Sublimated or castrated psychoanalysis? Adorno’s critique of the revisionist psychoanalysis: An introduction to ‘The Revisionist Psychoanalysis’

Nan-Nan Lee
Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL, USA

Abstract
In ‘The Revisionist Psychoanalysis’, Adorno criticizes the neo-Freudian psychoanalysis for losing the critical edge of Freud’s theory with regard to social critique. Neo-Freudians whom Adorno calls ‘revisionists’ criticize Freud for his ‘mechanical’ views of the human psyche and for his over-emphasis on sexual libido. They reverse Freud’s dictum – ‘where id was, there ego shall be’ – by stressing the importance of development of the ego, and thus that of its adaptive functions. For revisionists, the aim of psychoanalytic practice is to help analysands be better adapted to their social environment. According to Adorno, the revisionist psychoanalysis is suspected of conformism, and implicitly advocating an ideology that what is existent is the best of all possible worlds. The emphasis on adaption actually weakens the ego instead of strengthening it – leaving it vulnerable to the whim of social conditions, and that of instinctual impulses. Most importantly, it weakens individuals’ ability to think critically and makes them susceptible to ideological and psychological manipulation against their own rational interests.

Keywords
Theodor Adorno, Critical Theory, neo-Freudianism, psychoanalysis, social psychology

Corresponding author:
Nan-Nan Lee, Department of Philosophy, Saint Xavier University, 3700 West 103rd Street, Chicago, IL 60655, USA.
Email: lee@sxu.edu
Introduction: The historical context

In 1927, Adorno encountered Freud’s writing for the first time while vacationing on the Italian Riviera.¹ The intensity of his interest in Freud’s psychoanalysis as a potential epistemological model for critique resulted in his failed Habilitationsschrift [thesis] ‘Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transcendentalen Seelenlehre’ [The Concept of the Unconscious in the Transcendental Theory of the Psyche].² Throughout his life, Adorno continues to utilize Freud’s psychoanalytic concepts in his cultural and social critique. The following statement testifies not only to what Adorno perceives as the critical power of Freud’s psychoanalysis, but also to one of his own theoretical orientations. He states: ‘To be able to come to terms with fascism, it was, therefore, considered necessary to complete social theory by psychology, and particularly by analytically oriented social psychology.’³ What Adorno says about the empirical studies by the Institute for Social Research – ‘These studies are unthinkable without the impulse of the Freudian psychology and making use of diverse Freudian concepts’⁴ – is equally applicable to Adorno’s own critical theory.

From the beginning, Adorno was not interested in therapeutic aspects of Freud’s theory. Unlike some members of the Institute for Social Research, he was never psychoanalysed.⁵ He was interested in Freud’s theory as an epistemology without its therapeutic aims and biological hypotheses. He sees a similarity between transcendental analysis of the possibility of knowledge and psychoanalysis: ‘We see in psychoanalysis an appropriate method for the knowledge of unconscious events, we chose it precisely because it meets the demands of a particular level of transcendental method, but also because it alone of all psychological disciplines focused on the analysis of intra-temporal relationship of consciousness’ (BUTS: 313–14). He also sees a possibility of a model of ideological critique in Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. In Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transcendentalen Seelenlehre, he criticizes psychological theories in the 1920s, such as characterology, personality psychology and the gestalt theory, for serving an ideological function, that is, ‘they supplement what the reality lacks, and at the same time glorify the faults of society’ (ibid.: 318). By validating the power of the unconscious of the individual, these theories abstract from the dominant economic factors an independent psychic realm which is free from economic pressure as if it were, as Adorno puts it, ‘a summer resort of consciousness’ (ibid). They create an illusion that individuals are independent of their social relations and economic productions, and such an illusion allows them to escape into a private domain rather than engaging themselves with the possibility of a fundamental change of society (ibid.: 319). These theories not only divert attention from the harsh social reality but also defend society when the economic enterprise goes beyond reasonable measure and strives for power blindly. They use force of nature of the unconscious power to justify endless selfish exploitations and the most pernicious imperialism. For Adorno, It is just this unconscious power that needs to be demystified (ibid.).

Furthermore, Adorno argues that one should understand the unconscious as a form of concept formation which always and exclusively has its cause in consciousness, and must be revealed such: ‘[S]o far as dark instinctual force and claim of power hide behind unconscious events, it is important not only to arrive at a demystification of the concept
of the unconscious ... but also at the knowledge of the unconscious events themselves’ (BUTS: 320). Such demystification is the potential of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory as an ideological critique. Adorno declares that ‘psychoanalysis is conducive to this knowledge of the unconscious without ... a metaphysical pathos’. Psychoanalytic knowledge aims at ‘the resolution of unconscious events, and thus is a powerful weapon against any metaphysics of drive and deification of purely dull organic life’ (ibid.). In other words, it is a powerful weapon against the ideology that the existing economic system springs from natural forces of the drives of the individual. In his first lengthy writing – Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transzendentalen Seelenlehre – Adorno undertook an ideological critique of psychological theories at the time which anticipated his critique of the revisionism later. However, the de-mystification of the concept of the unconscious through psychoanalytic knowledge has its limitation. The formation of the unconscious force is conditioned by circumstances of the material world which cannot be understood through psychoanalytic knowledge alone (ibid: 321–2).6 The de-mystification of the concept of the unconscious requires not only an analytical knowledge of the psyche but also a critical theory of society.

As early as in the 1920s, the Institute for Social Research was aware of the limitation of orthodox Marxism to account for the never-materialized proletarian revolution.7 The institute sought to incorporate Freudian theory into its Critical Theory of society in order to supplement the Marxist analyses of objective conditions of society with a subjective theory of human motivation. From the 1930s on, the institute increasingly utilized Freudian psychoanalytic concepts to offer an explanation of the rise of fascism,8 and this utilization culminated in the publication of a very Freudian text, The Authoritarian Personality,9 and Adorno was the lead researcher.

According to Martin Jay, ‘It was ... primarily through Fromm’s work that the Institut first attempted to reconcile Freud and Marx’ (DI: 88). However, Erich Fromm, the only member of the institute who was a trained psychoanalyst, was gradually disenchanted with and moved away from the Freudian orthodoxy. He criticized Freud for his biologism and emphasized the social influence on the character formation, so much so that he jettisoned the libido theory altogether. This change of his psychoanalytic approach, according to Fromm himself, was due to his clinical observations which did not confirm Freud’s libido theory. His revisionism created a fundamental theoretical disagreement between him and members of the institute at the time. In 1939, his relation with the institute was formally severed.

Horkheimer, the director of the institute, in his 1942 letter to Lowenthal expressed it thus:

We really are deeply indebted to Freud and his first collaborators. His thought is one of the Bildungsmächte [foundation stones] without which our own philosophy would not be what it is ... Psychology without libido is in a way no psychology and Freud was great enough to get away from psychology in its own framework. Psychology in its proper sense is always psychology of the individual. Where this is needed, we have to refer orthodoxyally to Freud’s earlier writings. The set of concepts connected with the Todestrieb [the death instinct] are anthropological categories [in the German sense of the word]. Even where we do not agree with Freud’s interpretation and use of them, we find their objective intention is deeply right and that they betray Freud’s great flair for the situation. His development
has led him to conclusions not so far from those of the other great thinker of the same period, Bergson. Freud objectively abstained himself from psychoanalysis, whereas Fromm and Homey get back to commonsense psychology and even psychologize culture and society.10

Revisionism, characterized by Horkheimer as a ‘psychology without libido’, not only undermines the critical potential of Freud’s theory, it also reduces psychoanalysis to a common-sense psychology. Its psychologization of culture and society is suspected of ideological justification of the existing society in the sense that it attributes the objective social ills to the subjective pathology of the individual.

As Martin Jay points out, what underlines the institute’s theoretical disagreement with the revisionists is its ‘refusal to collapse psychology into sociology or vice versa’ due to ‘[the] stress on nonidentity so central to Critical Theory’ (DI: 103). Adorno, who joined the institute soon after the departure of Fromm, was the first one who publicly addressed the disagreement. On 27 April 1946, he delivered a speech criticizing the revisionist psychoanalysis at the first meeting of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society. This speech was published in 1952 as ‘The Relationship of Psychoanalysis to Social Theory’ in *Psyche: A Journal of Depth Psychology and Anthropology in Research and Practice*.11 The same text was also published as ‘The Revisionist Psychoanalysis’ in Adorno’s *Gesammelte Schriften*.12 Adorno’s critique of the revisionists in this writing reflects both his own ideas in *Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transzendentalen Seelenlehre* and those of Horkheimer in the letter to Lowenthal. He takes Karen Horney as the representative of revisionism13 and focuses his critique mainly on her book entitled *The New Ways of Psychoanalysis*14 published in 1939.15

**Karen Horney’s revisionism**

In *The New Ways of Psychoanalysis* Horney offers her most systematic critique of Freud. Her criticisms of Freud focus on his theory of libido and instincts, which she finds most problematic. She argues that the libido theory is a form of biological determinism. Not only does she reject this theory but she also ‘consider[s] Freud’s instinctivistic orientation as one of the greatest handicaps to psychoanalysis’ (*NWP*: 24). For Horney, even without the theory of libido, psychoanalysis can still maintain its essence: ‘As a matter of fact, one can drop not only the physiological origin of the “pre-genital” drives but even the doctrine that these are sexual in nature without relinquishing the essence of the whole theory’ (ibid.: 69). Furthermore, she accuses Freud for generalizing characteristics he observed in late-19th-century Europe as human nature (ibid.: 40): ‘Freud ascribes to biological factors the trends prevailing in the middle-class neurotic of western civilization, and hence regards them as inherent in “human nature”’ (ibid.: 168).16

Horney argues that Freud’s evidence for infantile sexuality, erogenic zones, and certain character traits derives from the basis of shaky analogies and generalizations (*NWP*: 52). For her, the entire libido theory rests on the assumption ‘that man is driven to fulfill certain primary, biologically given needs, and that these are powerful enough to exert a decisive influence on his personality and this on his life as a whole’ (ibid.: 70). This assumption not only is unproven (ibid.: 52), but also is the real danger of the libido theory. The danger is threefold. First, it gives rise to ‘a distorted view on human...
On relationships, on the functions of the ego, on the nature of neurotic conflicts, neurotic anxiety, and on the role of cultural factors (ibid.: 70). Second, it is guilty of reducing the whole to a part, i.e. of attempting to understand a person from only one aspect of his being without taking into consideration various trends and their interrelationship. Third, it puts unnecessary limitation on psychotherapy. By taking biological factors as the ultimate determinant of the human psyche, ‘one is bound to come to rock bottom in therapy because, as Freud points out, one cannot change what is determined by biology’ (ibid.: 71). According to Horney, Freud’s biologism affects his views of the genesis of neurosis, the ego, the role of cultural factors in character formation, and the significance of childhood memories.

