https://theses.gla.ac.uk/

Theses Digitisation:

https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/research/enlighten/theses/digitisation/

This is a digitised version of the original print thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses
https://theses.gla.ac.uk/
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

ERICH FROMM - A TWENTIETH CENTURY PROPHET?

Mary Rattray

Thesis for the Degree of M.Th.,

Department of Biblical Studies,

The University of Glasgow,

April 1995.

c Mary Rattray.

ProQuest Number: 10390503

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest 10390503

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Thesis
10255
Copy 2

GLASGOW
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

SYNOPSIS:

There is some evidence to show that Erich Fromm saw himself as a prophet, and it is argued that his discovery of the part played by authoritarian attitudes in predisposing the German workers to accept Fascism, was, for him, a revelation.

However, after a careful survey of Fromm's work, following his study of The Working Class in Weimar Germany, it would appear that Fromm fits more readily into the role of 'prophet as social critic'.

This point is made, firstly, by establishing that Fromm is an 'intellectual' in Edward Said's (1993) terms, and that, moreover, he fits neatly into the category of 'intellectual as social critic' as defined by Michael Walzer (1987).

The final step is to establish him in Walzer's category of 'social critic as prophet', and to consider the question, 'Whose prophet?'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I should like to thank Dr. Rosalind Hursthouse of the Open University for accepting me as a post-graduate student; Professor R.S. Downie of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow for his great kindness and encouragement during the early stages of this work; and to Professor R.F. Carroll of the Department of Biblical Studies at Glasgow for providing the stimulation and sense of direction that enabled me to finish it.

Thanks, too, to John M. Rattray for careful proof-reading; to the Rev. R. McNidder for the loan of books; to James S. Day for help with my computer; and to the staff of Campbeltown Library for their unfailing helpfulness.

CONTENTS:

ERICH FROMM - A TWENTIETH CENTURY PROPHET?

INTRODUCTION

The idea of the 'prophet' is universally understood, and yet the term proves to be well-nigh impossible to define. Prophets are found in many cultures and are important in the world's major religions but they are also found in cults that are specific to a local area. While we can recognise a family likeness between the Old Testament prophets and Mohammed; or between the shamans of the Arctic Circle and the dervishes of the Arab world, it is clear that the two groups are far from being identical. Yet all have been described as prophets.

Even if we restrict our consideration to the prophets who were recognised as such by both Jews and Christians, the evidence we have in the Old Testament is insufficient to provide an unimpeachable definition of a prophet. To regard the Old Testament prophets simply as foretellers of the future is totally to misunderstand their purpose which was, primarily, to convey God's will and to persuade

the people to repent, (though they frequently presented potentially catastrophic future events as the inevitable consequence of present and past behaviour). Such prophets have been described variously as homines religiosi [1], men who have a unique experience of God and are able to transmit His will to the people; others have understood them, first and foremost, as intellectuals and social critics [2]; Weber saw them as the first pamphleteers [3]; while, more recently, they have been categorised as poets [4]. One characteristic, however, which does seem to be universal is their apparent need to proclaim their vision to the populace as a whole.

The purpose of this thesis is not to present Erich Fromm as one who was, or considered himself to be, divinely inspired. However in Chapter One, which covers Fromm's life up the publication of Escape from Freedom (1942), it will be argued that the discovery of the part authoritarianism played in the rise of National Socialism in Germany in the nineteen-thirties was, for him, a revelation and one which he felt a compulsion, comparable with the prophetic experience, to

share with the nations of the West - at that time at war with Germany.

In Part Two it will be argued that the later texts, written in America between 1942 and Fromm's death in 1980, show that, thereafter, Fromm fitted the type of 'intellectual as social critic' described by Edward Said in the 1993 Reith Lectures [5] and by Michael Walzer in Interpretatation and Social Criticism [6], in the same year.

Notes and references:

1. Lindblom, J., Prophecy in Ancient Israel, Oxford, 1978, p1.

2. Walzer, Michael, Interpretation and Social Criticism, Harvard, 1993, Chapter 3.

3. Weber, Max, Ancient Judaism, Illinois, 1952, p267.

4. Carroll, Robert R.P., 'Poets not Prophets' J.S.O.T., 27: pp25-31.

5. Said, Edward, Reith Lectures, BBC, 1993, reprinted in The Independent weekly, 24th June - 29th July 1993.

6. Walzer, 1993.

CHAPTER 1 - Biographical background.

1. The formative years.

a)1900-1922.

Fromm's own upbringing can best be described as benevolently authoritarian. He was born in Frankfurt-am-Main, on 23rd March, 1900, into the middle-class household of a prosperous wine merchant. However, his father must have been the first to break with family tradition as we are told that the young Fromm was descended on both sides of his family from a long line of Rabbis and thus he received a very thorough grounding in the scriptures at an early age.

Though anti-semitism was reported in Germany during the twenties, in Beyond The Chains of Illusion [1962], Fromm said that he was not particularly aware of anti-Jewish feeling in his youth, though he was distressed by a certain 'cliquishness' that separated Jews from Gentiles.[1] However, this does not necessarily imply an absence of such prejudice at that time - as Landis and Tauber point out that the close, warm, ethical family tradition in which he was raised made him somewhat of a stranger in the

modern world.

> 'The point of view and the principles of the rabbinical world were in sharp contrast to contemporary capitalism. Learning and the application of the principles of love and justice in all one's relations, not wealth or power, were the guiding values of this traditional life. That was the way his rabbinical ancestors had lived and that was the style that deeply impressed him....In many respects Fromm grew up in a world closer to the middle ages than the twentieth century - but he was also part of the latter - and the experience of the opposition between the two was one of the creative forces of his life.' [2]

The writers of this piece are clearly depending upon Fromm himself for the details of his upbringing. There is no reason to doubt that his childhood was unusually sheltered nor that it was dominated by traditional Jewish values, given

the rabbinical influence on both sides of the family. However, no evidence is put forward that such a life was typical of Jewish families in the late middle ages - even then, one might suppose, rabbinical families adhered to the traditions more strictly than other contemporary households. Be that as it may, there seems to have been nothing in this kindly upbringing to lead Fromm to reject the authoritarianism hidden behind the velvet glove.

During adolescence his early training in Judaism was reinforced by the formal teaching of the Talmud under the respected Rabbi J. Horowitz, and as a student he came under the influence of several leading exponents of Jewish thought. These included: Nehemiah Nobel (who, he tells us, was 'a mystic deeply steeped in Jewish Mysticism as well as the thought of Western Humanism'), Ludwig Krause, his mother's uncle ('a traditionalist little touched by modern thought'), and Salman B. Rabinkov ('rooted in the Hasidic tradition, a socialist and a modern scholar').[3]

As a student, too, he came into contact with the

Frankfurt Lehrhaus, which had formed round the charismatic Nehemiah Nobel. This was a group of intellectuals, including Martin Buber, who were at the cutting edge of Jewish thought at that time.

No doubt, this familiarity with different aspects of Judaism led to the choice of topic for his D.Ph. thesis, which he wrote under the supervision of Alfred Weber in Munich. His thesis, The Sociology of Jewish Law (on the socio-psychological structure of the Jewish Karaites, the Hasidim and Reform Jewry) was completed at the age of twenty-two, at a time when he was still a practising Jew.

It is my contention that, although he gave up his religious practise soon after this, his early training was to colour his understanding for the rest of his life and, in particular, he never lost his early interest in the lives of the prophets. He makes this explicit in Beyond the Chains of Illusion when he explains:

'I was brought up in a religious Jewish family, and the writings of the Old Testament touched me and exhilarated me more than anything else....
but more than anything else I was moved by the prophetic writings, by Isaiah, Amos, Hosea; not so much by their warnings and their announcement of disaster, but by their promise of 'the end of days', when 'nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks....'

The vision of universal peace and harmony between all nations touched me deeply when I was twelve or thirteen years old.' [4]

This vision, too, was to become a recurrent theme in Fromm's later work.

b. The Twenties.

Since Fromm was born in 1900, this subtitle applies equally to his own age and to the historical period under discussion. Fromm had been fourteen at the outbreak of war, too young to take part, but quite old enough to be aware of its effects. He describes in Beyond the Chains of Illusion his growing disillusion and, as the war progressed, he became increasingly obsessed with the question, "How can people behave like this?"

He tells us:

> 'When the war ended in 1918, I was a deeply troubled young man who was obsessed by the question of how the war was possible, by the wish to understand the irrationality of human mass behaviour, by a passionate desire for peace and international understanding. More, I had become deeply suspicious of all official ideologies and declarations, and filled with the conviction 'of all one must doubt'.
>
> 'I have tried to show which experiences

during my adolescence created the conditions for my passionate interest in the teachings of Marx and Freud.' [5]

(It is interesting that both his great heroes were distinctly authoritarian. How he coped with this will be discussed later.)
He continued this interest through his university studies, which began with the study of psychology, philosophy and sociology at Heidelberg before he went on to take his D.Ph. under Weber. This left him well qualified in sociology but then he changed direction and undertook a course of study designed to qualify him to practise psychoanalysis. He studied psychiatry and psychology at Munchen until 1926, the date that is usually given for his abandoning belief in God (after undergoing psychoanalysis). Thereafter, he began two years of training under Doctors Landauer and Wittenberg before moving on to the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute where he studied under such prominent Freudians as Theodor Reik and Hans Sachs. Thereafter, in 1931, he began a clinical practice.

Thus, for Fromm the whole of the decade was spent in study, but in spite of this sheltered existence he must have been aware that the twenties were a troubled period in German history. From 1921 onwards Germany suffered continual financial difficulties resulting in massive unemployment, strikes, sabotage and huge street demonstrations. Inflation grew at an alarming rate and by 1923 the currency became valueless, being eventually reorganised by a large loan under the 'Dawes Plan' promoted by the American Government and the other allied countries.

I am indebted to Wolfgang Bonss' introduction to the account he edited of Fromm's crucial study The Working Class in Weimar Germany for much of what follows.

Bonss tells us:

> 'If one looks at the development of materialist theory after 1918, one is struck by the growing emphasis given to social-psychological explanatory concepts, which was hardly to be found in Marx and his early followers....

> Where the labour movement in the nineteenth century had apparently repeatedly confirmed the hypothesis that capitalism was crisis prone and the victory of socialism inevitable, this empirical certainty had become increasingly fragile since the legalization of Social Democracy; the failure of the November Revolution of 1918 finally made unmistakeably clear that there was nothing inevitable about the outcome of the theoretically established contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production.' [6]

Bonss describes the rise of the SPD (Social Democrats) and the first stirrings of 'fascist and nationalist tendencies', so that increasingly Marxist supporters were faced with the need to provide an explanation of the failure of the revolution to materialise when the conditions for it seemed to be ripe.

If the outward conditions were right then the

explanation must lie within man himself, and so the explanation had to be sought in individual psychology.

> 'In so far as statements about the development of capitalism - that is, the 'objective' side of Marxist economic theory - had in no way been falsified, the reasons for the relative ineffectiveness of socialist campaigns had necessarily to reside in the subjective field....From the start, the psycho-analytical theory of Freud assumed a prominent place....'[7]

Nevertheless, three very different responses to the problem can be identified. The Social Democrats made several attempts to adapt Freud to suit their purposes, though nothing very much came of them and Bonss tells us that these attempts:

> '...are only of interest today in so

> far as the 'vulgarisation of Marxism and psychoanalysis is particularly clear' (Burian, 1972). [8]

The response of the German Communists (KPD) was to follow the Soviet party line. At first psychoanalysis was well received because it criticised bourgeois sexual morality, but after Lenin's death attitudes hardened and psychoanalysis was discounted.
Bonss tells us that others attempted to take up the middle ground:

> 'Several psychoanalysts such as Siegfried Bernfeld, Otto Fenichel or Wilhelm Reich who were committed to Marxism, although not uncritically so, raised their voice against this sort of ideological denigration: they did so less from a party political standpoint than from their experience of therapy.' [9]

Bernfeld argued that:

'In his view, both theories, even if autonomous in that they were concerned with different aspects of reality, were methodologically compatible and complemented each other, in that 'spiritual and social life are in dialectical process and proper cognition consists in the discovery of this dialectic' (Bernfeld,1926). [10]

By implying that Freudian theory was entirely materialist, Bernfeld had raised the question that was at the core of the debate in the nineteen twenties - Bonss points out that:

'If this natural science approach is taken to its logical conclusion, the outcome is precarious; for, to put it bluntly, psycho-analysis which is defined as biologically orientated individual psychology would find it largely impossible to integrate both biological as well as non-biological factors, on the one hand, and individual as well as social factors,

on the other. But this could hardly have been the aim of left-wing psychoanalysts. After all, they had set out to etablish a connection between psychology and social theory.' [11]

In spite of all this theoretical argument, very little objective practical investigation was undertaken before the foundation of the Frankfurt Institut [12]. Such surveys as had been done around the turn of the century were limited in scope and tended to be patriarchal in attitude (Bonss cites one example where employers were asked about the conditions of the workers, as it was assumed that the workers would be too illiterate and tongue-tied to speak for themselves!). Though more systematic inquiries, using the data from questionnaires, had been pioneered by Weber in 1910 and a later attempt (1912) was designed to explore 'the connection between technology and the inner life', it ran into difficulties because, according to Bonss, it was not sufficiently worked out.

Thus, in the twenties, there was no successful tradition of empirical socio-psychological research to build on. The white-collar unions had collated a mass of factual material, but the lack of serious investigation into subjective attitudes and forms of behaviour was becoming evident. Projects to remedy this began to be formulated and of these the work of the Frankfurt Institut is the most widely known, though work was also being done in Vienna and elsewhere.

As we have seen, Fromm bore a legacy of interest in, and knowledge of, Judaism from the earlier period of his life; similarly the idea of marrying the work of Marx and Freud, which arose in the twenties, was carried forward and became one of the keystones of his later work.

2 Exile and Prophecy.

a) The Frankfurt School

'The Institut fur Sozialforshung', to give the Frankfurt Institut its full title, originated in an idea conceived by a wealthy German intellectual, Felix J. Weil. Though he was never prominent among the scholars who formed the Institut, it was through the support of, first Weil's father, and later of Weil himself that the Institut became financially independent and was thus able to be reconstituted with relative ease when, after their enforced exile from Germany, a number of its members finally settled in New York.

A close friend, Friedrich Pollock, was involved with Weil in the original discussions, and he, in turn, enlisted the interest of Max Horkheimer. Both of these men shared wider interests than could easily be accommodated within the tight single discipline regime which characterised the German university system of that time.

'(The) idea of an independently endowed institute for social research seemed an excellent way to bypass the normal channels of university life.' [13]

When the Institut was formally set up, Weil kept financial and administrative control in his own hands, but it was stipulated from the outset that the directorship should be in the hands of a 'governmentally salaried full professor of the university (of Frankfurt)' [14]. Neither Pollock nor Horkheimer were qualified for the post and the first director to be appointed was, in fact, the economist, Kurt Albert Gerlach, but, unfortunately Gerlach died young, in 1922, before the official creation of the Institut on 3rd February, 1923.

He was replaced by Carl Grunberg who had previously held the chair of law and political science at the University of Vienna. Grunberg also was a Marxist, as were the other members of the group, and he was:

'....in agreement with the goal of an interdisciplinary institute dedicated to the radical dissection of bourgeois society.' [15]

Of interest here, in view of Fromm's later denunciation of authoritarianism is the following extract from Jay's account of Grunberg's address of dedication:

'Grunberg continued his remarks by outlining the differences in administration that would distinguish the Institut from other recently created research societies. Rather than collegial in leadership....the Frankfurt Institut was to have a single director with "dictatorial" control. Although the independence of its members was assured, true direction would be exercised in the distribution of the Institut's resources and the focussing of its energies. In subsequent years the dominance of Max Horkheimer was unquestioned.....

> Grunberg concluded his opening address by stating clearly his personal adherence to Marxism as a scientific methodology. Just as liberalism, state socialism, and the historical school had institutional homes elsewhere, so Marxism would be the ruling principle at the Institut.' [16]

Later leaders of the Institut were to move away from such 'unimaginative Marxism' [17] Jay remarks that Henryk Grossman:

> 'did not experience a later disillusionment with communism, even during his decade or so of exile in America, when many others with similar backgrounds repudiated their past.' [18]

(Nor did Fromm, although, later, he was to distinguish between Marxism and the Stalinist communism practised in the USSR and to complain

that Marxism had been seriously misunderstood and misrepresented in the West.)

Leo Lowenthal and Adorno joined the Institut in the late twenties. Lowenthal again came into contact with Erich Fromm, (whom he had known as a student) through the activities of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus as early as 1920, though, as will be seen, Fromm did not become a member of the Institut until the beginning of the thirties.

Grunberg suffered a series of strokes and when he was forced to retire, Horkheimer, who had been appointed to an extra chair in economics at Frankfurt, was, at last, able to become the new Director. It was in the concluding remarks of his inaugural speech that the first reference was made, in public, to the study upon which so much of Fromm's subsequent work was to be built.

> 'In concluding his remarks, Horkheimer outlined the first task of the Institut under his leadership: a study of workers' and employees' attitudes towards a variety of issues in Germany and the rest of developed Europe. Its

> methods were to include the use of public statistics and questionnaires backed up by sociological, psychological and economic interpretation of the data. [19]

Horkheimer, like his predecessors, placed great emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of the Institut's work and stressed particularly the role of social psychology as the link between the study of the individual and the study of society. It was to further this aim that Lowenthal recruited Erich Fromm, who was introduced, in 1931, as one of three psychologists (the others were Karl Landauer and Hienrich Meng) who would take an active part in the new project. Fromm was particularly valuable as he was qualified in sociology, as well as psychoanalysis, unlike the other psychoanalysts whose previous training had been in medicine. Herbert Marcuse also joined the Institut around this time.

In 1932, when the Institut was closed for

'activities hostile to the state' the members were to some extent dispersed - some went to Geneva (where an office had been established against just such an eventuality) others to London and Paris, before a smaller group (led by Horkeimer, and comprising Pollock, Lowenthal, Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm) was finally established in New York in the mid-thirties.
[It should be noted that Fromm's wife, Freida Fromm-Reichmann, did not leave Germany. She was not a Jew and, separated from her husband, she was not threatened by the Nazis.]

- The Integration of Psychoanalysis.

Long before any formal proposal was put forward, several Institut members, including Horkheimer and Lowenthal, had undergone psychoanalysis. Adorno, in 1927, had written a paper relating psychoanalysis to transcendental phenomenology and when the Frankfurt Psychoanalytic Institute was founded, in 1929, by Fromm and his wife, it was from the outset loosely connected with the Institut. Indeed it was through Horkheimer's influence that it was

accepted as a 'guest institute' of the University of Frankfurt. According to Martin Jay:

> 'Of the four permanent members (of the Psychoanalytic Institute), Fromm, who had been Lowenthal's friend for over a decade, and who was introduced by him to the Institut, soon established himself as its most important figure. Only he rejoined the Institut fur Sozialforshung after its emigration to America, where he soon established himself as one of the most prominent of the so-called Freudian revisionists.... It was thus primarily through Fromm's work that the Institut first attempted to reconcile Freud and Marx.' [20]

As early as the opening of the Frankfurt

Psychoanalytical Institute, in February 1929, Erich Fromm gave a lecture, which, Wolfgang Bonss tells us, was entitled The Application of Psychoanalysis to Sociology and Religious Knowledge, in which:

> '....he outlined the basis for a rudimentary but far-reaching attempt at the integration of Freudian psychology and Marxist social theory. [21]

It was several months later when the survey entitled German Workers 1929 - A Survey, its Methods and Results was undertaken under Fromm's direction by the Institut.

> 'The aim of the survey planned by Fromm, and largely carried out by Hilde Weiss, was 'to gain an insight into the psychic structure of manual and white collar workers'. With the aid of psychoanalytical theory they were
>
> hoping to obtain evidence about the

systematic connections between 'psychic make up' and social development. To initiate this ambitious research programme, a comprehensive questionnaire with 271 items was designed and distributed to 3,300 recipients; this was to provide the primary data. By the end of 1931, Fromm and Hilde Weiss had received back 1,100 questionnaires. [22]

The study continued to progress slowly until the Institut was forced to migrate to New York. In the confusion many documents were lost, including a large number of completed questionnaires. However, in an introduction to Hilde Weiss' summary, Fromm wrote that:

'....they were concerned with a project that had 'more of an experimental character than had later enquiries'. [23]

In spite of this loss, an advisory working

party was set up with a view to expanding and translating the German findings for publication in America in 1936. In fact, this never happened - as most of the group came to feel that due to the loss of so much raw data, they had insufficient evidence on which to base their findings.

> 'Fromm, who had also undertaken the co-ordination of the empirical follow-up projects, stood firmly by the survey, and a first report on The German Worker appeared within the framework of the publication of Authority and Family (HS,1936,239ff)'. [24]

Though Fromm was in disagreement with his co-workers, he continued for the time being as a member of the Institut. However, there were growing divergences between Fromm and the rest of the group, and the final break came, in 1939, when at a time of financial crisis, Fromm who had an income from his psycho-analytical practice, was asked to forego his remuneration. Fromm took

offence and finally, after he had received compensation of $20,000 for the loss of his tenured position, he broke off his connection with the Institut. [25]

(This was a considerable sum in 1939, and this incident should be borne in mind when assessing Fromm's later denunciation of greed in consumer society; whether or not the figure was a reasonable one in the circumstances, Fromm was not above taking financial considerations into account in his own case.)

That this quarrel was so bitter suggests that feelings were running high. However, in Fromm's view, the real cause of the dissension was not financial, but Horkheimer's refusal to proceed with the publication of the findings of the survey, and,

> 'When Fromm left the Institut in 1939 the study was finally withdrawn from publication since, as previous director of the social-psychological department, Fromm took all the relevant documents with him.' [26]

The survey clearly had assumed a great importance for Fromm, yet he did not publish it himself, then or ever. However, thirty years later he gave Bonss permission to re-assemble the papers and to publish the survey, insofar as it could be reconstituted as 'a contemporary historical document of considerable importance' [27] and as 'the preliminary work for the later Studies on Authority and Family.' [28]

In his introduction to the text Bonss tells us:

> 'Fromm several times stressed that he did not want to offer 'proof' with his figures, but only to show tendencies. The main tendency and therefore the central result of the study was the discrepancy between manifest political attitudes and latent character structures, since, contrary to theoretical expectations, there were, empirically speaking, very few purely 'authoritarian', 'ambivalent'; or 'revolutionary' characters; most

respondents were inconsistent; they showed authoritarian attitudes in one attitude syndrome; but ambivalent or revolutionary attitudes in another.... the psychoanalytically based characterology was not refined so as to incorporate the inconsistencies discovered.' [29]

This seems to give little support to Fromm's claims about the predominance of authoritarian character, but it is here that Bonss spells out the point that was to be the starting point for the first of Fromm's texts written directly for the general public, Escape From Freedom. (1941)

'However one may seek to explain the inconsistency, its existence is not in dispute, and this gives rise to an interesting new point which can help us

to understand the smooth establishment of fascism after 1933; the outward verbal radicalism of the Left was

misleading with regard to the actual anti-fascist potential of the labour movement, and if one looks at the discrepancy between manifest opinion and latent attitude, it seems that in many cases a left-wing outlook was neutralised or perverted by underlying personality traits. Fromm's conclusion was that despite all the electoral successes of the Weimar Left, its members were not in the position, owing to their character structure, to prevent the victory of National Socialism,' [30]

In fact, Fromm was convinced that <u>authoritarian</u> attitudes were the root cause of the success of the Nazis in Germany and he quotes John Dewey in support of his point'

'"The serious threat to our democracy," he says, "is not the existence of foreign totalitarian states. It is the existence within our own personal

attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions which have given victory to external authority...."'[31]

This 'discovery' seems to have struck Fromm with all the force of a prophetic revelation and even if it had been possible to produce the data in the form of an academic research report, I doubt if he would have taken the time to write it up. More immediate was the need to convey his findings to the opponents of fascism in the West, in a form that would convey to as many people as possible the danger that was so obvious to him.

'I feel that the psychologist should offer what he has to contribute to the understanding of the present crisis without delay....

