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Foreword

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„Foreword,“ in: E. Fromm, *The Revision of Psychoanalysis*

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In 1965 Erich Fromm became professor emeritus of psychoanalysis at the National Autonomous University of Mexico City. In the same year he finished his field research on the social character of the Mexican peasant village Chiconcuac. Released from his obligations at the university and free for a new project, he applied to various funding organizations for money to undertake a „Systematic Work on Humanistic Psychoanalysis,“ which he had decided to write in the course of the next few years. It was conceived as a work of three to four volumes that would deal with the complete range of psychoanalytic theory and practice. He intended nothing less than a dialectic revision.

Originally, Fromm wanted to write this „systematic and comprehensive work of psychoanalysis“ against the backdrop of his clinical experience as a practicing psychoanalyst, teacher, and supervisor. He also wanted to enrich his project with a number of case histories. That was not to be. Although Fromm worked for years on the project, his interest over time increasingly shifted toward the problem of forming an adequate psychoanalytic theory of aggression. This work Fromm presented in 1973 in his comprehensive volume *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*.

Other aspects of his project remained unfinished or were realized only in terms of the theoretical aspects. Fromm published only one chapter out of this work: „The Crisis of Psychoanalysis“ (Fromm, 1970c). It showed in detail the great need for the revision of psychoanalysis, even in its forms of further {XII} development as exemplified by the so-called Ego Psychologists. Fromm did not, however, publish his own position--his reformulation and re-vision of psychoanalysis.

This volume contains the until now unpublished parts of Fromm's humanistic and dialectic revision of psychoanalysis, conceived between 1968 and 1970. The largest cohesive manuscript part (Chapter 2) is therefore logically entitled „The Dialectic Revision of Psychoanalysis.“ Here Fromm develops his method of the „Psychoanalysis of Theories,“ which he used to revise Freud's theories. Fromm devoted special attention to the importance of social repression for a new definition of the unconscious. This chapter also contains important explanations of Fromm's perspective on therapeutic practice. And Fromm speaks for the first time here about his concept of transtherapeutic psychoanalysis, which in 1975 he included in *From Having to Being* (Fromm, 1989a).

Every revision of psychoanalysis must deal with the significance of sexuality to psychic processes. Fromm's critique of the role imputed to sexuality is expressed in the chapter entitled „Sexuality and Sexual Perversions.“ In Fromm's view the basic connection



between primitive drives and sexuality is of no significance. He uses examples of pre-genital sexuality, perversions, and, here especially, the sadistic perversion. This new formulation of the psychoanalytic doctrine on perversions led him to repeat his critique of Herbert Marcuse's theories. Presented in a separate chapter that Fromm originally wanted to publish as an „Epilogue“ to his collection entitled *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (1970a), this chapter carried the title „Infantilization and Despair Masquerading as Radicalism.“ The literary debate with his former colleague, Marcuse, had already begun in 1955 (Fromm, 1955b, 1956b) and was continued in a critical chapter in *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (1970c, pp. 9-41). One clearly feels the immediacy and emotional character of this {XIII} argument in the chapter that appears here for the first time: „The Alleged Radicalism of Herbert Marcuse.“

In one of his proposals seeking funding for his planned multi-volume work on psychoanalysis, Fromm described the origin of the cognitive processes that guided his interest in the scholarly reception of Freudian psychoanalysis:

My knowledge of and interest in the fields of sociology led me at first to the application of psychoanalytic theory to social and cultural problems. My papers in this area, containing already the nuclear ideas of my later work, were published in 1932-34. These papers showed for the first time the applicability of psychoanalytic theory to social-cultural problems.... In the course of these studies I began to become critical of strictly Freudian theory, and tried to modify it. Briefly, I tried to preserve Freud's fundamental discoveries, but replacing his mechanistic-materialistic philosophy by a humanistic one. Not man as a machine, regulated by the chemically produced tension--de-tension mechanism, but man as a totality, in need of relating himself to the world, was the basis of my theoretical thinking.

What Fromm insinuates here in rather simple words signals his replacement of the Freudian concept of man and its related theory of drives with a fundamentally different metapsychology: Man is to be understood primarily as a social being; the unconscious is mainly of interest in terms of the social unconscious and social repression; and the fact that man is driven is not due to instinctual drives but to his dichotomical situation as man, which is manifest in specifically human needs. Moreover, the ways of satisfaction are always social processes. The conflict between the individual and society, inherent in the Freudian concept of man, is understood by Fromm as a historically {XIV} conditioned antagonism between the productive and non-productive character orientations of the individual as a social being.

Corresponding to this new approach, which Fromm sketches in the first chapter of the present volume, was his understanding of psychoanalysis as an analytical social psychology. For him the discovery of the social unconscious should be located in the therapeutic applications of psychoanalysis: Common sense, the constraints of circumstances and of so-called normalcy, and the self-evident are rationalized expressions of the fixation on idols and the belief in illusions and ideologies. All such rationalizations are, in reality, merely expressions of the „Pathology of Normalcy.“

Because the original English manuscript of this book was not put together in the organized form you see before you, I made additional divisions in the text and created subtitles. Necessary editorial additions and omissions within the text are marked with brackets.

Tübingen, March 1992
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