The major external factor that causes neurosis, according to Freud, is the frustration of instinctual satisfaction. In order for civilization to exist and continue, culture in general has to impose restrictions on libidinal gratifications and curb destructive drives: ‘civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts. This “cultural frustration” dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings.’

Horney, who disavows Freud’s theory of libido, argues that neuroses are caused not by the conflict between the ego and the id, but by disturbed human relationships which give rise to feelings of alienation, hostility, fear and diminished self-confidence. These feelings ultimately create ‘a basic feeling of helplessness toward a world conceived as potentially dangerous’ (NWP: 173). Neuroses are rigid and inadequate defenses against this feeling and the anxiety it arouses in order to pursue safety and satisfaction (ibid.). Horney argues that the strength of the drives is not instinctual search for pleasure as Freud claims, but is derived from basic needs for safety and satisfaction: ‘Man is ruled not by the pleasure principle alone but by two guiding principles: safety and satisfaction’ (ibid.: 73). The cultural factor in the western civilization that engenders potential hostility among human beings and thus threatens their sense of safety and satisfaction is the economic principle of competition. ‘As we know, competitiveness not only dominates our relations in occupational groups, but also pervades our social relationships . . . thus carrying the germs of destructive rivalry, disparagement, suspicion, begrudging envy into every human relationship’ (ibid.: 173). The principle of competition undermines human solidarity, creates personal fear, insecurity and lack of self-confidence. The neurotic conflicts do not arise from the conflict between the ego and the id, and ‘man does not collide with his environment as inevitably as Freud assumes; if there is such a collision, it is not because of his instincts but because the environment inspires fears and hostilities’ (Ibid.: 191). There is nothing inherent in human beings that creates neurotic conflicts, these are results of coping with the unfavorable environmental factors. According to Horney, ‘the neurotic trends . . . though in some ways [they] . . . provide a means of coping with the environment, in other ways enhance [man’s] conflicts with it’ (Ibid.). In other words, neurosis is not a result of the conflict between the ego and the id, but an unsuccessful coping mechanism to ensure safety and satisfaction. This statement summarizes both her criticism of Freud and her own view on the genesis of neurosis: ‘Instead of recognizing that the conflicting trends in neuroses are primarily engendered by the conditions under which we live, [Freud] regards them as instinctual trends which are only modified by the individual environment’ (ibid.: 168).
Horney also characterizes Freud’s thinking as mechanistic-evolutionistic.\(^{19}\) What she means by mechanistic-evolutionistic is as follows: ‘Mechanistic-evolutionist thinking . . . implies that present manifestations not only are conditioned by the past, but contain nothing except the past; nothing really new is created in the process of development; what we see today is only the old in a changed form’ (\(NWP:\) p. 42). The most evident of Freud’s ‘mechanistic-evolutionistic’ thinking is his idea of repetition compulsion. The emphasis of repetition compulsion is on the past history: ‘when and in what forms a thing has previously appeared, and in what forms it reappears and repeats itself’ (ibid.: 43). Horney argues that it is not necessary to assume the ‘mysterious’ repetition compulsion in order to explain why neurotics re-enact their painful experience, ‘if we consider that certain drives and reactions in a person are bound to bring with them repetitive experiences’ (ibid.: 137). The compulsion to repeat is the neurotics’ attempt to regain safety and satisfaction in various situations which they perceive as threatening.

Closely related to the idea of repetition compulsion is the psychoanalytic practice of reconstructing childhood experience which contributed to the formation of neurosis. According to Freud, once the patient recovers the repressed childhood memory, the symptoms abate. On the basis of her clinical practice, Horney claims that the reconstruction of childhood memory does not always free the patient from the compulsive repetition, and it even becomes an obstacle to recovery (\(NWP:\) 143). The reconstruction of childhood memory not only fails to effect a cure, it is also dangerous: ‘the theoretical expectation that progress is to be gained from memories constitutes a temptation to make use of unconvincing reconstructions or of vague memories which leave unresolvable doubt as to whether they concern real experiences or merely fantasies’ (ibid.: 146). Horney thinks that it is more gainful to abandon such endeavor and to concentrate on the patient’s present drives and psychic forces which make him or her act and react in an unchangeable way. It is possible to gain understanding of these forces and drives without resorting to reconstruction of repressed childhood memory. ‘In the process of obtaining a better grasp of actual goals, actual forces, actual needs, actual pretences, the fog hovering over the past begins to lift. One does not regard the past, however, as the treasure long sought, but considers it simply as a welcome help in understanding the patient’s development’ (ibid.). Horney does not deny that childhood experiences exert a significant influence on character formation, but she attributes factors that shape the childhood experience to the environment, and to parental attitudes. Neuroses are not due to failure in dissolving the Oedipus complex or fixation on pre-genital stages, but are due to unfavorable environmental factors (ibid.: 82–7, 140–3).

Horney who rejects the libido theory also rejects Freud’s view that the ego is a part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.\(^{20}\) According to Freud’s account, the essential characteristic of the ‘ego’ is its weakness since it serves three ‘masters’ – the id, the super-ego and external reality. Horney thinks that the ego as Freud describes it, is a specific neurotic phenomenon, and not inherent in human nature, not even inherent in the individual nature of neurotics (\(NWP:\) 189). For Horney, psychoanalysis in general does not know much about the ego due to the overly extensive knowledge of the id, and ‘[o]nly by abandoning the theory of instincts can [one] learn something about the “ego”’ (ibid.). Even though she does not elaborate on a new theory of the ego, yet she thinks that there is a great advantage in abandoning the theory of
instincts in psychoanalytic therapy. She argues that as long as the ego is viewed as servant to forces beyond itself, it cannot be the object of therapy. The best one can hope for the analysands is a more adequate adaptation of instinctual drives to the demands of reality. If the weakness of the ego is considered as ‘an essential part of neurosis’, not as an inherent part of human psychic constitution, ‘then changing it must become a task of therapy’ – to restore the analysand’s spontaneity and faculty of judgment, in other words, to restore the strength of the ego (ibid.: 190). Horney changes psychoanalysis from an id psychology to an ego psychology.

Against Freud’s advice that the psychoanalyst should adopt a morally neutral attitude towards the analysands, and refrain from any judgment, Horney advocates the opposite. She makes the distinction between pseudo and real moral problems. ‘The real moral issues’ are not the ones neurotics are struggling with or pretending to have, but ‘insincerity, the haughtiness and the refined cruelty which are inseparable from’ their character structures (NWP: 231). She contends that in psychoanalysis, ‘it . . . becomes necessary to help the patient to face squarely the true moral problems involved in every neurosis and to take a stand toward them’ (ibid.: 10). Horney does not think the tolerance and moral neutrality of psychoanalysts help neurotics to recognize their real values or their real deficiencies (ibid.: 298). ‘[T]he patient must be enabled to see their character distinctly, for otherwise he cannot be freed from the tormenting duplicity of his life nor from the resulting anxiety and inhibitions.’ For this reason the analyst should deal with moral issues as candidly as he or she does with sexual deviations. The patient can take a stand toward them only after having faced them squarely (ibid.: 302). The psychoanalyst’s attitude should be ‘constructively’ friendly – pointing out the analysand’s deficiencies and acknowledging his or her good qualities and potentials.

