second generation of psychoanalysts and their efforts to bring psychoanalysis to bear on problems beyond the confines of the therapeutic setting

tice that emerged over these years, psychoanalysis figured as an intermediary between state and society in the transmission of rights and the imposition of discipline.⁵⁰

The attempts of Freudians to overcome their perceived isolation were assisted by the efforts of a host of experts and authorities over the middle decades of the century as psychoanalysis was increasingly integrated into the expanding welfare states.⁵¹ In Britain and the United States, especially, war was a major catalyst of this process: not only did it generate existential imperatives that demanded new forms of mass psychotherapeutic intervention, it also dramatically eroded the professional barriers separating psychoanalysis from adjacent medical and social scientific disciplines, all of which were now to be harnessed toward the needs of winning the war and reconstructing society and the individual psyche in its aftermath.⁵² As psychoanalysis expanded in this catastrophic context, it was simultaneously refashioned. With the need to care for displaced and vulnerable children paramount, the individualist orientation of Freudian metapsychology was increasingly supplanted, in Peter Homans's words, by "clinical and theoretical concerns with attachment, loss,

pales in comparison to the German language work that has emerged over the past decade (much of it published under the auspices of *Psychozial-Verlag*). Recent English language works, however, include Danto, *Freud's Free Clinics*; Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul*; Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity*; and Veronika Fuechtner, *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). See also Anson Rabinbach, "The Politicization of Wilhelm Reich: An Introduction to 'The Sexual Misery of the Working Masses and the Difficulties of Sexual Reform,'" *New German Critique* 12, no. 1 (1973): 90–97.

50. See also Stewart-Steinberg's wonderful reading of Freud's 1918 Budapest address as the moment in which the psychoanalytic discovery of the ego—as an agency that both resists knowledge of the unconscious and whose fragile resistances were nonetheless in desperate need of defense—generated a deepening political consciousness within Freudian thought. *Impious Fidelity*, 27.

51. Perhaps the best work on this subject has been that produced by Foucauldians, specifically Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), and Nikolas S. Rose, whose works *Inventing our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (New York: Routledge, 1990) employ the Foucauldian paradigms of discipline and governmentality as lenses for the expanding social application of the psy-sciences over the middle decades of the twentieth century. At the heart of both of their projects is a rapidly expanding psychoanalysis, penetrating and refashioning traditional modes of social regulation in the emerging welfare states of Western Europe.

52. The expanding social role of psychoanalysis in the context of the struggle against Nazism and the postwar reconstruction has been discussed by Michal Shapira, *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Modern Self in Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Daniel Pick, *The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess and the Analysts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Lyndsey Stonebridge, *The Writing of Anxiety: Imagining Wartime in Mid-Century* (London: Palgrave, 2007); and Edward J. K. Gitre, "The Great Escape: World War II, Neo-Freudianism, and the Origins of US Psychocultural Analysis," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 47, no. 1 (2011): 18–43.

and the social world of patients.”⁵³ In Britain especially, as Zaretsky has written elsewhere, psychoanalysis was drawn into a “society-wide healing process,” one centered on the management of anxiety and the reconstruction of group bonds primarily through the regulation of the child’s attachment to a maternal caregiver.⁵⁴

Zaretsky is certainly right to note the ambiguity of this moment, which legitimated the postwar welfare state by reinforcing traditional gender roles and deemphasized the politics of individual freedom at the heart of classical psychoanalysis in favor of a politics of “forg[ing] and sustain[ing] personal relations” (133). It is less clear, however, why he trains his critical gaze in this chapter exclusively on psychoanalysis as it evolved in midcentury Britain. If the new theories of child and mother fashioned in this context (and developed further by Klein’s successors) blunted psychoanalysis’s critical edge by transforming the self-reflective ego into an interpersonal one in pursuit not of autonomy but of nurturance and recognition, then it is arguable that ego psychology, as it developed in the United States over these decades, accomplished a more far-reaching debasement of psychoanalytic politics by precisely the opposite procedure (i.e., overemphasizing the potential autonomy of the ego at the expense of constitutive, conflict-ridden interdependence). From Heinz Hartmann’s conflict-free sphere of ego functioning to Kurt R. Eissler’s equation of ego strength with the capacity to forgo “warmth, reassurance, and direction” from the analyst and to guarantee “unswerving loyalty to the analytic compact,” midcentury psychoanalysis in the United States was a “normative and normalizing enterprise” that valorized a narrow conception of ego autonomy and pathologized dependency and vulnerability.⁵⁵ Far more than the Kleinian object relations theorists at the center of Zaretsky’s fourth chapter, ego psychologists stripped psychoanalysis of its critical potential at the very moment they sought to widen the scope for its application.⁵⁶