For the understanding of the reasons for the totalitarian flight from freedom is a premise for any action which aims at victory over the

totalitarian forces.' [32]

Hence his haste to produce the text in which this passage appears, which was produced in America in 1941 as Escape from Freedom, and in London, in 1942, as Fear of Freedom.
So long as he remained with the Institut, Fromm's publications were strictly academic, but after Escape From Freedom Fromm moved into what I have described as his 'prophetic mode' and concentrated on texts that were intended for a wider readership. There is a very marked change of direction, which can perhaps be accounted for by his sense of having been given a 'prophetic' message.

b) Fromm and the Prophetic Role.

There is evidence, not only that Fromm saw himself in the prophetic role, but that he was so regarded by admirers such as Marianne Horney Eckhart and by his most severe critic John H. Schaar.

In the essay Prophets and Priests, to be found in the posthumous volume of essays, On

Disobedience and Other Essays, he gives the impression of first hand experience:

> 'It is not that a prophet wishes to be a prophet; in fact, only the false ones have the ambition to be prophets.' [33]

In her essay, Fromm's concept of Biophilia, Marianne Horney Eckhart argues that Fromm's style is the style of the prophets;

> 'It is Fromm's chosen style. This style, as so many of his basic beliefs, has roots in rabbinical traditions, in biblical themes reinterpreted by him. This style is that of the prophets. Fromm described the prophets' role. Prophets do not predict the future.
>
> They present reality free from the blindfolds of public opinion and authority. They feel compelled to express the voice of their conscience

> to say what possibilities they see, to show alternatives, to warn people. It is up to the people to take the warning and to change or to remain deaf and blind. Prophetic language is always the language of alternatives, of choice, of freedom. It is never that of determinism.' [34]

This is a clear and accurate account of Fromm's position; it could not be applied without reservation to the biblical prophets, since they believed their message came from YHWH. It is being argued here that Fromm was a prophet <u>as he understood the term</u>.

Nevertheless, Fromm shared with the Old Testament prophets a sense that his message was <u>given</u>:

> 'A prophet must talk entirely out of his need to tell his vision, and only then can his vision be trusted.' [35]

Escape from Freedom arose directly from Fromm's need to 'tell his vision'. However, the assumption of the prophetic role carries its own dangers, and Fromm was not unaware of these.

> 'If however, he is motivated by the narcissistic wish to be a leader or saviour, the solidity of his message and the integrity of his voice are questionable.' [36]

This is crucial to Fromm's understanding of the role of the prophet, and it directly contradicts the point made by Schaar in Escape from Authority that;

> 'Fromm, unlike Marx or Mannheim, sets up no class which, by virtue of its socio-economic position can act as a
>
> redemptive force for the whole of society....
> If I understand Fromm correctly, the initial power can only come from a

source outside the social system: the prophet, the hero, the leader ....'[37]

Clearly, Schaar has recognised the prophetic streak in Fromm, but he is mistaken in equating the prophet and the leader, and concluding from that that Fromm must be considered as 'one who seeks followers'. [38]
As is evident from quotation [33] above; in Fromm's view this would render his message invalid, since the prophet cannot deliberately seek his role. He is supported in this by Walzer who explains that;

'(the prophets) do not seem to have sought a popular following or ever to have aspired to political office.' [39]

There is nothing to suggest that Fromm actually sought this role - though one may wonder at the persistence with which he clung to it. He wrote in this vein until his death in 1980.

Reverting to the call of the prophet, Fromm explains:

> 'His becoming a prophet is simple enough, because the alternatives he sees are simple enough. The prophet expresses this idea very succinctly: 'The lion has roared, who will not be afraid? God has spoken, who will not be a prophet?' The phrase here means simply that the choice has become unmistakably clear. There can be no more doubt. There can be no more evasion. Hence the man who feels responsible has no choice but to become a prophet, whether he has been herding sheep, tending his vineyards, or developing and teaching ideas.' (My italics) [40]

The last phrase surely supports the contention that Fromm saw himself in a prophetic role. This idea is supported by Fromm's understanding of the role of the prophet as

being 'to show alternatives between which to choose, and the consequences of those alternatives.' [10]

This presentation of alternatives is a continuing theme in Fromm's work, and indeed, it can be argued that he was oversimplistic in his reduction of life to a series of dichotomies. This point will be discussed more fully in later chapters. Similarly, it can be argued that while the presentation of hard choices was indeed part of the role of the prophet, [though the quotation which springs immediately to mind, 'I have set before you life and death....therefore choose life,' comes, not from the prophets but from Deuteronomy 30:19] - it is not their sole function nor even their major function, which was to recall man to the will of YHWH.

There were, however, some similarities between the situation of the Old Testament prophets and that of Fromm. Both prophesied in times of great national trouble. In a few short years, Fromm had seen his home country overrun by Fascists; his race reviled and ill-treated; he had been forced into exile and separated from his

wife, and finally found himself at odds with his closest colleagues. Though the full horror of the holocaust and Horoshima were not yet known, he was not alone in his sense of impending disaster. Once he thought he had discerned a clue to the way forward, it was well within the line of his character and upbringing that he should feel impelled to make his discovery widely known. Though he had ostensibly given up religious practice and belief, he had been so well trained in Jewish ways of thinking in his youth, that it was impossible to break free, and it remained a factor in his mature thought for the remainder of his life.

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

N.B Dates given in brackets after the first mention of a title in each chapter are the dates of copyright - see Appendix 1.

1. The biographical material in this chapter has been compiled from material contained in:

Bonss, Wolfgang, 'Critical Theory and Empirical Social Research', forward to Fromm, Erich, The Working Class in Weimar Germany, Leamington Spa, 1984, pp1-3.

Burston, Daniel, 'A Profile of Erich Fromm', in Society, 1991, V28, N4, pp84-89.

Fromm, Erich, You Shall Be As Gods, London, 1967.

Fromm, Erich, Beyond The Chains of Illusion, London, 1980. {Copyright in America, 1962}.

Landis, Bernard, and Tauber, Edward, B., In the Name of Life, Canada, 1971.

McLauchlin, Neil, 'The Legacy of Erich Fromm', Society, July/Aug., 1992, pp92-94.

Biographical Index.

2. Landis and Tauber, 1971, p2.

3. Fromm, 1967, p13.

4. Fromm, 1980, p5.

5. Fromm, 1980, p8.

6. Bonss, 1984, p4.

7. Bonss, 1984, p4.

8. Bonss, 1984, p5.

9. Bonss, 1984, p6.

10. Bonss, 1984, pp6-7.

11. Bonss, 1984, p7.

12. I have followed Martin Jay, and used the German 'Institut' to refer to the Frankfurt Institute, to differentiate it from other 'Institutes' referred to in the text.

13. Jay, Martin, The Dialectical Imagination, London, 1973, p8.

14. Jay, 1973, p8.

15. Jay, 1973, p10.

16. Jay, 1973, p11.

17. Jay, 1973, p12.

18. Jay, 1973, p17.

19. Jay, 1973, p26.

20. Jay, 1973, p88.

21. Bonss, 1984, p1.

22. Bonss, 1984, p1-2.

23. Bonss, 1984, p2.

24. Bonss, 1984, p2.

25. Bonss, 1984, Note 4, p29.

26. Bonss, 1984, p2.

27. Bonss, 1984, p2.

28. Bonss, 1984, p3.

29. Bonss, 1984, pp28-9.

30. Bonss, 1984, p29.

31. Fromm, Erich, Escape from Freedom, New York, 1941, p5.

32. Fromm, 1941, pvii- viii..

33. Fromm, Erich, On Disobedience, and Other Essays, New York, 1981, p42.

34. Horney Eckhart, Marianne, 'Fromm's Concept of Biophilia', Journal of the American Academy of Psychanalysis, 1992, Vol 120, n3, pp233-240, p236.

35. Fromm, 1967, p94, (note).

36. Fromm, 1967, p94, (note).

37. Schaar, John H., Escape from Authority, New York, 1961, p259.

38. Schaar, 1961, p262.

39. Walzer, Michael, Interpretation and Social Criticism, Harvard, 1993, p70.

40. Fromm, 1982, p42.

CHAPTER 2 Fromm and Religion

After Escape from Freedom Fromm continued to write for the general public, while pursuing a career in psychoanalysis both as a practitioner and as a teacher. He was a member of the Faculty at Bennington College (1941-49) and Guest Professor at Yale (1948-49) before moving, because of the illness of his second wife, to Mexico. There he became first, Professor, then Honorary Professor of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. However, throughout his time there, he commuted to New York and Michigan, where he also held chairs. In addition, he was a founder member of the Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology.

His next book, Man for Himself (1947), gave an account of Fromm's understanding of the development of character and was to an extent a continuation of the argument in Escape from Freedom (1941) providing a fuller explanation of how the authoritarian character is formed. The Sane Society (1956) set out for the first time Fromm's vision of the ideal society, based on

Marxian ideas, but in between came two texts with a religious theme viz: Psychoanalysis and Religion (1950) and The Forgotten Language (1952) which dealt with myth and legend.

As one reads through Fromm's work it soon becomes evident that the utopian structure that he was building had three main supports. These were: his religious background; his admiration for Marx; and a continuous internal dialogue/argument with Freud. It is proposed, therefore, to take each of these in turn, in order to extract the part each played in the overall theory that Fromm was developing.

1. Fromm's religious thought:

Fromm has written, at length, on his understanding of the scriptures in You Shall Be As Gods,(1966) though references to the prophets are scattered throughout his work. While it is clear that he has moved a considerable distance from traditional Jewish thinking, it is not clear how far he was out of step with contemporary avant-garde Jewish thought. A comparison with the work of Martin Buber and other members of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus would be helpful here.

However, these men, as we have seen, were pioneers of Jewish thinking and were probably not typical of mainstream rabbinical thought.

Certainly, by the time You Shall Be As Gods was written, 'God', for Fromm, had become an unnecessary construct.

> 'I believe that the concept of God was a historically conditioned expression of an inner experience.' [1]

Nevertheless, this inner experience, which he described as the 'x' experience, continued to be important to Fromm, as is evidenced by his interest in Zen Buddhism and the Christian mystics.

However, in this section it will be argued that, at the very least, he brought from Judaism to his consideration of Marx and Freud:

a) A set of values gained early in life.

b) An understanding of the prophetic role, and, most vitally,

c) An aim - that of the achievement of the messianic time.

a) Values.

Fromm identifies the prime values in the teaching of the prophets as being those of justice and love:

> '....in the prophets from Amos onwards, we find the same concept. What man has to do is to acquire and to practice the main qualities that characterise God: justice and love (rahamin). [2]

Later he amplifies this, and the addition, as will become evident, is crucial to Fromm's thought:

> 'The spirit of the law as it was developed by the rabbis through the centuries, was one of brotherly love for the individual, and the devotion of one's life to one's human development.' [3] (My italics.)

Fromm had a long experience of rabbinic teaching, so this last (italicised) phrase may well be true, but Fromm offers no evidence for it and it is certainly not part of the prophetic message as this is commonly understood.

As we have seen, Landis and Tauber considered that love of learning, as well as justice and love, was an essential part of Fromm's upbringing. A keen sense of social justice derives directly from the prophets [see, for example, Amos Chapter eight]; and, in addition, the prophets shared with Marx an interest in the historical process:

'It must be added that God acts in history and reveals himself in history. This idea has two consequences: one, that belief in God implies a concern with history and, using the word in its widest sense, a political concern. We see this political concern most clearly in the prophets.... the prophets think in historical and political terms. "Political" here means that they are concerned with historical events affecting...all the nations of the world. It means, furthermore, that the criteria for judging historical events are spiritual religious ones: justice and love.' [4]

The concept of a God who reveals himself in history is straightforwardly Jewish, and the teachings of the prophets were political insofar as the prophets spoke directly to the leaders of their time and demanded change in, for example, the treatment of the poor, as we have seen that Amos did, or gave direct advice to the king, as Isaiah did to Ahaz. (Isaiah Chapter 7).

Though Fromm, at the time of writing, had discounted the need for God and become imbued with the ideas of Marx - the ethical teaching of his youth regarding the primacy of justice stays in place and finds expression in his democratic, or communitarian socialism. [5]

Similarly, he considers that brotherly love is an essential pre-requisite for the achievement of man's full potential, and it is important to recognise that the biblical understanding of love was well-established as part of his belief system long before he arrived at his theoretical position in The Art of Loving.(1957) Since Schaar has written scathingly on this subject, it is necessary to define just what Fromm's position was - Fromm saw love as an art, which like any other art required a mastery of both theory and practice, though his theory seems, at times, to be unnecessarily complex and confusing. This is because, with Fromm, everything has to be made to fit into the strange mixture of Marxism, Freudianism and Godless religion that forms his central thesis. This will become evident as this work progresses.

However, no-one who has read Fromm's text can imagine that love is ever easy, it is an act of will that requires humility, courage, faith, and discipline - as well as care, responsibility, respect and knowledge - all of which, in Fromm's thought, are aspects of the mature character or the productive personality.

To say, as Schaar does, that 'the brotherly love of the Bible is plainly not that of Erich Fromm' [6] is wilfully to misunderstand Fromm's position, as is his claim that:

> 'In Fromm's pages, Christian love appears only as a bland residue of sympathy and benevolence left over after all the stringent elements of duty, debt and sacrifice have been left out.' [7]

This claim is possible only if one accepts Schaar's own divergent understanding of the term, which is that normal human love is restricted, rationed and particular, and that

> 'it must remain secret and mysterious, the talent and the privilege of the few'. [8]

However Schaar is right in pointing out the ambivalent nature of love:

> '....to praise love in the style of Fromm is in our day to run the risk of adding to a debased conception of love as the right to be accepted as one is....' [9]

This is the obverse side of unconditional love; such love can be made available only as a gift - it cannot be argued for as a right. This illogical situation is acceptable only in terms of faith, which Fromm understood as a function of character, but nowhere does he make his position clear on this.

(Fromm, like Freud, places great importance on the formation of character, but, as will become evident, gives a differing account of its development.)

The idea of the devotion of one's life to one's human development is crucial to Fromm's thinking, and his psychoanalytical practice has this as its main objective. He argues (in quotation 3 above) that this was part of traditional Jewish thinking; if this is so, this idea predates his encounter with Marx and Freud.

In You Shall Be As Gods, particularly, we find the interplay between Fromm's biblical background and his later psychoanalytical studies. God is seen as being the personification of the highest good, but what that is perceived as being is dependent on the character of the individual and, therefore, the concept of God varies with the maturity of the individual.

Here, as elsewhere, Fromm introduces the opposition between the authoritarian and the humanistic viewpoint; between patriarchal and matriarchal views of religion; and between rational and irrational faith - supporting the

second alternative in each case. The first and last of these attributes will be discussed more fully in the context of Fromm's understanding of character (see Man for Himself 1947). This discussion follows later. Meanwhile it should be noted that (not for the first, or only, time) Fromm creates difficulty for himself by trying to unite Jewish monotheism with atheistic Marxism. By asserting his own disbelief in God, he cannot escape the fact that the biblical prophets, whom he recommends, do believe in a paternalistic God and issue an authoritarian message.

As it happens, Fromm's understanding of the contrast between patriarchal and matriarchal accounts of religion arose from his study of Bachofen - an account of which appears in Martin Jay's study of the Frankfurt Institut:

> 'Bachofen's psychological insights on the other hand, were the source of the appeal to the left. Matriarchal society stressed human solidarity and happiness. Its dominant values were love and compassion, not fear and subordination. Both private property and repressive sexuality were absent from its social ethic. Patriarchal society, as Engels and Bebel had interpreted it, was related to a class society; both stressed duty and authority over love and gratification.' [10]

It is this reading of Bachofen that is coherent with Fromm's thought, but it led him further from Freudian paternalism.

[According to Jay, eventually Fromm's criticism of Freud was to lead to his separation from the Frankfurt School altogether; but as we have seen, Bonss gave an entirely different account of the break-up, blaming it on disagreements over the attitudinal survey. No doubt, several factors were involved - all the remaining members of the

Institut must have been undergoing a degree of stress at that time.]

Martin Jay tells us:

> 'At the same time as Fromm's disillusionment with Freud grew, so did his estrangement from other members of the Institut....Fromm wrote only one more article for the Zeitschrift, a study of the feeling of impotency in modern society. In 1939 his connection with the Institut was severed....' [11]

b) The Prophets.

Fromm's understanding of the role of the prophet, as one who sees the evil of his own time and presents man with alternatives, derives from his own, selective, reading of the Scriptures. Referring to the prophets he writes:

'...they have a fourfold function:

> 1. They announce to man that there is God, the One who has revealed himself to them, and that man's role is to become fully human; and that means to become like God.' (My italics) [12]

The insertion of the idea that man's role is to become like God is a typically Frommian formulation, as he seeks to keep the ethical content of the Old Testament while rejecting the traditional understanding of God.

Traditional believers would find something very odd in Fromm's attempts to keep all the functions of the prophet except the one that they consider essential, that is, that God exists and that the prophetic message comes from Him. He seems to be throwing out the baby and carefully preserving the bathwater! Nevertheless he is attempting to come to grips with a contemporary problem in terms a layman can understand - belief in a supernatural God is difficult, but the ethical superstructure is valuable - how can we keep one without the other?

Fromm tries to do this by playing down the importance of God while leaving the door open for those who cannot follow him in discarding the idea entirely. Thus, by describing God as 'a historically conditioned expression of an inner experience' [13] which he does not share, he leaves open the possibility that others have had the experience. Alternatively he can accept the

term as a poetic expression of 'the highest value in humanism, not a reality in itself'. [14] As we will see in the final chapter a less tortured way of achieving his end would be simply to accept the importance of the prophetic narratives in the formation of the moral culture of the West.

To return to his second point:

> 'They, (the prophets) show man alternatives between which he can choose, and the consequences of those alternatives. They often express this in terms of God's rewards and punishment, but it is always man who, by his own action, makes the choice.'[15]

All too often, by the time the prophet speaks the choice has already been made. In When Prophecy Failed, Robert P. Carroll points out that:

'A classical example of a domain assumption must be Jeremiah's belief that everybody in Jerusalem and Judah was completely corrupt, wicked and incapable of becoming otherwise. (Jeremiah 5.1-5; 6.13; 8.4-7; 9.4-5; 13.23) [16]

3. 'They dissent and protest when man takes the wrong road. But they do not abandon the people; they are their conscience, speaking up when everybody else is silent.'[17]

This identification of the prophets with their people is important to Walzer's definition of the prophet (see final chapter).

4. 'They do not think in terms of individual salvation only, but believe that individual salvation is bound up with the salvation of society. Their concern is the establishment of a society governed by love, justice, and truth; they insist that their politics

must be judged by moral values, and that the function of political life is the realisation of those values.' [18]

The word 'only' here is superfluous. It suggests that the prophets' message is, in part, about individual salvation - this is not the case as the prophet speaks invariably about the salvation of the people as a whole.

As Fromm sees it, man is endowed with tendencies towards both good and evil and must make a conscious choice between the two. He quotes (in You Shall Be As Gods) Deuteronomy 30.19 "See, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose life...' (In fact, much of his following argument seems to be based more on Deuteronomy than directly from the prophets, however, - since the exact relationship between Deuteronomy and the prophets seems to be far from clear and the teachings of the two have much in common - this may not be a crucial point).

Be that as it may, the admonition to 'choose life' is elaborated in The Heart of Man (1964) and The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973) as the choice between 'biophilia and necrophilia' which, also, will be considered later as part of the discussion of Fromm's development of Freudian psychology.

Faced with the problem of freedom or determinism, he takes a position between the two and opts for his own formulation of 'alternativism', where man does have the ability to choose between good and evil (since he has the potential for either) but, nevertheless, this freedom can be lost if an individual's development is limited or if it is distorted by too many wrong choices so that he reaches the point of no return. 'Alternativism' is related in You Shall Be As Gods to prophetic choices. As we have seen, this will not do - since alternativism is concerned with individual choices and the prophets are speaking to the whole people. However, since if the nation is to change its ways, the individuals who comprise the nation will each have to change, his argument is not necessarily invalid.

> 'They (the prophets) teach that there is nothing inherently evil in man's nature that would prevent him choosing the good which is in him as a potentiality, just as is the evil' [19]

It would have been helpful if Fromm had given examples from the prophets here, but presumably his argument is that there would have been no point to the prophetic message if human beings had not had the ability to do better.

> 'The idea that man is free to choose between good and evil and may yet lose this capacity for choice is expressed in the prophetic writings. They share the view that man can lose himself to the point of no return. Thus, while they announce alternatives, in a number of instances they have predicted unalterable disaster.' [20]

(The explanation of 'alternativism' is set out in detail in the final chapter of The Heart of Man. (1964) It is interesting to speculate how far Fromm's ideas on this subject were prompted by the need to solve this contradiction in the teaching of the prophets, which he must have been aware of since his youth.)

Fromm argues that the essence of man lies in his 'essential dichotomy', (See below) and in the questions this raises - in particular, how is man to overcome his separateness? He can do this regressively, by attempting to return to nature; or progressively, by moving toward a fuller humanity. Full humanity will be achieved in the messianic time, but until then each man should strive for greater maturity. Meanwhile the choice is there, inescapably, and must be accepted for good or evil, regress or progress.

Among the choices he finds in the scriptures, and in addition to those mentioned above, are those of nationalism versus universality; conservatism versus radicalism; and fanaticism versus tolerence - in each case, as a

radical humanist he would see the second option as being the progressive option. But he really cannot argue, as he tries to do, that this would be the position of the prophets - again and again we find the prophets fanatically denouncing other nations (Isaiah 13;15;17;18;19;) nor is tolerance one of their outstanding virtues, since their language is almost entirely that of strong denunciation.

Yet he needs to make this point if he is to make good the assumption underlying his text, that radical humanism 'marks the main stages of the evolution of the Jewish tradition'. [21] Though he admits that a much longer text would be needed to make this fully evident, it is clear that this is the understanding upon which his present work is based.

c) The Messianic Time.

Fromm believes in evolution - yet he invariably uses the biblical story of creation to explain his theory of the nature of man. In his account - over a long period of time, man evolved

to the point where, because of the growth of his intellect and the consequent reduction of his powers of intuition, he became irreparably separated from the rest of nature. He equates this with man's expulsion from Paradise. According to Fromm, only Christians see man's expulsion as a reward for sin - Jews regard it more positively as an act of disobedience, which was at the same time man's first act of freedom and the first step along a long road to his full development in the messianic time, when universal peace will reign and man will be reunited with nature.

> 'Seen from the point of view of biblical philosophy, the process of history is the process in which man develops his powers of reason and love, in which he becomes fully human, in which he returns to himself. He regains....the harmony of a man completely aware of himself, capable of knowing right and wrong, good and evil' [21]

(It might be safer to replace the first phrase with 'Seen from the standpoint of Frommian philosophy....')

However, Fromm continues:

> 'The messianic time is the next step in history, not its abolition..(it) is the time when man will have been fully born.' [22]

Fromm argues that progress towards the messianic time is brought about by the tensions inherent in 'man's essential dichotomy'

> 'This dichotomy creates conflict and suffering, and man is driven to find ever new solutions to this conflict, until he has solved it by becoming fully human and achieving at-one-ment'. [23]

This explanation of man's nature as being the result of this 'existential dichotomy' underlies all Fromm's thinking and makes its appearance in

the same form in all his work, (See the very full explanation in The Sane Society) [24]

It is probable that this understanding, which is crucial to Fromm's thought, arises from a conflation of the concept of the messianic time with the ideas of Marx, who also promoted an ideal of self-development.

However the idea of the messianic time as a time of peace and brotherhood is standard biblical teaching;

> '...the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them....
> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' Isaiah 11:6-9

Fromm quotes this passage in You Shall Be As Gods together with other passages relating to a future time when man will live in harmony with nature. In Beyond the Chains of Illusion (1962) he quotes it in conjunction with the passage from Isaiah 2:4 when nations,

> '...shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'

and the influence of the early teaching he received as a child is evident when he adds,

> 'The vision of universal peace and harmony touched me deeply when I was between twelve and thirteen years old.' [25]

From the prophetic description of the messianic time, Fromm draws the values of freedom and harmony, (between man and man, and between man and nature). His interest in harmony between

man and nature is consistent with his admiration for Schweitzer and his interest in Buddhism (Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis, 1960), but, more importantly, it clearly forms the basis of his lifelong pacifism. He was a consistent upholder of the cause of internationalism and of the anti-nuclear movement, while the clearest expression of his criticism of American foreign policy and the account of the dangers he foresaw in the international situation are to be found in May Man Prevail (1961).

