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*E. Fromm*

Fromm, Erich 1810  
TO HAVE OR TO BE?  
Harper & Row \$6.95  
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SBN: 06-011379-0

Erich Fromm, whose humanist writings have made psychology and philosophy accessible to many, here analyzes the nature of American society, notes the origin of its problems, and proposes an alternative. He sees having and being as two modes of experience, the one concerned with acquisitions and competition, the other with inner satisfaction and general harmony. Our society values private possession and personal initiative, but with ecological problems impending, physical survival depends on a change of priorities, a new orientation. Fromm is most convincing when he marshals the writings of the past to present his argument, finding kinship in the works of Buddha, Master Eckhart, Marx, and Schweitzer. He maintains that characterological change is necessary and possible if . . . and the conditions—which correspond to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhist traditions—give you pause. He details his specifications for a new society (some new ideas, some from earlier books), yet acknowledges that the chances for such a visionary undertaking are slim. Less compelling than his other works, this will nevertheless gratify his following.