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I.

Analytic psychology contains the realization that human beings affect one another, particularly in the process of child rearing, and therefore that what appear to be innate or natural properties of a person are actually the result of social interaction and human agency. In this sense, the psychoanalytic perspective represented a profound demystification comparable to Marx's analysis, which revealed the origins of commodity values in the human labor performed in social production. Despite this parallel, the task of synthesizing the work of Marx and Freud is more difficult than it may at first appear. When Adorno and Horkheimer began to systematically synthesize Freud's theory of society they were already dissatisfied by the efforts of Fromm and Reich to achieve this integration.¹ For critical theory the attempt to understand how people become accomplices in their own subjugation—"how domination is anchored in the hearts of the dominated"—it had to focus on the idea of internalization. Following Freud, critical theory used the idea to show how a tension between compliance and resistance occurs within the individual's relation to authority.

Yet, at the center of critical theory's analysis of modern capitalism is a paradox about the nature of resistance to domination. Those aspects of consciousness where this resistance might be located—critical reason, individuation, integrity and ultimately resistance itself—are tied to the process of internalizing authority. As a result, the rejection of authority can only take place through its prior acceptance. Even though the subjective dimension of domination is found to be in the way authority is internalized, the only possible resistance to authority is located in the same process of internalization. If reason, reflection and individuation are historically tied to the process of internalizing authority, is not the result that authority is in some sense seen as necessary or even vindicated? Or is this paradox only surmountable through an alternative not considered by critical theory: that the

¹ For an account of the differences between the Frankfurt theorists and Erich Fromm in particular, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston, 1973). Reich's *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, published in 1933 and Fromm's social-psychological portion of *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (Paris, 1936) presented similar hypotheses about the origins of authoritarianism in the relationship to the father. Although Fromm's analysis of the 'sado-masochistic character' was accepted by Horkheimer, his later rejection of Freud's patrocentric theory was not. Horkheimer's own portion of the Studies contains only one direct reference to "depth psychology," although it shows some influence by the idea of the Oedipus complex. I date the real integration of Freud into critical theory as occurring in the 1940s, and most definitively in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). Although a great deal of psychoanalytic study went into the *Authoritarian Personality* (New York, 1969), its analyses often run counter to the general statements about contemporary psychological development in Horkheimer and Adorno's work.
posibility of resisting authority need not be grounded in that aspect of the
subject which once accepted authority, but instead in that aspect which seeks
mutuality? Could not the potential for emancipation be grounded in an
intersubjective theory of personality, rather than an individual psychology of
internalization?

This possibility would call into question one of the major themes of critical
theory's acceptance of Freudian theory: that ultimately it is our natural
impulses, our 'human nature,' including love and desire, which betray us.
The malleable, asocial, regressive core of human nature—what Freud termed
the id—makes the control of inner nature through civilization and reason
necessary. Reason is then constituted as control and becomes a repressive and
destructive force—a second nature which can be held in check by no other
power. In this way reason, the very possibility of resistance, is implicated in
domination. Whereas Freud drew the consequence from the destructive
potential of the instincts that civilization was justified, Adorno accepts the
idea that "an unconquerable piece of nature" 2 underlies civilization, while
resisting the consequence that authority and civilization are thereby
legitimated. But, since Adorno finds no possibility of a reconciliation between
reason and nature, the struggle between them results in an impasse from
which authority emerges triumphant.

The impasse of authority grounded in the antinomy of reason and nature is
central to critical theory's analysis of modern culture. Internalization, even as
it perpetuates authority, is necessary for the constitution of reason which
alone can oppose authority. This impasse comes to be formulated in a
number of paradoxes, of which the critical theorists themselves often give the
best expression: while autonomy and acceptance of authority are opposed,
the same process of internalization and individuation underlies them; while
the autonomy of the individual in capitalism has been shown to be a mask of
isolation and powerlessness, the dissolution of individuality leads to a more
seamless conformity; while critical or emancipatory reason must be
developed to counter instrumental or dominating reason, they both emerge
out of a conflict with inner and outer nature; and finally, despite the fact that
the ego which embodies cognition can only grow out of a victorious struggle
against the instincts, the repression of instincts itself includes the repression of
cognition itself.

The distinction between rational control of the instincts and simple
repression becomes crucial—but in an "irrational society" the ego can only
fulfill the demand to tame the instincts by acting irrationally or un-
consciously. The hope for rational self-control is utopian; it presupposes a
rational social order whose realization is not in sight. If the present social

the third source, the social source of suffering...when we consider how unsuccessful we have
been in precisely this field of prevention of suffering, a suspicion dawns on us that here, too, a
piece of unconquerable nature may be behind—this time a piece of our own psychical
constitution."
order undermines the capacity for rational self-control, reason is doomed to be purely an instrument of domination rather than of liberation. In the present epoch the critical theorists find that authority is directly exercised over individuals rather than internalized—thereby eliminating the potential for critique or revolt. As a result, the possibility for the formation of a revolutionary subject is foreclosed. In the face of this situation the critical theorists look backward to the form of instinctual control which was the basis for ego development and reason in the past—individual internalization—and argue that only it contained a potential for the formation of a critique of domination. This is the impasse which I refer to as the “end of internalization.”

Freud distinguished the internalization process from the simple fear of an outside authority and saw it as an advancement in ego development. When the ego internalizes, it takes ‘inside’ a relationship in which it was once dominated from without, in such a way that one part of the ego acts as the agent of the authority toward the other part. This can be variously understood as the ego reproducing the relationship between self and other, or the ego identifying with the authority. The authority's commands are experienced as autonomous directives, appearing to emanate from within: conscience or super-ego. The response of the ego to this split is the feeling of guilt, which is fear of punishment by the super-ego. The process of internalization assumes the prior individuation, or differentiation of self and other. That which is taken in was only “outside” by virtue of an earlier process of exclusion, in which the ego formed a boundary separating a domain of self.

According to the critical theorists, the historical conditions of familial life which fostered the process of internalization and individuation as Freud knew it have been eclipsed. The increasing depersonalization of social relations in late capitalism, the decline of the entrepreneurial, individualist father, has undermined the familial organization on which internalization of authority was based. Internalization is replaced by direct conformity to external conditions.

