

noni leans heavily on Adler and his notions of inferiority and superiority, especially for the colonizers, though putting these notions very much to his own particular usages.

### Sullivan and Fromm

Elsewhere in this Volume (Chapter 40A), mention is made of a line of development seen in Durkheim, Cooley, Mead, Lewin, and Sapir that "reached conceptualization in the work of Henry Stack Sullivan, with its influence clearly revealed in the writings of Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Karen Horney, Clara Thompson [and others] . . ." (p. 843). What was this development, and what were its consequences for psychohistory? We shall take Sullivan and Fromm as the prototypes for what was involved.

For our purposes we need only highlight a few of Sullivan's emphases to illustrate certain developments in psychoanalysis. Sullivan stressed the following: (1) man must be viewed primarily as a socially interacting organism, although he is biologically rooted; (2) man is "not a fact but an act," that is, he develops and changes in a continuous process; and (3) his psychic states, for example, anxiety, are the result primarily of interpersonal relations (which are determined largely by his particular society and its socialization processes) rather than intrapsychic conflict.

Clearly Sullivan's shifts in emphasis from the classic Freudian position favored the study of man in society and developing over time, in contrast to the analysis of an individual in a relative vacuum. As such it would seem to be congenial to the work of historians. Certainly it influenced other analysts, such as Fromm and Horney, to explore the way particular societies created particular character types, for example, a "marketing character," or a "neurotic personality of *our time* (my italics)." Strangely enough, however, Sullivan's developments seem to have had little *direct* influence on historians per se, although his work undoubtedly affected the climate of opinion in which they worked. Perhaps this was because, in spite of its differing conceptual stresses, it really offered historians no

tools or operational theories separate from the orthodox Freudian ones with which to work.

The outstanding example of history psychoanalytically informed along the lines of Sullivan's thinking was the work of an analyst, not an historian: Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*.<sup>20</sup> The influence of this wide-ranging book has been rather extraordinary. Published in 1941, and obviously influenced by the Nazi phenomenon of the time, the book has enjoyed numerous reprintings.

Fromm conveniently states both his intention and his thesis at the very beginning of his work. He intends the book to be part of a broad study "concerning the character structure of modern man and the problems of the interaction between psychological and sociological factors." The Sullivanian overtones are clear and later openly acknowledged in various places (although it must be noted that by 1955 Fromm, in his *Sane Society*, turned against Sullivan). Fromm's thesis is that "modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities. Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable and the alternative he is confronted with are [*sic*] either to escape from the burden of his freedom into new dependencies and submission, or to advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man" (p. viii).

Fromm has been influenced by a number of different sources, and a few of them need to be remarked upon. First, Fromm had studied sociology (receiving a Ph.D. from Heidelberg in 1922), rather than history, before entering psychoanalytic training. Thus, he had professional competence in at least those two fields. In *Escape from Freedom* he borrowed heavily from sociological theories concerning man's alienation from modern industrial society, and one detects heavy echoes of Tönnies's division of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, Durkheim's

anomie, and Max Weber's general analysis of capitalist society and values. (Incidentally a splendid psychohistorical analysis of Weber, bearing on exactly the issues propounded in Fromm's thesis, is Arthur Mitzman's *The Iron Cage*.)<sup>41</sup> However, Karl Marx seems to be the outstanding influence. Passages in *Escape from Freedom* seem to read almost as quotations from *The Communist Manifesto*, as when Fromm talks of how capitalism "helped to sever all ties between one individual and the other and thereby isolated and separated the individual from his fellow men."

To his sociology, strongly Marxist-colored, Fromm adds psychoanalysis, heavily tinted by Sullivanian hues. He begins, however, by postulating a "drive for freedom" that is rooted in the individual's necessary "emergence from a state of oneness with the natural world." Fromm describes this earlier state as involving "primary ties," which, although affording security and a feeling of belonging, must be broken. The result is that the individual now feels his freedom as isolation, as "a curse." Two resolutions are open to him: he may turn to authority and slavishly submerge himself in a group, that is, "escape from freedom"; or he may embrace the "one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual."

Fromm does not state his insights merely in sociological and psychoanalytic terms; he places them in the context of an historical analysis. In a long chapter on the Reformation, he tries to show how the "capitalist" individual broke his "primary ties" during a specific historical period. Similarly, in a chapter on the psychology of Nazism, he seeks to show how in the twentieth century the escape from freedom into authoritarianism took specific shape in Germany. In short, he offers a sort of psychological history of modern times.