53. Homans, *Ability to Mourn*, 114. While Homans points to interwar London as the decisive moment when “metapsychology collapsed” under the pressure of widespread trauma and bereavement, the full significance of this erosion of the monadic model of the psyche would only become clear in the midst of the Second World War. *Ability to Mourn*, 222–31.

54. Eli Zaretsky, “Klein and the Emergence of Modern Personal Life,” in *Reading Melanie Klein*, ed. John Phillips and Lyndsey Stonebridge (London: Routledge, 1998), 46; Denise Riley, *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother* (London: Virago, 1983); Marga Vicedo, *The Nature and Nurture of Love: From Imprinting to Attachment in Cold War America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Frank C. P. van der Horst, *John Bowlby: From Psychoanalysis to Ethology: Unraveling the Roots of Attachment Theory* (Chichester: Wiley, 2011).

55. Heinz Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*, trans. David Rappaport (New York: International Universities, 1939); K. R. Eissler, “The Effect of the Structure of the Ego on Psychoanalytic Technique,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 1, no. 1 (1953): 121; and Herzog, *Cold War Freud*, 36.

56. The “widening scope” of psychoanalysis is a leitmotif of Freudian discourse in midcentury America, one first explicitly thematized in Leo Stone’s classic essay, “The Widening Scope of Indications for Psycho-

V

Zaretsky's final chapter, "From the Maturity Ethic to the Psychology of Power: The New Left, Feminism, and the Return to 'Social Reality,'" goes some way to redressing this oversight by shifting the locus of the narrative to the United States over the decisive decades of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.⁵⁷ As it fills in the history of psychoanalysis' decline, Zaretsky's fifth chapter fleshes out the tail end of the arc described in the first chapter by connecting the distinct moments (Freudianism at midcentury and Freudianism today) that composed the latter half of the preceding chapter.⁵⁸ Once again, we are presented with three stages. First, the period from the end of World War II to the early 1960s saw the reign of the "maturity ethic," a new ethic of internalized self-control that restricted political life and infused private life with intensity, purpose, and heteronormativity. The antinomianism of the 1960s then followed, and Zaretsky is predictably keen to demonstrate its ambiguity: on the one hand, radical works of political Freudianism, such as those of Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown, articulated a politics of "disidentification,"

analysis," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 2 (1954): 567–94. On the politics of analytic therapy in midcentury America, see especially Kate Schechter, *Illusions of a Future: Psychoanalysis and the Biopolitics of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Herzog, *Cold War Freud*; Jacoby, *Repression of Psychoanalysis*; and Martin S. Bergmann, ed., *The Hartmann Era* (New York: Other, 2000). A recent article by Arnold Richards that explores the continuing communist political affiliations of a number of émigré psychoanalysts in midcentury America should certainly qualify the broadly shared narrative (most forcefully advanced by Jacoby) that Freudians jettisoned their earlier politics in the process of emigration and assimilation. "The Left and the Far Left in American Psychoanalysis: Psychoanalysis as a Subversive Discipline," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 52, no. 1 (2016): 111–29.

57. While Zaretsky explores the reception of psychoanalysis in the United States and United Kingdom, it is somewhat odd that *Political Freud*—in contrast to *Secrets of the Soul*—lacks any sustained discussion of the appropriation and modification of psychoanalysis in France, that is, on the emergence of the so-called French Freud, a subject that has inspired a uniquely rich historiography over recent decades. See esp. Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925–1985*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Polity, 1997); Sherry Turkle, *Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud's French Revolution* (New York: Basic, 1978); Carolyn J. Dean, *The Self and Its Pleasures: Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Robcis, *Law of Kinship*; John Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan, and Derrida* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Jan E. Goldstein, "Neutralizing Freud: The Lycée Philosophy Class and the Problem of the Reception of Psychoanalysis in France," *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 1 (2013): 40–82.

