

The Reception of Erich Fromm's Writings and Ideas

Rainer Funk

The reception of Fromm's ideas and scientific contributions started during his lifetime and has continued to today, in various disciplines and professions and throughout the world. Some of this influence is well known and fully credited, while other times Fromm's contributions have been neglected. Helmut Johach, for instance, gives a striking example of the former case in his description of the influence which Fromm had on what is often called "Humanistic Psychology". My remarks in the following chapter will discuss only a few salient aspects of Fromm's reception, which I shall look at from the perspective of an editor of his (German) *Collected Works* and as Fromm's literary executor.



Rainer Funk

Concerning my own role, a first step toward promoting the reception of Fromm's ideas and writings was taken by Erich Fromm himself when he agreed to the publication of his *Collected Works* in German and asked me to edit the *Erich Fromm-Gesamtausgabe*. After five years of preparation, the publication of a collection of ten volumes begun in February 1980 while Fromm was still alive, with volumes one and four, and was completed in the fall of 1981. Volume ten of this omnibus edition contains a detailed index of some 360,000 entries, including, for instance, whether and where Fromm mentions Alfred Adler or discusses problems of authoritarianism or the aims of unions. Unfortunately, I have never succeeded in publishing Fromm's collected works in other languages because publishers were reluctant to invest money in an edited publication with an index volume.

schweigen	27
<p>schweigen: I 73 (A14), 133 IV 391 VI 103, 121 - gemeinsames: IV 391 Schweitzer, Albert: II 186 (A3), 274, 276, 338, 383f. IV 188, 161, 189, 327 V 297, 329-332 VI 91, 192, 279 (A4), 357 VII 331, 333 VIII 268 IX 5, 22, 141, 349, 351, 357, 417, 459, 509, 517 - Fortschritt nach ->: V 329-332 Schwermut (s.a. Depression; Melancholie; Traurigkeit): II 91 IX 385 Schwertkampf: II 169 - und Aggression: VII 168f. VIII 254 Schwindelanfälle, Ilse: VII 112 Schwindelanfälle (s.a. Ohnmachts- anfälle): I 192 II 141 VI 267 Scott, John Paul: II 169 (A1) VII 91, 107f. Scott, T. H.: VII 215</p>	<p>seelisch; psychisch (s.a. Psychoana- lyse); s. bei: Abhängigkeit; Apparat; Armut; Ausbeutung; Basis; Bedürfnis; Charakter; Dynamik; Eigenschaft; Einstellung; Energie; Entwicklung; Erfahrung; Erleben; Fortschritt; Freiheit; Geburt; Gesundheit; Grausamkeit; Haltung; Instanz; Isolierung; Konflikt; Konstellation; Konstitution; Kräfte; Krankheit; Leiden; Mechanismus; Oberfläche; Realität; Reife; Revolution; Sadismus; Schmerz; Schock; Selbst- Sicherheit; Spannung; Strebung; Struktur; Tendenz; Tod; Verarmung; Vereinsamung; Wachstum; Zwang Seelsorge (s.a. Heilen; Psycho- therapie): VI 264, 278 - und Psychotherapie: VI 232-234.</p>

As this work proceeded, Fromm re-wrote his last will and designated me as his "literary executor" and as the heir to his library and his scientific estate. After Fromm's death, I established the *Erich Fromm Archive* in Tuebingen and made major parts of Fromm's estate accessible for persons and scholars interested in Fromm.

Since that time, the Tuebingen Erich Fromm Archive has become not only a center for scholars from all over the world – many of whom were present and participated in the conference this volume is based on – but also, and in particular, it has become a venue for young German scientists

The Reception of Erich Fromm's Writings and Ideas



who wish to make use of Fromm's collected works and have gotten in touch with me as editor of the *Gesamtausgabe* and owner of the Fromm Archive. Meetings have been organized at the Fromm Archive, and in the fall of 1985 an International Erich Fromm Society was founded by this group of –

mostly young – Fromm scholars.

