

Secrets of a Soul: A History of Psychoanalysis and Cinema

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7:00 PM

The Philoctetes Center

Levy: Francis Levy
Nersessian: Edward Nersessian
Greenberg: Harvey Roy Greenberg
Makari: George Makari
Merkin: Daphne Merkin
Peucker: Brigitte Peucker
Polan: Dana Polan
A: Speaker from audience

Levy: I'm Francis Levy again, and before we start the roundtable I just wanted to say that the art you see on the walls is from an exhibit that just went up today called *Self-Reflection: The True Mirror*, and it's curated by Hallie Cohen, who is our exhibition space curator and a member of the Philoctetes directorate, and also head of the Art Department at Marymount Manhattan College.

I'd now like to introduce Brigitte Peucker. Brigitte is the Elias Leavenworth Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and Professor of Film Studies at Yale University. Her books include *Lyrical Descent in the German Romantic Tradition*, *Incorporating Images: Film and The Rival Arts* and *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film*. She is currently working on a book on Fassbinder, and she moderated a wonderful panel on *In the Year of the 13 Moons*, and we did it exactly the same way, where we showed the film, and that was an amazing panel.

Anyway, Dr. Peucker will moderate this evening's panel. I think we're going to just have everybody introduce themselves, is that right?

Peucker: Right. That would be great.

Levy: Okay. Take it away.

Peucker: Could we perhaps start with Daphne Merkin? Would you mind just saying a few words about the kind of work that you're doing?

Merkin: I'm a writer and a general cultural critic. I did review films for *The New Yorker* for two years, and I've done a film column for a now—it's not moribund, it's dead—magazine called *The New Leader*, as well as for *Partisan Review*, and I remain very interested in film. I actually reviewed the book that took this title by Eli Zaretsky. I wrote a rather mixed review, to the horror of his many defenders. I'm trying to think if there's anything else to say. I've written a novel and a collection of essays called *Dreaming of Hitler*, and recently wrote a piece for *The Times*—a short piece—on the TV show "In Treatment," and whether it would convince those who are suspicious or skeptical about therapy, much less analysis, whether it would persuade them to its uses.

Greenberg: I'm Harvey Greenberg. I'm a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. I teach Medical Humanities and Adolescent Psychiatry when you can get me to do that sort of thing. My second career is as a journalist, and I've written down through the years on media, film, and popular culture. I have several books written for kids about psychotherapy and several books written about movies. My most recent publications—I have an upcoming chapter on compulsive gambling in a psychiatric textbook, and I've just had the third of three articles published in a poker magazine, I'm proud to say. Generally speaking, I work mostly with mainstream Hollywood film, although I can do the occasional art film. And I've been interested, I guess since 1970, in the articulation between psychoanalysis and cinema, the use of what the early Freudians called 'Applied Analysis,' and all the interesting things and the dangers and pitfalls of that sort of stuff. So that's me. I have the somewhat dubious merit of having been published both in *Movieline*, before it became totally tits and ass, and in *Camera Obscura*, which remains *Camera Obscura*. High and low.

Peucker: Great.

Makari: I'm George Makari, and I run The Institute for the History of Psychiatry at Cornell. I'm a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst and a historian, and I've written mostly about the history of psychoanalysis. I just published an intellectual history of the emergence of psychoanalysis in western and central Europe called *Revolution in Mind*.

Polan: My name is Dana Polan. I'm a Professor of Cinema Studies at NYU, although recently I've been moving more into television studies, and that might be something we can get back to and maybe talk about "In Treatment." I've just today in fact, I'm proud to say, finished a book on *The Sopranos*—finished at 5:30 and jumped onto the subway to come here—a television show which obviously has its psychoanalytic dimensions. The next book I'm writing I don't think will be psychoanalytic—although when you say something's not psychoanalytic it obviously is. I'm writing a book about Julia Childs, the French chef. And I'm very excited by that.

Peucker: Great. Well, we haven't had much of a chance to talk about how we might organize this, so I think I'm just going to plunge in with a remark that comes to me when I overheard somebody talking and saying, "Gee, the actor who plays the analyst is really interesting. Who is he, and why did they choose him?" His name is—as you no doubt noticed—Pavel Pavlov, a Russian actor. When Marc Sorkin, who was the assistant director for this film, cast him, he—Marc Sorkin—had been made by, I guess Hanns Sachs and Karl Abraham, to study Freud's writings for two or three months so he could adequately direct Pavel Pavlov. That's one story about him. But then the other one, which may be apocryphal, I really can't say, is that after the film was released in the US, groups of, I believe, American analysts, thinking that Pavel Pavlov was actually an analyst—maybe thinking about the behaviorist—invited Pavel Pavlov to come over and speak to their groups. So those two anecdotes by way of opening up the discussion.

Greenberg: Well there's a parallel story. On several occasions Leonard Nimoy has addressed people who are training to go into space, atomic physicists, quantum theory people, and they always ask him questions about quantum foam and boolean algebra, and he says, "I'm just an actor." And they don't believe him.

Polan: One thing that's interesting about the anecdotes is, I mean if you look at the actor, until he's identified as a psychoanalyst he could have any number of professions. In particular I think the way he comes up to him in the night and says, "Here's your key," he could be a policeman. He actually looks a little bit to me like the investigator in Fritz Lang's *M*.

Makari: That's true.

Polan: At a number of points in this film there's a kind of association of psychoanalysis to other arts of investigation, in particular, the police procedural. I think just as a policeman is about looking for clues, coming up with a narrative, solving the case, and therefore gaining a kind of heroism for doing so, this film associates psychoanalysis with a kind of heroic solving of the crime, a bringing to justice of evil and rooting out criminality wherever it lies. It's not accidental that there is a murder plot going on at the same time and we hear that the murderer's been arrested in Munich. Part of the way this film is bolstering an image of psychoanalysis is to make it heroic, just as law enforcement is heroic—and that's something I think you see also, for example, in a number of the very psychoanalytic films you get in the United States after the second World War, the psychoanalytically-inflected film noirs where there's often the psychoanalyst as miracle-bringer, the figure who brings a cure. It's not accidental that the same figures who work in crime drama work off in the psychoanalytic dramas.