As psychological *history* his work paints with a broad brush in a way that might leave many historians filled with misgivings. For example, Fromm asserts without much real

use of hard historical data that medieval man, in spite of many dangers, "felt himself secure and safe." This hardly accords with other views of the medieval period, where anxiety seems endemic. If 1348-1349 is still "medieval" (and Fromm makes no effort to be precise), then one must reckon with the psychic consequences of the Black Death, as William L. Langer so eloquently reminds the historian in his ringing invitation to the application of psychology to history, "The Next Assignment."<sup>29</sup> Fromm seems also to assume a "middle class" in the medieval period; most historians would judge this as present-minded. On a broader issue, "escape from freedom" in the twentieth century seems less related to highly developed liberal capitalist societies, such as Great Britain and the United States, than to latecomers to capitalism, e.g., Germany; to incipiently industrialized countries, e.g., Italy; or to backward and underdeveloped countries, e.g., Czarist Russia. Such questions suggest that Fromm's work deals more with sociological categories than with concrete historical data, and historians have accordingly resisted following it.

As psychology and sociology, which is what Fromm himself primarily intended his book to be, it has been more successful in instigating further work. Fromm's psychoanalytic interpretation of the escape from freedom into authoritarianism as being rooted in sadomasochistic strivings has found its echo in such large-scale investigations as *The Authoritarian Personality*, by T. Adorno *et al.*,<sup>2</sup> and in specific studies such as William Blanchard's<sup>5</sup> book on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Fromm's chapter on "The Psychology of Nazism" has anticipated a flood of studies on Nazism, Nazi anti-Semitism, and Adolf Hitler.<sup>1,19,28,48,51</sup> His attention to the "person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him," points directly to David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, whatever its own limitations as history and therefore psychohistory, *Escape from Freedom* has been a seminal book in inspiring related studies. Keeping steadily in mind the junctures of Sullivan's version of psycho-



analysis, Fromm has sought to deal with individuals as interacting with other individuals in a social and historical setting. Above all, he has shown others how to avoid sheer reductionism, where everything becomes translated into psychology. As Fromm comments, "Nazism is a psychological problem, but the psychological factors themselves have to be understood as being molded by socio-economic factors; Nazism is an economic and political problem, but the hold it has over a whole people has to be understood on psychological grounds." An insight such as this, worked out in terms of actual data, as Fromm has attempted it in *Escape from Freedom*, tries to give historical life to the changes in emphasis brought to psychoanalytic theory by Sullivan and his co-workers. It also opens the way for a truer fusion of psychoanalysis, sociology, and history.

### W. Reich and Marcuse

A brief word must be added about some contributions spiritually related to Fromm's efforts. Indeed, Wilhelm Reich, whose work has unexpectedly come into prominence recently (see, for example Robinson's *The Freudian Left*),<sup>46</sup> predates Fromm. Reich's contributions to psychoanalysis carried Freud's theories to their two extremes. On one side Reich stressed the biological, that is, the libido, which he tried to measure quantitatively in biopsychic energy, practically reducing the sexual to the merely genital. On the other side Reich emphasized the social, insisting on the unique importance of social and historical factors in psychic development. Thus, in his theory of "character neurosis" Reich focused attention, not on particular symptoms, but on the patient's total character structure, seen as the result of his entire personal and societal history.

In his major contribution to "historical" studies, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933),<sup>44</sup> Reich turned to Marxism as the key to the social factors and tried to fuse Marx and Freud. In this book Reich attempted to delineate an authoritarian character structure, brought into being as a result of bourgeois

economic and social developments. Suggestive, the book is generally not judged successful; and it is still almost unknown to most historians.

Herbert Marcuse is a nonanalyst who has followed in the footsteps of Reich and Fromm, trying to synthesize the work of Marx and Freud. His *Eros and Civilization* (1955)<sup>37</sup> represents the work of a philosopher and a political theorist and makes no appeal to clinical evidence. However, Marcuse holds fast to the Freudian emphases on childhood and on sexual repression and accuses the neo-Freudians (such as Fromm) of watering down or ignoring the fundamentals of psychosexual development. In his very difficult book Marcuse attempts to place repression in an historical dimension and to show that sexual repression under capitalism is *surplus* repression, that is, the equivalent of Marx's surplus value. He also analyzes the "performance principle" as operating in the service of capitalism by desexualizing the pregenital erogenous zones. (Thus, Marcuse is here also criticizing Reich's emphasis on genitality.) Although accepting the necessity of a bare minimum of repression, Marcuse seems to look with favor upon a return to "polymorphous perversity." In a non-capitalist society sexual repression would no longer be essential to insure social repression and economic exploitation.

