



## Erich Fromm's Courage

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The duty of an intellectual, as I understand it, entails a commitment to resisting power. This principle amounts to the proposition that it behooves freethinkers to oppose, as a matter of principle, whatever current fashions might dictate. It has always appalled me how, both in academic life as well as in the outside world, most people seem so apt to worship blindly that which is currently established. This sort of enslavement may make some sort of sense for those who stand to gain, in terms of self-interest, by following the dominant trends in society. But for individuals who are supposed to be devoted to the life of the mind, endorsing any aspects of the status quo amounts to a special sort of degradation. Intellectual life, as I see it, is a secularized priestly calling. And therefore I treasure such programmatic statements as can be found in books like Julien Benda's *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, or Raymond Aron's *The Opium of the Intellectuals*. And while I think that Fromm would doubtless have been unhappy, on political grounds, for me to link him with Aron's work, since Aron directed his polemic at the way Marxism could attract so many otherwise highly cultivated French thinkers, what I have to say would seem to me in keeping with the dominant thrust of what I take to be the essential spirit of Fromm's teachings.

Although many of my writings have been about Freud and those thinkers who considered themselves loyal to the movement he started, I have also been especially concerned with the fate of the analysts who were stigmatized as so-called deviants. Freud made no bones about calling both Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, for example, „heretics.“ In light-hearted moments Freud found no difficulty, de-spite all his proclamations as a scientist, in likening himself to the

Pope, even if he surely knew that his was a new Church, one that was explicitly opposed to traditional religions. Fromm makes an interesting exception to most generalizations connected with alleged dissidents from the mainstream of psychoanalysis. For on the one hand, like others who have caused trouble for the prevailing powers-that-be in psychoanalysis, Fromm insisted that he was singularly faithful to the true meaning of Freud's message; Fromm thought he was genuinely psychoanalytic while he believed those who invoked Freud's legacy, within the International Psychoanalytic Association and its affiliates, for example, were actually false to the truest implications of Freud's heritage. At the same time Fromm took some pains to distance himself, for example, from Jung, Freud's most notorious enemy, who founded a dissident school of analysis. And yet Fromm became, in his own lifetime, one of those underdogs whom I think it should be the job of intellectuals to accord special credit for the kind of accomplishments he was able to achieve.

In my own adulthood Fromm's reputation has under-gone a dramatic change. It was while I was taking a government department honors tutorial at Harvard College in my sophomore year, 1955-56, that I first read Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*. At that time nobody could be considered well educated in the social sciences without having absorbed Fromm's argument in that text and I think that *Escape from Freedom* remains a momentous contribution in twentieth century intellectual life. The commercial success the book had must have done much, I suppose, to have offended some of Fromm's former allies at the Frankfurt school of critical sociology, which had moved to New York City temporarily during World War II, since they were less



successful than Fromm in being able to articulate an argument that could appeal to the broad reading public.

Like others, such as today's most resolutely systematic popularizing defender of Freudian orthodoxy, Peter Gay, I was initially attracted to psychoanalysis by Fromm's writings. As far as I can recall, I was reading Fromm's many books long before I studiously set out to read Freud himself, although I had been assigned Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) in my first year as an undergraduate in an introduction course to political philosophy. At one time I could be certain that I had read everything by Fromm, at least all that had been translated into English. I whisked through his book *Sigmund Freud's Mission* when it first came out in 1959, although I am afraid at the time I did not believe some of his critique of Freud. My skepticism about Fromm's argument, I hope, can be traced to the way in which, as the years passed, Fromm was increasingly tempted to make Marx into a hero (Fromm 1961), while I had always been dubious about Marx's standing in Western thought. Max Weber, and in particular his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, had an early appeal to me because of his insistence on the independent force of religious ideas, and in general the power of the mind to affect the course of history. Marx's insistence on the inevitability of class struggle seemed to me alien to the world as I had experienced it, and then Fromm appeared bent on humanizing some of Marxism's most revolutionary features.

Although I was dubious about parts of the thesis in *Sigmund Freud's Mission*, it was not long before I began reading for myself Ernest Jones's three volume biography of Freud. At the time, the early 1960s, Jones's detailed account of Freud's life and ideas seemed enormously seductive, and hard to challenge. Jones constructed an edifice that has attracted many besides myself, and Jones, an expert in power-seeking, knew the force that historical legend could exert. I later found out that some famous orthodox analysts, in New York City for instance, were grateful to the successful political act that Jones had accomplished through his biography.