[Like almost everyone else, he failed to predict the sudden break up of the communist bloc and it is interesting to speculate on what would have been his reaction to the collapse of the Berlin wall and subsequent events. Throughout his exile he retained a profound distrust of Germany. Given his experience, this is understandable, but the possibility of rationalisation on his part has to be borne in mind when he describes Germany as incurably expansionist.) [26]

2. Fromm's Theology.

Fromm traces the development of God from the omniscient, all-powerful and arbitrary ruler, through the Jewish understanding of a covenant with God, and, finally, to the concept of freedom from God.

'God' was the concept used to describe an experience. Thus, at the outset, he defines his own position:

> 'I have tried to show that the God-concept is only "the finger that points to the moon". This moon is not outside of ourselves but is the human reality behind the words: what we call the religious attitude is an 'x' that is expressible only in poetic and visual symbols'. [27]

This understanding of God is perhaps more familiar today than it was at the time this was written, nevertheless, in most of what follows, Fromm is reading his own philosophy into the Bible.

The difference between ethical man and the religious man is not a question of belief in a form of words used to describe the indescribable, it is a matter of character and lies essentially in the difference between authoritarian and humanitarian attitudes (see later discussion).

In Fromm's view 'authoritarian ethics are always tinged with idolatry' [28] whereas humanitarian ethics is consistent with the 'x' experience - but whether one describes this in theistic or non-theistic terms depends on one's conceptualisation of the experience. The experience is the same however it is described. Whatever the name given to the experience, Fromm suggests that certain factors are characteristic of those who participate in it:

1. They experience life as a problem and seriously seek to overcome the essential dichotomy posed by life and seek at-one-ment.

2. They seek the highest development of their own powers of reason, love, compassion, and courage.

3. For an 'x' person, man alone is an end and never a means, 'each event is responded to from the standpoint of whether or not it helps to transform him in the direction of becoming more human'.[29]

4. They seek openness through letting go of the ego.

> 'to make oneself empty does not express passivity but openness. Indeed, if one cannot make oneself empty, how can one respond to the world? How can one see, feel, hear, love, if one is filled with one's ego, if one is driven by greed?' [30]

Though we invariably try to conceptualise or find symbols to convey religious experience, there are dangers in doing so,

'The concept and the symbol have the great advantage that they permit people to communicate their experiences; they have the tremendous disadvantage that they lend themselves easily to alienated use.' [31]

This, in Fromm's view is exactly what happened - the concept and the experience became separated (alienated) and, because of the social structure of the time, with the mass of the people dominated by powerful leaders and kings, God was conceptualised in terms of supreme power.

'...the concept 'god' was conditioned by the presence of a sociopolitical structure in which tribal chiefs or kings have supreme power. The supreme value is conceptualised as analogous to the supreme power in society.' [32]

Given Fromm's view of authoritarianism, it is not surprising that he found this view untenable. He also found it unnecessary, as he considered that it is possible to undergo a religious experience without necessarily interpreting it in traditional theistic terms, hence the current interest in Zen Buddhism and Taoism;

> 'The East, however, was not burdened with the concept of a transcendent father-saviour in which the monotheistic religions expressed their longings. Taoism and Buddhism had a rationality and realism superior to that of the Western religions. They could see man realistically and objectively, having nobody but the 'awakened' ones to guide them, and being able to be guided because each man has within himself the capacity to awake and be enlightened.' [33]

If the idea of God as an absolute ruler constituted the first stage of man's understanding of God, Fromm saw it as being counterbalanced by the idea that man was God's potential rival. If he had eaten of the fruit of the tree of life as well as the fruit of the tree of knowledge he would have attained immortality and become the equal of God - hence his expulsion from the garden - but the potentiality remains.

> 'As we shall see, the more man unfolds, the more he frees himself from God's supremacy, and the more he can become like God.' [34]

God's covenant with Noah marks a decisive step forward,

> 'The idea of a covenant constitutes, indeed, one of the most decisive steps in the religious development of Judaism, a step which prepares the way to the concept of the complete freedom of man, even freedom from God.' [35]

When man strikes a bargain with God, he does so, necessarily, from a position of near equality. From there the next step leads to a position of complete equality. But if man is the equal of God - the concept of God becomes superfluous. Thus, he understood 'godless religion' to be a logical development from the Jewish tradition of 'the nameless god'. However, the term YHWH was not adopted because God had no name, rather because it was too holy to be uttered - so that Fromm's argument was based on a misreading. (See, for example, Exodus 20.2 when the expression 'I am the Lord, your God', could equally have been translated, 'I am Yahweh...')

> 'There is a common element of experience referred to by the concept of God, but there is also a constant change occurring in this experience and hence in the meaning of the word and concept.

> What is common...(is) that there is only the ONE who represents the supreme value and the supreme goal for man: the goal of finding union with the world through full human development of his specifically human capacities of love and reason.' [36]

This may be an admirable aim, but it is not biblical. Nevertheless, it is this goal which is at the heart of all Fromm's subsequent writing, from Escape from Freedom (1941) to The Art of Being, (1993).

He repeatedly asserts that the Scriptures do not attempt to describe God, in fact they firmly discourage any attempt to do so. For second Isaiah, God is incomparable,

> 'To whom then will you liken God.
> Or what likeness compare with him...'
> (Isaiah 40.18)

However the Scriptures do lay stress on what God is NOT and the prophets, in particular, are less interested in theology than in discouraging idolatry. (Isaiah 44. 9-20)

> 'An idol represents the object of man's central passion: the desire to return to the soil mother, the craving for possession, power, fame and so forth. The passion represented by the idol is, at the same time, the supreme value within man's system of values....
>
> The history of mankind up to the present time is primarily the history of idol worship, from the primitive idols of clay and wood to the modern idols of the state, the leader, production and consumption - sanctified by the blessing of an idolised God.' [37]

As Professor Carroll has pointed out, in his supervisory capacity, this is pure homily. There is a place for homily, and arguably it is not out of place in a popular text, but You Shall Be As Gods is less 'popular' in style than many of Fromm's works.

According to Fromm, the worship of any idol invariably serves to reduce or weaken the powers of the individual. True worship by whatever name, will always promote the growth of the self in the direction of freedom, love and the mature productive character. Through the concept of idolatry we find Fromm raising many of the concerns with which he is preoccupied in his writings.

3.Fromm's concerns.

a)Alienation.

Fromm's views on alienation were shared with other members of the Frankfurt School, as they pursued their aim of marrying the idea of Marxism with Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

> 'The Hegelian-Marxian concept of alienation makes its first appearance - though not in these words - in the biblical concept of idolatry. Idolatry is the worship of the alienated, limited qualities of man, The idolater, just as the alienated man, is the poorer the more richly he endows his idol. [38]

This understanding of alienation is discussed in the following section.

b)Freedom.

> 'God in the Bible and in the later tradition allows man to be free; he reveals to him the goal of human life, the road by which he can reach this goal; but he does not force him to go in either direction. It could hardly be otherwise in a religious system in which.....the highest norm for man's development is freedom'. [39]

This, again, is a typical Frommian formulation. God in the Bible has always been regarded as leaving man free to choose between good and evil, but the rest does not necessarily follow.

In Fromm's thought, people indoctrinated by an authoritarian, paternalistic culture are afraid of freedom, and thus lack the resources to make independent decisions, and Fromm does provide some backing for this idea in Fear of Freedom.

In The Revolution of Hope, (1968) Fromm explains the psychological reasons for 'belief in idols and political leaders' as being the outcome of man's need for certainty and for conformity. The ability to stand apart from the herd, as the prophet must do, is a humanistic, rather than an authoritarian characteristic. However, as has already been pointed out, the prophets carried the message of a paternal, authoritarian God, and could not conceivably be described as humanistic.

c) Contemporary Idols.

> 'Once idols were animals, trees, stars, figures of men and women....Today they are called honor, flag, state, mother, family, fame, production and many other names. But because the official object of worship is God, the idols of today are not recognised for what they are....Hence we need an idology that would examine the effective idols of any given period....how they have been syncretised with the worship of God, and how God himself has become one of the idols...' [40]

As with so much of Fromm, there is a grain of truth in this, insofar as we are able to accept that God represents our highest value - that which we worship. Then to worship anything less, is to make of it a substitute for God, that is, an idol. It can be argued that the main purpose of Fromm's work is to provide such an idology.

d) Pacifism.

> 'Is there really as much difference as we think between the Aztec human sacrifices and the modern human sacrifices in war to the idols of nationalism and the sovereign state?'. [41]

It has to be remembered that Fromm was old enough to have been profoundly disturbed by the mass slaughter, on both sides, of the First World War. At the time of writing there are many conflicts, world wide, all of which seem unnecessary, seen from the outside. Moreover, Fromm's lifetime covered the period of both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam and he would have had friends and students involved in all of these. It is not surprising that he equates war with Moloch.

4) Conclusion.

Several main planks in Fromm's philosophy can be shown to be closely linked to ideas drawn from his early Jewish upbringing, albeit often illicitly adapted to suit his own purposes - among them being:

1. The concept of idolatry, which derives, obviously, from Fromm's early training in the Jewish Scriptures. In his estimation the worship of false gods is at the heart of all human ills and the idea permeates all of his writing. Idolatry and alienation, as we have seen are inseparable, and the topic must recur continually in any discussion of Fromm's work.

2. The idea of man's essential dichotomy, which, perhaps more than any other factor, conflates the teachings of Fromm's youth with his mature thinking. At a conscious level he is dealing with myth, yet he discusses the myth and draws conclusions from it as if it were fact. [In a similar manner Christians discuss the story of 'the Good Samaritan' as if it was fact, although, even if the Gospel story is accurate, the man was

an imaginary figure created by Jesus to illustrate a point.] This does not necessarily invalidate Fromm's thesis that man's disease in the world arises from his development away from the certainties of the instinctual behaviour of animals, and the choices that the development of his intellect have placed upon him - but it must create difficulties for those who are not equally immersed in the biblical tradition.

3. Fromm's, mistaken, claim that there is biblical authority for the stress he puts on the ideal of self development. This is not the case, as the idea is almost entirely absent from the bible - the concept is a modern one which is necessary to support Fromm's humanist position. What is interesting here is to note the length to which Fromm, the humanist, will go to find biblical support for his ideas. It suggests that his early training is a powerful component of his mature philosophy.

4. Fromm's insistence that man is capable of both good and evil seems experientially self-evident, but in view of religious accounts of man's innate depravity, and more recent accounts of inescapable aggression in, for example, The Naked Ape [42] it is a position that needs to be defended. Not only that, but in view of Schaar's attack -

> 'We come again to the basic point. Fromm believes that a good society will make good men and that evil men are merely the unnatural reflections of evil social conditions.' [43]

- the argument that Fromm, in fact, held the view that mankind is capable of evil - is also in need of defence. Fromm discusses his belief that man has to choose between good and evil in the final chapter of The Heart of Man (1964), and defends his stance against those who regard humans as being incurably aggressive in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973). Both of these texts are discussed in later chapters.

He is not, however, overly optimistic - he sees contemporary conditions as favouring the evil, rather than the good, in man.
However the issue of the choices that life places before us is central to much of the discussion of Fromm's psychology which is the subject of chapter four.

5. Fromm's account of the role of the prophet who, in a troubled situation, and because he is one of the few who are sufficiently developed to see the alternatives, has a duty to point these out to his fellows - in the hope of bringing about a change of direction before it is too late. This is clearly the role in which Fromm saw himself. Fromm is here taking the myth of the prophet, as the intellectual who stands for justice and righteousness, against current trends, at whatever cost, as the basis of his argument - rather than a careful examination of the biblical text which would not support many of his claims.

Overall, although Fromm attempts to give some formal biblical backing to his general thesis in You Shall Be As Gods, this is to rationalize after the event.

Certain values, such as those of love and justice, had been so ingrained in his youth that he would have been incapable of devising any theory of man in which they were not included. Moreover his insistence on 'the devotion of one's life to one's human development', (which he insists is biblical but for which we have been able to find no evidence in the prophets), if translated simply as 'the need to make the most of one's talents' immediately brings to mind the parable of Jesus which seeks to make just that point.

Fromm was not a Christian, but Jesus was a Jew, and there is evidence that many of his teachings were traditional Rabbinical doctrine. This may well be one of the lessons which were insisted upon in the upbringing of a very bright Jewish child - to the extent that for Fromm it became an unacknowledged article of faith, which must be incorporated with the other values into his final theory.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Fromm, Erich, You Shall Be As Gods, London, 1967, p26.

2. Fromm, 1967, p65.

3. Fromm, 1967, p193.

4. Fromm, 1967, p121.

5. Fromm, Erich, The Sane Society, London, 1956, p321.

6. Schaar, John,B., Escape From Authority, New York, 1961. 1961, p132.

7. Schaar, 1961, p141.

8. Schaar, 1961, p134.

9. Schaar, 1961, p140.

10. Jay, Martin, The Dialectical Imagination, London, 1974, pp95-96.

11. Jay, 1973, pp98.

12. Fromm, 1967, p117.

13. Fromm, 1967, p15.

14. Fromm, 1967, p19.

15. Fromm, 1967, p117.

16. Carroll, Robert P., When Prophecy Failed, London, 1979, p12.

17. Fromm, 1967, p117.

18. Fromm, 1967, p117/118.

19. Fromm, 1967, p162.

20. Fromm, 1967, p165.

21. Fromm, 1967, p122/123.

22. Fromm, 1967, 122.

23. Fromm, 1967, p123

24. Fromm, 1955, p22 et seq.

25. Fromm, Erich, Beyond The Chains Of Illusion, London, 1980, p5.

26. Fromm, Erich, May Man Prevail?, New York, 1961. Chapter 6.

27. Fromm, 1967, p226.

28. Fromm, 1967, p56.

29, Fromm, 1967, p58-9.

30. Fromm, 1967, p59.

31. Fromm, 1967, p20.

32. Fromm, Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis, London, 1960, p80.

34. Fromm, 1967, p24.

35. Fromm, 1967, p25.

36. Fromm, 1967, p22.

37. Fromm, 1967, p43.

38. Fromm, 1967, p48. (note).

39. Fromm, 1967, p47.

40. Fromm, 1967, p47/48.

41. Fromm, 1967, p48.

42. Morris, Desmond, The Naked Ape, London, 1967.

43. Schaar, 1961, p69.

CHAPTER 3

The Influence of Freud and Marx.

Just as what Jay has described as 'Fromm's religiosity' derives from the earliest period of his life, so his interest in Freud and Marx can be linked to his second decade and to the efforts being made at that time to combine Freudian psychology with Marxism. Indeed, Fromm's thought was so influenced by them that it has been suggested that, if Fromm was a prophet, he was a failed prophet of Marx and Freud. This challenge will be taken up in the final chapter, but, prophet or not, he was certainly a disciple of Marx. His relationship with Freud, as we shall see, was less straightforward.

In Beyond the Chains of Illusion (1962), which could be described as an autobiographical account of Fromm's thinking up to that date, he tries to explain, in terms that a layman might understand, the similarities and differences between Freud and Marx and how these had affected his own thinking.

Though this chapter is largely based on that text, I have ranged more widely throughout Fromm's work to expand on some of the points made.

He had previously written (in 1955) Sigmund Freud's Mission, which was largely devoted to an attack on Freud and his followers, and (in 1961) Marx's Gospel of Man (to which one might be forgiven for adding, 'as Fromm saw it'). As will be seen, Fromm was as capable of reading what he wanted to find in Marx, as he was of giving his own interpretation to the Bible. Yet, overall, he considered that Marx was far more influential than Freud.

> 'That Marx is a figure of world historical significance with whom Freud cannot even be compared in this respect hardly needs to be said.' [1]

The reputations of both have suffered in recent years, and it is doubtful if Fromm's opinion is still widely shared.

Fromm's interest in psychology, he tells us, began in his early teens, when a young woman whom he admired greatly committed suicide immediately after the death of her father (who, the young Fromm considered, was an unattractive old curmudgeon). He could not understand her reaction, and this incident and the outbreak of World War One, which followed shortly afterwards, set the direction of his future studies. He was obsessed with the question, 'Why?' 'Why do people act in ways that are self-destructive or harmful to others?' 'Is such behaviour avoidable?' These were not purely academic questions for Fromm - his life was devoted to the search for answers, and in spite of the criticism that may, justly, be levelled at his writing, the sincerity of his search deserves respect, and presents a challenge to his critics to provide better answers.

1. Freud

While he never allowed himself to be counted among the psychoanalytic schools antagonistic to Freud, Fromm was extremely critical of Freud's disciples largely because, in his view, they regarded as heretical any attempt to revise the teachings of their founder. This, he considered, justified both his opinion that they were guilty of idolatry, and his scathing assessment of the authoritarian character of the Freudian School in toto; though, as has been seen, the constitution of the Institut, of which he was himself a prominent member, was authoritarian in the extreme.

> 'Freud was a bold and radical thinker in his discoveries, but in their application he was impeded by the unquestioning belief that his society....was the ultimate form of human progress and could not be improved....the question was, which of the two aspects would be developed by his disciples? Would they develop Freud's special theory of the

unconscious, which was related to sexuality, into a general theory that would take as its object the whole range of repressed psychic experiences....

Freud could have been developed in both directions. However, his orthodox disciples followed the reformer, not the radical....they were still trading on the aura of radicalism that psychoanalysis had before the first World War, when it was daring and revolutionary to expose sexual hypocrisy....

Most of those he made leaders of the movement were men without any ability for radical criticism. Freud himself cannot have failed to know this, but he chose them because they had one unfailing quality: unquestioning loyalty to him and the movement; in fact, many of them possessed characteristics of bureaucrats of any political movement.' [2]

When we remember that 'characteristics' was a precise term for Fromm, since a large part of his life was devoted to the study of human character, this passage, which is typical of Fromm's attitude to the Freudian School, is particularly telling.

Sigmund Freud's Mission includes an extended character study of Freud, showing him to be authoritarian, paternalistic, resistent to criticism and limited by a world view that was restricted to the life-style of the nineteenth century middle class. Above all, Fromm saw Freud as the founder of a movement that became an alternative religion.

> 'Who were these first most loyal disciples?....They were urban intellectuals, with a deep yearning to be committed to an ideal, to a leader, to a movement, and yet without having any religious or political or philosophical ideal or convictions; there was neither a socialist, Zionist, Catholic or Orthodox Jew among them....Their religion was the movement.' (3)

If, indeed, Freudianism had become an alternative religion, one would hardly have expected active members of existing faiths to have been attracted to it - allegiance to both would have been impossible.

Differences between Fromm and Freud are explored in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973) and The Greatness and Limitation of Freud's Thought. As the latter book was written in the year of Fromm's death, it can be assumed to be his final word on the subject and worthy of further examination.

What Jay meant by Fromm's 'reliosity' is evident in the first paragraph.

> 'In order to appreciate fully the extraordinary significance of Freud's psychoanalytic discoveries, one must start out with understanding the principle on which they are based, and one cannot express this principle more adequately than through the sentence of the Gospels 'And the truth shall make you free' (John 8:32). Indeed, the

> idea that truth saves and heals is an old insight which the great Masters of Living have proclaimed, nobody perhaps with such radicalism and clarity as the Buddha, yet it is a thought common to Judaism and Christianity, to Socrates, Spinoza, Hegel and Marx. [4]

In general, he praises Freud's observations but disagrees with the interpretation; Freud's discoveries were creative and liberating but they were, necessarily, expressed in terms acceptable to his own contemporaries:

> 'the thinker has to <u>express</u> his new thought in the spirit of his time. Different societies have different kinds of 'common sense', different categories of thinking, different systems of logic; every society has its own 'social filter' through which only certain ideas and concepts and experiences can pass; those that need not necessarily remain unconscious can become conscious when by fundamental

changes in the social structure the 'social filter' changes accordingly'. [5]

This gives support to the idea of the link between individual and social character and society which, as we shall see, is a crucial step in Fromm's argument - but surely Freud's emphasis on infantile sexuality went entirely against the grain of society when it was first mooted, however fashionable these ideas became later. What were the 'fundamental changes' in the social structure between the eighteen eighties, when Freud's ideas were first mooted, and the outbreak of the first World War, by which time they were, if still not popular, at least part of the common knowledge of educated people?

Fromm explains that it is only with hindsight that we can distinguish the new from the conventional,

'the new thought.... is a blend of what

> is truly new and the conventional thought which it transcends. The thinker, however, is not conscious of this contradiction...Only in the historical process, when social changes are reflected in thought patterns, does it become evident what in the thought of the creative thinker was truly new and to what extent his thinking is only a reflection of conventional thinking'. [6]

This leads us to the crux of Fromm's critique of Freud's followers and an understanding of how he saw his own position.

> 'it is up to his followers living in a different frame of ideas to interpret the 'master' by distinguishing his original thoughts from his conventional thoughts, and by analysing the contradictions between the new and the old, rather than by trying to harmonise

> the immanent contradictions of his system by all kinds of subterfuge'. [7]

Thus we arrive at truth by a rolling process in which each generation, with the benefit of hindsight, traces the strengths and errors of their predecessors. Fromm is doing this for Freud, but, in all fairness, it must be said that he fully expects that the next generation will do as much for him.

> 'The revision is not simply true as the original was not simply false.' [8]

His complaint against Freud's disciples was that they did not do this - Freud's word became sacrosanct and thus progress would have come to a halt had it not been for independently minded analysts outwith the Freudian school. However, it should be noted that in what was an irrascible and ongoing quarrel with Freud's admirers, Fromm does not lose sight of the religious base to his own thought:

'Man can grasp truth only when he can regulate his social life in a human, rational, way. To use a politico-religious expression, only in the Messianic Time can the truth be recognised insofar as it is recognisable.' [9]

Meanwhile he would not allow himself to be counted as a member of any psychoanalytic school antagonistic to Freud, nor did he found a school of his own.

2.Specific Differences between Fromm and Freud.

a. The Oedipus Complex.

Freud had realised that sexuality was a function that linked the physical with the psychical; this was a considerable step forward, but he had over-rated the importance of sexuality - later information about the hormonal system would provide other connections.

In the absence of this later information, Freud's greatest discovery, of the strength of unconscious forces of behaviour, was limited to an investigation of sexual repression. Because of this, Fromm believes that Freud totally misunderstood the Oedipus myth - in Fromm's view, the whole story, which includes Oedipus at Colonnus and Antigone as well as Oedipus Rex, is more accurately interpreted in terms of maternal versus paternal values, rather than in terms of sexual rivalry between father and son.

'If we look at the trilogy as a whole, we discover that Sophocles is speaking of the conflict between the patriarchal and the earlier matriarchal world.' [10]

It is clear that this is of considerable importance to Fromm, as he devotes a whole chapter in The Forgotten Language as well as a long section in The Greatness and Limitation of Freud's Thought to a detailed exposition of his argument, and references to this myth abound in his work.

b. Transference.

Fromm readily acknowledges that Freud had broken valuable new ground in his investigation into the existence of transference between the analysand and the analyst; but in his view, this was another Freudian discovery that had not been taken far enough, simply because Freud's understanding led him to interpret it simply in terms of the persistence of infantile tendencies into adulthood.

'Freud, in discovering transference in the psychoanalytic situation made another universally valid discovery, but on the basis of his premises could not appreciate the far reaching social importance of what he had discovered.' [11]

Fromm saw that in many respects adults were as helpless in the face of circumstances as children, and are, therefore, as likely to look for a parent substitute to resolve their difficulties - this is the case, not only with neurotic patients who are in need of treatment, but under certain social conditions the problem is generalised.

'....he remains helpless in his fight against natural dangers, in the fight against better armed and and more powerful social classes and nations, the fight against disease, and finally death. He has better means of defence but is also much more aware of the

dangers than a child is. It follows that the alleged contrast between the helpless child and the powerful adult is, to a large extent, fictitious.' [12]

This becomes a social problem when the masses of the people seek a powerful and charismatic figure to help them. Fromm instances Hitler and De Gaulle.

