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PW INTERVIEWS:

J.F. Baker:



# Erich Fromm

His "To Have or To Be?" is a combination of psychoanalysis, religion and humanistic philosophy that is nothing less than a new blueprint for mankind

Erich Fromm is the same age as the 20th century, has meditated about the progress of that century probably more than most men and has set down his wide-ranging conclusions in a new book whose title summarizes what he sees as the apocalyptic clash between two ways of looking at, and living, human life: "To Have or To Be?"

The book is the 50th in Harper & Row's scholarly World Perspectives series (which was inaugurated by Dr. Fromm's highly influential "The Art of Loving" 20 years ago) and in some ways he is reluctant to see it appear under such a scholarly rubric. For "To Have or To Be?" is a distillation of most of the themes he has expounded in more than 40 years of writing on both sides of the Atlantic: the relationship between psychoanalysis, religion and philosophy, the areas where social change and human personality overlap. Briefly, the book posits two fundamental modes of human life, personality and thought: the Having mode, dedicated to material possession and property, aggressiveness and personal aggrandizement, with its attendant evils of war, ecological destruction and human dissatisfaction and boredom; and the Being mode, suffused with love, the spirit of caring and a proper regard for the spiritual side of humanity, which means contentment, a pleasant sufficiency of the means to life (but no more) and a profound kinship with the rest of nature.

Dr. Fromm sees most of humankind deeply imbued with the Having outlook and his book is a striking evocation of its discontents and dangers, as well as a reasoned outline of how the change to a Being mode could be made—and why it *must* be made if civilization is to sur-

vive. He would like the book to reach a wide audience (as "The Art of Loving" did), and he is worried lest it get overlooked in its sober dressing and be relegated to the back of the library shelf. That is probably one reason why he patiently submitted not long ago to a *PW* interview; he is not normally enthusiastic about being interviewed, feeling that TV cannot be anything but superficial, and that reporters cannot always be trusted to quote him correctly. But having agreed to submit to the ordeal, he turns out to be an excellent subject: patient, careful to make even his more difficult thoughts clear, and with a decent respect for the most tentative opinions of the interviewer.

Dr. Fromm migrates now between a West Side apartment overlooking the Hudson in New York and a lakeside one in Locarno, on the borders of Switzerland and Italy. Born and raised in Frankfurt, he was an Orthodox Jew until he was 26 years old and already beginning the psychoanalytic training that was to form the basis of his life's work. Studies at Heidelberg, Munich and Berlin were harshly interrupted by Hitler's rise to power, and Dr. Fromm, seeing what was coming as early as 1932, left for the U.S. His earliest books were published in Germany, and it was not until after World War II that he began to make a name here as a combination of psychoanalyst and philosopher. Then the books (the titles of which display the heart of his interest) began to flow regularly, many of them from Holt, Rinehart and Winston, a few from Harper: "Psychoanalysis and Religion," "The Sane Society," "The Art of Loving," "Escape from Freedom," "The Dogma of Christ," "The Crisis of Psychoanalysis," "The Anato-

my of Human Destructiveness," to name a few of the more widely known. Holt is reissuing a batch of its more celebrated titles in paperback this month, and with "To Have or To Be?" out in early October Dr. Fromm is in the happy position of having much of his collected thought before the public at the same time.

His new book, he says, is "a summary of most of what I have thought or felt—with some new things." The new perceptions in the book are Dr. Fromm's sense that human beings actually repress much of the truth about life as they instinctively know it ("I think the real truth is known subconsciously, as in a dream, but that if we were consciously aware of what we really know about ourselves and others, we could not go on living as we do, accepting so many lies"), and what he sees as a new historical orientation in his view of human progression. "I now see the human story in terms of the different visions people are moved by," he says. "In the Middle Ages it was the vision of the City of God that inspired us. Then, beginning in the 18th century, it was the vision of the City of Earthly Progress, the sense that we must understand nature in order to dominate it. Now this has all ended in what looks like the Tower of Babel—that which was progressive in the Middle Ages and the 18th and 19th centuries has been lost. What we now desperately need is a synthesis between the faith of the late Middle Ages and the reason and science of the last two centuries. That's the only way I see that we can be saved from a sort of technocratic fascism."

Dr. Fromm has also found his view of Karl Marx evolving over the years,



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## Interview

and now sees him as a deeply religious man, who before his views were falsified was one of the prophets of our present discontents. "He thought he saw capitalism in decline, but actually he saw it at its peak. It is *now* in decline, and that's why he has been adopted by communists and materialists."

Dr. Fromm loves to talk to people, outside of his analyst's role, and a recent spell in hospital enabled him to talk to many of his fellow patients and staff. "I find an enormous number of people who are not really attracted by constant consumption, who feel there is more to enjoy in life than this. But they are afraid, because if one says this, one puts oneself outside the broad consensus. And the desire not to be an outsider, not to be ostracized, is a dominant impulse." Dr. Fromm was not one of those who saw great hope for a spiritual rebirth in the revolution against materialism of the young during the 1960s. "They were very enthusiastic, and they grasped some of the truth, but they had no critical faculties, no sense of perspective, no skepticism, so they gave up and dropped back into their consumer role. Now the new thing is some sort of search for the spiritual self, with meditation and self-awareness, but so far all we've seen is a commercialization of this drive."

