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The Institutes for Propaganda Analysis and Frankfurt School Social Research on Morningside Heights: A *de facto* Alliance and Its Legacies

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) and the exiled Frankfurt School's Institute for Social Research (FISR) is somewhat enigmatic, despite the two entities' physical proximity on Morningside Heights during the 1930s and 1940s. This article challenges J. Michael Sproule's "mutual disinterest" account of that relationship. It demonstrates the influence of Alfred and Elizabeth Lee on the FISR's *Studies in Prejudice* project, which anticipated a scenario in the US like the democratic crisis that exists today. Theodor Adorno's work on demagogic propaganda is particularly indebted to the Lees' *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches* (1939). Detailed archival and textual reconstruction of this relationship is presented. This focuses on the FISR's plans for a popular manual like *The Fine Art* and Adorno's reworking of the IPA's famous "seven devices" of propaganda technique into a more elaborate theoretical and practical counter-demagogic program. This article also demonstrates that these developments in propaganda studies played a little-recognized role in the well-known tension between Adorno and Paul Lazarsfeld regarding "administrative" and "critical" communications research. Finally, the legacies of this complex history are briefly explored in the context of current debates about research on disinformation.

KEYWORDS

Adorno; Alfred McLung Lee; demagogue; Frankfurt School; Institute for Propaganda Analysis

J. Michael Sproule's *Propaganda and Democracy* is a recognized landmark text in the history of US research on mediated propaganda, rendering its author a leading expert on the trailblazing Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA).¹ Yet its pages suggest that the short-lived IPA and the exiled Frankfurt School's Institute for Social Research (FISR) had little in common, despite their physical proximity on opposite sides of Morningside Park, near Columbia University's main campus.²

Propaganda and Democracy leans heavily here on interviews and correspondence conducted in the 1980s with Alfred McLung Lee, who succeeded Clyde Miller as Director of the IPA in 1941.³ Sproule paints a picture of mutual disinterest. Disparaging phrases from Lee about the FISR—such as "obscure terminology and more complicated theories"—pepper his account. The German emigrés in turn appeared to Lee to be critical "missionaries" uninterested in existent US progressive traditions. The FISR's self-styled critical theory, with Theodor Adorno's name to the fore, typifies

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for Sproule an approach within “humanistic communication study” that was of little interest to progressive propaganda critics: “grand theory lacking a critical application.” For Sproule, this meant that humanistic scholarship was unable to offer a serious alternative to “the growing measurement-management orientation in social science,” resulting in the alienation of progressive “propaganda critique from allies.” Lee’s alienation from Adorno and his colleagues’ “obscure terminology and more complicated theories” exemplifies such a failed potential alliance.⁴

In this article, I challenge Sproule’s account and related assumptions in communication studies. The two institutes had far more common ground than Sproule suggests, and the major disjunction was more likely temporal than intellectual. Shortly after the IPA’s closure, the FISR embarked on exactly the kind of propaganda research that Sproule implies they were incapable of undertaking. Moreover, IPA work was employed as a template within this Frankfurt School program. The two institutes were *de facto* allies after all. While the relationship is complex, this recovery aims to provide a further dimension to the revival of interest in the IPA’s work during the current crisis of democracy.⁵

I draw on established historical scholarship and archival materials, especially those in the Archive of Max Horkheimer, then Director of the FISR. These provide evidence of the productive interaction between the IPA’s Alfred Lee and the FISR’s *Studies in Prejudice* project on antisemitic propaganda. I highlight the under-recognized communicative focus of this project and how propaganda research adds another dimension to the famous tension between Adorno and Paul Lazarsfeld regarding administrative and critical communications research. I also conduct a detailed textual examination of Theodor Adorno’s critical dialog with IPA work and its influence on his formulations regarding “the culture industry.” Finally, the legacies of this complex history are briefly explored in the context of current debates about research on disinformation. I shift perspective here to highlight the comparative perspective on media-institutional and regulatory practices opened up by the FISR’s exilic status. Yet it should be noted at the outset that the FISR’s return to Frankfurt in 1950 meant that its prescient work on propaganda was never fully applied by its members to any subsequent US crisis situations.

The Morningside Heights Intersection

As other contributions to this special issue have detailed, the IPA was established in 1937 and closed in 1942. It took shape initially from the meeting of the philanthropy of Edward Filene and the journalistic and progressive educational experience of Clyde R. Miller, its first Director. Both shared concerns about the growing role of propaganda, especially that espousing antisemitism. Filene died shortly before the IPA’s formal establishment, so rendering it “a kind of posthumous experiment.”⁶ The connection with Columbia University came via Miller’s teaching position at Columbia’s Teachers College and the presence of Columbia academics in key positions on its board. Its office was initially located at 132 Morningside Drive.

Most of the revival of interest in the IPA has focussed on the period of Miller’s directorship (1937–41) and his prodigious efforts at promoting what is now called critical media literacy. This is entirely understandable, as Alfred Lee’s tenure as successor Director was quite brief.

However, Lee was also coauthor (with Elizabeth Lee) of the IPA's *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches*, published in 1939.⁷ As we shall see, the Lees' book played a key role in linking the IPA and FISR. Commissioned by Miller, it also became the major means by which many learned of Miller's distillation of propagandistic rhetorical techniques into "seven devices." Miller had published them, unsigned, two years earlier in the relatively ephemeral newsletter of the IPA. So *The Fine Art* was often mistaken as their source, to Miller's later chagrin.⁸

Although much-lauded in scholarly reception, *The Fine Art* did not aspire to the norms of academic scholarship, which would have included a properly referenced sourcing of something as fundamental as the seven devices construct. Instead, the Lees' book was primarily a popular manual. As Miller himself makes clear in his foreword, the authors had "adapted for the purpose of this book the techniques and other materials of the Institute and . . . used them in analyzing the propagandas of Father Coughlin."⁹

The FISR too owed its origins to a beneficent benefactor concerned about antisemitism: the left-wing graduate Felix Weil (together with his father Hermann). This philanthropy was configured in the socialist environment of Germany's left-wing coalition government that ruled in the wake of the failed November (1918) revolution. Weil planned an independent research institute, with university affiliation, composed of non-factional Marxian intellectuals. On its establishment in 1923, the FISR initially had the goal of making practical policy plans for a socialization program, so providing one meaning for the titular "social research."¹⁰ However, it subsequently pioneered the separation of Marxian thinking from obligations at the barricades and eschewed any affiliation with Leninist (or any other) political parties. Thus, "critical theory" as a distinct project emerged, often in dialog with psychoanalysis.

