Chapter Eleven

CHARISMA OR RATIONALIZATION?
U.S. PSYCHOANALYSIS
IN THE EPOCH
OF THE COLD WAR

My generation invested personal relations with an intensity they could hardly support, as it turned out; but our passionate interest in each other's lives cannot very well be described as a form of emotional retreat. We tried to re-create in the circle of our friends the intensity of a common purpose, which could no longer be found in politics or the workplace.

—Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven

During the same crisis of fascism and war that brought British psychoanalysis into its fateful relationship with the Beveridge welfare state, nearly two hundred refugee psychoanalysts, most of them Jewish, arrived in the United States from Austria, Germany, and France. After the war the influence of psychoanalysis exploded. Erich Heller, writing of the United States in the 1950s, observed that analysis was "more than merely one among many possible theories about the psyche; rather it comes close to being the systematic consciousness that a certain epoch has of the nature and character of its soul." Heller's observation was somewhat overstated; currents like existentialism and existentialist theology were also important. But psychoanalysis had an extraordinary resonance with U.S. culture in the 1950s. As in England, it derived much of its appeal from the opposition to totalitarianism, but, in contrast to England, in the United States collective traditions were vulnerable and psychoanalysis bore the mark of its mind-cure predecessors. Partly for these reasons, postwar psychoanalysis became a veritable fount of homophobia, misogyny, and conservatism, central to the cold war project of normalization. Yet when many of the most profound thinkers of the fifties—Lionel Trilling, Philip Rieff, Norman O. Brown,
and Herbert Marcuse among them—sought to criticize social control and conformity, they turned to psychoanalysis. Both strands of psychoanalysis—the rationalizing or social-control strand and the critical or anti-rationalizing strand—were rooted in the matrix of Freudian charisma.

As we saw, this charisma arose from Freud’s ability to articulate the historically new experience of having a personal identity distinct from one’s place in the family, society, or division of labor, but charisma becomes institutionalized. With its routinization, it congeals into organizational structure. But it may also reemerge in new antinomian, anti-institutional upsurges that seek to revivify the dying spirit.

By World War II, psychoanalysis was being institutionalized in the United States. Like Weber’s Protestantism, it was becoming a “this-worldly program of ethical rationalization,” one with links to such normalizing agencies as the social-service professions, the social sciences, and the welfare state. Yet even as it was being routinized, analysis retained its connections to its charismatic, anti-institutional origins, partly through “the aura of close association with the founding fathers,” partly through its relations to art and religious experience, but especially through its associations with sexual love, which, as Weber wrote, appeared as “a gate into the most irrational and thereby real kernel of life.” During the 1950s, U.S. analysts drew on these associations to resanctify the heterosexual family, investing domesticity with deep personal, ethical, and sexual meanings previously attached to extrafamilial forms of personal life. In so doing, they invoked charismatic forces they could not always contain. By the 1960s, antinomian upsurges linked to analysis would overflow the boundaries of the analytic profession, the heterosexual family, and the welfare state. Simultaneously normalizing and fueled by charismatic sources, then, U.S. analysis was at the center of both the growing rationalization of personal life unfolding in the 1950s and the looming critique of rationalization, the charismatic rejection of the mundane, that came to the fore in the 1960s.

The rationalization of psychoanalysis began before the wartime emigration. In 1907 the American sociologist Edward Ross coined the term “social control” to describe a broad, general, and desirable shift from external coercion to internalized self-control. Ross’s central idea was that the citizen or worker was a free, self-determining agent, not a passive object to be commanded. In Michel Foucault’s terms, social control meant a shift from “repressive” to “productive” forms of power, forms that elicited the active cooperation of their subjects. The project, accordingly, was ambiguous. On
the one hand, it meant a vastly increased space for individual and collective decision making. On the other hand, largely aimed at industrial-era class conflict, it implied adjustment, psychologization, and the rise of a new, professional class.

By the Fordist period, many U.S. social planners had connected psychoanalysis to the project of social control. In 1927 the political scientist Harold Lasswell, seeking to dispel the "tumult" and "rhetoric" of "class politics," cited Freud for the idea that politics was often driven by needs that originated in the private sphere. The same idea informed the famous Hawthorne experiments, which purported to show that workers were more interested in whether anyone paid attention to their complaints than in their actual conditions of work.

These efforts, however, took the Freudian idea of the unconscious as their point of departure. The professionalization of American psychoanalysis in the 1930s, and the emigration of such Berlin analysts as Franz Alexander, connected a very different current of analytic thought, namely, ego psychology, to social control. As we saw, the core idea of ego psychology was that the ego was two-sided: simultaneously an agent of rational self-reflection and the locus of the resistance to self-reflection. Thus, analysis had to work both through and against the ego. In the U.S. reception and development of the theory, however, this two-sided character was lost. The view of the ego as the locus of resistance receded, and the ego increasingly appeared as the agent of reason and control.

The principal architect of this shift was Heinz Hartmann, whose 1937 lecture "Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation" laid out much of the framework developed by U.S. ego psychologists in the 1940s and '50s. Born in 1894, Hartmann came from Vienna's assimilated Jewish elite. One grandfather had been a deputy in the Frankfurt assembly of 1848; another was, in Freud's words, "the most eminent of all our Vienna physicians." Hartmann's father had been a historian at the University of Vienna; his tutor became Vienna's mayor; his wife was a pediatrician. Hartmann himself was intellectually distinguished. Having attended Max Weber's 1918 lectures in Vienna, he maintained contact with the circle of logical positivists, studied experimental psychology, and was analyzed by Freud at Freud's invitation. One can imagine his prestige among analysts.

Hartmann's main theme was the "strength" of the ego: its ability to adapt and thereby master the external world. Claiming that the earlier generation of analysts had overemphasized the power of the drives, he hoped to turn psychoanalysis into a general psychology that could explain such functions as thinking, memory, and perception. His 1937 lecture described the
ego as an apparatus of regulation and adaptation whose central function, thought, was made possible by neutralized or desexualized energies. Although he was careful to cite Freud for the existence of these energies, Hartmann maintained, contra many Freuds, that not every adaptation to the environment was the result of a defensive conflict. Thus, the ego could transform an attitude that originally arose as a reaction formation against a drive, such as generosity, into an independent source of motivation. Even experiences that seemed to emanate directly from the drives, such as orgasm, might be better understood as “the ego-controlled suspension of certain ego functions,” or, as the idea later came to be known, “regression in the service of the ego.” Because Hartmann’s main interest was not the ego’s relations to the id but its relations to social norms, mind-sets, and demands, he became the favorite psychoanalyst for those who sought to harness psychoanalysis to social planning. In 1963 Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz praised him for breaking with the dominant view of the ego as “devoid of energy and initiative.” Not only had Hartmann shown that the ego was more powerful than Freud realized; he had also shown that the id can be influenced by society, that “reality shapes not only the ego but even the underlying drives.”

With its stress on the power of the ego, ego psychology dovetailed neatly with the project of social control. The thinker who best grasped the possibilities was Talcott Parsons. In the late thirties Parsons sought to theorize democratic forms of character and social organization able to withstand “fascistic” and “communist” appeals. Participating in a reading group in Boston with such refugee analysts as Edward and Grete Bibring, Parsons learned from psychoanalysis that self-control could be strengthened when external authority did not intervene. When World War II broke out, he urged the government not to respond to antiwar protests “hysterically,” as it had during World War I. A propaganda agency, Parsons wrote, should assume a “disinterested” role and decline to respond “to hostile interpretations of government policy—thus defeating them in the manner of a therapist whose non-responsive behavior [undermines] a patient’s neurotic perceptions by withholding confirmation from them.” Avoid partisan politics, identify with integrative national symbols, cultivate a reputation for integrity. Franklin Roosevelt’s handling of the Great Depression supplied the model. Roosevelt was certainly conscious of being “the object of negative transference,” Parsons noted, but his speeches were “analogous to the interpretations of a psychoanalyst. . . . One of the most interesting things for a very high executive to learn is not to speak publicly too much, too often, or at the wrong times.”

