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Intellectually secure, in the midst of kidnappings, espionage, infiltrations into free industry, and the farmer. They must have sent one along, anyway.

THIS MASS MADNESS—IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

"THE SANE SOCIETY," by Erich Fromm (Rinehart, 370 pages, \$5).

Reviewed by Russell Kirk
[Author of "The Conservative Mind"]

Ours is not a sane society, Dr. Fromm tells us; and he has collected from various sources some impressive opinions and statistics to support his argument.

Suicide, homicide, and alcoholism are his indices to the sanity of a nation and, judged by these standards, the prosperous industrial states of the western world come off badly. Efficiency, material production, and creature comforts do not of themselves make a people happy. If material prosperity has been bought at the price of the human self—that is, at the expense of true individuality—and by the destruction of a sense of community, duty, and worth while work, then the fancied benefits of a "higher standard of living" may do no more than usher in widespread neuroses that amount to madness in society.



insensately, to "1984" [communism] or "Brave New World" [the consolidation of capitalism].

"In the development of both capitalism and of communism as we can visualize them in the next 50 or 100 years," he says, "the process of automatization and alienation will proceed. Both systems are developing into managerial societies, their inhabitants well fed, well clad, having their wishes satisfied, and not having wishes which cannot be satisfied; automatons, who follow without force, who are guided without leaders, who make machines which act like men and produce men who act like machines; men, whose reason deteriorates while their intelligence rises, thus creating the dangerous situation of equipping man with the greatest material power without the wisdom to use it.

"This alienation and automatization leads to an ever increasing insanity. Life has no meaning, there is no joy, no faith, no reality. Everybody is 'happy'—except that he does not feel, does not reason, does not love."

The human self, in short, virtually ceases to exist in this society of the future.

Is life worth living? This question—the Fromm himself dislikes the phrase—seems to have been answered in the negative by the suicides, murderers, and drunkards of our century, and to have had much to do with the rise of totalist ideology, the "escape from freedom." Fromm believes that we can regain our sanity as a society only if we devote our talents to men, rather than things—to the self, to community, to work that has purpose, rather than to mere quantitative production. Otherwise we will stumble on,

Altho Fromm's book is scarcely original in much, it contains a good many valuable insights and interpretations, and reminds us forcefully of the need for humanizing the industrial world and restoring the reality of community among men.

Fromm has no love for the leviathan state, thoroly rejects totalist ideologies, and is highly critical of British socialism. Yet his own remedy for our present discontents, "Humanistic Communitarian Socialism," is feebly presented and generally unconvincing.

Altho not really disavowing supernatural religion, Fromm recommends a "religion of humanity" upon the positivistic pattern, leaving quite out of account the failure of every attempt to persuade man to worship man. Altho his suggestions for restoring true community thru the establishment of voluntary "utopian" socialistic settlements and a central "cultural agency" are interesting, they retain the mark of abstract "doctrine and theoretic dogma." And when he turns to capitalism and socialism, Fromm falls into the pit of 19th century ideology and slogan, attributing to "capitalism" [an abstraction coined by Karl Marx] all sorts of ills that really are produced by technology and mass production rather than by private control of the means of production, and clinging to a rather timid hope that there is some magic in the abstraction "socialism" which will enable us to forget all about the old problems of justice, power, leadership, and pride.

This is a book to provoke reflection, but not a book to put us securely on the road to sanity.

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2. "AUNTIE MAME," by Patrick Dennis.
3. "THE MAN IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT," by Sloan Wilson.
4. "THE FLOWER GIRLS," by Clemence Dane.
5. "SOMETHING OF VALUE," by Robert Ruark.
6. "EXCELSIOR," by Paul Hyde Bonner.
7. "NO TIME FOR SERGEANTS," by Mac Hyman.
8. "THE DINNER PARTY," by Gretchen Finletter.

NONFICTION

1. "GIFT FROM THE SEA," by Anne Morrow Lindbergh.
2. "THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING," by Norman Vincent Peale.
3. "ONIONS IN THE STEW," by Betty MacDonald.
4. "HOW TO LIVE 365 DAYS A YEAR," by John A. Schindler.
5. "THE FAMILY OF MAN," edited by Edward Steichen.
6. "HIROSHIMA DIARY," by Michihiko Hachiya.
7. "FROM MY EXPERIENCE," by Louis Bromfield.
8. "A MAN CALLED PETER," by Catherine Marshall.