By the time of its arrival in the US a decade later, the FISR might indeed have seemed to share little with the future IPA. The Frankfurt School members were all steeped in the most complex European forms of what Sproule characterized as humanistic scholarship. Yet, their interests in esthetics, philosophy and sociology still relied on a Marxian theory that had, contra Sproule, a strong empirical dimension. Before they had left Germany, FISR members had undertaken major research on the psychosocial bases of authority and the family, including a 1929 empirical study of the German working class in Rhineland.¹¹ By the Nazi consolidation of power, all the key members of the FISR's inner circle were German Jews, and emigration became essential.

While the work of the IPA created a somewhat testy relationship between Miller and Teachers College administrators from its establishment, the FISR was actually *invited* to Columbia to be affiliated with its Sociology department.¹² A key figure here was Robert Lynd, author of the famous *Middletown* community study (and a member of the IPA board). He saw potential common ground with his own work in researching the effects of the Great Depression on the institution of the family. Yet, Lynd was also attracted to the innovatively interdisciplinary character of the FISR, which had so formed in consistency with changes in German universities. Lynd regarded such collaborative endeavors as a necessary model for future social research programs.¹³

The FISR had begun reassembling its operations at Columbia in the summer of 1934, three years before the IPA commenced its activities. Horkheimer was keen to avoid another international relocation and so sought to ensure the FISR maintained a low political profile in the US. Yet the FISR became deeply interested in antisemitism and was resolutely anti-fascist. As with the IPA's philanthropical founder, it was World War II and the fate of Jews in Europe, rather than a longstanding commitment based in personal identity, that triggered a motivation to investigate and combat antisemitism in the US.¹⁴

The Frankfurt School and Propaganda Analysis: Hiding in Plain Sight

Sproule is hardly alone in underestimating the Frankfurt School's contribution to progressive propaganda critique. When he elaborates the FISR's alleged failings in challenging "measurement-management" orthodoxy—what Adorno would have called administrative positivism—he travels an already well-trodden path in the historiography of US communication studies. That path leads to the relationship between Adorno and another beneficiary of Lynd's collegiality, the already established Austrian émigré Paul Lazarsfeld, Director of the Princeton Radio Research Project. The latter institution epitomizes for Sproule the turn to quantitative measurement in communications research.¹⁵ Adorno was employed there from his arrival in the US in 1938 until the termination of his Rockefeller Foundation music research funding in 1941.

Like many previous commentators, Sproule relies on Lazarsfeld's account of the breakdown of this relationship.¹⁶ It is Lazarsfeld who initiates the view that Adorno was a speculative thinker unwilling or unable to provide what would now be called an "operationalization" of his research plans suitable for data collection. This situation contributed to a major distinction, used by both Adorno and Lazarsfeld, between critical and administrative research in communication studies, where the latter referred to research contracted by administrative agencies, including private corporations.¹⁷ Lazarsfeld also points to questions of corporate ownership as appropriate for critical research, so contributing to the erroneous view that Frankfurt-inspired critical communications research would be identical to a critical political economy. As we shall see, much more than such economic foci were at stake for both authors in this tension. Antisemitic propaganda also played an informing role. As we shall also see, this tension has arisen again today in discussions of "disinformation."

It is pertinent, then, that most commentators, including Sproule, overlook Lazarsfeld's remarkable moment of self-doubt in his account:

The defeat of this hope in the Princeton project has left a troublesome question in my mind. After the war Adorno was an active member of the Berkeley group that produced *The Authoritarian Personality*. Their basic concept of the fascistic character was developed by Adorno and was certainly no less speculative than what he wrote for us; nevertheless, his colleagues in California were able to convert his idea into the famous F-scale. I have an uneasy feeling that my duties in the various divisions of the Princeton project may have prevented me from devoting the necessary time and attention to achieve the purpose for which I engaged Adorno originally.¹⁸

Adorno's Berkeley research should have encouraged communications scholars to equally prioritize the project that had produced that somewhat intimidating 1,000-page tome

which, as Lazarsfeld notes, came about quite separately from the Princeton research and its problems. His candor was also an acknowledgment that Adorno had produced exactly the kind of “actual cooperation of critical and administrative empirical research” that Lazarsfeld had advocated in his essay on the topic.¹⁹

The Authoritarian Personality also met considerable controversy on publication in 1950 but nonetheless established itself as a crucial development in critical social psychology and generated a related minor tradition of “authoritarian studies” in political psychology. In recent journalism, Thomas Edsall’s columns in *The New York Times* have drawn on authoritarian studies scholars whose research identified the strong presence of “authoritarians” amongst Donald Trump’s most ardent followers.²⁰

However, even its advocates usually treat *The Authoritarian Personality* as a freestanding work. In fact, Adorno’s “Berkeley group” formed only one section of a multi-pronged project investigating (primarily US) antisemitism, *Studies in Prejudice* (1943–1950).²¹ Their monograph was one of the five published in 1949–1950.²² The Berkeley group’s work directly addressed a research commitment made by the FISIR to their chief funder, the American Jewish Committee (AJC): to establish a means to identify what became known as “potential fascists,” the famous “F-scale” checklist of qualities to which Lazarsfeld referred.

While still in the Princeton project, Adorno had attributed to Lazarsfeld the identification of a version of administrative research that might be considered “benevolent.” Lazarsfeld certainly implies this in his 1941 essay by alluding to the wider policy context of the Princeton Radio Research, now fully revealed by Josh Shepperd’s recent archival work: establishing evidence of the social value of educational broadcasting radio licenses held by universities.²³ *Studies in Prejudice* similarly met a “benevolent”—but certainly more existential—purpose, as required by a Jewish self-defense organization. Indeed, Lazarsfeld opens his own essay with a hypothetical scenario where antisemitism—the growth of which “in this country had been well-recognized”—and fifth columnism required dedicated “specialist” research to assist broadcasters.²⁴ He evidently drew this scenario from his time in 1939–40 with the Rockefeller Communications Group, a panel of experts which considered the likely climate of opinion formation, propaganda, and “emergency psychology” that might arise should the US join the second world war. In Brett Gary’s much-cited estimate, this group was the epitome of technocratic “nervous liberals.”²⁵