'Anybody who is willing to see can discover the tremendous role that transference plays, socially, politically and in religious life. One has only to look at the faces in a crowd that applauds a charismatic leader like Hitler or De Gaulle, and one sees the same expression of blind awe, adoration, affection...' [13]

Such dangerous situations do not arise where

individuals are encouraged to face up to reality and to take an active part in decision making.

> 'A society whose members are helpless needs idols. This can only be overcome to the extent to which man is fully aware of reality and of his own forces.' [14]

In Fromm's view, even in America, this is far from being the normal state of affairs:

> 'Our whole social system rests upon this extraordinary effect of people who have appeal...the transference in the analytic situation and the worship of leaders are not different....What is often overlooked, is that the adult is helpless too.' [15]

c. Narcissism

Fromm is extremely critical of Freud's attitude to love. He considered that in Freud's view to be loved is the aim of the normal male; actually to love is weakening. Love is a weak virtue appropriate to women, whose role is to support the male.

Because of this, Freud was incapable of appreciating that narcissism is the opposite to love. For Freud narcissism was sexual energy turned to oneself rather than to the other. Fromm believed that Freud's obsession with the libido put him on the wrong track. In the first place, a limited amount of narcissism is necessary for survival, and this creates a tension with ethico-religious principles which require love of one's neighbour, so that narcissism must be reduced to a minimum. This tension is present in the normal as well as the neurotic individual. It is a matter of degree, or, alternatively, of where one is placed on a continuum between narcissism and love.

Fromm describes the narcissistic individual as follows:

'To narcissistic persons the only sector that seems fully real is their own person. Feeling, thoughts, ambition, wishes, body, family, everything that they are or what is theirs. What they think is true because they think it, and even their bad qualities are beautiful because they are theirs.' [16]

He explains that such qualities can be a positive advantage in some professions, such as the stage or politics, because they give the holder a tremendous confidence in himself that creates an aura which may be admired by more realistic individuals who question their own strengths. This is particularly the case when the individual possesses undoubted creative talent, since the ability to express one's subjectivity is a strength in many of the arts.

The dangers that Fromm sees are failure to love and lack of reason. Reason is defined as 'the faculty to recognise things as they are regardless of their value or danger to us' [17]

This, by definition, narcissistic individuals cannot do, but if they are possessed of strong manipulative intelligence, as is often the case with narcissistic politicians, they become potentially very dangerous - the more so if the mass of the population have not been encouraged to think for themselves.
[Fromm, obviously has in mind the situation in Weimar Germany - in 1980 he was still preaching the same message.]

The ordinary man, however, is not likely to be encouraged to develop a narcissistic outlook - but he is in danger of falling prey to group narcissism in the form of nationalism, racism or any other form of group identification which encourages the view that 'my' group is superior to the others.

> 'But, one might object, how can we be sure that his evaluation of his group is not realistically correct? For one thing, a group can hardly be as perfect as its members describe it; the more important reason, though, is that

criticism of the group is responded to with intense rage, which is the reaction of one whose individual narcissism is wounded. In the narcissistic character of national, political, and religious group reaction lies the root of all fanaticism....In the cases of hot or cold wars, the narcissism takes on a more drastic form. My own nation is perfect, peace-loving, cultured etcetera; the enemy's is the contrary - vile, treacherous, cruel..In reality most nations are equal in the balance of good and evil traits; however, virtues and vices are specific to each nation. What narcissistic nationalism does is to see only the virtues of one's own and the vices of the enemy's nation.' [18]

There is so much in this that is recognisable and valid - Edward Said made similar points in his recent (1993) Reith Lectures, but one would like some experimental evidence that specific vices and virtues can be attributed to individual nations.

Fromm considers that the only remedy for this state of affairs is that the lives of individuals 'must be (made) so interesting that they can relate to others with interest and love' [20] and this depends on a 'social structure that engenders being and sharing and discourages having and possessing.'

This is a reference back to an earlier work, To Have or To Be, based on an untenable premise that a clear distinction can be made between the two terms. - this book will be discussed later.

Group narcissism is encouraged by the structure of contemporary cybernetic society. An economic system that is based on 'ruthless selfishness' necessarily brings about a situation in which individuals are isolated and antagonistic and, consequently, increasingly insecure, and in need of the comfort that comes

from an exclusive group. This is not to argue that group narcissism is to be found only in modern society, but that the worship of industrial production is, in itself, a deviation from the natural order of things and an encouragement to narcissism.

> 'The scientist making these discoveries had to perceive things as they are, objectively and with little narcissism. But the consumer...has not had to have the mind of the scientist. The overwhelming part of the human race has not had to devise new technics; they have been able to build it...and admire it. Thus it happens that modern man has developed an extraordinary pride in his creation; he has deemed himself to be a god, he has felt his greatness in the contemplation of the grandeur of the man-made new earth. Thus admiring his second creation, he has admired himself in it. [20]

Carried to this extreme narcissism makes an idol of man himself.

d. Character.

As both Freud and Fromm understand it, temperament refers only to the instinctive mode of reaction to a situation and is independent of, and much less important than, character, which is the product of experience and which is changeable in the light of new insights and experiences.

Character and behaviour are not synonymous; character is the force that drives human behaviour - for example, a person may save money because she is essentially parsimonious or because she is saving to make a generous donation to a good cause. The behaviour is the same, the motivation is totally different. A single person will possess many character traits, some of them conflicting - but his/her personality, which amounts to the total characterisation, is the sum of the whole.

So far Fromm is in agreement with Freud.

However, he differs fundamentally from Freud (who thought that characterisation depended on the organisation of the libido) in arguing that character is formed through assimilation and socialisation. A person may assimilate or acquire things, (or attitudes?), by taking them from some outside source or by his own efforts. To do this he must associate with others, as he cannot develop productive attitudes towards humanity in the absence of actual people.
(This is not to deny the individual's need for solitude, which Fromm himself insists is essential - but simply to state a biological fact. In order to perpetuate the race people must mate and make provision for the upbringing of their children - who would not otherwise survive. Moreover humanity's advance to the present situation has largely been dependent upon the ability to co-operate and share discoveries.)

It would appear, therefore that Fromm disagreed with Freud, not on the existence of unconscious motivation, but on its interpretation. Unlike Freud's disciples he did not regard the original (or any) findings as

being conclusive but as being the start of an ongoing process of discovery. It was symptomatic of his attitude that he departed from the traditional use of the psychiatrist's couch in favour of a face-to-face encounter with the patient.

3. Marx

While Fromm is critical of Freud's authoritarianism, he seems at times to be almost deliberately blind to the same vice in Marxism. Fromm insists that Marx's message has been distorted in the East and misrepresented or misunderstood in the West. Nevertheless, because, in his view, Marx was able to combine the best of the spiritual heritage of the Enlightenment and German Idealism with socio-economic reality, Fromm considered that he was a towering figure in the potential renaissance of Western Humanism.

Important to Fromm's assessment of Marx were the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts written by Marx in 1844 but relatively unknown in the West

until T.B. Bottomore's translation was published as a postscript to Fromm's own work, Marx's Concept of Man in 1961. In the latter text he seeks to correct a widespread misunderstanding of Marx based on a common idea of Marx's 'materialism'.

> 'Marx's criticism of religion was held to be identical with the denial of all spiritual values, and this seemed all the more apparent to those who assume that belief in God is the condition for a spiritual orientation.' [21]

Fromm's own departure from theistic belief would place him in sympathy with Marx on this point, and he continues:

> '....this view of Marx then goes on to discuss his socialist paradise as one of millions of people who submit to an all-powerful state bureaucracy....and have been successfully transformed

> into millions of uniformed robots....led by a small elite.... Suffice it to say at the outset that this popular picture of Marx's 'materialism' is utterly false.' [22]

It is in the remainder of this quotation that we begin to see Marx, the prophet, emerging:

> 'Marx's aim was that of the spiritual emancipation of man, of his liberation from the chains of economic determinism, of restituting him in his human wholeness, of enabling him to find unity and harmony with his fellow man and with nature. Marx's philosophy was....a new and radical step forward in the tradition of prophetic Messianism; it aimed at the full realisation of individualism, the very aim which guided Western thinking from the Renaissance and the Reformation far into the nineteeth century.' [23]

However recognisable this is as a view of Marxist thought (and many would agree that it was the aim - if not the outcome) - it certainly is a succinct account of the aims of Fromm's own philosophy. However, it is difficult for anyone who remembers the worst excesses of Stalinism, committed in the name of Marx, albeit unjustly, not to be wary of new prophets of socialism. Fromm has to convince us that the processes that brought about this distortion are now sufficiently understood to prevent a repetition. This, of course, is what he was seeking to do, though nothing in his writing suggests that he believed that man was likely to change sufficiently for the realisation of the ideal to be remotely possible.

Nevertheless, it is at least arguable that Fromm found in Marx what he was looking for - a secular argument for those ethical aspects of his religious belief that he could not, in good conscience, discard. There is a chapter in The

Crisis of Psychoanalysis [24] entitled Marx's contribution to the Knowledge of Man which is of special interest for the comparison between Fromm and Marx. One is tempted to say that in Marx we find the roots of Fromm's thinking - until it becomes apparent that Fromm has had to search through Marx's early writings, as well as the better known volumes, to find the material to make his case and to support his ideas.

> 'Marx never put his psychological views in any systematic form, but they are distributed all over his work and have to be pulled together to display their systematic nature.'[25]

It is clear that Fromm's socialism is derived from Marx, but the whole body of his thought has to be understood as a creative conflation of many sources, among whom Marx and Freud were of particular importance.

4. Freud and Marx: Similarities and Differences

a) Unconcious forces.

As Fromm saw it, Marx and Freud held many views in common, though the rationale in each case differed. Both doubted human rationality but, whereas Marx saw human thinking as being conditioned by the ideology of the society in which he lived, Freud laid this irrationality at the door of unconscious forces in the individual.

> 'Marx, like Freud, believed that man's consciousness is mostly 'false consciousness'. Man believes that his thoughts are authentic and the product of his thinking while they are in reality determined by the objective forces at work behind his back; in Freud's theory these objective forces represent physiological and biological needs - in Marx's theory they represent social and economic forces which determine the being and thus indirectly the consciousness of the individual.' [26]

However, both aimed to free individuals from their misconceptions and lay bare the truth - Marx by a process of education and Freud through individual psychoanalysis. Both share the humanistic view that each man or woman represents the whole of humanity, which Fromm had arrived at through his study of the scriptures, and both see a psychic pathology in the society of their time.

Thus Fromm sees their views as not being contradictory - all these forces may be at work without human behaviour being entirely determined - much depends on the influence of character and the degree of awareness in the individual. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

b. 'The Sick Society'.

Fromm elaborates this idea in The Sane Society, 1956'

> 'In the last one hundred years we, in the Western World, have created a greater material wealth than any other society in the history of the human race. Yet we have managed to kill off millions of our populations in an arrangement we call 'war'....
> Our direction of economic affairs is scarcely more encouraging. We live in an economic system in which a particularly good crop is often an economic disaster....
> We have a literacy above 90 per cent of the population. We have radio, movies, a newspaper a day for everybody. But instead of giving the best of past and present literature and music, these media of communication.... fill the minds of men with the cheapest trash....

> Why should I continue with a picture that is well-known to everybody? Certainly, if an individual acted in this fashion, serious doubts would be raised as to his sanity; should he, however, claim that nothing is wrong, and that he is acting perfectly reasonably, then the diagnosis would not even be doubtful any more.' [27]

What Fromm does not make clear, however, is how this state of affairs can be remedied without using authoritarian means. For Fromm, capitalism was simply, and self-evidently, insane, and, like the prophets before him, he devoted his life to propounding the message to those who did not want to hear. (The argument that he had become a prophet of Marx has been delayed until the conclusion of this thesis.)

However, he was not alone in his view that society had become sick - it was a view shared by both his great mentors. Freud understood mankind's sickness in individual terms as being a failure to develop a mature genital

orientation, for which the individual's upbringing in the family was to blame. Thus, unlike Marx and Fromm, he saw no need for social change.

The concept of the sick society is important in Fromm's thought but, as Schaar points out, he does not explain precisely how one can diagnose the degree of sickness in any specific society. However, it is implicit in his work that this would be done by looking, first, at a cross-section of the individuals who comprise that society, and then at the family as the determinant of the social character. The cure is dependent upon the sufferer becoming aware of his situation and then taking steps to change those factors which are the cause of the suffering. Schaar points out a crucial difference between Freud and Fromm that is relevant here:

> 'For Fromm, cure is complete only when the sufferer has altered the realistic situation which has produced the sickness. And, since Fromm stresses the relevance of current (as opposed to

> early childhood) situations in the production of neurosis, it follows that current realities are the ones which must be changed. This is an emphatically political conception, one that calls for large changes in the social order. In his conception of a cure, Fromm sheds the mantle of a doctor of the soul and takes up the sword of the reformer.' [28]

It will be argued in the following chapter that in taking on the mantle of the social critic, he adopts the role of the prophet.

However, Schaar identifies two immediate difficulties with this; firstly, that Fromm's description of the healthy society is altogether too loose and general, and, secondly, that no society ever existed that would qualify as 'healthy' in Fromm's terms, and that one can only assume that 'the good society is the good man writ large'. [29]

Fromm did not expect to see the perfectly healthy society before the messianic time, but would still insist that we should co-operate to work towards that desirable end.

c Alienation.

Marx, on the other hand, saw mankind's handicap in terms of 'alienation', a concept that Fromm had used to describe the separation of the idea of God from the actual experience. However, in Marx, it is man who has become alienated from the product of his own work through increasing mechanisation, and hence from himself and from fulfilling relationships with others. Thus because he was concerned, primarily, with historical and socio-economic forces, rather than individual psychology, he blamed the ills of society on social organisation under capitalism and recommended socialism as the remedy.

As we have seen, Fromm defined alienation in terms of idolatry. He saw alienation as a process by which the individual transferred his

own human powers to someone or some thing else. The object to which these powers are transferred then becomes an idol to be worshipped by the very person to whom the powers truly belong. This process seems to be closer to 'transference' as understood by Freud, than to Marx's understanding of alienation.

Even human beings can become the subject of idolatry - Fromm believed that the ideas of both Marx and Freud had been turned into ideologies and used to defend positions that would have been anathema to their originators - and thus, by implication, that both men had become mere idols to their followers.

In Marx's thought, man, being no longer a craftsman who for however brief a time 'owned' the object of his labour, in a society based on production became alienated from the product of his labour. Moreover, because modern industrial production requires stratification of society into distict classes and competition for position, in such a society, inevitably, man becomes alienated from his fellows. Fromm's understanding of the Marxian position is

demonstrated in the following quotation from Beyond the Chains of Illusion.

> 'All these consequences flow from the fact the the worker is related to the product of his labour as an alien object. For it is clear on this presupposition that the more the worker expends himself in his work, the more powerful becomes the world of objects he creates in face of himself, the poorer he becomes in his inner life and the less he belongs to himself; it is just the same as in religion. The more of himself man attributes to God the less he has left for himself.' [30]

I am not entirely convinced by this extract. I can believe that a man (or woman) 'gives' himself in the making of a piece of craftsmanship; but would have considered that he would be likely to withhold that degree of commitment to a task of routine repetition on a production line - and that it is in this sense,

of withholding commitment, that he would be alienated from his work. Nor, initially, was I convinced that when we convey to our concept of 'God' (whatever form that concept takes) the best that we know, that we are necessarily depriving ourselves of those values. Rather we are postulating a being who has those values in perfection and in perpetuity and setting Him up as a model against which we can measure our own intermittent and limited attainment, in the hope of improvement. However, it may be that Fromm is saying that mankind is projecting human values on to a Being who is wholly other, and in so doing is denying the possibility that humanity can ever attain perfection. By doing this he is denying the possibility of the messianic time - and that man can ever become like God. This could be avoided by postulating the possibility of a perfect man as the ideal at which to aim. Christians have gone part of the way by postulating Christ as the representation of perfect humanity, but then they recoil from their own audacity and insist that the perfect man must also be God.

Nevertheless, the idea that mankind must eventually take over from God is gaining ground. In the best-selling popular text The Road Less Travelled, we find M. Scott Peck, himself a psychoanalyst, saying:

> 'For no matter how we pussyfoot around it, all of us who postulate a loving God and really think about it, eventually come to a single terrifying idea: God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself). We are growing toward Godhood. God is the goal of evolution.'. [31]

Typically, Freud saw alienation in the process of 'transference' - which, as we have seen, occurs between the patient and the psychotherapist when feelings or attitudes applicable to another person (e.g. parents or siblings) are displaced on to the analyst. Fromm comments:

'Needless to add that the transference phenomenon is not restricted to the analytic situation. It is to be found in all forms of idolisation of authority figures, in political, religious, and social life....Alienation as a sickness of the self can be considered to be the core of the psychopathology of modern life ...,' [32]

The process of transference seems to be involved in idolisation as Fromm understood it - though the words he uses to describe it come directly from the passage taken from Marx and quoted above.[28] Clearly, these concepts overlap - but in Freud's case the term is related to the individual patient, whereas Marx and Fromm are concerned with the individual in society - and therein lies most of the confusion identified by Schaar, (see below).

It should be noted, however, that the concept of 'alienation' in Fromm's thought is linked with

his understanding of 'idolatry' and that this understanding reaches back to the teaching of the prophets and their concept of the messianic time. It is a continuing theme in Fromm's writing - he insists that the idolatry of things and the consequent devaluation of the individual is the greatest evil in contemporary society.

As Schaar points out, the term 'alienation' was not original to Marx. It was first used by Hegel and appropriated by Feuerbach, before being taken up by Marx, and thence to Fromm.
In Marx, Schaar believes,

> 'Alienation is nothing but capitalism seen from one angle of vision, capitalism seen from the point of view of its evil impact on man. Hence when Marx wrote the history and analysed the dynamics of capitalism, he did the same for alienation, because alienation was not an incidental feature of capitalism, but capitalism itself, capitalism in its social-psychological

> aspect. From this it follows that alienation follows as capitalism advances and disappears as capitalism disappears.' [33]

This is clearly oversimplistic, but Schaar argues that, superficial though it is, it is a view of alienation that is shared both by Marxists and those who oppose Marxist ideas. He points out that the concept is an essential part of Marx's theory, and that it has four different aspects which, for his purposes can be grouped into two broad categories: 'alienated labour' and 'alienated human relations'. He considers that Fromm held on to the core of Marx's ideas, which Fromm himself formulated as follows:

> 'man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished 'thing', dependent on powers outside himself, unto whom he projected his substance.' [34]

But he has added psychological content and,

> 'In this expansion lies Fromm's contribution. In it also lies his peril, for in his hands alienation becomes so protean a term that it loses some of its precision, and therefore the analytic utility, of Marx's formulation.' [35]

Fromm has moved from a critique of class society to an evaluation of mass society and this, overall, in Schaar's view, is an advantage. However, he points out that very little empirical work has been done on the problem of alienation, which is a 'promising hypothesis' rather than 'a verified theory' [36] and Fromm is selective in his choice of illustrative material. This is undoubtedly true. Moreover Fromm is not consistent in his use of the term 'alienation', at times using it in a descriptive sense to describe how people feel, and at other times using it in an objective diagnostic sense to explain unfelt anxiety and discontent. Fromm,

similarly, tends to conflate 'technology' with 'capitalism'.

Surprisingly, however, considering the extent of his criticism, Schaar concludes:

> 'These necessary qualifications and criticisms made, there remains much in Fromm's diagnosis which is excellent. Fromm has earned a secure place in the splendid tradition of humanistic social criticism.' [37]

This point will be important in the final consideration of Fromm's claim to be considered as a modern prophet.

d. Ideologies and rationalisations.

The concepts of 'ideology' and 'rationalisation' are used by both Marx and Freud and both are given a subtle reinterpretation by Fromm to suit his own purposes.

'Ideology' commonly tends to be used as a perjorative term for a set of ideas divorced from reality. According to Raymond Williams, Marx and Engels saw ideologies as

> 'nothing more than the ideal expresion of the dominant material relationships...' [38]

Fromm uses the concept differently again. As he sees it, ideas that were originally valid come to be separated from their original context, lose their original force and may indeed be used to convey meanings quite contrary to those intended at the outset. He believes that Christianity provides the perfect example.

> 'Take the example of Christian teaching: the ideals of brotherly love, justice, charity, etc., were once genuine ideals....but throughout history these ideals have been misused to produce rationalisations for purposes which were the very opposite.

> Independent and rebellious spirits have been killed, peasants have been exploited and oppressed, wars have been blessed, hatred of the enemy has been encouraged in the name of these very ideals.' [39]

Thus a set of ideas becomes an ideology when the words in which the ideals were originally encapsulated are used in a different context to convey quite different meanings. As we have seen, in Fromm's view the ideas of both Marx and Freud have been turned into ideologies, in this sense, by their followers. However, while an ideology can work in this way as rationalisation, it nevertheless still carries the seed of the original ideal which, given the right conditions, may be reactivated and again become a potent force.

'Rationalisation', in itself, serves no useful purpose, as it invariably serves to disguise the real motivation guiding a particular course of action. If an explanation can be shown to be

pure rationalisation it is totally invalidated - but in the case of an ideology something might possibly be saved:

> 'The task of critique is not to denounce the ideals, but to show their transformation into ideologies, and to challenge the ideology in the name of the betrayed ideal.' [40]

This is the task that Fromm has assumed in his assessment of the contribution of Marx and Freud; an assessment which is outlined in Beyond the Chains of Illusion, but which, in effect. constituted the work of his lifetime.

e. Repression.

Fromm believes that a person's unconscious contains all the good and evil of which he is capable. Which comes to the surface and which is repressed depends partly on his own level of development and partly on the level of the society to which he belongs. Thus both the

individual and society are involved in the process. Repression of unpalatable facts is found in both capitalist and communist societies and in Fromm's view its root is to be found in the universal fear of isolation and ostracism. People simply will not 'see' the truths that underlie their particular form of society, if that 'seeing' forces them to go against the grain of their own group or community. Only those who have achieved freedom through the full development of the self have the strength to stand up and be counted in these circumstances.

Said is referring to the same mechanism in his sixth Reith Lecture when he describes the situation where:

> 'It is rather when a totally dogmatic system - in which one side is innocently good, the other irreducably evil - is substituted for the process, the give and take of vital interchange, that ....politics becomes religious enthusiasm - as is the case in former Yugoslavia - with results in ethnic cleansing, mass slaughter and unending

> conflict that are horrible to contemplate.' [41]

To Marx, the repression that really matters is social repression (seen as representing social backwardness), so that with increasing civilisation comes a commensurate reduction in repression.

> 'For Marx....repression is essentially the result of the contradictions between the need for the full development of man and the given social structure - hence the fully developed society in which exploitation and class conflict have disappeared does not need ideologies and can dispense with repression.' [42]

Presumably, in the fully developed society individuals will continue to create original ideas which never degenerate into ideologies. Moreover they will have developed strategies for dealing with any potentially conflicting ideas.

Paradise indeed! Nevertheless, the idea of such a society is not inconsistent with Fromm's idea of the messianic time.

Freud, on the other hand, laid the stress on the repression of the individual sexual drive within the family structure and, consequently he believed that civilisation led to an increase in repression.

> 'Freud was mainly concerned with the uncovering of the individual unconscious. While he assumed that society enforced repressions these were the repressions of instinctual forces, and not the social repressions that really matter...'[43]

It is hard to see how the practical application of Freud's thought could lead to more than a manageable and comfortable balance between between instinctive forces and rationality. The idea that the purpose of psychoanalysis is to act as the means of helping people to adapt to existing conditions was anathema to Fromm, and

was the source of much of his criticism of contemporary psycho-analytic practice. (See The Crisis of Psychoanalysis (1971). However, it is not difficult to see how Freud's followers came to move in this direction, as Freud was concerned purely with the sickness of the individual - whereas Fromm believed that the individual could not be made whole apart from the society in which he lived.

[Fromm's pre-psychoanalytic training in sociology, - as opposed to Freud's medical background may have much to do with this.]

In any event, Fromm's position was much closer to that of Marx, though while Freud saw the process in terms of repression of inherent tendencies in the individual and Marx was concerned entirely with social pressures - Fromm considered both individual and social pressures were involved and developed his idea of the 'social character' as the essential link between the two.

5. Fromm's synthesis of Freud and Marx.

a. The social character.