Peucker: Right. Well, what you were saying about policing, Dr. Orth, which means, of course, regularizing—think orthodontics or something of that sort—that's what he's doing. His goal is to regularize and to socialize. It's portrayed as a very humane thing to do. But I think that when one looks at this film, which was made in 1926, and hence was an example of what was called "the new objectivity," what it has a lot to do with is bringing to light, literally *enlightening* the themes of expressionist cinema that came before about the various obsessions and phobias that were never called that—but, you know, the insane criminals that populate German expressionist cinema, which goes up to about 1924. You can see it in the style of the film, too. It's all bright light, and not the chiaroscuro of those films. This film is about enlightenment and regularizing and socializing and normalizing the impulses that you see given sort of criminal and insane forms in the earlier cinema.

Greenberg: Well if you look at the movie behind the movie—people have said about Woody Allen you don't generally see poor people and very few people of color in his films. This is really a bourgeois society despite the somewhat radical film techniques, but the society is essentially a society with maids and with not quite Wiener Werkstatte furniture, but almost there. The idea of the disruption of the bourgeois status quo I think is very much what we're looking at. Also, if you think about it, Freud's patients mostly came from the bourgeoisie. Occasionally there was a prince, you know, that floated in and out.

Makari: Can I beg to differ? In Berlin in the mid '20s psychoanalysis was very much associated with the avant-garde, and they had a very active polyclinic that was treating lots of folks who were artisans and plumbers and tradesmen. It was not associated with normalizing as much as academic psychiatry was, for sure. So one of the great debates that emerged between Vienna and Berlin, of course, was whether they would do this film. Part of the Berliners' association to the avant-garde made them more attracted than Freud was, for instance.

I'm interested in your comments, because one of the most trying moments in terms of the narrative, for me at least, is you find a patient by hanging out until closing time at a bar and you follow them home. This is a way to pull Amy Winehouse into treatment, but very few other people do this.

Nersessian: It's not a bad technique.

Makari: It's a *rare* technique, let's put it that way. It seems to be a stretch. All, it seemed to me, to set up that wonderful line where the analyst says, "Is there a reason why you hesitate to enter your home?" But there is something about Berlin and psychoanalysis being in the cafés, in the bars, in that world, very much not yet in the university and in academia and in the orthodox bourgeois society. I think there's certainly a tension, because of course the household he comes from reeks of all those trappings.

Greenberg: In that regard, I didn't mean the clinics that were going on, and the Wilhelm Reichs and the radicalization and the indemnification of the avant-garde. I'm talking about a film that was made, as I recall, to try and present psychoanalysis. I think it even came with a booklet that was given out at the time.

Peucker: Yes, right.

Greenberg: It was an attempt to show ordinary people that the demons were not entirely out of the bottle. That sure, psychoanalysis was always on the cutting edge, for a lot of different reasons. A lot of the practitioners, as we know, were Jewish, and that already had a certain negative cache for a lot of people. But my point here would be that you have a film—granted, it's expressionist technique, but still you're trying to present it to an ordinary public walking through the door, not the artists who were being treated at the clinic. Freud spawned several revolutions in linguistics, in politics. He would've, I think, denied some of them. But in terms of this film, as I recall, it was meant to *enlighten* people, literally enlighten the average guy on the street that this wasn't a terrible thing, and that psychiatric illness was treatable, and this method could be used with ordinary people.

Merkin: Glen Gabbard, who wrote a very good book on cinema and a good book on *The Sopranos*, which I assume you know about, referred to films from the '30s as being involved with "cathartic cures." I don't know what kind of audience this movie drew in at its own time, but it's a lot about symptom relief in the end. I mean, along the way there are a lot of terms thrown in. One way it struck me as mimicking psychoanalysis today, with the exception of Freud, is its linearity and its sort of humorlessness, while Freud certainly had a very good sense of humor. But everything is presented in this sort of magical way that continues years later, like in *Vertigo*, when the psychoanalyst says, "You suffer from—" I forgot what he tells James Stewart exactly, something that releases James Stewart for the rest of his life from the vertigo. This movie also suggests that if you have one or several insights into—it's a little about the 'aha!' insight mode of therapy, which never worked for me, but maybe it does work.

And I did have a passing thought. One of the more praised aspects of this movie are the dream sequences and the double exposures, and I was thinking of a writer, a critic, a very good critic I took a writing class with years ago named Anatole Broyard, and one of the things he said was

never to write about dreams, that they're inherently boring. I was thinking watching this movie that a little of his dream, for me, went a long way, that it kind of stretched out in a way. And I still thought he seemed like a hysteric at the end of the movie the way he ran down the hill like he was going to a baptism. But those were some thoughts I had.

Levy: Dreams of the bell tower—

Makari: The bell tower, yeah.

Greenberg: Dreams have always presented a great problem for filmmakers. A long time ago I read an essay about *Psycho* and it said that filmmakers are often at their worst in portraying dreams when they try to do it. The dreams in *Spellbound* are famously hideous. But if you look at a shot in Hitchcock's *Psycho* when Vera Miles is approaching the house, where we know that Mrs. Bates, or her mummy, is living it's very, very eerie. Instead of her going to the house, the house appears in a canted way to come to her. And that is *damned* eerie, and there are a lot of examples where cinema is extraordinarily dreamlike but not when it's trying to be, and I think that's sort of intriguing.

Polan: I'd like to go back to two points, or pick up two points that you mentioned. This sort of also builds on the filmability of dreams and things like that. One was this idea of the punctuality, or what you called the 'aha!' moment, and I think part of this is why I'm actually interested as much in how television is dealing with psychoanalysis as film is. I think one limitation of film obviously is the format of the feature film: an hour and a half, or in this case about seventy minutes, two hours. There's only so much of the ongoing interminable process of psychoanalysis that can be represented, and I think you're impelled towards that kind of narrative of closure when you have a two-hour, beginning, middle and end structure. There's so many films you can cite. Is it *Spellbound* where there's the cure as they're skiing down the ski slope?

Polan: Yeah. You know Fritz Lang's *Secret Beyond the Door*, well he says—

Greenberg: Well, there are very few movies that present therapy as it is because therapy is inherently boring.

Polan: But also, I think, the duration of film is of a different duration than the psychoanalytic process.

Nersessian: Somewhat.

Greenberg: To be sure. Unless you're watching Andy Warhol look at the Empire State Building.

Merkin: Can I interrupt and say I know it's said that therapy is inherently boring, but I don't think it's quite accurate, certainly not to me. It's more that therapy is quiescent. It doesn't have much active life. Many things are boring and repetitive and perseverating, and they're portrayed with—I mean, love affairs are boring. They can only go a certain kind of way.

Levy: Which way?

Merkin: I meant one of two ways: fail or succeed. But we're talking about interiority, which is a problem that novels have addressed, like in stream of consciousness. Simply to call it boring is cute, but doesn't address the larger issue of how do you represent an essentially interior process.