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Like social control generally, the implications of Parsons’s approach were ambiguous, suggesting both democratization and enhanced autonomy on the one hand, and psychological manipulation, on the other. This ambiguity was inherited by the new corps of experts—aptitude counselors, forensic specialists, school psychologists, guidance counselors, industrial psychologists, urban planners, and above all doctors—who turned social control into a large-scale program of social reorganization during and after World War II.

Analysis was at the center of this project. As in England, the American entry into the war precipitated a new alliance between analysis and the state. During World War I only 2 percent of all American recruits were excluded for psychiatric reasons. During World War II the corresponding figure was 8–10 percent. During the first war, the chief reasons for psychiatric rejection were mental insufficiency and psychosis; during the second, neurosis was the leading ground for rejection. A key reason was that Brigadier General William Menninger, head of the neuropsychiatry division of the Surgeon General's Office during World War II, ordered that every doctor in the military be taught the basic principles of psychoanalysis. Altogether, one million men and women were rejected from military service for mental and neurological reasons, and 850,000 soldiers were hospitalized for neuroses.

When doctors could not meet the demand for treatment, the newly founded professions of clinical psychology and psychiatric social work stepped into the breach. Psychology became an established discipline during World War I through the development of intelligence and aptitude testing aimed at large-scale tasks of sorting, regimentation, and classification. During World War II, however, its clinical or therapeutic branch expanded exponentially. Carl Rogers's 1942 Counseling and Psychotherapy sparked the change. Rogers contrasted counseling to classical psychoanalysis, advocated “mirroring,” or nonjudgmental recognition, rather than interpretation, and pressed for the use of the term “client” rather than “patient.” Largely as a result of his influence, psychologists won authorization to use psychotherapy to treat veterans. Similarly, social work had developed its casework approach in the 1920s under Freudian influence. During the war, however, casework became more closely associated with psychiatry through the creation of the subfield of psychiatric social work.

Nevertheless, the postwar growth of analysis was almost wholly based on the expansion of psychiatry. In 1940 there had been only 2,295 psychiatrists in America, two-thirds practicing in public hospitals. By 1948 the figure was 4,700 and growing rapidly. In 1945, 60 percent of the patients in
V.A. hospitals were confined for psychiatric reasons; 50 percent of all disability pensions were paid to psychiatric casualties. By the mid-fifties, half the hospital beds in the country were occupied by mental patients, a fact the 1955 Hoover Commission called "the greatest single problem in the nation's health picture." The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the fastest-growing division of the National Institutes of Health, subsidized psychiatric research into juvenile delinquency, suicide, alcoholism, and TV violence. By 1976 there were 27,000 psychiatrists in the United States.15

To a significant extent, the approximately four hundred U.S. psychoanalysts practicing by the end of the forties dominated this vast host. The reason was that postwar psychiatry expanded as a reform or "psychodynamic" discipline that rejected its earlier custodial image. Often sparked by conscientious objectors, muckraking exposés of the mental hospitals attacked the older psychiatrists' reliance on drugs and electroshock therapy. Albert Deutsch's Shame of the States compared mental hospitals to concentration camps. By contrast, "talking therapy" exemplified reform. Since psychiatrists were department heads in hospitals and oversaw social workers and clinical psychologists, the reach of analysis was vast. Such disciplines as counseling, testing, welfare, education, personnel, and law, especially new branches such as juvenile and domestic relations and criminology, were transformed.16 Virtually every practice that centered on children, adolescence, and the family was deeply affected.17 So, too, was religion, which became a locus of psychological counseling.18 But the most important effect was on medicine in general, which shifted its emphasis from the treatment of specific diseases to the management of the social and interpersonal dimensions of illness. In this shift, too, the formulations of psychoanalysis served as the guideposts.19

In all areas, then, analysis was central to postwar social reorganization. In contrast to earlier forms of social intervention, which were now stigmatized as "paternalist," the newer disciplines aimed, according to the sociologist Morris Janowitz, at "the enriching of personal control by means of the development and reinforcement of autonomous ego controls."20 Operating "through the element of subjectivity," the new analytically informed "agencies and mechanisms of regulation" treated the ego as a rational, self-regulating actor whose maturation would be facilitated by forms of intervention that refrained from external direction.21

The new regime was represented in the rash of postwar psychiatric films such as Anatole Litvak's The Snake Pit (1948), which invariably contrasted the analytically coded doctor to the old-style psychiatrist. Typically, the turning point in these films occurs when the analyst does not retaliate...
against the patient’s anger, thus facilitating the patient’s self-control.20 These films record the coming into maturity of the distinctively modern form of power that Foucault identified in the 1970s as working “not from the outside but from within . . . not by constraining individuals and their actions but by producing them.”21

While Foucault described the new form of power as wholly negative, the results were actually ambiguous. On the one hand, the expanding regime of psychological experts in 1950s America gave ordinary people new vocabularies and practices of self-reflection and empowered them against earlier forms of community control. On the other hand, it gave unprecedented new powers not only to doctors and therapists but to human-relations-oriented supervisors, personnel experts, ministers, rabbis, and high school guidance counselors. The treatment of homosexuality exemplifies the ambiguity.

Before the war, homosexuals in the military were imprisoned. Conviction for oral sex could and did lead to fifteen years behind bars. Psychiatric reformers, led by analysts, successfully fought to change the designation “sodomist” to “homosexual” and to reduce the punishment to discharge. At their urging, President Roosevelt pardoned a naval officer charged with homosexuality. Progressive though it was, this reform extended the scope of surveillance within the military, transferring the supervision of homosexuals from the criminal-justice system to the psychiatric profession and laying the groundwork for the heightening of discrimination that occurred after the war. In explicit contradiction to Freud’s view, homosexuality was redefined as an illness.22 Considered more humane at the time, that alternative may have been more insidious than legal prosecution, since it was likely to affect homosexuals’ self-perceptions more deeply.

The importance of the “internal” dimension in social reorganization found broader cultural expression in a new stress on individual privacy. Given the close proximity of Nazism and Stalinism, freedom in the private or personal realm was touted as the indispensable ground for freedom in public life. That point was central to such exemplary works as Hannah Arendt’s 1951 Origins of Totalitarianism and her 1958 Human Condition. But analysts invested it with charismatic depth.

Perhaps no contemporaneous document is so illuminating on this question as Bruno Bettelheim’s 1943 memoir, “Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations.”23 Born in 1903, Bettelheim had been in analysis in Vienna when he was arrested and sent first to Dachau and then to
Buchenwald, where he spent one year. Having apparently bribed his way out of the camps, he came to the United States in 1939. His memoir of this experience was published in 1943 in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, edited by the Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport. In 1945 Eisenhower had it distributed to all U.S. officers in occupied Germany. Dwight Macdonald reprinted selections in the journal *Politics*. Hannah Arendt discussed it in her *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Bettelheim made it the centerpiece of his 1960 book, *The Informed Heart*. It deeply influenced such crucial works of the period as Stanley Elkin's *Slavery* (1954) and Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). In short, it attained iconic status.

The theme of Bettelheim’s memoir is the survival of the individual personality in an environment aimed at destroying it. “According to the well-known ideology of the Nazi state,” Bettelheim wrote, “the individual as such is either nonexistent or of no importance.” The camp was set up “to break the prisoners as individuals,” as well as to provide the Gestapo with an “experimental laboratory in which to study the effective means of breaking civilian resistance.” Writing in a calm, logical, social-science style, Bettelheim distinguished three types of camp behavior—individual, mass, and private—but gave only one example of the last: his own self-reflection during his imprisonment. This, he claimed, was the key to his survival: he had divided himself into an observing and an observed ego.