58. As Dagmar Herzog recently noted, however, the narrative of psychoanalysis's decline "occlude[d] from view" a much more complex story and one in which psychoanalysis continued to flourish in a variety of widely dispersed contexts (Herzog, *Cold War Freud*, 216). An excellent overview of the decline of US psychoanalysis can be found in Paul Stepansky, *Psychoanalysis at the Margins* (New York: Other, 2009). The best single history of the history of psychoanalysis in the United States is Nathan G. Hale, *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917–1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), the successor volume to his *Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). On psychoanalysis in America, see also Mitchell G. Ash, "Americanizing Psychoanalysis," *Modern Intellectual History* 14, no. 2 (2017): 607–17.

of “a shattering of social identity” (167); on the other, the 1960s also gave rise to affirmative psychologies of “mind cure” and a transformation of the ego into the self, attended by a new positive valuation of narcissism. Finally, and despite the productive encounter with Freud in works like Shulamith Firestone’s *Dialectic of Sex* (1970) and Juliet Mitchell’s *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974), the feminism of the 1970s replaced the New Left’s politics of disidentification and installed itself as “the final form of the spirit of capitalism for the era of mass consumption” (179).⁵⁹

That the 1970s witnessed the birth of a new ideology of identitarianism that fractured the New Left is a commonly accepted point, but the naming of that ideology “feminism” is bound to raise eyebrows. Zaretsky’s argument might be justified as a strategic exaggeration intended to reignite interest in radical feminism’s productive revision of psychoanalytic theory, but it is also misleading, reductive, and closed off: to equate feminism and identity politics, Zaretsky must simply ignore not only feminist psychoanalytic theorists, such as Rose, Jane Flax, and Jessica Benjamin, whose work calls attention to the failure of identification, but also the wide range of feminist and queer theorists who bitterly critique but nonetheless productively engage psychoanalysis.⁶⁰ In addition, Zaretsky’s portrayal of feminism as the guiding ideology of the neoliberal, narcissistic age of empowerment colludes with the cultural figuration of the feminine as narcissistic.⁶¹ One wonders throughout this chapter why Zaretsky was not content with the term “identity politics,” a much less controversial name for the ideology that accompanied the market revolution of the 1970s. Although a certain strain of liberal feminism played a key role in the emergence of identity politics, the reason that Zaretsky picks out feminism as the third spirit of capitalism unfortunately runs deeper.

Throughout *Political Freud*, one feels Zaretsky’s palpable lament for what has been lost since the inception of psychoanalysis, and it is this desire to prophetically rescue *Geistigkeit* from those obscurantists who would snuff it out that is responsible for the passionate cogency with which the tradition of political Freudianism is portrayed. However, this same drive to return to the original message of psychoanalysis—one might call it Zaretsky’s “death drive”—also leads him to view all theoretical developments in the history of psychoanalysis as regressive or, at best, am-

59. For a complementary critique, see Nancy Fraser’s powerful argument in “Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History” *New Left Review* 56, no. 2 (2009): 97–117.

60. We owe this point as well as the following to our colleague Katie Glanz.

61. Zaretsky’s thought on these points echoes that of other cultural critics, especially Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978). A different reading of narcissism, one that also serves to historicize the emergence of Heinz Kohut’s self-psychology, can be found in Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Americanization of Narcissism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

bivalent. Thus, in chapter 3, the questions of patriarchy and the role of the mother in preoedipal life that attended and reflected “women’s large and growing role within the analytic movement” in the 1920s and ‘30s are represented as ultimately at odds with the priority of intellectuality over sensuality characteristic of Freudian *Geistigkeit* (102). In chapter 4, Klein’s rethinking of the ego is also cast as a falling away from the original Freudian model wherein “reason or rationality was at the core of the individual” (137), rather than what it was: an attempt to further understand the preconditions for the emergence of a capacity for rationality (or as Fred Alford calls it, “reparative reason”).⁶² A general preference for the oedipal over the preoedipal, for the intellectual over the sensuous, for the subjective over the intersubjective, thus runs throughout *Political Freud*, and it is difficult to bracket this partiality by the time Zaretsky comes around to pinning the ideological justification for our current regime of flexible accumulation on feminism.