Adorno’s critique of the revisionists

Even though Adorno agrees with the revisionists’ critique of Freud that he neglects social factors which contribute to formation of neurosis, and that Freud psychologizes sociology,21 he sees the revisionism as an attempt to ‘reverse’ Freud’s theory and replace it by a sociologized psychoanalysis. For the revisionists, psychoanalysis should focus on ‘the interaction between social and psychological factors, and that the object of analysis should be the life process of a person in its totality instead of the atomistically isolated impulse dynamics within the individual’ (Gesammelte Schriften [Collected Works], 8(1): 20). Though Adorno is sympathetic toward such an attempt, yet he argues that the division between sociology and psychology, between society and the individual psyche, reflects what takes place in reality. This division, which Adorno calls a false consciousness, cannot be eradicated through theoretical constructs (SP: 69). A sociologized
psychology can be just as problematic as a psychologized sociology. In *Freud in der Gegenwart* [Freud in the Present] Adorno declares:

The psychoanalytic revisionism of a different school, which advocates greater significance of so-called social factors against the alleged Freudian exaggerations, doesn’t have Freud’s most brilliant discoveries – the role of the early childhood, that of the repression, since it softens the central concept of the unconscious, it allies itself with social conformism, moreover, with trivial common sense, and forfeits the critical acuity. The degeneration of Freudian theory into an all-around psychology is also passed as advancement. (FG: 648)

Adorno begins his critique by examining the revisionists’ characterization of Freud’s theory as mechanistic. For him, Freud does not rigidly divide the psyche into fixed drives as some psychologists did in the 19th century. Freud’s theory, which allows variations and dynamic modifications of the drives (RP: 22), does not deserve the description of being ‘mechanistic’. In spite of the revisionists’ emphasis on the historical significance of character traits, they treat these traits as given (ibid.). In other words, they hypostatize them against their own proclaimed intention. Thus Adorno contends that the revisionists’ criticism of Freud is a projection – they project their own unconscious hypostatization of character traits onto Freud. If Freud is rationalistic in mechanically dividing the psyche into fixed drives, then the revisionists are equally guilty of the same accusation in their attempt to ‘sever the ego from its genetic relationship to the id and attribute to the ego a being-in-itself – the embodiment of the “rational” faculties of the soul, as if it fell from the heaven’ (ibid.). This severing the ego from its genetic origin is evident in Horney’s effort to substitute emotional drives, impulses and passions for libido. She merely postulates these categories without any justification. Adorno argues that since Horney rejects the libido theory, then the origin of these drives, impulses and passions would have to be the ego. By doing so, she grants the ego a status independent from the libido as if the ego is not genetically related to the id (ibid.). Horney or the revisionists neglect that ‘only in the developed civilization, the ego indeed has become an independent entity’ (ibid.: 23). Moreover, the concept of the ego, as we understand it now, is a product of thinking in the bourgeois era. It did not ‘fall from the sky’, so to speak. The revisionists hypostasize the ego as if its current form had existed from time immemorial.

Thus for Adorno, the revisionists’ environmental theory of character formation which takes the ego as given is suspected of naïve individualism. They forget that not only the individual but also the concept of the individual is a product of society: ‘the individual is . . . not simply individual, not merely the substratum of psychology, but, as long as he behaves with any vestige of rationality, simultaneously the agent of the social determinations that shape him. His “psychology”, the dimension of irrationality, points back no less than instrumental rationality, to social moments’ (SP: 73). An analytic social psychology, as the revisionism aspires to be, should investigate and thereby reveal the decisive social determinants in the most inner mechanism of the individual (RP: 27). By treating the individual as an independent entity affected by external forces, the revisionists merely repeat the ideology of the individualistic society. Adorno contends that ‘only tendencies which are already preformed in the individual, are intensified and
brought out by external influence’ (ibid.). The deeper psychology looks into the inner
dynamic of the individual, the more it can become aware of the social apparatus which
produces the individual. Freud’s theory focuses on the libido as pre-social, both phylo-
genetically and ontogenetically, and reveals that ‘the social principle of domination coin-
cides with the psychological repression of the drive’ (ibid.). This is what Adorno refers to
as one of Freud’s brilliant discoveries.

The naïve individualism is manifest in Horney’s insistence that the object of psycho-
analysis should be the entirety of character structure, and not fragmented drives or
impulses. This insistence betrays a belief in the unity of a person which is neither pos-
sible nor desirable in the existing society. Adorno claims that:

The goal of the ‘well-integrated personality’ is objectionable because it expects the individ-
ual 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. (SP: 83)

Furthermore, a well-integrated personality, which is often thought of as a result of sub-
limation, is also neither possible nor desirable. For Adorno, in an irrational society, the
ego is inadequate to perform functions allotted to it by society. ‘To be able to assert itself
in reality, the ego has to understand reality and operates consciously. But to enable the
individual to effect the often senseless renunciations imposed on him, the ego has to set
up unconscious prohibitions and to remain largely confined to the unconscious’ (SP: 87).
Instead of analysing sublimation which results in integration as a form of social coercion,
the revisionists sublimate Freud’s psychoanalysis in their rejection of the libido theory.
Horney’s protest against Freud for reducing the sublime feelings and noble deeds to
modified sexual drives represents the revisionists’ attempt to purify psychoanalysis in
order for it to be more acceptable to the public.22

For example, Horney tones down some ‘radical’ psychoanalytic concepts. In her
emphasis on cultural determination of the character, she replaces ‘domination’ by ‘fam-
ily discipline’, ‘drive repression’ by ‘timidity’. As a result, psychic conflicts happen on
the surface layers of the consciousness rather than in the unconscious. In addition, like
other revisionists, she excludes all somatic elements in psychic conflicts. The revisio-

nists fail to see that social integration in an advanced exchange society ‘is based on phys-
ical coercion, on bodily torment, a material moment that transcends both immanently
‘material incentive’ and the intrapsychic instinctual economy’ (SP: 70–1). By turning
away from the unconscious and somatic suffering, the revisionists change psychoanaly-

sis ‘into a type of higher social-welfare’ (RP: 28). Adorno compares what some revisio-

nists advocate to newspaper advice column or popular self-help books – treating
psychology as means of social success and adaptation. He writes:

Now that depth-psychology, with the help of films, soap operas and Horney, has delved into
the deepest recesses, people’s last possibility of experiencing themselves has been cut off by
organized culture. Ready-made enlightenment turns not only spontaneous reflection but
also analytical insights – whose power equals the energy and suffering that it cost to gain
them – into mass-produced articles, and the painful secrets of the individual history, which the orthodox method is already inclined to reduce to formulae, into commonplace conventions ... Instead of working to gain self-awareness, the initiates become adept at subsuming all instinctual conflicts under such concepts as inferiority complex, mother-fixation, extroversion and introversion, to which they are in reality inaccessible. Terror before the abyss of the self is removed by the consciousness of being concerned with nothing so very different from arthritis or sinus trouble. Thus conflicts lose their menace. They are accepted, but by no means cured, being merely fitted as an unavoidable component into the surface of standardized life.23

In her account of the genesis of neurosis, Horney tries to make up for what Freud’s theory lacks – attention to historical and cultural elements. In so doing, Horney postulates that ‘the normal person is capable of making the best of the possibilities given in his culture ... The neurotic person ... suffers invariably more than the average person.’24 In other words, the normal person is the ‘average person’ who conforms to cultural patterns, whereas a neurotic person deviates from them. Horney’s definition of neurosis inadvertently gives away her conformist leaning, since she makes no attempt to question these ‘cultural patterns’, she simply takes them as given. If a neurotic is to be cured, that is, if she or he is to be a ‘normal’ or ‘average’ person, the only choice is to adapt to or adjust to ‘cultural patterns’. For Adorno:

If such a thing as a psycho-analysis day’s prototypical culture were possible; if the absolute predominance of the economy did not beggar all attempts at explaining conditions by the psychic life of their victims; and if the analysts had not long since sworn allegiance to those conditions – such an investigation would have to show that the sickness proper to the time consists precisely in normality. (MM: 58;translation modified)

Horney’s attempt at incorporating sociology into psychoanalysis – the call for cultural considerations vis-à-vis Freud’s biologism – becomes an ideological substitute for critical insight into society. In contrast, Freud’s theory which emphasizes fragmentary impulses recognizes the nature of social mutilation (RP: 25) – ‘both the inner life and the outer life are torn apart’ (SP: 70). In fact, what the revisionists hypostatize as the totality of character is the result of reification of real experience. The revisionism absolutizes ‘this totality, it might easily enough become an ideological hiding place for the psychological status quo of the individual’ (RP: 24–5). For Adorno only through the articulation of the difference between inner life and outer life, between individual psyche and society, not by smoothing it over, can one express their relationship adequately. Freud’s theory which turns away from society and concentrates on the individuals and their archaic heritage speaks more about the existing conditions of society than the revisionists’ holistic approach or an inclusion of social ‘factor’ does (SP: 70).

Adorno argues that Horney suffers from ‘a cultural lag’ in spite of her proclamation of incorporating cultural elements into psychoanalysis. By taking competition as the main cause of disturbance in human relationship and that of distortion of character, she is out of step with the development of advanced societies. Free competition is a relic of the bourgeois era; in the advanced industrial society, competition is reduced if not altogether
eliminated by big businesses. ‘In the advanced liberal society competition was not the law, according to which it [society] operated . . . The society is held together by frequent indirect threat of material force, which is the origin of the “potential hostility” that has an effect on neuroses and character disturbances’ (RP: 32). The material threat is not that whoever fails to comply with the economic rules will go hungry or become homeless, it is a threat of being cast out. ‘[T]he fear of being cast out, the social sanctions behind economic behavior, have long been internalized along with other taboos, and have left their mark on the individual. In the course of history this fear has become second nature’ (SP: 71). Though Freud admittedly claims that sociology was for the most part nothing but applied psychology (FG: 647), he is able to articulate the internalization of the material force and concrete forms of social pressure on the individual. In contrast, the revisionists, who boast their sociological revision of Freud’s theory, substitute the tame concept of competition for the unsublimated threat.

