

Matteo Santarelli

Adorno and Freud Integration as a political problem

Abstract

This article examines Theodor W. Adorno's engagement with Freudian psychoanalysis, especially in the late 1940s and in the early 1950s. It argues that Adorno developed a powerful psychoanalytic interpretation of fascist mass phenomena, based on Freud's theory of identification. At the same time, he exposed the limitations of purely psychological explanations of social domination. The paper reconstructs Adorno's critique of two major attempts to integrate psychology and sociology: revisionist psychoanalysis (notably Karen Horney), and Talcott Parsons' theory of social action. In both cases, Adorno rejects integration as theoretically misleading and politically conformist, contending that it neutralizes the critical potential of psychoanalysis. According to Adorno, Freud is "right where he is wrong": his psychological one-sidedness preserves a critical insight into social power that is obscured by later sociological corrections. The article concludes by identifying immanent tensions in Adorno's own position, particularly his underestimation of Freud's dialectical concept of reality and of psychoanalytic practice. It suggests that these neglected dimensions could have strengthened Adorno's critical project.

Keywords

Psychoanalysis, Power, Political philosophy

Received: 29/04/2025

Approved: 30/07/2025

Editing by: Mario Farina

© 2026 The Author. Open Access published under the terms of the CC-BY-4.0.
matteo.santarelli4@unibo.it

Introduction

Adorno's engagement with Freud and psychoanalysis is a long and varied one, having undergone numerous stages. As Helmut Dahmer (2012: 201) pointed out, "Adorno had adopted the psychoanalytic mode of thinking early on; so his philosophical and sociological writings, as well as his theories on music and literature, are interwoven with Freudian concepts and theses". Since a competent reconstruction has already been done (Buck-Morss 1977; Bock 2018; Dahmer 2012; Molinari 2020; Micaloni 2023, among others), I will not attempt to replicate it here. Rather, I will focus on a specific period of Adorno's intellectual production – the early 1950s – on specific texts, and on a specific set of problems.

Specifically, I will start with Adorno's article *Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda*. I will show that this is an extremely insightful Freudian account of fascist propaganda, which nevertheless points to a problem that cannot be encompassed by Freudian psychoanalysis – i.e. the problem of the relationship between psychoanalytic and sociological explanations. This step requires confronting existing proposals for integration between psychological and social perspectives. The first is the so-called revisionist psychoanalysis, while the second is Parsons' theory of social action. After reviewing and assessing Adorno's critical approach to these two proposals, in the conclusions I will briefly focus on some limitations of Adorno's interpretation of psychoanalysis. I understand these limits as immanent limits, so to speak, and therefore I will not engage in an external critique of Adorno. Rather, I will try to show how Adorno somehow neglects two aspects that would have been fruitful for his own project. With regard to the first limitation, I am afraid that Adorno somehow downplays the dialectical power and significance of Freud's concept of reality. Furthermore, I think Adorno is too quick to dismiss psychoanalytic practice as conformist. This leads him, in my opinion, to downplay the philosophical and political importance of Freud's technical essays, while underestimating the significant role that post-Freudians like Melanie Klein could play for his own project (Allen 2020).

1. *Adorno's "Freudian theory" of "the pattern of fascist propaganda"*

Adorno's 1951 article *Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda* could be understood as a systematization of his previous work on the mass psychological base of fascism (see the classical Adorno *et al.*

1982). In this article, Adorno claims that the general frame of fascist propaganda needs to be examined in psychoanalytical terms. This he undertakes through a painstaking interpretation of Freud's 1921 essay *Mass psychology and the analysis of the ego*. Adorno's central point is as follows: although Freud's analysis was exclusively psychological, he provided a general analysis of the genesis of masses that applies in an effective way to fascist masses. As Adorno aptly points out, fascist masses cannot be defined merely as a biological phenomenon – e.g., considered mere manifestations of an alleged group instinct. Freud had already ruled out this possibility in his critical rejection of Trotter's theory of herd instinct. On the contrary, any definition of mass phenomena in the twentieth century must take into account why “prima facie individuals, the children of a liberal, competitive and individualistic society, conditioned to maintain themselves as independent, self-sustaining units” (Adorno 1982: 123) regress to the point of becoming members of masses, connected by a specific bond. According to Freud, the regressions that reduce fascist followers to group members are not driven by love – at least not uninhibited love. Rather, Freud suggests that the mechanism that allows members of the mass to set aside their rational interests and uncritically unite into an unreflective collective is identification. This means that the horizontal bond between members is a secondary effect of an earlier identification with the fascist leader.