Greenberg: I meant boring from the outside in the sense that we sit for three quarters of an hour, fifty minutes to an hour, time after time. A lot is going on, but those 'aha!' moments are relatively rare. The inner process is what's important. But I don't think it's easy for a film to capture—since films are inherently dramatic—that kind of day after day suchness—

Merkin: I just said that.

Greenberg: —and why should it?

Polan: Yeah, and then going back to Brigitte's point about bringing to light, I think one of the interesting things about this film then is it has a certain confidence in the science of psychoanalysis as bringing to light, rendering clear and somehow starting to put to rest psychical processes, yet the very moment of light at the end of the film begs for psychoanalytic interpretation. Everything is so bright, everything is so perfect. It's clear that that last sequence is a kind of wish fulfillment, is a projection. It's phallic, with the baby held up against the mountains. I mean, you know—

Peucker: It's definitely meant ironically. It's too idyllic. You have urban people suddenly transformed into peasants. It's not just a summer house or a weekend place. The whole business of the fish—it is another—

Greenberg: But it's also Freud in Switzerland during August.

Peucker: Oh, maybe so. That's very ironic.

Merkin: It's interesting to me that they chose to use the man as the holder of all the—probably because I'm thinking of a new book that's coming out called *Mad, Bad or Sad*, which is the treatment of women as mental, as calling them mental patients, even if they simply have—you know, aren't mental patients in that sense. So I thought in that way there was a little bit of gender—not inversion, but it interested me that he had what I would think of as, in the hysteric quality of everything. I mean, of the knife obsession—to me it seemed more like classically female symptoms.

I also thought one thing that was interesting in the movie was the whole treatment of the marriage and the treatment of paranoia. I kept thinking of—I think it's wrongly attributed to Delmore Schwartz—"even paranoids have enemies." Like the setup of the cousin who's always lurking about suggestively, and then you're supposed to attribute it all to the man's hyperactive, hypertrophic imagination was interestingly done, as well as the marriage. And I was wondering, in the scene when he was having the nightmare and clearly screaming, why the wife didn't come out of the room sooner. It took like a breakdown for her to emerge. So I was thinking of the view of marriage that the movie conveys.

Greenberg: Well I think what the movie cannot—if you think that it can't say certain things. This man is impotent. I think it's implied in the film, but you didn't talk about that kind of stuff

openly in cinema. Today we're drowning in it. There is a great deal, in order to make the film acceptable to an ordinary audience, that can't be shown. We know in passing that they have separate rooms.

If you want to give it another construction, in terms of what you're saying about paranoia and Freud's classic paper on paranoia and homosexuality, Martha Wolfenstein famously said, "When a film is trying to reassure you about what hasn't happened or what isn't happening, it *has* happened." One other way of looking at it—I'm just playing around with it here—is that this is a man in some kind of homosexual conflict about his cousin, that that's really the lover, and it's the wife that's getting in the way. If you turn the whole thing upside down. I'm not saying that that's entirely viable, but—

Peucker: Well, it is interesting. You were talking earlier about detection being another analog for, let's say, the analytic process. It's also interesting that the spectator of the film has a great deal more work to do than the analyst. All the interesting images—and in a way you're suggesting that all the interesting images are the ones you can't talk about, which sort of surprises me because I think you could talk about it—but, anyway, those are left there for the spectator to interpret and read.

Makari: Yeah, I saw the film for the first time earlier today, and I thought of it as a success. I had read all of the arguments between Freud and the Berliners about this thing and knew all about that, but I had never seen the film. That's the way I came to it, and the question that I was asking was, was Freud right? His basic concern was the abstractions of psychoanalysis couldn't be represented in plastic form. So given the parameters—and the parameters were also a *silent* film—how successful was this film going to be, or how much of a disaster? We've all seen lots of disasters, right? I have to say I thought it was relatively successful, and in part because of that: what it did with artistry and implication. A lot is implied. There's not one sexual interpretation that the analyst makes. The whole case is filled with sexual symbolism. It's a case that cries out for a heavy-handed sexual—

Greenberg: Yeah, true.

Peucker: Right.

Makari: It's never made.

Merkin: What about a light-handed?

Makari: Even a light-handed one. In fact the analyst would have no doubt, especially in Berlin, where they were pretty heavy-handed about their interpretations, and would have been making a lot of heavy-handed sexual interpretations. So it's interesting that it doesn't happen in the film. Maybe the artistry of the director is such that he knew that implication would be more powerful in getting one internal state to imagine another.

Greenberg: Professor, could you say more? I never quite understood the remark that Freud was supposed to have made to Abraham about plasticity, that we cannot represent—

Peucker: Abstract—

Greenberg: You used the term—

Makari: Abstraction, yeah.

Greenberg: What would that be? What was he actually referring to?

Makari: In terms of the plastic arts it was a question that had great resonance because it also meant how empirically validatable was your stuff if you couldn't pick it up or represent it in sensory ways. So the abstractions of psychoanalysis—how much could it be represented in a form that could be easily observed with sensory perception? Tough question.

Polan: When you were talking about those things that escape the therapist in the film but that we interpret, it occurs to me that a corollary of what you were saying before about the difficulty of finding adequate representation of dreams in psychoanalytic films is an inadequacy of finding an equivalent for the therapeutic process.

Greenberg: Yes.

Polan: What we get is very literal therapeutic activity, someone hearing and interpreting, someone saying you said that. Here's the symbolic interpretation. I think you see the same thing at times in *The Sopranos*. I think you see it in *In Treatment*. The most interesting moments of therapy are not what's represented as going on between the therapist and the patient. It's elsewhere in the show. It's elsewhere in the fabric of the work. In the same way, I think, there's something very literal about the psychoanalyst in this film.

Greenberg: In the nature of the constraints and the trajectory of narratives it has to be that 'aha' moment, and it often has a crude and rather simplistic quality. There's an old bad joke. The guy comes to the analyst and he says, "I have a nameless fear," and the analyst says, "Well, please don't worry about that because we have a name for everything." The sequence that mocks that is the end of *Psycho*, when Simon Oakland gets up and gives this explanation, and this all makes sense, and then the last thing you're left with is this strange, eerie, crazy moment where Anthony Perkins says—and you see the skull—"I wouldn't hurt a fly." That says more than that analyst is ever going to say about the inner nature of that weirdness.

Polan: The equivalent in this film is that you have an interesting plasticity in the images that then gets traded for the verbal, literally titles, that explain what interpretation the psychoanalyst is coming up with. So you move from one form, silent cinema, to a verbal art.

