



The Influence of Sigmund Freud's Theory of Psychoanalysis on the Theodor Adorno's Philosophical and Educational Works

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Abstract

The article examines the use of the Sigmund Freud's psychological legacy as the founder of the theory of psychoanalysis by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno, a representative of critical theory. It was found that the Sigmund Freud's works played the role of maker of such knowledge, which was used for identify social and psychological reasons of the mastery of social ideology by the collective consciousness of society. On the other hand, Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis was helped Theodor Adorno to identify the spiritual energy of the new individual that can be used in new educational activities. This energy becomes necessary for educational upbringing of the future conscious citizen of a democratic state.

Keywords: Theory of Psychoanalysis; Totalitarian Society; Ideology; Individual; Self; Education; Upbringing; Democracy

Introduction

The philosophical works of the German social thinker Theodor Adorno, who was one of the leading representatives of the critical theory of society (Frankfurt School of Neo-Marxism), were influenced by the ideas of many prominent philosophers. Researchers of Adorno's theoretical legacy determine the influences of such German philosophers as I. Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, F. Nietzsche, and K. Marx. No less important influence on the Adorno's personal anthropological orientations was the theoretical legacy of Sigmund Freud as the founder of theory of psychoanalysis. Adorno theoretically used the results of psychological research and the personal convictions of this Austrian scientist to critically identify the deep psychological causes of the emergence and spread in the then industrial society of socio-cultural phenomena that had a clear dehumanized character. The aim of this article

was to consider the influence of Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis on the philosophical and educational works of the German philosopher neo-Marxist Theodor Adorno.

The Attitude of the Frankfurt School to Psychology as a Science

Within the theoretical limits of social research of the leading representatives of the critical theory of society, their interest in psychology as an important science was extremely stable. Can point to a significant number of such examples. Early in his research, Max Gorkheimer, a theoretical moderator of critical theory of society, wrote the article History and Psychology (1932), in which he defined psychology as such theoretical knowledge that leads to a scientific understanding of the inner world of the individual as a real factor by historical change in society.

Also one of the theoretically influential representatives of the Frankfurt School was Erich Fromm, who worked as a psychoanalyst before his literary career. In his books of the war and postwar periods, Fromm makes a thorough critique of ideologically dehumanized society and reveals the depths of the psychology of authoritarian politics. Herbert Marcuse, another representative of critical theory, in his postwar book *Eros and Civilization* (1954), written under the influence of Freud's psychoanalysis, criticizes the then industrialized dehumanized society, which selfishly uses the life energy of the individual-him libido. Thus, according to Marcuse, the sublimation of human energy (Freud) can not be directed to creative activity as unconditionally free human activity. In general, these Frankfurt neo-Marxist philosophers in their work actively used theoretical developments in psychology, including the results of Freud's research, to philosophically study the deep essence of the authoritarian pressure of social ideology on the consciousness of the individual and his activities.

Adorno's Works by the American Period and Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis

During World War II, Adorno, like all other members of the Frankfurt School, was forced to emigrate from Germany, because power in his country is obtained the National Socialists-the enemies of democratic government and supporters of authoritarian and xenophobic political ideology. Having found protection in the United States, Adorno conducted and led sociological research on the media of that time, and in 1941 he became a co-director of a sociological project, the results of which were set out in the book *The authoritarian personality* (1950). By that book, it was scientifically stated as factual: in the then United States, along with the political ideology of democratic governance, there is a steady social particularism of individuals as a social ideology. According to the study, such social particularism breeds xenophobia of various kinds in a democratic society and forms the xenophobic consciousness of individuals [1]. Although this point by the book is implicit but it is clear that its psychological part and conclusions were written by Adorno himself as project leader – because while in the US, the philosopher wrote an article the revised psychoanalysis as a report in the Psychoanalytic Society of San Francisco. In this work, the philosopher critically analyzed the theoretical positions of the representatives of the school of revisionism of Freud's psychoanalysis and singled out the position of Karen Horney. According to Adorno, the revisionism of this school of Freud's theoretical legacy ideologically influence an the society understanding of individual. The consequence of such influence is a false vision to soul of an individual as devoid of internal dynamics, as static and unchanging. The individual are incapable of internal change, and therefore it is incapable of changing external social life [2].