4. Max Horkheimer, “Authoritarianism and the Family Today,” in The Family: Its Function and Destiny (New York, 1949), pp. 359-369. The main point of this article is that authority is increasingly depersonalized. Because it is located outside of the personal parent figure, it cannot become part of the internal psychic make-up. In this discussion, Horkheimer is explicitly using the Freudian concept of ego development based on successful resolution of the Oedipal complex, a model explicitly based on socialization of the male child. The child comes to replace the desire to act as the father does toward the mother in the hope of being able, in the future, to possess a similar object. The child relinquishes the immediate desire for possession, because of either fear of castration or loss of love—in any case, a personal relationship with the father. He takes the paternal authority inside as super-ego. This scheme posits a one-shot development of conscience, and largely ignores early stages of identification, especially with the mother. It is therefore patrocentric, and the conclusion that Marcuse (Five Lectures [Boston, 1970], p. 50) as well as Horkheimer and others have erroneously drawn is that the lack of a strong father does not provide a basis for children who can resist authority. The peer group is considered invariably
pressure. Similarly, the lack of opportunity to identify with effective and
loving parental figures leads to a failure of ego development. In this way the
critical theorists establish the criteria for analyzing the current psychological
state of the subject by reference to that historical moment when the family
was still intact. In 1936 Horkheimer had argued that the family was a means
of socializing the individual to accept authority, that it taught the child to be
"reasonable" in conforming to uncontrollable social reality. But in 1949 he
stressed that the family had once defended the individual against society—a
point he made earlier—and that the lack of parental effectiveness today
delivers children even earlier into the hands of state institutions and mass
media.

Now that impersonal, extra-familial forms of authority hold sway over the
individual, "the mediating agency of the ego" is unnecessary to insure
compliance. Rather, they argue, the direct manipulation of unconscious
drives by external forces perpetuates social domination. Adorno explained
both the fascist movement in Germany and conformist culture in America as
"the appropriation of mass psychology by the oppressors": the replacement of
the conflict between the ego and id by direct manipulation of the id. Given
the persistence of individual isolation and competitiveness in late capitalism,
an external semblance of individuality and "automated ego" remains—but
this is understood as "individualism without the individual." This verdict
must be seen, however, in its historical context: the failure of that class to
revolt whose collective identity was to end bourgeois individualism while
realizing its unfulfilled promise of individual autonomy. Because this moment
of historical possibility failed, this form of individuality remains the last
preserve of critical opposition and consciousness—a form which is dying out.

Despite their own exhaustive critique of liberal individualism, Adorno and
Horkheimer now return to the individual, if only as an explanatory concept
for their post mortem. The ideal of individual consciousness upheld by
liberalism presents us with the missing sources of resistance. Internalization,
although in collusion with authority, was also a source of ego autonomy
without which the struggle for emancipation cannot be waged.

It cannot be stated too often that the critical theorists were themselves
aware of the way in which this impasse had grown out of specific conditions of
bourgeois society. They themselves had criticized the assumptions underlying

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conformist. This is actually contradicted by the data in "Liberal-democratic personality" in The
Authoritarian Personality despite Horkheimer's attempt to enlist the data for his thesis.
Furthermore, it ignores the role of maternal authority and pre-Oedipal development as well as
the difference in female child development, and therefore the possibility that women will oppose
paternal authority, perhaps based on identification with strong mothers and without the support
of men who have strong egos.


6. The empirical credibility of the thesis that the individual is declining is dubious even from
the standpoint of Adorno's own empirical results in The Authoritarian Personality. The "liberal-
democratic personality" rooted in the modified nuclear family was not on the wane.
the hope of opposing individual reason to authority. Nonetheless, the unwillingness to abandon certain assumptions of liberal rationalism lead them inexorably into resigning themselves to the very impasse they had identified. It is necessary to return to these assumptions about human nature and the constitution of reason, which they shared with Freud, in order to explain why they were forced into the paradoxical opposition between reason and authority: an impasse from which they could not escape.

II.

As idle as it may appear to be to attempt to subtract all that is "social" from our behavior in order to determine that the residue is the truth of human nature, it is perhaps still more difficult to completely avoid all such assumptions about human nature. The danger, however, is that social relations may be fetishized and seen as belonging to nature, so that the results of a process appear ultimately as the cause. Freud himself was not loathe to speculate about the nature of the basic human drives. He posited the id as the unconscious locus of the primitive, unsocialized instincts—the sometimes dangerous impulses motivated by the aim of reducing tension or the pleasure principle. In the case of the id the fetishism occurs when the ego's dominance is seen as a response to rather than as a cause of the primitive nature of the id. While Adorno and Horkheimer propose in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the ego's efforts to master a frightening nature actually increase the antagonism between the two, they do not direct this proposition to the understanding of the id. Rather, they propose that the id's innate destructiveness emerges when it is no longer restrained by the internalizing ego. The ego, which is unable to protect itself from its internal impulses, projects them outwards "pathologically." It appears in this formulation that self-control, domination of internal nature, was actually justified because in its absence the innate core of aggression would emerge.

This position implies an unacknowledged reversal of their argument that the ego creates an increasingly hostile world through its exercise of domination and control. The objectified id appears in their theory as the only source of conflict through which the ego can develop. They lack a basis for examining the extent or way in which socially mediated antagonisms produce, rather than express, destructiveness. This requires an examination of the way in which certain sets of impulses become split off or alienated from

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7. "Mimesis imitates the environment, but false projection makes the environment like itself," Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cummings (New York, 1972), p. 185. The exposition of the way in which objectifying thought gradually severs the subject's connection to the world of objects must be seen as their attempt to discuss the formation of the ego alienated from the id. However, they themselves never consciously include the id in these considerations, just as they never explicitly draw the parallel between formal instrumental reason and the ego based on the performance principle.

8. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, op.cit., p. 193. Here the critical theorists are not reluctant to posit the nature of the subject. The a-social character of the id is not the least of their empirically unsubstantiated propositions.
the original ego, and take on the character of a powerful or destructive internal nature.

The apparent necessity of ego development through opposition to the external world and internal nature could be countered by the supposition of the subjective need for mutual recognition. The mutual recognition of subjectivity implies that the world to which the subject stands opposed can be demystified as the creation of other subjects who are continually acting upon one another. What appears to be internal nature can be grasped as the alienated form of the need for recognition, distorted through an intersubjective process of objectification. In fact, it is precisely in this alienated mode of denying the basic need for recognition that the interdependency of subjects is most visible. The denial of this universal mutual need is integral to the struggle around any concrete particular need through which power relations are consolidated. Thus, the understanding of domination requires the investigation of the social process of alienating this need in earliest childhood, examining the interaction from the viewpoint of the socializer as well as the socialized.

The psychoanalytic perspective known as "object relations theory" in which ego development is explained through the interaction with other subjects is particularly appropriate to such an investigation. The object-relations perspective sees the libido as directed toward the other, the libidinal drives as "object-seeking." That is, the subjective motive of an interaction, even where partial, sexual drives are brought into play, is the connection to the object as another subjective being. The ultimate need is not for the breast, or milk, but mother. This perspective suggests that the instrumentalization of the other for the satisfaction of partial sexual urges, while apparently natural, actually represents a deterioration of object relations. Thus the pleasure principle, which in Freud's view governs the id, constitutes a degeneration of object relations which must first be explained through the development of those relations.