It took me some time to appreciate the cen-

tral weaknesses in Jones's approach. An orthodox analyst like Robert Waelder (1963) had known enough to wade in and write an article against Fromm's *Sigmund Freud's Mission*. Jones's saga, in the meantime, appeared incontrovertible. It was only when I undertook to do my own interviewing, in the mid-1960s, of those people still living who had had personal contact with Freud, that the blinders I had once had started to dissipate, and I could absorb the full merits of Fromm's position about Freud. By the time Fromm sent me a personally inscribed copy of *Sigmund Freud's Mission*, with an acknowledgement of what I had accomplished with my 1969 *Brother Animal: The Story of Freud and Tausk* (Roazen 1990a), I understood how successful Fromm had been so early on in pulling the rug out from under Jones's version of Freud.

When I met Fromm in 1966, he was a relatively isolated figure within the world of psychoanalysis. It was paradoxical that it was in the radical days of the late 1960s that Fromm's reputation among North American intellectuals began its serious slump. The more successful Fromm became in running rings around official psychoanalysis and the better he was able to appeal to general readers, the easier it became to write him off as a popular preacher, a psychoanalytic Norman Vincent Peale.

In the hindsight appropriate to the history of ideas, Fromm deserves full acknowledgment for being one of the earliest to have raised some of the key, even if elementary-seeming, questions about Freud's work. Fromm undertook a psychoanalytic exploration of Freud's life, in the course of his short text on Freud's „mission“; Jones, with all his invaluable documentary material, had been able to evade an objective appraisal of Freud's psyche. Fromm, for example, asked some deep questions about Freud's relation to his mother, a subject that has still received an inadequate amount of attention in the vast literature about the creator of psychoanalysis. I doubt that Fromm knew some of the minutiae about Freud's life, for example that he had failed to attend his mother's funeral in Vienna and had stayed home that day writing letters; Freud sent his daughter Anna to the ceremony as his „representative,“ just as she had gone to



Frankfurt to accept the Goethe Prize in Freud's behalf. Freud was also late for his father's funeral, another detail I suspect Fromm may have ignored; but Fromm had the brains to detect that Freud's complex tie to his mother was something that Jones neglected to explore, even though that key relationship necessarily had to be an essential constituent of Freud's whole psychology.

Fromm's courage seems to me the most obvious at-tribute of his contribution. The large number of Fromm's works that are in print around the world indicates that Fromm's courage has paid off. In contrast, Erik H. Erikson, an analyst who was terribly fearful of being ex-communicated from the movement and temperamentally given to having only the most elusive confrontations with Freud, has not fared nearly as well with the general population. Erikson was enormously talented as a psychologist (Roazen 1975, 1976a,b, 1980, 1992c). And yet the cautious way Erikson expressed himself, with the exquisite care he took in distinguishing his own work from Freud's, meant that Erikson has been in a slump of his own in recent times. Erikson was determined not to have his own work associated with that of Fromm, despite the similarities in their using social science as a corrective to Freud's framework, and Erikson would have been unhappy to have been mentioned in association with Fromm. But Fromm's outspokenness, and the courage he showed in constructing his own theoretical system, has meant that his writings are today accessible, in Spanish, Italian, German, and French, as well as in English, in a way that Erikson's books are not.

By the time I met Fromm in 1966 he was seemingly detached from the outside world. When I traveled to see him, he was not even available in Mexico City, and I went to visit him in Cuernavaca. Yet millions of people are still reading his works today; no other psychoanalyst's writings, around the world, are still as accessible to airport bookstore browsers. And yet these books are studied not as class assignments in schools or training institutes; nor does Fromm's audience depend on whatever prestige may be associated with lining office bookshelves with „official“ authors-that explains why so many psychoanalytic texts are bought even if

they remain unread. Furthermore, Fromm's capacity to achieve his success, such that it has been outside of most official psychoanalytic circles, is all the more remarkable in that he was for the most part not writing in his native language.

At the time I met Fromm, vicious stories were circulating about him in North America. One famous neo-Freudian analyst in New York City said that Fromm was then inhabiting a palace carved out of stone outside Mexico City. In fact Fromm lived in circumstances that were modest, certainly as compared with the lavish Park Avenue apartment my informant enjoyed. One relatively emancipated Toronto analyst, who at the time was probably earning about 300,000 Canadian dollars a year thanks to a lavish provincial insurance system that subsidized analysis for an unlimited amount of time, not only thought of Fromm as immensely rich, but also maintained that Fromm was „quietly going mad“ in Mexico.

Today psychoanalysis in North America has long since been eclipsed by the many advances that have taken place in so-called biological psychiatry. If I were a young man now, instead of being as concerned about the abuses of power within psychoanalysis as I was then, I would probably be making a study of contemporary psychiatrists, for, with a naive commitment to the possibility of making exact-sounding diagnoses, they are capable of perpetrating the kinds of misuse of scientific authority that took place around the turn of the century before Freud's revolution in ideas got under way.

