



Man For Himself:
A New Introduction for Transactions Publishers
by Daniel Burston

Erich Pinchas Fromm was born on March 23, 1900 in Frankfurt, and died on March 18, 1980 in Locarno, Switerzerland. By his own account, he was the only offspring of a troubled marriage. In keeping with his name -- Fromm means "pious" -- young Erich received an intensive religious education, and continued to observe the rituals of his faith until the age of 26. Fromm's religious preceptors espoused ideas gleaned from philosophy, mysticism, socialism and psychoanalysis along with their rabbinic wisdom, and they evidently had a decisive effect in molding Fromm's character and convictions. This seems to bear out Fromm's assertion (contra Freud) that character is not something that is crystallized before puberty, or patterned by family influences alone. According to Fromm, character can change throughout life, and prevailing social character has a profound impact on the developing individual, irrespective of their own family's idiosyncracies or misfortunes. This was certainly true in Fromm's case. The typically Jewish synthesis of rationalism and mysticism, and of love of tradition, combined with a prophetic element of radical protest; these contradictory tendencies existed in Fromm's character in about the same proportion as they existed in his cultural surround, and constitute the creative matrix from which his thought emerged (Funk, 1984).

While still in the midst of religious studies, Fromm received his doctorate in sociology at Heidelberg at the age of 22 with a dissertation on the role and function of Hallachic law in three religious communities; the



Karaites, the Hassidim and Reform Jewry. Fromm's formal analytic training commenced with a year's study in Munich under Wilhelm Wittenberg at age 25 , and was followed by another year under Karl Landauer in Frankfurt. Fromm finished his training with two more years under Hanns Sachs and Theodor Reik in Berlin.

In the late 1920's, Fromm was instrumental in organizing the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute, and as a result of his efforts, came in contact with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, a group of creative scholars and social scientists with Marxist leanings affiliated with the University of Frankfurt. Because of his background in sociology and clinical work, Fromm was soon appointed the head of the Institute's section on social psychology; a position he held until 1938, when he parted angrily from his former associates who, like Fromm himself, had relocated in New York to escape the Nazi menace. Fromm went on to achieve fame and fortune with Escape From Freedom (1941) and many other best-sellers, but the lingering bitterness between Fromm and his erstwhile colleagues resulted in fierce polemical exchanges between Fromm and the Frankfurt School in the years that followed (Jay, 1973; Burston, 1991).

Although Fromm received his analytic training from staunch Freud loyalists, his real sympathies lay with Freud's loyal opposition, or those independently minded analysts who tried to reconcile their intellectual loyalty to Freud with other influences and ideas, but who attempted to remain within the organizational framework of the analytic mainstream. When Fromm began writing in the 1930's, Freud's loyal opposition could be neatly divided into two camps; the Marxists and the non-Marxists. The non-Marxists were somewhat dispersed geographically, and were so strikingly individual, in some ways, that one hesitates to characterize them



as a "group". But their number included analysts like Ludwig Binswanger, Georg Groddeck, Sandor Ferenczi, Karen Horney, Paul Schilder and others.

By contrast, the left-leaning analysts included Wilhelm Reich and his associates, the various participants in Otto Fenichel's celebrated *Kinderseminar*, and of course, Erich Fromm. During the late 1920's and early 1930's, their cultural center of gravity was Berlin. Despite their strong intellectual resemblances, characterizing Freud's left opposition in the 1930's as a "group" is also somewhat problematic, because despite various collaborative efforts that appeared to succeed temporarily, they ultimately fought among themselves -- (though the non-Marxists did not) -- and expressed their differences with a cold and furious pedantry rooted as much in left-wing sectarianism as it was in the jealous, fratricidal atmosphere Freud cultivated among his less independent followers (Harris and Brock, 1991; Burston, 1991).

Though a supporter of Reich's for a brief period of time in his 20's, this relationship soon soured, and to the best of my knowledge, Fromm never developed any close affectional ties with any other left-wing analysts or their families.¹ Nevertheless, he remained on excellent terms with Georg Groddeck, Sandor Ferenczi and Karen Horney. As the record will attest, Groddeck, Ferenczi and Horney were three creative intellects whose theoretical differences with Freud led to their being abused both in public and private by Freud's more zealous followers, and they all suffered deeply

¹ The possible exception is Ernst Schachtel, who is not usually included among the political Freudians. Schachtel started out as a lawyer, and did not complete his analytic training till sometime in the 1940's, but he did help Fromm to design and score his pioneering study of authoritarian tendencies among the working class in Weimar Germany in 1930, and wrote several articles for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, the house organ of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (Bonss, 1984; Burston 1991).



as a consequence. Witnessing the vicious and demeaning things said to and about these people, whom he admired and respected deeply, Fromm naturally acquired a visceral distaste for the seamy, authoritarian side of psychoanalytic politics, which he subsequently wrote about with rare candor (Fromm, 1959; Fromm, 1970; Burston, 1991).