The Fromm Society has always regarded itself as an international umbrella organization for other institutions and initiatives that are devoted to Fromm's ideas and their reception:

Name, Vorname	Anschrift	Unterschrift
Funk, Erich	Bismarckstraße 47 1100 Charlottenburg MUMKASSE 11	[Signature]
OTTE, KATZKE M.A.	74041 DUISBURG	[Signature]
Pankaj Kell	Großstr. 201 I 77471 Oberrhein	[Signature]
31a Prof. Dr.	Sonnenstr. 33 53087 Zülpich	[Signature]
M.H. Jode Wasserf.	Groß-Helmgraben 116 25127 EM Die Haas die Nachbarn	[Signature]
Pongrats, Dorothea	Höfenstraße 27 54714 Frecken	[Signature]
Wick, Helmut	Großstr. 42 95031 Karlsruhe	[Signature]
EIDER, MICHAEL	SÜDRING 1 40740 GLEIBITZ	[Signature]
Johanna, H. Hahn	Euphratstr. 38 41001 Solingen	[Signature]

Rainer Funk

- After Fromm's death in 1980, a first international Fromm conference was organized by the philosophers of the Yugoslavian "praxis"-group in December 1981 in Dubrovnik.
- Simultaneously with the establishment of the International Erich Fromm Society, in Italy a group around *Pier Lorenzo Eletti* dedicated itself to Fromm's ideas and began organizing conferences in Florence.
- A first joint seminar with this group took place 1987 in Tuebingen. From then on, regular meetings and conferences have taken place, especially with the group around *Romano Biancoli* of Ravenna. He founded the Bolognese Fromm Training Institute in Bologna and, with the assistance of *Marco Bacciagaluppi* of Milan and *Jorge Silva* of Mexico, has offered training seminars for treating patients according to Fromm's psychoanalytic theory. There have been joint meetings in Bologna, Locarno, Florence, Grosseto, Verbania, Verona, Konstanz, Ascona, Magliaso and Ravenna. The photograph below was taken during a seminar in Verbania (Lago Maggiore) and shows Romano Biancoli and Marco Bacciagaluppi on the right (in squatting position), with Jorge and Inés Silva of Mexico behind them, and Ruth Lesser from New York in the middle; on the left side are Petra Tauscher (Berlin), Helmut Johach (Nuremberg) and Maarit Arppo from Finland.



The Reception of Erich Fromm's Writings and Ideas

- Another center of Fromm research emerged in Mexico, where the Seminario Socio-Psicoanalítico around Salvador Millán and *Sonia Gojman de Millán* began conducting training seminars in socio-psychoanalysis and has carried out many empirical studies on the application of Fromm's social character theory and method.
- *Michael Maccoby* also contributed greatly to Fromm's reception with the *Project on Technology, Work, and Character* which he directed for many years in Washington DC. As he reports in his chapter here, he and his colleagues have applied Fromm's theory and methods regarding social character, and this has led to many studies and publications. He organized joint meetings together with Mexican researchers and sponsored an international Fromm Conference in Washington in 1994. The photo shows the members of a meeting in 2000 (on the occasion of Fromm's centenary) in Washington, DC.



- Two other persons are also to be mentioned here, both Mexicans, who – quite independently of each other – spent many weeks every year abroad teaching other psychoanalysts about Fromm's theories and his way of treating patients. I am speaking of *Aniceto Aramoni* and *Jorge Silva*, both of whom, I am sad to say, passed away within the

Rainer Funk

last two years. They had a tremendous influence on psychoanalytic groups in Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Norway, Sweden and South America.

While many conferences and study groups happen to take place in Germany, the Fromm Society has invariably tried to maintain contact with other local initiatives all over the world, particularly after the Iron Curtain dropped. Hence, conferences were arranged in Hungary, the Czech Republic, in Poland and in Slovakia. In 2013 the Fromm Society organized conferences in Latvia and Lithuania.

Starting about ten years ago, a growing interest in Fromm's work has been observed in the Arabic-speaking world on the one hand and in China on the other; in 2005 a conference took place in Rabat, and another one in 2007 in Fes, Morocco. However, an overwhelming interest in Fromm is to be found in China. Manfred Zimmer, a member of the Fromm Society who lives in Malaysia, did a

thorough internet research about Fromm's reception in China and identified some 700 dissertations, master theses, and detailed books

and articles on Fromm's ideas. (A poster which he prepared for this conference and is included in this volume gives an idea of this Fromm reception in China.)¹