One way in which historians of Freudianism have attempted to overcome this nostalgia is by recuperating the work of figures within the psychoanalytic movement whose contributions represent either alternative legacies for later generations or attempts to work through unresolved problems in Freudian thought. Of all such figures in the history of psychoanalysis, perhaps the most frequently rediscovered has been Sándor Ferenczi, whose thought has inspired a range of critical departures from classical Freudian analytic technique.⁶³ Not only was Ferenczi a vital figure in the inauguration of the tradition of psychoanalytic thinking that focuses on the therapeutic relationship and on intersubjectivity in general, but the intimacy of his friendship and collaboration with Freud over the decisive years leading up to the postwar revision of Freudian metapsychology often makes it difficult to determine with whom certain ideas originated. The entanglement of their thought

62. Fred Alford, “Reason and Reparation: A Kleinian Account of the Critique of Instrumental Reason,” *Theory and Society* 19, no. 1 (February 1990): 38.

63. Beginning with Erich Fromm’s critique of Freudian analytic therapy in his 1935 “Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie,” Ferenczi’s thought has proven to be a virtually inexhaustible resource for those intent to break free of the perceived strictures of Freudian theory and practice. Fromm’s critique would itself serve as an important point of departure for Helmut Dahmer’s magisterial *Libido und Gesellschaft: Studien über Freud und die Freudsche Linke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982), a work that devoted a central chapter to “Sandor Ferenczi and the Problems of Psychoanalysis.” More recently an astonishing number of works have appeared devoted to Ferenczi’s legacy and the significance of the loose school of thought he inaugurated. See André E. Haynal, *Disappearing and Reviving: Sándor Ferenczi in the History of Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac, 2002); Peter L. Rudnytsky, Antal Bókay, and Patrizia Gimpieri-Deutsch, eds., *Ferenczi’s Turn in Psychoanalysis* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Judit Szekacs-Weisz and Tom Keve, eds., *Ferenczi and His World: Rekindling the Spirit of the Budapest School* (London: Karnac, 2012); Judit Szekacs-Weisz and Tom Keve, eds., *Ferenczi for Our Time: Theory and Practice* (London: Karnac, 2012); and Judit Mészáros, *Ferenczi and Beyond: Exile of the Budapest School and Solidarity in the Psychoanalytic Movement during the Nazi Years* (London: Karnac, 2013).

would persist even as their friendship cooled, leading to an ultimate break shortly before Ferenczi's death in 1933. As Freud had the tendency to work over and digest other people's ideas "until such time as they resurfaced as his own," André Haynal has argued, "many of Ferenczi's ideas and concepts reappear in Freud's work, often after a long period of latency and integrated into his own ideas: thoughts about homosexuality, phylogenesis, trauma, transference and countertransference, ego-development, technique, parapsychology."⁶⁴ In a way, then, Haynal argues that the origin of psychoanalysis, maintained in near-blinding purity by Zaretsky, was already compromised from the start by the psychoanalytic theories of others, theories that uncoincidentally pertain to those very topics that Zaretsky finds indicative of theoretical regression.

In *Impious Fidelity*, Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg makes a similar move in showing how the complexity of Sigmund and Anna Freud's relationship makes it impossible to distinguish the latter's acts of "betrayal" from those of "fidelity." On the one hand, given "Freud's need to organize the psychoanalytic movement in such a way as to place himself—like a woman—in the 'background' against a struggle of brothers, a struggle out of which emerged victorious his daughter Anna," the line between the unconscious organizational preparation of her father and her own alleged transgressions of his insights—that is, her attempt to convert the knowledge of the unconscious into a stable psychoanalytic institution—cannot be clearly drawn.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Anna's turn to ego psychology—her act of betrayal, according to Jacques Lacan—was not a negation of the centrality of the unconscious but rather an attempt to bring "back the unconscious as the constitutive force in the construction of both subjectivity and sociality in a world that she experiences and understands as radically orphaned."⁶⁶ Stewart-Steinberg would thus reject any clean distinction between Sigmund's original insight and Anna's alleged reification of it: as in actual psychoanalysis, history cannot be "staged" without repression.