Though studiously neglected by the analytic mainstream, Fromm emerged from the turbulent 30's and 40's to become one of the most popular and prolific psychoanalytic authors of the 20th century. As any intellectual historian will attest, his impact and relevance to the humanities and social sciences in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's is second to none; an inference abundantly borne out in the number of times he was cited in journal articles. Only Erik Erikson, who stayed close to ego-psychology and the analytic mainstream, achieved comparable stature among non-clinicians.

Man For Himself, published in 1947, occupies an interesting place in the trajectory of Fromm's thought. To begin with, Marx's influence, which was so prominent in the 1930's, and which resurfaced again in the late 1950's and 1960's, is scarcely in evidence here. Cold War tensions, McCarthyism, and the threat of political persecution may have had something to do with this. But another more salient factor, perhaps, was that in this book, Fromm was attempting to revive and incorporate philosophical leanings and interests from his late adolescence and early adulthood *prior to* his immersion in Marxism and psychoanalysis.

Nowhere is Fromm's revival of older intellectual loyalties more in evidence than in connection with his psychology of ethics, which is best approached by way of contrast with Freud's. Freud's persistent attempts to unmask the irrational or libidinous strivings behind ethical and religious



precepts prompted Paul Ricoeur to describe his interpretative strategy for these domains of human experience as a "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur, 1970). The same, of course, could be said of Marx, for whom class interest was of paramount importance. Though it is seldom remarked upon, or even *remembered* by the educated public, the fact remains that in 1932, Fromm commended psychoanalysis to Marxists for its ability to reduce the loftiest ethical ideals "to their earthly, libidinal nucleus", thereby disclosing the covert political objectives behind the methodical manipulation of the masses' infantile attachments to their rulers (Fromm, 1932a). In short, the notion that ethical ideals are often smokescreens for other, hidden agendas, rather than true ends in themselves, or even real *entities per se* -- an argument articulated by Stirner and Nietzsche, as well as Marx and Freud² -- seemed quite congenial to Fromm at the time.

Though he later objected that he never intended to deny the reality or importance of ethical ideas *per se* (Fromm, 1963, introduction), Fromm used a similar unmasking technique to expose the ideological underpinnings of the idea of analytic neutrality, albeit in the name of a more humane and liberating set of values (1935). But whatever he may have thought or felt at the time, by 1947, we find Fromm strenuously insisting that ethical ideals are not always or inevitably ideological subterfuges or elaborate self-deceptions; that on some level, ethical ideals

² Max Stirner -- born Johann Kaspar Schmidt -- was the author of The Ego and His Own (1844), and was a vociferous critic of Kant, Hegel and Feuerbach, who thought that all ethical and humanitarian ideals were really mystified and mendacious inducements to the ego to relinquish its sovereignty, and become idolatrously enslaved to the generalized other. Though seldom remembered nowadays, he influenced Nietzsche and Sartre, and many features of his thought resemble Ayn Rand's "objectivist" philosophy. For Fromm's critique of Stirner, see chapter 4, section 1.



represent answers to the problem of human existence, and that our innermost nature *demand*s that we become ethical beings to preserve our relation to *Being*, and for the sake of our sanity and integrity as persons.

In fairness to Fromm, this apparent about face was probably just a dramatic change in emphasis, and not a change in his fundamental position, as many critics allege. After all, it is perfectly logical to suppose that while *many* lofty moral injunctions disguise baser objectives, or lend themselves to this kind of hypocritical use, not all of them do, or are intended that way. This point is important to bear in mind, because a dizzying number of new variants on the old hermeneutics of suspicion, bearing the names of Lacan, Althusser, Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard and other Parisian intellectuals, have inundated academia of late, and only recently have they begun to wane, and to show their poverty plainly. Despite the eloquence and the breathtaking coherence that the hermeneutics of suspicion sometimes seem to impart to their subject matter, their chief weakness lies in a sweeping, totalistic, and ultimately nay saying manner. Besides, the insistence on dispensing with sham and self-deception that Marx, Stirner, Nietzsche and Freud all shared express an implicit value system; one that predicates the possibility of emancipation on the ability to relinquish illusions, and puts a *positive* value on the ability to think critically against the mainstream. Or are the pursuit of honesty and emancipation not the expressions of ethical values? (And if so, *what* are they?)

