



McLaughlin_N_2017a

Who Killed off Fromm's Reputation in North America? Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* and the Forgetting of a Public Intellectual

Neil McLaughlin

„Who Killed off Fromm's Reputation in North America? Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* and the Forgetting of a Public Intellectual“, in: *Fromm Forum* (English Edition – ISBN 1437-1189), 21 / 2017, Tuebingen (Selbstverlag), pp. 07-21.

Copyright © 2017 by Professor Dr. Neil McLaughlin, Dept. of Sociology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4L8 / Canada. E-Mail: nmclaugh[at-symbol]mcmaster.ca.

For those of us who have been inspired and influenced by Erich Fromm's critical theory and psychoanalytic insights, it has always been somewhat of a mystery to explain how his reputation declined so dramatically after the early 1960s, especially in the United States and English-speaking world. There are the obvious usual suspects responsible for attacking Fromm unfairly, spreading half-truths, distortions and out-right lies about his ideas and politics in order to discredit his social theory: orthodox Freudians, dogmatic Marxists, neo-conservative critics of his radical humanism and critiques of American foreign policy and positivist social scientists more concerned with academic legitimacy than critical ideas. There is consensus that the Fromm-Marcuse debate in *Dissent* magazine in the mid 1950s (Fromm 1955b; 1956b; Marcuse 1955; 1956b) was a particularly important intellectual event that played a central role in undermining Erich Fromm's intellectual reputation, as part of the Frankfurt School feud between Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse and Fromm that went back to the 1920s when they worked together in the dying days of the Weimar Republic and again in the 1930s in exile in New York City (Burston 1991; Braune 2013; Friedman 2013; Funk 1982; McLaughlin 1998a; Rickert 1986; Durkin 2014). But somehow the remarkable way that this short exchange in a prestigious but ultimately

low circulation and relatively marginal American left wing magazine in the middle of the 1950s would be so influential in damaging the reputation of a major intellectual figure of Fromm's stature remains a mystery. If we somewhat playfully think of reputational damage as a crime, I think I know who did it.

This essay will argue that of all the various factors that helped damage Fromm's reputation in North America it was not the Fromm-Marcuse debate itself that was key but the influence of Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (1975b) and, to a lesser extent, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (1983) that was pivotal. Usually one thinks of reputational damage being done by powerful gatekeepers and famous scholars but Jacoby was an obscure American radical historian during the late 1960s and early 1970s who had trouble landing an academic position and wrote a number of polemical essays in the relatively marginal American radical journals, particularly in *Telos*, an important outlet that was formed in 1968 and played an instrumental role in introducing Frankfurt School style critical theory in America. So this is a double mystery because Jacoby himself at the time was marginal as a historian who did very little archival research, if any, and largely wrote highly theoretical and polemic essays and books making



the case for Western Marxism, Adorno and Frankfurt School radicalism. The historian Martin Jay had written the most influential study on the Frankfurt School three years before *Social Amnesia* (1975b) in *The Dialectical Imagination* (1972), a competent if biased work based on archival sources and interviews that both secured his reputation as a scholar and created room for the next generation of Frankfurt School historians and critical theorists (Bronner 1994; Wheatland 2009; Wiggershaus 1986). Clearly the rising tide of critical theory scholarship in the 1970s that Jay helped create partly explains the success of *Social Amnesia* (1975b), but it is important to not read later history into our historical understanding of these intellectual events. In the late 1960s Jacoby was on the intellectual margins in America, and his writings were a hybrid mix of polemics, history and theorizing that left him stranded in the spaces between disciplines and thus largely unemployable in major research universities at the time. How could it come to be that Jacoby's book in a relatively minor left wing press in the United States could have such an influence? Jacoby's polemics against neo-Freudians, particularly Fromm, saved his career, and significantly damaged the reception of Fromm's work, particularly in America and in the English-speaking world, a story to which we now turn.

Marcuse's Critique of Fromm: Conformist Revisionist?

