

FROMM, ERICH

Mar. 23, 1900- Psychoanalyst; social philosopher; author; university professor
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The creation of a sane society based on human needs and the establishment of harmonious relations among men and nations in a nuclear age are the prime concerns of the noted psychoanalyst and social philosopher, Dr. Erich Fromm. Since leaving Nazi Germany in the 1930's, he has become a leading exponent of the application of psychoanalysis to the problems of cultural neurosis through such best-selling books as *Escape From Freedom* (1941), *Man for Himself* (1947), *The Sane Society* (1955), *The Art of Loving* (1956), *May Man Prevail?* (1961), and *The Heart of Man* (1964). In others he has examined the views of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx and the precepts of Judaism, Christianity, and Zen Buddhism. In addition to prosecuting his literary activities, Fromm holds professorships at the National University of Mexico and at New York University. Describing a visit with Fromm in Mexico, Chandler Brossard wrote in *Look* (May 5, 1964): "In talking to Dr. Fromm, one gets the impression—and it is an exhilarating one, tinged with awe—that he has dedicated his life to rolling back the darkness of man's history."

Descended from a long line of rabbis, Erich Fromm was born in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany on March 23, 1900 to Naphtali Fromm, a wine merchant, and Rosa (Krause) Fromm. He grew up in Frankfurt in a devout Jewish atmosphere, but his humanist outlook was also shaped by other influences, notably the ideas of Spinoza, Goethe, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. The outbreak of World War I, when he was fourteen, came as a profound shock to him and marked the beginning of his pacifism. "For me, the First World War was the beginning of the process of brutalization that continues to this day," he once recalled in an interview with Joseph Wershba in the *New York Post* (April 22, 1962).

After completing his secondary education in Frankfurt, Fromm attended the University of Heidelberg, where he obtained his doctor of philosophy degree in 1922. He obtained training in psychoanalysis at the University of Munich in 1923-24 and then completed his formal education at the internationally renowned Psychoanalytic Institute in Berlin. Unlike many of his colleagues, who entered the psychoanalytical profession through the practice of medicine, Fromm never received a medical education.

Although he was originally a dogmatic and orthodox Freudian, Fromm gradually modified his views because he disagreed with Freud's emphasis on unconscious inner drives and his neglect of social and economic factors in his theories of the human mind. Fromm's social concern also caused him to abandon his strict adherence to the Jewish

religion at the age of twenty-six. "I gave up my religious convictions and practices because I just didn't want to participate in any division of the human race, whether religious or political," he told Joseph Wershba in the *New York Post* interview.

In 1925 Fromm began to practise psychoanalysis, devoting part of his time to theoretical work in the application of psychoanalytical theories to social and cultural problems. He became a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association and soon gained a reputation as a psychoanalyst of some note. From 1929 to 1932 he was a lecturer at the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. His lengthy essay, *Die Entwicklung des Christusdogmas; Eine psychoanalytische Studie zur sozialpsychologischen Funktion der Religion* (The Development of the Dogma of Christ; a Psychoanalytical Study of the Socio-psychological Function of Religion), first appeared in 1930 in *Imago*, a journal published by Freud in Vienna, and was separately published in the following year. In it he sought to interpret the doctrines and symbols of Christianity in the light of the social and economic experiences of the early Christians. Fromm was in Geneva, Switzerland when Hitler came to power in Germany.

Invited to lecture at the Chicago Psychoanalytical Institute, Fromm visited the United States in 1933. In the following year he left his Nazi-dominated homeland permanently, having decided to settle in the United States and to become an American citizen. Once in the United States he encountered some difficulty in achieving status within his profession and found himself excluded from the official ranks of the psychoanalytical establishment. For a time he was associated with the views of the noted German-born psychoanalyst Karen Horney, whose stress on the importance of childhood environmental factors had gained considerable acceptance in the United States. Eventually, however, Fromm chose an independent course, and embarked, in the words of Gregory Zilboorg in the *Saturday Review* (April 11, 1959), on a search for the "essence of man, the meaning of human struggles, and the roots and growth and efflorescence of love in the deepest and universal, ethico-philosophical meaning of this word." He soon became known for the unorthodox, controversial views that he expounded in his lectures and writings.