Unfortunately, considerations like these were utterly lost on Fromm's critics, and after the appearance of Man For Himself, Fromm was frequently condemned as a simple-minded moralist, or a glibly utopian Pollyanna. These charges came from all parts of the political spectrum, although some of the most strident denunciations came from left-wing philosopher



Herbert Marcuse, formerly of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (1955). None of this affected Fromm's public popularity much. But Fromm's ultimate failure to embrace the hermeneutics of suspicion unreservedly made him anathema to the guardians of orthodoxy in both Marxist and psychoanalytic circles, and turned a significant number of the intelligensia away from him. And this, in turn, contributed to his current neglect in academe. Although I am not uncritical of Fromm's work, I share his conviction that most of these criticisms were unfair, and rooted in ignorance of the deeper implications and fundamentals of his thought.

Despite its inappropriately gendered title, and its antiquated references to "the science of man", I think Man For Himself is a remarkable book that will amply repay the attention of any thoughtful reader whose outlook has not been jaundiced already by Fromm's many detractors. It is both passionate and theoretical, yet cogent and accessible, and though lacking in empirical or experimental data, by mainstream, contemporary standards, it is infused with a lively and expansive erudition in literature, philosophy and the social sciences that is all too rare in most contemporary reflections on psychology and ethics.

Still, writing a new introduction for it is a daunting prospect for a historian of psychoanalysis, because in this work, the sequel to Escape From Freedom [Fromm, 1941], Fromm distanced himself even further than before from his Freudian beginnings, and openly took his bearings from a philosophical tradition that antedates Freud. In Man For Himself, a multitude of thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics, St. Augustine, Calvin, Hobbes, Rousseau, Grotius, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Bentham, Nietzsche and Dewey put in noteworthy appearances, while references to Hegel, Dilthey, Bergson, Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler



and Sartre, among others, grace the footnotes. While some might regard this as cause for celebration -- or a modicum of grudging respect, at least -- professional philosophers have often used Fromm's eclectic borrowings from philosophy as a pretext to dismiss him altogether, and to ignore the lucidity and overall integrity of his reading and response to Freud. Similarly, among Freud zealots, Fromm's open reliance on pre-Freudian sources has occasioned the charge that Fromm's revisionist reflections on analytic theory are merely a reversion to a pre-Freudian psychology of consciousness, and therefore lacking in a realistic appreciation of the depth and irrationality of unconscious mental processes, and the importance of sexuality and early childhood experiences.

On close inspection, however, these charges prove to be untrue, or at least greatly exaggerated, requiring detailed and extensive qualification in lieu of a simple rebuttal. In the philosophical dimension, Man For Himself provides us with a searching critique of the limitations and abuses of the ethical relativism espoused by many Freudians, according to whom all ethical or normative ideals are no more than the conscious expression of unconscious needs and tendencies. The emphasis on the alleged relativity of ethical values in the analytic mainstream was rooted originally in a hermeneutics of suspicion that was closer in spirit to Nietzsche than to Mill or Max Weber. But up until recently, this kind of thinking did not carry well across the Atlantic, and accordingly, in the United States, it was soon replaced by the positivist thesis that values and ethical ideals are purely subjective or sociologically determined, with no possible basis in objective fact, and by the erroneous idea that psychoanalysis is a purely scientific "technique" with no prescriptive content or basis.



Fromm's analysis of the *implicit* ethical norms that inform Freudian theory and therapy show clearly how they contradict or override the value-relativism that was consciously espoused by Freud and his followers. In a manner of speaking, Man For Himself demonstrates that the tacit, inarticulate and largely unconscious ethical dimension in Freud's theory of therapy is in fact far more humane and concrete than the specious value-neutrality espoused by some analysts in the ostensible interests of dignifying their discipline as a branch of the natural sciences. In so doing, it punctures some of the positivist pretensions that still linger in influential circles in the analytic world, and elsewhere in the behavioral sciences. This was typical of Fromm. And although Fromm's borrowings from philosophy were indeed eclectic, and occasionally tendentious or uncritical, this does not detract from the fundamental soundness or cogency of Fromm's

analysis of Freud's (conscious and unconscious) ethical position, which could hardly be improved upon by a professional philosopher.³