An ego psychologist, Bettelheim introduced many themes that later became standard in the literature of the Holocaust, such as the initial shock, the experience of deportation and transportation, and the differences between old and new prisoners. Most riveting, however, was his account of the prisoners’ psychological regression. Deprived of all adult rights, especially privacy, required to ask permission to use the latrine, forced to address one another as “du,” treated en masse whenever possible, and regularly threatened with torture, the prisoners grew ashamed of being punished, especially if the punishment was minor. To be sure, they fantasized impossible revenges. But, of deeper significance, they imitated the guards, shared the latter’s contempt for “unfit” prisoners, criticized ex-prisoners who had condemned the camps in the world’s newspapers, and sewed and mended their uniforms to resemble the Gestapo’s, even when punished for doing so. The guards treated the prisoners with utter contempt, but the prisoners imagined that the guards were secretly on their side. Once, when a guard cleaned his boots before entering a barracks, the prisoners discussed it excitedly for weeks, arguing over whether it was a sign of respect.

Bettelheim’s account was later challenged by other inmates, but its accuracy is not the issue here. More important is how it was received. Bettel-
heim claimed that his observations applied not only to the camps but also to "the concentration camp of Greater Germany." His readers extended the scope of his account even further: they read the essay as a generalized account of the factors that threatened autonomy in all modern societies. Like Bettelheim, who had based his analysis on Freud's theory of groups, they were struck by the individual's difficulty in maintaining autonomy when treated solely as a member of a group.29 And they followed Bettelheim in identifying a single, crucial means for keeping one's soul intact in such an environment: psychoanalytic self-reflection.

What made the camp so terrible, in Bettelheim's account, was that there was no retreat from the guards and therefore no division between public and private. This emphasis on the sanctity of that division pervades the great works of American social science of the 1950s. In Arendt's Origins of Totalitarianism, the destruction of private life distinguished totalitarianism from earlier forms of tyranny that left the private sphere essentially undisturbed. In Elkin's Slavery, it was the absence of a private space—ability to own property, a house and garden, literacy, the right to travel—that made North American slavery so much more virulent and destructive than that of Brazil or Haiti, where slaves did have some space of their own. And for Friedan and those who followed her, it was the then-new awareness that women had no private space—that the home had become a prison—that made the condition of women so oppressive.26

The stress on privacy fostered a turn from politics to interiority. The historian Carl Schorske, with whom our journey began, returned from military service, became a teacher, and watched his students' interests shift from economics, politics, and sociology to literature and philosophy.27 Even the great works of engaged social science of the period, such as Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma, (1944), were founded on the assumption that "the moral struggle goes on within people and not only between them."28 For most, the agony of McCarthyism lay not in the struggle of worldviews but in the demand that individuals betray their conscience, and their friends.29 Many observers also believed that the atomic age required deeper insight into psychology than the Popular Front had allowed. Writing in the Saturday Review, Norman Cousins described "a primitive fear, the fear of the unknown [which] has burst out of the subconscious and into the conscious, filling the mind with primordial apprehensions."30

Often, the stress on privacy shaded into a new emphasis on domesticity. The dominant ideology of the postwar family stressed its private character, the way in which it protected its members from the external world, including even the American government. The ideology reflected the shift from a
class- and community-based industrial society to a family-centered “post-industrial” society, oriented toward mass consumption. With hitherto undreamt-of possibilities for private consumption, personal life, previously associated with countercultural and transfamilial milieus, became the ideology of the masses. Propelled by its ideals, the postwar generation lowered the age of marriage for both sexes, reduced the divorce rate, and increased the number of children, a trend that lasted until the end of the sixties. Meanwhile, advertising and Hollywood invested not just specific commodities but the entire project of domestic consumption with the charisma of utopian desire. Whereas powerful ethnic communities and industrial-union drives had organized working-class life in the 1930s, in the postwar period prefabricated suburban homes, washing machines, refrigerators, and “luxury” goods for the masses further eroded class-based identities. National chains supplanted local, ethnically based stores; networks edged out local radio programming; and television discovered in the working-class family the material of sitcoms.

In this context, a new ethic of “maturity,” “responsibility,” and “adulthood” unfolded, simultaneously shaped by, and in turn shaping, psychoanalysis. In Erik Erikson’s definition, the mature person was “tolerant of differences, cautious and methodical in evaluation, just in judgement, circumspect in action, and ... capable of faith and indignation.” Reflecting women’s historic stress on the significance of the family, and middle-class as opposed to working-class norms, “maturity” implied men’s rejection of the homosocial, adolescent world of “mates” or “buddies,” their reorientation to the heterosexual dyad, and their acceptance of the responsibilities of marriage. Maturity also implied the acceptance of limits. In Philip Rieff’s formulation, it meant “resign[ing] yourself to living within your moral means, suffer[ing] no gratuitous failures in a futile search for ethical heights.”

Key elaborators of the ethic of maturity, psychoanalysts tied it to domesticity. Infusing the private, familial realm with charismatic meanings associated with sexuality, the deep self, and personal life, they resanctified heterosexual love and marriage. Whereas in the New Deal epoch, the family had been mundane, a sphere of resisted authority for men and of unrenumerated work for women, in the 1950s it became an intensely invested sphere of personal meaning, perhaps especially for women. While there is some truth in the later feminist portrait of the 1950s as a time when “Rosie the Riveter” was unwillingly pushed back into the home, women continued to make up a majority of Freud’s readers and of analytic patients. Many believed in the new ideals of the home, the profound significance and rewarding character of child rearing, the ethical value of a lifelong commit-
ment, and the associated goal of maturity. In the 1956 movie *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, the wife (Jennifer Jones) longs for a nicer house and pushes her husband (Gregory Peck) to earn more money. Yet her insistence on personal integrity is counterposed to the shallow, empty “yes man” he encounters in his new job in public relations. And the wife “matures” in the course of the film. At the climax, having learned of her husband’s wartime affair with a Roman woman, she overcomes her hurt feelings, recommits to her marriage, and agrees to accept financial responsibility for her husband’s war child, thus symbolizing America’s financial responsibility for Italy in the mid-1950s.

Masculinity, too, was further transformed during and after World War II. Previously, conservative pundits had worried that the New Deal was producing dependent “weaklings.” In 1943 General George C. Marshall wrote, “While our enemies were teaching their youths to endure hardships,” ours had learned to depend on government. Even William Menninger conceded that American society was at an “immature stage of development, characterized by ‘I want what I want when I want it.’” In 1943, however, Dwight Eisenhower censured General George Patton for striking soldiers who had been hospitalized for psychiatric reasons. “Shut up that Goddamned crying!” Patton had shouted at one. By the time the story reached the newspapers, Patton, not the patients, was viewed as the one with the psychological problems. After the war, the Veterans Administration helped produce films like *The Men*, (1950), which centered on Marlon Brando’s struggle to accept his paraplegia. Discharged from an all-male V.A. hospital against his will but for his own good, he is shown in the final scene dragging his useless body up the walk of his single-family suburban home. His wife asks if he needs help. “Please,” he replies.

In general, then, the postwar period brought major social and cultural transformations. A new sense of individual responsibility pervaded the military, the workplace, and the professions, while the associations of personal life invested marriage and family with intensified value. In these transformations, charisma and rationalization were inextricably intertwined. On the one hand, charismatic associations gave deep personal meaning to such apparently external developments as the reorganization of work and the new reign of science. On the other, the resanctification of domesticity grounded rationalization in the individual’s life cycle. The result was to destroy preexisting communities and group solidarities and to create new bureaucratically and technically organized forms of order—psychiatry, medicine, the welfare state, the multiversity, the military, and the family—against which the 1960s generation would rebel.
U.S. psychoanalysts were agents of rationalization. Yet they were themselves transformed by it. Ostensibly the key factor was medicine—in particular the requirement that every analyst hold a medical degree. At a deeper level, there had always been a special resonance between psychoanalysis and American mind-cure culture, the culture that sustained the project of social control. Emigration brought the two into fateful conjunction. The worst tendencies in European psychoanalysis—perfectionism, a worship of science, authoritarianism—received a new and characteristically American inflection.

