



someone who will not grow up and get a job; Szasz practically says this. In a belabored comparison of husbands and wives to psychiatrists and patients, Szasz advises both wives and patients to make a break for economic independence. . . . The only way to overcome their [the mental patient's] subjection is by both economic and personal independence from psychiatrists. This means that 'psychotics' should not expect to be supported by psychiatrists (society) as patients, but must support themselves by work salable in the market place." So much for Szasz's prescription.

Again this is not a political aside; it emerges directly out of his analysis. His critique always begins exactly where the individual and cash nexus ends. Nothing focuses him more than state institutions pockens with freeloading "patients." His primal charge against Laing is that he is bilking the taxpayer. "The cost of care of the 'residents' in the Laingian

asylums is mainly borne by the British taxpayer. . . . Ironically, while Laing's tongue lashes society for driving people mad, his hands are picking the taxpayer's pockets."

In sum, Szasz blasts society with all the explosive force of a popgun. In the stifling air of technocratic capitalism, the pop occasionally reverberates. Szasz as civil libertarian has something to say; he defends the individual against state and medical domination with the ardor of an 18th-century radical. But Szasz even at his best speaks in the name of the society he decries. He represents a more elemental form of domination, plain competition, against its successor, state-regulated competition. Inasmuch as the latter is not far from the former, Szasz is hardly a critic. He only wants to disestablish medicine and balance the budget. Illness, schizophrenia (and state religion) hardly disappear; they are just put on a pay-as-you-go basis. □

A Stranger to Narrow Fashion

TO HAVE OR TO BE? By Erich Fromm. Edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Harper & Row. 215 pp. \$8.95.

PAUL ROAZEN

In the history of ideas it is customary for the reputations of thinkers to fluctuate cyclically. It is more unusual, however, for a living writer to have endured major changes in fashion. Among intellectuals Erich Fromm commands little current interest. *To Have or to Be?*, Fromm's twenty-second book, appeared early last fall, and although it was the selection of a major book club it has met with critical silence. This new book is a restatement of Fromm's present theoretical position, and one might explain the absence of reviews by the familiarity of many of its themes. But the appearance in 1973 of Fromm's *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, a major statement, did little to alert the intellectual community to the misunderstandings that have grown up around the contributions of this seminal thinker.

The publication of Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941) was a notable event in modern intellectual history. *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (1947) also illus-

trated the power of his mind. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s students read and respected Fromm's publications, and tried to keep up with the flow of his new books. Perhaps Fromm's fecundity has helped to deter his success in the high culture. But the climate of opinion has also shaped the response to Fromm's work. Socially he has been the most radical of psychoanalytic thinkers. He is concerned with the pathology of normality, and considers it legitimate to speak of an "insane" society and of what happens to sane people within it. Paradoxically, Fromm's reputation went into an eclipse in North America during the turbulent 1960s, yet in the preceding (supposedly more conservative) decades he was widely acclaimed as a pundit. Just as Jung's reputation as a depth psychologist, despite his political misjudgments about the Nazis, is finally on the upswing, in the long run Fromm will undoubtedly get the credit he deserves. No living psychoanalyst has tried more relentlessly to reconcile Freud and Marx.

Part of Fromm's problem has come from his lack of association with one of the more prestigious research universities on this continent, and here he might well feel vindicated in his belief that the more famous centers of learning propagate support for the status quo. It has taken courage and originality on Fromm's part to establish himself as someone to be heard without the support either of conventional academic life

Paul Roazen teaches social and political science at York University in Toronto. His most recent book is Erik H. Erikson: The Power and Limits of a Vision (The Free Press, Macmillan).

THE NATION/February 5, 1977

Roazen, P., 1977: Review Fromm, E.: To Have Or to Be? (1976a, English), In: The Nation (5. 2. 1977), pp. 151-154.



or the mainstream of the psychoanalytic movement. Other conformist pressures have worked against him. Literary critics, if only by virtue of their command of language, exert a critical weight beyond their special fields; and they have on the whole sided, when they have been at all receptive to psychoanalytic thought, against the revisionist school.

Sectarianism has undercut the place Fromm deserves. It is not surprising, given the prior controversies in the history of psychoanalysis, that although a landmark in social science, *Escape from Freedom* was greeted with savage reviews by Freudians insistent on preserving the purity of their dogmas. Psychoanalysis, like other organizations, has thrived on having both heroes and villains, and it was Fromm's fate to become an object of scorn among orthodox psychoanalytic followers. He found himself dropped from the direct membership list of the International Psychoanalytic Association, and like other so-called heretics his writings have been blacklisted at most training centers. Although his books continue to be widely purchased by the public, professionally Fromm has been ignored rather than criticized responsibly. It is perhaps the inevitable fate of dissidents that they must each go their own way. Fromm once published a critique of Otto Rank, and has been at times too hard on Jung. He has been allied with such original thinkers as Harry Stack Sullivan, Clara Thompson and Karen Horney, and yet none of these people has been able to match organizationally the ranks of "official" psychoanalysis.