Fromm considered that Marx was unable to explain exactly how the economic basis of society was translated into its ideological superstructures and that this difficulty could be overcome by the introduction of the concepts of the social character and the social unconscious. [Individual character, according to Fromm (and he differs here from Freud) will fall into one of five broad categories: the receptive; the exploitative; the hoarding; the marketing; and, finally, the productive character. These categories are to some extent self-explanatory, but will be dealt with more fully in the following chapter.]

Character is dynamic and provides the motivation for behaviour - since motivation depends on how a person thinks or feels - and this, in turn, depends upon his character. Social character is most simply described as the character that is most typical of a given society, but it is seen by Fromm as the link

between the economic basis and the ideas and ideals of society.

As the behaviour of individuals is ultimately dependant upon their character, so is the behaviour of a particular society driven by the character orientation of the majority of its citizens.

Clearly, individual character and social character are closely linked, but the social character is not just the sum or average of the individual characters forming a given community. It is the character that is most typical of the community; and is brought about by factors that influence all the members of the community alike. Fromm defines it as:

> 'The essential nucleus of the character structure of most members of a group which has developed as the result of the basic experiences and mode of life common to the group.' [44]

Part of his assessment of the workers in

Weimar Germany was that the great majority had an authoritarian character structure and, therefore, a deep seated respect and longing for established authority, so that they were ready to support a regime that seemed to promise just that.

Any given society functions economically in ways that are determined by external conditions: climate, population, geographical position - and by the stage of development it has reached, in terms of the means of production and political organisation. If things are to continue to run smoothly the individual members of society must <u>want</u> to conform to the norms of that society. Overt compulsion invites revolution. It is the purpose, therefore, of the social character to perform the function of conditioning individual members so that they direct their energies in such a way as to ensure the continuity of that society. However, against the forces conditioning man to conform, are inherent human qualities leading him to assert his basic freedom.

> 'In trying to avoid the errors of biological and metaphysical concepts we must not succumb to an equally grave error, that of a sociological relativism in which man is nothing but a puppet, directed by the strings of social circumstances. Man's inalienable rights of freedom and happiness are founded in inherent human qualities; his striving to live, to expand and to express the potentialities that have developed in him in the process of historical revolution.' [45]

The point here is that the concept of the social character provides Fromm with the link he seeks between Marx and Freud.

> 'Freudians saw the individual unconscious and were blind to the social unconscious; orthodox Marxists, on the contrary, were keenly aware of unconscious factors in social

behaviour, but remarkably blind in their appreciation of individual motivation. This led to a deterioration of Marxist theory and practice, just as the reverse phenomenon has led to the deterioration of psychoanalytic theory and therapy. This result should not surprise anybody. Whether one studies society or individuals one always deals with human beings, and that means that one deals with their unconscious motivations; one cannot separate man as an individual from man as a social participant - and if one does one ends up by understanding neither. [46]

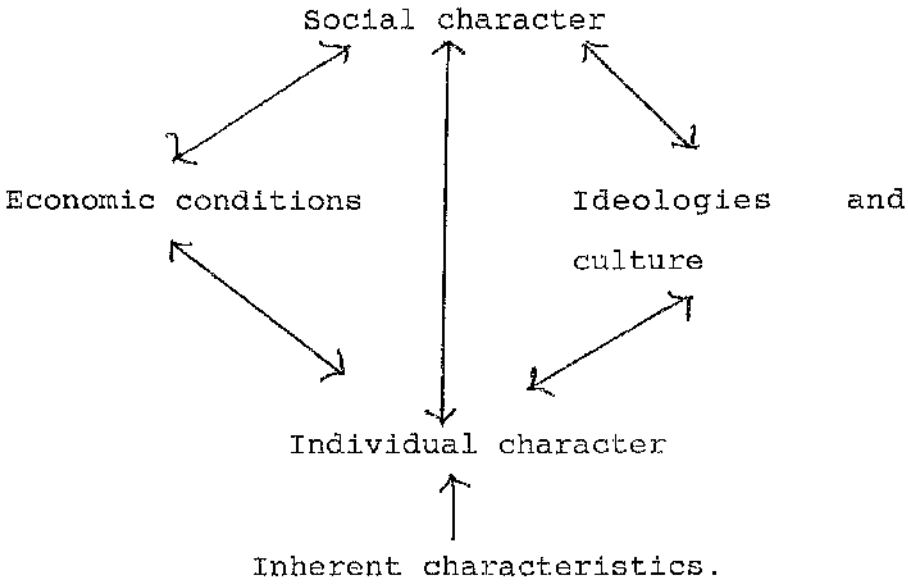
In Escape from Freedom, Fromm demonstrates the link between social character and ideology and in so doing shows how economic conditions crucially affect the whole structure.
He sums up the process as follows:

'The social character results from the

dynamic adaptation of human nature to the structure of society. Changing social conditions bring about changes in the social character, that is, in new needs and anxieties. These new needs give rise to new ideas and, as it were, make men susceptible to them; these new ideas in their turn tend to stabilize and intensify the new social character and to determine man's actions. In other words, social conditions influence ideological phenomena through the medium of character; character on the other hand, is not the result of passive adaptation to social conditions but a dynamic adaptation on the basis of elements that are either biologically inherent in human nature or have become inherent as the result of historic evolution. [47]

This can be laid out in diagrammatic form.

<u>Behaviour results from</u>:



Thus economic conditions affect both the individual character and the social character and these, in turn, give rise to the ideologies that support and maintain the existing economic conditions.

Just as the individual may be unaware of the repressed factors that govern his behaviour - so society as a whole may be, and usually is,

unaware of the factors underlying the direction taken by that society. Thus it is, for example, that a nation can rush headlong into a war that very few individuals actually want. Their society is being driven by forces of which they are not consciously aware, and over which, therefore, they have no conscious control. (Some of these forces are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.)

> 'To a later generation, years after the outbreak of mass insanity, the insane character of such thinking, even though it was shared by almost everybody, may be clear; thus some of the more extreme reactions to the Black Death in the Middle Ages, the witch hunting at the time of the Counter Reformation, the religious hatred in England in the seventeenth century, the hatred against the Huns in the first World War, appear to be pathological manifestations many years later. But usually there is little awareness of much that passes

for 'thinking' while it is occurring.' [48]

Hence Fromm's thesis that it is absolutely necessary for each individual to develop his powers to the point where he is able to control his life, and to recognise the truth in any given situation, regardless of the distortions of propaganda - so that society as a whole may act rationally and not remain within the grip of irrational forces.

Said gives examples of these same irrational forces in his second Reith Lecture. Here he is referring to the way in which Islam is in danger of taking the place of communism as the 'bogey-man' of the West.

> 'here corporate thinking has not made intellectuals into the questioning and sceptical individual minds about which I have been speaking, but rather into a chorus that echoes the prevailing policy view, hastening it along into more corporate thinking, and gradually

> into a more and more irrational sense that 'we' are being threatened by 'them'.[49]

However, here Fromm is faced with an apparently insoluble dilemma. Man can develop productively only in a society that does not obstruct this process. In such a society each individual could develop his powers to the full. Yet it appears that no civilised society has fulfilled this condition, though some have been more conducive to freedom than others.

Nevertheless, Fromm believed that throughout history, when society as a whole has seemed to have been hell-bent on taking a road that is totally destructive, prophets have arisen to give warning and to urge a change of direction. This perception is clearly taken from the mythic narratives of the prophets, rather than from careful academic study, but Said looks to his 'intellectuals' to perform a similar function in society:

> 'The central fact for me is, I think, that the intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, the public, in public ....[50]

This, I have already argued was crucial to the prophet's role.

> 'And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them) to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments and corporations, and whose raison d'etre is to represent all these people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug.' [51]

These are the people who should be there 'to give warning and urge a change of direction'.

If a sufficient proportion of the people take heed, and the prevailing ideology and economic conditions are sufficiently modified, disaster is avoided - for the time being. Unfortunately, because to create real change all four elements (i.e. the economy, social and individual character and ideology) must be altered simultaneously, there is small likelihood of this happening. Nevertheless, in spite of the slim chance of a successful outcome, Fromm, I am convinced, saw himself as being called to the prophetic role (or to that of Said's intellectual?) since, in his view, the only chance of a future for civilisation as we know it depended upon a change from the 'having' mode of contemporary society, to the 'being' mode that could potentially lead to the messianic time.

b) Having and being.

In To Have or To Be, Fromm tells us:

> '....having and being are two fundamental modes of experience, the respective strengths of which determine the differences between the characters of individuals and various types of social character.' [52]

If all that Fromm intended by this was that it is better to value people for what they are, as opposed to what they own, and that a society that puts value on things rather than on people is to be deprecated, many people would agree with him. However, typically, he goes further than this and destroys his own argument with unnecessary abstractions.

In Fromm's view, having is an alienated form of existence in which the individual assesses his own and others' value in terms of the goods owned, be these material or abstract (power and honour are possessions in this sense.)

This might be acceptable, but when he adds that such people are so obsessed with 'having' that they speak of 'having a pain' instead of 'feeling a pain', the argument begins to break down. The use of the active rather than the passive tense is often colloquial, and we talk of 'having a cold' but would more naturally speak of 'being ill' than of 'having an illness'. This has nothing to do with character type.

On the other hand, Fromm considers, the person who has evolved to the state where he is free to be himself and to know himself, experiences life at first hand. He may, or may not, enjoy certain possessions but he is not dependent on them. He is his own man.

Again, there is truth in this. It is good to be able to enjoy things without being dependent on them, to depend ultimately on an inner strength that cannot easily be destroyed whatever the circumstances. But to introduce arguments about the state of the self requires a much stronger philosophical underpinning than Fromm provides.

(If he had stuck to homily, he might have been more effective.)

Said, also, hopes that his 'intellectuals' will work towards a better society:

> '..in trying to induce a change in the moral climate whereby aggression is seen as such, the unjust punishment of peoples or individuals is either prevented or given up, and the recognition of rights and democratic freedoms is established as a norm for everyone, not invidiously for a select few.' [53]

and he also sees a need for men who are strong enough to stand against the tide:

> 'Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right

one, but which you decide not to take.'
[54]

Said, however, not only depends on intellectual argument to make his point, he gives his 'intellectuals' no other weapon in their fight against injustice. Fromm, for all his unnecessary mystifications, may be on stronger ground when he argues that not only ideology, but individual and social character, as well as the economic conditions that contribute to their nature, must be simultaneously changed if change is to be effective.

Schaar thought Fromm was ludicrously optimistic about this:

> 'The revolution must not be merely, or even primarily, economic or political or moral or philosophical. Rather it must sweep across all these sections simultaneously: a prairie fire of progress.' [54]

This is unfair. Fromm was well aware of the difficulties, nor did he expect to see perfection before the messianic time - he saw, or believed he saw, the direction mankind must take if progress is to be made, and he shared his vision, but he had no reason to do more than hope that some initial movement will be made in that direction.

He likens his situation to that of the parent of a very sick child:

> 'The most adequate words would be, "I have faith that my child will live". But 'faith', because of its theological implications is not a word for today. Yet it is the best we have, because faith implies an extremely important element; my ardent, intense wish for my child to live, hence my doing everything possible to bring about his recovery.' [56]

c) Capitalism/Socialism.

In To Have or To Be, capitalism is seen as being synonymous with the 'having' mode of existence and, therefore, no good can come of it:

> 'Our judgments are extremely biased because we live in a society that rests on private property, profit, and power as the pillars of existence. To acquire, to own, and to make a profit are sacred and unalienable rights of the individual in industrial society. What the sources of property are does not matter; nor does possession impose any obligation on property owners. The principle is: Where and how my property was acquired is nobody's business but my own; as long as I do not violate the law, my right is unrestricted and absolute.' [57]

That such extreme selfishness would be wrong, does not mean that there can be no case for the right to any private property. (Indeed, 'right to property' was included in The Declaration of Rights of Man published after the French Revolution, and this would suggest that property was held by right rather than selfishness.) Rather it is a case of priorities - if the most important things in life (our Gods) are private property, profit and power, and not the welfare of human beings (or some greater good such as 'God's will on earth'), then something has gone astray. Fromm, as ever, tends to overstate his case. However, he does see the dangers involved in the Russian version of communism, which he saw as nothing less than 'state-capitalism', which served the Russians less well than the Western version.

> 'At any rate, every socialist or communist party that could claim to represent Marxian thought would have to be based on the conviction that the Soviet regimes are not socialist

systems in any sense, that socialism is incompatible with a bureaucratic, thing-centred, consumption-orientated social system, and that it is incompatible with the materialism and cerebralisation that characterise the Soviet, like the capitalist system.' [58]

In Beyond the Chains of Illusion Fromm summarizes the ideals and attitudes of those radical humanists of whom he approves, chief among them being the Buddha, Eckhart, Marx and Schweitzer, upon whose views, he believes, a true socialism could be built on the following terms:

'1. That production must serve the real needs of the people, not the demands of the economic system;

2. That a new relation must be established between people and nature, one of co-operation not of exploitation;

3. That mutual antagonism must be replaced by solidarity;

4. That the aim of all social arrangements must be human well-being and the prevention of ill-being;

5. That not maximum consumption but sane consumption that furthers well-being must be striven for;

6. That the individual must be an active, not a passive, participant in social life.' [59]

For Fromm, this rationalist/humanist socialism is the ideal, but to reach it men need the understanding of humanity provided by psychoanalysts and the knowledge of society provided by historians and sociologists - we need both Freud and Marx. We need also the rational faith that is a positive attitude to life and which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

d) Fromm's 'Credo'.

Concluding Beyond the Chains of Illusion Fromm defines his 'Credo'.

He starts with man as the product of evolution, with each individual as the representative of humanity and with man's essence as the product of the dichotomy of his existence.

He sees man's aim as being the achievement of maximum human development and thus he believes in human perfectibility. However this perfectibility is consequent on the making of the right choices and Fromm is pessimistic - he sees no evidence that man is about to choose rightly.

He repeats the importance of the choice between life and death, which he derived originally from the scriptures and which is dicussed in the following chapter, and suggests that there are alternative ways of arriving at the good:

1. by obedience to laws (as was expected of the Jews traditionally).

2. by developing a sense of well-being in well-doing.

[Fromm's 'Credo' was written as a postscript to Beyond the Chains of Illusion, in 1962, Having and Being was not published until 1976, though I have found it convenient to refer to both in this chapter. I think that, here, there is no special meaning in Fromm's choice of words to convey a sense of feeling good because one has been behaving well. It is in keeping with the rest of his philosophy that he considers the latter course is to be preferred.]

He believes it is possible to educate the young to appreciate this feeling of 'well-being' through 'the best heritage of the human race', though he does not state of what the 'best heritage' is formed.

Society is necessary for the full development of the individual, but if the aim of 'one world' is to be achieved, fully developed individuals will be required.

Man has an inalienable right to freedom to develop and has, in fact, already developed to the stage where he could free himself from nature, but has succumbed instead to things.

In the light of the foregoing, mankind can only be saved by reason and then only if belief in the perfectibility of humanity is maintained (and, bearing in mind the difference made by Fromm between 'cleverness' and 'wisdom', the recognition of truth is a matter of character and not intelligence.)

Such was Fromm's own summing up of his position at that time. It should perhaps be noted that the 1962 text was written as part of a series, Credo Perspectives and that this may have a bearing on the rather strange style of the writing in the postscript.

Overall, it must be said that Fromm's analysis of the human condition gains much from his ability to see humanity in both sociological and psychological terms while at the same time retaining a sense of a spiritual dimension. That he is not always, (or often) the master of the complexity of this tri-partite vision, and

that his argument often seems confused, should not blind us to the value of his aim. A one-sided view of humanity provides a more straightforward argument but only by avoiding the reality and richness of life as it is actually experienced.

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. Fromm, Erich, Beyond the Chains of Illusion, Abacus, London, 1980, p11.

2. Fromm, Erich, The Crisis of Psychoanalysis, Jonathan Cape, London, 1971, p15.

3. Fromm, Erich, Sigmund Freud's Mission, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1959, p105.

4. Fromm, Erich, The Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1980a, pix.

5. Fromm, 1980a, p2.

6. Fromm, 1980a, p3.

7. Fromm, 1980a, p4.

8. Fromm, 1980a, p4.

9. Fromm, 1980a, p4.

10. Fromm, p1980a, p34.

11. Fromm, 1980a, p42.

12. Fromm, 1980a, p42.

13. Fromm, 1980a, p41.

14. Fromm, 1980a, p43.

15. Fromm, 1980a, pp41-2.

16. Fromm, 1980a, p48.

17. Fromm, 1980a, p50.

18. Fromm, 1980a, p52.

19. Fromm, 1980a, p53.

20. Fromm, 1980a p54.

21. Fromm, Erich, Marx's Concept of Man, Frederick Ungar, New York, 1961, p2.

22. Fromm, 1961, p2.

23. Fromm, 1961, p3.

24. Fromm, 1971, p62.

25. Fromm, 1971, p62

26. Fromm, 1980, p101.

27. Fromm, Erich, The Sane Society, Routledge, London,1956, pp3-6.

28. Schaar, John H., Escape from Authority, Basic Books, New York, 1961, Note at foot p162.

29. Schaar, 1961, p163.

30. Fromm, 1980, p43.

31. Scott Peck, M., The Road Less Travelled, 1983, p269.

32. Schaar, 1961, p187.

33. Schaar, 1961, p187.

34. Schaar, 1961, p192.

35. Schaar, 1961, p193.

36. Schaar, 1961, p201.

37. Schaar, 1961, p208.

38. Williams, Raymond, Keywords, Flamingo, 1976, p155.

39. Fromm, 1980, pp 125-126.

40. Fromm, 1980, p126.

41. Said, Edward, B.B.C. Reith Lectures, 1993 No.6 The Independent Thurs 31st July 1993.

42. Fromm, 1980, p125.

43. Fromm, 1980, p123.

44. Fromm, Erich, Escape From Freedom, Rinehart, New York, 1941, p277.

45. Fromm, 1941, p289.

46. Fromm, 1959, p110-11.

47. Fromm, 1941, p298.

48. Fromm, Erich, May Man Prevail, Doubleday, New York, 1961, p19.

49. Said, Edward, B.B.C. Reith Lectures 1993, No.2. The Independent, 2nd July, 1993.

50. Said, Edward, B.B.C. Reith Lectures 1993. No.1. The Independent, 26th July 1993.

51. Said, No1.

52. Fromm, Erich, To Have or To Be, Abacus, 1978, p26.

53. Said, Edward, B.B.C. Reith Lecture, 1993, No. 5. The Independent, 24th July, 1993.

54. Said, No. 5.

55. Schaar, 1961, p246.

56. Fromm, Erich, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, Penguin, London, 1977, p576

57. Fromm, 1978, p75.

58. Fromm, 1978, p157.

59. Fromm, 1978, p157-8.

CHAPTER 4 - Fromm's psychology

There has never been a lack of social critics - ecologists, economists, journalists, politicians, philosophers, sociologists and religious leaders have all, at one time or another, attempted to diagnose the contemporary condition and offer a remedy; though they have generally tended to see the world through the lens of their own expertise.

Fromm was, by profession, a psycho-analyst, so that we would expect to find a strong psychological component in his vision - drawing attention to the unconscious as well as to the conscious forces that determine the way we behave. Nor would we be disappointed; such factors occur in all of Fromm's output, but for the fullest account of his psychology one would turn particularly to texts such as, Man for Himself, (1947); The Art of Loving, (1957); The Heart of Man, (1964); and The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, (1973), and, of course, his critiques of Freud, Sigmund Freud's Mission, (1959) and The Greatness and Limitation of Freud's thought, (1980).

1. Character

As we have seen in the discussion of Fromm's relationship to Freud, both men saw character as being of vital importance, because it is capable of being changed. Character determines motivation, and motivation determines behaviour. Personality, on the other hand, is the sum of many character traits which vary from individual to individual. However, whereas Freud thought character was determined by the libido in infancy and early childhood; Fromm considered that character traits were the result of the individual's reaction to experience at any age. The early experiences within the family were of great importance but were not the whole story - relationships with other people throughout life had a part to play.

However, the relationship with others may be one of competition or co-operation, love or hate, and be oppressive and authoritarian or based on equality and freedom. Each individual has arrived at a settled pattern in his way of dealing with life which allows him to react, more

or less automatically, to the myriad of major and minor problems that life throws at him. It is this patterned response that Fromm is referring to when he speaks about 'character', and he believes that such patterning has come to replace the instinctive behaviour of animals.

He divides these near-instinctive orientations into those which are 'productive' and those which are 'non-productive', and argues, at least by implication, that it is by developing a productive orientation that mankind will reach the messianic goal.

Individuals will display a mixture of productive and non-productive traits and the aim of Fromm's psycho-analysis, and his teaching, is to make people more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, to the point where they can become responsible for their own further development. (He dislikes the term 'unconscious' - preferring to describe the individual's situation in terms of greater or lesser awareness of the factors which have been repressed in the individual, or which in the social situation are generally not recognised.)

Broadly speaking, Fromm divides the non-productive orientation into four categories:

a) The receptive orientation - where the individual expects to obtain all he needs from others as a gift - either by earning it for good behaviour or by coaxing.

b) The exploitative orientation - typical of the individual who expects to obtain what he needs from others, by guile or by force.

c) The hoarding orientation - such a person obtains his feelings of security by holding tight to what he has and seeking to increase his hoard, by whatever means present themselves.

d) The marketing orientation - marketing man expects to obtain what he needs from others by means of barter - his faith is in things and people are treated as such.

Fromm relates these character types to the social character of particular civilisations or periods of history. While one can accept that the social character (which as we have seen is the character which is most typical of the individuals comprising a given society) would change gradually as the living and working conditions of the people changed - Fromm gives

his argument too hard an edge when he describes the hoarding character as being typical of nineteenth century capitalism, and marketing man as the typical contemporary figure. As with so much of Fromm, there is truth in this, but he tends to overstate his case. However, since he does see the marketing orientation as being predominant in contemporary society, it is this characteristic that is most frequently under attack in his social criticism.

The productive orientation is the one towards which society should aim - it is roughly equivalent to Freud's 'genital character' but goes beyond the concept of sexual maturity to that of the individual who is aware of his own powers and able to make constructive and creative use of them - free from dependence on, or submission to, other people. Such a person is able to respond to others on equal terms and to will their well-being as his own - his power is power <u>to</u>, not power <u>over</u>.

Why use the term 'productive'? Fromm sees the productive man as working on himself to produce the person he has the potential to become. No-one ever completes this process but emotional and intellectual capabilities are capable of continuous development in the direction of productive love, which involves care and responsibility, as well as respect for, and insightful knowledge of, the person who is loved.

2. Love and Faith.

Productive love, as the alternative pole to narcissism, is sufficiently important in Fromm's thinking to be given a text to itself. The Art of Loving defines love as a difficult art that has to be learnt. It is the means by which man learns, slowly and painfully, to overcome his separateness, and an analogy is drawn with the love of God. (In whom Fromm does not believe!)

'In conventional Western theology the

> attempt is made to know God by thought, to make statements about God. It is assumed that I can know God by my thought. In mysticism ....the attempt is given up to know God by thought, and it is replaced by the experience of union with God in which there is no more room - and no need - for knowledge <u>about</u> God.' [1]

It is this degree of at-one-ment with the other that is the aim of love, and which Fromm eventually concludes is the product of the mature productive character. He, therefore, sees contemporary civilisation as antithetical to love, insofar as it hinders the growth of the productive character.

What is essential, is faith:

> 'In the sphere of human relations, faith is an indispensable quality of any significant friendship or love. 'Having faith' in another person means to be certain of the reliability and

> unchangeability of his fundamental attitudes, of the core of his personality, of his love....
> In the same sense we have faith in ourselves....Unless we have faith in the persistence of our self, our feeling of identity is threatened and we become dependent on other people...Only a person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others, because only he can be sure that he will be the same at a future time as he is today....' [2]

Thus faith, so often seen as the cornerstone of religion, is not a matter of belief - but is a character trait. Fromm gives a fuller account of faith, understood in this sense, in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. At one time lack of faith was no more than constructive criticism of beliefs that were authoritarian, and to that extent could be viewed as a positive characteristic.