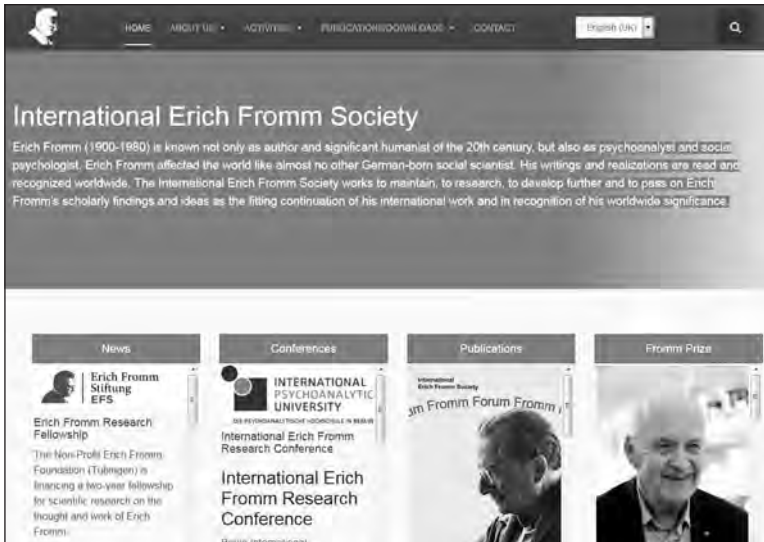
Most of the contributions presented at conferences have been published in yearbooks, journals or in other collections. The Mexican scholars have published a series of *Anuarios*, *Memorias* and *Cuaternos*; the Fromm Society published its *Yearbooks* from 1991 through 1996 and since 1997 has continued to publish an annual *Fromm Forum* in both English and a German edition, given gratis to 700 members worldwide. Digital techniques, electronic media and the internet make all these papers more easily available to Fromm scholars and to people all over the world who value Fromm's work.

There are two websites which everyone interested in Fromm should be familiar with: the website of the Fromm Society (www.frommsociety.org)

1 An English report on the reception of Fromm in China is available at: http://fromm-online.org/wp-content/uploads/Zimmer_M_2014.pdf (27.02.2015)

The Reception of Erich Fromm's Writings and Ideas

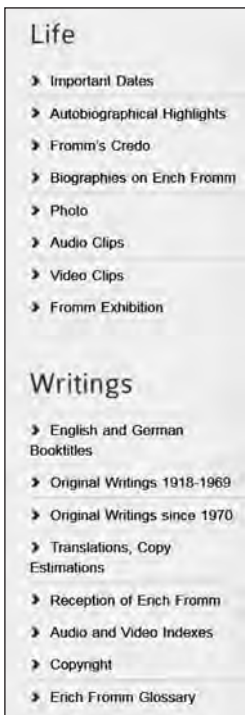
or www.fromm-gesellschaft.eu), and the official website of Erich Fromm (www.erich-fromm.com or www.erich-fromm.de).



Rainer Funk

The website of the Fromm Society presents not only announcements but also a huge collection of papers from the *Yearbook* series and the *Fromm Forum* for download. In addition, and also free to download, the website contains many important publications about Fromm. Here you will find the *Festschrift* on the occasion of Fromm's seventieth birthday, entitled *In the Name of Life* and edited by Landis and Tauber, or the publication of the Society's field research about the social character of East- and West-German primary school teachers in 1990, which was published in 1995 under the title *Die Charaktermauer* ("The Character Wall"). – The website of the Fromm Society is available in German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, French, Arabic, Bulgarian, Latvian, and English.

The official Fromm website (www.erich-fromm.com) is a treasure trove of subjects related to Fromm's life, writings and ideas. Just to give you some idea of what you can find on the Fromm website, here are some examples of what you can discover by using the menu buttons:



The website's menu button *>Life of Erich Fromm<* opens up a table of *>Important Dates<* in various languages as well as a list of *>Biographies on Erich Fromm<*. His most important findings and his concept of man are the content of Fromm's humanistic *>Fromm's Credo<* – also available in various translations. For all who wish to use a photograph of Fromm for their own purposes a colored photo is offered for free download. The same holds true for some audio and video clips in German and English.

The menu button *>Writings of Erich Fromm<* leads to a list of all original writings by Fromm; in addition, an English-German synopsis of the titles of Fromm's books is featured. The setup of the menu button *>Reception of Erich Fromm<* is still in progress, but offers an interesting overview showing which Fromm titles have been translated into which languages; an estimate is also given of how many copies of each Frommian book title have sold so far. Last but not least, this menu

button gives access to two lists of some 700 academic publications (dissertations etc.) published in China in the last years and to abstracts of these titles.