Fromm's interest in asking the most fundamental questions, and his conviction that Freud had not been radical enough, meant that Fromm was able, starting in the 1930s, to tease out some of the central moral and philosophic bases of Freud's outlook. Fromm was shrewd as a Marxist in spotting the middle class liberal premises Freud took for granted. At the same time Fromm shared Freud's belief, especially as expressed in Freud's post-1923 cancer-ridden phase, that psychoanalysis had succeeded in attaining the status of being a neutral scientific body of knowledge. We now know that despite Freud's protests about being compared with traditional philosophers, even as a young man



he was far better acquainted with philosophy, and more sophisticated, than one might have imagined. I am told that in Freud's library in London there is a book of Kant's with Freud's marginalia in it, despite the fact that there is scarcely even now, with all that has been written about Freud, anything to speak of about his links with someone like Kant.

Fromm's special contribution as a psychologist was to be concerned with understanding the social forces that both stabilize as well as undermine society. Freud had looked on society chiefly as the individual's enemy. But Fromm was interested in the problem of social change, and how such sociological issues can be understood in the light of depth psychology. Fromm's concern here was not just a theoretical one, although his abstract contributions as a thinker were remarkable. For in his last years he helped coauthor a fascinating study of Mexican peasantry, *Social Character in A Mexican Village* (Fromm and Maccoby 1970), which shows how Fromm was able to think through concrete problems afresh. His posthumously published *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, which only appeared in English in 1984, illustrates how he had always possessed an empirical dimension to his thinking, even though he has so often been accused of merely being a moralist. Freud too had a rabbi's voice in him, but had a way of camouflaging it so that at least for a time in North America the intelligentsia swallowed the line that he was primarily a scientist.

Fromm naturally had his predecessors within psychoanalysis, and Wilhelm Reich may be perhaps the most notable among those who tried to unite Marxist and Freudian thinking. Reich has, however, because of his unfortunate last years, tended to be almost eliminated from the orthodox history of the development of Freudian thinking. As in Stalinist historiography, which rewrote the past to exclude the contributions of someone like Trotsky, so Reich's key role within the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society has been obscured by simply omitting to mention his work or even his name (Roazen 1990b). Reich's attack on the role of patriarchal family structure in mobilizing oedipal reactions, and his yearnings for a utopian society in which the worst constraints of middle class family life

would be lifted, so that a new and nonneurotic humanity might arise, seemed serious enough for Freud to have sat down to write *Civilization and Its Discontents* as a warning against Reich's sort of thinking.

Fromm's reputation has suffered from different sources than those that have undermined Reich's contributions, which include notable work by Reich on negative transferences, the role of nonverbal communications, and the problem of so-called technique in psychoanalytic therapy. Orthodox Freudians not only succeeded in wiping Reich off the map of the history of modern psychology, but they nearly managed to efface Fromm's work as well. Once Fromm was dead, it no longer seemed necessary to carry on diatribes against him; but I was amazed, for instance, when my collection *Sigmund Freud* (Roazen 1987) first appeared in 1973, containing an article by Fromm, how much of the review in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* was taken up with an assault on Fromm.

After Fromm's death in 1980 he necessarily became less menacing to orthodoxy. Certain psychoanalytic journals, which have been known to reject advertisements for books by „deviants,“ now began to accept money from publishers of Fromm's books. Thanks to the feminist movement, and a reconsideration of Freud's alleged ideas about female psychology, Karen Horney's works crept back into the bibliographies of papers that appear in official psychoanalytic quarterlies. It may still be the case that it would be unwise, if one is to get a paper accepted by an orthodox psychoanalytic journal, to list too many citations to the works of someone like Jacques Lacan, but then he is a current-day danger, and his followers still a threat to the International Psychoanalytic Association, whereas Horney is no longer deemed such a terrible problem.

Fromm's standing has suffered not just from the most fanatical Freudians, but there are other modern Ayatollahs as well in Fromm's case, die-hard Marxist hardliners have been determined to dismiss Fromm as a so-called social democrat. In certain circles such a designation is as damning as it would be for someone to be called a Jungian in the New York Psychoanalytic Society,



or to acknowledge an indebtedness to Franz Alexander in Chicago. The school of self psychology, initiated by Heinz Kohut, came to be deemed by Anna Freud as antipsychoanalytic; but Kohut, one of the leaders in trying to thaw out the rigidities of classical analysis, would have shied away from being linked with the dissidence of either Jung or Alexander. Fromm had to deal with the same sort of sectarianism not only within psychoanalysis, but from embattled Marxists as well. It is still true in Canada, for example, that the standing of Theodor Adorno, who disapproved of his former ally Fromm, rides high; and Adorno's friend Herbert Marcuse published a famous critique of Fromm. Despite Fromm's (1958) telling response to Marcuse's failure to understand the therapeutic side of Freudian thinking, Fromm's rebuttal of Marcuse's indictment has still not attained the currency it deserves (Howe 1958, Roazen 1987).