In the clinical dimension, things are somewhat more complex. To begin with, in all his writings on clinical topics, Fromm handicapped himself by his deliberate policy of making minimal use of case histories and clinical vignettes. Thus, in Man For Himself, for example, the reader must be content with merely two dream specimens that are used to illustrate Fromm's theoretical position. Fromm's reticence about his clinical experiences was prompted by a strong belief in patient confidentiality, and while he discussed case material with great thoroughness in his training seminars, he argued that most published case histories reveal enough about the identity of their subjects to permit others to surmise who they really are, thereby violating a first principle of analytic practice, and often undermining the therapeutic benefits that accrue from it. In short, where

³ Unfortunately, in some circles, the term "positivist" has become little more than a derogatory epithet, rather than a meaningful or precise label that has some clear and commonly agreed upon linguistic referent. To avoid unnecessary confusion here, I follow Peter Sedgwick, who defines positivism in the mental health field as "an approach towards the investigation of human pathology which, modelling itself upon antecedents it believes to be characteristic of the natural sciences, (a) postulates a radical separation between 'facts' and 'values' (declaring only the former to be the subject matter of the professional investigator) and (b) suppresses the interactive relationship between the investigator and the 'facts' on which he or she works" (Sedgwick, 1982, p 23). Though I do not wish to be party to the wholesale and indiscriminate dismissal of what is, in fact, a broad and extremely diverse spectrum of beliefs, rather than a monolithic entity, positivism of this kind often prevents those committed to these principles from engaging with the problems and perplexities of mental illness except in a schizoid, pseudo-objective way. My main complaint with Sedgwick is that he does not recognize Fromm among the more cogent and persuasive critics of positivism in the mental health field, and therefor as an important precursor to Laing, Szasz, Goffman and Foucault, among others.



the interests of scientific investigation and debate conflict with those of patient confidentiality, Fromm, in true Hippocratic spirit, honored the patient's interest consistently, and this accounts for the somewhat vague and impressionistic character of the clinical vignettes he uses here.

Another possible drawback for the clinician is Fromm's tendency to overstatement, which was prompted by an apparent need to overcompensate for the one-sidedness of the narrow Freudianism he opposed. In his original Foreword, for example, Fromm stated that: "Neurosis itself is, in the last analysis, a symptom of moral failure (although 'adjustment' is by no means a sign of moral achievement)." This is a monstrous overstatement. What about the noxious effects of trauma, neglect and abuse that are chronicled so carefully in the literature? Besides, anyone reading Freud's own case histories soon realizes that the symptomatology of many of Freud's female patients was due less to moral "failure", or even sexual hunger, pure and simple, than to the stifling effects of oppressive class and gender roles that trapped these poor women in sterile, subservient or purely ornamental lives from adolescence onward. Finally, by implication, if not by direct attribution, the claim that all neurosis is symptomatic of "failure" -- moral or otherwise -- puts the onus squarely on the afflicted person, rather than on the environment, and is therefore flagrantly inconsistent with Fromm's emphasis on the cultural and economic determinants of mental disturbance.

Thankfully, Fromm immediately went on to qualify this sweeping assertion with the following, more balanced one: "In many instances, a neurotic symptom is the specific expression of moral conflict, and the success of the therapeutic effort depends on the understanding and solution of the person's moral problem". On reflection, this is a much more

modest and plausible claim than the one immediately preceding it. Fromm begins this sentence with the qualifier "In many instances . . .", indicating he has some or perhaps even most neuroses in mind. Moreover, instead of pontificating about "moral failure", he agreeably switches to an emphasis on "moral conflict", which as any thoughtful person knows, is ubiquitous, and fully consonant with Freud's model of the mind.