Where Lazarsfeld had called his hypothetical a “fable” and cast broadcasting companies therein as unwitting innocents, *Studies in Prejudice* recognized an existent *systemic* threat including, as we shall see, the culture industry. The instrument of the F-scale was considered necessary due to the rising tide of antisemitic propaganda, including that increasingly available via prominent “radio demagogues,” whose broadcasts only ceased with the US entry into World War II. The often populist radio demagogues had flourished in the wake of the Great Depression and remained numerous. However, the Lees’ choice as case study, Father Charles Coughlin, was easily the most prominent. At first mixing papal encyclicals with revived left-populist thematics from the USA’s progressive 1890s Populists, Coughlin’s initially muted antisemitism later became outright fascistic. He reproduced the conspiratorially antisemitic “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” document in his heavily subscribed parish newsletter and formed his own extra-party social movement, the National Union for Social Justice. He eventually advocated the formation of “Christian Front” paramilitary groups (which were soon broken up by the FBI).²⁶ In 1934, his weekly radio sermons were reported to have an “audience of ten million [that] is probably the largest steady radio

audience in the world.”²⁷ He achieved this by using solicited donations—decades before “televangelists”—to finance his own ad hoc broadcast network. His career thus demonstrates the embedding of antisemitism in a broader syncretic demagogic propaganda practice and the culture industry.

So the key companion texts to *The Authoritarian Personality* were those that addressed *demagogic propaganda*. One of the five Harper volumes, Lowenthal’s *Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator*, was dedicated to this topic. Adorno had produced his own unpublished “pilot” demagoguery monograph in 1943 and later produced several articles on this theme.²⁸ *The Authoritarian Personality*’s social-psychological typology of character types, including potential demagogues as well as “potential fascists,” so formed the “reception” component that complemented Lowenthal and Adorno’s content analyses of the rhetorical techniques employed by the radio demagogues.²⁹ While antisemitism remained the focus, the FISR understanding of demagogic propaganda was always more encompassing.

It was in this context that the IPA/Lees’ publication *The Fine Art of Propaganda* became relevant to the Frankfurt School.

The IPA Legacy and the Frankfurt School

Despite his later evident misgivings about aspects of the FISR’s theoretical orientation, Alfred Lee appears to have had no similar qualms about *Studies in Prejudice*, at least by the time of its successful grant application to the AJC. Indeed, he served on the “sponsoring committee” for the project and wrote a testimonial supporting the FISR’s revised application in late 1941.³⁰ In his testimonial, Lee stated:

In my estimation, such a study would contribute significantly to our knowledge of this disturbing area of social tension and conflict. The better equipped we are with realistic analyses of antisemitism the better will Americans and others be able to combat the growth of this social malady. . . . I hope that it will be possible for the Institute for Social Research to carry this work forward in the near future.³¹

In an introductory statement to the FISR proposal the following month, there was an explicit reference to studying “the methods of disseminating” antisemitism “with the help of the categories developed by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis.”³² Lee’s hopes would also appear to have been fulfilled, as nine years later he published an enthusiastic review of Lowenthal’s demagoguery study, calling it “a wise and significant volume.”³³ So there is more than a hint that Lee saw the FISR resuming aspects of the IPA’s work.

Lee also highlighted *Prophets of Deceit*’s “very cogent typification of the verbalizations of the selected agitators” and the “telling picture of agitators’ stock techniques and thought processes in the form of twenty-one themes characteristic of their performance.”³⁴ He displays remarkable modesty in not drawing attention to Lowenthal’s debt to the IPA’s work here. For *The Fine Art of Propaganda*’s form—a popular manual promoting critical understanding of demagogic “devices” or “tricks”—was clearly a model for his demagoguery study and even moreso for Adorno’s “pilot” analysis.³⁵

In May 1944, at the end of the first year of funding, the AJC organized a small conference on “Research in the Field of Anti-Semitism” which discussed the progress of the FISR project. Sponsors and other relevant scholars and figures in Jewish self-defense were

invited.³⁶ The FISR was represented by Adorno, Horkheimer and Friedrich Pollock (who had participated in the AJC negotiations). Also present was Paul Lazarsfeld. As a sponsor, Alfred Lee was present too and once again close to the FISR research, this time face-to-face. The summary of proceedings refers to Lee, in part, as “Former Director, Institute of Propaganda Analysis.”³⁷

As reported by the AJC, conference discussion was repeatedly returned to the question of “the premises of a sound defense program” that might arise from the ongoing research. For the AJC, outcomes consistent with such a goal were thus a high priority.

Some months earlier, in late 1943, Horkheimer and Adorno had dined with Morris D. Waldman, Executive Vice-President of the AJC.³⁸ When Waldman later asked Horkheimer for “a report on our work,” Horkheimer and Adorno provided an aide-mémoire of what they had said at the dinner.³⁹ The aide-mémoire, with separate sections indicating the respective authorships of Horkheimer and Adorno, is a remarkable document that provides a vivid account of the state of play of the initial research and anticipations of material that would appear in future publications. Of most relevance here are Horkheimer and Adorno’s references to a key defensive instrument for the AJC that they planned as a research outcome: a popular manual derived primarily from the demagogy research. Having briefly described Adorno’s just-completed demagogy study, Horkheimer introduces the manual plan thus:

Our study will form the basis for a popular manual in which all the totalitarian propaganda devices are enumerated. Each of them will be roughly but strikingly characterized, and possibly illustrated by a caricature. Such a manual, written in a popular and satirical vein, could be distributed to great masses in order to immunize them against the ever-recurring and schematized devices of totalitarianism. It should not be used now, but should be held in safe-keeping for times of crises. It is one of the many elements of preparedness which should be accumulated now.⁴⁰

Adorno’s contribution follows a detailed, but non-technical, account of his demagogy study designed to facilitate the case for the manual, e.g. “He who knows the tricks of the trade, and their calculated, insincere nature, may become immune to them.”⁴¹ If there were any doubts about whether Horkheimer’s references to “propaganda devices” were an allusion to the IPA’s seven devices, Adorno’s invocation of “tricks of the trade” should assuage them. The phrase coincides with the chapter title of *The Fine Art* in which the devices are initially introduced.⁴²

The seven devices framework also served immanent Frankfurt School concerns. Amidst their internal debates about how best to understand fascism, an analogy with racketeering had been adopted by both Horkheimer and Adorno. The IPA language of “tricks” and “devices” blended well with this established tendency to use the metaphor of “rackets” to describe fascist activity.⁴³ Positioning demagogues in this way as tricksters also suited Adorno’s understanding that modern demagogy shared little with its classical forebears.⁴⁴

The proposed popular manual never eventuated in the form proposed in the aide-mémoire; its demise was evidently a collateral effect of administrative tensions between Horkheimer and the AJC.⁴⁵ It should be noted nonetheless that, consistent with the rackets motif, Adorno and Lowenthal demonstrated within their demagogy monographs that they were more than capable of writing in an appropriately popular style.