While from an outsider's point of view Fromm has remained an analyst loyal to the broad Freudian tradition, he has also been a Socialist. But even here sectarianism undermined his stature within the intellectual elite. Fromm was an early member of the Frankfurt school of critical sociology, and his bitterest critic has been a former co-worker, Herbert Marcuse. In a famous exchange, originally published in *Dissent*, Fromm tried to defend himself against Marcuse's attack. Marcuse cannot be entirely blamed for the slavish way his own disciples have continued either to attack Fromm or to denigrate his contributions. But combined with the opposition of establishment psychoanalysis, the sectarianism of the Left (aided by Paul Goodman's critique of Freudian revisionism) gave Fromm little basis for potential supporters.

When he was 22 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg for a thesis on the sociology of three Jewish

sects. Subsequently he underwent psychoanalytic training and graduated from the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society in 1931. He recalls having spent about ten years as an orthodox Freudian, although he never had any personal contact with the founder of psychoanalysis. In its early years psychoanalysis attracted more illustrious, and less conformist, practitioners than is apt to be the case today in North America. Fromm's first wife, Frieda Fromm-Reichman, was a pioneer in the development of new therapeutic techniques. In 1934 they moved to New York, and then in 1949 Fromm himself left for Mexico where he launched a psychoanalytic institute. Like other post-Freudian thinkers such as Erik Erikson and Bruno Bettelheim, his writings have moved from their psychological and social moorings toward philosophical and moral issues. Such psychoanalysts have helped to fill the gap left by the fashionable narrowness of contemporary professional philosophy.

No revisionist Freudian has been writing for as long as Fromm, nor has any reached a broader public, shown more independence of thought, or possessed more conceptual ability. He helped introduce important alterations in the 1930s brand of psychoanalysis. Turning away from the pessimism of Freud's instinct theory, Fromm insisted on the potential significance of changes in the social environment as a means of altering the human condition. In a field where it is still possible for writers to treat Freud's case histories as sacred texts, Fromm has been bold in challenging Freud's clinical practices. Early on he recognized the social prejudices incorporated in the traditional psychoanalytic conception of women. Sociologists advise that the way to advance oneself professionally is to write for one's peers, but within psychoanalysis Fromm has had few equals, and his early associates are now long dead. So in the end his strategy of appealing to the book-buying public may have been the only recourse open to him.

Freud was not much interested, aside from criticizing sexual mores, in the social sources of suffering and exploitation. Fromm, on the other hand, has been intrigued by the way our culture fosters conformist tendencies by suppressing spontaneous feelings and thereby crippling the development of genuine individuality: "human beings are more afraid of being outcasts than even of dying." Following the earlier interest in character structure shown by Jung and Wilhelm Reich, although loyally citing Freud's own limited efforts at character typology, Fromm developed his concept of "social character" to explain how so-

cialties produce and reproduce the personality types they need to perpetuate themselves. Social character gets molded by the economy, and in turn dominant character traits shape the social process. As external necessity gets internalized in the psyche, human energy is harnessed for a given economic or social system. In this way we become what we are expected to be.

Instead of seeing the unconscious as something frightening, Fromm holds that truth is repressed by an unconscious which is basically socially determined. He also thinks that too, often we fear our superior potentialities, and in particular the ability to develop as autonomous and free individuals. He traces destructiveness to the un-lived life rather than to a mythical death instinct. If cruelty is one of the ways of making sense of life, it only illustrates Fromm's theory that character-rooted passions should be considered psychosocial phenomena.

Fromm is fundamentally a religious person in the prophetic tradition. His occasionally sanctimonious tone has often obscured his critical acumen. To Freud sentimentality of any sort awakened fears of personal weakness and passivity. If Freud avoided piousness he could at times be moralistic; in books like *Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents* he sought to overturn traditional Western standards of ethics. Beneath Fromm's religious piety lies a genuinely bold spirit. Both Fromm and Freud likened themselves to great rabbis. In *To Have or to Be?* Fromm identifies with Rabbi Jochanan ben Sakai, as Freud had done in his *Moses and Monotheism*. Even in his accounts of clinical work Freud gave his readers more comfort than he liked to acknowledge. It is reassuring to be led to think one is tough-minded. Freud's therapy was characteristically more supportive than his ideal of aloofness might lead one to suppose.