However, as Fromm grew older, he began to see that to attack authoritarianism was not enough (see the posthumous volume On Disobedience and Other Essays),(1981)). Carried to the extreme, the so-called 'rational certainty' that is opposed to 'irrational faith' becomes a front for a profound uncertainty which makes people vulnerable to new philosophies that are themselves unhelpful - and constitutes a lack of faith in a much more negative sense.

Fromm devotes a section of his, so far, final text, The Art of Being [1993], to these 'unhelpful' philosophies. They include transcendental meditation, and other 'no effort' approaches to religion and self-improvement.

> 'Another barrier to the art of being is the 'no effort, no pain' doctrine.... Take our entire method of education....In the name of 'self-expression', 'anti-achievement', 'freedom' we make every course as easy and pleasant as possible.
> ....The professor who insists on hard work is called 'authoritarian' or old-

fashioned.' [3]

Predictably, Fromm blames this state of affairs on economic conditions:

> 'The increasing need for technicians, for half-educated people who work in service industries, requires people with a smattering of knowledge as our colleges provide it. Second, our whole social system rests upon the fictitious belief that nobody is forced to do what he does, but that he likes to do it. This replacement of overt by anonymous authority finds its expression in all walks of life. Force is camouflaged by consent, the consent is brought about by methods of mass suggestion,' [4]

At this point, Fromm makes a useful differentiation between decisions made as the result of a temporary whim, and those which really are the result of the careful and mature

decision making that is characteristic of the productive character.

> 'Following a whim is, in fact, the result of deep inner passivity blended with a wish to avoid boredom. Will is based on activity, whim on passivity.' [5]

> 'To sum up: The chief rationalisation for the obsession with arbitrariness is the concept of antiauthoritarianism. To be sure, the fight against authoritarianism was and still is of great positive significance. But antiauthoritarianism can - and has - become a rationalization for narcissistic self-indulgence, for a child-like sybaritic life of unimpaired pleasure, in which, according to Herbert Marcuse, even the primacy of genital sexuality is authoritarian, because it restricts the freedom of

pregenital - ie anal- perversions. Finally the fear of authoritarianism serves to rationalize a kind of madness, a desire to escape from reality.' [6]

This passage, in itself, shows how pervasive authoritarianism is. Fromm, more than most, realised the dangers both of authoritarianism, and of a mindless anti-authoritarianism.

[He was fully aware that we are subject to influences of which we are not fully conscious - but would he have recognised the authoritarian homophobia implicit in this passage?]

To indicate that Fromm, himself, was subject to the hidden dangers against which he warned does not, necessarily, invalidate his argument - it may, indeed, <u>illustrate</u> it.

Neither extreme is productive, and another approach must be found. Fromm begins with the idea of rational versus irrational doubt. Both of these are attributes that colour a person's personality.

The extreme form of irrational doubt is a form of neurosis which causes the individual to doubt everything and makes decision making well-nigh impossible. However, the typical contemporary form of doubt produces the attitude of indifference described above, where everything is possible but nothing is certain. Such an attitude leaves the individual feeling isolated, bewildered and powerless, with no firm convictions of his own and open to manipulation by others. Real individual freedom is lost and a productive outcome is impossible.

Rational doubt, however, is directed at authoritarian teaching, which must be evaluated by the individual before it is accepted. It is a process of growth by means of which the individual comes to know his own views and to be himself.

Similarly, faith can be rational or irrational. Irrational faith does not depend on the individual's own experience, whereas rational faith does; whether we are referring to faith in God or faith in a loved one. Rational faith in God could exist only where the individual had personal experience of God.

Moreover, in Fromm's opinion, the links between the kind of person who is free to have this experience and the one who has escaped from authoritarianism and has begun to live as a productive, humanistic personality have become clear. Thus the prophetic insistence on freedom is justified, since the individual cannot develop productively unless s/he is free to do so, and is not prevented from taking a principled stance which may be contrary to that of society as a whole.

3. Conscience.

Inextricable from the idea of character is Fromm's description of the manner in which conscience is formed - in ways that may be authoritarian or humanistic. The authoritarian conscience has been formed by some authority outwith the individual, usually by parents or teachers (who themselves have been conditioned by the social character of their own society) and who literally, and sometimes forcibly, have 'laid down the law'. The response to such training is

motivated by the fear of punishment for wrong-doing and the rewards of 'good', that is, obedient, behaviour, and is invariably determined by the commands and prohibitions of authority. Such an individual will obey the law even when that law is demonstrably unjust and tyrannical. (Fromm gives a full description of how this comes about in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness.)

The point here is that the authoritarian conscience is linked to those forms of religion which equate obedience with virtue. Thus, as we have seen, in Christian teaching the disobedience of Adam and Eve is equated with original sin; whereas Fromm understands it as the first step on the road to freedom, comparable with Prometheus' theft of fire from the Gods. In both stories, disobedience is punished by an authoritarian and vengeful God or gods. From this it follows that much religious teaching is based on the concept of obedience to authority - a concept that limits growth towards individual productive freedom. Fromm believes we greatly underestimate the authoritarian component in contemporary life, or

the extent to which internalised authority influences decision making.

The humanistic conscience, on the other hand, is our own voice - which approves and gives a feeling of 'rightness' to those actions that are conducive to our proper functioning and full development.

(There seems to be a close relationship between this idea and The Society of Friends' concept of 'that of God' in every man, which will lead to right action, if heeded.)

This conscience is based on those principles of living that we have discovered for ourselves or have found to be true to life in our experience. The possessor of the humanistic conscience would no more allow himself to become the tool of others than he would seek to exploit others for his own purposes. Mutual love and respect is the keynote of the humanistic society.

How does Fromm account for the rarity of the humanistic conscience, of individuals who can see the world clearly, as it is, and act according to their own best judgement? As he sees it, this is partly because we live in a society where authoritarianism is, and has been, dominant, and

partly because we have lost the ability to listen to our own authentic voice. People are afraid of being alone and seek to lose themselves in continuous activity, Those who have learned to live productively and to be still and listen to, and follow the guidance of, the voice of their own authentic conscience continue to grow mentally and emotionally into old age; whereas those who have lived their lives in a continuous round of (in Fromm's terms) unproductive activity, deteriorate as their physical health wanes. In reality, of course, both forms of conscience are present in everyone - what matters is that we should try to become aware of how our reactions are being conditioned and make a conscious effort to move in a humanistic direction.

4.Schaar's Response to Fromm's Anti-authoritarianism.

Fromm's views on authoritarianism are clearly crucial to his whole approach; yet it is this aspect of his thought that is most severely challenged in John M. Schaar's Escape from Authority.(1961) It is necessary, therefore, to look at this issue in some detail, the more so as Fromm's attitude to religion is closely bound up to his attitude to authority.

At the outset, Schaar makes clear his profound disagreement with Fromm's position:

> 'as soon as one says that man is man and not God...he parts company with Fromm....I am morally convinced that to tell man he is perfect, as Fromm does, is to expose him to unnecessary dangers and excite him to catastrophic adventures'. [7]

Nothing in the above outline of Fromm's views would warrant such a statement; but, in addition, in his concept of 'alternativism' he expressly

states that the individual is equally disposed towards good and evil and must make the choice. He has the potentiality, in the messianic time, to become perfect - but Fromm had no illusions regarding his present condition.

Schaar assures us that, like Fromm, he yearns for 'the noble city on the hill', but adds:

> 'It seems to me, on the other hand, that God's City might better be put back in heaven, where it was before the eighteenth century. Located there, it is certainly harmless, probably beneficial, and possibly even true.' [8]

I doubt very much whether Schaar actually holds a pre-eighteenth century view of heaven, which he would have to do, if his last phrase is to be taken seriously - at times he allows an unreasonably strong reaction to Fromm to take the place of reasoned discourse. This spoils his own argument and strengthens Fromm's argument that we all are subject to unconscious impulses of which

we are not consciously aware.
In any case it is obvious that there is unlikely to be a meeting of minds.

Schaar, like Fromm, speaks of our own age as being more than normally problematic:

> 'Our age fears, as few others have, that the problematic seems headed for the chaotic. We fear shipwreck; and we know that this time the disaster could be total.' [9]

Fromm and Schaar, writing in the nineteen fifties and sixties, both shared the widely held fear of nuclear disaster - but, more than that, like Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) they considered that morality itself had broken down. (This is discussed further in the final chapter.)

Fromm, Schaar considers, offers three responses to shipwreck:

1. To party, and eat, drink and be merry as the ship goes down.

2. To follow a leader who claims to have 'a secret chart and an unsinkable boat'.

3. To look on helplessly, unable either to ignore the situation or to act upon it.

He gives no specific instances in Fromm's work to substantiate this view, and, without such support this seems to be a rather bizarre account of Fromm's position.

Schaar's own view is that:

> 'In a time like our own the ideas of the shipwrecked are the most worth reading, for any man who today does not know he is lost is lost without hope. He will never find himself or guide others. The Liberal epoch has run its course.... It can no longer be denied that Western man .... does not know what he really wants. Lacking that knowledge, and therefore lacking the power to gain fulfilments, Western man now shows himself hostile to life, and perhaps prepared to destroy it.' [10]

He commends Fromm for recognising this and for seeking 'something of value beyond it' [11] but scorns his solution:

> 'Fromm's solution reads in substance; since we lack faith, and know not where to go, let us cleave together in love, while we search for ourselves in our work'. [12]

This again, is less than accurate; in Fromm's view we work towards becoming our productive selves by becoming aware of the forces within, and of social forces outside ourselves, which are influencing our actions - we are then in a position to make a reasoned decision as to the right course of action in the circumstances.

In Schaar's view, the problem is not, as Fromm thinks, the problem of irrational authority, but 'the absence of all authority properly so called'.

> 'Fromm thinks that if we can only banish the irrational authorities .... reason and beauty will flourish. This is just not enough. Men will be ruled. The majority of men lack the power to form their own conceptions of the real and the ideal. Therefore, there must be guiding ideals, and there must be uniform and authoritative rules based on the guiding ideals. There must also be men who represent and embody the ideals, and who make and enforce the rules based on them.' [13]

Schaar does not say where these guiding ideals are to come from, nor who is to choose the enforcers of the rules. As it stands, this seems to be an invitation to dictatorship, nor is there any guarantee that it would be a benevolent dictatorship. However, the lack of this firm authoritarian structure is seen by Schaar to underlie the moral breakdown that is characteristic of contemporary life.

Schaar's own argument in favour of the authoritarian position is based on the myth of the civilised 'walled city' which must be defended against the barbarians, and the symbolism of 'the dying king'.[14]

[MacIntyre uses the idea, of attack by the barbarians, metaphorically - but Schaar uses it much more strongly as the foundation of his position, in much the same way as Fromm uses the Jewish story of the creation.]

On the strength of these myths, Schaar argues that Fromm is inadequate because he does not go beyond the formula 'liberate man from irrational authorities', without offering a clear idea of what, precisely, they are to do with their liberty. There seems to be some force in this charge. It is not clear, however, that Schaar offers enough evidence for his claim that the only, and necessary, alternative to authority is domination by fashion and the whim of the moment. Surely some, at least of those who are given their freedom will make good use of it.

Alternatives to irrational authority are rational authority, or some form of democracy, not, necessarily, license. However, Schaar is convinced that what Fromm is recommending is 'the slavery of unlimited desire'. [15]

He reiterates that Fromm:

> 'cannot see that authority must rest upon positive conceptions of duty and the good life. He cannot see that his advocacy of the democratic principle, as he has defined it, is really an advocacy of fashion and passion, made attractive by the understanding that all men have an equal right to see their desires gratified.' [16]

Overall it would appear that Schaar is more concerned to make his own case for authoritarianism, than to do justice to Fromm. On the other hand, we have seen that Fromm, himself, came to see that anti-authoritarianism, per se, could be destructive. Moreover, Schaar rightly points to the difficulties involved when

attempting to resolve questions that lie on the border of politics, and he raises an uncomfortable point in his claim that democracy, as at present practised, can come close to government by 'fashion'. Fromm's mature characters are needed to make democracy work as it should - but any alternative at present on offer would seem to have more dangerous drawbacks. It is not clear what Schaar has to offer in its place that would not eventually lead to some form of totalitarianism.

5. Aggression/Needs.

Fromm's views on aggression are contained in the lengthy volume The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. Much of the earlier part of this text is given over to the discussion of earlier, and alternative, views of aggression. However, here, it is proposed to concentrate on the outlines of Fromm's own position, insofar as it has a bearing on earlier parts of this essay. He divides aggression into its socially useful and its dangerous forms.

Benign aggression is an inherent defensive mechanism which is essential for human survival. Mankind's nearest relatives, the chimpanzees, have a similar degree of inbuilt aggression and lead relatively peaceful and non-violent lives. Man, however, is the most unnecessarily aggressive species and Fromm finds the explanation of this in the concept of 'malignant aggression' - up to a point this can be accounted for by the fact that many, perhaps the majority, of people are living in conditions of overcrowding and restricted freedom that would produce aggressive behaviour in any species. However, this is insufficient to account for individual acts of cruelty and destruction such as are found in no other species.

The importance of the individual character structure has already been emphasised. Here Fromm relates it to his own concept of existential (as opposed to physical) needs.
In his view, these are:

The need for an object of devotion - this can be devotion to God, love or truth - any worthwhile aim in life would serve the purpose and produce a positive outcome; however, the worship of destructive idols will produce negative (aggressive) outcomes.

The need for relatedness is fulfilled by love or kindness - but its negative version produces dependence, sadism, masochism and destruction.

The need for unity and rootedness is located in solidarity, brotherliness, love and mystical experience, or alternatively, by drunkenness, drug addiction and depersonalisation.

The need for effectiveness answered by love and productive work or by sadism and destructiveness.

The need for stimulation and excitation fulfilled by a productive interest in man, nature, art or ideas - or by a greedy pursuit of ever-changing pleasures.

At a common-sense level, to disagree with the proposition that the positive features of this list are greatly to be desired, is rather

like objecting to motherhood and apple pie - but, as Patricia Springborg has shown in The Problem of Human Needs and the Critique of Civilisation,[17] this list will not stand up as a list of 'needs' comparable to biological needs.

The problem with Fromm's list is that these needs, as described, overlap. 'Relatedness' is akin to 'rootedness'; the 'need for transcendence' could be satisfied in much the same way as the 'need for a frame of orientation and devotion'; and, to complete the circle, it is difficult to distinguish the 'need for identity' from those of 'relatedness' and 'rootedness'. Ultimately, they are all functions of 'productive love' - 'or relations which combine love, effectiveness and reason'.[18]

Moreover, there is a confusion between needs and motivation:

> 'If we look carefully at the catalogue of existential needs that he gives, we find that there is little or no point in calling them needs at all. What he is presenting is a set of cultural

> values or normative stipulations. If the needs of relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, identity and a frame of orientation and devotion were really 'needs'; man would show a greater propensity to satisfy them, if not indeed a compulsion, and they would not be problematic at all.' [19]
>
> 'What we see in Fromm's catalogue of existential needs is a set of prescriptions for resolving the universal problems of human existence.' [20]

As such, they have their place in social criticism but they do not have the biological force that Fromm ascribes to them.

However, in Fromm's account, these characteristics tend to occur in clusters, so that an individual is oriented towards the positive outcome in each case or towards the negative. In the first case, he would be described as 'biophilic', and in the negative

case as 'necrophilic' - as his choices are life-destroying. Fromm argues that healthy development leads to biophilia. When necrophilia occurs, as it does all too frequently, man's natural development becomes distorted and destructive.

Fromm took the term 'necrophilia' from Miguel de Unamuno, (who used it as a term of contempt in a passionate speech against the leader of the Falangists), but admits that the idea of conflict between striving for life and striving for death came from Freud. Yet, as ever, he took over the idea only to 'reformulate' it.

> 'Freud's idea guided me to see clinical data in a new light and to re-formulate - and thus to preserve - Freud's concept on a different theoretical basis...' [21]

He continues:

> 'Necrophilia in the characterological sense can be described as the passionate attraction to all that is dead, decayed, putrid, sickly; it is the passion to transform that which is alive into something unalive; to destroy for the sake of destruction; the exclusive interest in all that is purely mechanical. It is the passion to tear apart living structures. [22]

One begins reading this definition with a sense of unreality; surely this applies only to a few sick people? But by the time we reach 'destroy for the sake of destruction' we can see the relationship to our own times. Fromm devotes many pages of his text to the connection between 'necrophilia' and 'malignant aggression'. Here, it is possibly sufficient to establish Fromm's belief that much of the apparently inherent destuctiveness in humanity is due to the failure to develop towards the mature, independent, 'productive' character which would represent mankind's optimal development. As we have seen previously, in Fromm's thinking

economic and social conditions are related to individual psychology. Present conditions depersonalise the individual and so encourage necrophilous growth. For optimal development, man needs 'freedom, activating stimuli, the absence of exploitative control and the presence of man-centred modes of production'. [23] Unfortunately, men have been brainwashed to the point where they are no longer aware of what is needed to further their own maximal growth. Their real needs have become confused with socially conditioned wants which are not in their own best interest.

It follows from the foregoing that Fromm will consider that any behaviour that serves to promote humanity's well-being is (in Fromm's vocabulary) rational; whereas anything that tends to weaken or destroy an individual's potential for growth is seen as irrational. Irrational behaviour is <u>not</u> instinctive behaviour - a person becomes irrational because his natural development has been stunted.

(Statements like this leave him open to Schaar's charge of 'naturalism' - but Fromm is not recommending a Rousseau-like return to nature,

merely that individuals should not be prevented from 'normal' development by adverse factors, be they individual or social.)

Thus the major human motivations may include the rational passions of love, tenderness, solidarity, freedom and truth - or the irrational passions which include drives to control, to submit, to destroy; as well as narcissism, greed, envy and ambition. Any one individual will have drives from both groups which can, on occasion, be held in a creative tension - but usually one constellation will predominate. Under ideal conditions only the life-enhancing drives would develop and the destructive drives would be repressed or severely weakened.

In real life, however, destructiveness is always present, and may be activated in apparently 'normal' people under extreme conditions of war, poverty or extreme deprivation. Current examples could be found in Bosnia or Rwanda. This 'spontaneous' destruction must be distinguished from the permanently destructive character, though no doubt such characters may be found among the more fanatical leaders who incite mass destruction. Each

individual, however, will demonstrate both biophilic and necrophilic tendencies, but, if mankind is not to precipitate its own destruction, it is the life promoting features which should be nurtured - and these come remarkably close the virtues of love and justice promoted by the Old Testament prophets. The unfettered humanistic conscience is, nevertheless, mankind's best guide to life enhancing progress - since the authoritarian conscience is destructive of individual freedom. In Fromm's opinion, religion can be either authoritarian or humanistic. An omniscient, paternal God is plainly authoritarian, but Fromm sees in the idea of a covenant with God the beginning of a breakthough to a more humanistic position. Taking his lead from Bachofen, Fromm equates paternalism with authoritarianism; but sees maternalism as being humanistic. Calvinism and Lutheran protestantism are seen as being strictly paternalistic, while the paternalism of Roman Catholicism is moderated by the worship of Mary.

This equating of paternalism with authoritarianism is more or less traditional,

certainly it is not peculiar to Fromm - but if fathers are to be 'productive', in Fromm's own terms, they must be allowed to interpret the role for themselves, as mothers struggle to re-interpret theirs.

6. Conclusion

Like many other social critics, Fromm sees clearly many of the dangers facing contemporary society, but his prescription is, at times, utopian, and is frequently difficult to follow. However, his strength is that he does realise that there can be no easy answers and he gives reasons for this. Unconscious, as well as conscious, factors determine behaviour; the individual is important, but so is society as a whole and both are determined by the very economic and ideological factors which they help to create.

Crucial in all this are the left-wing German workers whose conscious ideas were overthrown by their unconscious authoritarian tendencies when they were faced with the apparent attractions of National Socialism. This discovery, which

excited Fromm's prophetic tendencies, became the starting point for his social criticism and for his remedy for present ills. Unless people are fully aware of the forces that are at work in themslves and in society, they will be incapable of taking the radical and reasonable steps that would be necesary to put things right.

Where Said relied on reasoned argument to advance the cause of freedom and justice that was so dear to Fromm:

> 'What I care about as an intellectual is what I say before an audience or to a constituency, and what my representations are about is not only how I articulate them, but what I represent, as someone whose main concern it is to advance the cause of freedom and justice. I say or write these things because, after much reflection, they are what I believe; and I also want to persuade others of this view.' [24]

Fromm himself realised that individuals were not able to respond freely or fully to such an

appeal until they became aware of the unconscious factors which determined their behaviour. Remembering the German workers, he knew that intellectual consent was not enough and that what was true in the case of the individual was true for society as a whole. On the other hand a direct appeal to the emotions such as that made by charismatic figures, be they religious evangelists or politicians, could be even more dangerous, since such leaders tend to appeal primarily to those with insufficiently developed critical faculties. As he saw it, unless people became aware of the ways in which, for example, market forces affect the everyday lives of individuals, they cannot make rational political choices.

The Old Testament prophets could be said to have been aware of a connection between economic conditions, the social character and the ideology of the people as a whole, but they did not speak directly to the individual.

[In Amos 2:6-12, the prophet specifies the social sickness of Israel - the people have been

involved in slavery; have trampled on the poor and ignored the needy. Moreover, they have become sexually amoral, and fly in the face of traditional values. All this at a time when they are enjoying unprecedented prosperity. This is linked by the prophet with their change in ideology - they are no longer true to YHWH, they have dismissed the prophets and their religious practices have lost their original content. Therefore God's message to the people is that they will be punished, as a people.]

To the triumvarate of economic conditions, social character and ideology, Fromm added an understanding of individual psychology and when this whole complex seems to be heading for destruction, as he sees it, the only hope is that enough individuals have become sufficiently aware of their own and their society's situation to be able to stand against the trend. Said describes such an individual in the final paragraph of his first lecture:

> 'At bottom, the intellectual in my sense of the word is neither a pacifier nor a consensus builder, but someone whose whole being is staked on a critical sense, a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready-made cliches, or the smooth ever so accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say and what they do. Not just passively unwilling, but actively willing to say so in public.' [25]

The person who can do this is very close to becoming Fromm's 'productive' individual.

Fromm has been criticised for his essays into mysticism and Zen Buddhism, but given the importance he places on 'awareness' in his scheme of things - it was not unreasonable for him to look at techniques that are reputed to increase this faculty.

> '...there are two core doctrines

> acceptable to many who, like myself, are not Buddhists, yet are deeply impressed by the core of Buddhist teaching. I refer, first of all, to the doctrine that the goal of life is to overcome greed, hate, and ignorance. In this respect Buddhism does not basically differ from Jewish and Christian ethical norms. More important....is another element of Buddhist thinking: the demand for optimal awareness of the processes inside and outside oneself.' [26]

Though this attempt to draw individual, social, and spiritual factors, together with their economical and ideological environment, into one cohesive structure was open to criticism, Fromm has demonstrated the need for a co-ordinated approach to the explanation of complex human behaviour, and has shown that attempts to account for our present condition simply in terms of economic, social or historical factors, or alternatively, in terms of moral decline, must always be insufficient.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Fromm, Erich, The Art of Loving, 1957, p32.
2. Fromm, 1957, p102.
3. Fromm, Erich, The Art of Being, 1993, pp24-25.
4. Fromm, 1993, p25.
5. Fromm, 1993, p29.
6. Fromm, 1993, p29.
7. Schaar, John H., Escape from Authority, 1961, p10.
8. Schaar, 1961, p11.
9. Schaar, 1961, p286.
10. Schaar, 1961, p286.
11. Schaar, 1961, p287.
12. Schaar, 1961, p287.
13. Schaar, 1961, p288.
14. Schaar, 1961, p291 et seq.
15. Schaar, 1961, p295.
16. Schaar, 1961, p295
17. Springborg, Patricia, The Problem of Human Needs and the Critique of Civilisation, London, 1981.
18. Springborg, 1981, p151.
19. Springborg, 1981, p152.

20. Springborg, 1981, p153.

21. Fromm, Erich, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. London, 1973, p441.

22. Fromm, 1973, p441.

23. Fromm, 1973, p348/9.

24. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, 1993, Lecture 1. The Independent, 24th June 1993.