In this context, the analysis of ego development need not assume that human beings are blank slates upon which society imprints itself, that they have no unconscious drives nor potential for destructiveness. Rather, society must be seen as a creation of such human beings in which they externalize their nature. We need not assume that this externalizing process proceeds without distortion. The problem lies not in the what but the way human nature is externalized. This insight emerges repeatedly in critical theory, but finally founders on their acceptance of instinct theory, their demonization of second nature as nature.

The relation between ego and inner nature in critical theory closely parallels their construction of the relation between reason or ego and external.

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nature. In their analysis of the conflict between ego and outside world they, like Freud, never state exactly what the external world is composed of. It is not clear when the term designates the social world and when the natural, when it refers to other subjects and when to objectified social processes or institutions. Horkheimer and Adorno see reason as a universal historical, ontologized process developing out of the opposition to nature.\(^\text{10}\) In a parallel way, Freud explained the evolution of the ego out of the id as a result of the pressure of necessity and the stimulus of the external world. For Adorno and Horkheimer the struggle between ego and outside world, reason and nature is transposed within the subject as a process of controlling her or his own nature. Goal rationality begins as the social relation to nature which becomes internalized as self-control over internal nature.\(^\text{11}\)

As an orientation to nature, reason always contained both goal rationality or control, and the aspect of enlightenment or liberation from fear. Adorno and Horkheimer wanted to show how the drive for mastery over nature, that is, for self-preservation, was inextricably intertwined with the development of reason. By the same token, the basis of ego development is always self-preservation, the reaction to the external world. Hence, the degree of consciousness and quality of rationality which could develop depend on the social requirements of survival. These requirements are consolidated in socio-historical forms which mediate the form of the ego. Thus, Adorno and Horkheimer believe that what history has brought forth it can also eliminate.

Ego, for critical theory, is a purely social or secondary formation. At the same time, it is welded to individual self-preservation (as Freud also believed), to the principle of individual self-interest. They consistently state that ego and rationality both come to an end when interest no longer demands them. Of course, the principle of self-interest was understood in bourgeois society as an individual rather than a collective principle. The possibility of a different form of ego, based not on individual self-interest but on social membership and mutuality of interest is not wholly unrecognized in critical theory. But only the principle of individual interest, that is, individual self-preservation, is raised to a category of endopsychic process, of nature.\(^\text{12}\) Furthermore, only

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\(^\text{10}\) Freud mentions this in a number of expositions, e.g., *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Part of the function of the ego is to project against these stimuli, to ward them off because the nervous system would "if this were feasible, maintain itself in an altogether unstimulated condition." See Freud, "Instincts . . .," *op.cit.*, p. 86. The ego is thus seen as a secondary formation which only comes into being in order to serve the pleasure principle—the principle of reduction of tension—because an individual is impinged upon. The function of judgment, accepting the reality principle, is to ascertain what is good or bad and whether it is inside or outside. See Freud, "Negation," *General Psychological Theory*, *op.cit*.

\(^\text{11}\) The extent to which goal rationality is a life-form was never fully appreciated in Critical Theory. Eike Gebhardt points this out in "Identity as a Total Institution," *International Journal of Sociology*, 5:1 (Spring 1975), pp. 3-46. Marcuse's formulation of the Performance Principle (in *Eros and Civilization*) also lacks a more phenomenal description of the search for approval and calculation of use. The full implications of the Protestant Ethic as a psychological phenomenon have yet to be developed.

\(^\text{12}\) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op.cit.*, p. 189. They repeat the depletion of the ego within their theory—by analyzing the "outside world" as an abstract category, the subject also loses con-
the struggle against nature, rather than an impulse to satisfy a desire for the other—sociability—can ultimately elicit the human potential for conscious social existence.

The crucial problem in both this conception of the ego and of nature is therefore the lack of a concept of intersubjectivity—of subject to subject relations or societal interaction. Consciousness appears to be a property of the individual monad. The world is not conceived of as an intersubjective realm in which the objects encountered are really themselves subjects who have the capacity to act and be affected by another's actions. In their use of the abstract category "outside world," in their analysis of reason itself in terms of ego and outside, subject and object, they are unable to overcome the subject-object dualism from which, in their view, domination ultimately springs. The source of their objectification of the outside world, as well as their inability to transcend the reason which objectifies, is the development of the categories of reflection and self-reflection solely out of the relation between subject and object.

This is precisely the idealist position of which Adorno and Horkheimer are themselves critical. In his early discussions of authority, Horkheimer had shown how the thinking individual, the autonomous subject of bourgeois philosophy is actually socially powerless. The opposition of individual reason to authority, really signified his aloneness in the world, leaving him no alternative but to adapt himself. Horkheimer argued that the split between subject and object arose because the origins of the external world in human practical activity are obscured. By confronting a world in which the subject cannot recognize his own doing, that world then appears objective. It becomes an object of contemplation, a world in which the object is separated by a gap which can only be bridged by knowledge, not action. In this view, the premise for individual ego development, the existence of a boundary between subject and object which allows the external to become internal, is actually the intersubjective process of alienation.

The recognition of this intersubjective process is not maintained by Adorno and Horkheimer when they derive the opposition between the reasoning ego and internal nature from the nature of the id. Their reversion to the ideal of individual consciousness, after having revealed its origins in the fetishism of the market, is founded in an inadequate theory of object relations, and a
concomitant acceptance of the objectified id. These assumptions, in turn, rest on their difficulty in accepting the conception of an intersubjective world.

III.

For critical theory, no matter how reason becomes a force of domination, or ego becomes an agency of authority, these remain the last embattled forces against mass society through which nature takes its revenge. Consequently, the instrumentalization of reason and the automation of the ego mean nothing short of the defeat of subjectivity itself. The process of objectification prevails in a dual sense: the world becomes increasingly reified and reason becomes increasingly incapable of reflecting upon the ends it serves, becoming subordinated to these objective processes. The verdict of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, then, is that reason, which once embodied a tension between reflection and repression, has itself eliminated the contradiction in favor of the repressive side. The analysis of this paradox of reason in its various forms and evolution is the backdrop for comprehending the present dilemma, the end of internalization.

Internalization always implied a process of differentiation, of separating what is self from what is outside, and thus of conscious individuation. The separation of self from object—the subject-object dualism—is the precondition for reflection upon the object. More important, the self can now become an object of reflection. This means that the subject can hold in check his tendency to objectify the world through reflection by reflecting upon his own tendency toward objectification. The solution to the problem of reason is more reason. That which has become part of the self through the process of internalization can still be criticized, externalized, even rejected. Having taken what is outside into its own domain, the subject is free to reconsider it as its "own." In this sense internalization is the basis of the ego's autonomy and self-consciousness.

