

'THE ANATOMY OF HUMAN DESTRUCTIVENESS, by Erich Fromm (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., \$10.95, 478 p.)

In these days of concern over increasing violence throughout the world, an understanding of the root problem by the individual seems imperative. For it is the 'common man' who must, in the end, restore reverence for that which is good.

'The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness', by Erich Fromm, is a scholarly attempt to explain man's lust for cruelty by offering an in-depth study to readers for their own evaluation. The author does not pretend to offer solutions, but does imply that all is not yet lost.

"Sensitivity toward destructiveness-cruelty is rapidly diminishing," warns the author, "and necrophilia - the attraction to what is dead, decaying, lifeless and mechanical - is increasing throughout our cybernetic industrial society."

To counteract this Falangist thinking, Fromm says that we must extricate ourselves from circumstances of our own creation in spite of the limitations imposed by social structure. Radicals who say it can't be done are too deeply involved in their own personal resistance to inner change to be capable of taking the necessary steps.

In his thesis statement, Erich Fromm claims that prehistoric man, living in bands as hunter and food gatherer, was characterized by a minimum of destructiveness and an optimum of cooperation and sharing, and that large scale destructiveness and cruelty grew as civilization and the role of power expanded. "But," he claims, "aggression and destructiveness can once more assume a minimal role in the fabric of human motivations."

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He bases his conclusion on human dignity and the positive effects of the love of life.

It is interesting to note that Freud dismissed human aggressivity as a 'component instinct' of the sexual instinct - a conclusion that didn't wholly satisfy him and was in time changed. An appendix is offered to those who are interested in the development of his thoughts on this subject.

'The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness' is a big think book of the ancient Greek type whereby a problem is posed, examined thoroughly and then philosophized about. And a big door is opened to those who believe there is still hope for a peaceful Shangri-la.

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