

# The Sane Society, by E. Fromm

## a. People / Organizations:

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## b. Quotes:

- "It is naïvely assumed that the fact that the majority of people share certain ideas or feelings proves the validity of these ideas and feelings. Nothing is further from the truth." - Author (pg. 14)
- "Freud's theory is a curiously rationalistic interpretation of the observable facts." - Author (pg. 42)
- "The average man today obtains his sense of identity from his belonging to a nation, rather than from his being a "son of man." His objectivity, that is, his reason, is warped by this fixation. He judges the "stranger" with different criteria than the members of his own clan. His feelings toward the stranger are equally warped. Those who are not "familiar" by bonds of blood and soil (expressed by common language, customs, food, songs, etc.) are looked upon with suspicion, and paranoid delusions about them can spring up at the slightest provocation. This incestuous fixation not only poisons the relationship of the individual to the stranger, but to the members of his own clan and to himself. **The person who has not freed himself from the ties to blood and soil is not yet fully born as a human being;** his capacity for love and reason are crippled; he does not experience himself nor his fellow man in their-and his own-human reality." - Author (pg. 58)
  - "Nationalism is our form of incest, is our idolatry, is our insanity. "Patriotism" is its cult. It should hardly be necessary to say, that by "patriotism" I mean that attitude which puts the own nation above humanity, above the principles of truth and justice; not the loving interest in one's own nation, which is the concern with the nation's spiritual as much as with its material welfare - never with its power over other nations. Just as love for one individual which excludes the love for others is not love, love for one's country which is not part of one's love for humanity is not love, but idolatrous worship. The idolatrous character of national feeling can be seen in the reaction to the violations of clan symbols, a reaction which is very different from that to the violation of religious or moral symbols." - Author (pg. 58-59)

## c. General Notes:

▪ Forward (pg. x)

- "This book is a continuation of *Escape from Freedom*, written over fifteen years ago. In *Escape from Freedom* I tried to show that the totalitarian movements appealed to a deep-seated craving to escape from the freedom man had achieved in the modern world; that modern man, free from medieval ties, was not free to build a meaningful life based on reason and love, hence sought new security in submission to a leader, race or state. In *The Sane Society* I try to show that life in twentieth-century Democracy constitutes in many ways another escape from freedom, and the analysis of this particular escape, centered around the concept of alienation, constitutes a good part of this book. In another way too, is *The Sane Society* a continuation of *Escape from Freedom*, and to some extent, of *Man for Himself*. In both books I have treated specific psychological mechanism, as far as it seemed pertinent to the main topic. In *Escape from Freedom*, I dealt mainly with the problem of the authoritarian character (sadism, masochism, etc.). In *Man for Himself* I developed the idea of various character orientations, substituting for the Freudian scheme of libido development one of the evolution of character in interpersonal terms. In *The Sane Society* I have tried to develop more systematically the basic concepts of what I have called here 'humanistic psychoanalysis'" (pg. vii)
  - "I hope the reader of my previous books will have no difficulty in seeing the continuity of thought, as well as some changes, leading to **the main thesis of humanistic psychoanalysis: that the basic passions of man are not rooted in his instinctive needs, but in the specific conditions of human existence, in the need to find a new relatedness to man and nature after having lost the primary relatedness of the pre-human stage.**" (pg. viii)

▪ Introduction to the Second Edition, by David Ingleby (pg. xvi) >> <https://historicalunderbelly.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/erich-fromm-the-sane-society.pdf>

