



## English Summaries

### Psychoanalytic Social Theory: Studies from the Frankfurt School (1931–1957)

#### ESSAYS

#### **JÁNOS WEISS: The Place (and Change) of Psychology Throughout the History of the Frankfurt School**

The prefatory note examines the place of psychology in different periods of “critical social theory.” (1) In early interdisciplinary studies, psychology (along with economic theory) had a dominant role, to the extent that Erich Fromm (after the leader, Marx Horkheimer) was the most important theoretician of the School. (2) In the first half of the 1940s, the ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ sharply curtailed interest in psychology; there are a few hints of its importance only in the appendix of the book. (3) From the mid-1940s onwards, and then in the first half of the 1950s, we can see a revaluation of psychology in the lectures and studies of Horkheimer and Adorno. (4) Finally, in the second half of the 1950s, Alexander Mitscherlich appears on the periphery of the Frankfurt School, and he makes a major contribution to add new perspectives to the thinking of the School’s second generation. This contribution has significantly formed the structure of discourse in the 1960s.

**Keywords:** Frankfurt School, critical social theory, psychology, Fromm, Horkheimer, Adorno, Mitscherlich

#### **ERICH FROMM: Psychoanalysis and Sociology**

The author pays particular attention to the “and” between the two disciplines; he believes that these disciplines should not be simply brought closer together but should be applied to each other. (1) On the one hand, if psychoanalysis is being applied to sociology, we must be careful not to displace economic, technical, and political aspects. Fromm is interested in solely one theme: “the role of the unconscious in man shaping and developing society.” (2) On the other hand, applying sociology to

psychology means that we must always bear in mind that man is inherently socially subordinate.

**Keywords:** psychoanalysis, sociology, unconscious, society

### **ERICH FROMM: Politics and Psychoanalysis**

After psychoanalysis has shown us how to interpret the actions, thoughts, and desires of the individual, it is reasonable to expect that we will be able to interpret society as a whole in this way. And so, we can attempt to explain “often irrational political events.” And then, the hope arises that society could be “therapeutised” in the same way as the individual, and so that we could even reach eternal peace. In the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was a widespread assumption and expectation. The peculiarity of Fromm’s idea lies in the assumption that psychoanalysis must be seen in relation to historical materialism. At first sight, both psychoanalysis and historical materialism seem to lead to identical results, since both aim to dethrone the profoundly self-righteous consciousness. However, if we look at the tools they use for overthrowing, we find huge differences. These analyses conclude that field research is not a solution to social problems. The quasi-neurotic behaviour of the masses cannot be “cured” through “analysis,” but through changing the conditions of life that cause it.

**Keywords:** psychoanalysis, politics, historical materialism, social conditions

### **ERICH FROMM: On the Method and Task of Analytical Social Psychology**

This study is more closely related to Freudian theory than any other. Freud (drawing on a great tradition) distinguished two groups of instincts: the instinct of self-preservation and the sexual instinct. After clarifying the definitions, the first and most important task is to outline the differences between them. One of the most significant differences is that the sexual instinct can be postponed, and it can be adapted to circumstances well and flexibly; whereas the instinct of self-preservation is imperative in its nature, consequently, the latter is superior. The approach to sexual instincts belongs to psychology, and the approach to self-preservation belongs to social theory or sociology. However, this sharp distinction cannot be tenable: “the fact that a phenomenon belongs to the social sciences does not mean that it cannot also be the subject of psychoanalysis.” And from this idea we arrive at the following central thesis: “there are subjects in psychology, and especially in social psychology, that capture the social background and function of psychic phenomena.”