In a nutshell, identification with the fascist leader is characterized by five features. 1) A sense of enlargement of the self of each member of the mass. 2) A sense of belonging shared by members of the mass. In Freudian technical terms, this happens because the fascist leader takes the place of the ego-ideal of the individual members, leading to three further important consequences. 3) The ego ideal – i.e. in part what Freud would call two years later the “super-ego” – is responsible for our self-criticism. Since this place is occupied by the leader, self-criticism will definitely be weakened and there will be room for legitimized impulsive mass behavior. Moreover, the leader somehow mediates between the masses and reality, producing a distortion of reality which may not be purely psychotic in the Freudian sense, but which certainly involves a psychotic tendency¹. 4) Since the person who takes the place of the ego-ideal is some-

¹ I thank Marvin Ester and Francesco Simoncini for pointing me to this problem. I agree with Ester that while the outcomes of this identification cannot be fully labelled as psychotic, there is still a psychotic tendency going on in this process. The depth of this

one like us – but better – and not an unattainable moral example, members of the fascist masses will constantly experience the narcissistic pleasure that comes from the correspondence between our actual and ideal selves. This is why the fascist leader “must at the same time work the miracle of appearing as an average person, just as Hitler posed as a composite of King Kong and the suburban barber” (Adorno 1982: 127). 5) Fascist masses are characterized by repressive egalitarianism:

The narcissistic gain provided by fascist propaganda is obvious. It suggests continuously and sometimes in rather devious ways, that the follower, simply through belonging to the in-group, is better, higher and purer than those who are excluded. At the same time, any kind of critique or self-awareness is resented as a narcissistic loss and elicits rage [...] “We are all in the same boat”; nobody should be better off; the snob, the intellectual, the pleasure seeker are always attacked. (Adorno 1982: 130)

Through shared identification with the leader and this mechanism of active exclusion, mass members can avoid admitting their mutual contempt.

But can a simple psychological account explain the emergence and development of fascism and the fascist masses? Adorno’s answer to this question is dialectical. Because they contradict the material interests of those who support them, fascist leaders must connect with and mobilize the “irrational, unconscious, regressive processes” (Adorno 1982: 134) of their audience. Psychological rather than factual and material orientation is essential for fascist propaganda. However, contrary to a fairly widespread assumption in liberal circles, the genesis of the fascist masses is not due to psychological factors – e.g. irrationality – alone, but to their active manipulation. Although “the fascist agitator doubtlessly takes up certain tendencies within those he addresses”, he does so as the “mandatory of powerful economic and political interests”. “Psychological dispositions in themselves do not actually cause ‘fascism’: rather, fascism defines a psychological area which can be successfully exploited by the forces which promote it for entirely nonpsychological reasons of self-interest” (Adorno 1982: 135). This point is made clear in Adorno’s essay on sociology and psychology: “There is no ‘neurotic personality of our time’

tendency will have to do with the level of distortion of reality involved in the different cases of leader identification and mass formation. Micaloni (2023) finds a similar psychotic tendency in the interplay between stereotypization and personalization in Adorno *et al.* (1982).

– the name alone is a diversionary tactic – rather the objective situation does determine the course regressions will take” (Adorno 1968b: 89).

Moreover, the fragile basis of the bond that unites the members of fascist groups and their ambiguous identification with the leader – someone like us, but omnipotent – must be continuously re-enacted: “It is probably the suspicion of this fictitiousness of their own ‘group psychology’ which makes fascist crowds so merciless and unapproachable. If they would stop to reason for a second, the whole performance would go to pieces, and they would be left to panic” (Adorno 1982: 135). The obsessive neurotics analyzed by Freud have their lives ruined by individual debilitating rituals designed to control aggressive thoughts that are never even remotely realized. But here, as Adorno notes, in fascist masses “the game has been socialized” (Adorno 1982: 137). Therapeutic experience and its failures taught Freud that regression must be controlled. In the fascist masses, however, regression has no framework: the game of hypnosis and identification is serious and coexists with the awareness that it is a game. This awareness must be silenced, which makes the game extremely serious. In obsessive-neurotic rituals, no one is seriously hurt – the obsessive-neurotic has wished for the death of a person she would never hurt, and she has to control this thought with rituals. But the Nazi game with its festive and ridiculous features involves the extermination of millions of people – Nazis included. A game made even more cruel by the need to prove that it is not a game.