25. Said, 1993, Lecture 1.

26. Fromm, 1993, p52-3.

CHAPTER 5

Was Fromm a prophet?

Earlier in this thesis I have argued that the abrupt and significant change in Fromm's output, subsequent to his study of working class attitudes in Weimar Germany and his exile to America, was an indication of his perception of himself as having made a revelatory discovery which he felt obliged to share. In addition, I have tried to show, using illustrations from his writings, how he linked this experience to that of the Old Testament prophets to the extent that he saw himself as having been called upon to play a prophetic role. Therefore, it now becomes necessary to consider whether he had reasonable grounds for this belief - and this, in turn, depends upon the definition given to the term 'prophet'.

Fromm's own definition, as we have seen, was derived from the conventional Jewish view of the prophets as religious teachers combined with the view, common towards the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, of the

prophets as social critics and intellectuals. Neither of these views of the prophets would be regarded as unproblematic by all contemporary theologians, but in Fromm's youth such an understanding of the prophets would be widely accepted. However, Fromm's idiosyncratic attempt to present the prophets as humanistic social critics concerned only with the denunciation of idolatry, without reference to the God whose prophets they were, in fact, amounts to an attempt to mould them into his own image and would certainly not have been accepted by any competent biblical scholar.

Nevertheless, the view of the prophet as an intellectual and social critic is still widely held and informs the work of both Edward Said (implicitly) and Michael Walzer (explicitly). By this I mean that Said's intellectual and Walzer's social critic/prophet have so much in common that it is difficult to draw a clear line between them. Said never expressly uses the term 'prophet', but it is clear that his intellectuals are performing the same function in society as Walzer's social critic/prophet.

However, by combining the insights of these writers, I believe it is possible to arrive at a description of a contemporary prophet, which would be applicable to Erich Fromm - looking first at Said's understanding of the intellectual as social critic and moving on from there to Waltzer's account of the social critic as prophet.

1, The intellectual as socal critic.

This part of the argument is derived from Edward Said's Reith Lectures given in 1993 and entitled The Role of the Intellectual.

In his first lecture, Said differentiated between Gramsci's division of intellectuals into two broad types; 'traditional intellectuals', (teachers, priests and administrators), whose role remains the same throughout the generations and 'organic intellectuals' who prostitute their abilities in the service of those who hold the strings of power in their generation - and Julien Benda's view of intellectuals as a select group of highly intelligent and ideally motivated

social critics who are prepared to suffer and, if need be, die for their beliefs.

It is clear that Said's view comes close to that of Benda:

> 'The central fact for me is, I think, that the intellectual is an individual endowed with a facility for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public, in public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose raison d'etre is to represent all those people and issues who are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug.' [1]

Fromm fits comfortably into neither of Gramsci's definitions, as quoted by Said, he was not content to remain securely within the bounds of his own academic competence (in psychology) nor did he make any attempt to gain the approval of those in power in his adopted country. Therefore, if he was an intellectual at all he belonged in the category, defined by Said, of intellectual as social critic. There is no denying that he was an individual who had a view which he attempted to convey directly to the general public and one for which he was prepared to stand up and be counted - he did not lie low during the McCarthy years, when to be a public supporter of Marxist ideas in the U.S.A. was to risk being regarded as an enemy of the state - not an easy position for one who had already been forced into exile to escape persecution. Nevertheless, his contribution was not sufficiently distinguished for him to be compared to the select band of Benda's intellectuals, who included Socrates and Jesus as well as Spinoza, Voltaire and Renan. However, to be an intellectual by Said's criteria does not demand views that are beyond criticism, simply that they

be sincerely believed, publicly proclaimed and courageously upheld. Fromm qualifies on these counts.

However, while he was not afraid to ask embarrassing questions regarding the values broadly held in capitalist states, as we have seen, it could be argued that he confronted capitalist orthodoxy with Marxist orthodoxy, an undoubted failing insofar as it was a blinkered view, but which nevertheless served to draw attention to issues which were 'routinely forgotten or swept under the rug' in Western society. Thus his Marxism does not prevent him from qualifying as an intellectual in Said's terms.

Said quotes C. Wright Mills in this connection:

> 'The independent artist and intellectual are among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things. Fresh perception now involves the capacity to continually

> unmask and to smash the stereotypes of vision and intellect with which modern communications [that is, modern systems of representation] swamp us....' [2]

Fromm would have agreed with every word! In the foreward to To Have or To Be he comments:

> 'The dream of being independent masters of our lives ended when we began awakening to the fact that we have all become cogs in the bureaucratic machine, with our thoughts, feelings, and tastes manipulated by government and industry and the mass communications that they control.' [3]

As elsewhere, Fromm was able to point to an anxiety that was widely felt, but in this book, especially, the effort to approach the problem through the familiar mixture of popular psychology and Marxist theory produced an awkward and distorted text. Increasingly, in the later

titles, ideas that seemed promising in Fear of Freedom and Man for Himself became elaborated almost into meaninglessness. The basic premise of To Have or To Be, which I take to be that there is something far wrong with a life lived under international, bureaucratic consumerism, is, at least, worth arguing - but it gets lost in a melange of psuedo mysticism, unargued psychology and Marxism that is exasperating to the sympathetic reader, who senses that under all this waffle there are points that should be, and are not being, made. Sadly, Fromm was unaware of the extent to which he remained in thrall to the stereotypes of Marxist teaching - to him they remained new, fresh and challenging. He was well aware of the stereotypes of the West but was unable sufficiently to recognise those implicit in communism.

This limitation of vision is of especial concern to Said, who, however, is not particularly troubled by the limitations of Marxism, since he shares the general view that communism lost its force with the destruction of the Berlin Wall. Instead, he draws attention to the rise of nationalism and the tendency always

to think in terms of 'us' and 'them'.

> 'There seems to be no way of escaping the frontiers or enclosures built around us either by nations or by other kinds of communities....they take place in the post-Cold War context provided by a United States' domination of the Western alliance, in which a consensus has emerged about resurgent or fundamentalist Islam being the new threat that has replaced communism. Here corporate thinking has not made intellectuals into the questioning and sceptical individual minds about which I have been speaking, but rather into a chorus that echoes the prevailing view...and into a gradually more and more irrational sense that 'we' are being threatened by 'them'. [4]

What Said does not make explicit here is the extent to which this new nationalism serves the purposes of the arms manufacturers rather than of any one nation, or the extent to which the economies of the West seem to be dependent upon the supply of arms to the second and third world. Nor does he deal with the dangers inherent in the manipulation of language, so that 'profit' replaces 'efficiency' as though the two terms were synonymous. They are not; 'efficiency' is a scientific/technical term relating to the ratio between input and output - the output of a car assembly line is cars - whether the money obtained for those cars is distributed to the shareholders, paid to the employees, or returned to the buyers as a discount is another matter - an efficient organisation, in human terms, will have the well-being of people as its aim and will be concerned for those who make the product or provide the service, as well as those who finance it and make use of it. The most efficient organisation, in these terms, would be the one that produced the best balance between these conflicting interests.

Fromm was aware of the ways in which the emotional context as well as the intellectual use of language can be manipulated to serve the ends of international organisations who have no concern beyond the balance sheet, and for whom 'the bottom line' has become the ultimate good.

His concept of the 'social character' of a particular era could be useful in demonstrating how the complex matrix of individual and social pressures determines outcomes which are not consciously desired or envisaged by those who are most effected by them. Yet his own efforts to do this are flawed by his attempts to press the new wine of his later insights into the old bottle of his original thesis. If he had stuck to a more rigorous social psychology, stripped of mysticism, and with a less blinkered approach to Marxism, he might have produced a useful critique of consumer society.

Said believes (lecture 3) that 'expatriates and marginals' are in a particularly strong position to view their adopted culture with the degree of detachment that is necessary to form a fresh and unbiased view of its strengths and

weaknesses. He cites Adorno, who had been a colleague of Fromm's in the Frankfurt School and exiled with him, as an

> 'endlessly fascinating man whose entire career skirted and fought the dangers of fascism, Communism and Western mass consumerism.
> ....although Adorno returned to Frankfurt in 1949 (unlike Fromm who remained in America until shortly before his death)...his years in America stamped him with the marks of exile forever.' [5]

It was not so much the years in America, as the totally unexpected experience of finding himself regarded as an undesirable alien in his own country that was so traumatic. As we saw in part I, only Fromm and Lowenthal among the members of the Frankfurt Institut were ever practising Jews, and none of them saw their Jewish descent as overriding their German nationality. Be that as it may, Said, himself an exile, sees this

condition as being particularly favourable to the critical, detached view so necessary to the intellectual as social critic.

> 'Because the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterparts in the old country. From that juxtaposition one gets a better, perhaps even more universal, idea of how to think, say, about a human rights issue in one situation by comparison with another.' [6]

Perhaps exile need not be geographical to function in this sense. When Fromm left behind the religion which had given meaning to the earlier years of his life, he may well have suffered a degree of trauma or 'exile' similar to that which was described by Tolstoy in his A

Confession, [which is the first essay in A.N.Wilson's collection of Tolstoy's religious writings, The Lion and the Honeycomb.]

> 'My heart was now full of despair that there was no God at all, I repeated: "Lord have mercy on me, save me! Lord, my God teach me." But no one had mercy on me and I felt my life was coming to a standstill....my source of life dried up and I fell into despair, thinking there was nothing left but to kill myself. And the worst thing of all was that I was unable to do this. All this happened to me not two or three times, but dozens and hundreds of times. ' [7]

The loss of a secure religious faith at an impressionable age, can be a deeply disturbing experience. Such an event might account for his seeming compulsion to attempt to reconcile the Marxism, and to a lesser extent the Freudianism, which he had adopted as his new mental 'country', with the Judaism which he had left behind. If I

am right about this, he was an exile on both counts.

> 'A second advantage to what is in effect the exile standpoint for an intellectual is that you do tend to see things not simply as they are, but as they have come to be that way. Look at situations as contingent, not as inevitable; look at them as the result of a series of historical choices made by men and women, as facts of society made by human beings, and not as natural and God given, and therefore unchangeable, permanent, irreversible.' [8]

There is no doubt that Fromm did so look at American society. He viewed human existence in terms of existential and historical dichotomies. The former are unavoidable, but historical contradictions are not.

> 'The contemporary contradiction between an abundance of technical means for material satisfaction and the incapacity to use them exclusively for the peace and welfare of the people is soluble, it is not a necessary contradiction but one due to man's lack of courage and wisdom.' [9]

There is no guarantee, however, that in the attempt to account for what one finds in the new territory one will not make rationalisations which do not stand up to close scrutiny. Fromm's vision was cumbered rather than enhanced by the mind-set he brought with him from Germany. He never broke away from the agenda of the Frankfurt School - all his subsequent writings continued the attempt to marry Marx with Freud. The original idea, that to understand human behaviour one must look both at psychological pressures and sociological pressures was sound enough, but he never got away from the towering figures of Marx, whom he revered, and Freud, with whom he carried on a continual internal argument.

This is not to question the advantage of

marginality (it is an old adage that the onlooker sees most of the game!) but the onlooker's vision must be true, and he will not be the best judge of that. Fromm's own vision was distorted by his inability to see beyond Marxism and his ambivalent relationship with Judaism.

One of the points Said raises in his fifth lecture is the necessity for the intellectual to apply the same critical standards to one's own country (and this would apply equally to one's own political position) as one does to its enemies.

> 'I believe there is a special duty to address the constituted and authorised powers of one's own society, which are responsible to its citizenry, particularly when those powers are exercised in a manifestly disproportionate and immoral war, or in deliberate programmes of discrimination, repression and collective cruelty.' [10]

There was no shortage of critics of Marxism in America during Fromm's sojourn there; however, that criticism passed beyond fair comment to a demonisation of everything that could, however loosely, be attributed to 'Stalinism'. Fromm continually complained of the misrepresentation of Marxism in America. Meanwhile 'the American dream' and the emotional patriotism of 'God bless America' seemed to disguise much in American policy that was less than edifying. Said gives many examples to show how American behaviour, especially in the international sphere, failed to match its rhetoric. It can be argued that Fromm, for all his failings, was serving a necessary intellectual purpose by presenting an alternative view to the existing American hegemony.

Said is particularly critical of those whom he describes as 'professional' intellectuals. Such people are content to remain within their own sphere of expertise, to progress in their professions and to play for safety.

> 'The result is that today's intellectual is most likely to be a closeted literature professor, with a secure income and no interest in dealing with the world outside the classroom. Such individuals, Jacoby alleges, write an esoteric and barbaric prose that is meant mainly for academic advancement and not for social change.' [11]

Such a stance was open to Fromm; he held professorships in several universities, and it is to his credit that he resisted the temptation to play safe, which, given his circumstances, must have been considerable - and made a concentrated effort to draw the attention of the general public to what he saw as the dangers of the dependence of the West on material values. However faulty were some of his arguments, his vision was not without truth, as became evident when Thatcherite and Reaganite economics came to dominate the decade following his death in 1980.

As Said sees it,

> 'The danger comes from an attitude that I shall be calling professionalism, thinking of your intellectual work as something you do for a living .... - not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and objective.' [12]

On the face of it Fromm was free of these dangers - but he was 'marketable'. However, he appealed to the wrong market if he had wished to make himself academically respectable, though there is no evidence that he had any such aim in mind.

Opposed to the 'professionals', Said places the 'amateurs'. Such people may, and probably will, be respected academics in their own fields but they have the desire and ability to range more widely.

> '(they are) moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a speciality, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession.' [13]

Such people have the ability to resist agendas laid down by governments (and Said describes at some length how such agendas are set). - He concludes this section:

> 'Every intellectual has an audience and a constituency. The issue is whether the audience is there to be satisfied, and hence a client to be kept happy, or whether it is there to be challenged, and hence stirred into outright opposition, or mobilised into greater democratic participation in the society.' [14]

There is no doubt that Fromm's aim was to challenge his audience - albeit the challenge was muted because so often the argument was confused. He had a particular interest in the extension of democracy and one of his lesser known titles, The Revolution of Hope, is directly and specifically aimed to that end.

He would score equally strongly when faced with Said's final challenge in this lecture:

> 'How does the individual address authority: as a professional supplicant, or as its unrewarded, amateurish conscience?' [15]

By 'authority' Said is referring to those who have power over others and especially to the overriding power of the state. This has little to do with Fromm's understanding of 'authoritarianism' as a personality defect - but like Fromm, he does see the dangers inherent in a too ready submission to authority, in whatever form it becomes manifest.

'The intellectual has to walk around, has to have space in which to stand and talk back to authority, since unquestioning subservience to authority in today's world is one of the greatest threats to an active and moral, intellectual life.' [16]

It is interesting to compare this with Schaar's assessment of Fromm's position on authority:

'The dictates of authority are wrong even when they may be good for the subject, because authority always has its own interests firmly in mind. The interests of the subject are secondary. This violates the canon that no man should be treated as a means. It also violates Fromm's canon that we ought to love and care for others as ourselves.' [17]

There is no doubt that, overall, Fromm can be safely placed in the category of 'intellectual as social critic' in Said's terms. It now becomes necessary to consider whether he will meet Michael Walzer's criteria for the social critic as prophet.

2. The Social Critic as Prophet

Essential to an understanding of Walzer's argument on the social critic as prophet is his belief that morality derives from the interpretation of a dense moral culture which already exists.

Of the three possible approaches to moral philosophy which he identifies i.e. discovery, invention and interpretation, he considers that interpretation 'accords best with our everyday experience of morality.' [18]

The story of Moses might seem to provide an example of how the process of discovery operates. In the legendary account, he goes up to the mountain, where he meets with YHWH, and returns with the ten commandments inscribed on tablets of stone.

But even if this was so, (and the evidence would appear to be against it) it is unlikely that the content of these commandments was completely new to the desert wanderers. The more perceptive, at least, had surely learnt by bitter experience that an embattled and landless people could not afford to allow devisive behaviour such as theft, murder, false witness, covetousness and adultery among their own ranks. The Sabbath was part of Jewish culture as far back as the records go - as was the worship of YHWH. If worship of gods other than YHWH was not against the accepted tradition there would have been no reason for Moses' anger when he returned to find his people worshipping the golden calf. (Exodus 32)

It could be argued that the actual 'discoveries' took place by experience, gradually and piecemeal, before and during the desert experience and that what Moses did was to encapsulate the essence of the highest wisdom of his people and give it the force of divine law. Whoever gave us the ten commandments in their present form, the fact remains that to take an inchoate mass of communal experience and produce

from it a moral code that is still relevant was an inspired achievement resulting from a profound spiritual experience that is not necessarily lessened by arguing for pre-existent moral knowledge.

Be that as it may, Walzer's argument is that once the commandments had been given, the period of discovery was over and, thereafter, moral discussion took the form of interpretation of the laws already formulated.

In more recent times, attempts have been made to invent a morality relevant to contemporary conditions and devised on entirely rational lines where,

> 'The end is a common life, where justice, or political virtue, or goodness, or some such other basic value would be realised.' [19]

But, as Walzer puts it,

> 'The crucial requirement of the design procedure is that it eventuate in agreement.' [20]

- a well-nigh impossible demand. Many efforts have been made to ensure that the inventor of the new morality is free from bias and able to speak for everyone. Walzer cites the Rawlsian approach which,

> 'has the nice result that it ceases to matter whether the constructive work or legislative work is undertaken by one or many people. Deprived of all knowledge of their standing in the social world, of their interests, values, talents and relationships, potential legislators are rendered, for the practical purposes at hand, identical.' [21]

It is doubtful whether such a position could be achieved in practice. However, the claim is that,

> 'the moral world we invent behind the veil of ignorance or through an ideologically uncluttered conversation is the only world we could invent, universally inhabitable, a world for all persons.... so we create a morality against which we can measure any person's life, any society's practices. [22]

Until such a perfect morality is achieved we get by as best we can with a set of values

> 'created by conversation, argument, and political negotiation in circumstances we might call social over long periods of time.' [23]

As Walzer points out,

> 'The point of an invented morality is to provide what God and nature do not provide, a universal corrective for all the different social moralities.' [24]

Walzer is not convinced that this is necessary,

and compares the homely values within which we live with invented morality which he likens to the coldness and lack of individual character of a luxurious but impersonal hotel room. A better procedure would be to start from where we are and, by adapting the Rawlsian position of detachment, turn the the moral reality into an idealised type [as in the story of Moses].

Walzer's position can be summarised as follows:

The true path in moral philosophy can be compared roughly to the three branches of government:

1. Discovery resembles the work of the executive - to find, proclaim and then enforce the law.
2. Invention is legislative:

   Invention de novo is like constitutional legislation.

   Minimalist legislation is more like the work of legal codification.
3. Interpretation is the work of the judiciary.

He then reaches the core of his argument:

'The claim of interpretation is simply this: that neither discovery nor invention is necessary because we already possess what they pretend to provide. Morality, unlike politics, does not require executive authority or systematic legislation. We do not have to discover the moral world because we have always lived there. We do not have to invent it because it has already been invented - though not in accordance with any philosophical method. No design procedure has governed its design and the result no doubt is disorganised and uncertain. It is also very dense: the moral world has a lived-in quality.... Moral argument in such a setting is interpretive in character, closely resembling the work of a lawyer or judge who struggles to find meaning in a mass of conflicting laws and precedents.' [25]

In answer to the question 'Why should the moral morass be authoritative for philosophers?' Walzer insists that,

> 'the moralities we discover and invent always turn out, and always will turn out, remarkably similar to the morality we already have....
> There are indeed discoveries and inventions - utilitarianism is one example - but the more novel these are the less likely they are to make for strong or even plausible arguments. The experience of moral argument is best understood in the interpretive mode. What we do when we argue is to give an account of the actually existing morality. That morality is authoritative for us because it is only by virtue of its existence that we exist as the moral beings we are. [My italics] [26]

It is important, however, that for Walzer the existing morality is not a means of supporting any existing political hegemony - its purpose is to act as a corrective'.

> 'The capacity for criticism always extends beyond the "needs" of the social structure itself and its dominant groups. I do not want to defend a fundamentalist position. The moral world and the social world are more or less coherent, but they are never more than more or less coherent. Morality is always potentially subversive of class and power.' [27]

At any one time the question morality poses is "What is the right thing for us, given our particular circumstances, to do?" The answer is invariably a matter of interpretation of the situation and of the probable effects of alternative courses of action. As with the reading of a poem, the <u>best</u> reading is not the sum of previous readings but the one that

provides new and persuasive insights - one that may challenge or confirm previous readings.

> 'And if we disagree with either confirmation or challenge, there is nothing to do but to go back to the "text" - the values, principles, codes and conventions that constitute the moral world - and to the "readers of the text"'. [28]

The "readers" are the effective authorities - but their interpretation is not inviolate - they may change their minds, the population of readers may change and the argument can always be reopened.

Fromm did not, in fact, discover a new morality, nor did he invent one, in spite of the elaborate structure he constructed from the insights of Marx, Freud and his own Jewish culture. - He did what all prophets do - he re-presented the existing morality in terms which he thought were relevant to his own time. We already knew that love was better than hate, justice was better than injustice and that greed was one of the seven deadly sins. What Fromm

did was to provide reassurance to people who were anxious about the apparent loss of the moral community that morality still mattered; and he provided a scientifically unsophisticated public with what sounded like a scientific argument in favour of the values they already held but which, for most of them, were no longer supported by a firm religious backing.

Unlike Said, Walzer saw the social critic as an 'insider'. His stipulative definition of social criticism runs as follows:

> 'Social criticism is a social activity, "Social" has a pronominal and reflexive function, rather like "self" in "self-criticism," which names subject and object at the same time. No doubt, societies do not criticise themselves; social critics are individuals, but they are also, most of the time, members, speaking in public to other members who join in the speaking and whose speech constitutes a collective reflection upon the conditions of collective life.' [29]

Marginality does not necessarily make for detachment - it could be

> 'a distorting factor, undercutting his (the prophet's) capacity for effective judgement' [30]

Nor does Walzer accept the conventional view that'

> 'the critic is not really a marginal figure; he is - <u>he has made himself into</u> - an outsider, a spectator, a "total stranger", a man from Mars. He derives a kind of critical authority from the distance he establishes.' (my italics) [31]

Instead he proposes an alternative view of the critic who is 'one of us', [32]

> 'This is the style of....Gandhi in India, of Tawney and Orwell in Britain. Social criticism, for such people, is

an internal argument. The outsider can become a social critic only if he manages to get himself inside, enters imaginatively into local practices and arrangements.' [33]

Both Said and Fromm are exiles who have become sufficiently 'naturalised' in America to become social critics in these terms. Of the two, Fromm had the lesser adjustment to make because of the close affinities between western Europe and the U.S.A.

[The discrepancy between the positions of Said and Walzer is more evident than real. Both throw light on the ambivalent position of the social critic, who cannot function prophetically unless he is an 'insider' and yet must have the vision to see further than his contemporaries. The wider experience of the naturalised exile may be an asset but it is not essential to this enhanced vision.]

Said is probably correct, in any case, in

pointing out that the outsider may be more immediately aware of the need for social change (as Amos, the Judean, recognised the ills of Israel), though I would agree with Walzer that it is necessary to get inside a specific culture before one is in a position to judge fairly and make positive suggestions as to how the necessary changes are to be brought about.

One could not argue, however, that Fromm has insufficient knowledge of the culture he wished to change, nor, I believe, that many of his critisms of capitalist society were invalid - the problem lies in his belief that Marxism and Freudianism had anything to offer, morally, that was not already present in our culture, [though Freud did add to our understanding of sexual morality].

Walzer considers that:

> 'Opposition, far more than detachment, is what determines the shape of social criticism. The critic takes sides in actual or latent conflicts; he sets

himself up against the prevailing political forces.' [34]

This was self-evidently true of Fromm, as was his wish, in Walzer's terms, 'that things should go well' [35] with his adopted country. This point is essential to Walzer's definition of the social critic as prophet,

> 'He is not an enemy, even when he is fiercely opposed to this or that prevailing practice or institutional arrangement. His criticism does not require either detachment or enmity, because he finds a warrant for critical engagement in the idealism, even if it is a hypocritical idealism, of the existing moral world.' [36]

For example, there would be no point in Hosea's condemnation, [4:2]

'there is no fidelity, no tenderness,
no knowledge of God in the country,
only perjury and lies, slaughter, theft,
adultery and violence, murder after murder....'