Fromm's own prescription for self-awareness is regular self-analysis, which he practices himself, half an hour a day, no matter how busy he is. "I meditate on what I have done, review my own behavior—it's the most important thing in my day." He acknowledges that it requires knowledge and experience to be undertaken successfully—"perhaps I'll write a separate book on it." It is an ultimate concept in Buddhism, he adds. "The three cardinal sins, according to Buddha, are greed, hate and ignorance, which we could also call illusion—and self-analysis banishes illusion." Too often, Dr. Fromm says, people go to psychoanalysts for problems that are "essentially spiritual and existential," and which they could better deal with by themselves. "And so often just talking won't do anything. A person has to make an active effort to change his or her life. Results are commensurate with effort, but our society always stresses ease. People get sold on the idea that you can change your life by sitting in a room for a few hours without effort. No—to live life successfully you have to practice living, every day."

How does he rate the chances of a major psychosocial transformation taking place, changing humankind from driven and aggressive consumers into people living in harmony with themselves and each other? "In the long run I'm very pessimistic. The powers

## people who pioneer for the future

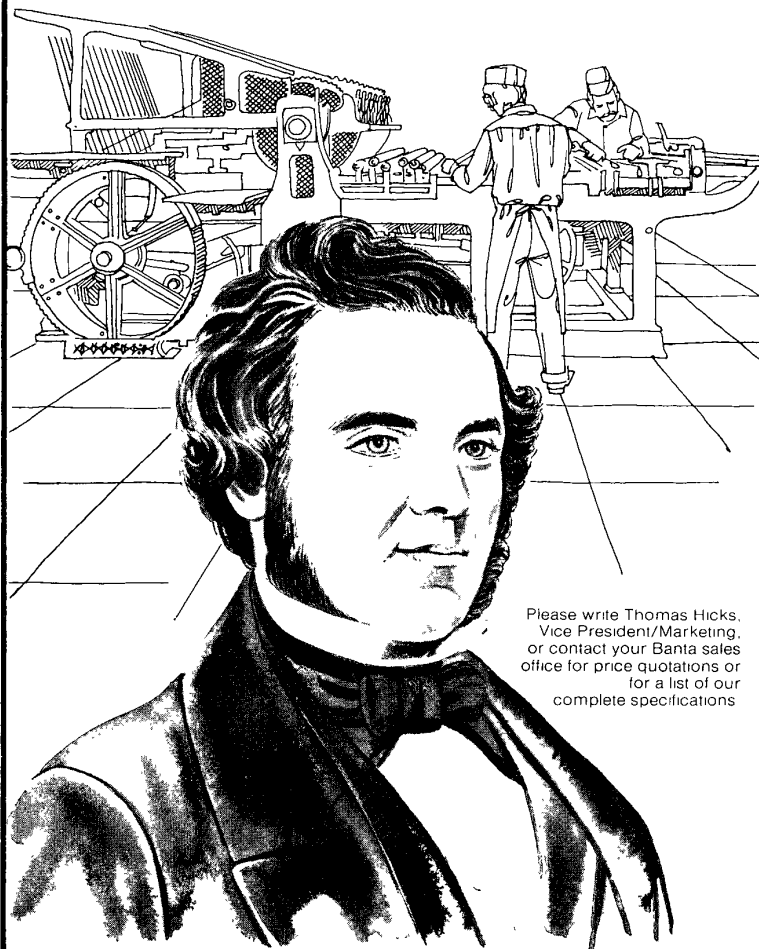
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## Interview/Media

ranged against a change of this sort are so great. But there are some things that give me some hope. Economists and ecologists are now saying that people must change their way of life, which is something only priests would have said at one time. And nuclear or biological warfare remains so threatening a possibility that at the last moment man may be scared into his senses. So I haven't entirely lost hope."

Perhaps paradoxically, he sees America as the country closest to a breakthrough into a new consciousness, despite its rampant materialism. "It's just that the wealth is greatest here, and therefore the consciousness that there must be more to life than buying and owning is most powerful here." He has

hopes, too, of the new women's revolution. "It's poorly led now, with too much emphasis on equality with men, instead of women working for their own very different consciousness. The female consciousness is essentially closer to what I think of as the Being mode, but it's been submerged because of the myth of male superiority—which, like all war propaganda, is utterly false, and which has imposed its own distrustful and stereotyped view of women on us."

Dr. Fromm seems to have reached the age when a host of apparently contradictory ideas are falling, for him, into vast recognizable patterns. Simply to listen to him talk is to think of new books being born, and in fact he has ideas for several more: apart from perhaps writing on self-analysis, he would

like to do what he calls a sequel to "To Have or To Be?" which would be a study of the way the unconscious, and its apprehension of life, comes through constantly into our conscious thoughts; and he would like to write on what he calls "godless religion" between Buddha and Karl Marx, a study of religious experience in which the concept of a god is "unnecessary and undesirable."