In Adorno’s view, Horney’s conformist tendency is most noticeable in her dismissal of childhood memory. He argues that Freud places vital importance on the childhood experience in understanding neurosis or character formation and that central to his theory of childhood is the concept of damage or trauma (RP: 23). According to Freud, as far as individual development is concerned, trauma which contributes to formation of neurosis is a kind of shock: ‘an experience within a short period of time presents the mind with an increased stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way, and this must result in permanent disturbances’ (ILP: 315). Phylogenetically, both the demand of sacrifice of instinctual gratification and that of sublimation of instinctual aims by civilization are also traumatic.

Civilization is built upon a renunciation of instinct . . . it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means) of powerful instinct. This ‘cultural frustration’ dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings. As we already know, it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle . . . it is not easy to understand how it can become possible to deprive an instinct of satisfaction. Nor is doing so without danger. If the loss is not compensated for economically, one can be certain that serious disorders will ensure. (CD: 51–2)²⁵

Adorno interprets this idea of damage or trauma as ‘abrupt blows caused by just the alienation of individual from society’ (RP: 24). These blows are a series of shocks which leave psychic scars. For Horney and the revisionists, the object of psychoanalysis is not the past history or traumatic childhood experience, it is the entire personality structure at present. Adorno argues that if there is anything that resembles the ‘totality’ of character, it would be ‘a system of scars’ left by the forced integration through suffering (ibid.).²⁶ A totality of character ‘is an ideal which would be realized only in a non-traumatic society’ (ibid.: 23–4). In an antagonistic society, such a totality is fictitious.

Horney’s dismissal of the importance of childhood memory or the past history reveals her sympathy for adaptation. She divides psychoanalytic concepts and therapeutic interventions into two categories – constructive and non-constructive. ‘Constructive’ ones are those which can help to understand the actual functions of neurotic trends and their consequences, and to diminish the hold of the neurotic trends (NWP: 282). Recovery of
repressed childhood memory is non-constructive. This division also runs parallel to what Horney calls ‘actual vs. past’. Whatever is present is constructive, whatever has to do with the past is non-constructive. For Adorno, this division not only is dogmatic but also encourages social adaptation. He states: ‘[Horney] has conspired with the dominant spirit, which would like to banish everything which is not positive, here-and-now concrete fact’ (RP: 34). If investigation of the past history is a waste of time, then one would have to eliminate everything that is not immediate present, one would also eliminate everything that constitutes the ego. Psychoanalytic cure would reduce an individual to nothing other than ‘a nucleus of conditional reflexes’ (ibid.: 33–4). For Adorno, such a reduction hardly needs the help of psychoanalysis. In a highly socialized and rationalized society where important decisions are pre-determined, the function of the ego is to choose between small and insignificant options (SP: 79). Individuals respond to whatever the economic system or mass cultural industry put forward in a fashion which closely resembles conditional reflexes. The revisionist psychoanalysis unwittingly betrays its own intention: ‘Alienating [man] from himself, denouncing his autonomy with his unity, psychoanalysis subjugates him totally to the mechanism of rationalization, of adaptation. The ego’s unflinching self-criticism gives way to the demand that the ego of the other capitulate’ (MM: 64).

The revisionists not only tacitly encourage adaptation, they also subscribe to conventional morality. Though they criticize Freud for his dogmatic adherence to the moral standards of his time, they ‘proclaim the necessity of moral norms in the name of the welfare of individual and society, without worrying about whether or not they are true in themselves. Blindly, they subscribe to the conventional morals of today’ (RP: 29–30). Adorno takes issue especially with Horney’s distinction between pseudo-moral problems and real ones. He claims that this distinction is arbitrary without any objective criterion or any reasonable method of differentiation. Horney should have subjected it to critical examination instead of taking it as given. Adorno states:

It would be an intellectual defeatism to leave the impasse as it is, and to promulgate a type of dual morals: on the one side, psychological-genetic dissolution of the moralistic ideas, through reduction to the origin of the super-ego and the neurotic guilt feelings, on the other side, the abstract proclamation of moral values untouched by the psychological insights. The neo-Freudian conception, according to its own objective meaning, leads to such a confirmation of the conventional code with bad conscience, the double morals of morals. (RP: 31)

The revisionists’ eager defense of tender love against Freud’s idea that such love has its origin in sexuality shows that the bourgeois moralistic view of sexuality has more influence on them than on Freud. They adopt the conventional distinction between sexual and sublime love and accuse Freud of pan-sexualism, and in this respect, their theory is more repressed than his. ‘[P]sycho-analysis itself is castrated by its conventionalization: sexual motives, partly disavowed and partly approved, are made totally harmless but also totally insignificant’ (MM: 66).

Moreover, the revisionists accuse Freud that he as a psychoanalyst is cold and aloof. This criticism refers to Freud’s recommendations that in order to effect a real cure, the analyst should put ‘aside all his feelings, including human sympathy’, and should refrain
from returning affection toward the analysands. For Adorno, Freud’s ‘coldness’ not only pertains to the professional nature of therapy but also springs from his critical awareness of human relations. Freud, though not a utopian, takes utopia seriously in the sense that he faces the harsh social reality squarely in order not to be stupefied by it (RP: 38). The possibility of change does not lie in the naïve view of ‘we are all brothers’ but in facing and dealing with the existing antagonism in social relations. Adorno states:

Professional warmth, for the sake of profit, fabricates closeness and immediacy where people are worlds apart. It deceives its victim by affirming in his weakness the way of the world which made him so, and it wrongs him in the degree that it deviates from truth. If Freud was deficient in such human sympathy, he would in this at least be in the company of the critics of political economy. (MM: 60)

Adorno finds Horney’s claim that erotic attachment without gratification is neurotic pathological dependency particularly offensive. This claim implies that love is an exchange of equivalents – never giving away affection without receiving it. The ‘unhappy’ love is unhealthy and pathological because it does not obey the reality principle of exchange (RP: 38–9); whereas the healthy, Adorno declares, resembles ‘a being whose heart has stopped beating’ in its reflexes (MM: 59). To have the prescribed happiness, the neurotic must forgo the last remnant of autonomy and rational faculty through repression and regression, and show wholesale enthusiasm for popular Hollywood films, expensive but terrible meals in trendy restaurants, vigorous sex life taken as medicine (ibid.: 62). Adorno claims:

Society has, as it were, assumed the sickness of all individuals, and in it, in the pent-up lunacy of Fascist acts and all their innumerable precursors and mediators, the subjective fate buried deep in the individual is integrated with its visible objective counterpart. And how comfortless is the thought that the sickness of the normal does not necessarily imply as its opposite the health of the sick, but that the latter usually only present, in a different way, the same disastrous pattern. (MM: 60–1)

All movements of health, including the revisionist psychoanalysis, in their mistaking the social sickness as individual psychopathology, become champions of the disastrous pattern. Adorno is not an avid defender of Freud, he criticizes Freud for subverting the critical standard Freud himself espouses. The problem with Freud, as Adorno sees it, is that he traces conscious actions to their unconscious origins in instincts, and yet at the same time he also exhibits the bourgeois contempt for instincts. He sides with the dominant idea that social goals are higher than self-seeking sexual aims. He uncritically accepts the distinction between the social and the egoistic goals, which, ironically, is what he tried to dismantle. In this regard, Freud’s theory is self-contradicting: ‘[Freud] vacillates, devoid of theory and swaying with prejudice, between negating the renunciation of instinct as repression contrary to reality, and applauding it as sublimation beneficial to culture . . . As a late opponent of hypocrisy, he stands ambivalently between desire for
the open emancipation of the oppressed, and apology for open oppression’ (MM: 60–1). Furthermore, Adorno agrees with Horney’s and the revisionists’ criticisms that Freud is dogmatic in some claims of his theory and that he has a strong tendency to generalize with very limited empirical evidence. Adorno states:

Not the least among the strategic reasons for Freud’s scientific success is that his capacity for psychological insight was combined with a systematic trait which was permeated by monolithic, authoritarian elements. While precisely this intention of forcing individual findings towards total theses gave rise to the untruths of psychoanalytic theory, it derives its suggestiveness from that self-same totalitarian impetus. It is harkened to as if it were a magic formula able to solve everything. (SP: 74)

Yet, Adorno declares, ‘Freud was right where he was wrong. The authority of his theory lives off his blindness in the face of the separation of sociology and psychology, which, however, is admittedly the result of . . . the self-alienation of the human being’ (RP: 35). The revisionists’ eagerness to bridge sociology and psychology misleads them into believing that ‘the antagonism between private and social being of individual could be cured by psychotherapy’ (ibid.). Freud, in contrast, unintentionally lends an adequate expression to the atomized human social existence through his psychological atomism. According to Adorno, Freud has naïvely accepted the monadic social existence of human being, while revisionists, to their credit, are critically aware of such an existence. Their problem, however, lies in that they treat inhumane relationships as if they could become human without a fundamental change of society. Adorno claims: ‘If psychology makes itself human or fit for a good society, by it doing so, inasmuch as society would be determined by human beings and their inner selves, then it lends an inhumane reality a glance of the human’ (ibid.: 35–6). This is precisely what Freud has done in his theory. The revisionists, in the hope of improving psychoanalysis, have deprived it of its critical impulses; in their ‘new’ ways, they reproduce the repressive and regressive tendencies of social reality. Instead of sublimating psychoanalysis, they castrate it.