Devices to Psychotechnics: Adorno's Appropriation and Reworking of *The Fine Art*

If we turn to Adorno's Martin Luther Thomas study, the debt to *The Fine Art* becomes plainer, but so to do Adorno's revisions to the Lees' schema.

Firstly, some contextualization of Adorno's chosen demagogue is necessary. In contrast with Coughlin and other radio demagogues investigated in *Studies in Prejudice*, the Reverend Martin Luther Thomas remains a remarkably obscure figure. While, like Coughlin, he addressed his listeners as a clergyman, his background was Protestant rather than Catholic. An overt fifth columnist based in Los Angeles, he never attained the national profile that Coughlin achieved via his networked audiences. Neither Adorno's original text nor the Stanford republication provides a discrete background profile of Thomas. Likewise, the source of Adorno's "data" is not revealed. The little that has been documented and published about Thomas is chiefly due to recent archival research about Jewish self-defense organizations, most notably the work of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee (LAJCC) and its allies.⁴⁶ These employed undercover surveillance tactics to gather incriminating evidence about such figures. Like Clyde Miller, the LAJCC struggled to persuade the Dies House Committee to act on their evidence regarding fascist propaganda, as its remit required.⁴⁷ The Thomas transcripts that Adorno analyzed all date from 1935, three years prior to his arrival in the US. However, in the aide-mémoire, Adorno states that "Transcripts of a large number of Thomas" radio addresses were "put at our disposal by a West Coast civic group."⁴⁸ It seems very likely, then, that the LAJCC or one of its allies provided those transcripts.

The IPA's seven devices ranged from the self-descriptive "name-calling" and "testimonial" through to what are now recognizable as standard maneuvers of the populist—such as the invocation of "just plain folks." Yet also present were quasi-psychological /semiotic devices such as "transfer" (of desired/undesirable qualities from one entity to another).

Adorno cites the Lees' devices seven times, employing all but two of them. Even more so than *The Fine Art*, Adorno's manuscript is structured as an itemization of demagogic propaganda devices. In the first break with the simplicity of the popular manual format, Adorno expands the number of devices/tricks to over 30, albeit while maintaining the colloquial naming of each device.

The second break with the Lees' approach is the expansion of discussion to include explicitly psychological—chiefly psychoanalytic—dimensions. These additional dimensions are sometimes framed as implicit critiques of the Lees' devices. Thus in the case of the one-sided monopolization of sourcing that characterizes "card stacking," Adorno also provides a commentary on the Lees' elaboration of a characteristic usage of this device by Coughlin—what the Lees call "Coughlin's 'defense mechanism' theory."⁴⁹ By this is meant Coughlin's claim that Nazism itself constituted a defense mechanism against communism, which in turn is presented antisemitically as the product of a Jewish conspiracy. So the trick here is a discourse "stacked" in favor of the Nazi narrative. Adorno effectively divides this device into two: the "sheep and buck device" and "the persecuted innocence device." The former refers to the "black vs white" polarity identified by the Lees that is essential to card stacking. The reliance on such "stereotypy," as Adorno called it, played a major role in *The*

Authoritarian Personality as a key indicator for the identification of potential fascists.⁵⁰ Here, it is tied to the “persecuted innocence” device and the Lees’ account of Coughlin’s “defense mechanism theory” which seeks to “rationalize aggressiveness under the guise of self-defense.” This is made possible by appealing to a sadistic tendency that lacks a specific object:

In this connection, psychoanalysis has shown that the aggressive, sadistic tendencies to which Fascist propaganda appeals do not clearly differentiate between the aggressor and the victim. . . . In the last analysis, such an interchangeability makes it possible to blame the prospective victim for the very same crime one wants to commit oneself. By “projection” one unconsciously makes events appear real which exist only in one’s own imagination.⁵¹

Relying in part on Erich Fromm’s prior research, Adorno regarded the “sado-masochistic character,” who defers to those above and is hostile to those below, as the most potentially receptive to fascist propaganda.⁵² Of more specific pertinence, however, is the introduction of the psychoanalytic concept of false projection: the attribution (usually unconscious) to another of qualities of one’s self. Horkheimer and Adorno’s most famous work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, included a section devoted to the concerns of *Studies in Prejudice*, “Elements of Anti-Semitism.” Its period of drafting overlapped with that of Adorno’s demagogue study.⁵³ In “Elements,” false projection is coupled with paranoia as the psychological centerpiece of the modern demagogue’s practice, most obviously in the form of promoting conspiracisms. The details of the demagogue’s conspiratorial vilifications are thus often unwitting self-descriptions.

While “Elements” was composed in a challengingly hyperbolic style, Adorno fleshed out these reflections more fully and transparently in three later essays.⁵⁴ Each extends the above tentative steps toward a psychoanalytic analysis of demagogic propaganda. In this sense, they “suture” the IPA-inspired analyses of devices with a psychoanalytic framework. What is most remarkable is that *The Fine Art* is here treated as a *de facto* work of critical theory, effectively placed alongside the then-unpublished FISR work of Lowenthal, Paul Massing, and Adorno. The explicit reference is the following: “The devices pointed out in McClung Lee’s book on Father Coughlin, such as the band wagon idea or the testimony trick, implying the support of famous or successful people, are only elements of a much farther-reaching pattern of behavior.”⁵⁵

Because of the standing that *The Fine Art* is granted, this is also a criticism of the preliminary work of the FISR on demagogic propaganda. The “larger pattern” emerges from reconsideration of the characterization of propaganda as “irrational.” Thus, the evidence makes plain to Adorno that:

It does not employ discursive logic but is rather, particularly in oratorical exhibitions, what might be called an organized flight of ideas. The relation between premises and inferences is replaced by a linking-up of ideas resting on mere similarity, often through association by employing the same characteristic word in two propositions which are logically quite unrelated.⁵⁶

We are still on the terrain of devices—notably that of (associational) transference—but questions of composition and reception are now also drawn in. Thus:

... anti-Semitic propaganda is by no means altogether irrational. ... We know, above all, that fascist propaganda, with all its twisted logic and fantastic distortions, is consciously planned and organized. ... it is applied rather than spontaneous irrationality, a kind of psychotechnics ...⁵⁷