Fromm was a lecturer at Columbia University's International Institute for Social Research from 1934 to 1939 and a guest lecturer at Columbia in 1940-41. From 1941 to 1950 he was a member of the faculty of Bennington College in Vermont, and during that period he was also a lecturer at the American Institute for Psychoanalysis in 1941-42 and Terry lecturer at Yale University in 1949-50. He also joined the staff of the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in 1945 and became chairman of its faculty in 1947. Since 1951 Fromm has been a professor in the department of psychoanalysis in the medical school of the National University of Mexico, and in 1955 he became head of the department, supervising the training of psychoanalysts and psychiatrists. Concurrently, Fromm served as a professor at Michigan State University

from 1957 to 1961, and since 1962 he has held a professorship in psychiatry at New York University. To fulfill his obligations to N.Y.U., and to meet the demand for his lectures in the United States and abroad, Fromm spends about four months each year away from Mexico.

In his best-selling book *Escape From Freedom* (Farrar, 1941), which by late 1965 had gone through some twenty-five printings, Fromm traces the development of man's freedom and self-awareness from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and Reformation to recent times. Applying the techniques of psychoanalysis to the social process, he examines the tendency of modern emancipated man to take refuge from the dehumanizing trends of contemporary civilization by turning to totalitarian movements, such as Nazism. The book is regarded as a landmark in psychology, intellectual history, and political philosophy.

Some of the questions that he poses in *Escape From Freedom* Fromm examines further in *Man for Himself; An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics* (Rinehart, 1947), in which he asserts that the individual must determine his own ethical standards, rather than blindly follow authority. In *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (Yale Univ. Press, 1950), based on the Terry lectures he delivered at Yale, Fromm discusses the religious views of Freud and Jung and, while noting religion's shortcomings in coping with modern problems, suggests areas in which psychoanalysts and clergymen might co-operate. In *The Forgotten Language; An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales, and Myths* (Rinehart, 1951), Fromm takes an excursion into the realm of fantasy with examples from the Bible, folklore, and modern literature, and reaffirms his faith in the unfettered human mind.

The alienation of man in consumer-oriented, industrial society constitutes the theme of *The Sane Society* (Rinehart, 1955), one of Fromm's most influential works. Modern man, Fromm argues, has become estranged from his own forces and actions and has become a virtual prisoner of the institutions and material objects that he himself has created. To restore sanity to human existence, Fromm urges that a rebirth of enlightenment take place in the social, economic, political, and spiritual spheres of life. The end product would be a "Humanistic Communitarian Socialism," within which man would be "restituted to his supreme place in society." *The Sane Society* inspired the name of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), which Fromm helped to organize in 1957.

The thesis that "love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence" is advanced in Fromm's next book, *The Art of Loving* (Harper, 1956). In it he discusses the emotion in its various manifestations, contrasting immature love, based on such superficialities as popularity and sex appeal, with mature love, a mutually satisfying interpersonal union "under the condition of preserving one's integrity." In *Sigmund Freud's Mission; An Analysis of His Personality and Influence* (Harper, 1959), Fromm traces some of the strengths and weaknesses of psychoanalysis to the life and personality of its founder and criticizes



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those who have found in his movement "a dogma, a ritual, a leader, a hierarchy, the feeling of possessing the truth, of being superior to the uninitiated." The concepts, methods, and goals of psychoanalysis and Zen are compared in *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (Harper, 1960), based on a workshop conducted in 1957 at the National University of Mexico by Fromm, D.T. Suzuki, and Richard de Martino.

Fromm's concern about the prospect of nuclear war permeates his *May Man Prevail? An Inquiry Into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy* (Doubleday, 1961). Analyzing the cold war, he maintains that hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union results from paranoid thinking based on misconceptions that the two powers hold about each other's aims. The Soviet Union, he observes, is no longer an expansionist, revolutionary power but an essentially conservative, bureaucratic nation that has many interests in common with the United States. On the other hand, he sees a definite source of danger in a strong, nationalistic Germany under the domination of the same forces that had been in control in the past. As a possible solution to the world crisis Fromm suggests co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union in a program to alleviate poverty in underdeveloped nations; universal, controlled disarmament under the auspices of the United Nations; and encouragement of a growing unaligned bloc of nations to constitute a third force between the two great powers. Fromm was co-editor, with Hans Herzfeld, of the bilingual volume of essays *Der Friede: Idee und Verwirklichung; The Search for Peace*, published in Heidelberg in 1961.