Apart from Adorno’s inimitable wit and incisiveness, this essay looks like an excellent standard Freudian reading of fascism. However, Adorno is too familiar with sociology, Marxism, and political theory to accept Freud’s psychological hypothesis as a general explanation for the origins of fascist manipulation and the emergence of fascist masses as social phenomena. This is where things become interesting for the purposes of this paper.

2. Socializing Freud? Adorno vs. the illusion of integration

Indeed, the so-called revisionist psychoanalysis of authors such as Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan and Karen Horney also aimed to address Freud’s alleged psychological one-sidedness by making Freudian psychoanalysis more socially oriented. This means that these authors all emphasized the importance of social factors in both the formation of the self

and the development of psychopathologies, in opposition to Freud's alleged methodological and theoretical individualism.

But revisionist psychoanalysis is a classic target of critical theory. Marcuse has an entire chapter on this subject in *Eros and civilization*. According to Marcuse (1955), revisionists undermine the critical potential of psychoanalysis, which involves exposing moral and political taboos as compromises that contribute to the survival of systems of domination. This is achieved by minimizing or rejecting the most controversial Freudian concepts – such as primary narcissism, the death drive and the killing of the primal father – and limiting the importance of the ontogenetic and phylogenetic past, in order to affirm the centrality of the present. Finally, interpersonal relationships are assumed to be central in order to minimize the split between the individual and society. In 1942 Horkheimer – at the time director of the Institute for Social Research – wrote a letter in which he acknowledged his debt to Freud, and accused two prominent revisionists, Fromm – who had left the Institute in 1939 – and Horney, of having regressed to commonsense psychology and of having psychologized culture and society (in Jay 1973: 102).

Adorno is no exception. As Nan-Nan Lee (2014: 311) notes, Adorno's critique of the ideological compromise of the psychological theories of the 1920s and their complicity with the naturalization of the dominant political and economic power in his unpublished doctoral thesis *Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transzendentalen Seelenlehre* (1927) clearly anticipates his later critique of revisionism. But a critical and public distancing from so-called revisionism took place on 27 April 1946 at the first meeting of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society, where Adorno gave a lecture on the relationship between critical theory and psychoanalysis, published six years later in 1952 under the title *The revisionist psychoanalysis*.

In this text Adorno explicitly targeted Karen Horney – even though there are good reasons to think he is also referring to Fromm. Carvalho (2024) noted that in some passages Adorno removed direct references to Fromm – with whom he had a bitter quarrel after the publication of Fromm's 1935 essay against the myth of the therapist's neutrality – leaving only explicit references to Horney, who has a close relationship with Fromm. In a series of works – and in particular in a 1939 essay on *New ways in psychoanalysis* – Horney had developed a multi-leveled attack on Freudian theory. First, Freud is accused of having biologized certain aspects of his historical and social context, transforming them into sup-

posed characteristics of human nature. Secondly, whereas Freud emphasized the intrapsychic causes of the genesis of neurosis, Horney saw neurosis as an inadequate defense against threats to the basic needs for security and satisfaction engendered by certain types of social environment. In the case of Western market societies, the pathogenic feature lies in the dominance of the principle of competition.

Apparently, there is some common ground between Adorno's and Horney's perspectives. So-called revisionism seems to take into account the social dimension that Freud's individual-psychological focus neglected. For instance, Horney's focus on the pathogenic power of social and economic competition seems to offer an explanation that does not limit itself to the psychological dimension of social phenomena, but introduces some specific social features as key factors. And yet that's precisely where Adorno's problems with Horney, and more generally with trying to socialize Freudian psychoanalysis, begin. Let's concentrate on a few fundamental aspects.