The activity of the ego has always contained the element of dominating the object, however, and internalization always meant self-domination. In psychological terms, the ego's increasing domination of the subject's own internal nature brings forth a contradiction: internalization as reflexivity but also as the destruction of reasoning consciousness. While the rational ego is brought forth by the drive for self-preservation, it is also the victim of it. Self-control, the principle of worldly asceticism, is in collusion with the social relations of domination which, although they encourage rationality, nonetheless subordinate it. As this control becomes objectified in the social relations themselves, even self-control becomes obsolete.

Since the development of capitalism has eliminated the necessity for individual decision-making or rational self-control, it dissolves the functions

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15. *Ibid.* Horkheimer also explicates the theme of the depletion of the ego in a more cogent form in *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1974).
of the ego it once cultivated: "There is no object left for the conscience because the responsibility of the individual for himself and his family is replaced by his contribution to the apparatus. Even if the old moral assumptions are retained, there is no longer an internal, instinctive, or motivational conflict to form a basis for the development of the tribunal of conscience. Instead of the internalization of the social command, which not only made it more binding and at the same time more open...and even turned it against society, there is an immediate and direct identification with stereotyped value scales." 18 Further, they maintain that it is no longer the responsibility of the ego "to hold the psychological drives within the limits of self-preservation," to control instinct. The "system of mass culture which takes over the last inward impulses of individuals" makes ego control unnecessary. "The committees and stars serve as the ego and super-ego," a form of instinctual control more inescapable than internalization, which embodied the capacity for reflection on the aims of control. 19 Thus, contemporary society witnesses the end of that intrapsychic conflict between ego and instinct which, in their view, made internalization a source of critical opposition.

The end of this conflict has meant the end of all possibility for opposition. Adorno wrote in 1954: "A brutal standardizing society arrests all differentiation, and to this end it exploits the primitive core of the unconscious. Both conspire to annihilate the mediating ego; the triumphant archaic impulses, the victory of id over ego, harmonize with the triumph of society over the individual." 20 This statement suggests that, in accordance with their assumptions about human nature, both ego and id are infinitely malleable. While Adorno attacks the analytic revisionists for tracing the nature of the unconscious to social influences, 21 he himself argues that the id can be wholly instrumentalized and manipulated by social forces. If not a blank slate, still this id is conveniently composed of only such energy as the bourgeois economy can absorb at any given time. Further, since the ego only differentiates from the id under external pressure and can be completely instrumentalized, it too has no power to resist. Thus, the impasse is complete: an infinitely manipulable id and an ego based upon individual self-interest deliver the subject passively into the grip of external social forces.

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18. Ibid., p. 198.
19. Ibid., p. 203.
21. Ibid., p. 75. Adorno's argument of reductionism seems far more aptly leveled at Parsons, who maintains that the id is the sediment of object relations, just as are the ego and super-ego. This is reductionist because it implies that human beings can be shaped at will, without protest, and hence denies the fundamental analytic insight that the repression of basic impulses cannot really succeed and leads to neurotic conflict. However, the revisionists do not hold that id content is created by social relations so much as affected by them. The real issue here is what really are the fundamental impulses, and whether they are correctly understood as sexual. Despite Adorno's assertion that the revisionists deny the importance of sexuality, he never integrates it into his theories about the ego.

Adorno's position is reiterated in Russell Jacoby, Social Amnesia (Boston, 1975).
In the face of this impasse, Adorno chooses to be a partisan of the defeated ego, and maintains that the id is victorious.\(^{22}\) He ultimately makes this commitment after numerous vacillations, because the ego represents consciousness—and consciousness, not instinct, is the real oppositional forces whose casualty we suffer. Conscious control represents the transcendence of mere repression, and is thus comparable to the capacity to reflect upon ends or values as the transcendence of instrumental reason. Conscious control of inner nature distinguished the critical ego from the undifferentiated automated ego which only represses.\(^{23}\) The distinction between conscious self-control and repression is absolutely central to the Freudian analysis of the ego. It expresses the difference between repression of the instincts which result in unconscious guilt and aggression, and the rational acceptance of necessity.

In capitalism, according to critical theory, this distinction between repression and rational self-control becomes obsolete. The rational ego which it once fostered to meet the demands of self-preservation is now suppressed by it—or else it would question the necessity of self-control. The objective basis for rationality is lost as renunciation becomes objectively unnecessary; self-control is no longer necessary to keep the productive system going. In view of the development of the productive forces and the increased possibilities for satisfaction, the ego cannot rationally sacrifice in order to survive, preserve itself, perform competitively. Even the rationality of self-interest is eroded, leaving only the skeleton of calculation behind: “In an irrational society the ego cannot perform at all adequately the function allotted to it by that society. To be able to assert itself in reality, the ego has to understand reality and operate 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...the rational ego...is unequal to its task. It has to become unconscious, part of the instinctual dynamic it is still, however, supposed to transcend. The ego’s cognitive activity, performed in the interests of self-preservation, has to be constantly reversed in the interests of self-preservation.”\(^{24}\)

At this juncture Adorno attempts to relocate the problem of compliance from the repression of instinct, to the repression of the ego. He suggests that it is the ego itself that is in conflict, pulled both in the direction of conscious activity on the one hand, and the suppression of rational cognition by the social demands of survival on the other. Marcuse later developed this idea that the present epoch is distinguished by repression of the ego. “The defense consists chiefly in a strengthening of controls not so much over the instincts as over consciousness, which, if left free, might recognize the work of repression.

\(^{22}\) Jürgen Habermas, “Moral Development and Ego Identity,” Telos, 24 (Summer 1975), pp. 42-43. According to Habermas, “the critical theory of society still holds fast to the concept of the autonomous ego even when it makes the gloomy prediction that this ego loses its basis.”

\(^{23}\) Adorno, “Sociology and Psychology,” op.cit., p. 87.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 88. See also Marcuse, Five Lectures, op.cit.
in the bigger and better satisfaction of needs." 25 The instincts, however, are palliated and enlisted in compliance by a kind of pseudo-gratification which Marcuse termed "repressive desublimation." 26

This is a highly significant attempt to formulate the social psychology of conformity in a society which has abolished scarcity for many of its members. What both Marcuse and Adorno seem to be driving at is the idea that repression of perception or cognition is as vital to domination as repression of desire. According to this view, the source of compliance is no longer repression per se, unless repression refers not to wishes but to perceptions. Indeed, they are ambiguous about whether cognition would not flourish by virtue of instinctual repression more than by satisfaction.

Adorno also developed the idea that the unconscious ego, the narcissistic impulses and defense mechanisms, is an important starting point for the analysis of contemporary culture. He suggests that the ego itself is in conflict, pulled both in the direction of consciousness and the suppression of awareness by the social demands of survival. The ego, as Freud's later theory developed, could be seen as both the repressing agency and the repressed content. 27 This contradiction, Adorno thinks, reflects the real situation of the ego. It develops a certain amount of rationality for the sake of self-preservation, but not enough to challenge the system. The ego represents psychologically the conflict between the two forms or rationality—instrumental and emancipatory—in its dual position as conscious and unconscious. However, in Adorno's view, both of these tendencies are responses to outside pressure, secondary formations. He therefore does not develop his analysis of the ego, or of the repression of perception and cognition, beyond the point of stating that social forces have eliminated the emancipatory tendency.