Merkin: But I'm not sure I agree with George that the artistry is all in what isn't being said. Essentially what the analyst says to him is you're afraid of knives because you're afraid of knives. There's a slight zen, essentially. First of all, this was pre the Hays Code. They could have put in—I don't know, would it have hurt the film to have attempted some translation into sexual terms or sexual fears without coming out in a major—. In some ways it becomes laughable to me: the dissonance between what the analyst actually says and, if you want to use the term, the plastic part of the film. You see so much drenched sexualized imagery, and then they're busy talking about, well, you wanted to kill your wife, with no further attenuation of those feelings.

Makari: Well, no, I think I might agree with you. I didn't mean it specifically just about that interpretation. I meant about the mode of filmmaking in general, that so much is left to implication.

Merkin: Right.

Makari: But yes, I think it's fascinating that there was no sexual interpretation as a punch line. It seemed kind of incongruous. Now it should be said that this film initially was planned—at least the analysts thought it was planned—to have two parts. The first part was going to be totally didactic. It was going to be a lecture about psychoanalysis. It was either never made or the director said, "Yeah, we'll do that." Any good director would have left that on the cutting room in the first three seconds. So they left it all that we're going to tell a patient's story and try to get it all in there. That could have been a disaster. It could have been much, much worse. I have to say, I was pretty impressed. But no, I take your point. I think it's a good point.

Peucker: Certainly nothing is ever mentioned about the relationship to the mother, either, although that's central. Actually there's another scene in this film that was cut for this DVD. I've never seen it myself, but I've read about it, and that is between the scene in which he almost feels very tempted to kill his wife and the moment when he appears in his mother's apartment. He actually goes back to his lab, prepares to drink poison, writes a few lines of goodbye letter to his wife. Then his eyes rest on the photograph of his mother that is sitting next to the photograph of his wife. He picks up that photograph, apparently kisses it, and as he's picking it up, or putting it back down, he knocks over the poison, and doesn't commit suicide. So there's a lot of that going on there too. What I find so peculiar is that if this is a film made as an educational film for people who don't know much—anything at all, let's say—about Freud's writings, then why is all the fun of it for an audience that does know something? Was it actually made for the analysts themselves in some sense?

Makari: I think it was also actually just made for a good story.

Peucker: Yeah.

Makari: Because it's actually very strategically placed. He's regressing in analysis; he goes back to his mother.

Peucker: Right.

Makari: But unless you know about—that would completely go by the boards. There's no way you would make that connection. It was totally symbolic.

Peucker: Right.

Makari: So as an educational tool it's rather weak.

Merkin: Does anyone know if it had a popular appeal?

Makari: Apparently, it got good reviews.

Greenberg: It got good reviews.

Merkin: Whatever that means.

Makari: Yes, whatever that means.

Greenberg: But the actual B.O., the box office take, and how many bags of popcorn they sold, I don't think we know very much about that.

Can you tell us more about this whole battle between Freud and Abraham and Sachs about the way the film was made and why Freud didn't want it made? There's a lot of different history about that, and I've heard some of it, but I wonder how much of what I know is apocryphal.

Makari: The bigger picture is that between '24 and '25 there was a lot of fighting between Berlin and Vienna, and a lot of this was expurgated from the first Abraham-Freud, so we had to wait for the complete Abraham-Freud that came out in 2002, or if you went to the archives you could find it in the secret committee meeting. Bitter, bitter vitriol between the two camps. This was just one other fight; they had been fighting about a bunch of stuff. One of the fights was how independent was the Berlin group going to be? They didn't accept death drive. There's no death drive. This is a movie about sexual frustration leading to aggression and rage, and this is Abraham's model of the drives that's making this guy sick.

So you know, there's different positions, and there's just plain old power struggle for who's going to control the movement, because Berlin's got the most powerful institute, and Vienna's got Freud and Rank and the Verlag, and they're fighting a lot. This becomes one of the fights. There's this whole thing where—I don't know that much about it—Bernfeld and Stouffer apparently—. As Freud was saying, he didn't want to deal with the filmmakers who had come over. One of the American Hollywood guys had come over and offered Freud \$100,000.

Greenberg: Samuel Goldwyn.

Makari: To narrate or something the great love stories—

Greenberg: I've heard several different versions of it, and I went into the archives, because Hollywood doesn't want to talk about this. My son is a screenwriter, so we got a hold of some stuff. Goldwyn came to Freud—and this is a time when Freud had zip money—and he wired him and offered him 100,000 smackers if he would collaborate, consult on a series of films about great love affairs of history. The first was supposed to be Antony and Cleopatra.

Makari: Right.

Greenberg: Freud sent him back a resounding, "Nein," which is one of the few times anybody ever said no to Samuel Goldwyn, leading Goldwyn several years later to say anybody who sees a psychiatrist should have their head examined. But Goldwyn was furious. And then there was the whole question of Freud's relationship to America. He wasn't too wild about us a good deal of the time.

Makari: Right, so even his contempt for that offer—and it was contempt—he still said to Abraham, “Well, at least Goldwyn is a clever man. He understood the only way you can represent this stuff is through what’s available visually, and that’s going to be in something like a love story.”

So he was against it. But as this was getting off the ground, and as it looked like it was gaining momentum, two Viennese came up with a screenplay of their own—and that’s Siegfried Bernfeld and Stouffer. There’s an unclear kind of debate about whether they tried to undermine, undercut the Berlin project.

Greenberg: Was it made?

Makari: It was never made.

Greenberg: Do you know what it was about?

Makari: I don’t know if the screenplay exists. It was to present psychoanalysis to a film audience.

Greenberg: I was lucky enough to talk to Kurt Isler, because I was trying to—there’s always this myth that Freud didn’t go to the movies at all. The only time he went was when he came to America and brought us the plague. Jones said that he went to a film with a lot of wild chasing, some Keystone Cop nickelodeon-type film. Then there was the idea that Freud couldn’t go outside because he was sick, and Isler denied all of this. He said, look, if you think about it, do you ever hear of a telephone in Freud’s writing? You hear of trains, but most of the apparatus of modern day life is not to be found in Freud. He said, Freud was a man, in many ways, of the nineteenth century. However, Freud did go to the movies.