Final remarks

There are some fundamental theoretical disagreements between Adorno and Horney, and between the Institute of Social Research and the revisionists. These disagreements really lie in different premises from which their views of psychoanalysis develop. For Horney and the revisionists who are practising psychoanalysts base their criticisms of Freud on their clinical experiences. They are concerned with the impact of an inadequate theory on psychotherapeutic practice. Adorno and the Institute of Social Research from the beginning were not interested in the therapeutic aspects of Freud’s psychoanalysis. They are concerned with having a more adequate social critique by incorporating psychoanalytic concepts into their theory. Even though the revisionists, especially Fromm, develop a critical theory of society, they do not accept the central claim made by Freud in Civilization and Its Discontents: that civilization is both oppressive and repressive; whereas Adorno and the Institute of Social Research do.
Horney’s *New Ways of Psychoanalysis* is written from the perspective of practising psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and her critique and thus revision of Freud’s theory are intended to function as a guide to therapy: ‘For the psychiatrist interest in these philosophical premises lies in investigating whether or not they lead to constructive and useful concepts and their results’ (*NWP*: 46; emphasis added). It is not intended as a critique of social conditions that generate neurosis. This is a fundamental difference between Horney and Adorno – she tries to change individuals in order for them to live happily, and for him, without a radical change of social conditions, individual happiness is both impossible and illusory.

Adorno’s critique of Horney and the revisionists reflects a tension between theory and practice. Adorno and the Critical Theory of the Institute of Social Research are insistent that the tension between theory and practice should be maintained and articulated, it cannot be smoothed away by reducing one to the other. The same tension exists between psychoanalysis as a critical theory of society and psychoanalysis as practice of individual therapy. Adorno’s critique of the revisionists is that they weaken the theory for the sake of therapy and for the public acceptance. As Russell Jacoby puts it, ‘Psychoanalysis as individual therapy necessarily participates within the realm of social unfreedom, while psychoanalysis as theory is free to transcend and criticize this same realm. To take up only the first moment, psychoanalysis as therapy, is to blunt psychoanalysis as a critique of civilization, turning it into an instrument of individual adjustment and resignation.’

For Adorno, the revisionist psychoanalysis is certainly guilty of being such an instrument.

**Notes**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.


2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Der Begriff des Unbewussten in der transzendentalen Seelenlehre* [The Concept of the Unconscious in the Transcendental Theory of the Psyche], in *Gesammelte Schriften* [Collected Works], vol.1, ed. Rolf Tiedermann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 79–302. According to the Editorial Postscript of this work Adorno withdrew it before the initiation of thesis procedures. All translations are mine; hereafter cited as *BUTS*.


4. Theodor W. Adorno, ‘*Freud in der Gegenwart*’ [Freud in the Present], in *Gesammelte Schriften* [Collected Works], vol. 20(5), ed. Tiedermann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 646; all translations are mine; hereafter cited as FG.


6. According to Adorno, Freud is quite aware of the limitation. Freud declares:
It is not [a physician’s] business to restrict himself in every situation in life to being a fanatic in favor of health. He knows that there is not only neurotic misery in the world but real, irremovable suffering as well, that necessity may even require a person to sacrifice his health; and he learns that a sacrifice of this kind made by a single person can prevent immeasurable unhappiness for many others. If we may say, then, that whenever a neurotic is faced by a conflict he takes ‘flight into illness’, yet we must allow that in some cases that flight is fully justified, and a physician who has recognized how the situation lies will silently and solicitously withdraw. (Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [hereafter cited as *ILP*], trans. J. Strachey [New York: Penguin Books, 1973], p. 430)


15. In n. 1 of ‘Die revidierte Psychoanalyse’, Adorno writes:

   The following discussions refer to only those revisionist authors, at whose publications the author had a closer critical look. It is first and foremost about Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (Heinz Neumann, Stuttgart 1951). Considerable theoretical differences among the revisionist authors had to be neglected. However, they all have the tendency to push psychoanalysis in the ‘realistic’ direction which will be addressed in the text. (*RP*: 41)


18. As to why some people in the same cultural milieu do not develop neuroses while others do, Horney offers this explanation: ‘The persons who succumb to a neurosis are those who have been more severely hit by the existing difficulties, particularly in their childhood’ (*NWP*: 178).
19. Erich Fromm also describes Freud’s older theory as mechanistic-materialistic in his *Greatness and Limitations*, p. 108.


21. ‘When Freud admittedly raised the claim that sociology was by and large nothing but applied psychology, it appears to us that the laws of society as such are not the pure interiority of human beings was overlooked. These laws have reified themselves. They oppose human beings and individual psyche independently and contradict them in crucial factor’ (FG: 647).


It has been claimed that the insecurities of the émigré analysts played a major role in their apoliticism and conformism, and that is undoubtedly true. Not only had they fled the realities of a Europe torn by war and fascism, they were also confronted with American xenophobia and McCarthyism. In choosing to follow the perhaps prudent but unfortunate course of accommodating themselves to the conservative American culture of the 1950s, they withdrew from political reality altogether. (Whitebook, ‘Weighty Objects’: 57)

The same can be said about the revisionists. In order for psychoanalysis to be acceptable to the American public, they ‘clean’ it up.


25. Cf.: ‘The libidinal achievement demanded of an individual behaving as healthy in body and mind, such as can be performed only at the cost of the profoundest mutilation, of internalized castration’ (*MM*: 36).

26. The subtitle of *Minimal Moralia* is ‘Reflections from Damaged Life’.


Revisionist Psychoanalysis T. W. Adorno, translated by Nan-Nan Lee

A translation of T. W. Adorno’s ‘Die revidierte Psychoanalyse’ [The Revisionist Psychoanalysis] follows. The original text was published in T. W. Adorno, Gesammelte Schriften [Collected Works], vol. 8(1), ed. Rolf Tiedermann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 20–41. All passages Adorno quoted from Horney’s New Ways in Psychoanalysis are in their original English. The house style of Philosophy & Social Criticism has been followed. Deutsch von Rainer Koehne, 1952.

For approximately 25 years, the tendency in psychoanalysis which grants the social and cultural motivations which are easily accessible to consciousness a significant role at the expense of hidden mechanisms of the unconscious has become apparent as ever. It aims at something like a sociologization of psychoanalysis. People accuse Freud for taking social and economic structures as mere effect of psychological impulses, which originate from a more or less ahistorical instinctual constitution of human beings. The idea that characteristics such as narcissism, masochism, or the anal syndrome are no less products of society and environment as they are causes of social phenomena, becomes such an attempt as to explain wars in terms of destructive impulses or the capitalistic system in terms of the anal-erotic collective instinct. That real science has to look steadfastly at the interaction of social and psychological factors, that the object of analysis should be the life-process of a person in its totality instead of the atomistically isolated impulse dynamics within the individual, are deduced incidentally from the indisputable insufficiency of those derivations. In fact, psychology, as a sector of science based on division of labor, cannot master social and economic problems altogether. Psychoanalysis can hardly have any interest to defend at all costs such narrow-mindedness as that of Laforgue, who treats the poet in his book on Baudelaire as a neurotic, whose life could have turned out quite differently and more happily, if he had only severed his attachment to his mother. On the contrary, psychoanalysis must face the methodological problem in its relation to social theory. This is considered as the merit of the neo-Freudian or revisionist school. It is arguable whether the sociologized psychoanalysis could provide critical insights into the nature of society. The practising analysts who adhere to the fundamentals of Freudian theory, already expressed the criticism that the sociologized psychoanalysis relapses into superficiality because it replaces the established theory on the dynamic of the pleasure principle in Freud with pure Ego. The first part of this article discusses some of the motives and the coherence of arguments which definitively characterize the revisionist approach. The second deals with
the relationships between culture and individual and their implications in the revisionist theory and points out some consequences for the theory of society. The third part of this article attempts to provide a brief sociological evaluation of the neo-Freudians and their relationship to Freud.

Horney expresses the essence of neo-Freudian deviation from Freud when she says ‘psychoanalysis should outgrow its limitation set by its being an instinctivistic and a genetic psychology’.² To a psychological practice which is not content to leave reason and socially determined behavior patterns unresolved but attempts to derive differentiated psychic patterns from the strivings of self-preservation and pleasure, the concept of drive psychology, which was once ambiguously identified as a psychology dividing the psyche more or less mechanically into a number of drives, as is done in some schools of the late 19th century, functions as an anathema. That a rigid division of the psyche to irreducible drives is impossible and that the concrete phenomenon of the drives to widest extent could have variations and dynamic modifications are in no way excluded by the basic approach of Freud’s theory of libido, and only in this sense it would be called drive psychology.

Nothing at the moment characterizes the position of the revisionists sharper than that they attack Freud for his alleged mechanistic prejudice as the relic from the 19th century of habits of thinking, the categories which Freud’s theory takes as a basis, are nothing but mere results of psychological dynamic, which is hypostasized and appears as an absolute. What Freud should have done with the drives was what the neo-Freudian school does with character traits. That neo-Freudians insist on the historical significance of these character traits and accuse Freud for naïvely holding on to outdated scientific methods is arguably projection: they see in Freud a rationalistic scheme which dissects the psyche into an array of fixed predetermined drives, and yet they themselves proceed in the same rationalistic fashion to sever the ego from its genetic relationship to the id and attribute to the ego a being-in-itself – the embodiment of the ‘rational’ faculties of the psyche, as if it fell from heaven.

