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Erich Fromm Dies in Switzerland; Psychoanalyst and Author Was 79

By DAVA SOBEL

Dr. Erich Fromm, the psychoanalyst and social philosopher whose influential writings ranged over subjects from the alienation of the individual to the sanity of society, died yesterday of a heart attack at his home in Muralto, Switzerland. He would have celebrated his 80th birthday this Sunday.

Dr. Fromm wrote 20 books, most of them hailed as major works in the field of psychology, including "The Art of Loving" (1956), in which he called love "the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence." He sought a sane solution to political difficulties as well and in 1957 helped to organize the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, or SANE, which took its name from his book, "The Sane Society" (1955).

Dr. Fromm was schooled in Germany in the analytical technique of Sigmund Freud, but he developed his own theories and his own style of psychoanalysis.

A Descendant of Rabbis

Similarly, although he was born into a Jewish family as the descendant of a long line of rabbis and reared according to orthodox teachings, he abandoned Judaism when he was 26 years old. As he explained in 1962 to a reporter, "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."

Born in Frankfurt March 23, 1900, Dr. Fromm became a pacifist at the age of 14 when World War I began. He sought American citizenship after visiting the United States in 1933 and emigrated from Germany, then dominated by the Nazis, in 1934.

His theory of human nature cut a middle path between the instinctivists, who held that innate qualities were fixed at birth, and the behaviorists, who taught that all responses are the result of learning.

Traits Held Interrelated

"Every character trait is interrelated with every other," Dr. Fromm wrote in 1972, "and a single trait cannot be changed without changes in the whole system. That is why to change the character of a person can be compared to splitting an atom; to change only his behavior can be done by conditioning."

No subject relating to human experience was beyond his consideration. The late Margaret Mead, anthropologist and author, praised Dr. Fromm for this scope when she said of his book, "Escape From Freedom" (1941), "It bridges the gap between economics and psychology and shows how no theory which invokes only man's way of earning a living or man's human nature alone is sufficient."

Others found his eclecticism pretentious. Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School criticized him for his "congenital insensitivity to the normally respected boundaries between disciplines."

Philosophy to Psychoanalysis

Dr. Fromm entered psychoanalysis from philosophy, not medicine. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of Heidelberg in 1922 and also trained at the University of Munich and the Psychoanalytic Institute in Berlin.

He began seeing patients in 1925 and began what was to be a distinguished teaching career in 1929 at the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt.

He lectured all over the world and held formal faculty appointments at Columbia University, Bennington College, Yale University, Michigan State University, where he founded the school's Institute of Psychology; New York University, and the National University of Mexico.

Dr. Earl G. Witenberg, director of the William Alanson White Institute for Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology in New York, said in an interview that Dr. Fromm was one of the founders of the institute in 1943 and worked there continuously until 1950.

'A Penetrating Man'

"He was a penetrating man," Dr. Witenberg said. "He could very adroitly make formulations and statements about a patient after one hour of interviewing. He could describe a patient's difficulties in literary and graphic, almost poetic, terms."

In his personal dealings, Dr. Witenberg said, Dr. Fromm "did not countenance fools or sham," and added: "People had to be authentic as well as sincere. He was a great man, both by his presence and his firm ideas. You either loved him or you hated him."

Once, when Dr. Witenberg asked him why he had given up his strictly Freudian approach to analysis, Dr. Fromm replied that he had got bored with it. "He was

more interested in confronting the patient," Dr. Witenberg said, "often working face to face with him and dynamically engaging him with insights about his condition and working actively toward the goal of getting those things clarified."

Dr. Witenberg cited this confrontational practice as one of Dr. Fromm's major contributions to psychoanalysis. And although Dr. Fromm discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Freudian analysis in his book "Sigmund Freud's Mission" (1959), his own technique of treatment was never the subject of any of his written works, and his colleagues learned what they could about it through word of mouth.

In the 1950's Dr. Fromm saw a danger in spreading technology and warned about the possibility of people turning into robots. He participated in a conference on unions in 1956, where he warned that a 20-hour work week, which was being advocated then, would produce nervous breakdowns in people who would not know what to do with their time.

Rather, he suggested making work more interesting, making "men count again" and making all segments of life — economic, cultural, political and spiritual — move forward in an integrated way.

Moved to Switzerland in 1974

Dr. Fromm has been described as a cheerful person. A reporter who visited him in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1964, said that Dr. Fromm had "the energy and spirit of one half his age." In 1974, Dr. Fromm moved to Switzerland, where he continued to work.