A guy came up to me when I was giving a lecture about twenty-five years ago. His name was Charles Lieber, and Lieber, as I recall, was an entertainment lawyer, and he used to go to Berlin and Vienna and hang out with his uncle, whose name was Lipschitz or something like that. He was an entertainment lawyer, and he loved the movies, and he loved psychoanalysis, even though he had never been in psychoanalysis himself. This would have been around 1936, 1935, and there was a movie downtown called *Das Kreuz—The Cross*—and they showed American films probably with subtitles or dubbed. Now according to Lieber, the lights came up after the double feature and as he walked down the aisle the uncle elbowed Lieber and he said, “Das ist Sigmund Freud!” Lieber looked over, because everybody knew what Freud looked like—he had been in the newspaper—and they claim there was Sigmund Freud between two younger people, a man and a woman, having an animated discussion. Now, it could have been Freud’s double, but it’s sort of an interesting story if you think about it, Freud at the Bijou watching *Gone with the Wind* or whatever they were showing.

Merkin: One thing that I was also struck by watching the movie is that the analyst is not made into a figure of fun, which certainly happens. There’s a little period in the late ’50s, early ’60s, where you have Claude Rains being a gently helpful—all analysts smoked pipes in those years, but then later on, by the ’70s, analysts in general—. You could see that in The Smithsonian exhibit, the one that was contested by Frederick Cruz and others, and then in the end did go on.

They showed vignettes from movie portraits and TV portraits of therapists, analysts, and they were mostly completely send-ups. And it interested me that this was not. I thought he was a private eye. He has a kind of benign face, which in a plastic art makes a big difference. He could have looked different, with a sinister mustache, and then his interpretations might have sounded more sinister. But that interested me, because I think it changes, that kind of benign view.

Polan: Well, I think some of that goes along again with this idea of enlightenment, which is he's bringing to light processes in others, but in a sense he doesn't have a psychology of his own. He's above that. He is the force of reason, of law, order, symbolic interpretation—

Merkin: But later on that enlightenment and all he's bringing become mocked, beginning with the '60s.

Polan: Right. I think one version of that is the notion that every analyst is himself or herself troubled and needs an analysis. Probably for me the key film is a lesser known film, but now it's sort of coming back: *The President's Analyst* with James Coburn, where he hears terrible things from the President of the United States and then goes to his own therapist and says, "I have to talk to you about this," and that idea that the analyst also is implicated in psychological processes I think comes much later. But analysts in the earlier films don't have private lives.

Merkin: Right.

Polan: Claude Rains, in I think the classic example, is not really an analyst but close to it. In *Now, Voyager*, he's always available for Charlotte Vale. We learn a lot about her life, but he's just there because he's there. The psychoanalyst is always able to be there miraculously when you need him or her. Later on, Melfi in *The Sopranos* is not always there. Melfi has a private life. What we're seeing with Paul on *In Therapy* is very much about the interference, or intersection, of his life with his patient's life. At least in the history of the representation, that's a more recent development.

Greenberg: The Gabbards in a great book—and it's now in a second edition—Krin and Glen divide psychiatrists over the years into three categories: Dr. Evil, who is the mad scientist—it would be like *Silence of the Lambs* is the latest, but he's a psychiatrist. Dr. Dippy, which came from an early silent presentation of a movie called *Doctor Dippy's Sanitarium*, where the analyst is crazier than his patients—*What About Bob* And then there is the Dr. Wonderful. Dr. Wonderful is the analyst you wished you could have, and maybe people in Hollywood do actually have. He is available, or she is available, anytime, anywhere, any place, fee is never mentioned, and in so far as we know the only patient is the patient being treated, and that's it. So you have those three stereotypes, and they come and go.

Merkin: They probably still exist.

Makari: I think Dr. Evil in Berlin, if I'm correct—maybe you can tell me—in *Dr. Mabuse*, there is a scene where it says Dr. Mabuse, Psychoanalyst. Now, he's never shown practicing—

Greenberg: Is that so?

Makari: That's right.

Peucker: Well, it's through hypnosis, really.

Makari: You see him doing hypnosis, but at one point it says on his door—

Peucker: He's not really an analyst, but what's interesting—he is obviously a villainous figure, right? But he's also—in one particular scene he performs on stage, and his first performance is to create huge cinematic images on a screen. Those images actually become real and enter the space of the theater. His next performance has to do with hypnosis. What I want to say is that often in German cinema of this period there are overlapping allegories of a filmmaker and a psychoanalyst, and the most obvious one of those would be *Dr. Caligari*, who is the sideshow carnival filmmaker, but he's also at the end the analyst who presides over the interpretation of images, the people in his theater of madness.

And it's not just those two examples. It's also in *The Last Laugh*, and that was made at the same time, 1925, as this film, where this dream sequence begins with a kind of rotating door, which is the glass door of the hotel, but that also stands for primitive visual toys—a holograph, or something of that sort. Time and again you have filmmaker and analyst in negative positive guises coexisting. I was wondering if anyone had anything to say about that, any light to shed on that. Because you were saying earlier, Dana, that you don't think that there is any real analogy between cinema and psychoanalysis, I mean in the sense of growing up at the same time, or that one can think of them productively together.

Polan: Oh, I didn't mean—

Peucker: I thought maybe you could talk about that a bit.

Polan: I guess I should clarify. This is something we were talking about before the evening began.

Peucker: Right.

Polan: It wasn't so much that there's not an analogy. I think if there is a connection it is at the level of analogy, rather than some kind of—

Peucker: Right.

Polan: What I want to avoid is some sense of a natural destiny by which cinema and psychoanalysis had to be two practices of the twentieth century that came together that reflect something about our modernity, sort of the intellectual history of modernity. I think there's always a danger of saying there's this one modern phenomenon, and another modern phenomenon. They're both part of modernity and therefore must both express something deep. To my mind, any two things will have some points of contact, but that doesn't mean they're intimately, necessarily connected. I think there are historical moments where psychoanalysis comes together with cinema, but a lot of that's about historical contingency.

Levy: German expressionism provides the pallet kind of—

Polan: But that's for specific historical reasons. American film in the '40s is in part because a number of German émigrés were coming to the United States, having an awareness of European traditions. But there's not some natural vocation of the cinema to be psychoanalytic.

Peucker: Oh no, I don't think so.

Greenberg: However, and, again the Gabbards have made this point and I think it's a great point. Hollywood basically likes to tell great stories and make a fair amount of money, and if the movie's a great movie and makes a lot of money that's good, too. Psychiatrists are great for the purpose of pure narration. First of all, they encourage flashbacks, childhood memories: "And then I remembered..." They enable confrontations: "Oh, so you think you didn't love your mother? Well, let me tell you all about that." Krin and Glen call the psychiatrist—they use a term borrowed from Henry James, a *ficelle*. It's the marionette's strings. In that sense, psychiatrists are tremendous empowerers of interesting narratives, and always have been.