Horney wants to substitute ‘emotional drives, impulses, needs or passions’³ for libido. If these categories, which happen to be unanalysed, are to be something other than basically different words for libido or dogmatically postulated entities, then their origins, to which they supposedly return, are not derived from libidinal energy, could only be in the ego. The ego then would not be genetically related to the libido, but would stand as an equally organized entity apart from the libido. However, since only in the developed civilization, the ego indeed has become an independent entity, the psychological categories of the revisionists rather than those of Freud’s theory seem to do justice to the historical dimension of psychology. But then there is a price to pay: the revisionists’ unmediated orientation on the view of present situation is at the expense of an analysis of what one could call its inner historicity. The rejection of Freud’s drive psychology in practice amounts to a negation of his theory: ‘[Freud believes] that culture by forcing restrictions on libidinal and particularly on destructive drives, is instrumental in bringing about repressions, guilt feelings and needs for self-punishment. Hence his general slant is that we have to pay for cultural benefits by dissatisfaction and unhappiness’.⁴ As if Freud’s insight into the inescapability of cultural conflicts in the dialectic of progress, would have been brought to the surface no more by the essence of history than by the
hasty appeal to the environmental factors which, according to the revisionists, are to explain the formation of the neurotic conflicts.

As a serious consequence from the polemic against Freud’s drive psychology, the central role of the childhood memories, to which pertains the quintessence of psychoanalytic theory, is challenged. The revisionists find Freud’s assumption ‘that later experiences to a large extent represent a repetition of those had in childhood’ particularly offensive. Whereas Freud, orienting on the model of trauma seeks to trace neurotic and other character traits as far as possible to the individual processes in the child’s life and experiences, Horney assumes

\[...\] certain drives and reactions in a person are bound to bring with them repetitive experiences. For instance, a propensity for hero-worship may be determined by such conflicting drives as an exorbitant ambition so destructive in character as to render the successful persons, to love them and to participate in their success without the individual having to accomplish anything himself, and at the same time an excessively destructive and hidden envy toward them.\[6\]

Labels such as ‘exorbitant ambition’ or ‘idolatry of successful people’, which only pose problems, become as distinct as if they were the explanation. At the same time, a crucial element of Freudian theory is misappropriated. What Freud actually induces to attribute particular weight to individual processes in childhood, although not explicitly \[unausdrücklich\], is the concept of damage. A totality of the character, assumed by the revisionists as given, is an ideal which would be realized only in a non-traumatic society. Whoever criticizes the present society, as most revisionists do, cannot shut themselves up and so they will suddenly be surprised by abrupt blows caused by just the alienation of individual from society, which is rightly emphasized by the revisionists, when they argue sociologically. The character they hypostasize, is by far a greater measure of the effect of such shocks than that of continuous experience. The totality of the so-called ‘character’ is fictitious: one could almost call it 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. More than their nimble sidelong glance at social conditions, Freud adheres to the nature of the socialization by staying just with the individual’s atomistic existence persistently.

In the light of such examination, these quite plausible statements reveal apparently an undoubtedly unintentional endorsement of complacent optimism and conformism: ‘There is no such thing as an isolated repetition of isolated experiences; but the entirety of infantile experiences combines to form a certain character structure, and it is this structure from which later difficulties emanate.\[7\] That there are psychological traits and impulses, which are not direct repetition of childhood experiences, but are mediated through the hardened character structure, does not exclude that this structure itself goes back to isolated events in the child’s life. In addition, that intrinsically critical phenomena of psychology – symptoms, in the widest sense – invariably conform to the pattern of repetition compulsions is falsified into a positive through an overevaluation of
characterology. The insistence on the totality, as the antithesis to the unique, fragmentary impulse, implies a harmonious belief in the unity of a person, which is impossible in the existing society, perhaps is not even desirable at all. That Freud has destroyed the myth of the organic structure of the psyche counts as his greatest merit. He has thereby recognized the nature of the social mutilation more than any direct parallelism between character and social influence could have done. The sedimented totality of the character, which the revisionists push into the foreground, is in truth the result of a reification of real experiences. If one absolutizes this totality, it might easily enough become an ideological hiding place for the psychological status quo of the individual. As soon as the petrified result of the psychological dynamics is enthroned by the theory as original strength, the primary traumatic experiences, whose mere derivative not by no means constitutes the ‘natural’ character, are relegated to the realm of the irrelevant and harmless: ‘The relevant factor in the genesis of neuroses is then neither the Oedipus complex nor any kind of infantile pleasure strivings but all those adverse influences which make a child feel helpless and defenseless and which make him conceive the world as potentially menacing.’

Under more or less vaguely conceived ‘unfavorable influences’, in which the absence of parental love ranks especially high, the frightful and unequivocal phenomenon like the castration threat is subsumed. However, the neo-Freudian school, by expelling the castration threat from the psychoanalysis, castrates the psychoanalysis itself. Its concept of the character is a convenient abstraction, which refrains from exactly what amounts to the sting of psychological realization. The general concepts which then gain predominance mask the painful severity of the wounds, if not the wounds themselves from which character traits originate. This is reflected especially by Horney’s discussion of the anality: ‘In other words, should not the greediness shown in eating or drinking be one of many expressions of a general greediness, rather than its cause? Should not a functional constipation be one of many expressions of a general trend toward possessiveness, control?’

Thus just the phenomena which need the psychological explanation most urgently because of their irrationality, are introduced as principles of the explanation once more and degenerate into being self-evident. The same scheme, by the way, underlies Horney’s attack on the theory of libido. She sets ‘two guiding principles: safety and satisfaction’ against Freud’s pleasure principle, without further attending to the insight that safety is nothing other than an objectification of the drive for pleasure over time.

II

Instead of the drive dynamics, the result of which is the character, the environment is introduced by the revisionists: ‘the entire emphasis falls on the life conditions molding the character and we have to search anew for the environmental factors responsible for creating neurotic conflicts; thus disturbances in the human relationships become the crucial factor in the genesis of neurosis’. It boils down to the fact that ‘the very essence consists of disturbances in the relations to self and others, and conflicts arising on these grounds’. As questionable as the psychological aspect of this construction, which must from the beginning take the ‘ego’ at least and to a certain extent as a given, on which the outside world impresses its traces, it is also sociological, namely, especially
the uncritical idea of the ‘influence’. The assumption of the environmental theory, which became famous through Taine, is a naïve individualism. Following the habits of thought of the 19th century, it assumes the individual as an independent, autonomous and subsistent monad, which is affected by supposedly external forces. Quite similarly, the revisionists seize the separation between the individual and society, which pertains to their central theme, uncritically following a kind of primitive realistic epistemology. While they talk continually about the influence of society on the individual, they forget that not only the individual but the category of the individuality is already a product of society. Instead of first cutting out the individual from the social processes, in order to describe their formative influence, an analytic social psychology would have to uncover decisive social forces in the most inner mechanisms of the individual. Speaking of social influences at all is questionable: a mere repetition of the ideological idea of the individualistic society itself. Usually, only tendencies which are already pre-formed in the individual, are intensified and brought out by external influence. The deeper that psychology probes the critical areas within the individual, the more adequately it can become aware of the social mechanisms that produced the individuality; and the more the interaction between internal and external world is displaced on to the surface, the more apparent the explanation is against the social theoretical consideration of psychology. It is Horney’s fundamental conviction that characters were not determined as much by sexual conflicts as by cultural pressure. However, what she describes as a union of the cultural determinants and individual psychology, perpetuates their separation, whereas the radical psychoanalysis, by focusing on the libido as pre-social, phylogenetic as well as ontogenetic, reaches the point where the social principle of domination coincides with the psychological repression of the drive. However, the neo-Freudian school brings together both principles only after it has minimized them before: domination appears as family discipline, lack of love and other epiphenomena, drive repression as a timidity which has its place in the superficial layers of narcissism, and in the conflicts which happen more in the pre-conscious than in the unconscious. The more psychoanalysis is sociologized [soziologi-siert], the blunter its operation for the knowledge of socially determined conflicts becomes. The same tendency appears also in the exclusion of all actually somatic ideas. So, the psychoanalysis is changed into a type of higher social welfare. Instead of analysing the sublimation, the revisionists sublimate the analysis themselves. This makes them publicly acceptable.

Horney’s attitude towards sexuality is more revealing than any others. She pretends, according an antiquated custom, the unbiased view of the unprejudiced, objective scientist, who could not state anything sexual about phenomena in many cases which are sexual according to Freud. She is basically hostile to theory. She makes a pact with healthy common sense against differentiating the appearance from the essence, without which psychoanalysis is deprived of its critical impulses. In the name of sociology, she confirms social prejudices by way of undertaking de-sexualization: ‘[T]here is no evidence for the generalization that therefore all trends toward affection or power are aim-inhibited instinctual drives. It is not proved that affection may not grow out of various non-libidinal sources, that it may not be, for example, an expression of maternal care and protection.’ Such statements are hardly distinguished from the righteous indignation which through the speech of the existence of nobler instincts not only denigrates
sexuality, but at the same time also glorifies the family in its existing form. With the same strike is Horney’s claim that ‘a sadistic striving for power is born of weakness, anxiety and revenge impulses’.14

As in this theory of sadism constructed by Honey, which dilutes sadism to a purely social behavior pattern, the fascist politics of extermination offered barbaric demonstration of identifying the alleged social striving of sexual impulse, and just the obscuration of this identification contributed not the least to the unleashing of the barbarity. It may have to do with the theoretical underestimation of the role of sexuality, when a tendency of disparaging treatment of sexuality insinuates itself in the later publications of the revisionists, who had fought against the puritanical elements of the Freudian conception in the first place. She finds the point of the least resistance with perversions: ‘Such activities not only are limited on sexual perverts, one also finds indications from it with otherwise healthy people.’15 It is a characteristic blunder when Horney who otherwise knows the problem of emphasizing the concept of normality, so abruptly speaks of sexually normal person as if it is a self-evident ideal. At another place, the reader is taught ostentatiously that sexual relationships meant nothing by the speech of luck in the love life.16 In such pronouncements social conformism reveals itself as an essential element of the neo-Freudian conception. It explains above all the classification of psychoanalytic concepts into constructive and non-constructive. Virtually, everything is eliminated, an ordinary human being does not bother his or her head about it, and merely leaves what encourages social adaptation as it is.