Rationalization began in the early years of the Depression, when, as we saw, “a new generational phalanx” of younger American analysts, including Ives Hendrick, Ralph Kaufman, Bertram Lewin, Gregory Zilboorg, and Lawrence Kubie, seized power from the Eastern European–dominated New York group centered around Abraham Brill. The key idea of the
younger analysts was to build professional institutes combining education, clinical work, and popularization. That idea dovetailed with the psychiatrists’ quest for legitimacy, as reflected in the many foundations that sponsored analytic training for psychiatrists. The thirties saw the growth of local institutes, most of them night schools with an intense in-group life. Meanwhile, psychiatric residencies in elite institutions became “psychodynamically” oriented. By the mid-1930s, all candidates for psychoanalytic training were expected to have completed a psychiatric residence in an approved institution.

The arrival of the refugees strengthened the tendency toward medical- ization. Most came from the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, which led the initial push toward professionalization. The refugees were all pioneering ego psychologists who shared the younger analysts’ views; indeed, many of them had been the Americans’ analysts earlier, in Austria and Germany. Key figures included Sándor Rádi, who went to Columbia University, and Ernst Simmel, who founded the first psychoanalytic society in Los Angeles in 1934, where he was later joined by Otto Fenichel and Martin Grotjahn. Against Freud’s wishes, Helene Deutsch left Vienna in 1935 for Boston, where she joined Hanns Sachs and was herself later joined by Edward and Grete Bibring. Theodor Reik fled Berlin in 1933, first to The Hague and then to New York City. Rudolph Loewenstein, the Polish Jew who had been Lacan’s analyst, Ernst Kris, the assistant curator at the Vienna Kunsthistorische Museum who had helped Freud with his collection of antiquities, and Heinz Hartmann, who in 1941 became director of research at the New York Psychoanalytic Society, also emigrated to New York, as did Annie Reich, Hermann Nunberg, Edith Jacobson, Käthe Wolf, and Marianne Kris. When the market in New York became overcrowded, émigrés went elsewhere: Robert Waldler to Philadelphia, Richard and Edith Sterba to Detroit, Else Franckel-Brunswick to San Francisco, David Rapaport to the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann to the Chestnut Lodge Sanitarium in Maryland.

The refugees brought tremendous prestige to what was otherwise still a rather colorless profession. Analysis, wrote one, developed against the background of “the unfolding of images and ideas from Sophocles through Shakespeare and Goethe.” How, asked another, can one do analysis when one does not understand that the word “gay” can mean homosexual? Many émigrés adopted a pose of fashionable superiority. Abram Kardiner called them “bei uns,” referring to “Ja, bei uns war es anders”—“Where we come from one did things differently.” Often they expressed a “derivative judgement of American psychoanalysis” as “service-oriented, and rather mind-
less.”

Dorothy Burlingham (née Tiffany) complained to Anna Freud of the “big business” methods of the Americans. American-born psychiatrists sometimes reciprocated in kind. Thus, in 1938 Karl Menninger congratulated Franz Alexander: “You are a very flexible person, an international person . . . not aligned with the Jews.” And William Menninger told his brother: “I don’t know of any medical group that has as many ‘queer birds’ . . . as the [recently immigrated] psychoanalytic group. . . . I don’t feel any great urgency to identify myself . . . with them . . . I would much rather be identified . . . with the American Psychiatric or the American College of Physicians.”

As immigration gave way to assimilation, the requirement of a medical degree was enforced with ever-intensified devotion. At the William Alanson White Institute, nonmedical therapists had to sign a statement promising they would not practice analysis. Elsewhere, analysts were not allowed to participate in reading groups that included nondoctors. Lionel Trilling was refused an analytic honor because he was not a doctor. Paul Federn, Freud’s personal secretary, was not allowed to become a member of an analytic society until he became a physician seven years after he immigrated. Freud sent an outraged, impotent protest. Erik Erikson, Siegfried Bernfeld, and even Anna Freud were discredited by their lack of medical credentials. Karen Horney, who founded her own association when the New York Psychoanalytic Society disqualified her as a training analyst, expelled Erich Fromm because he was not a licensed physician. Theodor Reik, whose lay status had been the occasion for Freud’s 1926 *Lay Analysis*, wrote: “I was the author of more than 14 books and countless articles in psychoanalytical journals. I really was expecting a royal welcome. I soon found out that all this counted for nothing, because I was not a doctor of medicine. They offered me a miserable job on the condition that I did not start a practice. I often did not even believe myself that I was competent in psychoanalysis in comparison with my medical colleagues.”

As analysts conquered psychiatry, they increasingly absorbed its values. The key to success, Ives Hendrick told his fellow analysts in a presidential address to the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) of 1955, was the “victory” over Freudian dogmatism. American psychoanalysts “refused to be stifled by theoretical dogma. As pragmatists they favored that which endures because it is serviceable.” Franz Alexander’s 1948 *Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis* argued that it was no longer desirable to study the history of analytic theory since “the conventional historical presentation is often confusing.” A text should present a “comprehensive view of the present stage of psychoanalytic knowledge.” In 1965 Alexander published Freud’s corre-
spondence with Eugene Bleuler in order to demonstrate that psychoanalysis had gone wrong when Freud turned away from the official psychiatry.34

As the boundary between analysis and psychiatry weakened, analysts gained enormous prestige and financial reward. Of all the émigrés, the analysts were the most successful. By contrast, for example, Wolfgang Koehler, Max Wertheimer, and Kurt Koffka were never able to rebuild Gestalt psychology.35 The year 1947, according to Nathan Hale, was "something of a gold rush."36 In his 1953 presidential address to the APA, C. P. Oberndorf remarked: "Psychoanalysis has finally become legitimate and respectable." Two years later Ives Hendrick called analysis "the brand that (ostensibly, at least) dominates the market," and noted that its membership was "growing by geometrical rather than arithmetical progression." He added: "Our success, hugely magnified . . . by the esteem of other medical groups, has given us unsought and unexpected powers": faculty appointment, student selection, and powers over curriculum and accreditation among them.37 Even Wilhelm Reich prospered, setting up a lucrative practice in Forest Hills, New York, before dying insane in a federal penitentiary after his conviction for fraud under the Food and Drug Act.38 Analysis, Alfred Kazin noted in 1956, was a "big business and a very smooth one."39

The absorption of psychoanalysis into the American welfare state was something more than the familiar tale of the talented outsider corrupted by the American greed-machine. An unexamined convergence between American traditions of religious conversion, mind cure, and self-help, and the utopian strains in psychoanalysis, inspired the long-standing American love affair with analysis, as well as fueling the postwar program of social reorganization. Insofar as analysis remained a predominantly marginal, countercultural force, this convergence produced few baneful effects. By contrast, the integration of analysis into the welfare state—emblemated by its obsession with the medical degree—lent it state power and authority. Especially in the context of the cold war, its preexisting tendencies toward authoritarianism, scientism, and grandiosity took on a sinister hue.

To begin with, the integration of analysis into the welfare state wedded it to a positivistic notion of science that was soon to be used against it.40 In 1997 Alan A. Stone remembered that during his postwar training in Boston, his teacher had compared analytic work to the great collective labors of the past. A half-century later, with the charisma of analysis dissipated, Stone reported that he had come to believe that psychoanalysis was not a science, not cumulative, not always based on observable data, and not subject to prediction.41 Stone’s impoverished notion of science would have excluded almost every way of studying human beings not directly modeled on
physics; indeed, physics is more complex. The subordination to an idealized and unduly restrictive conception of the natural sciences, the exclusion of critique and speculation, the refusal to ask when empirical verification was necessary and when it was impossible to obtain, the neglect of the fact that the subject under study was not an object but a free being, capable of self-transformation through the process of being studied—all of this was consolidated in the rationalization of the late forties.  