- if he did not care for the well-being of his people, or if he did not assume that the people should know better. Indeed, this passage clearly evokes Moses' teaching in the ten commandments. Nor would there be any foundation for Isaiah's lament for Jerusalem [1:21-28] if he did not care deeply about the situation he found there.

'What a harlot she has become
the faithful city,
Zion, that was all justice!'[1:21]

However, Walzer continues:

'The problem with disconnected criticism, and thus with criticism that derives from newly discovered or invented moral standards, is that it

presses its practitioners toward manipulation and compulsion.' [37]

One reason for this, and it applies to utilitarianism and Rawlism as much as to Marxism, is that they meet with resistance as soon as they become counter intuitive, [as, for example, when Singer approves infanticide]. When this happens, pressure of some kind is needed if the new standards are to be implemented. Walzer is correct in insisting that the morality that is effective, is the shared morality embedded in the culture and traditions of a particular people. Fromm was able to appeal to the popular reader of his time only insofar as he reinforced that shared morality and showed where contemporary practice had departed from it.

He failed to see the inconsistency involved in advocating Marxism and anti-authoritarianism simultaneously.

Walzer invites comparison with Alasdair MacIntyre when he claims that:

> 'Social criticism is less the practical offspring of scientific knowledge than the educated cousin of common complaint. We become critics naturally, as it were, by elaborating on existing moralities and telling stories about a society more just than, though never entirely different from, our own.' [38]

MacIntyre bemoans the loss in contemporary society of just that sense of shared life and tradition, upon which Walzer's argument is based, and which he describes, in After Virtue, thus;

> 'A living tradition, then, is an historically extended, socially embedded argument, and an argument in part about the goods which constitute that tradition.' [39]

He insists that contemporary society has become so disordered that;

'What we possess.... are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts of which lack those contexts from which their significance derived.' [40]

MacIntyre sees life from the viewpoint of the intelligentsia in the larger cultural centres of the developed world. This is a large and influential section of the world's population, but it is not the whole of it. Many tribes in undeveloped countries continue their traditional life undisturbed, but more than this, MacIntyre underestimates the extent to which communities within larger urban areas, and even more among the rural populations, still cling to shared basic moral standards as the norm, adapting them if need be to meet the need of changing circumstances. There is not space to debate this here. MacIntyre makes a strong theoretical case and he has perceived a dangerous tendency, but I do not believe that we have reached the stage where Walzer's whole position is invalidated.

MacIntyre and Walzer share a belief in the importance of narrative in the maintenance of these shared traditions:

> 'there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources. Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things.... And so too, of course, is that moral tradition from heroic society to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues.' [41]

There is no doubt that the narratives of the prophets have operated in precisely this fashion in both the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Walzer regards the Old Testament prophets as the earliest examples of social critic, as he defines the term.

However, he considers that Weber goes too far when he describes them as demagogues,

> 'that is not quite right, for though the prophets spoke to the people and, arguably, on their behalf, and though they spoke with the fierceness and anger we conventionally attribute to demagogues, they do not seem to have sought a popular following or ever to have aspired to political office.' [42]

However, he is inclined to agree that the writings of the prophets are perhaps the earliest known examples of political pamphleteering and thus can be regarded as exemplars for the type of social critic he had in mind. (Weber instances Isaiah 22:15f and 'the written curse which Jeremiah placed upon Semachiah'.) [43]

Walzer points out that the prophet does not produce radically new teaching - rather, he refers back continually to what people already knew but failed to practice.

'For the most part, they disclaim originality, not only in the obvious sense that they attribute their message to God. It is more important that they continually refer themselves to the epic history and the moral teaching of the Torah: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good" (Micah 6.8) The past tense is significant. The prophets assume the previous messages, the divine "showings", the immediacy of history and law in the minds of their listeners....They speak to a large audience, and for all their anger, they seem to take that audience for granted. They assume, writes Johannes Lindblom, "that their words could be immediately understood and accepted" - not, however, that they would be.' [44]

Like the prophets Fromm reinforced what people already knew. His 'humanistic ethics' does not, in fact, produce a new morality, rather it postulates a different reason for being moral.

We are to love our neighbour because this will produce the best results for humanity, not because it is part of a set of moral laws laid down by those in power:

> 'The paralysing effect of power does not rest only on the fear it arouses, but equally on an implicit promise - the promise that those in possession of power can protect and take care of the "weak" who submit to it, that they can free man from the burden of uncertainty and of responsibility for himself by guaranteeing order and by assigning the individual a place in the order which makes him feel secure.' [45]

As Fromm sees it, 'freedom, the ability to preserve one's integrity against power, is the basic condition for morality' [46] - there is truth in this, nor would the biblical prophets have disagreed. They believed that their authority lay in their ability to articulate the will of YHWH in their own situation, and

frequently this involved a challenge to those who held the religious and political power in their time. Amos' tirade against those in authority in Israel who 'trample on the heads of ordinary people and push the poor out of their path' [2:7] is a case in point. But whatever the theory behind the morality, unless the result of the prophetic message is to produce a change in direction in those who hear the message, the prophecy has failed.

Fromm made no more impression on the ills of his time than the biblical prophets did on theirs.

Walzer underlines his view of the prophet as 'insider' by comparing Amos (arguably an outsider to the Israelites - but an 'insider' insofar as Israel and Judah shared a common theological tradition) - with Jonah, who was sent to Ninevah as an 'outsider' - 'where his appeal to Israel's history and law would obviously make no sense'. [47]

Amos, in the confrontation with Amaziah (7.10-17) had the advantage of being able to appeal to a shared religious tradition against

the priest's advocacy of reasons of state, unlike Jonah who can appeal only to a minimalist 'international religious law' which Weber had suggested could be 'presupposed as valid among the Palestinian peoples'. [48]

Because Jonah is an 'outsider', his words lack the added meanings which derive from a shared cultural background,

> '..this is prophecy without poetry, without resonance, background allusion or concrete detail'. [49]

The story tells us more of the lesson God taught Jonah than of the conditions in Ninevah - and this, no doubt, is the purpose it serves in the Jewish scriptures.

In Fear of Freedom, Fromm is delivering to the Western allies a message that he has derived from his experience in Germany. This does not detract from its 'prophetic' quality, since the cultures of western Europe and the U.S.A. were not dissimilar, the aberrant growth in Nazi Germany was one that could easily be repeated

elsewhere, and indeed it had been - in Italy and Spain. His situation, however, was not parallel to that of Amos, to get a more exact parallel one would have to imagine an American or one of the allies who had travelled to preach in Germany before the outbreak of the war.

Though Walzer continues to stress the importance of the shared tradition, he also stresses the part the prophets played in the creation of that tradition:

> 'the coherence of Israelite religion is more a consequence than a precondition of the work of the prophets. Their prophecies, together with the writing of the Deuteronomic school, begin the creation of something we might call normative Judaism. It is important to stress the pre-existing moral and legal codes, the sense of a common past, the depth of popular religiosity. But all this was still theologically inchoate, highly contentious, radically pluralistic in form. In fact, the

> prophets pick and choose among the available materials....They are parasitic upon the past, but they also give shape to the past upon which they are parasitic. [50]

Fromm, too, was parasitic on many sources which he attempted to weave together to form a democratic moral structure of ideas to serve his own time. The biblical prophets, however, sought to serve one people and one tradition within a relatively limited geographical area - the stage on which Fromm had to work covered the western world, a melting pot of peoples and traditions with a further 3,000 years of history behind them and change on an unprecedented scale in front of them. It is less easy to be a true prophet under these conditions.

This has to be borne in mind as Walzer continues:

> 'Just as we need to resist the portrayal of ancient Israel as a special case of moral coherence, so we

> need to resist the portrayal of the prophets as peculiar, eccentric, and lonely individuals. ....
> Interpretation as I have described it, as the prophets practiced it is a common activity'. [51]

Moreover, the same cultural background is available to both sides of the argument.

> '...the same resources - authoritative texts, memories, values, practices, conventions - are available to social critics and defenders of the status quo.' [52]

Schaar and Springborg call upon texts that were equally available to Fromm to refute his arguments - they assume they share the same academic tradition. The situation becomes confused because Fromm tried to have it both ways, to write popular texts drawing from his academic background. This is notoriously

difficult to do, and it cannot be said that Fromm

has succeeded. His arguments too often do not stand up to close scrutiny by his peers yet his style is insufficiently unpretentious to be accepted as simply 'popular'.

Referring to the account of the prophet, Amos, Walzer concludes,

> 'The animating passion of the book as a whole, however, is a surely a deep concern for "the hurt of Joseph"....Amos is a critic not only because of his anger but also because of his concern'. [53]

This, surely, was the case with Fromm. His deep concern for the well-being of all men was real.

Whose prophet?

The biblical prophet could appeal to a shared tradition of religious belief when he referred his listeners to the commands of YHWH. Such an appeal was not open to the agnostic Fromm. Yet he did repeatedly refer to authority

to validate his arguments (in spite of his thunderings against authority). In his case it has been argued that his authority was Marx, and that therefore, he is best understood as a prophet of Karl Marx. Yet this is to oversimplify,

> 'There is no God but Marx - and Fromm is his prophet'

is not an assertion that can stand beside the traditional reference to Allah, in the same way as one could say of Amos,

> 'there is no God but YHWH - and Amos is his prophet'.

In renouncing YHWH, Fromm had perhaps taken on board a pantheon of lesser gods, among whom Marx was predominant.

Certainly, by the time The Sane Society was published the clear prophetic voice warning against the dangers of authoritarianism has been replaced by a more complex message based on post-Freudian insights and Marxist ideology. Fromm is too critical to be considered seriously as a prophet of Freud, however much he acknowledges his debt to his predecessor.

The argument that he is a prophet of Marx has more substance - but Marx, himself, is frequently considered to be a prophet, and to be a prophet of a prophet is to dilute the term beyond useful meaning.

I would prefer to describe Fromm as a disciple of Marx and, to a lesser extent, of Freud, and to argue that increasingly, as time wore on - the original prophetic message became elaborated to form a uniquely Frommian thesis compounded of a rationalised Judaism; Freudianisn revised, in all but its most basic tenets; and a sanitised Marxism. However, he still propounded the message with an earnestness that at least warranted the title of 'prophet as social critic'.

In addition, his work has to be seen in the context of the situation that concerns MacIntyre where, in a post-religious age we have lost belief in a single moral code and are faced with a plethora of competing moralities.

> 'A crucial turning point in that earlier history occurred when men and women of good will turned aside from

> the task of shoring up the Roman imperium and ceased to identify the continuity of civility and moral community with the maintenance of that imperium. What they set themselves to achieve instead - often without fully recognising what they were doing - was the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that the moral life might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness.' [54]

It is MacIntyre's position that we can do no other than to emulate them, though our case is even more desperate as,

> 'This time the barbarians are not waiting at the frontier; they have already been governing us for quite some time.' [55]

Fromm's work could be seen as part of this effort to maintain the traditional values by building up moral communities within which they could be sustained. Like MacIntyre, he wanted the rebuilding process to begin now and was not prepared to wait for the dark times to pass. The Sane society was intended to encourage the promotion of such moral communities, as was The Revolution of Hope - where the aim was to produce:

> 'the transformation of society which would allow the individual to find ways of immediate participation and action, and give an answer to the question, "What can I do?"
>
> We are in the very midst of the crisis of modern man. We do not have too much time left. If we do not begin now, it will probably be too late. But there is hope - because there is a real possibility that man can reassert himself, and that he can make the technological society human.
>
> "It is not up to us to complete the

task, but we have no right to abstain from it".' [56]

It is not inappropriate that this thesis should end with a saying from The Avoth which is to be found in all Jewish prayerbooks.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, 1993, Lecture 1, The Independent, 24th June 1993.

2. Said, Lecture 1, 1993.

3. Fromm, Erich, To Have or To Be, London, 1976, p12.

4. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, 1993, Lecture 2, The Independent, 2nd July 1993.

5. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, 1993, Lecture 3, The Independent, 9th July 1993.

6. Said, 1993, Lecture 3.

7. Wilson, A.N., The Lion and The Honeycomb, London, 1987, p24.

8. Said, 1993, Lecture 3.

9. Fromm, Erich, Man for Himself, London, 1949, p43.

10. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, Lecture 5, The Independent, 23rd July 1993.

11. Said, Edward, BBC Reith Lectures, Lecture 4 The Independent, 16th July 1993.

12. Said, 1993, Lecture 4.

13. Said, 1993, Lecture 4.

14. Said, 1993, Lecture 4.

15. Said, 1993, Lecture 4.

16. Said, 1993, Lecture 6.

17. Schaar, John H., Escape from Authority, New York, 1961, p105/6.

18. Walzer, Michael, Interpretation and Social Criticism, London, 1987, p10.

19. Walzer, 1987, p10.

20. Walzer, 1987, p10.

21. Walzer, 1987, p11.

22. Walzer, 1987, p12/13.

23. Walzer, 1987, p13.

24. Walzer, 1987, p13.

25. Walzer, 1987, pp19-20.

26. Walzer, 1987, p21.

27. Walzer, 1987, p22.

28. Walzer, 1987, p30.

29. Walzer, 1987, p35.

30. Walzer, 1987, p38.

31. Walzer, 1987, p38.

32. Walzer, 1987, p39.

33. Walzer, 1987, p39.

34. Walzer, 1987, p55.

35. Walzer, 1987, p61.

37. Walzer, 1987, p64.

38. Walzer, 1987, p65.

39. MacIntyre, Alasdair, After Virtue, London 1987, p222.

40. MacIntyre, 1987, p2.

41. MacIntyre, 1987, p216.

42. Walzer, 1987, p70.

43. Weber, Max, Ancient Judaism, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952, p267.

44. Walzer, 1987, pp71-72.

45. Fromm, 1949, p246.

46. Fromm, 1949, p247.

47. Walzer, 1987, p73.

48. Walzer, 1987, p79.

49. Walzer, 1987, p77.

50. Walzer, 1987, pp82-83.

51. Walzer, 1987, p83.

52. Walzer, 1987, note p82.

53. Walzer, 1987, p90.

54. MacIntyre, 1987, p263.

55. MacIntyre, 1987, p263.

56. Fromm, Erich, The Revolution of Hope, New York 1968. pp168-69.

APPENDIX 1.

Fromm's work listed by date of copyright - or by date of first publication.

1941. ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM.

1942. FEAR OF FREEDOM.

1949. MAN FOR HIMSELF. (First pub. in Gt Britain)

1950. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND RELIGION.

1952. THE FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE.

1956. THE SANE SOCIETY.

1957. THE ART OF LOVING. (First pub. in England.)

1959. SIGMUND FREUD'S MISSION.

1960. ZEN BUDDHISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS with D.T.Suzuki and R. de Martino.

1961. Der Friede: Idee und Verwirklichung: (ed) THE SEARCH FOR PEACE (Bilingual volume.)

1961. MARX'S CONCEPT OF MAN.

1962. BEYOND THE CHAINS OF ILLUSION.

1963. THE DOGMA OF CHRIST AND OTHER ESSAYS.

1965. THE HEART OF MAN. (first pub. in Great Britain.

1965. (ed) SOCIALIST HUMANISM: AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM.

1966. YOU SHALL BE AS GODS.

1968. THE REVOLUTION OF HOPE.

1969. THE NATURE OF MAN.

1970. SOCIAL CHARACTER IN A MEXICAN VILLAGE. (With M. Jacoby).

1970. THE CRISIS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS.

1973. THE ANATOMY OF HUMAN DESTRUCTIVENESS.

1976. TO HAVE OR TO BE.

1978. THE WELL-BEING OF MAN IN SOCIETY.

1980. THE GREATNESS AND LIMITATION OF FREUD'S THOUGHT.

1980. THE WORKING CLASS IN WEIMAR GERMANY, (ed. Wolfgang Bonss.)

1981. ON DISOBEDIENCE AND OTHER ESSAYS.

1993. THE ART OF BEING (ed. Rainer Funk.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Fromm, Erich, - editions used for reference:

1. Beyond the Chains of Illusion, Abacus, London, 1989.
2. Escape from Freedom, Rinehart and Coy., New York, 1941.
3. Man for Himself, Ark Paperbacks, London, 1986.
4. Marx's Concept of Man, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1961.
5. May Man Prevail, Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, 1962.
6. On Disobedience and Other Essays, The Seabury Press, New York, 1981.
7. Psychoanalysis and Religion, Yale University Press, London, 1976.
8. Sigmund Freud's Mission, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1959.
9. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, Penguin Books, London, 1990.
10. The Art of Being, Constable, London, 1993.
11. The Art of Loving, Mandala, Harper Collins, London, 1985.

12. The Crisis of Psychoanalysis, Joathan Cape, London, 1971.

13. The Dogma of Christ, Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., London, 1963.

14. The Greatness and Limitation of Freud's Thought, Harper and Row, New York, 1980.

15. The Heart of Man, Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., London, 1965.

16. The Revolution of Hope, Bantam Books, 1968.

17. The Sane Society. Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., London, 1963.

18. The Working Class in Weimar Germany, ed. Wolfgang Bonss, Berg Publishers, London, 1984.

19. To Have or To Be, Abacus, Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1990.

21. You Shall Be As Gods, Jonathan Cape Ltd., London, 1967.

22. Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis, with D.T. Suzuki and Richard de Martino, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1960.

Secondary Sources relating to the work of Erich Fromm.

1. Allen, Harold J., 'Fromm's Relatavism and Roly's Relatavistic Historicism', Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Vol 28, No 3, 1992, pp467-463.

2. Allen, David F., and Bachelder, Robert, 'Psychiatry and Religion: Judeo-Christian Theism and Fromm's Humanism' Journal of Psychiatry and Health, 1985, Vol 24, No 1, (Spring), pp49-59.)

3. Bonss, Wolfgang, 'Critical Theory and Empirical Social Research: Some Observations', introduction to Fromm, Erich, The Working Class in Weimar Germany, Berg Publishers, Leamington Spa, 1980, pp1-38.

4. Burston, David, 'A Profile of Erich Fromm', _ Society, 1991, V28, N4, pp84-9.

5. Chrzanowski, Gerald, 'On the Erich Fromm Anniversary Symposium', in the Journal of the American Academy Psychoanalysis 1991, 19 (4), pp667-683.

6. Eckhart, Maria, Horney, 'Fromm's Concept of Biophilia', Journal of the American Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1992, Vol 20, N9, (Sum.) pp233-240.

7. Forsyth, James J., and Beniskos, J.M., 'Biblical Faith and Erich Fromm's Theory of Personality', Revue de L'Universite d'Ottowa, 40, J.MR (19?)70, pp69-73.

8. Garbuzov, A.S., 'The Conception of Man in the Philosophy of Erich Fromm', Soviet Studies in Philosophy, 1985, V24, N2, pp41-46.

9. Grey, Allen, 'Society as Destiny: Fromm's Concept of Social Character', Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 1992, Vol 28, No 2, pp344-363.

10. Jay, Martin, The Dialectical Imagination, Heinneman, London, 1974.

11. Lethbridge, David, 'Fromm and Marx; On Human Nature' Journal of Humanistic Psychology 1987, V27, N1, pp92-108.

12. Schaar, John B., Escape From Authority, Basic Books Inc., New York, 1961.

13. Schaff, Adam, 'MARX'S CONCEPT OF MAN by Erich Fromm, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961. Pp.xii,260. PHILOSOPHY AND MYTH IN KARL MARX. By Robert Tucker: Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1961. Pp263. Hist. Theor. 2, 1963, pp307-309.

14. Springborg, Patricia, The Problem of Human Needs and the Critique of Civilisation George Allen and Unwin, London, 1981.

Sources relating to prophecy and the Prophets:

Abbreviations: J.S.O.T. = Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. (Sheffield).

1. Auld, H.G.,

'Prophecy and the Prophets', Creating the Old Testament, ed. Stephen Biggar, Blackwell, Oxford 1994, pp203-226.

'Prophets Through the Looking Glass', J.S.O.T., 27, 1983, pp3-23.

'Prophecy in Books: A Rejoinder.' J.S.O.T., pp31-32.

'Prophets Through the Looking Glass: A response to Robert Carroll and Hugh Williamson.' J.S.O.T. 27, 1983, 41-44.

2. Barton, John, Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical study, Darton, Longman and Todd, London,1992.

3. Biggar, Stephen, (ed) Creating the Old Testament, Basil Blackwell, 1989.

4. Carroll, R.P.,

'From Amos to Anderton' Theology, 90, 1987, 256-83.

From Chaos to Covenant, S.C.M. Press, London, 1981.

'Poets not Prophets: A response to Through the Looking Glass', J.S.O.T., 27, pp25-31.

'Prophecy and Society', in Clements, R.E., The World of Ancient Israel' Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp203-225.

When Prophecy Failed, S.C.M. Press, London, 1979.

'Whose Prophet? Whose History? Whose Social Reality? Troubling the Interpretative Community Again: Notes Towards A Response to T. W. Overholt's Critique., J.S.O.T., 48, 1990, pp33-39.

5. Clements, R.E., Prophecy and Tradition, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975.

6. Heschel, Abraham J., Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1969.

7. Lindblom, J., Prophecy in Ancient Israel, Basil Blackwell, London, 1978.

8. Overholt, Thomas W.,

Channels of Prophecy, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1989.

'Is It Difficult to Read? J.S.O.T., 48, 1990, pp51-54.

'Prophecy in History: The Social Reality of Prophecy', J.S.O.T., 48, 1990, pp3-29.

9. Petersen, David L.,

(ed) Prophecy in Israel, S.P.C.K., London, 1987.

The Roles of Israel's Prophets, J.S.O.T. Press, Sheffield, 1981.

10. Robinson, T.H., Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., London, 1967.

11. Roper, Trevor, 'The Prophet', The New York Review, 12th Oct. 1989, pp28-34.

12. Sawyer, John F.A., Prophecy and the Prophets of the Old Testament, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989.

13. Weber, Max,
Ancient Judaism, The Free Press, Illinois, 1952.
The Sociology of Religion, Methuen and Co., London, 1965.

14. Wilson, Robert R., Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1980.

Other Reading:

1. Brown, J.A.C., Freud and the Post-Freudians, Penguin, London, 1969.

2. Campbell, Tom, Seven Theories of Human Society, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989.

3. Downie, R.S., Roles and Values, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1971.

4. Gibran, Kahlil, The Prophet, Penguin Books, London, 1992.

5. Gilbert, Paul, Human Relationships, Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, 1991.

6. Hursthouse, Rosalind, Beginning Lives, Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, 1987.

7. Lyon, David, Karl Marx, Lion Publishing, Tring, 1983.
8. MacIntyre, Alasdair, After Virtue, Duckworth, London, 1985.
9. MacQuarrie, John, Twentieth Century Religious Thought, S.C.M. Press Ltd.,1971.
10. Morris, Desmond, The Naked Ape, Cape, 1967.
11. O'Connor, Flannery, The Violent Bear it Away, Faber and Faber, London, 1985.
12. Rawls, John, A Theory of Justice, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991.
13. Riazanov, David, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Monthly Review Press, London, 1973.
14. Said, Edward, B.B.C. Reith Lectures,
    1. 'Representations of the Individual', The Independent, 26th June, 1993.
    2. 'Holding Nations and Traditions at Bay' The Independent, 2nd July, 1993.
    3. 'Expariates and Marginals' The Independent, 9th July, 1993.
    4. 'Professionals and Amateurs', The Independent, 16th, July, 1993.
    5. 'Speaking Truth to Power', The Independent, 23rd July, 1993.

6. 'Gods that Fail'(?)

The Independent, 30th, July, 1993.

15. Scott Peck, M., The Road Less Travelled, Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1983.

16. Singer, Peter, A Companion to Ethics, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1991.

17. Stevenson, Leslie, Seven Theories of Human Nature, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991.

18. Storr, Anthony,

Human Aggression, Penguin Books, London, 1992.

Solitude, Fontana, London, 1988.

19. Tillich, Paul,

The Shaking of the Foundations,

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1948

20. Walzer, Michael, Interpretation and Social Criticism, Harvard University Press, London, 1993.

21. Williams, Raymond, Keywords, Fontana, London, 1983.

22. Wilson, A.N., The Lion and the Honeycomb: The Religious Writings of Tolstoy, Collins, London, 1987.