Even here, however, a tendency to overstatement creeps in. Having qualified his categorical insistence that every neurosis is symptomatic of moral failure, he nevertheless appears to convey that in the many cases where ethical conflicts are salient to the structure of neurotic symptomatology, understanding the underlying moral conflict is somehow sufficient to effect the desired therapeutic transformation. This is far from being true. As Fromm himself was well aware, the nature and quality of relatedness between therapist and patient are always key. One can easily imagine a situation where a therapist "understands" the patient's underlying moral conflict accurately, but doesn't understand (or empathize with) others aspect of the patient's background or personality sufficiently to enable him or her to make use of this theoretical formulation. When this happens, patients submit to the superior wisdom of the analytic authority, but fail to achieve real insight, and muddy the picture with pseudo-health or fresh symptomatology -- or, understandably enough, they rebel against the judgmental attitude of the therapist. While both these responses may be construed as signs of "resistance", they are often stimulated by the analyst's own bearing and attitudes -- conscious and unconscious. Fromm's insights into the ethical dimension of analytic therapy are very valuable and illuminating, but in his haste to explicate his emerging philosophical anthropology, and his views on human nature, he obviously neglected to



make sufficient allowance for these clinical commonplaces in his *published* work to enable practitioners to apply his ideas concretely.

Having said all that, however, the reproach most commonly leveled by analytically oriented clinicians, that Fromm's is a reversion to a pre-Freudian psychology, which denies the importance of childhood and sexuality, is not born out in fact. Witness his discussion of the authoritarian conscience (or superego) in these pages. Here Fromm states plainly that children cannot help having sexual feelings, and that the widespread tendency to stigmatize or taboo the sexuality of infants and children gives rise to unconscious guilt feelings and self-hatred.

However, unlike orthodox Freudians, Fromm did not believe that infantile or childish sexuality *necessarily* gives rise to guilt feelings or the super-ego as a result of castration anxiety, and irrespective of prevailing environmental conditions. On the contrary, Fromm regarded the repression of childhood sexuality as an early installment in a more concerted strategy of socialization that is designed to break or disfigure the will, spontaneity and independence of children in a patriarchal society that values submission to irrational authority. Indeed, Fromm interpreted the Oedipus complex -- and rebellion against the father -- in this light.

The obvious (if unstated) implication of this analysis, which Fromm pursued at length elsewhere, is that in a society freed from patriarchal authoritarianism, the Oedipus complex would disappear, or at any rate be confined to rare or exceptional cases [Fromm, 1932a; Fromm, 1951; Fromm, 1970]. In short, he regarded the Oedipus complex as a social artifact, to a very large extent, and not as the hidden basis of all social organization, as Freud evidently believed. Inasmuch as Freud regarded Oedipal phenomena as the expression of a nuclear or "core complex" (Rudnytsky, 1987; Kerr,



1991), Fromm's revisionist interpretation will never be endorsed by orthodox Freudians. But neither does it support the argument that Fromm's is a simple-minded reversion to pre-Freudian perspectives.

Another radical departure from Freudian orthodoxy -- one which *does* lend some credence to the orthodox critique of Fromm -- is his characterology. In his attempts to explicate the baffling complexities of mental illness, Freud postulated a universal sequence of developmental stages that the growing organism must traverse; one that ideally culminates in "genitality", but can easily be arrested at any point along the way in adverse circumstances, or as a result of innate constitutional predispositions that short circuit the process at some predetermined point. In Freud's system, any neurotic symptom or character trait can be understood -- in principle, anyway -- as a product of a psychological regression to or fixation at a specific psychosexual phase, although arrested development in this sense does not involve any anatomical abnormality, but is inferred from the subject's behavior, which may or may not involve an overtly "perverse" preoccupation with non-genital sexual expression.

Fromm's earliest discussions of psychoanalytic characterology were a model of lucid, penetrating and comprehensive exposition that merit study and comparison with the best efforts of Ferenczi, Abraham and Freud himself [Fromm, 1932b; Fromm, 1934]. And like Ferenczi and Abraham's contributions to the field, Fromm's showed great originality, as well a powerful analytical intelligence. But in 1936, or thereabouts, Fromm rejected the instinctivistic basis of Freudian characterology, and began to construe the various libidinal positions identified by Freud as necessary stations on the road to maturity as merely different ways of filling one's metabolic needs -- so many strategies or modes of assimilation that either are

promoted or suppressed by prevailing social conditions, and not as epigenetically pre-programmed ontogenetic sequelae.

In Fromm's rendering then, character structure is an essentially social artifact, and therefore subject to the vagaries of macro-social and economic changes, and not just the micro-social environment of the immediate family and its vicissitudes. Accordingly, in Man For Himself, Fromm dropped the organismic underpinnings of Freud's theory of character, to both good and bad effect. In fairness to Fromm, and to a variety of existentially oriented critics of Freudian psychoanalysis like Binswanger, Frankl, May and others, it is undeniable that human development and motivation -- both conscious and unconscious -- are driven by specifically human or psychological needs that are not reducible to the exigencies of erogenous satisfaction or tissue needs; needs for a sense of oneness or solidarity with others, for a framework of orientation and devotion, and for self-actualization. Moreover, these needs can be as profoundly unconscious as their libidinal counterparts, and their frustration in adverse circumstances can be just as detrimental to our psychological well being; indeed, more so, in many cases.