First, according to Adorno, the split between the individual and the social is false in theory and in the abstract – and Horney is right about this – although it is practically true (Micaloni 2023: 210) in the dominant social and political system: “What psychology takes to be mere rationalization is often socially necessary. In an antagonistic society each individual is non-identical with himself, both social and psychological character at once, and, because of the split, maimed from the outset” (Adorno 1968: 85). Second, Horney and the revisionists criticize the excessive Freudian emphasis on the internal split of the self and the constitutive weakness of the ego. They counter this idea with a model that emphasizes the totality of the personality and its need for integration. However, in Adorno's view, this emphasis on integration and synthesis rather than splitting and analysis is to be rejected both theoretically and politically. It must be rejected theoretically insofar as it contradicts the revisionist attempt to socialize psychoanalysis. Precisely because the social and psychic levels are intertwined, it becomes controversial to expect the individual to develop a capacity for psychic integration in a disintegrated society. On an ethical-political level, even if this integration were possible, it would be absolutely morally reprehensible.

The goal of the ‘well-integrated personality’ is objectionable because it expects the individual to establish an equilibrium between conflicting forces which does not obtain in existing society – nor should it because those forces are not of equal moral merit. People are taught to forget the objective conflicts which necessarily

repeat themselves in every individual, instead of being helped to grapple with them. (Adorno 1967: 83)

Integration would be a false reconciliation with an unreconciled world, as well as a failure to recognize the internal divisions of the self as moments of self-division that cannot be resolved within the confines of the psyche (Adorno 1968: 83). On the contrary, Freudian psychoanalysis was right where it was wrong. Both the hypostatization of the conflict opposing the individual, as well as the social and the structural conception of the internal heterogeneity of the individual psyche are mistaken if understood as biological data. Yet it is precisely in this hyper-psychological and supposedly pre-social characterization that these aspects of Freudian thought retain a powerful political value as a critique of the functioning of contemporary societies. Vice versa, the theoretically correct emphasis on the social dimension of psychic phenomena by Horney and the revisionists paradoxically leads to the false hope of a possible integration of the psyche in a disintegrated society, and thus ultimately, to an instrument of social and political conformism. Instead of the totality of character, at most there can be a system of scars “which are integrated only under suffering, and never completely. The infliction of these scars actually is, not the illusory continuity, but the form which the society asserts itself in the individual which, to their credit, the revisionists foresee from the shocking structure of individual experience” (Adorno 2014: 328). If the alienating and traumatizing character of socialization is not an invariable natural and biological fact, it is nonetheless a social fact. Paradoxically, the socialization of the object of psychoanalytic study risks losing sight of... society! To sum up, according to Adorno, revisionists adopted the conformist tendencies in Freud’s writings on treatment techniques, disregarding his radical theory of drives. They oriented therapy towards helping patients properly adjust to the realities of their social ‘milieu’ (Dahmer 2012: 101).

But Horney and the so-called revisionists are not the only ones who have tried to socialize Freud. One of the most significant attempts in this sense is that of Talcott Parsons, probably the most influential sociologist in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. From Adorno’s point of view, Parsons’ attempt seems, at least at first sight, to be more appealing than the revisionists’ one. In fact, Parsons has something that psychoanalysts – however revisionist and however interested in the political and social dimension – do not have and cannot have: namely, a theory of social systems. Parsons uses psychoanalysis to integrate his theory of social

and cultural systems with a theory of personality. In particular, Parsons believes that Freud, along with Durkheim, Mead and Cooley, contributed to analyzing the process of internalization of role and status, values and norms, crucial to understanding social and cultural systems. For Parsons, Freud is an author who allows the systemic study of society to be integrated with an analysis of the motivations that lead social actors to act in ways that preserve – or challenge – the social order.

Parsons' use of Freud seems to evade two of Adorno's criticisms of revisionism. First, instead of socializing psychology from the outset, Parsons relies on the need for a methodological distinction between psychology and sociology – which reflects the distinction between social systems, cultural systems and personality systems. Adorno's criticism of the uncritical flattening of the psychological into the sociological – or worse, vice versa – is dodged. Second, given his primary sociological interest, Parsons is not at all concerned with the development of an integrated individual personality, neither as a normative nor as a therapeutic goal.