Fromm, when I saw him, acknowledged that at one point he had himself been an orthodox Freudian, although his withdrawal from that sort of thinking was unclouded by any problems with Freud personally, since Fromm had had no contact with Freud. Nonetheless it is hard to believe that Fromm could easily forget how his *Escape from Freedom* had once been denounced as a betrayal—all hell broke loose over his innovating ideas. Karl Menninger, who wrote a blistering review of the book, tried to maintain in his last years that he could not remember what could have separated him from neo-Freudians like Horney, and Menninger even tried to cover his tracks by writing flatteringly to Thomas Szasz. (The kind of hatred Szasz could inspire took even Marcuse's breath away.) But Menninger had, on the appearance of *Escape from Freedom*, done his best to discredit Fromm publicly. Horney, along with Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Clara Thompson, formed the psychoanalytic Left; people like Abram Kardiner, Sandor Rado, and Alexander were on the identical side of the antiestablishmentarian fence.

But left-wingers are notoriously difficult to hold together organizationally, and each of these people tended unnecessarily to differentiate their own publications from those of others. I suppose it is the fate of brave pioneers to have special difficulty in hanging together. Still, it is

appalling in retrospect to find Alexander criticizing Horney; and Fromm himself, who may well have later regretted tarring Otto Rank's use of „will“ with fascism, looks from a Rankian perspective now as someone who did not hesitate on occasion to stoop to conquer.

Had Fromm ever functioned as part of a prestigious research university, his work would never have been as underrated as it is now; this attractive hypothesis has been advanced by as acute an observer as David Riesman.

Yet although Fromm was outside the mainstream, and in her lifetime Helene Deutsch was very much a part of it, both of them were capable of taking the identical view of the writings of Otto Fenichel. Deutsch told me she thought Fenichel's famous textbook was the „cancer“ of psychoanalysis, and Fromm too thought that Fenichel, one of his opponents over *Escape from Freedom*, engaged in a kind of obsessive theorizing that meant the end of psychoanalysis.

Fromm in his lifetime was notable for his not being afraid to be alone, even in the face of the worst threats of heresy-hunting. And he generalized about how difficult it was for most people to risk his own kind of solitude. Fromm told me that he had had a „brief“ orthodox phase, from about 1926 until 1935; yet if one examines some of his papers in the early 1930s the seeds of later ideological trouble are already discernible. When I talked with Fromm, I tried to press him to elucidate in writing what the implications of his ideas were for practical issues connected with the conduct of psychoanalytic therapy. Fromm said he was going to do a book-length work on the matter, but never fulfilled that objective.

Freud, too, had not wanted to write much about technique, and I think only got into the subject in order to differentiate his approach from that of Adler and Jung (Roazen 1975, 1992a). Students have an excessive need for certainty and leap at every chance to be given rules and guidelines. Freud had not initiated the idea of training analyses; that represents a contribution of Jung, who doubtless thought that Freud's lack of being personally analyzed helped account for the kinds of troubles Jung had had with him. Only after Freud was already sick did didactic analysis become standard training for



future analysts, even if in Paris today there are prominent analysts who want to do away with the practice of training analyses. Lacan's seemingly arbitrary ways of proceeding in certifying people as analysts is not really so different from Freud's own habit of personally anointing those to be sanctioned within the profession as qualified to treat patients. (For all the Lacanian interest in experimenting with time, little seems to be remembered about what Alexander had to say on the subject; nor was Alexander aware of how much he owed to Jung, although heresy-hunters would have been delighted to associate Alexander with the Jungian „deviation.“)

Before almost anyone else, Jung had gone to some lengths to show why the use of the couch had authoritarian implications; yet few in Paris today, for example, seem aware of the possible drawbacks to its therapeutic use. Fromm told me that he simply thought that the couch was not „helpful,“ and he preferred having the patient sit in a chair. The problem with the couch, according to Fromm, is that „nothing happens“ therapeutically, and here Fromm turned to discuss his own „unsuccessful“ analysis with Hans Sachs. Fromm never mentioned to me any other analysis that he underwent except that one with Sachs, although one researcher has now concluded that Fromm had something of a record in having had some four other analysts (Haynal and Falzeder 1994).