Fromm scholars have long known about the importance of The Fromm-Marcuse debate in *Dissent* for damaging Fromm's reputation, but it is important to remember that it became so influential also because of interaction between two major intellectual currents and one polemical book: the orthodox Freudians in America, the political movement of the New Left and Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* (1975b). Marcuse was not a Freudian or psychoanalyst and most of Freud's followers in America were not political radicals, but in 1955 when the Fromm-Marcuse debate was published, the psychoanalytic movement was facing major challenges that made the exchange relevant to broader

publics beyond the New York Left. Psychoanalysis had grown in status in America throughout the 1930s and then again in the immediate post war years, but by the end of the 1950s it was in decline. The rise of behaviorism and then the cognitive revolution in psychology, the attacks on Freud launched by feminists in the early 1960s, growing hostility to psychiatry and growing medicalization alongside of the emergence of new drug regimes had soon led to the marginalization of psychoanalysis in American academic and intellectual culture. Fighting an internal battle with various alternative version of psychoanalysis from Adlerians, to Jungians and then the Neo-Freudians represented by Horney, Sullivan and Fromm, classical Freudians were on the intellectual defensive.

In this context then, many orthodox Freudian psychoanalysts and intellectuals influenced and shaped by classical libido theory picked up on Marcuse's critique of Fromm and popularized it in various books, articles and essays. Fromm indeed was a major critic of both orthodox Freudian theory but also the professional practice of the traditional psychoanalytic institutes (Burston 1991; McLaughlin 1998b; 2001). The fact that he was being attacked for his revisionism by an obscure German philosopher with a prestigious pedigree and a radical sensibility in a magazine of the intellectual left was an event that gave Freudians an opportunity to try to marginalize one of the major heretics from Freudian orthodoxy by highlighting and amplifying Marcuse's critique (Roazen 1996).

The truth is, however, this debate remained largely a marginal New York Intellectual event until nearly a decade later when we saw the emergence of Marcuse as a major intellectual celebrity of the New Left, especially after the publication of *One Dimensional Man* (1964). Even then, most intellectuals and scholars were too focused on the Vietnam War and violent protests on American campuses to care all that much about this debate. Marcuse was a guru for the New Left and had a certain left celebrity status, to be sure, but his writings and specific critique of Fromm remained relatively obscure.



It was not until the New Left generation of radical started to focus their energies on building academic careers that there then appeared a new set of writings on the Fromm-Marcuse debate as the Frankfurt School institutionalized itself in the academy throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Leading the commentaries on the Fromm-Marcuse debate in a way that set the tone for the reception of Fromm among the New Left generation was Russell Jacoby's books *Social Amnesia: Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (1975b) and *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (1983). Jacoby is an excellent writer and consummate polemicist and he, more than anyone, was responsible for making Marcuse's critique of Fromm the conventional wisdom for a generation of critical theory scholars and elite intellectuals.

How Jacoby sold Marcuse's critique of Fromm to American academics and intellectuals

Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* (1975b), in particular, repeated all of Marcuse's major criticisms of Fromm - that his revisions of Freudian theory purges its most radical elements, that Fromm's humanism and politics is conformist, and that despite Fromm's objections it is useful and appropriate to see his ideas as part of the Neo-Freudian tradition. But Jacoby took the critique up a notch with style and bite.

Writing twenty years after the original debate gave Jacoby the opportunity to amplify the critique by making the case that Fromm's book *The Art of Loving* (1956a) proves Marcuse's point. Writing before male leftists had to take seriously the feminist point that the personal was the political, he mobilized a late 1960s era sensibility to add to his political critique of Fromm's activities after the debate, and addressed Fromm's later criticisms of Marcuse as a "nihilist" that he articulated in various writings in the 1960s and 1970s. Jacoby writes that Fromm's allegedly liberal perspective suggests that "with a little effort at home anyone can be spared a deadly and loveless world" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 37). Characterizing Fromm's with his

trademark sarcasm and wit, Jacoby writes, "Love and happiness are repairs for the do-it-yourselfer" in contrast to the view of critical theory where "these exceptions are confirmations of the very brutality and injustice they ideologically leave behind" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 37). For Jacoby, amplifying Marcuse's critique with a new level of sharpness and vigour, sensitivity and warmth for the few, and coldness and brutality for the rest, is one of the stock notions and realities that feed the ongoing system. Love within a structure of hate and violence decays or survives only as resistance. The neo-Freudians escape the social contradictions that sink into the very bowels of the individual by repressing them (Jacoby 1975b, p. 37).