Before returning to war-torn West Germany, Adorno TW, et al. [3] writes the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), which examined the psychological, cultural, and historical causes of political and war crimes in Europe of the Nazi ideologies supporters. The *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* states the following: through the dialectical layers of cultural products of the Western Enlightenment, European civilization in the middle of the twentieth century forms a social totality in which the individual loses his individuality. Thus, the European personality, whose free activity was a factor in positive socio-cultural transformations, is formed as an authoritarian and immoral personality. His drive to power makes the process of individuating another person impossible. Thus, European civilization is moving in the direction of primitive barbarism, which is represented by the crimes of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz [3].

The Component of Sigmund Freud's Theory of Psychoanalysis Adorno's Philosophical and Educational Works

After his return to the West Germany, Adorno engaged in teaching and began a series of philosophical and educational works. In general, the philosopher expressed his critical attitude to those factors of the then education of West Germany, which make it impossible for a new educator to personally struggle with the ideological legacy of totalitarian society and him building of the West Germany as a democracy country. In the speech *The Theory of Half-education* (1959) Adorno critically analyzed the half-education as a cultural phenomenon of German society at the that time and identified as a factors of half-education the cultural industry (the mindless entertainment industry), traditional rural culture, collective narcissism, and post-totalitarian resentment of Nazi ideology carriers and supporters. The spread of half-education in society leads to the formation of a half-educated person, the very existence of which is a condition for preserving the authoritarian ideology of society. It was pointed out that a half-educated person is always forced to worry about self-preservation, to which his own self is not involved. Adorno here treated to a human self like Freud. The founder of psychoanalysis was to saw the human self as consisting of the ego, the main «organizational component of the human psyche», and the id, which is a threat to the self, because it cares about nothing but finding and satisfying instinctive needs (The Ego and the Id). According to the philosopher, post-totalitarian society needs a half-educated person for it's survived. This society demonstrates itself as a numb social being, consisting of cognitively numb people. Only a caring person can overcome this numbness of society. Him conscious activity steadily nourishes the energy of the him individual spirit. The spirit of such a person derives its strength from the educational legacy that was developed by

previous education [4].

In his next report, entitled what does «processing of the past» mean (1959), the philosopher continues the critique of the social ideology of post-totalitarian society as an unchanging social being. According to Adorno, this ideology, then present in West German society, sought to eradicate people's historical memory of the horrors of Nazi rule. It seeks to push them out of the collective consciousness of the Germans of the time, in part through their recollections of the carefree days of life under Nazi power. Those people have a weak ego, and therefore as a surrogate of identity they need to be identified with a large team, they are socially integrated only by the authority of the power personality. In order to reveal the essence of the connection of the then German with the representative of the Nazi power, Adorno uses the concept of Freud's psychoanalysis of narcissism, referring primarily to the collective narcissism of the then Germans as the supporters of Nazi ideology. Theoretically based on Freud's book *Group Psychology* and the *Analysis of the Ego* (1921), the philosopher defines the identifications of those Germans and their collective narcissism as completely unchanged in society, they also do not identify with the victims of Nazism and do not sympathize with those victims. New democratic pedagogy and anti-ideological education as re-education were named as an effective means of overcoming this ideological tendency. In society, they are practically carried out by educated people who are aware of the past crimes of the totalitarian regime. This eliminates the "political infancy" of an individual young person and makes it impossible for Europe to historically repeat the crimes of the Nazi regime [5].

The theme of criticism of the educational system of post-totalitarian society was continued in the Adorno's speech *The Philosophy and the Teacher* (1961). The philosopher critically singles out as the dominant trend in the postwar universities of Germany adherence to the principles of only scientific knowledge. According to Adorno, this negatively affects the attitude of some future teachers to their profession and their students. These teachers do not have a philosophical understanding of their work and treat knowledge as appropriated in a consumer way, due to a lack of personal love for their profession and for their students. Such teachers are indifferent to their profession and have not the calling to it, they are unable to offer new knowledge to their students both through selective oral speech and through perfect written presentation. Adorno offered to see a completely different educator.