This is applicable to the atmosphere of revisionism as well as to its decisive sociological concepts. In addition, the assessment of morality is closely connected to the evaluation of sex. In earlier stages, some revisionists, among them Fromm, had identified the contradiction in Freud’s theory, that the morals are derived on the one hand genetically, however, on the other hand, from the official moral standards, the idea of social usefulness and productivity roughly remain untouched. This criticism contains some truth so far as Freud did not touch on the existing division of labor between the sciences and hardly allowed it to be disturbed by critical insights, which he had advanced as a specialist, where his specific psychological theories were not directly attacked. The revisionists try to get over the contradiction through simple reversal. While Freud had thoughtlessly accepted the moral norms, as every physicist of the 19th century would also have done, the above-mentioned moral norms are reproduced as dogmatic postulates, seemingly free from reflection. The revisionists have freed themselves from the moral prejudice, but at the same time also from the analysis that had dissolved the prejudice. They rejected one of the decisive impulses of psychological progress of the analysis and now proclaim the necessity of moral norms in the name of the welfare of individual and society, without worrying about whether or not these norms are true in themselves. Blindly, they subscribe to the conventional morals of today:

Moral problems on the other hand gain in importance. To take at their face value those moral problems with which the patient is ostensibly struggling (‘super-ego’, neurotic guilty feelings) appears to lead to a blind alley. They are pseudo-moral problems and have to be uncovered as such. But it also becomes necessary to help the patient to face squarely the true moral problems involved in every neurosis and to take a stand toward them.17
The differentiation of pseudo-moral problems from real ones takes place authoritatively and in the abstract, without mentioning any objective criterion or any sensible method of the differentiation. Horney is not to blame for what is missing; however, she is probably to blame because she stops thinking, as she absolutizes a distinction which would have been an object of analysis, not as a solution which should be passed out. Her single attempt to determine the content of moral ideal backfires: ‘a condition of inner freedom, in which all abilities are fully utilizable’. This is not only vague but also dubious. Full utilizability has to do more with the industrial concept of the full employment than with the reflection on the purposes of these abilities. Indisputable is the aspect of the dialectics of the progress that all the more individual and society are threatened by total regression, the more ideas are dissolved by the unveiling of their mythical character. However, this antinomy in which psychoanalysis participates as a part of enlightenment must be understood: above all the explication of the two antagonistic moments belongs to the development of philosophical thinking today. It would be an intellectual defeatism to leave the impasse as it is, and to promulgate a type of dual morals: on the one side, psychological-genetic dissolution of the moralistic ideas, through reduction to the origin of the super-ego and the neurotic guilt feelings; on the other side, the abstract proclamation of moral values untouched by the psychological insights. The neo-Freudian conception, according to its own objective meaning, leads to such a confirmation of the conventional code with bad conscience, the double morals of morals. So it might adapt itself to changing circumstances.

Just as problematic is the revisionist sociological theory of the causes of those conflicts, which Horney marketed under the questionable title ‘the Neurotic Personality of Our Time’. She viewed the competition as the main reason for the distortions of character in the contemporary society. Among factors of western civilization which produce potential hostility, the condition that has established individual competition probably ranks utmost. This sounds all the stranger at the very least than Fromm’s Escape from Freedom, the loss of autonomy and spontaneity which the individual suffers today – facts which apparently have something to do with the increasing reduction of free competition by big enterprises. The hypothesis of a psychological ‘cultural lag’ – that the individual still holds on to the spirit of competition, while the competition is dwindling in social reality – would be upheld only with difficulty. The ideologies may roll over more slowly than the basic economic structures: but not psychological forms of reaction. Rather, the earlier competitive spirit of the middle class struggles desperately for admission into the new technological hierarchy. Even the ego-psychology, on which revisionists insist, would have to draw consequences from it. But this most recent shift [Verschiebung] should not even be crucial. Also in the advanced liberal society competition was not the law, according to which it (society) operated. This was always a phenomenon of façades. The society is held together by frequent indirect threat of material force, which is the origin of the ‘potential hostility’ that has an effect on neuroses and character disturbances. Unlike Freud himself, who mindfully stayed with every step of the theory that what is internalized by the individual is the material force, the revisionist school substitutes the tame concept of the competition for the unsublimated threats, which originate from today’s society no less than from the archaic one. Freud, who did not proceed from sociological categories, understood the pressure of the society on the
individual in its concrete forms at least just as well as his sociological successors. In the epoch of the concentration camps, castration is more characteristic of social reality than competition. No factor of the revisionist conception carries the stamp of harmlessness as unmistakably as its pluralism which naïvely juxtaposes superficial phenomenon and essential determinations of society:

As we know, competitiveness not only dominates our relations in occupational groups, but also pervades our social relations, our friendships, our sexual relations and the relations within the family groups, thus carrying the germs of destructive rivalry, disparagement, suspicion, begrudging envy into every human relationship. Existing gross inequalities, not only in possessions but in possibilities for education, recreation, maintaining and regaining health, constitute another group of factors replete with potential hostilities. A further factor is the possibility for one group or person to exploit another.21

While the classic economic theory still always had struggled to understand the economic process as immanent-lawful totality, for Horney ‘disparagement and suspicion’ appear on the same level as economic group relationships. The scheme resembles that which neutralizes the critical phenomena of psychology of sexuality.

Not a few neo-Freudian formulations actually are on the level of those mailbox newspapers and popular writings, in which psychology is treated as a means to success and social adaptation: ‘If narcissism is considered not genetically but with reference to its actual meaning it should, in my judgment, be described as essentially self-inflation. Psychic inflation, like economic inflation, means presenting greater value than really exist.’22 Despite all the complaints about the hindrance of the individual development by society, such remarks side with society against the individual; and rightly so, if the individual does not bow to the prevailing value. Horney’s biological-sociological-economic pluralism blocks the insight that narcissism in its present form is nothing other than a desperate attempt of the individual at least partially to compensate for the injustice that in a society of universal exchange nothing ever comes at its expense. She misjudges the sociological root of the narcissism that the individual is forced by the almost insurmountable difficulties to relinquish all spontaneous and direct relationship among human beings today, to steer his idle energies toward himself. The health, envisioned by Horney, is from the shock of the same society that holds the individual responsible for the formation of the neuroses: ‘[a] sound and secure self-confidence draws upon a broad basis of human qualities, such as initiative, courage, independence, talents, erotic values, capacity to master situations’.23 Horney’s aversion to getting overly involved with the past is closely connected with the sympathy for adaptation. She has conspired with the dominant spirit, which would like to banish everything that is not positive, here-and-now concrete fact. Her resistance to Freud’s persistent emphasis on the necessity that the consciousness of a particular childhood would have to be recovered resembles the pragmatism that fades out the past, as far as it is not suitable to the control of the future:

It seems more profitable to drop such efforts (about the reconstruction of the childhood) and to focus on the forces which actually drive and inhibit a person; there is a reasonable chance of gradually understanding these, even without much knowledge of childhood. Incidentally,
when proceeding this way one does not learn less of childhood. In the process of obtaining a
deeper grasp of actual goals, actual forces, actual needs, actual pretenses, the fog hovering
over the past begins to lift. One does not regard the past, however, as the treasure long
sought, but considers it simply as a welcome help in understanding the patient’s
development.24

An investigation of the past is a waste of time. Horney’s bold and joyous suggestion simply
annuls the individuality which the suggestion supposedly should serve. If one wanted
to follow it, one would have to eliminate all that exceeds immediate presence with every-
thing constitutes the ego. The cured would be nothing more than a nucleus of conditional
reflexes.

III

Rebellion against certain despotic traits of Freudian thinking originated from the motive
of social theory, from which the orthodox neo-Freudian movement split. The existence
of such traits or their dubiousness is not simply to be denied. However, a moment of truth
becomes evident in them as soon as one moves them into the light of the development,
which claims to be the revision. Their concluding idea to detach psychoanalysis from its
involvement with authoritarianism, has led to exactly the opposite result and psychoana-
lysis is more narrowly fused with repression than was the case in Freud which did not
challenge the society explicitly. This functional change did not happen accidentally. The
eager defense of tenderness and human affection against the suspicion that they could be
rooted in sexuality, attests that the taboos have greater power over the revisionists than
they did over Freud. When they protested against his theory of sexuality in the name of
love, they at the same time took up the conventional differentiation of the sexual and the
sublime love against him from the beginning, and they wanted to resist not so very much
the repression of the sexual itself as the attack on the untruthful non-promiscuity of the
sublime. Generally the inconsistency in Freud’s thinking that on the one hand he makes
sexuality the center of psychoanalysis, on the other hand he clings to sexual taboos, about
which revisionists get annoyed, was in no way a mere mistake in thinking. The incon-
sistency corresponds to the objective facts that desire and inhibition cannot be dis-
mantled mechanically but are mutually determined. They must be understood in their
interdependency: desire without inhibition is just as difficult to imagine as inhibition
without desire. If psychoanalysis denies this interconnection it simply reduces itself to
a type of social therapy of healthy solution of ego conflicts and ends up endorsing the
paternalistic society, from which the secession wanted to turn away.