Jacoby links Fromm both to the Neo-Freudians and the broader tradition of "ego psychology," suggesting that "The 'positive appreciation' of the ego is the song and dance of social amnesia; it forgets the pain by whistling in the dark" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 42). Instead of a truly critical theory of the Freudian unconscious, Fromm "champions" "notions" that are "borrowings from everyday prattle: the self, values, norms, insecurities, and the like" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 45). After the Fromm-Marcuse debate, Fromm had become more public in his critiques of Freudian orthodoxy, particularly when he published "Psychoanalysis: Scientism or Fanaticism" in the mass-market magazine *Saturday Review* (1958) and the book *Sigmund Freud's Mission: An Analysis of his Personality and Influence* (1959). Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* thus had a ready-made audience among orthodox Freudians who saw Fromm as a serious threat to classical psychoanalysis. It is one thing, of course, to critique orthodox psychoanalytic theory in obscure psychoanalytic journals as most critics of Freud had done in the 1930, 1940s and early 1950s but when Fromm took these debates to magazines that potential clients might actually read, this was psychoanalytic civil war and Fromm paid a reputational price for it within Freudian institutes.

Jacoby also had a bigger target to attack in the world of radical politics than Marcuse did in



1955 because in the middle of the 1950s, Fromm was just entering into more than a decade long period of intense political activities that included work with the American Socialist Party, global activism around both nuclear disarmament and human rights and anti-Vietnam activities and electoral campaigning in the United States. *Social Amnesia* was effective in amplifying Marcuse's critique of what he viewed as Fromm's political reformism by drawing on some quotes and examples from his book *The Revolution of Hope* (1968), a book written as part of Fromm's work for Eugene McCarthy presidential primary run in the middle of the most militant protests against the Vietnam war in the United States, the riots at the Chicago Democratic Convention and in the angry aftermath of the assassinations of Kennedy, King and Malcolm X. Fromm had outlined a set of political views in *The Sane Society* (1956a) and had been active in the disarmament issues throughout the 1950s (the anti-nuclear weapons organization SANE bears the name of Fromm's book), and he wrote a manifesto that he wanted the American Socialist Party to adopt in the early 1960s.

One of the things we learn from Lawrence Friedman's biography of Fromm *The Lives of Erich Fromm: The Prophet of Love* (2013) is that Fromm played the role of left wing philanthropist in the post war and Cold War periods, donating large amount of money to various political causes particularly Amnesty International partly because of the jailing of his radical cousin by the East German state (Friedman 2013). Fromm had been living in Mexico since the early 1950s, but remained active in American politics speaking for political causes on college campus, and he had thrown himself into the Democratic Party nomination campaign for Eugene McCarthy (Friedman 2013).

As a part of that political activity, he had written the book *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) as essentially the practical and philosophical counterpart to the critique of modern society he had penned in *The Sane Society* (1955a), the book Marcuse had attacked in the Fromm-Marcuse

Dissent debate. Jacoby's critique of Fromm's political ideas in *Social Amnesia* was brilliantly polemical, sarcastic and played an important role in discrediting Fromm among many New Left era radicals. Fromm's *The Revolution of Hope* (1968), while written 13 year later, was not unconnected philosophically to the Fromm-Marcuse debate, because Fromm viewed Marcuse's radicalism as problematic partly because his invoking of the "Great Refusal" represented a way of refusing political engagement by not being "concerned with steps between the present and future" (quoted in Jacoby 1975b, p. 14). Fromm had articulated a set of political ideas in *The Sane Society* (1955a) essentially based on some of the ideas in the anarchist, utopian socialist and communitarian socialist traditions. Fromm was deeply shaped by Marx and Marxism, but one of the major reasons why he became a "forgotten intellectual" among the left was that he was always a critic of orthodox Marxism, Stalinism and Maoism (McLaughlin 1998a). Soviet Marxists were Fromm's most vicious ideological opponents, and Althusser and Fromm were bitter intellectual and political enemies (Anderson 2015). Fromm did not do well with New Left activists who were attracted to Maoist politics (he had critiqued Maoism in detail in *May Man Prevail* (1961b)). And he made his opposition to Stalinism very clear in his best selling book *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961a), the first widely available translation of Marx's early human 1844 manuscripts in North America that included a long Fromm introduction that defends democratic socialist humanism against Stalinism.

In many ways then, *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) was a political not an intellectual contribution, where Fromm was attempting to mobilize Americans active in the anti-Vietnam war protests and the New Left activism away from what he viewed as nihilist destructive politics that would lead to Weatherman inspired bombing or a withdrawal from politics in face of the right wing reaction represented by Richard Nixon. And he was passionately attempting to create a democratic socialist current in American intellectual life, fighting against conservatives,



liberals and Stalinists. Jacoby's wing of the intellectual New Left opposed precisely this kind of "reformism" so Fromm was easy pickings for a polemical attack.

