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## Introduction to the „Erich Fromm Institute of Neo-Freudian Psychoanalysis“ - Bologna

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The „Erich Fromm Institute of neo-Freudian Psychoanalysis“ was set up as the result of work carried out over many years by a group of neo-Freudian-oriented psychoanalysts working in Bologna. This group has been looking at both the published and little-known, unpublished works of Erich Fromm, and they have organised conferences, established contacts with analysts and scholars from other countries, and published studies. The reasons for naming a psychoanalysis institute after Erich Fromm are the same reasons why a Jewish author, of Central European and North American culture, has had so much editorial success in this country. An explanation can be found in the fact that Fromm's thinking is non-scholastic, libertarian, anti-academic and anti-dogmatic. In a word, it is anti-authoritarian. to a country of opportunism and compromise church and rebellion Fromm, in a completely new way, demonstrated how disobedience can be the first step towards freedom, when there is the rigour of choice and consistency. This does not mean that rebellion against those who dominate in order to take their place is justified, but means rather the refusal of domination as a form of human relationship, whoever the perpetrator. It is a gesture made towards the generous utopia which has always been present in Italian culture, both in scholarly and popular expressions. These are plain words on the subject of affections which, without some form of control, generate irrationality, and on rationality which, when it loses its link to the concrete, grows on

its abstract and alienated self, with consequences which are often harmful to mankind. Reason and love must go hand in hand. The scientific research carried out by Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst, is based on an epistemological clarification in two areas of inquiry: clinical-individual and socio-historical. Together they throw a critical cross-light on the relationship between the individual and society and show how a certain amount of individual psychopathology is normal in a sick society.

Fromm wrote widely about the things that concerned him most: the technological and consumer society of today in which the individual has become a passive automaton and must be taught to again take control of his life and live it to the full. In his works Fromm concentrated on a psychoanalytical inquiry into society, including field research. His radical humanism gives substance to a characterological theory which contributes to the worldwide debate on psychoanalysis in both original and critical terms. In choosing this form of intervention Fromm does not explicitly refer to the technical side, what he calls the „art“ of psychoanalysis. However, during his lifetime Fromm carried out clinical work on which he based his theories, and the Erich Fromm Institute in Bologna finds its *raison d'être* and bases its work on these sources. The Institute's first task is to collect and put together a wealth of clinical experience through study and research. On the subject of technique, written and recorded documents consist of precise and



valuable notes, some long, some short, which are found in various books, and of unpublished works and recorded seminars and interviews. This material is invaluable but it does not give us a complete working method. Fortunately the „rules“ of Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical art survive in the followers he analysed, particularly in Mexico where he worked, taught and trained for so long. It had long been recognised, however, that a lot of research would be necessary.

Over the years links have been built up which have led to a series of meetings and seminars: with Dr. Rainer Funk from Tübingen, on theory; with Dr. Jorge Silva-Garcia from Mexico City, on clinical work; with Dr. Marco Bacagaluppi from Milan on the theoretical orientation of Fromm's clinical thinking. Furthermore, links in individual psychoanalytical supervision have been set up with these experts and from a psychoanalytical point of view this is of fundamental importance.

An important event for the Italian group was the International Symposium on Erich Fromm in May 1988 organised by the International Erich Fromm Society in Locarno. Dr. Silva-Garcia's subsequent seminar in Bologna on the technique and understanding of dreams led to a new method being adopted in the supervisory groups.

The Institute now intends to contribute to forming a Frommian research tradition and to try to implant this tradition in Bologna. So members visit Germany and Mexico, and both Italian and foreign lecturers and supervisors are invited to Bologna. A seminar was recently organised by the International Erich Fromm Society together with the „Erich Fromm Institute of neo-Freudian Psychoanalysis“, in Bologna, and it followed an excellent lecture by Dr. Rainer Funk on the destructive aspects of the modern social character. The seminar, from 17-19 February, studied the relationship between Marx and Fromm and looked at the possibility of recognising in Marx an outline of humanist psychology which would later be found in Fromm. It was attended by Italian, German and Swiss participants and papers were given by Dr. Erich Klein Landskron, Dr. Romano Biancoli and Dr. Enzo

Lio. The discussion was possible thanks to the ability of Dr. Marianne Koch, who is not only an excellent interpreter but who is also familiar with Fromm's thinking. The papers are to be published in a special booklet edited by the International Erich Fromm Society.

The „Erich Fromm Institute of neo-Freudian Psychoanalysis“ is above all a school for neo-Freudian psychoanalytical training. As such it organises a two part course, each part lasting four years. The first four years include the study of theory in order to provide the student with a general background. It concentrates on Frommian and Freudian thinking but also includes the study of other authors, especially those from the North American tradition of socio-cultural research. Subjects of a more general nature, such as sociology, cultural anthropology, history of religion etc. are also studied in the first part of the course. The second four years are given over to technique and theory with a neo-Freudian-Frommian approach to training but with a look at various other schools too. In this part of the course there are lessons, seminars and weekly supervisory groups. Individual psychoanalytical supervision begins in this phase with analysts who either belong to or are recognised by the Institute. Obviously it is impossible to speak of an administrative deadline for individual analysis. The student is required to remain in analysis until such time as the analyst certifies its conclusion. Only then is the transition to the second part of the course possible, with the authorisation to practice within the limits established by the relative body of the Institute and with compulsory group and individual supervision.

It is hoped that this training will constitute a serious base so that the work of Erich Fromm will not exist in Italy simply as an editorial phenomenon, important as that may be, but also as a school. The Institute encourages scientific help and teaching both from Fromm's followers and from academics who either knew him or who are concerned with his work. Our thanks go to the International Erich Fromm Society for their scientific support and invaluable collaboration.