Merkin: That sounds so, unlikely, frankly, this connection between empowering and narrative. I did just write about *In Treatment*, and I think you can empower narrative if you have melodrama, such as a patient who's the most unlikely patient, bringing in an espresso machine. First of all, in real life I don't think that man would remotely be in therapy. He's resistant. That show has been relentlessly accused—not to me, to anyone who reads about it—of being unrealistic and melodramatic. It comes back to the same issue to me. I'm not sure analysis enables storytelling in a way that's accessible to a viewer. It enables internal storytelling between one person and another person, which isn't storytelling of a populist variety. It's a very idiosyncratic story that may not have application to anyone else.

Greenberg: I'm talking about just moving a narrative along.

Merkin: Yeah, understood.

Greenberg: There are other characters that move narratives along. It could be sea captains, but I think the Gabbard's point is that psychiatrists have a peculiar power in classic narrative. Whether you believe it or not is a whole other issue.

Polan: Picking up on your point, the intense subjectivity of any one particular therapeutic situation—

Merkin: Right.

Polan: I think that goes back to something you were talking about earlier, sort of the dogmatic side of this film, that here is this analyst who has the key.

Merkin: Literally the key.

Polan: Well, but also this idea that you present me with a figure, I will tell you the one symbolic meaning it has. In any particular psychoanalysis, water might mean any number of things for any number of people. But here, water always means this. Such and such always means that. I think that's part of the dogmatic side of this film.

Makari: It's part also of—after seventy years of attempting to represent psychoanalysis in different forms, this extraordinary disjuncture between popular representations of it and the field itself, which, once it moved to character analysis—which, by 1925 it had really started to do—and transference analysis and countertransference, rather than dream interpretation and catharsis, which was already kind of almost over by '25—it was very hard to represent that. That was slow, grinding, not very dramatic work.

Greenberg: That's absolutely true.

Polan: I also want to pick up on another thing. You said that the representation of psychoanalysis in something like *In Treatment* is, I think your term was 'unrealistic.'

Merkin: No, I personally wrote that I thought that it did an actually interesting job. I know the accusation has been made often by people who wouldn't step near analysis anyway, that it's too melodramatic and it has a lot of plot points that are—

Polan: Right. I guess what I wanted to simply say is that we have to make sure, or we need to be aware, that unrealistic or melodramatic representations can still be quite effective in the public arena.

Merkin: I agree.

Polan: I think one of the things that's interesting, especially given today's topic of the history of psychoanalysis and the history of cinema, is not only to ask how cinema represents psychoanalysis, but how in doing it the way it does, it actually becomes itself a constitutive part of the process of psychoanalysis. What I'm thinking of is people who, having grown up on the movie version of psychoanalysis, or who are now growing up on the television version of psychoanalysis, will let that, consciously or unconsciously, influence their understanding of the practice. There was an interesting piece in today's *L.A. Times* about *In Treatment*. We were talking earlier about people—both therapists and patients—who are finding their therapeutic situation influenced by watching the show. I have a friend, and this was actually before shows like that, who said she had to terminate one of her analyses because she found she wasn't transferring onto the analyst. She said, "I kept waiting for transference, and I kept thinking..." And my answer was if you know you're supposed to have transference, that's going to influence the coming of transference. If you think you're always going to cathect onto your—

Nersessian: To think you don't have transference, that's itself a transference.

Polan: Yes.

Nersessian: I just wanted to add a couple of things to the discussion. One is just to finish up on what Dr. Makari was saying, Freud ended up being okay with this movie, and the reason he ended up being okay with the movie was because Abraham got sick and Abraham needed money to pay for his medical treatment, and Freud thought that—. You see, something good came out of it anyhow, despite the fact that prior to that Ernest Jones had been very, very negative about this and had written numerous letters to Freud complaining about it. So he ended up being okay about it.

I thought that the sexual aspects, the impotence of the man or the difficulty he had in making his wife pregnant—and I don't know if at that time in psychoanalysis he would have been considered as impotent the way we have now erectile-something-dysfunction, but more that he had some kind of phobia or block to being able to impregnate his wife. It was nicely done. I think it would be very hard in watching the movie not to come to that conclusion because the clues are all over the place.

Greenberg: That's true.

Nersessian: The other thing that struck me, and I think people who know more about movies and moviemaking could comment on that because I don't know much about it, is that there were many, many—it was a little bit like taking fifteen things that Freud said in his *Interpretation of Dreams* about phobia and showing them, and fifteen things about something else and showing them, and then choosing out of that whole bunch of things only a few to make it into a cohesive narrative. I don't know if that was a result of the fact that they had numerous things that they had to edit and put together, or whether that was done on purpose. For example, they show a dream where the man is flying up and then flying out. Freud describes specifically in a chapter about typical dreams these flying dreams and falling dreams. So they show that. Then they show when Assisi is coming up, and when it's coming up there's this tower that looks exactly like a penis. So there's that symbolic—the idea that Freud had at that time about symbolic interpretations: a tower is a penis, a knife is a penis.

Makari: Let's not forget the wonderful pith helmet.

Peucker: The pith helmet.

Greenberg: You get an examination dream in there, too. There's at least one examination/trial dream, which he thought was a typical dream.

Nersessian: Right. And then another thing which is interesting is one of the things Freud describes: that if you have many it really represents one. There is a scene where there are four or five somethings, and he's one—maybe that connects the trial. So that's another element from Freud's ideas. Then there was the one where he flies and he goes through that statue that has been given as a gift, and twice they show him going through it—which is what Freud said, that in the dream that can happen. You can go through a solid structure, whereas in reality you can't. So they show a tremendous amount of theory, as was available in that time.

Psychoanalysis as presented in this movie is pretty true to what was being practiced in the 1915, 1910 period—a little bit like comparing a car from that period to a car that we have today. It didn't have all the complications and sophistications. It had the four wheels, it moved, it had an engine, but it didn't have much of the other things, and therefore, because it had to be focused, it focused on one problem. The problem was the man was having difficulty with his wife, so they managed—and at the end I think it's interesting because what he shows symbolically. I'm trying to build my own cardiovascular and running as much as I can and I saw this fellow who's kind of not in a very good shape running around. I thought if I did that I would have a heart attack right now. But he had no problem. He ran right up, picked up the kid. So they showed, you know, his potency had come back.

Greenberg: What I think is very real about the psychoanalysis, and that we can learn from it, is you see an analyst talking to a patient. If you read the records, these guys never stopped talking.

