PSYCHOLOGY

Alfred Lorenzer is one of the best-known German psychoanalysts. With the dyadic “scene” and the “form of interaction”, he introduced new relational concepts into psychoanalysis. His in-depth hermeneutical method bridges the gap between cultural and psychoanalytic theory, allowing the unconscious sensual-symbolic forms of interaction of cultural phenomena and the socially oppressed schemas of life represented therein to be uncovered. Now, with this book, his landmark essay on the inextricability of drivenness and sociality; they also demonstrate how the two can be integrated psychoanalytic sociology.

This riveting volume puts generative pressure on the metapsychological divide that keeps contemporary psychoanalysis stalled, precisely because it has pitied the body against culture, and the drives against the social. Via the lens of Alfred Lorenzer, whose work represents the most substantial theoretical and methodological contribution to ‘applied’ psychoanalysis and the integration of psychoanalytic thinking and the social sciences in Germany in the late 20th century.

Born in Ulm, Lorenzer studied medicine and then turned to psychiatry. His doctoral thesis was supervised by Ernst Krischmeyer in Tübingen. Lorenzer’s subsequent turn to psychoanalysis led him to take a position at the psychoanalytic clinic in Heidelberg, headed by the well-known psychoanalyst and progressive cultural critic Alexander Mitscherlich, whom Lorenzer succeeded and then followed to Frankfurt when Mitscherlich took over as head of the Sigmund Freud Institute there. At the Institute, Lorenzer started to develop his theoretical approach with the aim of creating a fully integrated psychoanalytic sociology. Perhaps the most central text of that endeavor is published here in English for the first time.

Alfred Lorenzer (1922–2002) was a German sociologist and psychoanalyst, whose work represents the most substantial theoretical and methodological contribution to ‘applied’ psychoanalysis and the integration of psychoanalytic thinking and the social sciences in Germany in the late 20th century.