Fromm thought that Sachs had excelled in making „ludicrous“ interpretations. (Helene Deutsch told me she thought Sachs was a poor therapist; she readily acknowledged how many of his analysands seemed to appreciate him, but she felt it was apt to be at the expense of their relationship toward Freud.) Fromm said he was obliged by the injunction to free associate to be „conscientious,“ and expressed from the couch just what sort of animal (a pig) Sachs reminded him of. Actually, Fromm said, Sachs bore more exact resemblance to an owl. But Sachs had responded to Fromm's observation by insisting that Fromm's hanging his coat on a peg right beside Sachs's coat belied Fromm's own negative-sounding words. But Fromm insisted to me that such an interpretation made no sense, since realistically there was nowhere else in the room to put his coat.

Fromm had met Sachs in later years when Sachs was established as the first training analyst in Boston. At that point Sachs had both a servant and a butler, the first butler Fromm had ever seen, or Sachs either according to Fromm. In those days, Sachs had an abundance of WASP upper-class patients, and Helene Deutsch told me how when she had moved to Boston, becoming the second training analyst there, Sachs had moaned about the difficulty of trying to conduct analysis without using rabbi stories. After about a year, Deutsch ran into him again and asked how he was doing without the rabbi tales; fine, Sachs said, he changed the rabbi into a minister, thereby „baptizing“ the jokes. Humor was an essential aspect of Freud's and Fromm's own therapeutic practice, although little is written about this aspect of their therapeutic approaches.

Since I had been trained as a political scientist, and Fromm understood what sort of field work I was then conducting, he encouraged me to try and find out „where the power lay“ within the psychoanalytic movement. (Although much has been written about the so-called secret committee around Freud, I do not think he ever yielded the mantle of the authority of psychoanalytic leadership.) Fromm's wife, who sat in on our interviews (and I seem to remember cats wandering around), wondered aloud where on earth the New York analysts had gotten their technique from, since the aim of neutrality and distance seemed so foreign to how Freud himself had proceeded. Her question was an excellent one, which I have thought about a lot. I concluded later that the Americans had come to Vienna in Freud's sick phase, and identified with the relatively distant, detached, dying Freud. But there was also hypocritical disguising of what Freud had actually been like (Roazen 1990c), and this shared secret became a powerful bond among Freud's loyal disciples.

Fromm, when I saw him, was astonished to hear about the change that had taken place in Anna Freud. He recalled her as a modest, shy, and retiring person, and Fromm seemed to have little idea about the political power she was capable of wielding. He knew that London had been responsible for himself being dropped as a direct member of the International Psychoana-



lytic Association, but somehow he did not link this expulsion with Anna Freud herself. He correctly perceived that there had been a „court“ around Freud, and Fromm wanted to be sure that I found out who were the most important figures there. (Although I have not examined the letters at the Library of Congress between Waelder and Anna Freud, it is a safe bet that his attack on Fromm got directly sent to her.)

Fromm mentioned Freud's mother's dream, which was reported by Lancelot Whyte, about the death of her famous son Sigmund. When I contacted Whyte, he was not certain whether it had been a „dream“ of the old woman's or a waking vision; in any event Fromm made the shrewd point that when Freud's mother described how she had visualized the major heads of state of the European countries standing around her eldest son's casket, she was revealing a curious conception of him, and of herself. For how many mothers, and Jewish ones at that, if they had had such a fantasy, would have allowed that calamity to cross their lips? Freud's mother obviously had an image of Freud as a powerful warrior, one that he himself shared; so that when he took the night train to London in 1938, old and sick, still he dreamt that he was arriving at the same place in England as William the Conqueror in 1066. Fromm had his own prophetic streak, which may have helped sensitize him to this side of Freud. And Fromm also had a special interest in exploring the primal tie to mothers, and how it can be coped with.

From Fromm's point of view, Freud's strongest point had been his „honesty,“ but I think this is rather harder to discuss than Fromm might have thought. Fromm was after all a representative of old German culture, whereas Freud remained a Viennese to his fingertips. For Viennese, I am convinced, truth-telling was a complex matter, and Austrians rather sneakier than Germans. I am re-minded of a story told me by a bookseller in pre-World War II Vienna when in 1938, after the Anschluss, he found that the concierge was flying a Nazi-party flag. This seemed a surprising partisan affiliation, so the concierge then took the Viennese bookseller up to his apartment; he opened a closet that was full of the party flags of every possible political group, from the monarchists to all the left-wing

organizations. Whoever had come out on top would have been celebrated with an appropriate flag. One cannot exactly see that as old Viennese dishonesty, since none of them were, by North American standards, straight shooters. Freud could talk out of both sides of his mouth, sending praise to an author while simultaneously asking a disciple to tear the author's book to pieces (Roazen 1992a). Freud's subtle capacities for artistic inventiveness turn up in the way he fashioned his case histories, which is likely to seem to many contemporaries now as falseness and an unscientific example of rhetorical partisanship.