The reality is, however, that Fromm was not temperamentally oriented to practical party politics despite his willingness to put in time and money to the cause, something he himself acknowledged (Friedman 2013). And by 1968, Fromm was in his late 60s and had exhausted himself with effort, and was on the verge of a heart attack that would force his withdrawal from these political activities, and his eventual retirement to Switzerland for the decade of his 70s (Friedman 2013). The political options for a democratic socialist in America in the late 1960s were grim, with Martin Luther King dead, and the student movement in a period of militant opposition to the Democratic Party and their war in Vietnam, and with Richard Nixon in the wings speaking for the "silent majority" and their backlash to the civil rights, student, anti-war and feminist movements. Fromm was on the verge of entering into a period of political despair, and the practical ideas he outlined in *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) were simply not very politically compelling, certainly to young radicals who had seen the American state repress the Black Panthers and the anti-war movement in a context where the Democratic Party was clearly bankrupt and Nixon and then California Governor Ronald Reagan on the rise.

Jacoby tore apart Fromm's political ideas in *Social Amnesia* (1975b) and the reputational consequences for Fromm in Frankfurt School circles were immense. The first chapter of *Social Amnesia* (1975b) is entitled "Social Amnesia and the New Ideologues," and he made Marcuse's critique of Fromm more powerful by linking him to broader intellectual currents than the neo-Freudians and by using Fromm's practical suggestions for social change against him. Jacoby quoted from *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) where he had written "if people would truly accept the Ten Commandments or the Buddhist Eightfold Path as the effective principle to guide their lives, a dramatic change in

our whole culture would take place" (cited in Jacoby 1975b, p. 14). Jacoby mocks Fromm with a tone common in the late 1960s and 1970s among radicals, writing "If this dramatic change" seems unlikely or impractical Fromm has some other ideas on how to reach the future more quickly and efficiently (Jacoby 1975b, p. 14). And then Jacoby discusses the proposal floated in *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) for the formation of National Council called the "Voice of the American Conscience" of 50 or so Americans of unquestioned integrity who would deliberate and issue statements on major social issues that would gain media attention and shape debates. Fromm had argued in *The Sane Society* (1955a) that the localism syndicalist and communitarian socialist tradition should be drawn upon to create local discussion groups to help move the public away from the propaganda promoted by the corporate dominated media and the self-interest of professional politicians and political parties. In *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) Fromm developed these earlier ideas, suggesting the creation of local clubs to debate social issues, feeding into the National Council. Jacoby was not wrong to suggest these ideas were not well developed, but he was scathing in his critique of Fromm's suggestion that schemes of this nature could play a role in changing society, arguing that Fromm's critique of Marcuse for not articulating concrete steps for social change were invalidated by his suggestion that this scheme could "alter the nature of society" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 14) and that "The advocate of immediate practice, impatient with critical theory, turns into the homespun philosopher promoting the miracle effects of a little elbow grease" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 14).

Moving from critique to mockery, Jacoby then went on to talk about the last page of the book, where there was a tear-out to be sent in with proposed candidates for the National Council, where Fromm emphasized that the lack of a stamp was a conscious choice since "even the first small step requires initiative at least to address the envelope yourself and spend the money for a stamp" (cited in Jacoby 1975b, p. 15). Returning to Fromm's critique of Marcuse



in the *Dissent* exchange, Jacoby writes that "Social change for the cost of a stamp is the wisdom of the humanist denouncing as nihilism the theory exposing the post-card mentality" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 15) and "the revolution of hope is a Walt Disney production" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 15). And Jacoby circles back to Marcuse's defense of "human nihilism" in the Fromm-Marcuse debate, approvingly quoting Marcuse that "Nihilism as the indictment of inhuman conditions may be the truly humanist attitude" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 15).

Jacoby's success in damaging Fromm's reputation among critical theorists can also be explained by the fact that Fromm's attacks on Marcuse in the years after the 1955 debate were so angry, personal and excessive that he had left himself vulnerable to Jacoby's acerbic polemics. Lawrence Friedman suggests that Fromm perceived that he had lost the exchange in the court of intellectual opinion (Friedman 2013). And it is certainly the case that Fromm responded with anger in his writings throughout the 1960s and 1970s, often taking polemical shots at Marcuse. Jacoby quotes Fromm's attack on Marcuse from *The Revolution of Hope* (1968) where he psychoanalyzes his former colleague as "an alienated intellectual who presents his personal despair as a theory of radicalism" (Jacoby 1975b, p. 14). There is also an extended critique of Marcuse in Fromm's *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (1970) that Jacoby references and, additionally, negative remarks in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973). These polemics made Fromm look bad, an opening that *Social Amnesia* (1975b) exploited. Fromm had legitimate and I think quite compelling answers to the specifics of Marcuse's argument both about Freud and politics. But when Fromm went beyond critiques of ideas to offer a psychoanalytic interpretation of Marcuse's personality at the time when he became famous as a militant representative of the New Left, he left himself vulnerable to Jacoby's brilliant polemics that suggested that Fromm had collapsed the political into the therapeutic.