Yet, in his dense essay on sociology and psychology originally published in 1955, Adorno expresses his two main dissatisfactions with Parsons's project. First, the division of labor between sociology and psychology – reflected in the distinction between the social system, the cultural system and the personality system – is yet another way of downplaying the tension between the individual and the social. Unlike the revisionists, in Parsons's project this integration is achieved in terms of a division of labor between different disciplines and methodologies. But the dichotomy between society and the psyche is the effect of a false consciousness which is "also true". Therefore, it cannot be removed methodologically, as it is based on an objective alienation: "People are incapable of recognizing themselves in society and society in themselves because they are alienated from each other and the totality" (Adorno 1967: 69). Or again: "The postulate that the sociological theories of motivation must tally with established findings about personality structure substitutes a harmonious object for a contradictory one in the interests of the unity of scientific explanation; for, while remaining products of the social totality, individuals, as such products, no less necessarily enter into conflict with the totality" (Adorno 1967: 72).

Second, in order for psychoanalysis to contribute fruitfully to his complex study of social systems and subsystems, Parsons must follow the revisionist path and thus pre-socialize Freud. As Matteo Bortolini (2005) points out, Parsons recognizes that he has distanced himself from Freud, culturalizing and sociologizing psychic economy to a much greater extent

than the founder of psychoanalysis (see for instance Parsons 1952). This can be seen in the complete socialization of the super-ego (which in Freud is the spokesperson of society in the self, but still remains permanently out of phase with society) and in the transformation of the id into a reserve of libidinal energy, completely undifferentiated, available to the ego and the super-ego. This latter move – as Adorno points out – is in sharp contrast with Freud’s idea that “inside the instinctual dynamic, reality is ‘translated’ into the language of the id. If there is any truth in Freud’s notion of the archaic and indeed possibly ‘timeless’ nature of the unconscious, then concrete social circumstances and motivations cannot enter it without being altered and ‘reduced’” (Adorno 1968: 79-80).

Conclusion. Was Adorno more Freudian than the Freudians?

So, what are we to do with Adorno’s criticism of the attempts to socialize Freud and psychoanalysis? Adorno’s strategy can be summarized in the dialectical *Witz* that “Freud was right where he was wrong” (Adorno 2014: 334). More precisely: “Psychoanalysis in its most authentic and by now already obsolete form comes into its own as a report on the forces of destruction rampant in the individual amidst a destructive society” (Adorno 1968: 95). This is not an acritical endorsement of Freudian psychoanalysis, but this is the key to Adorno’s skepticism towards various attempts to correct Freud’s alleged psychological one-sidedness by socializing psychoanalysis. In the case of both revisionist psychoanalysis and Parsons’s sociology, this socialization of Freud’s thought takes place at the very high cost of theoretical inaccuracy and of softening Freud’s radical critical potential. This means that Freud’s psychological and individual one-sidedness has more to say about concrete social processes of power and domination than did his interpreters, who explicitly took into account the social and political dimension of psychology: “There is more hope that concentration on the particular isolate will break through its monadic crust to disclose the universal mediation at its core than that the conceptual synthesis of real decomposition could actually stop the rot” (Adorno 1967: 73).

So, does it mean that Adorno was ultimately more Freudian than the Freudians? In the very last part of this paper, I will very briefly discuss some of Adorno’s criticisms of Freud to show how they paradoxically involve downplaying some dialectical aspects of Freud’s thought that would

appear, on the contrary, to resonate with Adorno's profound reading of psychoanalysis.