Cai, Xiujuan, 2006: The Solitude of Dubliner [都柏林人的孤独 - 关于乔伊斯《都柏林人》的文学研究, Chongqing University, Chongqing, China, 2006. - Abstract]
Cai, Xuemei, 2011: The Solitary in the Love [无爱世界里的孤独者——《露辛达》研究, Journal of Jiaying University, 2011. - Abstract]
Cao, Kui, 1984: Comment on E. Fromm's "The Solitary in the Love" [论弗洛姆《无爱世界里的孤独者》], Journal of Shanxi University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 1984, pp. 35-39. - Abstract]
Cao, Lizhi, 2008: On Fromm's Concept of "The Solitary in the Love" [论弗洛姆《无爱世界里的孤独者》], Modern Commerce, No. 6 (2008), pp. 266-267. - Abstract]
Cao, Youchang, 2007: Fromm's Personality Theory and Its Marxist Philosophy [弗洛姆的人格理论及其马克思主义哲学], South China Normal University Journal (Social Sciences Edition), 2007, pp. 10-13. - Abstract]
Cao, Yuchang, and Liu, Guofeng, 2010: The Solitary in the Love and the Theory of Personal Development [论弗洛姆《无爱世界里的孤独者》及其个人发展理论], Journal of Shanxi University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2010, pp. 49-50. - Abstract]

Particular attention should also be given to the >*Erich Fromm Glossary*< button: some 150 of the most important terms and concepts developed by Fromm are defined there in Fromm's own words. The quotations (in English and German) are verified and can be copied into the reader's own paper.

For Fromm scholars, the richest treasure is to be found in the >*Document Server*<: Just click on the "Document Server" link on the homepage or fill in the search mask with any term related

to Erich Fromm. It is then forwarded to the advanced search engine OPUS that is offered by the Zuse Institute in Berlin, which includes some 25,000 titles from the Erich Fromm Archive and Institute of Tuebingen and c. 8,000 full text files (PDFs).

The following inventories are included in the "Document Server":

- (1) All published *Writings by Erich Fromm* in all known translations and editions (now around 4,000), some 700 *Excerpts* by Fromm, and drafts, typescripts and proofs referring to publications by Fromm.
- (2) All known *Writings about Erich Fromm* (c. 6,500).
- (3) Fromm's *Reference library*, which he handed down to me (c. 3,500 books, journals and collective volumes, with some 15,000 single titles in total).
- (4) The *Publications of the International Erich Fromm Society* (c. 750 single titles).

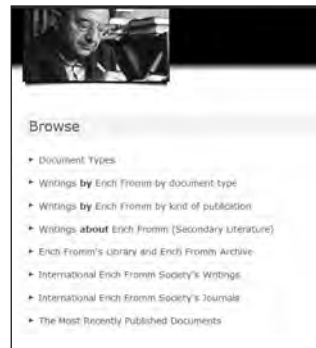
All collections of the Erich Fromm Archive are now located physically at the Erich Fromm Institute in downtown Tuebingen at Hintere Grabenstrasse 26. The opening hours for the public are published on the Fromm website and on the Fromm Society's website. The inventories and a growing number of full texts are also housed virtually in Berlin and are accessible via the Fromm website ><http://erich-fromm.com>< or directly via ><http://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-Fromm/home><.

Rainer Funk



The *>Erich Fromm Document Server's<* search engine offers two ways to find dates and full texts concerning Fromm (a detailed description for optimal use of the search engine is given under the FAQ's at the homepage of the document server): simply write an author's name or some terms from a title in the search mask, and the result will be a listing of all data records in which the name or terminus you asked for is mentioned in the title or in the full text. Usually the search machine presents a very large list which can then be filtered according to language, author, document type, year of publication and which displays whether the full text is available or not.

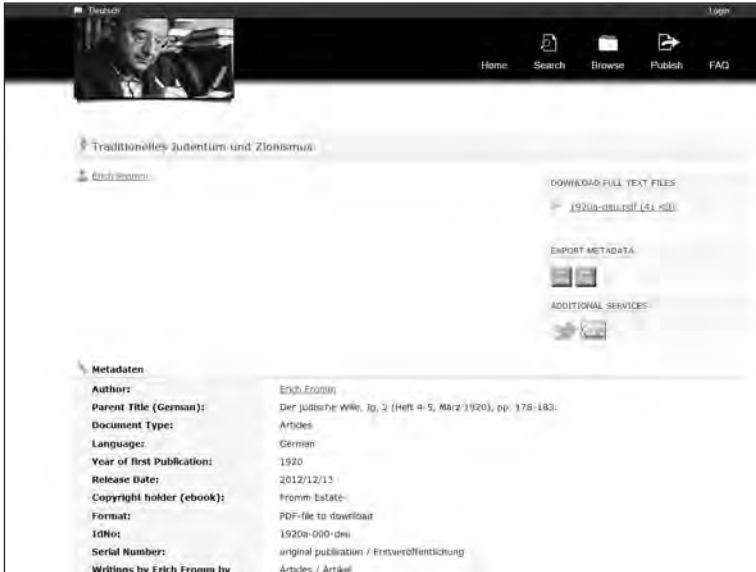
The *>Browse<* button, makes an even more precise search possible, it allows to search in detail within the inventories, for instance in the inventory of *>Writings about Erich Fromm<*. Here, you can choose among *>articles<*, *>books<*, *>interviews<*, *>prefaces<*, *>reviews<*, and so on. If you are searching for *>books<* about Fromm, a scroll of some 300 titles is shown, all of which are concerned with Fromm's thought. From there you can filter your search (on the left side) according to language, author, document type, year of pub-