Jacoby's historical imagination and the quality

of his writing, moreover, allowed him to contextualize Marcuse's critique of Fromm in the broader history of the Freudian movement, the topic of his next major book *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (1983). *The Repression of Psychoanalysis* was published not by the alternative Boston press Beacon as was *Social Amnesia* but by Basic books, a major New York based commercial press. Jacoby was on the path towards writing about public intellectuals as he did in the book that would bring him academic fame, *The Last Intellectuals* (1987) also published by Basic. And the path he took of deepening Marcuse's critique of neo-Freudianism led him to write the history of the left wing Freudians, starting with Otto Fenichel, a Viennese émigré Marxist psychoanalyst who, along with Wilhelm Reich, had pioneered just the kind of Marxist-Freudian synthesis based on libido theory that Marcuse argued was so important for the radical project. Marcuse's critique of Freudian orthodoxy had originated with Adorno in the 1930s when Fromm was centrally involved with the Horkheimer circle, but neither Marcuse or Adorno had extensive clinical knowledge of Freudian practice so Fromm's response to Marcuse on this point had a certain power and resonance. But Jacoby succeeded in changing the subject.

Jacoby played such an important role in diffusing the Marcuse critique of Fromm and helping him become a "forgotten intellectual," at least in the English speaking world (McLaughlin 1998a), because Jacoby did the historical digging that identified Marxist Freudians who opposed Fromm's revision of libido theory. *The Repression of Psychoanalysis* highlighted a psychoanalyst who had known both Freud and Fromm and who had died young in exile in the United States, as did Reich. Intellectual movements love heroes who die young. And Jacoby succeeded in taking the Marcuse critique of Fromm out of the personal animosity that so clearly motivated both of them, particularly Fromm, and making the issue a larger political question about the radical Freudian tradition, something that had appeal for many American



radicals in the 1970s and early 1980s. Jacoby gave this generation of critical theorists two Marxist Freudian heroes, Reich and Fenichel in the years of the 1960s and 1970s sexual revolution and Fromm became the foil as an alleged cultural conservative in ways that were devastating to his reputation.

The broader cultural reception of psychoanalysis in America at the time was a key dynamic operating in the reception of the Jacoby version of Fromm-Marcuse debate. Marcuse's original critique had found an audience outside of radical circles, because orthodox Freudians in the 1950s in America hated Fromm and the neo-Freudians because they were looking for allies for their own rather arcane internal battles for control of psychoanalytic institutes and training. Both Horney and Fromm had written extensively, very publically and critically about both orthodox Freudian theory and the practices of the psychoanalytic establishment, and proponents of Freudian ideas in America were pleased to see such an attack on Fromm in a high status journal of the New York democratic left. The great liberal literary critic Lionel Trilling at Columbia University was a relatively orthodox Freudian, as was, in a different way, Erik Erikson, teaching at Harvard. And both Trilling and Erikson contributed to the de-legitimization of Fromm's ideas. And when feminists started to attack Freud in the early 1960s, starting with Betty Freidan's *The Feminist Mystique* (1963), Freud's defenders in America were happy to try to further marginalize Fromm because he had been one of the first to publically critique Freud's patriarchal thinking. It is not an accident indeed, that the historian, public intellectual, orthodox Freudian and militant anti-feminist Christopher Lasch picked up Jacoby's reading of Marcuse's critique of Fromm in his *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) and he had actually done the preface for Jacoby's *Social Amnesia*, helping sponsor Jacoby into the intellectual elite. It required some fancy footwork to hide the conservative political views of many of the critics of Fromm in making the case for Marcuse's critique of neo-Freudianism, but Jacoby pulled it off brilliantly. Largely because

of the Fromm-Marcuse debate, and with Jacoby's help and Lasch's seal of approval, Fromm became widely known in America as a conformist, simplistic, conservative and shallow thinker as he was written out of the "origin myths" of the Frankfurt School (McLaughlin 1999).