While Adorno remained less optimistic about the id than Marcuse, who attempted to find within it or within libido a potential for going beyond the pleasure principle, he did continue to carefully scrutinize the complicity of the ego in domination. 28 This is particularly important in his analysis of fascism which reveals some of the most troublesome aspects of critical theory's approach to the conflict between reason and nature. The issues of power and helplessness, of the intersubjective conditions of social control, and the unresolved question as to whether cognition must necessarily be based on

27. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," *op.cit.*, Part II, p. 87. Adorno writes: "Freud's immanent statements about the ego involuntarily contradict one another and disrupt the closed system he strives to establish," and "the ego, while encompassing the activities of consciousness, is itself conceived to be essentially unconscious."
28. Marcuse, on the other hand, sought at least a vision of human striving toward liberation which could not be expunged. He argued that the prevailing reality principle which takes the form of the performance principle (demanding instrumental achievement) could be superceded by a truly sociable, spontaneous orientation to reality. The ego could thus become sociable rather than instrumental. Marcuse was able to formulate a utopian vision in which reason and nature are reconciled. But he was not able to find within our present society a force for critical consciousness because he fashioned his utopia within the context of the present social order.
instinctual repression or repressed along with instinct, are all raised but not truly clarified. Adorno is unable to distinguish between conscience and consciousness, super-ego and ego, social control and self-control.  

Adorno argues that fascism, like mass culture in advanced capitalism, results from a failure of internalization: individuals remain at the stage in which fear of external authority is the primary motivation. In fascism, the archaic id impulses are exploited by the leaders, "the appropriation of mass psychology by the oppressors." He maintains that the super-ego or conscience declines, allowing for greater impulsivity. These id impulses have the tendency to repersonalize and idealize the authority figures which have lost the aura such figures had in the past. The progressive depersonalization of authority, in fact the rationalization of all social relations, are compensated for by mass irrationality. The fascist leader supplies the missing object for these unsatisfied desires for authority. Here the theme of the "revolt of nature" as Horkheimer termed the betrayal by innate destructive drives, is paramount.

On the other hand, Adorno suggests that fascist behavior does not simply express instinctually rooted aggression, but is motivated by narcissism.

For Adorno, narcissism is a weakness of the ego, a diminution of its conscious cognitive side which replaces internalization as the cause of compliance. In "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," Adorno elucidates the exploitation of narcissistic identification and narcissistic injury in fascist movements. He argues that narcissistic afflictions of the ego are more characteristic in the present period which "for socio-economic reasons witnesses the decline of the individual and his subsequent weaknesses." Similarly, he asserted in "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda" that the "ego plays much too large a role in fascist irrationality to admit of an interpretation of the supposed ecstasy as a mere manifestation of the unconscious." Presumably what he means is that fascist behavior does

29. See Herbert Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," *Five Lectures*, op. cit., p. 50. "But the regression of the ego shows forth...above all in the weakening of the 'critical' mental faculties: consciousness and conscience. They are interrelated: no conscience without developed knowledge...of good and evil." Typically, Marcuse confuses moral judgment and awareness of domination, which can be completely obfuscated by moral categories.

30. T.W. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," *Gesammelte Werke, Soziologische Schriften I* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 416. The "repersonalization thesis" is extremely important in light of critical theory's argument that depersonalization has robbed individuals of the opportunity to develop an ego. Essentially, the thesis expresses the idea that people now develop a 'false ego' and that once the ego was real because it had, within a circumscribed area, a real opportunity to exercise judgment. However, here the very weakness of the entire discussion of fascism becomes evident: was the depersonalization process really so far advanced in Germany, or is Adorno really referring to American society, especially to the culture industry, and simply collapsing the two social formations? Cf. Piccone, "From Tragedy to Farce," op. cit.


not simply express aggression which is instinctually rooted in the id, but is motivated by an affliction of or conflict within the ego. This, he says, fits in with the fact that the participation in fascist movements has a “phony” quality, that people “perform” it rather than feel or believe it.

The narcissistic impulse to satisfy the ego’s own ideal is thus the basis for identification with fascist leaders. Narcissistic individuals have highly rational ego ideals and demand of themselves a high degree of self-control, which in fact they cannot fulfill, resulting in an injury to their sense of self-control. The leader’s control corresponds precisely to the demand the followers cannot meet in themselves. Rational demands, or the demand for rationality become the basis for compliance. What the fascist participant seeks is the illusion of control in order to redress his sense of powerlessness.

Underlying these somewhat conflicting interpretations of fascism is a common judgment—the desire for power or authority which is expressed in fascism as primary formations, rather than the secondary expressions of needs which have become alienated and distorted through social interaction. There is a further reason for Adorno’s suggestion of two contradictory explanations of mass psychology—either the end of internalization, or the reaction of a weak ego to a strong ego ideal. He tends to use the concept of internalization confusingly to signify two different but related phenomena, the development of the ego and the super-ego. The identification with parental authority as super-ego is collapsed into the identification with parental competence or the reality of childhood autonomy as ego formation. In fact, the claims of the ego and super-ego are more likely to be opposed to one another.

34. Ibid. See also Anson Rabinbach, “Marxistische Faschismustheorien: Ein Ueberblick,” Aesthetik und Kommunikation, 26 (December, 1976), p. 10. “The stress on leadership as the basic relationship which consolidates fascism is an oversimplified approach both to the problems of culture and of authority, whether, as in Reich’s case... the emphasis is put on a rigid and mechanical theory of instinctual repression... or in Adorno’s on a relatively simple idea of the relation between psychic regression and manipulatory technique.” The other difficulty is Adorno’s tendency either to separate psychoanalysis and sociology or to deny the explanatory power of psychoanalysis altogether. Either he asserts that “psychological processes... have ceased to appear as the determining forces of the social process” or he argues that “fascism is not a psychological issue,” and any attempt to understand it as such is ideological. Actually, a dual approach is necessary, which analyzes the origins of the objective crisis to which individuals responded psychologically, the emergence of fascism as a response to definite historical conditions. Feelings of terror and abandonment in response to social crises must still be grasped as psychological, and the way in which fascism organized these emotions is a crucial part of its politics. But feelings of terror are conspicuously absent from the discussion of fascism in Adorno’s writings.
36. The way in which the two explanations may be unravelled is suggested by the efforts to distinguish the historical formations.
37. Fromm had already pointed out the difficulty of distinguishing super-ego and ego in Authority and the Family, op.cit. The difficulty of distinguishing conscience and consciousness, super-ego and ego is apparent in Horkheimer’s arguments in favor of a strong father. The difficulty stems largely from the metapsychological viewpoint, which is anathema to the metatheory.
If the current pattern of socialization fails to produce a super-ego ("autonomous conscience") and thus permits the "desublimation" of violent, archaic id impulses in fascist movements, then it might be valid to say that manipulation has replaced internalization. But the absence of a conscious ego, which Adorno calls narcissism, is hardly identical with the lack of super-ego or ego ideal—in fact, the opposite is more likely. A strong super-ego accompanies and encourages a weak ego. The reason Adorno equates lack of internalization (weak super-ego) with narcissistic identification (weak ego) may be found in an important category underlying his analysis: differentiation. While incorporative identification is opposed to differentiation, eliminating boundaries and differences, the internalization of authority as we have seen is a process of individuation. It both presupposes and establishes boundaries and difference.