Second, a scientific culture sanctioned analysts in not reflecting upon themselves, either individually or collectively. Nothing could be less analytic, yet analysis was a far less efficacious treatment than its practitioners claimed. As a result, psychoanalysis was often a community in bad faith, boasting of successes and ignoring failures, distorting classroom presentations, and denying itself the means for self-correction. The matter is no doubt complicated. As a charismatic force, analysis made great demands on its practitioners and its patients. Nonetheless, there were far more “failures,” second and third analyses, and lives tragically distorted than was publicly admitted. There is truth in Frederick Crews’s later condemnation of analysis: “its deliberate coldness, its cultivation of emotional regression, its depreciation of the patient’s self-perceptions as inauthentic, its reckless dispensation of guilt, its historic view of women’s moral inferiority and destined passivity, and its elastic interpretive license, allowing the analyst to be right every time.”  

This stance was stiffened by internal authoritarianism. According to one analyst’s recollection of his training, “if any student asked any question whatever, he was put down and told he was resistant.”  

Third, medicalization encouraged depoliticization, and even reaction. Ideals of “professionalism” and “analytic neutrality” took on a different meaning when analysts were allied to official power. As the cold war unfolded, claims to be “above” politics became especially pernicious. The most egregious example occurred in Brazil. Werner Kemper, a leading representative of German psychoanalysis during the Third Reich, was among the founders of the Psychoanalytic Institute of Rio de Janeiro in 1946. Much later, but with an outlook formed by medicalization, Amilcar Lobo, an analytic candidate supervised by an analyst trained by Kemper, helped torturers by watching over the psychic and physical state of the victim. Despite repeated requests for intervention, the IPA minimized the significance of the case.  

In England, anticommunism subtly shaded an analytic tradition deeply shaped by the Popular Front, but in the United States even liberal analysts acquiesced in McCarthyism. Arthur Miller recalled that his difficulties “were surely personal,” but he could “not help suspecting that psychoanaly-
sis was... being used as a substitute not only for Marxism but for social activism of any kind." Some analysts urged their patients to cooperate in the HUAC and McCarthy hearings. When the actor Sterling Hayden, whose analyst was himself an ex-Communist, reported that "the FBI isn’t going to let me off the hook without my implicating people who never did anything wrong," his analyst advised him that "the FBI would probably treat this information confidentially." When Hayden said his attorney told him not to trust the FBI, his analyst suggested that he "try another attorney." Later the analyst told him: "There’s really not much difference between talking to the FBI in private and taking the stand in Washington. You have already informed after all. You have excellent counsel, you know, and the chances are that the public will—in time perhaps—regard you as an exemplary man, who once made a mistake." 

Analysts had once stood for a more nuanced notion of the ego than the dominant culture provided; now they identified themselves uncritically with the West’s "respect for the individual." In 1948 UNESCO sponsored a conference in Paris at which Harry Stack Sullivan and others debated Eastern European social scientists led by Alexander Szalai of Budapest. The American defense of Western psychology easily defeated the orthodox Marxist insistence that it was impossible to change individual consciousness without first changing social conditions, but that should have been the beginning of the discussion, not the end. Moreover, the Americans adopted a self-serving missionary stance that strengthened cold war triumphalism. Karen Horney advised the United States to adopt "long-term planning for emotional stability," Sullivan called for a "worldwide mobilization of psychiatry," and Henry A. Murray argued that social scientists needed to "invade... the realm of values" and become "physicians to society." 

The ambiguities of a government-supported psychoanalysis emerged most clearly in the realm of foreign affairs. During the occupation of Japan, Masao Maruyama, a Marxist theorist, linked Japanese militarism to the weakness of what he called "the modern ego" in that country. In Germany, Alexander Mitscherlich, a second-generation critical theorist, exposed the complicity of German psychoanalysis with National Socialism. The American authorities ignored both initiatives. Under the impact of the cold war, they encouraged the development of analysis as a way to forget the past. In Germany, as early as October 1945, analysts, including Felix Boehm and Karl Müller-Braunschweig, got a government-backed insurance company to pay for psychotherapy, producing what Edith Kurzweil has called a "psychoboom." Within a decade the Germans had become among the largest
groups in the IPA, just as Germany became the United States’ main cold war partner. As the history of the Göring Institute was buried, analysts revised “their own recent histories, stressing their earlier ‘ambivalence’ about the Nazis and the hardships they had suffered, and contacting Jewish analysts in America and England with whom they formerly had been friendly.”71 Thus, U.S. analysts wound up exporting a sanitized version of Freudianism as part of the larger process by which the United States sought to export to both countries its own way of life.

Even as they were caught up in the process of routinization, connection to a charismatic source of meaning shaped the inner life of American analysts and distinguished them from their fellow doctors. No mere economic rewards could explain the discipleship, the self-denial, the years of training, the night classes, the monastic demeanor, the secrecy, and the dedication that produced the analyst. Psychoanalysis, before it was anything else, was a *vocation*. Analytic education, wrote Michael Balint, was “strongly reminiscent of the primitive initiation ceremonies,” with esoteric knowledge, dogmatism, and “authoritative techniques.” At its center was the training analysis, the deep, one-on-one bond with an individual whose authority ultimately descended from Freud. Its aim, as in the training of any priesthood, was “to force the candidate to identify himself with his initiator, to introject the initiator and his ideals, and to build up from these identifications a strong superego which will influence him all his life.”72 The trauma of emigration intensified the intensity of these dyadic attachments but also drove them underground.

As analysis merged into the welfare state, the most important resource analysts had for maintaining their inner identity was their “shared ego ideal, the idealized imago of Freud.” Lionel Trilling, speaking at a dinner in 1955, congratulated psychoanalysis for having “its whole history before its eyes . . . made actual and dramatic in the person of Freud.” The Freud centenary in 1956 was guided by a single principle: to do nothing of which Freud would have disapproved. Ruth Thomas commented: “It seemed as if after all we found our one point of agreement in veneration of Freud.” Ernst Kris prepared Anna Freud for her visit to the United States: “Everyone will be at your feet. Not because you are Freud’s daughter, but nonetheless in a sense because you are.” He continued: “If you prefer, you may assume that the positive aspect of their ambivalence toward him is intended for you.”73

Apart from the training analysis, there were two additional means by
which the charismatic tie to Freud was reproduced. The first was through reading Freud’s work, especially *The Interpretation of Dreams*. As Heinz Kohut remarked, the study of this text led students to identify with Freud by participating “in the workings of the most intimate recesses” of his mind; “such empathic closeness with total sectors of another person’s mind, extending from conscious to unconscious levels, is not available to us in our day to day relationships, not even with those we are closest to—the members of our family and our friends.” The second means for reproducing identification with Freud was by assuming his core identity and becoming a writer. In 1945 Ernst Kris called for “authoritative statements of what we believe to be true Freudian psychoanalysis.” Writing from London, he sent a “MEMORANDUM—Free Associations to the Topic What to Do Next?” Nothing, he wrote, “is, at the present time, as important as writing.”

The wish to guard and protect Freud’s legacy was reflected in a new epoch of systematization. Among its products were Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein’s regularly appearing articles in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, David Rapaport’s 1959 *Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory*, and the *Hampstead Psychoanalytic Index*, conceived by Dorothy Burlingham and cosponsored by Anna Freud, which sought to record analytic data in a way that made systematic comparisons possible. In mourning, Melanie Klein remarked, one tidies the house. At the same time, systematization served the drive toward medicalization and positivism. Where Freud had spoken of the superego’s approval or disapproval of the ego, preserving an experiential dimension, Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein “corrected” Freud’s language to refer to “degrees of tension” between the two agencies.