An Irony, A Pardon and Two Happy Endings

There is a remarkable irony here, the need for an intellectual pardon and the potential for two happy endings. The irony is that Jacoby helped ruin the reputation of Fromm, critical theory's great public intellectual, before going on to make his own reputation arguing against just the kind of arcane obscure writing that was exemplified by Adorno and Jacoby's own first articles and books. A re-read of Jacoby's early writings in the critical theory journal *Telos* help us understand why he had difficulty getting an academic job in the early years of his career; the essays are pompous, narrowly framed around obscure philosophical questions, difficult to make sense of and marred by self-indulgent ultra political polemics that do not read well today in Trump's America (Jacoby 1971; 1975a; 1980). When Jacoby wanted to write well, he could, but when he was in his Adorno worship mode his writing was appalling. Jacoby's two books in the seventies on Freudian "radicalism" were far better written and had allowed him to develop some academic voice and stature and made his reputation, but his first book in the early 1980s published now by Cambridge University Press entitled *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism* (1982) remains largely impenetrable as prose and as more or less irrelevant as both scholarship and politics as his earlier writing.

It was only after Jacoby wrote *The Last Intellectuals* (1987), a brilliant polemical critique of the academic form of writing that the American research university produced, that his career took off and he secured a job at UCLA as the scholar who popularized the concept of the "public intellectual". It is for this reason that if I had the powers of ultimate pardon in the intellectual



world that a certain American president is claiming in the political-legal world, I would grant a full and unconditional pardon to Jacoby for the sloppiness and intellectual incoherence of *Social Amnesia* (1975b) and for all his bad writing before *The Last Intellectuals* (1987). It is true that the unfairness to Fromm in his earlier works caused damage even beyond Fromm's reputation because the most unhelpful aspect of his argument was his dual suggestion that theoretical adherence to a particular Freudian theory had inherent political implications and his excessively sharp division between politics and therapy. The truth is, one can be a political radical, conventional liberal or cultural conservative and believe in libido theory. The same can be said for objection relations, interpersonal, Kleinian or even Lacanian theory; one can hold a variety of political positions while being rooted in these theoretical traditions. The theoretical and clinical issues need debated out on their own terms, leaving broader political issues to be discussed on political terms. Moreover, there is a real danger to be avoided of turning political issues and a structural analysis of society's social problems into self-help, therapeutic or excessively individualistic questions. One can argue out the question of whether Fromm found the right balance, and reasonable people can agree to disagree. But the idea that trying to help individual human beings deal with their personal pain, interpersonal relationships and moral dilemmas through clinical practice is somehow a neo-liberal or even a conservative political act is absolutely absurd. Jacoby's arguments were incoherent here, but he should be forgiven because everyone has a right to be wrong and he did much good later in his career, contributions worth celebrating and building on.

Happy ending number one then is that Jacoby is now a well regarded, if grumpy social critic and writer, who has made useful contributions to the culture war debates in the United States in *The end of utopia: Politics and culture in an age of apathy* (Jacoby 2000) and *Dogmatic wisdom: How the culture wars divert education and distract America* (Jacoby 1994) that read in a style

far closer to Fromm than to Adorno. And if you are a young radical intellectual interested in deflating the pomposity of overly academic tenured Marxists there is no-one who writes polemical book reviews better than Russell Jacoby, as can be seen in his hysterically funny if more than a little unfair take-down that scores many direct hits, ironically again published in *Dissent* magazine, of Marxist sociologist Erick Olin Wright's book *Real Utopias* (2010) in "Real Men Find Real Utopias." (Jacoby 2011). Jacoby has found his place in the American academic and intellectual field and in my view his almost single-handed creation of the debate about the public intellectual in America was and remains an enormous intellectual and political contribution, despite legitimate criticisms of his viewpoint and a massive literature on how the concept does or does not travel well outside the United States. All is forgiven Russell.

And indeed, this leads to potential happy ending number two. The creation of the term "public intellectual" has played a significant role in helping revive Fromm's reputation, as scholars and intellectuals today now have a category for understanding his work that was not available in the 1960s when he was seen as too popular to be a major academic figure and part of the intellectual elite. Jacoby rose in stature in the late 1980s with his argument for clear writing and Fromm's reputation is being revived as I write, helped along by the current that began in the late 1980s and early 1990s when many journalists, scholars and intellectuals were tiring of just the kind arcane jargon and academic insularity that Jacoby was rooted in during the first two decades of his career, as one of Adorno's major supporters in the United States.