Freud was right where he was wrong. The authority of his theory lives off his blind-
ness in the face of the separation of sociology and psychology, which, however, is admit-
tedly the result of those social processes some revisionists call, in the language of the
German philosophical tradition, the self-alienation of the human being. These have to
do with that they [the revisionists] allowed themselves to be misled to the destructive
side of the separation precisely by the critical insight, as if the antagonism between pri-
vate and social being of the individual could be cured by psychotherapy, thus Freud,
through his psychology of atomism, lent an adequate expression to a reality, in which
the people are in fact atomized and are separated from one another by an insurmountable divide. That is the factual justification of his method to penetrate into the individual’s archaic depth and to take the individual as an absolute, which is tied to the totality only through sufferings, and the necessity of life. Admittedly he had naïvely accepted the monadological structure of society while the neo-Freudian school adopted a critical awareness of it. Instead of remaining consistent in the critical awareness, the neo-Freudian school wants to overcome this negativity by treating the inhumane relationships as if they were already human. In the established condition of existence, human relationships emerge neither from their free will nor from their instincts but from social and economic laws, which prevail over their heads. If psychology makes itself human or fit for a good society – inasmuch as society would be determined by human beings and their inner selves – then it would lend an inhuman reality a glance at the humane. Freud stands therein alongside Hobbes, Mandeville and Sade – those dark thinkers who insist on wickedness and incorrigibility of human nature and who pessimistically declare the necessity of authority, do not allow themselves to serve as reactionaries conveniently. They would never welcome their own change. That one is to speak from the bright and not from the dark side of individual and society, suits exactly the official and acceptable and respectable ideology. The neo-Freudians, who are angry at the reactionary Freud, fall prey to such ideology, while his irreconcilable pessimism testifies to the truth about the conditions, of which he does not speak.

This aspect of the controversy manifests itself particularly in the revisionists’ discussion of the concept of the new way. According to Horney, Freud’s thinking is ‘evolutionistic … but in a mechanistic way. In a schematized form, his assumption is that nothing much new happens in our development after the age of five, and that later reactions or experiences are to be considered as a repetition of the past ones.’ 25 ‘The most general expression of the mechanistic-evolutionistic thinking of Freud is in his theory of repetition-compulsion.’ 26 Indeed, there is not actually anything newer for Freud after the first development phases. The identical repetition of psychological reactions marks a historical stage, in which the archaic traits of civilization emerge again. Horney overlooks this. If she accuses Freud of lacking the belief in the new, she seems to believe that the new is possible at any time, as if it could be made to order. Her conception of the new is that of mass production, which proclaims each standardized gadget as unprecedented: ‘The past in some way or other is always contained in the present. If I should try to formulate briefly the substance of this discussion I should say that it is a question not of “actual versus past,” but of developmental processes versus repetition.’ 27 However, if the theory calls repetition by its right name and exists on the negative always-the-same in the seemingly new, she can perhaps gain the promise of the new from the always-the-same. However, it is ostracized by Horney as neurotic or mechanistic. Where she assures us that things are not so bad, is the pseudo-radical optimism and lip-service to the belief in the unlimited possibilities of human beings. One rightfully asked the revisionists, what they would have fundamentally against their teacher; they would presumably say, he lacks love. Groddeck’s magnanimity and Ferenczi’s empathetic tenderness are placed in contrast to Freud’s coldness and aloofness. No advanced thinker or artist escapes this reproach. As he takes the utopia and its realization bitterly seriously, he is no utopian but faces the reality as it is in order not to let himself be stupefied by it. He wants to free the elements of the
better that are determined in the reality from their bondage. He makes himself so austere in order to break the petrified conditions. The possibility of change is not promoted by the falsehood that after all, we are all brothers but only by dealing with the existing antagonisms. Freud’s coldness, which expels every fictitious immediacy between doctor and patient, and openly admits the professionally mediated nature of the therapy, does more honor to the idea of humanity by unrelentingly eliminating its appearance than comforting consolation and warmth of command do. In a world where love has become one psycho-technical instrument among others, the fidelity to love is upheld by a thinking which insists that the doctor must heal the patient without feigning ‘human interest’. The society has developed to an extreme where love can still possibly be love only as resistance against the existent: They say ‘If I don’t hate the evil, I cannot love the good!’ in Strindberg’s Black Glove. A look at the concrete application of the revisionist postulate of love is instructive. Personal sympathy for the patient is prescribed as means to the creating of a good transference, and the asexual nature of the love is glorified. However, as soon as love is no longer practical, that is, as soon as it no longer leads to a happy, real object relationship, it is attacked. In her book Self-analysis, Horney has introduced the concept of the ‘pathological dependency’. She identifies this phenomenon with the erotic attachment to a human being beyond satisfaction, which she regards as absolutely neurotic. Such an attachment is illness, which hides ‘behind such pretentious concepts like “love” and “fidelity”’. According to her scheme it is healthy and well adjusted never to give away more affection than to receive. Love should also become psychologically what it already becomes socially, an exchange of equivalents. The question remains, whether or not love which transcends the circle of prevailing condition of exchange necessarily contains the admixture of despair, which revisionists want to drive out. Maybe Freud’s misanthropy is nothing else than hopeless love and the only expression of hope which still remains.

Freud’s complex thinking contains an aspect that is related to the overall intention of the neo-Freudian movement, as this thinking first appears. The movement needed him only partially to push for attaining consistencies, which are contradictory to the essence of Freudian theory. In his ‘technical’ writing, Freud formulated flexible postulates, permanent modification and practical adjustment for therapy which could be quoted comfortably by revisionists to justify their basic approach. If Horney banishes unhappy love to the category of the neurotic, then she sins against Freud’s spirit more through the tenor of her uncritical praise of mental health than through the content of thought. Freud went so far as to say in his ‘Observations on Transference-Love’ that every love ‘consists of a new edition of old traces and that it repeats infantile reactions ... There is no love that does not reproduce infantile prototypes. The infantile conditioning factor in it is just what gives it its compulsive character which verges on the pathological.’ If Freud calls falling in love infantile, without distinguishing its primary libidinal traits from those produced by repression, then revisionists can also rant and rave at love which is incompatible with the reality principle as pathogenic.

The aporia repudiates psychoanalysis as such. On the one hand, libido seems to be the only psychic reality; gratification as positive, denial, because it leads to the illness, as negative. On the other hand, such psychoanalysis accepts the civilization which forces the denial downright uncritically, thus it resigns to it (the civilization). In the name of
the reality principle, it justifies the emotional sacrifice of the individual, without subjecting the reality principle to a rational examination. A contradictory character in the evaluation of the libido comes necessarily from this contradictory character which reminds us of the problem of education. As method of medical treatment within given social relations, it must promote the social adaptation of the patient, and encourages him to work and play within these conditions. By accepting or even reinforcing certain behaviors and forms of satisfaction, however, the patient cannot avoid those that, measured by the core of the psychoanalytic doctrine of the libido theory, are doubtful substitutes. Freud was often driven to formulations which bring this conflict into relief concisely. In a passage of the ‘Observations on Transference-Love’, he warns the analysts against giving in to the erotic wishes of their female patients. He says:

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.31

What is ‘unimpeachable’ is not analysed. That the demanded form of satisfaction is shady raises the doubt about the principle, in whose name it is postulated.

The greatness of Freud as that of all radical bourgeois thinkers consists in that he leaves such contradictions unresolved, and he scorns the pretended systematic harmony where things in themselves are torn asunder. He makes the antagonistic character of social reality apparent, as far as his theory and practice within the above-mentioned division of labor go. The precariousness of the actual function of adaptation, the unreasonableness of rational action, which psychoanalysis reveals, reflects something of objective unreason. Psychoanalysis becomes the indictment of civilization. Revisionists want to isolate only the practical realistic side of the Freudian doctrine and to put the psychoanalytic method in service of adaptation without any reservation, in order to feel themselves executors of the Freudian intentions and at the same time to break the intentions’ backbone. It is not so very much about heretical deviations of Freud’s doctrine as about a convenient smoothing-over of its contradictions. In their hands, Freudian theory turns into another means which assimilates psychological movements to the social status quo. They make psychoanalysis a part of the industrialized mass culture, they make an instrument of the Enlightenment an instrument of the appearance, in which society and the individual, adaptation to the all-powerful reality and happiness coincide. However, this appearance increasingly becomes the ubiquitous ideology of a world, which traps the individual completely in the seamless organization, yet the individual thereby remains no less anal-retentive and irrational than psychological damages of the individual ever were.

Notes

1. The following discussions refer to only those revisionist authors, at whose publications the author had a closer critical look. It is first and foremost about Karen Horney, New Ways in Psychoanalysis (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939; Stuttgart: Heinz Neumann, 1951). Considerable theoretical differences among the revisionist authors had to be neglected. However,
they all have the tendency to push psychoanalysis in the ‘realistic’ direction which will be addressed in the text.

3. ibid.: 24.
4. ibid.: 171.
5. ibid.: 33.
6. ibid.: 138.
7. ibid.: 9.
8. ibid.: 9–10.
9. ibid.: 60–1.
10. ibid.: 73.
11. ibid.: 9.
12. ibid.: 11.
13. ibid.: 59.
14. ibid.
15. ibid.: 49.
16. ibid.: 115–16.
17. ibid.: 10.
19. ibid.: 284.
22. ibid.: 89.
23. ibid.: 117.
24. ibid.
25. ibid.: 44.
26. ibid.: 45.
27. ibid.: 153.
31. ibid.: 178.