Norman O. Brown,<sup>6</sup> in his brilliant excursion into metapsychology, *Life Against Death*, eschews Marcuse's Marxism, but carries even further his eulogy of "polymorphous perversity." The end of repression would mark, it seems, man's release from the nightmare of history. In the last part of his book, it should be added, Brown presents specific studies in anality, especially as it has manifested itself in the Protestant Era.

### Ego Psychology and Erikson

Almost all of the post-Freudian developments mentioned above have been more contributions to the philosophy of history, or to metapsychology, rather than the actual application of psychoanalysis to the traditional materials with which historians have worked,

that is, precise documents relating to specific individuals and events. With the work of Erik H. Erikson,<sup>13-17</sup> a "revolution" in history is occurring, marked by the use of the term "psychohistory." Not since Freud himself has the impact on history been so great.

Sullivan and his school helped prepare the way for Erikson, but it is primarily the developments in ego psychology, associated with Freud himself, his daughter Anna Freud, Heinz Hartmann, David Rapaport, and others, that opened the way in theory for Erikson's work. As is well known, attention was now centered on the interrelationship of id, ego, and superego processes, and stress placed on the defensive and adaptive functions of the ego. Normality and creativity became as interesting and valid as psychopathology and breakdown, and the personality was seen more as a functioning whole than as a bundle of neuroses; hence reductionism was more easily avoided.

With these inspirations, to which he contributed, Erikson turned to the elaboration of what has come to be called psychohistory. In *Childhood and Society*,<sup>18</sup> which has become practically a handbook in the field, he outlined in simple, clear terms his "Theory of Infantile Sexuality." Here he tried to show how id, ego, and superego processes interrelate during all the stages of psychosexual development; they are, in short, corresponding processes. Next he deals with the orthodox stages of oral, anal, phallic, and genital in terms of what he calls "zones, modes, and modalities," thus freeing them from a predominantly biological orientation. Implicit, too, in this essay, though more fully developed in the later chapter, "Eight Ages of Man," are Erikson's stages of development, ranging through infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, young adult, adulthood, and mature age, where the individual is presented with such antinomies as "trust versus mistrust," "autonomy versus shame," "initiative versus guilt," and so on.<sup>19</sup> Although such stages carry with them the danger of being applied mechanically, they offer, if correctly viewed, merely a useful schema of psychosexual development. In any case, throughout his work,

Erikson strives to show how the biologically given stages are elaborated upon by culture, with varied and different results.

Much of *Childhood and Society* is devoted to exemplifications of Erikson's theories in relation to specific case studies: anthropological, as in the study of the Yurok and Sioux Indians; historical, as in the studies of American, German, and Russian national character. In *Young Man Luther*<sup>17</sup> and in *Gandhi's Truth*<sup>14</sup> Erikson really practiced what he preached and gave full-scale examples of what he intended by psychohistory (though at first he did not use the term). Thus, much of Erikson's effect on historians has resulted from the fact that he united theory and practice to an unusual degree, and in a way that they could see themselves following.

Erikson's successful inspiration of a number of historians may be attributed to some of the following factors. First, his psychoanalytic theories, giving due weight to ego and superego processes, allowed him to take seriously historical materials as telling us what, in fact, was the cultural content of these processes. Second, to understand the historical he used actual historical materials—letters, autobiographies, and similar documentary materials—rather than resorting to large-scale sociological, and generally Marxist, theories; in fact, it is anthropology rather than sociology that has had the greatest influence on Erikson. Third, he studied his historical materials closely (though some historians disagree with the way he does this), adding to the usual historian's insight his own psychohistorical methods derived from a secure base in clinical data; that is, the same analysis of psychological processes, such as projection, displacement, and so forth, are applied rigorously and with great insight to the historical documents. Fourth, he concerned himself with problems of historical method and has shown an unusual awareness of problems of evidence and inference, and objectivity and subjectivity, for example, of transference or countertransference phenomena as manifested in the historian himself.<sup>16</sup> For these and similar reasons many historians have felt themselves at home with Erikson, or at least willing to learn from