Freud, as Felix Deutsch admitted privately, was a great „fighter,“ and I think he had a complicated set of weapons at his disposal. Freud's disappointment with Jung meant that he never got over the loss of that most talented of all his students, and as one of Freud's pupils once remarked to me, all Freud's writings have to be understood in the light of the opponents he was trying to rebut. Kurt R. Eissler, like Freud before him, collected a set of his own stated „war plans.“ And Fromm himself could be embattled. He told me how Jung had been a „destructive“ force, and Fromm knew all about the most unfortunate sides of Jung's politics in the 1930s (Roazen 1991).

But as knowledgeable as Fromm could be, he seemed to have little precise information about Jung's private life, or any of the involvements with his patients that we have subsequently learned so much about. Fromm did know exactly who in Switzerland had immediately denounced Jung's collaboration with the Nazis in Germany. One of Jung's enduring contributions, despite his politics, was his interest in being more explicit in linking psychology and philosophy. Here Fromm aimed to be himself more systematic, and Jung, rather similarly to Erikson, was temperamentally, and perhaps culturally, incapable of the kind of theoretical clarity that Fromm was so good at.

I think that what Freud had going for him, and helped him prevail against all his opponents, was not just that he was such a masterful writer, but that he succeeded in getting his own version of events, without contradiction, into the history books. Only years later, for example,



long after their historic falling out, did Jung mention in a seminar in the 1920s what had happened between himself and Freud, and that text did not subsequently come into print until 1989 (Jung 1989). Freud had a powerful sense of history, a sense that Fromm also shared, which is what prompted him bravely to contradict Jones's version of Freud. (At that time, when Jones's books were widely being hailed as definitive, only Bettelheim was willing to state publicly that Jones had failed to be properly psychoanalytic [Roazen 1992b].) Fromm also published a Fore-word to Helen Puner's 1947 *Sigmund Freud*, a strikingly prescient early biography (Puner 1992).

My historical work can be seen as fleshing out some points that Fromm had early on understood on the basis of his theoretical convictions. As courageous as Fromm had been in challenging Jones, Fromm was unaware of the degree of hanky-panky that has afflicted Freud's texts. It turns out that not only had Freud's letters been tampered with, at least up until the time I published the unedited version of Freud's comments to Lou Andreas-Salome after Tausk's suicide, but even the published versions of Freud's writings have also been altered, when it suited his students to do so. It is not only the case that most of Freud's correspondence has to be republished someday, but texts now in the Library of Congress indicate that passages have been cut from papers of Freud's that are treated as canonical in the professional literature. Readers should be alerted that unless something appeared in Freud's lifetime, it is likely that changes have been introduced by his heirs after his death. Freud's letters are now appearing uncut, starting with the Freud-Jung correspondence in 1974. But we are only now learning about how his other texts have been tampered with (Grubrich-Simitis 1993). Freud's 'Project' for a scientific psychology, his „Outline of Psychoanalysis,“ as well as a posthumous paper on the occult and telepathy all show signs of dubious editorial practices.

The aim of retranslating all Freud in English, however, seems to me a hopelessly misguided undertaking; the French translations of Freud, which are still not complete, have dragged into his works all sorts of words that have not been

used for centuries. Worse still, purism about translations, which are inevitably an act of interpretation, is apt to reinforce the idea that what we have with Freud is a new gospel. Instead of treating what Freud said as holy writ, it seems to me better to acknowledge that on central points he could be wrong. Here Fromm was one of the most important of Freud's critics, and fixing up translations, and reediting Freud's writings, is not capable of correcting some more central problems—just where Freud could be mistaken.

Fromm stoutly maintained that he himself did not believe in „kowtowing“ to free associations. He reported how in Berlin, during the time Fromm was active there, it was commonly discussed how important it could be, from the therapists' point of view, to analyze dreams that analysts had when they fell asleep during sessions with patients. Fromm implied not only that analysts could get bored, but that such nonsense of trying to find the psychological significance in the content of the dreams of delinquent analysts reflected the early conviction that the truth about the patients was already known. Fromm was impressed enough by our encounter for him to tell me that he was eager to hear from me in the future, and over the years we exchanged a number of letters about what I had been finding out.