The Reception of Erich Fromm's Writings and Ideas

lication and whether or not a full text is available. Let's say that you have selected the Italian titles: you can then sort the books alphabetically by author and title as well as chronologically according to the year of publication.

Clicking on a title opens a list of all data referring to that title.



If a PDF file name is displayed (in the right corner at the top end), then the full text can be read and downloaded. If, on the other hand, *>File not available?<* appears, then the full text has to be ordered via inter-library loan. In that case, you must fill out a request form (displayed with the link “document request”), including the identification number (= name of the PDF) and your e-mail-address, in order to get the full text at the earliest opportunity sent as an e-mail attachment.



With the friendly support of the Karl Schlecht Foundation, we are now in the process of scanning the literature about Fromm and intend to make it available.

Up to this point, my overview of Fromm reception has focused on the local Fromm

groups and on the activities of the Fromm Society. But over and above these institutional activities, there have been many Fromm scholars and students of Fromm who have contributed to this reception by their scientific work, research and publications. Happily, this group is represented at this conference by some of its most prominent figures.

As examples I want to mention Kevin Anderson and his publication on Fromm and criminology and Joan Braune, who contributed to a cumulative publication of American scientists about *Reclaiming the Sane Society*, which was recently published (Sense Publisher, 2014). Helmut Johach, Jan Dietrich and I have been editing the *Fromm Forum* for many years – and Rainer Otte had an enormous impact on Fromm's reception in Germany by producing two films on Fromm. Also, Lawrence Friedman's biography of Fromm stimulated interest in Fromm anew, especially in the United States, and Juergen Hardeck's intellectual biography is still influential in the German-speaking world. Finally, we expect that Thiago da Costa, a Brazilian based in California, will finish his documentary film on Fromm's life and work very soon.

The Fromm Prize, sponsored by a Fromm Society member living in Switzerland, turned out to be a most effective way to keep Fromm's legacy alive in the German-speaking countries. The idea of the present Fromm Prize is to give the award to a person who is well known to the public and who adopts or realizes Frommian ideas. Of international importance was the presentation of the prize to Noam Chomsky in 2010, but also in 2014 we were happy that the lecture of Dirk Schuemer, the award recipient, on Fromm's *To Have or to Be?* was published in one of the world's most renowned newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and evoked an enormous discussion through letters to the editor and on the internet.

As Fromm's literary executor, my own contribution to promoting the reception of his ideas has been and still is first and foremost to make Fromm's writings available all over the world. I have attempted to do so with the *Gesamtausgabe* and, following Fromm's death, with eight smaller volumes of posthumous published writings that have now been translated into many languages. These posthumous published writings were included in volumes eleven and twelve of the Fromm Collected Works in German, which came out on the occasion of Fromm's centenary, with some 7,700 pages and 20,000 copies sold.

Today, more and more readers prefer to read books and articles by using electronic media. Hence I have started an e-book publication of the English originals of Fromm's books with OPEN ROAD MEDIA.



19 Fromm books are already available on the e-book market, and the next five titles should be available in 2015. Our aim is to achieve e-book publication of all English-language Fromm titles. Such a “Fromm library” will also include articles, forewords, interviews and reviews. What can be easily realized with the original English writings of Fromm will in the future be realized also with Fromm's writings in Spanish, Italian and other languages. Concerning a German e-book collection I am preparing a quite ambitious project with the e-book publisher OPEN PUBLISHING in Munich: Everything written by Erich Fromm in German or translated into German (c. 270 titles) will be published as e-books. Moreover, OPEN PUBLISHING will offer an e-book version of the German Collected Works that will permit a search for specific terms and quotations. This e-book, the *Gesamt-ausgabe*, will include updated editorial remarks of the print edition and will offer links to facilitate jumps from one Fromm title to another (and back). Since the end of 2014 the first German Fromm e-book titles are on the market.