The problem is that Adorno sees the principle of self-control and responsibility which underly individuation in this society as constituting real autonomy. He therefore persists in seeing internalization as a vehicle for consciousness rather than the unconscious acceptance of authority. More important, he does not see that the loss of internalized conscience is not the same as the lack of conscious rational control over the environment which an autonomous ego could exert. Finally, Adorno does not discriminate between individuation which is imposed from without and that which develops spontaneously, between living up to the standards of a powerful parent and independence which comes from parental recognition of self-activity. There is no basis for distinction between the performance principle and another reality principle, between obedience and spontaneity.

IV. Many of the antinomies and assumptions of critical theory's appropriation of Freud are accounted for in the object relations perspective of psychoanalysis. Object relations theory sees the early process of ego identification as a basis for what is called super-ego. The ego was once whole—what is called id are the parts which are split off in early infancy. Ego development is a process of further splitting, in which successively threatening parts of the object are internalized in an effort to control them. At each point the part of the ego which relates to that object undergoes repression. But internalization as defense has a major drawback—one now has the threat inside oneself. Therefore, it becomes necessary to defend against the internal bad objects by internalizing the good as well. This internalized good object is the moral defense, or super-ego. Thus the formation of the super-ego is predicated upon early and drastic splitting of the ego in the course of pre-Oedipal object relations. The good ego, often conscious, is that part which relates to the internalized good object and desires to remain in its good graces. It is the well-behaved child who conforms to the performance
principle, the parental demand for achievement and conformity. Its real purpose, however, is to deny the reality of the bad object which is connected with early terror and helplessness.

Because the moral defense represents a denial of the real terror, not of the super-ego but of the early bad object, the motivation for compliance to authority, for conformity to reality, has a cognitive as well as an affective aspect. Goal rationality and reasonableness, the virtues of the well-socialized bourgeois child, are based upon an underlying irrationality: the perception of parental violence and childish helplessness must be repressed, even at the cost of blaming oneself for disobedience. “It is better to be a sinner in a world ruled by God than a saint in a world ruled by the devil.” In contrasting internalization as a force of differentiation with early incorporative identification, Adorno is actually making a case for the moral defense, imagining that the “good ego” would be anti-fascist. He is then logically forced to affirm the performance principle and instrumental rationality as well, vitiating his concept of autonomy. Thus he returns to the ideal of self-control, denying the terror of having once been subjected to the control of others. In so doing, he fails to see how the reversal of consciousness, the desire not to know, is motivated by early experience of helplessness and terror.

Adorno does come very close to accepting Fromm’s analysis of the phenomena of powerlessness, but he tries to assert that real experience is an inadequate basis for psychological understanding: “But experiences of real helplessness are anything but irrational—and they are actually hardly psychological. On their own they might be expected to prompt resistance... What people know about their helplessness in society belongs to their ego—understood not merely as the fully conscious faculty of judgment but as the whole web of its social relations. But as soon as the experience is turned into the ‘feeling of helplessness’ the specifically psychological element has entered in, the fact that individuals precisely, cannot experience or confront their helplessness... They have to convert the experience of helplessness into a

38. The crucial difference between obedience to the performance principle and self-activity is that the former is a response to approval, the latter to recognition. The “good” and the “bad” mother or father are equally coercive, hooking the child on either approval or the fear of negative judgment. Both inspire an instrumental relation to activity where it is turned into a means of gaining security. Internalization of judgment or approval must therefore be distinguished from ego development based on recognition—which cannot be internalized. For recognition is mutual and requires neither defense nor helpless assertions of independence. Yet, it has the quality of “being with” rather than “standing outside.”

39. W.R.D Fairbairn, An Object Relations Theory of Personality, op.cit., pp. 60-70. The whole import of self-blame is that it serves to cover up and deny that which is frightening. The covering up of helplessness in the face of domination is as crucial as the mystification of domination itself.

40. In 1937, Fromm published an article in the Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung (Vol. 6, 1937) entitled “On the Feeling of Powerlessness” (“Das Gefühl der Ohnmacht”). In it, he examined the way in which adults who were unable to act upon their knowledge or who were unable to believe that they could have an effect upon anyone had been made to feel utterly ineffectual as children. Perhaps in only the subtlest and most culturally “normal” ways their communications, wishes, and desires to decide for themselves had not been taken seriously.
feeling'...in order not to think beyond it. It is the age-old pattern of the internalization of social sanctions...the ego has hardly any other choice than either to change reality or withdraw back into the id." In this statement, Adorno has inadvertently defined how internalization really works, how a relation of domination is perpetuated by making something real outside into a feeling which no longer has validity as knowledge. By prefacing this passage with a critique of the analytic revisionists for ignoring the import of early experience, he obscures his affinity with their contention that real experience is the basis of psychology, that is, of what becomes endopsychic reality.

The relation Adorno draws between knowledge and feelings is particularly important. On the one hand, knowledge derives from the conscious rational faculty—but it is not only that. A "whole network of social relations" is a component of knowledge, equally important though not conscious. But knowledge turns into a feeling because it is impossible to maintain cognition as an individual who is unable to act. Implicitly Adorno recognizes that the experience of helplessness is one which can only be known when it is confronted by its opposite—the experience of power or mastery, of an alternative of way out. At other times, critical theory had argued that this alternative could be preserved in consciousness despite the impossibility of realizing it. But here Adorno himself reminds us that consciousness can only preserve that which has reality in experience or is objectified in practice.

There is another sense in which individuals are helpless—they require the validation and recognition of others in order to experience the truth of their own perceptions. The feeling into which the helpless person retreats is a response to an accurate perception which has no chance of being externalized in action. Thus rationality and consciousness, dependent upon intersubjective relations, cannot oppose powerlessness on an individual level. Even knowledge cannot be identified with the individual thinking subject, but rather with the collective acting subject.