He enjoyed reading the Bible and the Talmud and wrote about Zen Buddhism as well as about Jewish and Christian mystics. He was known to practice the formal movements of tai chi, a series of postures and exercises developed in China as a system of self-defense and as an aid to meditation.

Dr. Fromm was a man of medium height who wore frameless spectacles and had a full head of gray hair. He was active to the end of his life despite his fail-



United Press International

Erich Fromm

ing health. A critical study he wrote of Freud was published in West Germany last year, and he was reportedly at work on a treatise about psychotherapy when he died.

Devoted Friend and Colleague

Ruth Nanda Anshen, a professor of philosophy who is chairman of the Nature of Man Seminar at Columbia and who initiated a series of monographs in which most of Dr. Fromm's writings were published, said:

"Erich Fromm was my devoted friend and colleague for more than a quarter of a century. He knew that we are thrown into this indifferent universe, and that although life is exactly the way the Lord says it is to Job, that we can do nothing about it, we need not be silenced by lame submission."

Dr. Fromm was married three times. He and Frieda Reichmann were married in 1926 and divorced. Henny Gurliand, who became his second wife in 1944, died in 1952. He is survived by Annis Freeman Fromm, whom he married in 1963.

His literary agent, Ruth Liepman, said that no funeral arrangements would be announced, in accordance with his wish to have only his family present at the service.

A Fromm Sampler

In the 19th century the problem was that *God is dead*; in the 20th century the problem is that *man is dead*. In the 19th century inhumanity meant cruelty; in the 20th century it means schizoid self-alienation. The danger of the past was that men became slaves. The danger of the future is that men may become robots. True enough, robots do not rebel. But given man's nature, robots cannot live and remain sane, they become "Golems," they will destroy their world and themselves because they cannot stand any longer the boredom of a meaningless life.

The Sane Society (Holt, Rinehart & Winston).

Most people are quite ready to denounce faith in man's improvement as unrealistic, but they do not recognize that despair is often just as unrealistic. The statement, "Human nature is evil," is not a bit more realistic than the statement, "Human nature is good." But the first statement is much easier to make; anyone who wants to prove man's evilness finds followers most readily, for he offers everybody an alibi for his own sins — and seemingly risks nothing. Yet, the spreading of irrational despair is in itself destructive, as all untruth is; it discourages and confuses. Preaching irrational faith or announcing false Messiahs is hardly less destructive; it seduces and then paralyzes.

The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (Holt, Rinehart & Winston).

Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character, which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one "object" of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Because one does not see that love is an activity, a power of the soul, one believes that all that is necessary to find is the right object, and that everything goes by itself afterward. This attitude can be compared to that of a man who wants to paint but who, instead of learning the art, claims that he has just to wait for the right object, and that he will paint beautifully when he finds it.

The Art of Loving (Harper & Row).

It would seem that the amount of destructiveness to be found in individuals is proportionate to the amount to which expansiveness of life is curtailed. By this we do not refer to individual frustrations of this or that instinctive desire, but to the thwarting of the whole of life, the blockage of spontaneity of the growth and expression of man's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual capacities. The more the drive toward life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive toward destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. Destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived life.

Escape From Freedom (Holt, Rinehart & Winston).

John M. Slack Dead; West Virginian Served In House for 20 Years

Representative John M. Slack, Democrat of West Virginia, who served the state's coal-mining Third Congressional District for more than 20 years, died of a heart attack Monday night at Mount Vernon Hospital in Alexandria, Va. He would have been 65 years old yesterday.

Deaths	Brief
ABRAHAM—Miriam, The Officers and Board of Directors of the Jewish Guild for the Blind, its Womens Division and Staff mourn with deep sorrow the passing of Mrs. Otto Abraham, beloved and esteemed Honorary Vice President of the Womens Division and devoted benefactress of the Guild. Her wisdom, vision and leadership will be profoundly missed. We offer our heartfelt sympathy to the family. Bernard H. Mendik, President Mrs. W. Anthony Ullman, President Womens Div John F. Heimerdinger, Executive Director	FINKE—Mollie, Beloved wife of the late Irving E. Fink, daughter of Norma F. Frielle L. Illson of Loving grandmothers, Mrs. Freese, Dr. Kenneth M. Illson, and son, Great grandmothers, Mrs. L. Illson, N.Y., 1000 Park Center N.Y.
ALLEN—Fannie, Beloved wife of the late Hyman, devoted mother of Ralph Allen, Charlotte Hoffman and	FOWKES—Charles G. 1980. Beloved husband of Murray. Dear brother of O'Donnell and the