The most important projects of this generation—Ernest Jones’s three-volume biography of Freud and James Strachey’s *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*—were simultaneously works of mourning and of revision. Jones’s biography, dedicated to Anna Freud, “true daughter of an immortal sire,” began to appear in 1954. So potent was Freud’s imago that analysts attributed Jones’s supposed mellowing in the last decades of his life to his immersion in the materials. Seeking to buttress the scientific credentials of analysis, Jones emphasized Freud’s relation to Brückean materialism, reporting that while Freud attended Franz Brentano’s philosophy lectures, the fact does not “seem of any importance.” Still struggling with the aftereffects of a charismatic upheaval, Jones minimized the intensity of the *Männerbund* experience, ignored all connections between analysis and politics, settled old scores with Rank and Ferenczi, and in general exemplified what Peter Homans has called the “urban anxiety” of psychoanalysis—that it would be seen as a religion.
The twenty-four-volume Standard Edition, prepared by a small, international team of analysts, was begun in 1946 and completed twenty years later, the fulfillment of Jones’s early promise to Freud. There is no comparable edition in English for any other major modern European thinker, not even Marx, Weber, or Nietzsche. Prepared in England, it was largely financed by the American Psychoanalytic Association, which guaranteed the purchase of five hundred copies. Strachey reworked earlier translations, especially those of Joan Riviere and Katherine Jones, with the intent of producing a text of “absolute credibility and overwhelming authority.” He described the imaginary model of the reader he kept before him as “some English man of science of wide education born in the middle of the nineteenth century.”

The translation is a monument of the English language, but it also reflects the drive toward medicalization. One casualty was Freud’s use of everyday language. Freud used the term Ich, “I,” to refer to both a psychic structure and the experienced self, thus giving it a double meaning. Strachey’s translation of Ich as “ego” eliminated this duality. Strachey’s preference for classicized terms, itself a medical bias, deepened the problem. “Good” became “appropriate,” “need” became “exigency,” “at rest” became “in a state of quiescence.” Affected-adjectives, active, and dynamic constructions gave way to neutral, passive, and static ones. Freud’s present tense, often integral to his effort to capture the timelessness of the unconscious, was replaced with the simple past. The adoption of a standardized glossary underlined Anglo-American dominance over analysis. To this day, the Strachey translation remains the international standard.

Other translations and editions of the period also served to prettify and obscure. The 1960 English translation of an 1883 letter has Freud informing Martha Bernays that he planned to live more “like the gentiles—not striving after discoveries and delving too deep.” Freud’s German, however, refers to Goyim—goyim—not gentiles. In Freud’s letters to Fliess, published as The Origins of Psychoanalysis in 1954, Ernst Kris omitted, among other passages, Freud’s description, in a 1897 letter about “the intrinsic genuineness of infantile trauma,” of a father’s heartbreaking abuse of his two-year-old daughter. Attempts to “protect” Freud by excising such passages ended up rendering the whole analytic tradition vulnerable to accusations of dishonesty.

In fact, there was a great deal of ambivalence in these efforts. Many of the leading figures who would later seek to discredit Freud and psychoanalysis were either disciples or followers of orthodox analysts: Paul Roazen of Helene Deutsch, Jeffrey Masson of both Anna Freud and Kurt Eissler. Frederick Crews, the chief maligner of Freud’s person and thought, was...
once among America’s leading psychoanalytic literary critics. Robert Wallerstein, a leading American analyst writing in 1983, offered an explanation: American analysts “never fully mourned Freud, incorporated their ambivalence toward him, or consolidated their identifications with him.”  

The harnessing of analytic charisma to cold war normalization had its deepest impact in the sexual realm. Analytic influence in postwar U.S. society rested on its unique ability to scrutinize and influence the inner life of the family. Analysts possessed this ability because individuals trusted them. A medicalized profession often betrayed this trust by pathologizing the aspirations of women, homosexuals, and others.

The rise of American ego psychology to predominance within the international psychoanalytic movement had coincided with the entry into analysis of a large number of women, their emergence as leaders, and the shift to the mother-infant paradigm they brought about in analytic theory. But once in power, ego psychologists effectively remasculinized analysis.
Medicalization brought about a steep reduction in the number of female analysts. In the United States, where only 6 percent of medical students in the 1940s were women, the number of female analysts declined dramatically, from 27 percent in the 1930s to 9 percent in the 1950s. Medicalization made this decline inevitable.90 Since the United States dominated the international organization and led the rebuilding of analysis abroad, this shift in gender composition affected the entire movement.

Remasculinization was not merely a matter of numbers. Equally important were shifts in orientation and tone. Originally initiated and pursued by women, in the interests of women, the analytic theory of the mother-infant relationship became a medical theory directed against women. Female patients were discouraged from pursuing careers and urged to please their husbands, even by older female analysts who pursued successful careers themselves. Social problems were traced to what Abram Kardiner called the “uterine” family structure, meaning women’s excessive power within the family, and the consequent decline of the paternal role. “Narcissistic” mothers were blamed for juvenile delinquency; “schizophrenogenic” mothers were blamed for mentally ill children; the “weak, mother-centered family” was blamed for the black male’s supposed lack of self-esteem; the “silver cord” was blamed for male homosexuality; and “Momism” in general was blamed for what Philip Wylie called “the mealy look of men today.”91 Ironically, then, analysis became a male domain amid a revolutionary cultural shift in gender and sexual relations that it itself had helped set in motion. If psychoanalysis arose along with all the ardor and mystery of twentieth-century sexuality, it declined when it took on the task of normalization.

This is not to say that there were no weaknesses in the mother-infant paradigm. On the contrary, analytic texts typically cast the mother as an ontological category incapable of varying culturally or historically. In addition, Klein’s equation of the ego with concrete obligations had elided the problematic of self-reflection and autonomy at the center of Freud’s project. Translated into American ego psychology, the mother-infant paradigm tended to devolve into a straightforward developmental psychology.

Nonetheless, male analysts of the time did not aim to remedy these problems. Rather, like Jacques Lacan, they sniped that the postwar movement had become “matriarchal” or, like Ernest Jones and Edward Glover, “woman-ridden.”92 Anna Freud, in particular, encouraged the remasculinization of psychoanalysis. Her father, she wrote, “was convinced that anatomy determined whether predominantly male or female qualities would be developed and sought to prepare the individual for his or her differing future life tasks.” As late as 1977 she argued against feminists that “the
anatomical equipment of the female child puts her at a disadvantage in relations to the possessor of the phallus,” never questioning how it is possible to possess a representation.

Nevertheless, the influence of the women’s emancipation tradition that had emerged after World War I persisted in some analytic quarters. Phyllis Greenacre and Grete Bibring “encouraged their female patients to free themselves from their customary subjugation to men.” Helene Deutsch’s 1950s writings on the mother/daughter relationship influenced the feminist sociologist Nancy Chodorow. Viola Klein’s The Feminine Character (1949) integrated Freudianism with Margaret Mead and William I. Thomas’s feminist social science.

These, however, were exceptions. As such, they had little impact on the 1960s perception that psychoanalysis was uniformly hostile to feminism. A telling case is the reception of Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham’s 1947 book Modern Woman: The Lost Sex. This was the book that Betty Friedan singled out in her 1963 The Feminine Mystique as representative of the postwar psychiatric worldview. Indeed, Lundberg and Farnham had written that “feminism was at its core a deep illness. . . . It is not in the capacity of the female organism to attain feelings of well being by the route of male achievement.” Subsequently the work gained widespread notoriety in women’s liberation circles and in women’s studies programs, where it was taken as exemplary of the Freudian viewpoint. In fact, Lundberg and Farnham were not analysts. Moreover, when Frances Arkin reviewed the work for Psychoanalytic Quarterly—the only psychoanalytic journal to review it—she complained that “the authors’ constricted vision is most disheartening. . . . [They] turn the clock back to the days prior to the industrial revolution.”

If postwar U.S. analysis was not uniformly antifeminist, it tended nevertheless to enforce gender and sexual normalization. All of the analysts I have just cited as friendly to feminism—Phyllis Greenacre, Grete Bibring, Helene Deutsch, Viola Klein, and Frances Arkin—were women. Until Roy Schafer’s 1974 critique of Freud, it was hard to find a male analyst in the United States with a sympathetic word for feminism.