In attempting to disentangle the idea of character structure from purely organismic constraints and early childhood experiences, Fromm made it possible to focus increasingly on character deformations that arise from the necessity to adapt to features of the *adult* environment; an approach which is more congruent with current conceptions of socialization as an ongoing, life-long process, and not something that is done and over with by the time the person reaches puberty. Fromm's notion of the marketing character, which has no analogue in Freud's psychosexual schema, and therefore no specific anchoring in our somatic makeup, is a

good example of this kind of reasoning, and the increments it yields in understanding widespread patterns of human behavior (Burston, 1991).

Unfortunately, many analysts are loath to endorse or even entertain many of Fromm's ideas because they imply a radical critique of prevailing social organization. What Fromm was saying in effect, if not always in so many words, was that the way in which we are generally constrained to fill our material needs (in the interests of status or survival) is often profoundly at odds with our deeper *human* needs for real self-actualization and solidarity with other human beings, and that this socially patterned discrepancy gives rise to the frequent violation and eventual constriction of our humanistic conscience, resulting in many different varieties of mental anguish. Though mainstream analytic theory has yet to take cognizance of this fact, I think clinical experience bears out Fromm's contention that the unconscious conflicts that generate symptomatology are not limited to the inner eruptions from the traumatized or conflicted child who slumbers (and dreams) within all of us, but include the chronic and acute crises engendered by specifically adult problems and situations, which have an ethical dimension, more often than not.

On the other hand, and despite the increment in the breadth of perspective entailed in Fromm's revisionist theory, there are serious problems involved in abandoning the instinctivistic premises of Freudian theory that Fromm was evidently unaware of. For if we reject the idea of a universal sequence of psychosexual phases, or of some sequence of developmental phases that is inborn and universal, the concepts of fixation and regression, which are seemingly indispensable to analytic discourse, suddenly become moot. Regression *to* what? Fixation *where*? Though he did write later on about syndromes of growth and regression in somewhat



global and impressionistic terms [Fromm, 1960; Fromm, 1964], these are questions that Fromm did not address with the rigour and imagination he showed consistently in other areas.⁴

Still, despite the paucity of case material, technical directives, and Fromm's tendency toward overstatement, Man For Himself is full of ideas that the practicing clinician as well as the layperson will find stimulating and useful. Indeed, I would venture to say that many of these ideas could be applied fruitfully to problems of differential diagnosis, and that Fromm was remiss in not developing these ideas further in this direction. Fromm's remarks on the differences between intelligence and reason, and between reproductive and generative perception, and their relationship to paranoia, psychosis and the psychology of adjustment, all warrant close attention, as do his remarks on "productive thinking", and the difference between it and more stereotypical modes of reasoning. Metamorphosis, a much neglected book by Ernst Schachtel, Fromm's friend and collaborator of many years, attempts to apply and extend some of these ideas in an ethological and phenomenological vein simultaneously (Schachtel, 1962), and elsewhere, I have tried to unpack some of the logical implications of Fromm's work in this regard (Burston, 1991). But these efforts hardly exhaust the potential range of application for elements of Fromm's synthesis of psychoanalysis and philosophy. Much remains to be done.

As any thoughtful reader knows, really important books are seldom flawless, and no single author could ever hope to have the last word on human nature, or to address the multitude of problems posed by the

⁴ In his earlier discussion of Bachofen, however, [1934], Fromm examined the ideas of fixation and regression parenthetically, and made an interesting theoretical contribution within the Freudian framework he later abandoned.



bewildering variety of observable human behavior. As Fromm remarked on more than one occasion, any substantial advance in our knowledge of human nature is generally won at the expense of a certain one-sidedness of focus and emphasis, which only subsequent applications and inquiries can correct for [Fromm, 1980]. This claim was intended to exonerate Freud, but in retrospect, it applies with equal justice to Fromm himself. Though hardly uncritical of Freud, Fromm was faithful to him in his fashion, and grappled creatively with Freud's ideas and influence throughout his long career. His theoretical ardour, and the sheer wealth and liveliness of his ideas, make this among his most readable and stimulating books; a book to be read and reread over the years.

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