Unfortunately, it seems that Fromm's own correspondence has by and large disappeared, at least what he kept in his files. Fromm's conviction about preserving his own privacy may deter others from appreciating the stature he genuinely deserves in the full-scale account of the history of psychoanalysis. Kohut and Donald Winnicott, for example, have both had volumes of their letters appear. And Freud himself seems to have had somewhere between 20,000 and 35,000 letters that survived the upheavals of both world wars. Such documents are ready fodder for scholars, and to the extent that we have lost such material in connection with Fromm it is going to be harder to reconstruct his proper role. In Freud's case, for example, it has recently been discovered that there was an early draft of his paper on war and death, in the form of a lecture he gave to B'nai B'rith in Vienna under the title of „Death and Us“ (Meghnagi





1993). It is going to take a long time until scholars come anywhere near exhausting the Freud primary sources, and only in the next century is the sealed Freud Archives at the Library of Congress going to be made available for the inspection of neutral scholars. It might be better if scholarship devoted more of its energy to verifying the merits of what someone like Fromm had to say, rather than continuing to track down the intricacies, interesting though they may be, of what we can learn about Freud.

I am convinced that part of Fromm's strength came from a genuine identification that he made with Freud. For Fromm everything in psychology was supposed to be open to question, even if on some points even he may have been too credulous about what Freud had to say. It is one of the critical aspects of the history of psychoanalysis that to be genuinely like Freud means that one has to be independent. But this means that there are penalties to be paid, in that the crossing of trade-union boundaries entails that there are bound to be organizational squabbles. I have found, in some of my recent travels among psychoanalytic groups, that one dividing line has to do with those who read and those who do not; it is impossible to defend oneself against those who do not examine texts, not to mention against people who make no pretense of trying to be fair-minded. If one already holds the key to genuine knowledge, the ideal of toleration makes no sense. Fromm was, I think, being true to the best spirit of Freud as an investigator to the extent that Fromm tried to give expression to what he himself had experienced. That sort of outspokenness should be more important than any allegiance to organizational bodies. But Fromm's kind of independence is bound to come at a price, and not everyone is willing to pay the kind of price he did.

Too many in psychoanalysis have been willing to have twisted thoughts, and unclarified positions, in order to avoid the dangers of heresy. Both Paul Federn and Sandor Ferenczi were so intimidated by the risks of deviancy that their work suffered as a consequence; I wonder how widespread this phenomenon has been. The problem is that each of the many sects that have grown up within psychoanalysis has been relatively unaware of what others have been doing;

and therefore it has been hard to establish all the continuities in the history of ideas that the historiography of psychoanalysis should be aware of. It is no genuine tribute to Fromm, however, to try to assimilate his original ideas in the work of subsequent analysts, like the object relations school for instance, since these later people have been able to proceed with the mutual support of one another, running little ideological danger. That ideas might be in style now should not be taken by itself to enhance Fromm's pioneering, since that amounts to insulting him by looking through the wrong end of a telescope.

In my own experience, once I published *Brother Animal* (1990a) there was a special series of attacks on me. This war was felt necessary because my first book, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* (Roazen 1986), had been welcomed by powerful orthodox analysts. When I was interviewing Freud's pupils and patients, I think it was assumed by those I saw that somehow I would ultimately be controllable. Analysts are after all dependent on colleagues for referrals, and the unconscious ways people can be intimidated into conformity ought never to be underestimated. As a student of the history of ideas, with no clinical practice of my own to defend, there were no conceivable practical sanctions, aside from the possibility of hostile reviews, that could be exerted against me. Silence in the face of publications is always an effective device. Although it looked to orthodox Freudians like I had betrayed the „cause“ from inside, which helps account for the anger of Eissler and Anna Freud (Roazen 1993), I always felt secure in my own independent course.

Implicit in my approach, as in the work of Fromm, was an ideal of objectivity; although the truth may be impossible to discover, I believe it is essential in all scholarship to proceed as if the standard of truthfulness is the ultimate recourse. Although it is unfashionable in many academic circles today to say this, still I would insist that putting a premium on our own subjective responses can endanger not just the pursuit of research but democracy itself. How I interacted with Fromm personally, and my own educational background, had a profound impact on what I happened to learn from him. I would



not doubt that someone else, with a different set of concerns, would have come up with an impression of both him and his work that would be unlike my own. I am also not sure that I can prove that my own version of Fromm is in any sense definitive, and I would certainly be eager to agree that many others, far more knowledgeable about Fromm, are in a better position than I to write about his contribution. Simplistic scientism, the belief among some analysts that causes can be directly linked to effects, needs to yield to a less-linear outlook that concedes the inevitability, and desirability, of allowing more leeway to legitimizing interpretations that are unverifiable.