“Psychotechnics” is a term Adorno repurposed from Weimar industrial psychology, here applied to rationalized consumption.⁵⁸ In one of the most striking of Adorno’s “suturing” essays, he continues the (auto-)critique of the isolated analysis of devices:

So far, only the detached and in a way isolated nature of each device has been given scientific attention; the psychoanalytic connotations of the devices have been stressed and elaborated. Now that the elements have been cleared up sufficiently, the time has come to focus attention on the psychological system as such—and it may not be entirely accidental that the term summons the association of paranoia—which comprises and begets these elements. This seems to be the more appropriate since otherwise the psychoanalytic interpretation of the individual devices will remain somewhat haphazard and arbitrary.⁵⁹

Psychotechnics—understood as the rationalized irrationality of the demagogue-follower dynamic—designated that broader frame required to avoid overly concentrating on “haphazard and arbitrary” interpretation of individual devices. Adorno found a suitable schema for the comprehensive account of demagogic psychotechnics in Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.⁶⁰ The demagogue’s narcissism enabled a mode of identification with a figure who appeared to be an enlarged version of the follower’s own ego. Crucially, this was not an elitist “crowd psychology”—reliant on a “primitive” group unconscious or similar—but a set of convergent individual pathways for each subject. A device like Adorno’s “Great Little Man” exemplifies this. The demagogue presents as “he who walks in the same path as other folks but who finally is to be revealed as the savior.” His appeals for donations so point to both his identifiably ordinary financial struggles and his admirably grand purpose.⁶¹

Yet psychotechnics also implicated the culture industry, as it was its branches—broadcasting in particular—that rendered the apparent spontaneity of the demagogue’s performance into forms of communication that transcended the temporal and spatial limits of the meeting or rally. These psychotechnical forms were later traced by Adorno in other specific (but by no means all) culture industry products.⁶²

Adorno had clearly traveled some distance from merely emulating the IPA’s seven devices or even limiting propaganda analysis to broadcast “content.” Radio technics were just as implicated. In his suturing texts he pursues a dominantly theoretical analytic framework. To this extent, he redressed what Sproule saw as a failing, albeit tactical, of the IPA’s work: “the problems of theoretical depth plaguing propaganda analysis” meant that its lack of a fully fledged theoretical articulation contributed to its loss in a “paradigm war” between critical propaganda studies and emergent communication studies. Sproule contrasts Lazarsfeld’s Princeton Project’s success with the Rockefeller Foundation with the latter’s rejection of a grant to the IPA “on the basis that the Institute’s work was not ‘unassailably scientific.’”⁶³

This framing highlights how remarkably ironic it was that Adorno, of all people, produced that missing elaborated theoretical schema for critical propaganda analysis, one so indebted to the IPA’s work that it could be read as an extension of Miller’s and the Lees’

innovations.⁶⁴ For one of the reasons that Lazarsfeld had wanted him at Princeton was because he could contribute “(a) more theoretical attitude toward the research problem.”⁶⁵ Yet, this theoretical complement also highlighted progressive propaganda critique’s relative inattention to media technics as such in its focus on the analysis of content.

While Adorno’s relationship with Lazarsfeld’s Princeton Radio Research Project had been ambivalent, he was later more openly critical of what he called “opinion research”: the “voting” studies of radio, public opinion and voting behavior that Lazarsfeld’s Columbia Bureau of Applied Social Research produced from 1944 to 1955.⁶⁶ These became hegemonic in discussions of mediated political communication, so contributing to that subfield’s focus on what I have called elsewhere “liberal normalcy,” a circumscribed conception of mediated political practice that failed to fulfill the inclusive promise of the liberal public sphere. This technocratic model of mediated democracy was thus vulnerable to populist challenges.⁶⁷

Domestic US demagogic propaganda, never comparably investigated by Lazarsfeld, had receded in this period and was bracketed out in the voting studies. The meaning of “opinion formation” became narrowed, not only to electoral voting but to the limited period of the pre-election campaign. So was forged the analogy between political voting decisions and consumer commodity choices, an assumed “commensurability of buying and politics,” as Todd Gitlin called it.⁶⁸ Objectified commodified opinion—the product of polled opinions devoid of deliberation—could so become another form of psychotechnics.

Yet, despite the social harmony assumed by the intersection of culture industry and liberal normalcy, the forms of culture industry demagoguery consolidated by Coughlin had never disappeared. They merely retreated into underground broadcasts in the wake of the USA’s belated introduction of content regulation of broadcast political communication in the late 1940s. The regulatory deficit that had enabled Coughlin was to repeat itself from the 1990s, and mediated demagoguery soon found greater prominence.⁶⁹

Epilogue: Critical Legacies and the End of Liberal Normalcy

Sproule’s neglect of *Studies in Prejudice*’s emphasis on propaganda critique is problematic. But his book was published before the general availability of Adorno’s demagoguery study in 2000, where the debt to the IPA is plainest. It also predated the renewed archival research on *Studies in Prejudice* that can be dated from Thomas Wheatland’s work in the 2000s.⁷⁰

In one of the turning points in his historical account, Sproule points to a 1943 presentation by Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton on aiding propaganda *for* the war effort as a “managerial-administrative research Pronunciamento.”⁷¹ The presentation included a call for more focused empirical research on propaganda rather than “speculation uncontrolled by empirical enquiry” that was prone to “vacuity.”⁷² Sproule interprets this passage as an attack on the tradition of progressive propaganda critique embodied by the IPA. Thus, he extrapolates, “the progressive propaganda critics were the ones slated for replacement by new recruits mustering out of Columbia’s Office of Radio Research.”⁷³

Yet the anti-speculative tone of Lazarsfeld’s comments also echoes the debate over the relation between administrative and critical research. Moreover, 1943 marked the commencement of research for *Studies in Prejudice*. As I hope has become evident in this article, these debates around propaganda research usually had (at least) three rather than two institutional players during this period. Likewise, the critical/administrative research

tension itself was far closer to the concerns of propaganda research than is usually recognized. The IPA/FISR *de facto* alliance might thus be considered to have established a critical communications research tradition that included propaganda critique rather than replaced it.