VI

In the afterword to *Political Freud* ("Freud in the Twenty-First Century"), Zaretsky poses the question of whether Freud is, "in any meaningful sense, still our contemporary, and if he is not, can he and should he become one again?" (185). Freudianism's emergence as a movement, Zaretsky explains, was a product of the "uneasy synthesis of three different projects"—a therapeutic practice, a paradigm for interpreting culture, and an ethical project of self-reflection—that each "stemmed from

64. Haynal, *Disappearing and Reviving*, 17–18.

65. Stewart-Steinberg, *Impious Fidelity*, 145.

66. *Ibid.*, 133.

the interrelated political crises of twentieth-century Europe and the rise of consumer society" (185). The remarkable fact, Zaretsky contends, is that these three projects "were ever connected at all," a testament to the "innovative Freudian conception of the mind" and, behind it, of the historically novel experience of personal life (190). From the 1970s on, however, the three strands began to part ways, each being displaced by or subsumed within new projects and paradigms with little use for the ethical, cultural, and therapeutic impulses that constituted Freudianism. Yet the analytic project also contained a critical dimension, Zaretsky notes, one worth salvaging for the sake of contemporary politics. With the dissolution of the analytic synthesis that sustained and nurtured it, however, this critical dimension has itself been weakened, a fact "painfully evident today" (196).

As Herbert Marcuse argues in his 1963 essay "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man"—the essay Zaretsky credits with first inspiring his interest in the history of psychoanalysis (1)—"that which is obsolete is not, by this token, false."⁶⁷ Neither does it necessarily entail vitiation: through "its insistence on individual needs and individual potentialities which have become outdated" in the course of social and political developments, psychoanalysis "draws strength from its obsolescence," Marcuse contends.⁶⁸ While Zaretsky does not pursue Marcuse's suggestion, it seems plausible that being out of step with the times could, in fact, help renew the very critical dimension he aims to recover from "the long Freudian century" (196). In being deprived of the cultural and professional cachet that it accumulated over the early to mid-twentieth century, psychoanalysis could perhaps be returning to a marginality that suits it best, one embodied by the critical outsiders at the heart of *Political Freud*.

Zaretsky's history is a valuable contribution to the work of recuperating and renewing psychoanalytic critique. It is, above all, an important attempt to move beyond the puerile adulation and vilification of psychoanalysis without losing touch with the critical edge of Freudian thought and retreating into the comfort of a distancing defensiveness. We have sought throughout to highlight some of the limitations of Zaretsky's history—from the overdrawn character of its broadly declensionist narrative to the frustrating identification of feminism with the spirit of neoliberal capitalism (a critique perhaps best understood as a provocation)—while suggesting the value of more capacious and nuanced reading of psychoanalytic developments beyond Freud.⁶⁹ The ground of psychoanalytic thinking, we have argued, would be both

67. Herbert Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," in *Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia* (1963; Boston: Beacon, 1970), 60.

68. *Ibid.*

69. For an excellent survey of the development of psychoanalytic theory and practice after Freud, see Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black, *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought* (New York: Basic, 1995).

larger and more fertile if Freudian theorists from Ferenczi to Žižek were regarded less through the one-size-fits-all perspective of either rejuvenators or vulgarizers and more as responding to specific political conjunctures with the ever-evolving resources of an eclectic and ecumenical tradition of psychoanalytic critique. What is beyond contention is that the work of understanding the interrelationship of our constitution as sexed subjects with our political identities—the project at the heart of *Political Freud*—is no less relevant today than it was when Freudian thought constituted “a whole climate of opinion.” It is in this sense that we echo Adam Phillips’s assessment that “psychoanalysis is just beginning.”⁷⁰

70. Susanna Rustin, “Adam Phillips: A Life in Writing,” *The Guardian*, June 1, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jun/01/adam-phillips-life-in-writing>.