As a new person, a new teacher is able to deeply master the knowledge he needs to understand his professional duty. He is able to use self-understanding and self-reflection, and therefore he will be able to independently understand the

meaning of his pedagogical work. Under the influence of Freud's psychoanalysis, Adorno takes into account the phase of early human life, its characteristic feature is the young man's dissatisfaction with the perception of the real things as the obvious things. This means that young man will not be satisfied with the current state of affairs in society. The philosopher points out that although a person outgrows this age phase, he becomes demanding of himself if he voluntarily immerses himself in this phase. Therefore, this new person, as a new educator, will honestly and patiently perform his work for the practical implementation in the post-totalitarian society of humanistic ideals of previous philosophical knowledge [6].

The influence of Freud's psychoanalysis on Adorno's philosophy of education is clearly revealed in speech *the taboos on the calling of the teacher* (1965). In this work, the philosopher considered the socio-psychological and socio-cultural reasons that have historically led to the emergence in the German society of many psychological taboos on the pedagogical work of a school teacher. Theoretically based on Freud's book *Totem and Taboo* (1913), the philosopher analyzed the set of causes of disgust in the society to the work of a teacher. First of all, the very cultural tradition of the German society was defined, which historically developed mainly as materialistic. Another factor, the philosopher called the tradition of using in the society physical violence as a means of social coercion. According to this tradition, the school teacher had to subordinate students to his authority, and he himself was subordinated to social and school ideology. Thus there was an ideological distortion of the image of the teacher, castration of his image in social psychology, his self-alienation from the professional calling and the elimination of the power of his spirit. As an ideological alternative, Adorno suggested that society, if it consciously seeks democratic changes; first of all take into account such young teachers who demonstrate a dash of their individual spirit in the performance of their profession. It is this anthropological factor, according to the philosopher, can lead to the democratization of the German school, it will overcome barbarism in a post-totalitarian society and destroy the ideologically dehumanized traditions. And above all, it will destroy the barbaric tradition of violence in society [7].

One cannot ignore the psychological component of Adorno's conversation with political publicist and educational theorist Helmut Becker, which was recorded and published under the title *The upbringing-Why?* (1966). In that conversation, the above-mentioned German intellectuals was notice the aim of properly educating the then German as a citizen of a democratic country. They also defined the essence of democracy as the embodiment of such political governance, which requires the active use of their minds by

any member of society. Adorno and Becker agreed to call such a person as mature man. However, in their opinion, education that adheres to the traditional principles of upbringing leads to the formation of such a rational adaptation of man to the social world that it only increases the degree of human conformism. Talking to Becker, the philosopher noted the phenomenon of primary, preschool upbringing of the child, and also singled out the peculiarity of the period of puberty of the child. Talking to Becker, the philosopher noted the phenomenon of primary, preschool upbringing of the child, and also singled out the peculiarity of the period of puberty of the child. According to Adorno, this period is characterized by the fact that at this time of life can form a person's personal thinking as spontaneous. Therefore, the new education, which implements the renewed upbringing, in its process must focus on the formation of human spontaneity. This makes possible the process of individualization of the person and will destroy the ideological tendency to preserve the principle of anti-individualism in upbringing. As a result of such education becomes a new individual—a person who is able to consciously resist any ideological influences on the collective consciousness of society [8].

Conclusion

The Theodor Adorno's critical works are quite relevant for modern Ukraine, whose citizens have come to its defense against Russian-imperialist aggression. Such an attack, which is the result of the unnatural preservation of the ideology of Soviet society as a totalitarian society. In his works the Frankfurt thinker performed a thorough philosophical analysis of the ideology of post-totalitarian society and effectively used the theoretical legacy of Sigmund Freud to identify the root causes and consequences of ideological influence on the consciousness of society. In general, having a critical attitude to the scientificization of social life as the dominant socio-cultural trend, Adorno treated sociology and theoretical psychology as such knowledge in which scientists consciously and conscientiously perform their work. This is how Adorno's respect for Freud's psychological theory can

be explained. Based on Freud's psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt philosopher pointed to the deep layer of the spiritual energy of the individual, which was proposed to apply for the consistent and conscious struggle against any dehumanized ideology as dominant in society. According to Adorno, this struggle will take place as the work of a new educator, whose educational work will make it impossible to historically repeat the military and political crimes of totalitarianism.

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