However, if we jump to the present, there is an important sense in which Sproule's comment has proven prescient. A case can be made that Lazarsfeld's legacy has had a greater influence on contemporary research on disinformation and social media than either the FISR or IPA. The greatest of these is traceable to another essay with Merton, on friendship. Most notably, its formulation of the concept of homophily—initially meaning primary social affinities of similar social status and race—was tied to mathematical modeling. This has become a major reference point in researching online social and political affiliations, especially in “big data” statistical analysis of online network “nodes” and misinformation/disinformation, including those aided by algorithms.⁷⁴

Whether such research chimes with Lazarsfeld's own priorities is worth exploring briefly. The friendship essay was consistent with a trend in Lazarsfeld's voting studies to increasingly emphasize the role of face-to-face interpersonal communication in media audience reception. The most famous moment in this shift was the development (with Elihu Katz) of the “two-step flow” model of communicative reception and the related role of “opinion leaders”—those with more familiarity with specified mediated content—who played an important role in everyday interpretative group dynamics.⁷⁵ Likewise, in another essay with Merton, Lazarsfeld challenged outright a key premise of the IPA and FISR approach to the figure of Coughlin in the same terms. He argued that Coughlin's success was due more to the face-to-face communication within local organizations of his social movement than to his broadcasts.⁷⁶ Lazarsfeld was quite wrong about the organizational strength of Coughlin's social movement.⁷⁷ Yet to the degree to which contemporary invocations of homophily in analyzing disinformation confine themselves to online communicative interaction, they would appear vulnerable to Lazarsfeld's critiques.

Lazarsfeld also assumed that propaganda remained an exceptional mode of public communication; exceptional, that is, to the liberal normalcy frame he more typically employed. Ironically, he considered the dominance of advertising-funding in the US as a likely bulwark against a propagandistic monopolization of public communication. In contrast, as we have seen, the FISR regarded its propaganda research as anticipating contingent circumstances where the full repertoire of counter-demagogic practices would be required. *The Authoritarian Personality* makes plain in its opening pages that its analysis has greatest relevance to a *potential* scenario in the US in which “such propaganda would increase in pitch and volume and come to dominate in press and radio.”⁷⁸ Such an “end” to liberal normalcy has now arrived, in part because social media corporations have employed the advertising-funded monetization of disinformation within the “ruinous competition” for user/audience numbers via algorithmic biases in content selection. The net effect, as Habermas has recently detailed in FISR terms that Adorno would have recognized, is to marginalize the traditionally hegemonic liberal public sphere.⁷⁹

Less surprisingly, the critical versus administrative research distinction has been employed in more sweeping critiques of disinformation research, focusing on its very scale, in part due to its sometime dependence on collaboration with the very social media corporations that monetize disinformation.⁸⁰ The administrative goal so becomes anything but benevolent: the legitimation of negligibly effective self-regulatory content moderation.

What then of the contemporary relevance in this context of the IPA and FISR's "de facto alliance" that I have portrayed? If we take this to mean primarily the reworking of the Miller/Lees devices into Adorno's more complex psychotechnical schema—a critical communications research program—then its potentiality is considerable. For example, it provides a striking alternative to the tendency amongst "administrative" researchers to merely replicate Silicon Valley's preferred self-descriptors, most notoriously the allegedly neutral understanding of "platform" that entails no responsibility for "content" and the related refusal of "tech" corporations to admit to being media corporations. This linguistic maneuver bears a striking similarity to the devices and tricks—and yes, psychotechnics—that Miller, Lee, and Adorno typologized.⁸¹ We can see a similar tension between "propaganda" and "disinformation."

Indeed, it is relevant too that Adorno's very coinage of "culture industry" was intended to convey a reflective shock effect (aimed then at those who regarded esthetic culture as safe from all things administered). Similar linguistic contestation of the media-communicative dimensions of "tech" would seem fundamental to counter-propaganda scholarship and practice. On a conceptual plain, the demagogic modes Adorno found within existent culture industry practices lend themselves to contemporary analogues such as "influencers." The reassertion of such a schema also challenges the "presentist" neglect of the pertinence of the social organization of "legacy" media to the contemporary democratic crisis.

The revival of interest in the IPA today has clearly arisen because a comparable need for the promotion of critical media literacy is felt to exist in the face of contemporary anti-democratic propaganda challenges. Yet, in a rare convergence of views, both Adorno and Lazarsfeld regarded challenging propaganda with truth—or "truth propaganda" as Adorno called it—to be an insufficient strategy. It is pertinent, then, that Miller's own normative schema has been called into question recently.⁸² Still, there is one feature of his framework that has escaped criticism. In 1939, *The New York Times* reported on a series of speeches at the Progressive Educators Conference concerning the threat posed by Coughlin. One speaker called for undertaking "the unpleasant task of re-defining and re-interpreting the civil liberties" in order to curb Coughlin's use of radio. It was Miller who spoke against such proposals by arguing, the *Times* reported, that "it would be foolish to suppress Father Coughlin." This view of freedom of speech was consistent with the role Miller saw for critical media literacy as the most viable counter to "bad" propaganda that was consistent with the First Amendment.⁸³

Yet, as Pickard has argued, such logics have contributed to "recurring regulatory retreat" at times of communication crises in the US.⁸⁴ We might add that most contemporary Western democracies' broadcasting systems would not have permitted programs like Coughlin's to exist at all.⁸⁵ Moreover, unlike previous such US crises and policy failures, this latest soon became global due to the extraterritorial reach of the under-regulated "platforms."

The contrast here with Adorno could not be greater. He made clear in 1953 that he regarded the US culture industry as qualitatively different from that in (West) Germany. His public intellectual work following his return to Frankfurt significantly contributed to German, and eventually European, understandings of hate speech and modes of its public regulation compatible with free speech norms. He was remarkably explicit in his recommendations that compulsory regulatory action was legitimate against such speech.⁸⁶

It is no coincidence that such “European” forms of media regulation are targets of the current Trump administration and its “big tech” allies. Perhaps the most enduring lesson of the exilic “intervention” of the FISR, then, is that propaganda critique can no longer be isolated as a US domestic issue.