**Keywords:** Freud, sexual instinct, instinct of self-preservation, social background

### **ERICH FROMM: Psychoanalytic Characterology and its Significance for Social Psychology**

The basic idea of this paper is the recognition that the mediation between the human psyche and the social structure is possible primarily through the concept of “character.” Although Freud also writes about this concept, he does not exploit its

sociological potential. The first part of this study aims to reconstruct Freudian theory. It builds on the following assumption: “The general basis of psychoanalytic characterology is that character traits are to be understood as sublimations of specific sexual impulses.” The starting point of turning toward sociology is the idea that family and then society play a crucial role in the development of character. First, the author claims, in a way reminiscent of Freud’s description, that the development of character means that the libidinal structure adapts to the social structure. “The sexual morality of society plays a special role in this process.” But beyond this, to characterise society, we also need to develop the “spirit of capitalism.” Here, Fromm draws on Werner Sombart’s analysis: for the capitalist-civil spirit, the happiness and enjoyment of life have lost their central role and have been replaced by duties. Our task now is to outline the consequences of this.

**Keywords:** psychoanalytic characterology, family, social structure, adaptation, capitalism, Sombart

### **THEODOR W. ADORNO: On the Relationship between Sociology and Psychology**

Adorno’s study does not fit into the mainstream of life, and yet it can be considered of extraordinary importance, as it can be interpreted as an attempt to reformulate “critical theory” after World War II. Its starting point is twofold: (1) methodologically and in terms of their subject matter, psychology and sociology are at odds with each other; and (2) it is fully in line with the structure of contemporary late capitalist society. Adorno, in his decision, examines this issue from a sociological perspective and engages in an extensive discussion with Parsons. The individual human being, as well as human actions, no longer have a place in sociology, in other words, the human being is “just” one system among many. And this is also a fundamental feature of late capitalism: individual actions, intentions, and desires are separated from the general plane operating over the heads of people. “The separation of the social acts reproducing the lives of people from themselves prevents them from seeing the functioning of the machine, as well as gives them the sense that everything depends on the individual. (Interestingly, this sense was never as popular as it was at the time of the spread of the assembly line.)” The consideration of individual actions and the individual viewpoint can bring back a new critical perspective to the theory of sociology.

**Keywords:** sociology, psychology, capitalism, Parsons, individual

### **ALEXANDER MITSCHERLICH: Diseases of Society and Psychosomatic Medicine**

In the second half of the 1950s, a young psychoanalyst, Alexander Mitscherlich, who later became the head of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt, came forward. His greatest achievement was to reconfigure the relationship between psychology and sociology in such a way that a new programme of critical theory could emerge. Let us have a look at the primary assumption of his idea: “In the times of prescriptions, we can hear of symptoms covering a wide range of human functions: fatigue, dizziness, indigestion, sudden nausea, sweating spells, insomnia, etc. Although several attempts

have been made to summarise these ill-states without contouring coherent disease-concepts, this does not mean that we have yet understood the interrelationships of effects that create these multi-faceted images.” From this point, we can talk about (mental and non-mental) illnesses caused by the late capitalism. This pattern of “critical theory” is still highly popular today.

**Keywords:** psychosomatic illnesses, capitalism, critical theory

**SAMIR GANDESHA: Adorno, Ferenczi, and a new “categorical imperative after Auschwitz”**

Theodor W. Adorno’s mature thought can be characterized by the attempt to articulate what he calls a “new categorical imperative after Auschwitz.” By this, Adorno means that theory and praxis must be organized in such a way that the Holocaust does not repeat itself. This article argues that Sándor Ferenczi’s metapsychology is key to understanding Adorno’s attempt to rethink the nature of precisely such a new categorical imperative. One of the key themes of Adorno’s entire corpus is the problem of the “identification with the aggressor” – an idea that originates with Ferenczi rather than, as is commonly thought, Anna Freud. The Ferenczian dimension of Adorno’s thinking becomes particularly clear in Adorno’s thoughts on the question of freedom. In this context, Adorno engages in a psychoanalytically informed critique of the philosophy of freedom and a speculative philosophical critique of psychoanalysis. The fashioning of a “new categorical imperative” after Auschwitz entails a form of education directed towards a new form of *Mündigkeit*, one oriented towards contradiction, resistance, and a steadfast refusal to “identify with the aggressor.”

**Keywords:** Adorno, Ferenczi, identification with the aggressor, autonomy, the Holocaust