In *Marx's Concept of Man* (Ungar, 1961) Fromm contends that Karl Marx was essentially a humanist in the best tradition of the world's great religions and philosophies. Pointing to Marx's early economic and philosophical manuscripts, written in 1844, Fromm notes that Marx tried to end the alienation of man from himself and from nature by means of communism. Fromm continues his study of Marx in *Beyond the Chains of Illusion; My Encounter*





With Marx and Freud (Simon & Schuster, 1962), in which he contrasts Freud's essentially pessimistic view of man with Marx's "unbroken faith in man's perfectibility." Although he gives due credit to Freud's contributions to the study of human behavior, Fromm maintained that as "a figure of world historical significance" Marx was infinitely superior. Fromm's views of Marx met with some scholarly criticism, notably from Professor Sidney Hook, who dismissed the equation of Marxist socialism with humanism as "metaphysical extravaganza."

Fromm's early German essay on the development of Christian doctrine was published in English translation in the volume *The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology, and Culture* (Holt, 1963). In *The Heart of Man; Its Genius for Good and Evil* (Harper, 1964), Fromm discusses the creative and destructive capacities of man and contrasts two types of personality: the necrophile, attracted to death and decay, and the biophile, who has a reverence for life. Conceding the strength of the former in modern industrial civilization, Fromm nevertheless hopes that the latter will ultimately triumph with the achievement of a humanistic socialism. Fromm edited the volume *Socialist Humanism; An International Symposium* (Doubleday, 1965), a collection of essays by world thinkers. The alienation of man from industrial civilization is again a theme of Fromm's book *You Shall Be as Gods; A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Tradition* (Holt, 1966), in which he outlines a "non-theistic interpretation" of the scriptures and equates the "image of God" with man's capacity to realize freedom.

The popularity of Erich Fromm, especially among university students and professors, has led some observers to speak of a Fromm cult. Praising his versatility in a review in the *New York Herald Tribune* (September 4, 1955), John Dollard noted that Fromm is "at once sociologist, philosopher, historian, psychoanalyst, economist, and anthropologist—and, one is tempted to add, lover of human life, poet, and prophet." On the other hand, critic Harvey Cox, in the *New York Times Book Review* (November 27, 1966), called Fromm "an incorrigibly intrusive man with a congenital insensitivity to the normally respected boundaries between disciplines." And Carl H. Hamburg, in an essay in *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* (1957), concluded that "Fromm's attempt to provide us with a scientifically supported and naturalistic concept of human nature has not been successful."

Dr. Fromm is a diplomate in clinical psychology of the American Psychological Association. He is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Science, a member of the Washington Psychoanalytic Society, and an honorary member of the Mexican National Academy of Medicine. He has contributed many articles and essays to popular and scholarly publications. Although he no longer practises psychoanalysis he sustains his interest in current trends in his profession and is disturbed by the tendency of some of his colleagues to act as high priests of society who contribute to the dehumanization process by preaching conformity to the existing industrial and bureaucratic civilization. In recent years

Fromm has been prominent in the peace movement, along with such veteran pacifists as A.J. Muste and Norman Thomas. "The fight for peace," he told Joseph Wershba in the *New York Post* interview, "is one way to stay sane."

Erich Fromm's first marriage, on June 16, 1926, to Frieda Reichmann, ended in divorce. His second wife, the former Henny Gurland, whom he married on July 24, 1944, died in 1952. He was married a third time, on December 18, 1953, to Annis Freeman. Fromm and his wife make their home in Cuernavaca, southeast of Mexico City, in a modern stone-and-glass house that they themselves designed. Chandler Brossard noted in *Look* magazine (May 5, 1964) that Fromm has "the energy and spirit of one half his age," and that a visitor to his home "forgets about salon word-spinning in the presence of this onrushing, overwhelming, nonstop seeker after meaning," for whom "talk and action are one." Although Fromm no longer identifies himself with any formal religion, he still enjoys reading the Bible and the Talmud.

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HOVING, THOMAS P(EARSALL) F(IELD) (hō-ving)

Jan. 15, 1931- Museum director; art historian
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Among the qualifications that Thomas P. F. Hoving has brought to the demanding post of director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art are a flair for administration and a distinctive style in public relations. These endowments of Hoving the art historian came to light with unexpected splendor when Mayor-elect John V. Lindsay persuaded him to leave his position as curator of the Metropolitan's medieval Cloisters and become commissioner of parks of New York City in January 1966. The move was not so digressive as it at first seemed in the career of Hoving, who began at once to stress the cultural aspects of the work of the parks department and to look "at New York City in a way few men in city government ever thought to do—as a work of art," as John Garabedian observed in the *New York Post*. Succeeding the late James J. Rorimer, Hoving took office in April 1967 as head of the country's wealthiest and most esteemed museum.

Thomas Pearsall Field Hoving was born on January 15, 1931 in New York City to Walter and Mary Osgood (Field) Hoving. His father, who had come to America as a child with his Swedish parents, was

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