A certain snobbery deters some people from admiring a writer who becomes world famous. However lowbrow a popular book like Fromm's *The Art of Loving* (1957) may appear to be, he is doing something important for intelligent readers in need of spiritual guidance. For Fromm selfishness is not, as in Freud, the same as self-love. Fromm thinks they are opposites, and therefore the possibility for altruism as an aspect of self-expression becomes a real one. Yet there are grounds for questioning Fromm's capacity to convince. He lacks Freud's irony, the Viennese sense of play and feeling for the absurd. As a writer



Freud had a superb dramatic sense whereas Fromm's books weigh heavily now. At times Fromm does not sound ignorant enough, as when he asserts in *To Have or to Be?* that "we know almost everything that is important to know about human behavior. . . ." Freud was grandiose, but at least at times he liked to emphasize how little we can understand. The combination of certainty and skepticism in Freud helps account for his enduring popular appeal.

To Have or to Be? is not easy reading, but it does manage to present the viewpoint and challenge of "radical humanistic psychoanalysis." In keeping with his long-held view that selfishness and altruism are different character orientations, in his new book he presents two alternative modes of existence: the mode of having and the mode of being. A feature of what Fromm sees as the crisis of contemporary life is that society is too much centered around things rather than around persons. The "having" mode is represented in the alienation of consumerism, and the "having" mode's predominance is reflected, Fromm thinks, in the growing use of nouns and the decreasing use of verbs in the Western world. Whereas Freud liked to debunk the legitimacy of altruism, Fromm has tried to combat egocentricity. Too often we hold our ego as a possession, the basis for identity, a thing.

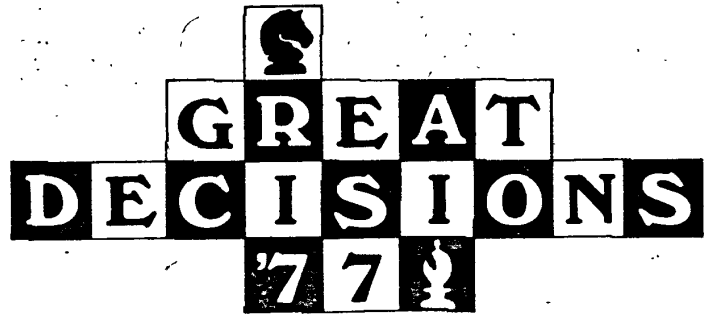
In addition to egotism Fromm sets out here to combat greed and human passivity, bemoaning the prevalence in the modern world of competition, antagonism and fear. We are, he says, unduly bound to our own egos. Like other thinkers he distinguishes between subjectively felt needs and objectively valid ones. For Fromm the existence of a desire does not in itself constitute an ethical norm. He has in mind the aim of self-realization; for him self-affirmation is a process of exercising human reason in a productive activity. He attacks Marcuse for encouraging a hedonistic return to childhood instead of holding maturity as the ultimate goal of socialism.

Fromm contends that reason properly exercised will lead to an ethic of love. But he distinguishes his own views from those of Freud. Love for Fromm is a process both self-renewing and self-increasing: "selfishness and laziness are not the only propensities inherent in human beings. We human beings have an inherent and deeply rooted desire to be: to express our faculties, to be active, to be related to others, to escape the prison cell of selfishness." Society has aimed

not, as Freud thought, to repress sex, but to vilify sex for the sake of breaking the human will. Social conformism succeeds to the extent that it breaks our independence without our even being aware of it. In searching for "guidance to a non-theistic, yet religious, philosophy of life" Fromm is no longer committed to a theory of progress. Like other Central European refugees he now hints that there has been a decline in the spirit of society at least since the 13th century. When he refers to Jesus he does not have organized religion in mind, and he divorces Marx from what

he calls "the vulgar forgery presented by Soviet Communism."

Fromm concludes *To Have or to Be?* by suggesting resolutions of what he sees as our central social crisis. Outside of proposing the creation of a new humanist body of experts who are to create guidelines to be submitted to the citizenry for discussion, Fromm is left with mainly hortatory proposals to encourage social change. He is not optimistic in his utopianism but he retains a "faith" in humanity's capacity to extricate itself from the catastrophic circumstances it has created.



A weekly series exploring vital U.S. foreign policy issues on National Public Radio's award-winning news magazine . . .