But I would insist that my own hesitations, and awareness of how illusory objectivity can be, does not in any way imply that there does not in principle have to be such a thing as truth. A permanent danger of fascism exists in the modern world, and perspectivism or moral relativism, no matter how attractive tolerance for diversity may seem, can be an invitation to the idea that might makes right. Giving up the standard of objective truth, which Fromm refused to do, can lead to deferring to whatever happens to be dominant at any time. Fromm, like other emigres from Germany, was centrally concerned with the rise of fascism; I would argue that the success of Hitler in overcoming the Weimar republic is the single most important political event in twentieth century history. The Nazi revolution did not take place violently, but Hitler's success occurred within the confines of the preexisting republican political system. The fact that Weimar Germany could self-destruct is an essential part of why Nazism continues to be so troubling a turn of events.

Fascism, however, has many possible sources, some of them stemming from the way intellectuals think. I gather that in later years, long after Fromm wrote that paper against Rank, Fromm had his doubts about reprinting the piece. Anyone like Fromm who witnessed the triumph of the Nazis is perhaps entitled to be supersensitive to ideas that might sound congenial to a Hitlerian point of view. Fromm was right to denounce Jung's collaboration with the Nazis, although Jung's unfortunate antidemocratic politics, not to mention his anti-Semitism

and opportunism, does not mean that his psychological thinking cannot still have something vital to teach us. Dostoyevsky was a defender of the Czar and the Orthodox Russian Church, and also anti-Semitic, but that cannot refute his being one of the greatest psychological understanders of all time. The relationship between psychology and politics is a complicated one, and just because a thinker is sound politically, or that we find a figure attractive democratically and socially, does not mean that a profound psychology is necessarily embedded in a theorist's work. Fromm's own critique of American policies at the height of the Cold War (which I did not happen to share) helped damage his standing among the typically hard-nosed political scientists who on policy grounds grew to suspect the author of *Escape from Freedom*. (The extensive FBI dossier on Fromm is a tribute to how non-sensical J. Edgar Hoover could be.)

Even though I would have disagreed with Fromm politically, he has something to teach us about the dangers of all sorts of collaboration. He was highly critical of Erikson's ego psychology, on the grounds that it embodied an implicit sort of conformism; and to some extent Fromm was right about Erikson, although I learned a lot myself from contact with him. In university life right now in North America we are, I think, being swept up by a dangerous form of righteousness, called political correctness, which is a movement I consider seriously at odds with the ideals of the objective search for truth. Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers wrote to each other about what they considered the collapse of German universities at the beginning of the Nazi regime (Arendt and Jaspers 1992). I only wish it were easier to be brave within today's university pressures, and to insist on the significance of merit alone as opposed to all the nonacademic criteria that are being imposed on us. It is one thing to have courage within psychoanalysis, when I remain an outsider to the field; but I concede it is a lot harder, as a member of academic life, to assert the priorities of merit that are so precious to the life of the mind.

Although these observations about contemporary academic life may seem a digression, I admit that courage is harder to come by than



may seem to be the case, and that Fromm is to be commended for the risks he took, which after all involved not just his livelihood but the congeniality and support of traditional colleagues. I hope he found sources of sustenance in Mexico. It still seems to me remarkable how he was willing to stand up for what he believed in, as he could tolerate a kind of isolation that surely was not always easy to bear. He should be a model of independence and autonomy for us all.

One can hope that intolerance among the Left in psychoanalysis can be minimized; for it is those people, not the mainstream, who have had all the new ideas, although it is hard to detect which currently fashionable ideas are to be attributed to identifiable earlier thinkers. How many Kohutians, for example, would feel comfortable with considering what Jung wrote about the self and processes of individuation, and yet why should that lineage cause so much concern? Donald Winnicott happily went about distinguishing the „true“ self from the „false“ one, even though any such philosophical-sounding talk would doubtless have offended Freud. Originality should not require a certified pedigree within psychoanalysis; some of the most interesting new thoughts have come from people whose names are apt to be anathema to orthodox analysts. I would be in favor of doing the best work one can, and claim Fromm's example even where he might have disagreed with the specific conclusions.

In the history of psychoanalysis, it is too often the case that earlier figures get forgotten. Whenever I have been on a Ph.D. board and met Marxists, I have always tried to ask some questions about Marx's enemy Mikkel Bakunin. Because Marx won and Bakunin lost, within the struggles of the First International, says nothing about the merits of the points that each of them had to make. I was originally attracted to psychoanalysis because of the way in which its respect for failure was at odds with political science's tendency to glorify success. Whatever Freud's personal snobberies might have been, his system of thought paid the greatest respect to those parts of us that malfunction. In keeping with Freud's original standing as an outsider, it is striking how much of an uphill struggle it has been to establish the legitimate role that Fromm

has played in the history of psychoanalysis; but that only makes me think that rectifying the situation, and paying him his due honor, is especially incumbent on us. Whatever legitimate disagreements there ought to be about what Fromm's legacy adds up to, I think few can deny that his responsible outspokenness, which I have called courage, should be a special beacon for us all.

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