That, in the end, is the center of his belief—that man is a religious being, but that any dogmatic form of religion can only narrow him. "Schweitzer said at the end of his life that it was not necessary to believe in God. He was a pessimistic humanist, and I suppose I am too. In the end the only important thing is our human activity, in which we can express love. Life has no meaning beyond that." JOHN F. BAKER

## MEDIA

THE FIRST ISSUE of the *New Review of Books and Religion* is out this month. The new journal was formed by the merger of the *Review of Books and Religion*, edited and published by Kendig Brubaker Cully and Iris V. Cully, and *New Book Review*, formerly published by Herder and Herder and now available from the Seabury Press.

The 10 issues per year of *NRBR* will cover "the 700 most important titles produced by all publishers of religious books." Extensive feature articles, general reviews and short notices will be included. Regular departments will be devoted to current topics on religion, philosophy, and the religious book trade and publishing scene. A detailed bibliography of all books reviewed and an annual index will also appear.

Iris V. Cully is editor-in-chief. Michael Leach of Seabury Press is managing editor; Christine Worth, also of Seabury, is assistant editor. Other board members are John B. Breslin, Robert N. Coles, Kendig Brubaker Cully, Andrew M. Greeley, Bruce Larson, Martin E. Marty, Marianne H. Micks, Randolph Crump Miller, Jacob Neusner, Schubert M. Ogden and Roger L. Shinn.

All questions regarding production schedules and policy as well as advance information on books should be directed to Christine Worth, Seabury Press, 815 Second Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Inquiries about advertising should go to Ruth Taylor, 40 Parkway Circle, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583; (914) 725-3728.

MARY HEMINGWAY's autobiography "How It Was" will be launched by Knopf with a cross-country tour by the author. In New York September 22 she will be guest of honor at a dinner at the Lotos Club, and September 27-29 busy with media interviews. She will be

in Houston September 30, and in Dallas October 1 and 2 for appointments including the Wellesley Club Book and Author luncheon. October 5 and 6, Ernest Hemingway's widow will be in Washington, and will appear at Bloomingdale's, on "Panorama," WTTG-TV, and the "Scene at Noon," WMAL-TV. The next two days she will be in Chicago to be a guest at the Awards Dinner of the Midland Writers Association and on "Noon News" with Jorie Lueloff, WMAQ-TV. October 12 and 13 in the Boston area her appearances will include the Hathaway House Book and Author program in Wellesley, the Boston Literary Hour cosponsored by the Old Corner Bookstore, the nationally syndicated "Good Day!" from WCVB-TV and a *Boston Globe* interview.

October 14-16 Mary Hemingway will be in University, Ala., for the third annual Alabama Symposium on English and American Literature—on the work of Ernest Hemingway—sponsored by the University of Alabama. She will then go on to Atlanta for the Emory University "Meet the Author" program. October 20 Mrs. Hemingway will be a guest at Horne's Book and Author program in Pittsburgh, October 21 at the same kind of occasion sponsored by the Long Island *Newsday* in New York. Heading back south, the author will be in Nashville October 25 for the *Banner* Book and Author dinner, and in Memphis October 26 for the Friends of the Library Book and Author dinner. Again in the New York area, she will be at Bloomingdale's in Stamford, Conn., October 28, with Elaine Steinbeck, and in Hackensack, N.J., October 29. November 1 she will be in Cleveland at the Women's City Club Book and Author luncheon cosponsored by Higbee's, and then will go to the West Coast to spend November 8 and 9 in San Francisco and November 10-12 in Los Angeles. November 15 and 16 will find her in Minneapolis, for an appearance at Dayton's, among other engagements,

and her tour will end in Philadelphia November 18 at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Book and Author luncheon. Press interviews with national scope have been confirmed with *People*, *Family Weekly* and *Women's Wear Daily*.

PUBLISHERS ARE INVITED to submit entries to the second annual National Press Club Book Fair, which will be held on the evening of November 18 in Washington, D.C. and will be attended by government leaders, politicians and journalists. Authors available for autographing at the fair are also being sought. Books should be 1976 titles of particular interest to Washingtonians. This includes books on politics and the Washington scene as well as books by Washington-based authors or those living in nearby Virginia or Maryland.

Publishers are requested to submit titles of proposed entries, as well as names and addresses of their authors and lists of authors willing to attend, to: Joseph Newman, Directing Editor, Book Division, U.S. News & World Report, 2300 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

A "SERIOUS MAGAZINE in tabloid format that deals with the interaction of all the major arts, while achieving a balance between worthwhile creative accomplishment and critical reflection," *New York Arts Journal* begins bi-monthly publication with the September issue. The new arts magazine reportedly has a guaranteed circulation of 15,000 copies, with distribution in all five New York City boroughs as well as Boston, California, Paris, London.

Features of the September issue include a portfolio of photographs by Brassai from the September book, "The Secret Paris of the Thirties" (*Pantheon*); an essay on Evelyn Waugh by critic and author Martin Green; interviews with playwright Edward Albee and conductor Lukas Foss; a pro-