Nersessian: Lecturing.

Greenberg: Lecturing to the patient, talking, and the guy turning around. Whereas when it comes to the United States, what happens? You get that famous joke He must be alive. Who ever heard of a dead man with an answering service? That idea, the classic silent analyst. These guys couldn't stop talking. I think maybe we should talk more to people.

Nersessian: The only thing I differ from what has been said—when I first saw that analyst I thought he looked more like a criminal than a policeman.

Peucker: Well, I was thinking before, he is coded as a modern man. I was thinking about what you'd said about the avant-garde, because the style of his suit was very much a modern suit, if you compare it to the pinstripe of the patient.

Greenberg: That's true.

Peucker: And the spaces that he—well, I don't know about the spaces that he inhabits. Actually, the patient inhabits modern spaces. But he's coded as modern. I don't know, who can say who did what in putting this film together, but it may be that he also is made to look like a Marxist, because—

Greenberg: Really?

Peucker: Pabst actually was an avid reader of Freud for years before he made this film, and he was also a Marxist and was involved with various socialist groups in the US and then in France as well. So you have these various kinds of analysts, but this man is modern. I'm thinking too of Peter Gay's book on Weimar culture, in which he says the modern is what's refused, and psychoanalysis is the modern, because it is the scientific.

Merkin: He actually has a brand new book on modernism itself. I was going to say one thing about the visual parts of the movie. Although I said I thought the dissonance sometimes became comic, the visual parts of the movie were stronger than the blocks of narration, which became incredibly literal and took the opportunity to throw in every piece of jargon—or maybe it was still pre-jargon—that was possible to do. In that way I thought the visual was more sophisticated than the actual narration.

Greenberg: I agree.

Levy: Do you want to take a few questions from the audience?

Peucker: Sure.

A: Just another way of defending the film, to pick up on various strands that have been held by speakers already, the anticipation of that serialization, interminable, as Freud might have called television—*The Sopranos* and so on—it seems to me the film is very self-conscious about its

being a short narrative structure, and realizing that in a way it can't really do justice to analytic treatment. The emphasis on months, which of course isn't very long, but you get the feeling he's in there with the guy all day every day, so quite a bit of work is being done. But in particular the relationship between the visual and the only occasional blocks of words strike me as trying to represent the difference between the work going forward, going on and on and on, and the occasional 'aha,' which of course is an exaggeration. But at least there is the film's sense of the difference between the long *dura* of analysis and the need to turn it into a narrative structure. That's it.

Greenberg: That's a good point.

Makari: Well, just one quick point. The average analysis in Berlin in 1925 was nine months.

Peucker: Right. Gestation.

Makari: But one wonders whether this being a silent film wasn't an advantage, frankly.

Merkin: Is it often suggested that patients leave their home? That interested me.

Makari: No, that was news to me.

Greenberg: I wondered about that.

Nersessian: They would specifically say, if you were for example planning to get married, that you shouldn't get married until you finish your—

Merkin: But that's not the same as saying, please move out of your home for the next three months.

Nersessian: I guess they didn't trust him with his wife.

Merkin: They thought he might murder the wife.

Greenberg: Yeah, sure.

A: I had just wanted to make the comment that as a psychoanalyst and someone who likes to look at films through a sort of transference/countertransference paradigm, I had a kind of countertransference, I guess you would say, to this film as a whole that was a kind of fondness, a kind of appreciation for the courage that it probably took to try to do something like this, to not be sure how it was going to be received but to just give it a try. I also was very struck by a few things. We don't always have the goal of perfection for our patients, but we look sometimes at what is the most significant problem, what's going on, what is really energized. This man was in a tremendous panic because he couldn't give his wife a baby. He was furious at her for constantly being the person who reminded him of how awful that situation was. And every time he tried to think of having sex with her he thought about a knife. There were all of these times he was affectionately trying to rub the nape of her neck and he was trying to trim her hair and he cut her. So there was something that was a sexual and an aggressive activity put together. It was clear every time he looked at the knife he was reminded of this. Then finally at the very end

when he's telling the doctor how furious he was, and he goes "this, this, this, this," and he's obviously been able somehow to disentangle aggression and libido—

This is where the art was at the time. So I thought bravo, you did a good job. Maybe there's homosexual conflict, but maybe this man will look at that or maybe he never will have to. If he successfully can have a child and have a heterosexual life, maybe if there comes a time later on when he needs to look at his homosexual conflicts he'll be able to do it.

Nersessian: He can give you a call.

Makari: Hang out at a bar. I can tell you where to go.

A: But I just think the idea that we can't do everything, and we do what we can—. There was a piece of this film that really made me feel that way, and this is like eighty-odd years later, so either I'm back in the early twentieth century, or maybe that's where psychoanalysis can be—

Polan: Can I ask you a question?

A: Sure.

Polan: The epilogue for me was almost reverse of what you're saying. I agree with you that the film has this kind of we're stumbling towards helping him, we go bit by bit. But the ending, it seems to me, is about the achievement of a kind of perfection. I think the implication, even if it's ironic, is nothing more needs to be done, we've achieved some kind of—

Merkin: But it was clear the moment we saw 'epilogue' on the screen.

Polan: Yeah, no, it's discounted.

Merkin: Unlike you, I was reminded of *The Sound of Music* with that running down the hill, but it would have been a stronger film—. No, I guess it would not have, as Oprah would say, 'closure' if it didn't have the epilogue. But it does suggest all problems have been solved.

Levy: That's German romanticism for you.

Greenberg: But isn't that a movie? I mean many of the movies, if you look at them—it's changed, but what percentage of movies have had these, you know, uplifting endings? Everything is resolved.

Polan: Well, you do see these close-ups of a little bit of anxiety when he's doing the fishing moment, as if there are little things left over, but—

Nersessian: But, look, I think the point you are making is that he was able to get his wife pregnant and have a child. Whether he has deeper conflicts that have not been resolved is really at that point irrelevant because he did what he needed to do to keep his marriage and have his family.

Merkin: It's interesting, we're just having a discussion whether the epilogue is ironic, which I don't see it as within the movie itself, but you see it as an ironic comment.

Peucker: Yes, I do. First of all, it's totally separate from the narrative. It's not the product of that narrative. It's a timeline.

Merkin: You do need to show at least nine months later that this has transpired.

Peucker: But it isn't such a radical displacement, I mean literally displaced people. First of all, it's kitsch, you know? It's just not of a piece with the aesthetics of the film. It's in every way separated off. It's the epilogue. You don't have a cut or a fade and then nine months lapsed time can pass.