The first criticism concerns the concept of reality. Sometimes Adorno seems to ascribe to Freud an idea of reality as merely factual reality: "In making the leap from psychological images to historical reality, he forgets what he himself discovered – that all reality undergoes modification upon entering the unconscious – and is thus misled into positing such factual events as the murder of the father by the primal horde" (Adorno 1968: 80). In this sense, Freud is a victim of his own myth (Adorno here refers to Kardiner) – i.e. he is under the spell of his own "translation of the intrapsychic into the dubiously factual". This "all too refutable" attempt to "gain a foothold in irrefutable facts" is thus a dangerous remnant of Freudian positivism. But even worse, this also involves a moral critique of the impulsive and imaginative tendencies that do not find adequate expression in concrete reality. In Zaretsky's (2015) jargon: Freud's concept of reality seems to be closely linked to a moralistic ethics of maturity, which fences off everything that does not fit into the conventional and standard concept of reality within a neurotic, purely psychic reality: "The analyst who takes pride in his realism thus becomes an out-and-out dogmatist the moment he disregards the real, objective aspects of rationalization in favor of its closed, immanently psychological context" (Adorno 1968: 82). This is why the psychoanalytic concept of reality runs the risk of slandering as mere narcissism any attitude that "distances itself from the realm of the immediate, of ends and means", and thus "positions itself squarely in an old anti-intellectual bourgeois tradition". The reference to the principle of reality is thus subordinated to an acritical endorsement of reality as it is. Freudian psychoanalysis, "which once set out to break the power of the father image, sometimes firmly takes the side of the fathers" (Adorno 1968: 92). While in this specific passage he is referring to Anna rather than Sigmund Freud, Adorno probably believes that the entire psychoanalytic concept of reality falls within the scope of this critique.

Adorno's position can easily be grounded in specific textual evidence. An example of this conformist use of the principle of reality is Freud's comment on love and psychotherapy reported by Adorno at the end of his essay on revisionist psychoanalysis:

However highly he may prize love, he must prize even more highly the opportunity to help his patient over a decisive moment in her life. She has to learn from him to overcome the pleasure principle, to give up a gratification which lies to

hand but is not sanctioned by the world she lives in, in favor of a distant and perhaps altogether doubtful one, which is, however, socially and psychologically unimpeachable. (Freud 1914b, in Adorno 2014: 337)

However, in other essays, Freud appears to adopt a more dialectical approach to reality, which Adorno seems to overlook or underestimate (Freud 1914a; Freud 1937a; Freud 1937b). These essays show how Freud introduces, albeit sketchily, the idea of “historical” truth and reality precisely in order to take account of the real, objective aspects of the material that emerges from the therapeutic work, without dismissing it as purely psychical reality. Freud recognizes – as does Adorno – that the mere dichotomy between psychical and merely external reality does not account for the kind of reality that is more important in the therapeutic context. It is precisely this intermediate and ambiguous status of reality that makes psychoanalysis critical. This could not be the case if reality were either purely psychic or merely external and uninteresting. Moreover, Freud introduces the concept of historical reality and truth precisely in order to address one of Adorno’s main concerns, namely the fear that truth will be conflated with genesis, instead of “thinking genesis and validity in their simultaneous unity and difference” (Adorno 1968: 93). In other essays, Adorno appears to be fully aware of the dialectical depth of Freud’s concept of reality, not only in his explicit definitions, but also in the manner in which he employs it. As Mario Farina rightly points out, this is made clear in Adorno’s comments on Kafka and Freud: “As the primal scene’s reality lies in its effect on individual development, Kafka’s literary works do not allude to an actual belief in what they represent. Rather, they indicate the fruitfulness and effectiveness of the interpretation that Kafka takes literally” (Farina 2026: 142).

To sum up, Adorno’s treatment of reality in the aforementioned essays seems partially disappointing, mainly because an acknowledgement of Freud’s dialectical reading of these concepts would have been in keeping with the spirit of Adorno’s own use of psychoanalysis. My tentative hypothesis is that this is related to Adorno’s rejection of psychoanalytic practice – at least at this specific moment in his intellectual career. Regardless of its validity, this attitude seems to involve – at least in the group of texts analyzed in this paper – a relative lack of interest in Freud’s technical essays, such as *Remembering, repeating and working through*, *Analysis terminable and interminable*, *Constructions in analysis* among others.

But it is in these essays that Freud's concept of reality becomes more dialectical and less prey to Adorno's critique of obsolete positivism and moralism.