Notes

1. J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Anya Schiffrin, “Fighting Disinformation in the 1930s: Clyde Miller and the Institute for Propaganda Analysis,” *International Journal of Communication* 16 (2022): 3716.
2. My subtitle is thus a partial homage to Thomas Wheatland’s conjugation in his historical work, e.g. his “Critical Theory on Morningside Heights: From Frankfurt Mandarins to Columbia Sociologists,” *German Politics & Society* 22, no. 4 (2004): 57–87.
3. Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 79–82.
4. Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 80, 78.
5. See, for example, the special issue of *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* 2(2) (2021).
6. Elizabeth Briant Lee and Alfred McClung Lee, “The Fine Art of Propaganda Analysis—Then and Now,” *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 36, no. 2 (1979): 117–127.
7. Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin’s Speeches* (NY: Harcourt Brace and Company/IPA, 1939).
8. J. Michael Sproule, “Authorship and Origins of the Seven Propaganda Devices: A research note,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2001): 138.
9. When Alfred Lee later expanded the devices to 11 in an academic article, he gave due recognition to Miller and the IPA, as he and Elizabeth did in a 1972 republication of *The Fine Art*. Clyde Miller, “Foreword,” in *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin’s Speeches*, ed. A.M. & E.B. Lee (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace and Company/IPA, 1939), x-xi; Alfred McClung Lee, “The Analysis of Propaganda: a Clinical Summary,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 2 (1945): 126–135; Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, “Introduction to the Octagon Edition,” in *The Fine Art of Propaganda* (N.Y.: Octagon Press, 1972), vii–xiv.
10. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 8; Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, Trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 11–20.
11. Max Horkheimer, ed., *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, Schriften des Instituts für Sozialforschung (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1936); and Erich Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological And Sociological Study* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1984).
12. Teachers College Drops Dr. Miller, *The New York Times*, May 8, 1948, 10.
13. Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 53ff.
14. Saul Engelbourg, “Edward A. Filene: Merchant, Civic Leader, and Jew,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (1976): 106–122; Martin Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory’s Analysis of Anti-Semitism,” *New German Critique*, no. 19 (1980): 137–149; Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
15. Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 79–80.
16. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir,” in *The Intellectual Migration*, ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969): 270–337.

17. Lazarsfeld's key statement was in the FISR's journal: "Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung/Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9, no. 1 (1941): 2–16.
18. Lazarsfeld, "Episode," 325.
19. Lazarsfeld, "Remarks," 14.
20. See, respectively: Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1950); Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda, eds., *Studies in the Scope and Method of "The Authoritarian Personality"* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954); Karen Stenner, *The Authoritarian Dynamic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Thomas B. Edsall, "The Trump Voter Paradox," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2017.
21. Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile*, 227–63. The AJC approved the seed grant at its administrative committee meeting of October 21, 1942: AJC Minutes, Executive Committee, July–December 1942: <https://ajcarchives.org/Portal/Default/en-US/RecordView/Index/4955>.
22. The other four are: Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator* (N.Y.: Harper, 1949); Paul W. Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction: A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany* (N.Y.: Harper, 1949); Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, *Dynamics of Prejudice: A Psychological and Sociological Study of Veterans* (N.Y.: Harper, 1950); and Nathan W. Ackerman and Marie Jahoda, *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (N.Y.: Harper, 1950). Although formally co-authored, I refer to *Prophets of Deceit* as a Lowenthal publication.
23. Theodor W. Adorno, "A Social Critique of Radio Music (reconstruction)," in *Adorno, Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory*, ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 134; Josh Shepperd, "Theodor Adorno, Paul Lazarsfeld, and the Public Interest Mandate of Early Communications Research, 1935–1941," *Communication Theory* 32, no. 1 (2022), 142–160.
24. Lazarsfeld, "Remarks," 3–8.
25. Brett Gary, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 85ff.
26. Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1982); Donald I. Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: Free Press, 1996).
27. *Fortune*, "Father Coughlin (pronounced Kawglin)," February (1934): 34.
28. The FISR publications tended to use "agitator" and "demagogue"—both prefaced by "fascist" when required—interchangeably. Likewise "fascist propaganda" is a typical characterization of the demagogues' oratory and related texts. Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*; Theodor W. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000 [1943]).
29. Jones, "Demagogy, Culture Industry, Psychotechnics".
30. It should be added that while Sproule did note *Prophets of Deceit's* debt to Lee, the reference is cursory and is not used to qualify his case regarding the Frankfurt School. Respectively: Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 235, 155(n83); Sproule, "Authorship," 141.
31. Alfred M. Lee, Testimonial in Support of Research Project on Anti-Semitism grant application to AJC, October 28, 1941, reproduced within: Institute For Social Research, Anti-Semitism, A Research Project of the Institute of Social Research, 1941, Na 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 664 - "Research Project on Anti-Semitism", Band 3 (p. IX 92.8–IX 100), Max Horkheimer Archive, Frankfurt-am-Main Goethe University; <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/horkheimer/content/titleinfo/5668682>.
32. Institute For Social Research, Introductory Statement, November 10, 1941, in: "Anti-Semitism, A Research Project of the Institute of Social Research," 1941, Na 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 664 - "Research Project on Anti-Semitism," Band 3 (p. IX 92.8–IX 100), Max Horkheimer Archive, Frankfurt-am-Main Goethe University, 3; <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/horkheimer/content/titleinfo/5668682>.
33. Alfred McClung Lee, "Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator" (Book Review), *Public Opinion Quarterly* 14 (1950): 347–348.
34. Lee, "Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator," 348.