And the story is not over, indeed, because there is now a Fromm revival happening, with general books being published on Fromm (Braune 2013; Durkin 2013; Friedman 2013; Funk and McLaughlin 2015) and serious attempts to restore his reputation within psychoanalysis (Carveth 2017; Corina 2015; Frie 2003; Funk 1993; Gojman de Millán and Millán 2015),



sociology (Durkin 2014), political theory (Bronner 1994; Wilde 2004), social work, critical theory (Kellner 2016; McLaughlin 2008) and education. There is a revival of interest in psychosocial perspectives in North American sociology led by Catherine Silver (Cavalletto and Silver 2014) and Lynn Chancer that draws generously albeit critically on Fromm's insights (Chancer 1991; Silver 2014; 2017). Moreover, intellectuals who were trying to understand what Fromm was about and what he was doing, knowing that he was not simply being an academic social scientist, a clinician exclusively focused on healing or political activist linked to social movements, now have a category where Fromm fits very nicely into. For all the distortions of his writings on Fromm, Jacoby's legitimation of the concept of the public intellectual will help enormously in the reconstruction of Fromm's reputation by providing us with a category that helps explain and legitimate Fromm's own contributions to our public social and political debate. Of course Fromm was also an academic scholar and a psychoanalyst but in the end, his great contribution to ideas and politics was as public intellectual, who operated both within and between the academic, clinical and political fields. Intellectual history, like human history itself, is full of surprises and it is worth keeping track of and building on the positive and hopeful ones, something Fromm would certainly approve of. Jacoby was terribly wrong on Fromm, but he helped keep alive the critical theory tradition in America and created a new appreciation for the importance of the public intellectual, a combination of contributions that can only benefit the revival of Erich Fromm's vitally important insights and legacy.

References

- Anderson, Kevin B (2015): "Fromm, Marx and humanism." In Rainer Funk and Neil McLaughlin, *Towards a human science: The relevance of Erich Fromm for today*. Gies-sen: Psychosozial-Verlag, pp. 209-218.
- Braune, Joan (2013): *Erich Fromm's Revolutionary Hope: Prophetic Messianism as a critical theory of the future*. Amsterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Bronner, Stephen Eric (1994): *Of Critical Theory and Its Theorists*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Burston, Daniel (1991): *The legacy of Erich Fromm*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press
- Carveth, Don (2017): "Beyond nature and culture: Fromm's existentialism," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol 104, Number 4, pp. 485-501.
- Cavalletto, George, and Catherine Silver (2014): "Opening/closing the sociological mind to psychoanalysis." In *The unhappy divorce of sociology and psychoanalysis* (Chancer and Andrews, editors) Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014, pp. 17-52.
- Chancer, Lynn (1992): *Sadomasochism in everyday life: The dynamics of power and powerlessness*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cortina, Mauricio (2015): "The greatness and limitations of Erich Fromm's humanism." In *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* Vol. 51, pp. 388-422.
- Durkin, Kieran (2014): *The radical humanism of Erich Fromm*. New York: Palgrave.
- Frie, Roger (2003): "Erich Fromm and contemporary psychoanalysis: From modernism to postmodernism." In *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 90, pp. 855-868.
- Friedan, Betty (1963): *The feminine mystique*. New York: Norton.
- Friedman, Lawrence J., with A. M. Schreiber (2013): *The Lives of Erich Fromm's Love's Prophet*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fromm, Erich (1941 [1969]): *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston.
- Fromm, Erich (1947): *Man for Himself, an Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*. New York: Rinehart.
- Fromm, Erich (1955): *The Sane Society*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston.
- Fromm, Erich (1955b): "The human implications of 'instinctivistic' radicalism: A reply to Herbert Marcuse." In *Dissent* 2, pp. 342-349.
- Fromm, Erich (1956): *The Art of Loving*. New