Furthermore, the inability or impossibly of knowing has inevitable consequences for feeling. Adorno points out how the repression of knowledge creates a particular feeling, rather than attributing distortion of consciousness to the unconscious wish. Unwittingly this formulation revises Freud. For Freud, guilt persists and the individual blames himself because the unconscious desire for the forbidden persists. But the real source of guilt

42. There is, however, no necessary antagonism between feeling and action—an assumption for which E. Schachtel has aptly criticized Freud. Cf. Metamorphosis (New York, 1959). Rather, he points out, certain affects are connected to an active, creative attitude toward the social world. Furthermore, the expression of feeling, communication, is one of the most important ways we act and interact or affect others. Consensually validated communication is a precondition for collective praxis.
43. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit., pp. 74-76. Freud also states that the child is "obliged to renounce the satisfaction of the revengeful aggressiveness" against the authority as if this were a matter of instinctual renunciation. More likely, it is a matter of sanity or madness when one's perception of reality is made impossible by a threat of punishment. Therapeutic
and self-blame is the persistent awareness of being treated unjustly, the denial of the authority's rectitude and right. "I am not to blame," is the feeling for which the victim continues to be punished, the feeling that turns powerlessness into an internal struggle.

Thus the acquiescence in the feeling of helplessness, the motivation for emotional submission to authority, is connected to the repression of what is actually known, a repression based on fear. Awareness of one's lack of power, of one's complicity in identifying with the powerful to whom one submits, and the knowledge that one's individuality and integrity are a fiction—this is the repressed which threatens to return. This threat to the forces of domination, the liberation of the perception of injustice, is never wholly annihilated. It can be called forth by any opportunity, however momentary, that suggests the possibility of acting to overcome powerlessness. Adorno does not venture so far in his argument as to recognize this possibility explicitly, but it is not inconsistent with his analysis.

Here, Adorno does bring together the two elements of the authority relation which diverge in his earlier analysis of fascism: the cognitive and the affective. In his two explanations of fascism, he had separated the cognitive and affective aspects along lines similar to Freud's structural topography of the psyche. Cognitive consciousness was seen as the restraining element, while the unconscious ego or the id provided the emotional basis for authoritarianism. But in this discussion, Adorno shows how within consciousness itself, self-control leads to authoritarian behavior. The restraint of feeling and action in the situation of helplessness subvert consciousness, undo knowledge. The individualism and self-control which are seen as the way in which ego differentiates from id are the very base of repressing awareness. The Dialectic of Enlightenment theme finds its most convincing presentation in Adorno's analysis of powerlessness as a psychological phenomena.

Nonetheless, Adorno finally does reject the conclusion that the withdrawal of the ego into the unconscious is an outgrowth of real experiences of powerlessness. As a result, the question of the source of irrationality, or even the criteria of it, is never satisfactorily resolved. He might have questioned, as Fromm did, the idea that the inevitable path of ego development is the internalization of the father figure as the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Destructive and regressive impulses which Adorno sees as the result of poor self-control, the lack of restraining authority to channel inner nature, may actually be the attempt to reassert control. They result from a social authority which induces helplessness and uncontrollable subordination. Again, what he identified as a regressive form of identification, resulting from a failure to resolve Oedipal conflict, could be understood as precisely those feelings which develop in the face of real helplessness. Conversely, the absence of authority and power, rather than identification with a powerful father, would form the
basis for autonomous ego development. Rather than assuming innate regressive tendencies which must be counteracted by outside pressure, we could imagine that some form of development toward sociability would occur in the presence of other subjects who do not exercise coercion. In this case, the deterioration of paternal authority as the force of cohesion in the family might be viewed with greater optimism than was the case for critical theory.\textsuperscript{44}

The presupposition for such a viewpoint, however, is the abandonment of precisely that aspect of Freud's theory to which the critical theorists cling most tenaciously. The supposition that the id serves the pleasure principle, seeking homeostasis, and that therefore the ego only emerges from it because of external pressure, posits a deep-rooted tendency to regression. Despite Adorno's suspicion that the timelessness and imperviousness to society which characterize the id are only an appearance, despite his own tendency to see the ego as withdrawing into and interacting with the id, he finally posits the id as \textit{innately} aggressive and regressive.

For Adorno, the id becomes at times the demonic force of nature which takes its revenge. The id is opposed to "the large sensitivity to difference which is the hallmark of the truly humane."\textsuperscript{45} This characterization of the unconscious, coupled with the insistence that the ego emerges as a response to the struggle for self-preservation, has two important consequences. The social individual is rooted in the biological individual—that is, the social form of individuality which emerges through a complicated intersubjective process is seen as a natural and universal form of ego development.\textsuperscript{46} Individuation only occurs because "civilization" forces the individual out of attachment to primitive, symbiotic unity. In the same way that the father forces the child's separation from the mother, society first enforces or gives individuation. Critical theory is consistent in maintaining that the individual is not naturally social, and conversely, that real individuality (autonomous ego development) is only social, an artificial product. The rift between nature and society is absolute; some form of domination, a relationship of instrumentality, is therefore unavoidable. The impossibility of escaping instinctual repression and renunciation also follow from these assumptions about human nature; society is inevitably founded on the domination of internal nature. Hence critical theory does not escape Freud's impasse in which socialization leads to its own destruction.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44} Christopher Lasch, "The Weak Modern Family," \textit{New York Review of Books}, November 27, 1975. The basic flaw in Lasch's argument is his failure to recognize that the mother who is no longer dominated provides the first opportunity in history for the freedom of daughters. Although he comes close, Marcuse also misses the fact that if, in the metaphor of revolt, the sons continually reinstitute the father's authority (Freud's primal horde theory), it is because they never alter the domination-possession-exclusion of women.

\textsuperscript{45} Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," Part II, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{46} See Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, \textit{Aspects of Sociology} (Boston, 1972), originally \textit{Soziologische Exkurse} (Frankfurt, 1954).

\textsuperscript{47} This is the basic theme of \textit{Civilization and Its Discontents}: the more socialization, the more instincts are suppressed, the more aggression builds, the more guilt, and therefore the more
But Adorno finds this impasse, like so many others, a necessary and fruitful one. In an essay on "The Revised Psychoanalysis," he argues, "the greatness of Freud consists, like all radical bourgeois thinkers, in letting such contradictions remain unresolved and disdaining to pretend a systematic harmony when the subject itself is torn." \(^{45}\) The contradiction which is constitutive of psychoanalysis is that "on the one hand the libido is considered the actual psychic reality; gratification is positive, renunciation negative, because it leads to illness. On the other hand it accepts civilization, which compels renunciation, if not uncritically then at least resignedly." \(^{49}\) This resignation infuses the heart of critical theory itself. Only a position of pessimism about human nature, with its concomitant resignation to the necessity of authority, allows a position from which authority can be criticized. Any position of optimism can be co-opted as apology for the repressive social order. \(^{50}\) The less pessimistic suppositions about human nature upon which the neo-Freudians based their theory actually lead them, Adorno writes, to a false optimism about society.