As always, the most egregious crimes occurred in the treatment. In a not untypical experience, Annie Parsons, Talcott Parsons’s daughter, after distinguishing herself in psychology at Swarthmore and Radcliffe; studying in Paris with Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Piaget; and doing research at Harvard Medical School, applied to train as an analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute. The response of her “extremely orthodox analyst” to her deep
unhappiness, she later wrote, was to say "nothing at all." He gave no "indication that her status as a candidate was in doubt," writes the historian Winifred Breines. In 1963 she was rejected for "failure to come to terms with her basic feminine instincts." She never recovered, and committed suicide at the age of thirty-three.98

Women were not the only victims. Many memoirs and biographies of the period record nightmarish analyses. One of Lionel Trilling's analysts, Ruth Mack Brunswick, was a drug addict. In Trilling's recollection, "the five years in which I was in treatment with Dr. Brunswick were the hardest in my life. Not only when I was at her office but through long sleepless nights I tried to make sense of her bewildering behavior."99 Calvin Trillin's memoir of "Denny," who appeared on the cover of Life magazine in the 1950s but later committed suicide, reveals that Denny was a homosexual who went through analysis, although the details are not given.100 At the end of the writer Dan Wakefield's "long and dispiriting psychoanalysis," he found himself "lying on the floor of [his] analyst's office in such a state of devastation [he] didn't think" he could get out by himself.101

The homosexual was often a special target. In 1956 Anna Freud appealed to the journalist Nancy Procter-Gregg, asking her to not reprint her father's famous 1935 letter to the mother of a homosexual (reproduced on page 178), which dissociated homosexuality from any stigma of illness. According to Anna Freud, analysts now had the means to cure homosexuality, and her father's letter would discourage homosexuals from pursuing that solution.102 The analyst Lawrence Kubie was among those who specialized in this "cure." Moss Hart's 1941 paean to psychoanalysis, Lady in the Dark, ran for 467 performances on Broadway, but Kubie's attempt to end Hart's homosexuality may have caused Hart's depression and early death. Apparently not averse to behavioral techniques, Kubie urged one patient, Vladimir Horowitz, to lock himself in a room when he felt homosexual urges coming on, and had another, Tennessee Williams, end the best relationship of his life.103 Yet, in Rome in the late forties, the poet James Merrill found an American analyst, Thomas Detre, who accepted and supported his homosexuality.104 In 1950 Allen Ginsberg went to a "lady psychiatrist" who "called up my father and told him my parents must accept the fact that I like men." The bisexual actor Montgomery Clift vacationed with his semicloseted gay neo-Freudian analyst, William Silverberg, an associate of Harry Stack Sullivan, who was himself a homosexual.105 And the psychoanalyst Robert Lindner wrote in 1956 that most of his colleagues had come to abandon the "naive" though "humanitarian" view that homosexuality was
an illness, coming increasingly to see it as “a rebellion of the personality that seeks to find—and discovers—a way in which to obtain expression of the confined erotic drives.”

The career of the term “bisexuality” is especially revealing. As we saw, Freud’s redefinition of the concept was intrinsic to the birth of analysis, and the term had always retained its connotations of freedom from prescribed gender roles. In 1940, however, Sándor Rádo at Columbia University asserted that the concept had “outlived its scientific usefulness.” The theory rested on an “arbitrary leap from the embryological to the psychological . . . with almost negligible exceptions, every individual is either male or female.” Returning to the pre-Freudian notion of a heterosexual instinct, Rádo reasoned that being one gender or the other necessarily implied having a particular sexuality. Therefore, “every homosexual is a latent heterosexual.”

Ernest Jones and Anna Freud were also among those who believed that Sigmund Freud had “over-stressed” the bisexual disposition of all human beings. As Kenneth Lewes, the historian of the psychoanalytic theory of male homosexuality, summarized: what had been ambiguous in Freud became simple and doctrinaire.

In 1948 when Alfred Kinsey and other researchers described homosexuality among animals, societies in which homosexuality was normal, and happy adjusted homosexuals, analysts were their leading detractors. Edmund Bergler was doubtless an extreme case, but his work was never publicly repudiated. His 1951 Neurotic Counterfeit Sex argued that homosexuals only appeared to be interested in sex. In fact, they were “injustice collectors [with] Kinsey-hewn chips on their shoulders.” Kinsey’s “erroneous conclusions,” he argued, will be “used against the United States abroad, stigmatizing the nation as a whole in a whisper campaign.” Similarly, according to the mainstream analytic thought of Charles W. Socarides, homosexuals feared merging with the “preoedipal mother. . . . They hope to achieve a ‘shot’ of masculinity in the homosexual act. Like the addict [the homosexual] must have his ‘fix.’ ” Such insights led the American Psychiatric Association in 1952 to classify homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disorder in its first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-1). For such reasons, Lewes has rightly, even generously, characterized the postwar period in terms of a “psychoanalytic tradition of moral safeguarding.”

Every charismatic sect that survives long enough to become institutionalized eventually becomes rigid, ossified, and text-bound. By the middle of
the 1950s, U.S. psychoanalysis had reached this point. Appealing to the
most private and unsocialized dimensions of individuality, it had become
an agent of rationalization, a virtual emblem of the "organization man"
conformism and cookie-cutter domesticity the age so dreaded. Insiders like
Anna Freud conceded that psychoanalysis was not in a "creative era": "If my
father were alive now, he would not want to be an analyst."14 As in the his-
tory of religion, renewal would have to come from the outside—in this
case, from writers and social theorists. But the outsiders appealed to the
same charismatic sources as the rationalizers.

Anti-rationalization took two forms: conservative and radical. The
dividing point was the status of institutions. Conservative anti-rationalizers,
such as Lionel Trilling and Philip Rieff, defended the need for institutions,
professions, and political authority, while invoking the instinctual and sex-
ual bases of individuality as correctives to bureaucratization and confor-
mity. Radicals, such as Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, were
anti-institutionalists. They hoped to liberate the depths of individuality
from the limits imposed by repressive institutions, especially the heterosex-
ual family.

Both currents had links to the New York intellectuals of the 1950s,
among whom nonmedical interest in psychoanalysis flourished.15 Although
highly diverse, this group shared a sense of the exhaustion of Marxism and
the limits of New Deal liberalism. Having long rejected Stalinism, they had
also moved away from the Popular Front. Reasoning that the conflict
between the individual and society had become more important than the
conflict between workers and capitalists, they concluded that economic
forms of struggle were no longer primary. Some moved to the Right, but
others turned to modernism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis in order to
criticize "mass society" and "mass culture."16

In a period in which medical analysts had sucked the lifeblood out of
Freudianism, the intellectuals in the New York milieu resurrected the mod-
ernist view that the genuinely personal—as revealed in sexuality, creativity,
and spontaneous action—was a permanent resource against rationalization.
That view informed the action paintings of the abstract expressionists,
Clement Greenberg's and Irving Howe's critiques of mass culture, and
Hannah Arendt's philosophy of political action.17 Partisan Review, which
had begun as a communist literary journal, came to view early-twentieth-
century modernism as a charismatic source of resistance to both rationaliza-
tion and Stalinism. Modernism, William Barrett wrote, was not so much a
matter of literature as an effort to keep "a certain kind of consciousness alive
in a society inert or hostile to it."18 Middlebrow culture, "kitsch," the wel-
fare state, what Arendt called "the social" could only be resisted by an avant-garde in touch with the deeper, darker currents of personal life.

Like the participants in the Harlem Renaissance before them, many postwar New York intellectuals drew upon African-American music, literature, and protest thought to criticize normalization. For many, racial injustice exemplified the dehumanization, loss of identity, and duplicity that characterized modern society more generally. Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, Richard Wright’s pioneering attempts to link modernity and racial identity, and James Baldwin’s early explorations of the interplay of racial and sexual identity reflected this view.179 For some, moreover, African-American culture offered resources for transcending dehumanization: the intensely personal spontaneity of jazz, the sadness and ambivalence of the blues, the freedom and sensuality made available by marijuana.