- York: Harper and Row.
- Fromm, Erich (1956b): A counter-rebuttal. In *Dissent*, Vol. 3, pp. 81-83.
- Fromm, Erich (1958): "Psychoanalysis: Scientism or Fanaticism." In *The Saturday Review*, June 1958, pp. 11-13.
- Fromm, Erich (1959): *Sigmund Freud's Mission*. New York: Doubleday.
- Fromm, Erich (1961a): *Marx's Concept of Man*. New York: Continuum.
- Fromm, Erich (1961b): *May Man Prevail?* New York: Doubleday.
- Fromm, Erich (1964): *The Heart of Man*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Fromm, Erich (1970): *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Holt, Rinehart Winston.
- Fromm, Erich (1973): *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Fromm, Erich, and Maccoby, Michael (1970): *Social Character in a Mexican Village: A Socio-Psychoanalytic Study*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall.
- Funk, Rainer (1982): *Erich Fromm: The Courage to Be Human*. New York: Continuum.
- Funk, Rainer (Ed.) (2009): *The clinical Erich Fromm: Personal accounts and papers on therapeutic technique*. New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Gojman de Millán, Sonia, and Salvador Millán (2015): "Understanding social motivation for encouraging children's development. Social character studies in Mexico." In R. Funk and N. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Towards a human science: The relevance of Erich Fromm for today*. Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, pp. 149-158.
- Jacoby, Russell (1971): "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy From Lukacs to the Frankfurt School." In *Telos*, Vol. 10, pp. 119-146.
- Jacoby, Russell (1975a): "The politics of the crisis theory: Towards the critique of automatic Marxism II." *Telos*. Vol. 23, pp. 3-52.
- Jacoby, Russell (1975b): *Social amnesia: A critique of conformist psychology from Adler to Laing*. Boston: Beacon.
- Jacoby, Russell (1980): "What is conformist Marxism?" *Telos*, Vol. 45, pp. 19-43.
- Jacoby, Russell (1983): *The repression of psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Freudians*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jacoby, Russell (2000): *The end of utopia: Politics and culture in an age of apathy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jacoby, Russell (2002): *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jacoby, Russell (2011): "Real Men Find Real Utopias." In *Dissent*, Vol. 58, pp. 95-98.
- Jay, Martin (1973): *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research*. Boston, MA.: Little, Brown.
- Kellner, Douglas (2016): "Donald Trump as authoritarian populist: A Frommian analysis." In *Logos*, Vol. 15, pp. 2-3. - <http://logosjournal.com/2016/kellner-2/>
- Lasch, Christopher (1979): *The culture of narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*. New York: WW Norton and Company.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1955): "The social implications of Freudian revisionism." *Dissent*, Vol. 2, pp. pp. 221-240.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1956a) [2015]: *Eros and civilization: A philosophical inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press,
- Marcuse, Herbert (1956b): "A reply to Erich Fromm". *Dissent*. Vol. 3, pp. 79-81.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1964) [2013]: *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. London: Routledge.
- McLaughlin Neil (1998a): "How to become a forgotten intellectual: intellectual movements and the rise and fall of Erich Fromm." In *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 13, pp. 215-246.
- McLaughlin, Neil (1996): "Nazism, nationalism and the sociology of emotions: Escape from Freedom revisited." In *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 14, pp. 241-261.
- McLaughlin, Neil (1998b): "Why do schools of thought fail? Neo-Freudianism as a case study in the sociology of knowledge." In *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sci-*



- ences. Vol. 34, pp. 113-134.
- McLaughlin, Neil (1999): "Origin myths in the social sciences: Fromm, the Frankfurt School, and the emergence of critical theory." In *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 24, pp. 109-139.
- McLaughlin, Neil (2001): "Optimal Marginality: Innovation and orthodoxy in Fromm's revision of psychoanalysis." In *The Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 42, pp. 271-288.
- McLaughlin, Neil (2008): "Collaborative circles and their discontents. Revisiting conflict and creativity in Frankfurt school critical theory." In *Sociologica*. Vol. 2, pp. 1-35.
- Rickert, John (1986): "The Fromm-Marcuse debate revisited." In *Theory and Society*. Vol. 15, pp. 181-214.
- Roazen, Paul (1996): "Fromm's courage." In Mauricio Cortina and Michael Maccoby (Eds.): *A prophetic analyst: Erich Fromm's contributions to psychoanalysis*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Silver, Catherine B. (2014): "Paranoid and institutional responses to psychoanalysis among early sociologists: A socio-psychoanalytic interpretation. In Lynn Chancer and John Andrews (Eds.): *The unhappy divorce of sociology and psychoanalysis*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 53-76.
- Silver, Catherine B. (2017): "Erich Fromm and making and unmaking of the sociocultural," *The Psychoanalytic Review*. Vol 104, Number 4, pp. 414-435.
- Wheatland, Thomas (2009): *Frankfurt school in exile*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press,
- Wiggershaus, Rolf (1986): *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wilde, Lawrence (2004): *Erich Fromm and the Quest for Solidarity*. New York: Palgrave.