Merkin: It's brief, yeah.

Peucker: This is separate.

Greenberg: It's even labeled as such.

Peucker: Yeah, 'epilogue.'

Greenberg: In other movies things like this happen with a year later and you see the guy with nine kids in the Swiss chalet and there's no epilogue. It just sort of happens.

Peucker: The aesthetics of new objectivity is sort of like the lab. It's modern, it's rectangular. It's none of the kitsch of sort of peasant representations.

Merkin: I don't know. I don't agree with you. I think it's demanding a lot of the movie and of the period to say it's being ironic. To me it sort of leads from the movie.

Levy: Let's take a couple more questions.

A: There's one scene in the movie that I just find baffling to the extent that I wonder if I actually saw it. It really relates to what I think Professor Polan said at the outset about analogizing between police work and law enforcement and psychoanalysis in terms of solving problems. The scene is where the wife and the cousin go to the police station when he's missing and the desk officer calls in apparently to the chief inspector, who is inside. When the chief inspector comes out there's another guy in the room who, as he comes out, lies down on what clearly is a psychoanalytic couch. What is that all about?

Polan: I think that was a total projection on your part. I'm joking, I'm joking.

Nersessian: Every police inspector has one of those—

A: Right, but it was there, right?

Peucker: Yes, it's true.

A: Just on the common sense level, if this was meant to sort of normalize and educate people, bourgeois people, about psychoanalysis, and earlier some of you suggested it was odd that the analyst wasn't making sexual interpretations, would that not have seriously alienated a bourgeois audience in the '20s, to have an open discussion of sexuality, or am I wrong?

Peucker: I can't answer that question if you're looking at me.

A: Well, whoever.

Peucker: I think there are all sorts of scandalous topics addressed by these so-called 'education films' that were made during the '20s about sexual matters, about homosexuality, all sorts of things. That's the only way I can indirectly answer your question, by saying I know there are these other films. This is also a kind of scientific, educational film, so why not. But I think it's more interesting when one doesn't perhaps.

A: Yes.

Merkin: Also, I wonder would the sexuality have been more problematic for an audience than unconscious homicidal aggression? I'm not sure it would have been any harder for them.

Greenberg: Well it's interesting that the pre-Hays Office films at this time were pretty damn sexy in America.

Merkin: Yeah, but that's—

Greenberg: Very, very sexy.

Merkin: It could've allowed more in if it had wanted to do so, but maybe it was somehow protective of the audience.

Greenberg: Or of the filmmaker.

Peucker: But there was censorship.

A: Thank you all.

Levy: I see that this lady was next. Yes?

A: Well I just have a question, actually. Since the film traffics so heavily in classic surreal iconography, imagery, it doesn't feel right then that there would be anything ironic in that in terms of the epilogue. I take it, perhaps naïvely, as just pure fantasy. I don't see it as ironic, but just that it's not real, it's pure fantasy, in the simplest way that one can think of a dream—not all that sort of Cuisenaire treatment with dream sequences, but just the simplest dream.

Merkin: Right, well I don't find it ironic. You mean a fantasy sequence, not a—if you're talking about the narrative.

A: A fantasy in the way that, let's say, one dreams of having a dinner party, where everyone you love and care about most in the world can be there, but you know that that can never be for many

reasons. Everyone may not be alive, or everyone may not be speaking to one another, and so that can never happen. So just in that simple sense, a very direct sort of fantastical sense of picturing that dinner party—

Greenberg: It could be a fantasy that a person in therapy who had this wish—

Polan: Yeah, that's why I said it's—the epilogue might be the most psychoanalytic moment in the film, because it really is—it could be read as a complete wish fulfillment, a projection.

A: That's what I'm saying. That's how I took it.

A: It's probably a very naïve question that I have. I'm just going out of my head. I don't think I'm doing too well tonight. What about the satisfaction of the wife?

Merkin: Of a life or wife?

A: Of the wife. Forgive me, I may not have heard every word because I was sort of flying off there. The husband is supposed to be the same age as the cousin, approximately. He looks very much older. That's one question that I had. You hear nothing about whether she's happy with the situation or not happy. Can we be sure that the baby is not the cousin's? Maybe I'll just leave it at that.

Levy: That's an award winning interpretation.

Merkin: This is why Jews have matrilineal descent.

Polan: In terms of the wife's position, it's interesting that there are a couple of moments where we see her, or her point of view, without the husband around. I think you were alluding to the problems in the marriage that have led to this. There's a telling moment where he goes into his room and she stays out on the landing, and the camera just lingers on her, as if she's saying, I wish he had invited me into the room. I'm consigned to the other room. So it's also about her story as much as—not as much as—but it's her story to a certain degree.

Merkin: But I would still say who worried about the wife's story at that time? That was not the period of whether she was being content, lacking sexual gratification, or even emotional gratification. It was a little early for that. I mean it'd still be early for that.

Nersessian: I don't know about that, because that's the same period where—in fact, I think you probably could put it exactly at the period it was when Freud wrote to Breuer, or to somebody, about the patient—that what she needed was much penis. The woman suffered from hysteria and he felt that what she needed was a prescription of much penis.

A: I'd like to add one other thing that I'd forgotten before: how come the husband was made a scientist? The scientist is supposed to be rational—at least that's the stereotype—and here he was a hysteric.

Greenberg: Well that would counterpoint his craziness in a way, if he's this rational being with his test tubes and his beakers, and here he is—

Merkin: Although the little girl with the box of candy—where did that fit into anything?

A: I guess on that note, one of the most telling and sexually standout moments was when the camera lingers on the image of the cousin's shadow on the wife's lower half, and that kind of paralleled to when he emerges from his captivity from his mother's house. He comes out and then there's this domestic picture of bliss, of the cousin and the wife who kind of emerge from this back room. So I was wondering if it was less of the homosexual story or sub-story and more of an extramarital affair, which kind of is the precursor to his Lulu films and his exploration of—

Levy: Yes, and the hotel thing too.

A: Right, going to a hotel. That was supposed to be obvious.

Greenberg: Well, you do get that interesting—I forget who wrote it—*Idols of Perversity*, where when the society goes wrong they blame the woman. It's the woman who's the siren. All these women are lying around while this poor guy's just trying to figure out what's going on.

Merkin: I agree that it had more of a ménage a trios quality than—

A: A homosexual—

Merkin: I mean you can conjecture anything if you're an analyst and make it sound like it has—I kept thinking it was a ménage a trios going on here, so how come he hasn't noticed?

Levy: Thank you very much.