35. *The Fine Art* is the first citation in *Prophets of Deceit*, where it is lauded as a “pioneering exception” to existent approaches to the agitator/demagogue. Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*: xv.
36. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 83.
37. American Jewish Committee, *Conference on Research in the Field of Anti-Semitism: Summary of Proceedings and Suggestions for a Program (May 1944)*, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1945), 2, <https://ajcarchives.org/Portal/Default/en-US/RecordView/Index/5111>.
38. The meeting was “brokered” by the host, Maurice J. Karpf (via whom Waldman also communicated his follow-up request). Christian Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research*, trans. Hella Beister (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 229.
39. The aide-mémoire was attached to a letter from Horkheimer to Waldman: “Max Horkheimer an Morris D. Waldman, New York (mit einem Aide-mémoire von Horkheimer und Adorno), December 30, 1943,” in *Gesammelte Schriften Band 17: Briefwechsel 1941–1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), 521–30.
40. Horkheimer an Morris D. Waldman, 522. The use of “totalitarian” here, some years before it was popularized by Hannah Arendt, alludes to the distinction between pre-totalitarian and totalitarian antisemitism that was adopted in the revised proposal. The former, it is argued, targets Jews exclusively and sometimes selectively while the latter uses antisemitism as a “spearhead” against more widespread elements of modern society. Cf.: Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 6; Institute For Social Research, “Anti-Semitism, A Research Project of the Institute of Social Research,” 6.
41. Horkheimer an Morris D. Waldman, 529.
42. Lee and Lee, *The Fine Art*, 22–25.
43. Indeed, Adorno employs variants of “racket” over twenty times in his demagoguery study. See Martin Jay’s detailed assessment of the rackets motif: “The Age of Rackets? Trump, Scorsese and the Frankfurt School,” in *Immanent Critiques: the Frankfurt School under pressure* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2023), 115–133.
44. Paul K. Jones, *Critical Theory and Demagogic Populism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).
45. Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile*, 247.
46. Laura B. Rosenzweig, *Hollywood’s Spies: The Undercover Surveillance of Nazis in Los Angeles* (New York: NYU Press, 2017). A similar undercover technique was later employed by Lowenthal’s “skilled stenographers” and “court reporters” sent to the demagogues’ rallies. Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, 150.
47. Rosenzweig, *Hollywood’s Spies*, 137–149. Cf. AJ Bauer, “Glittering Generalities: Reconsidering the Institute for Propaganda Analysis,” *International Journal of Communication* 18 (2024): 1986.
48. Horkheimer an Morris D. Waldman, 527.
49. Lee and Lee, *The Fine Art*, 97–99.
50. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, 228.
51. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas’ Radio Addresses*, 12.
52. Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (N.Y.: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).
53. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 137–72. On the provenance of “Elements of Anti-Semitism,” see the detailed discussions in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 74, 190–192 n206-211.
54. Theodor W. Adorno, “Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda,” in *Anti-Semitism: A Social Disease*, ed. Ernst Simmel (Madison, Wisconsin: International Universities Press, 1946), 125–137; Theodor W. Adorno, “Democratic Leadership and Mass Manipulation,” in *Studies in Leadership: Leadership and Democratic Action*, ed. Alvin W. Gouldner (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 418–438; and Theodor W. Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences* 3 (1951), 279–300.

55. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 135.
56. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 129–130.
57. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 130.
58. Paul K. Jones, "Demagogy, Culture Industry, Psychotechnics: The Authoritarian Personality as Media Reception Framework," in *Die Wiederkehr des autoritären Charakters: Transatlantische Perspektiven* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2022): 15–41.
59. Adorno, "Freudian Theory," 280.
60. Adorno, "Freudian Theory," 281ff; Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. James Strachey (London: The International Psychoanalytical Press, 1922).
61. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 19–20.
62. The most explicit such case study is: Theodor W. Adorno, "The Stars Down to Earth: *The Los Angeles Times* Astrology Column, A Study in Secondary Superstition," *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* 2 (1957): 19–88.
63. J. Michael Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science: The Rise and Fall of the Critical Paradigm," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 1 (1987): 71; cf. Schiffrin, "Fighting Disinformation in the 1930s: Clyde Miller and the Institute for Propaganda Analysis," 3716.
64. Sproule also presents Lee's later work as such a needed theorization: Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 155.
65. Lazarsfeld to Adorno, November 29, 1937, Horkheimer Archiv, Lazarsfeld Korrespondenz. Blatt 181f; cited in Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences*, 177.
66. Theodor W. Adorno, "Opinion Research and Publicness (Meinungsforschung und Öffentlichkeit 1964)," *Sociological Theory* 23, no. 1 (2005): 120–123; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944); Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955). Lazarsfeld's Office of Radio Research moved from Princeton to Columbia in 1939. It was succeeded by The Bureau of Applied Social Research in 1944.
67. Paul K. Jones, "Demagogic Populism and Media System: A Preliminary Articulation." *European Journal of Communication* 36, no. 6 (2021): 593–609.
68. Todd Gitlin, "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm," *Theory and Society* 6, no. 2 (1978): 214.
69. Paul K. Jones, "Demagogic Populism and U.S. Culture Industries: A Long Tradition." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 35, no. 1 (2016): 11–28.; Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?: Cold war right-wing broadcasting and the public interest* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).
70. Wheatland, "Critical Theory on Morningside Heights: From Frankfurt Mandarins to Columbia Sociologists"; Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile*.
71. Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 246.
72. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Studies in Radio and Film Propaganda," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 6, no. 2 Series II (1943): 59.
73. Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, 246
74. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Friendship as Social Process: A Substantive and Methodological Analysis," in *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, ed. Morroe Berger, Theodore Abel, and Charles H. Page (New York: D. van Nostrand, 1954), 18–66. The essay takes the form of a *de facto* dialogue between Merton's "substantive" analysis and Lazarsfeld's "formal" one. Cf., e.g.: Robert Ackland and Jamsheed Shorish, "Political Homophily on the Web," in *Analyzing Social Media Data and Web Networks*, ed. Marta Cantijoch, Rachel Gibson, and Stephen Ward (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 25–46; Petter Törnberg, "Echo Chambers and Viral Misinformation: Modeling fake news as complex contagion," *PLOS ONE* 13, no. 9: e0203958. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0203958> (2018).
75. Katz and Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence*.

76. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action," in *The Communication of Ideas: A Series of Addresses*, ed. Lyman Bryson (Institute for Religious and Social Studies/Harper, 1948), 115.
77. Cf. Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*, 175–79.
78. *The Authoritarian Personality*, 7.
79. Philip M. Napoli, *Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 2023).
80. Christian Fuchs, "From Digital Positivism and Administrative Big Data Analytics Towards Critical Digital and Social Media Research!" *European Journal of Communication* 32, no. 1 (2017): 37–49; Aman Abhishek, "Overlooking the Political Economy in the Research on Propaganda," *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* 2, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-61>.
81. For a useful dismantling, see: Philip M. Napoli and Robyn Caplan, "Why Media Companies Insist They're not Media Companies, Why They're Wrong, and Why It Matters," *First Monday* 22, no. 5 (2017), <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/7051/6124>.
82. Bauer, "Glittering Generalities."
83. "Calls Coughlin 'National Menace': Unitarian Minister Likens the Priest to Hitler in Perpetrating a 'Gigantic Hoax,'" *The New York Times*, February 26, 1939; Elisabeth Fondren, "'We are Propagandists for Democracy': The Institute for Propaganda Analysis' Pioneering Media Literacy Efforts to Fight Disinformation (1937–1942)," *American Journalism* 38, no. 3 (2021): 266–67.
84. Victor Pickard, "The Return of the Nervous Liberals: Market Fundamentalism, Policy Failure, and Recurring Journalism Crises," *The Communication Review* 18, no. 2 (2015): 82–97.
85. Napoli, *Social Media and the Public Interest*.
86. "Prologue to Television (1953)," in *Adorno, Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, ed. and trans. Henry W. Pickford (NY: Columbia UP, 1998); *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, trans. Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity, 2020).

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