Finally, a similar analogous problem can be detected in Adorno's kind of selective neglect of those post-Freudians who would fit better into his own project. The most significant example in this sense is Melanie Klein. As Amy Allen (2020) recently pointed out, Klein's dialectical concept of integration provides an effective means of sidestepping the political and theoretical issues identified by Adorno. From Klein's perspective, integration is not related to the myth of the illusory reconstruction of a fully harmonious and reconciled self within an alienated and fragmented social and political context. Instead, integration requires our ability to cope with ambivalence and ambiguity rather than resorting to defensive mechanisms to satisfy our urge for reconciliation and clear-cut moral distinctions. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the most ambitious and ground-breaking attempt to read Adorno and the psychoanalytic tradition together – that is, Amy Allen's 2020 book *Critique on the couch* – focuses on the "technical" concept of transference and ascribes a prominent role to Melanie Klein. However, these issues should not be viewed as evidence of external criticism questioning the value of Adorno's interpretation of psychoanalysis. Instead, they should be seen as signs pointing towards unexpected and creative future developments in the relationship between Adorno and psychoanalysis.

Bibliography

Adorno, Th. W., *Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda* (1951), in *The essential Frankfurt school reader*, ed. A. Arato, E. Gephardt, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 1982, pp. 118-37.

Adorno, Th. W., *Revisionist psychoanalysis* (1952), Engl. transl. N.-N. Lee, "Philosophy and Social criticism", n. 3 (2014), pp. 326-8.

Adorno, Th. W., *Sociology and psychology* (Part 1), Engl. transl. I. Wohlfarth, "New Left Review", n. 1/46 (November-December 1967), pp. 67-80.

Adorno, Th. W., *Sociology and psychology* (Part 2), Engl. transl. I. Wohlfarth, "New Left Review", n. 1/47 (January-February 1968), pp. 79-97.

Adorno, Th. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D. J., Sanford, N., *The authoritarian personality* (1950), ed. M. Horkheimer, S. Flowerman, New York, Norton, 1982.

Allen, A., *Critique on the couch. Why critical theory needs psychoanalysis*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2020.

- Bock, W., *Dialektische Psychologie. Adornos Rezeption der Psychoanalyse*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2018.
- Bortolini, M., *L'immunità necessaria. Talcott Parsons e la sociologia della modernità*, Roma, Meltemi, 2005.
- Buck-Morss, S., *The origin of negative dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*, New York, Free Press, 1977.
- Carvalho, B., *Adorno and Fromm. A debate on psychoanalytic clinical practice*, "International Forum of Psychoanalysis", n. 33/2 (2024), pp. 126-38.
- Dahmer, H., *Adorno's view of psychoanalysis*, "Thesis Eleven", n. 111/1 (2012), pp. 97-109.
- Farina, M., *Adorno e Kafka. La storia naturale dell'umano*, "Studi di estetica", special issue (2026), pp. 137-153.
- Freud, S., *Remembering, repeating and working-through* (1914), in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xii, London, Hogarth Press, 1958, pp. 145-56.
- Freud, S., *Analysis terminable and interminable* (1937), in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xxiii, London, Hogarth Press, 1964a, pp. 209-53.
- Freud, S., *Constructions in analysis* (1937), in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xxiii, London, Hogarth Press, 1964b, pp. 255-70.
- Fromm, E., *The crisis of psychoanalysis. Essays on Freud, Marx, and social psychology*, Boston, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Fromm, E. *The social determinants of psychoanalytic therapy*, Engl. transl. E. Falzeder, "International Forum of Psychoanalysis", n. 9/3 (2000), pp. 14-65.
- Horney, K., *The neurotic personality of our time*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1937.
- Horney, K., *New ways in psychoanalysis*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1939.
- Jay, M., *Dialectical imagination*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Lee, N.-N., *Sublimated or castrated psychoanalysis? Adorno's critique of the revisionist psychoanalysis. An introduction to 'The revisionist psychoanalysis'*, "Philosophy and Social criticism", n. 40/3 (2014), 309-38.
- Marcuse, H., *Eros and civilization. A philosophical inquiry into Freud*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1955.
- Micaloni, L., *Inconscio e critica. Psicoanalisi, società e politica nella Scuola di Francoforte*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis, 2023.
- Molinari, F., *L'inconscio disincantato. Il giovane Adorno tra filosofia della vita e psicoanalisi*, tesi di dottorato, Università di Urbino, 2021.
- Parsons, T., *The superego and the theory of social systems*, "Psychiatry. Journal for the study of interpersonal processes", n. 15/1 (1952), pp. 15-25.
- Sullivan, H. S., *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1953.
- Zaretsky, E., *Political Freud. A history*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015.