In spite of the conservatism of the analytic establishment, Freud was at the center of this return to the personal. For many, psychoanalysis was the true heir to an ossified Marxism. A 1948 article in *Commentary* contended that "when the political cliques of the 30s lost their passion and died, they never really died, but rose to the bosom of the Father and were strangely transmogrified. Psychoanalysis is the new look."120 In his autobiography, Arthur Miller recalled the intense fascination with psychoanalysis that swept New York in the late forties. The city, he wrote, "was swallowed with rivulets of dispossessed liberals and leftists in chaotic flight from the bombarded old castle of self-denial, with its infinite confidence in social progress and its authentication—through—political correctness. As always, the American self... needed a scheme of morals to administer... this time the challenge handed lost ones like me was not to join a picket line or a Spanish brigade but to confess to having been a selfish bastard who had never known how to love."121 The New York milieu constituted a critical bridge between the "old" (Marxist) Left of the 1930s and the "new" (Freudocultural) Left of the sixties, but, as Miller’s remark suggests, the radical spirit of psychoanalysis could sometimes contribute to moralism and self-righteousness as well.

Paul Goodman—homosexual, communitarian, anarchist—was a pioneering figure in the rediscovery of Freud’s radical potentialities. As World War II was ending, he argued that, like the New Deal, ego psychology had fostered a "rationalized sociolatry,... the smooth running of the social machine as it exists." Wilhelm Reich alone understood "that analysts who do not lend their authority to immediate general sex-liberation in education, morals, and marriage are no true doctors." C. Wright Mills criticized
Charisma or Rationalization?

Freud enters the counterculture through
Tom Lehrer’s folk music (1961)

Goodman’s “gonad theory of revolution,” but he too drew on psychoanalysis for his critique of white-collar society and the power elite. 122

Lionel Trilling dominated the New York intellectual reading of Freud. A professor of English at Columbia University and one of the first Jews on that university’s faculty, Trilling had long understood the limits of Marxism as an outlook for modern, middle-class men and women. Conceding “the historic role of the working class and the validity of Marxism,” and acknowledging that he was not being “properly pious,” he confessed that he shared the middle class’s overwhelming preoccupation, born with romanticism, with “the self in its standing quarrel with culture.” That quarrel, Trilling held, was the great achievement of modernity. For an “intense conviction of the existence of the self apart from culture is, as culture well knows, its noblest and most generous achievement.”

Psychoanalysis, Trilling argued, constituted the apotheosis of that conviction, in part because of its connection to art. Freud’s writings, Trilling wrote, constitute “the only systematic account of the human mind which, in point of subtlety and complexity, of interest and tragic power,” deserves
to stand beside literature. The whole tendency of his psychology, [Freud] establishes the naturalness of artistic thought. At the same time, Freud's contribution goes beyond that of the artist. His emphasis on sexuality, Trilling wrote, “far from being reactionary, is potentially liberating; it proposes to us that culture is not all-powerful. It suggests that there is a residue of human quality beyond the reach of cultural control, and that this residue of human quality, elemental as it may be, serves to bring culture itself under criticism and keeps it from being absolute.”

Philip Rieff's 1959 *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* also contrasted the analytic defense of the personal, not only to totalitarianism but also to the oversocialized, overadministered society of the 1950s. But for Rieff the gap was sharper than for Trilling. Rieff described Freud as the spokesman for “psychological man,” the last of the character types—after the political (ancient), the religious (medieval), and the economic (bourgeois)—that have dominated Western civilization. In contrast to Trilling's evocation of the artist, Rieff's description was strikingly antithetical. The direct descendant of “homo economicus,” but no longer preoccupied with the production of wealth, psychological man had inherited “the nervous habits of his father.” Freud was a sort of “investment counselor . . . of the inner life, aiming at shrewd compromises,” teaching his patients to carefully count their “satisfactions and dissatisfactions.” The payoff, however, was entirely internal. Through psychoanalysis, Rieff wrote, the individual learned to withdraw from the painful tension of assert and dissent in his relation to society by relating himself more affirmatively to his depths. His newly acquired health entails a self-concern that takes precedence over social concern and encourages an attitude of ironic insight on the part of the self toward all that is not self. Psychological man, Rieff added, in a phrase that helped inspire this book's focus on personal life, was “no longer defined essentially by his social relations.”

The radical anti-rationalizers agreed. But rather than value the tension or discontinuity between the psyche and social institutions, as Trilling and Rieff did, they believed that the forces uncovered by depth psychology could overflow and even transform institutions. Like their more conservative counterparts, Brown and Marcuse rejected ego psychology. But they also rejected the implications of heterosexual “maturity” and domesticity that Trilling and Rieff at least tacitly endorsed. In 1959 two students of Trilling's who were working in publishing, Jason Epstein and Norman Podhoretz, came upon Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death*, which had just been published by Wesleyan University Press. Epstein asked Podhoretz if it was worth reprinting. “Worth reprinting?” Podhoretz later recalled. “By the
time I had read the first few chapters I was overwhelmed, and by the time I had finished I was convinced that we had stumbled on a great book by a major thinker.” Having been taught that Freud was a conservative thinker and refuter of liberal and Marxist illusions of progress, Podhorez was shocked by Brown’s arguments. Brown disdained the “cheap relativism” of Freud’s early critics such as Karen Horney and Erich Fromm and understood that “the only way around a giant like Freud was through him.” Freud’s pessimism, Podhorez now realized, was not necessitated by Freud’s theory. Indeed, a whole new way of life was implicit in Freud’s vision of polymorphous perversion, a life of play and instinctual freedom.127

Brown’s vision was antinomian and mystical: he sought to use psychoanalysis as a gateway into trans- or superpersonal experiences such as those known to religious and artistic adepts. Marcuse, by contrast, was a political thinker who believed that psychology could contribute to the project of social transformation. Like Trilling and Rieff, Marcuse located this transformation in the new possibilities released by the increasingly automated, mass-consumption society that emerged after World War II. As we shall see in the next chapter, Marcuse placed two charismatic dramatis personae in the vanguard of social transformation: the artist and the homosexual, both of whom pointed beyond the production-oriented and father-dominated heterosexual family. Although Marcuse and Brown’s books were published in the fifties, they anticipated many of the anti-institutional themes of the New Left, especially that of the emancipatory energies of personal life.

Marcuse and Brown were gratified by the developments of the 1960s, while Trilling and Rieff were appalled. But both radicals and conservatives appealed to the same charismatic sources of sexuality, individuality, and the personal unconscious. So, moreover, did the ego psychologists. Thus, it would be a mistake to read the history of this period as one of bad rationalizers versus good heretics, or to play off a conformist 1950s against a rebellious 1960s. Rather, charisma and rationalization were always intertwined: charisma inspired motivational energies and ethical commitments, while rationality guided these energies and commitments into and through institutions. In both decades, the new possibilities of personal life were the grounds for this charisma. Thus, there was an underground continuity between the 1950s ideals of domesticity and the 1960s politics of personal liberation.

Just as seventeenth-century capitalism had required the sacralization of family life, and just as nineteenth-century industrialization had required a new work discipline, so the rise of an automated, mass-consumption society required analogous vehicles for the transformation of subjectivity. Psy-
choanalysis was one of the most effective of these vehicles. During what might be called "the long 1950s," it triggered internal, charismatically originated motivations that encouraged individuals to transform the family from the tradition-bound and production-oriented unit that it still tended to be in the New Deal period into the carrier of expressive individuality in the epoch of globalizing, postindustrial capitalism. In that transformation, the ego psychologists' stress on reason, maturity, and the ego's capacities to organize the inner and outer worlds proved as necessary as the emancipation of sexuality to which—as the anti-rationalizers seemed to intuit—it was about to give way.