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

- | | | | |
|---------|--|---------|--|
| Feb. 9 | The Spread of Deadly Weapons:
Can Proliferation Be Checked? | Mar. 9 | U.S.-Soviet Relations:
Whatever Happened to Détente? |
| Feb. 16 | Southern Africa:
End of White Supremacy? | Mar. 16 | China and the U.S.:
Where Should We Go from Here? |
| Feb. 23 | The Middle East Cauldron:
After Lebanon, What Next? | Mar. 23 | Food and Population:
Was Malthus Right? |
| Mar. 2 | Western Europe in Transition:
What Impact on the Atlantic Partnership? | Mar. 30 | Panama and Cuba:
What Choices for the U.S.? |

"Great Decisions '77" opinion ballots, inviting your views, will be offered during **All Things Considered**. Check local listings or your NPR member station for broadcast times.

This series is produced by NPR as part of a nonpartisan national discussion program developed by the Foreign Policy Association. For additional information on the program, write: FPA, 345 46 St., New York, N.Y. 10017.





FROMM-Online

Fromm's recommendations are in the end idealist ones, and if they succeed only in making us feel better about ourselves they may serve conservative purposes. But when he declares that a new society presupposes a deep change in the human heart, and that what we need is a new object of devotion to replace the present one, Fromm is convinced that drastic environmental re-

forms are necessary to improve human life fundamentally. His concepts are designed to construct bridges between the individual and society. Long ago he insisted on the inevitable role ethics play in psychology. To the degree to which Fromm has overcome received wisdom, avoiding both pre-Freudian and current behavioristic views, the monument of his work has enriched our discourse. □

The Blasted Nursery

FOOTHOLDS: Understanding the Shifting Sexual and Family Tensions in Our Culture. By Philip Slater. Edited by Wendy Slater Palmer. E.P. Dutton & Co. 227 pp. Paper \$4.95.

EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

Footholds is Philip Slater's most arresting book so far. It is studded with the kinds of insights which result from his exceptionally fresh way of looking at familiar relationships. Nevertheless the book is harder to characterize than his *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, because it is less well organized. *Footholds* was culled by its editor, Wendy Slater Palmer, from papers selected by Philip Slater; some are unpublished and one of them was written as a summary to the present volume. Ms. Palmer has done an excellent job of making the collection read as smoothly as if it had been conceived as a single work; but she has not quite managed to give *Footholds* the sharp focus of a work constructed as a unit.

There is, in any case, a difficulty that any reviewer of Slater's writing must face in trying to convey its consistently high quality. As a social psychologist or psychic sociologist Slater has chosen to do serious and disciplined; yet highly speculative, work in an area that lies at the center of current patterns of anxiety, an area which is, as a consequence, crowded with the pronouncements of gurus and other fast-buck artists. *Footholds* is subtitled "Understanding the Shifting Sexual and Family Tensions in Our Culture" and risks being classed with more pretentious works whose significance derives from their status as cultural artifacts rather than from their content. The standard precaution against this sort of confusion is to base one's writings on "hard," quantitative data, but

Edgar Friedenber is professor of education at Dalhousie University, Halifax, and the author of *The Vanishing Adolescent* and *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes*.

to do so would betray Slater's purpose at the outset. One of the most useful things a reviewer of *Footholds* can do for a prospective reader, therefore, is to put her (as Slater would say) on notice that this is neither a prospectus for yet another approach to group therapy nor one more treatise on the decline of everything in Western civilization—though it is closer to the latter than the former. Much easier to read than *Eros and Civilization*, much less a collection of glittering chips than *Love's Body*, *Footholds* shares the same concerns. But Slater, in this book, is cooler than either Marcuse or Brown, enough so that he manages to take an astonishingly non-partisan view of the struggle between Eros and civilization. When I finished the book, I found myself ready to concede that it was not only likely but appropriate, that this struggle should end in a dead heat.

Slater's point of departure is the psychodynamic truism that a better world might develop if, throughout the world, one generation of parents were able to rear their children with respect and affection. The vicious circle that leads to dehumanization, envy and global if not yet cosmic destructiveness, would then be broken. Fortunately Slater does not waste his readers' time in utopian fantasy about this unlikely prospect. Instead, he uses the issue heuristically, to help him and his readers analyze why this never happens, even on a small scale.

The central clue to the puzzle is to be found in the universal oppression of women. Like Ariadne's thread, this concern has run through all Slater's work and in *Footholds* it leads, if not out of the labyrinth, to a superbly detailed view of the Minotaur. In a brilliant set of reflections on the place of women in ancient Greece, Slater notes:

The social position of women and the psychological influence of women are thus quite separate matters. The Greek