The pessimistic thinker, who may even be "cold" and "misanthropic" as Freud was accused of being, is the only one able to retain a "negative" perspective. He can grasp reality uncompromisingly in order not to be stupified by it. \(^{51}\) The parallel between these assertions and Adorno's theory of socialization should be obvious: only the hard, judging father can make the child fit for struggle in the world, teach the child to abandon the illusory hope of an easy life. But Adorno's own authoritarianism studies show that harsh fathers do not produce critical children; rather their judgment is internalized and their authority accepted.

Adorno does not differentiate between judgment and love, or when he does, he defends the former. He thus defends Freud's analytic coldness against the analysts who argue that one should love the patient. He also cites Freud's statement that "A love that does not discriminate seems to me to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its object... not all men are worthy of love." When he states that it "makes a mockery of everything analysis stood for" to "demand that one should love a repulsively aggressive child," \(^{52}\) he seems to imply that love and compassion are blind, that only the renunciation. Thus, the conquest of nature, freeing humanity of so many dangers, has actually decreased the prospects for happiness.


49. Ibid., p. 39.

50. Ibid. "If one asked the revisionists what they fundamentally held against their teacher, they would probably say, he lacks love... no advanced thinker or artist escapes this accusation. Because he is bitterly in earnest about utopia and its realization, he is no utopian." This position expresses the idea that Adorno was to later make central in his aesthetics and cultural theory: the further the artist is alienated from her or his real audience, the more she or he is expressing the radical truth of society. This idea informs his notion of politics as well. This position has been recently reformulated in Jacoby's defense of Freud, Social Amnesia, op.cit.


cold intellect can grasp the truth. Love can certainly be understood as recognition of another's need, sharing of another's pain, rather than recognition of their value, or worth. Such a recognition of need and suffering in another helpless being need not blind to the severity of the problem or the societal contradictions which have brought it forth. Rather it can grasp the subjective experience of powerlessness from the inside as well as the effect of human action upon the helpless subject as an objective social phenomena. Furthermore, love as recognition means the awareness that manifest aggression is itself the expression of alienated need. Adorno's denial of the efficacy of compassion in the therapeutic relationship goes hand in hand with his denial of psychoanalytic theory's ability to grasp social relations. The possibility of overcoming the split between feeling and cognition, of combining compassion and criticism, did not occur to Adorno.

The separation of love and reason, feeling and cognition, implicit in Adorno's thinking, corresponds to aspects of Freud's metapsychology. While love, for Freud, is essentially the abrogation of boundaries between persons, the ego is the great maintainer of boundaries. The ego, which alone is capable of recognizing difference, must emerge out of enforced individuation and denial. It grows through the experience of seeking pleasure, reducing tension, avoiding pain. Later differentiation also progresses through mastery, the discrimination of the controllable and uncontrollable aspects of the environment. The ego's motives are possession, control and security. Love places one's destiny in the hands of another, threatening security and control. Thus the ego, and reason, grow in opposition to love. But the id, with its limited quantity of energy and its striving to reduce tension, provides Freud with an equally powerful argument against the possibility of universal love. Instrumental reason is therefore the necessary glue of society, self-interest the only available social principle.

Indeed, Freud always maintained that the reality principle is only a modification of the pleasure principle. In his late metapsychology he eliminated the contradiction between self-preservative drives and libido. He thus recognized that the two principles are not really opposed. Critical theory's notion of harmony between ego and id, or repressive desublimation, is already implicit in Freud's theory. Both the ego and the id, the reality principle and the pleasure principle, correspond to the historical reality of possessive individualism. What is lacking is a principle to oppose the performance principle, a principle based on the need for the other. In Freud's theory there is no opposition to the performance principle, no innate striving for intersubjective development that transcends usefulness to the monadic self. The requirement is always instrumental, gratification always expressed as particular, e.g., the baby needs the milk or breast, but not the mother as a whole. Thus there is no basis for differentiating the helplessness of natural helplessness.
infantile dependency from that helplessness which comes from lack of social recognition. The pessimism of Freud's position proceeds from such lack of differentiation between natural and social relations. Contrary to Adorno's contention, it obfuscates social causation and places the blame squarely on nature.

The analytic power of the pessimistic position is therefore questionable. Adorno argues against the revisionists because they give up the idea of castration. Indeed, castration may be a more adequate metaphor for the violence underlying fascism than the formulation of the inferiority complex. But neither explains the historical development of fascism nor the specific object relations which create such violence. As Adorno himself noted, "the relations between humans develop... (not) out of their instincts, but from social and economic laws." A theory of internalization is necessary which explains how the ego is formed through social interaction such that human beings come to comply with these laws rather than attempt to change them. Such a theory must recognize that internalization is a defense against unbearable reality, not a natural mode of constituting consciousness, necessitated by the opposition of the instincts. The idea of instincts has a role to play in the sense that the "libido is the actual reality," if we understand the libido as essentially object-seeking. Denial of this striving leads not only to illness but to compliance with authority, acceptance of helplessness. The way in which the striving for recognition is denied must be understood in the context of societal interaction rather than conceived as an eternal form of the ego. Adorno shies away from this conclusion—even though he often approaches it—because for him what is so powerful could never be simply social behavior. It does not do justice to the severity of fascist genocide, he argues, to comprehend it as "purely social behavior" rather than the expression of sexual drives. What Adorno misses about sexuality is that people's deepest needs can be distorted and turned against them, not that the needs or drives themselves are hostile. That sexual drives take on the peculiar distorted form they displayed in fascism precisely because of a social process of alienation does not seem possible. The implication of this thinking is that human beings cannot, in one lifetime, produce such behavior or impulses in one another. It denies the basic insight of analytic psychology, that individuals are not monads, but rather that human interaction has a lasting effect. It denies the power of society, of objectified forms of interaction, to reproduce a split at the core of human being—between mind and body.

59 (1958), pp. 350-368, for a discussion of the lack of a category of an innate drive for the object in Freud and Bowlby's own data confirming its existence.
56. Ibid., pp. 32-33. The problem of emphasizing sexuality as motivation or innate drive is the confusion of form and content. Sexuality, like language, may be the most highly expressive form of a content which, nonetheless, can be understood as intersubjectively—i.e., socially—rooted.
Instead, behavior must derive from some “piece of unconquerable nature,” an immutable core within the individual. Thus Adorno, like Freud, can stress the absence of an ego which practices rational self-control as the cause of destructive behavior. The complicity of the ego need not be faced. For to place the blame on the rational, controlling ego is to violate individual integrity in its most essential core and its last stronghold—the reasoning mind. As Freud himself showed, the rational mind cannot rule without exacting a terrible toll. Perhaps it is this narcissistic injury to theory which Adorno hopes to avoid, but which becomes inescapable in the absence of collective practice. The overriding fact of individual helplessness in our society cannot be overcome by theory alone.