- "Grand generalizations about what is wrong with our culture and how to put it right are, nowadays, more often to be found on the shelves of alternative bookshops than in the university library. Intellectuals today are either pragmatically occupied with making a living, or immersed in a sort of refined hopelessness; like neurotics who have been disappointed by one failed therapy after another, they have resigned themselves to the one counsellor who has always had time for them—their despair" (pg. xvi-xvii)
  - "The philosopher Alistair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, was among the first in recent times to diagnose the moral paralysis which seems to have beset Western thought" (pg. xviii)
    - "According to MacIntyre, we have sunk into this comfortable relativism—the philosophy of "anything goes"—as into a treacherous quagmire, and we are already up to our necks. His message was that those who still believed in rationality (in the difference between truth and falsity, good and evil) had better start looking around for whatever pieces of driftwood they could find with which to pull themselves out." (pg. xix)
- "Fromm is a modernist, an heir—albeit a critical one—to the Enlightenment, and a humanist who believes that a diagnosis of human ills can be grounded in an objective conception of what man essentially is. In this respect Fromm remains a loyal adherent of the Frankfurt School, although he parted company with it long before writing this book." (pg. xix-xx)
  - "For Habermas, as for Fromm, man is by no means dead: he has simply not yet reached adulthood" (pg. xx)
    - "For postmodernists, however, all these sorts of cultural critique—with their absolutist, essentialist presuppositions—are not part of the solution, but part of the problem: not a remedy for the ills of Western culture, but a terminal symptom of them" (pg. xx)
- "Along with a handful of other analysts (Siegfried Bernfeld, Otto Fenichel, Paul Federn, and Wilhelm Reich), Fromm became interested in the possibilities of combining the insights of Freud and Marx" (pg. xxi)
- "First, Fromm became increasingly critical of Freud's theory of the instincts, especially the concepts of "libido" and the "death instinct." Fromm rejected Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus complex and his concept of infantile sexuality: unlike many of Freud's followers, Fromm placed a low priority on sexual liberation. The pessimism inherent in Freud's "death instinct" was also unacceptable for Fromm, who still believed passionately in the ideals of universal peace and harmony which had inspired him as an adolescent. He found the arguments of Freud's *Civilisation and Its Discontents* no more than an apologia for an authoritarian and competitive society. Second, Fromm objected to the idea, which he (rightly or wrongly) ascribed to Freud, that human nature was in the last resort determined by biological instincts: for him (as for Martin Buber) man had a fundamental "essence", determined by his existential situation, and the realization of this essence was crucially dependent on cultural factors. Along with other "Neo-Freudians" such as Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan (but maintaining a careful distinction between his position and theirs), he developed what became known as the "cultural school" in psychoanalysis, in which the influence of social structure on personality formation was studied." (pg. xxii)
- "After a bitter condemnation of modern society, he considers the question of where criteria can be found for diagnosing the "pathology" of society. These, according to him, must be based in a conception of man's essential nature, which he proceeds to expound. He then evaluates modern society in terms of the extent to which it permits this nature to flourish, and finds it in every respect wanting." (pg. xxiv)
  - "...Fromm proposes investigating the essence of human nature—"the core common to the whole human race"—to use as a criterion for mental

health across all societies" (pg. xxv)

- "The first point about **Fromm's definition of human nature is that it starts from "the human situation"**, and not just man's biological endowment. This is his most important difference from Freud, whom he regards as blinkered by nineteenth-century ("non-dialectical") materialism. Fromm acknowledges the existence of biological drives, although he defines their content somewhat differently from Freud, but sees the **"human condition as constructed by the tension between these natural endowments and the equally essential but "non-biological" characteristics of self-awareness, reason and imagination.** For Freud, the contradictions which lie at the heart of the human condition are those between the needs of the individual and the demands of culture. Fromm replaces the latter by the demands of "self-awareness, reason and imagination" which are not seen as products of a culture, but as a priori givens" (pg. xxvi)
  - "Fromm sums up **the essential needs of man as 'the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion'**" (pg. xxvii)
    - "(1) **Relatedness vs narcissism.** Man's need for relatedness with other living beings is for Fromm a consequence of being "torn away from the primary union with nature". Freud was thus wrong to see man as fundamentally antisocial. Yet, for Fromm, the need for relatedness is not—as modern psychologists such as Bowlby, Trevarthen or Bruner argue—"instinctive, a product of nature, but the consequence of separation from nature" (pg. xxvii)
      - ◆ "For Fromm, false relatedness is as bad as none at all. True relatedness—love—is essentially symmetrical, based on equality and respect, in contrast to sadistic or masochistic relationships in which either the subjectivity of the other, or one's own, is denied" (pg. xxviii)
    - "(2) **Transcendence-creativity vs. destructiveness.** Again, Fromm locates the quality of destructive and creative drives not in biology, but in "the human condition". 'Being endowed with reason and imagination, [man] cannot be content with the passive role of the creature, with the role of dice cast out of a cup' (p. 35). The need to assert himself ("transcendence") can take the form of either creativity or destructiveness" (pg. xxviii)
- "For Fromm, **nationalism is one of the greatest threats to civilization:** "The average man today obtains his sense of identity from his belonging to a nation, rather than from his being a 'son of man' — (p. 56)" (pg. xxix)
- "The central theme in Fromm's account of **the rise of capitalism is that it is a social system which puts man in second place**. Under it, he is alienated from his nature and his true needs. As Marx put it, 'It is not individuals who are set free by free competition; it is, rather, capital which is set free'. The market comes to dominate man..." (pg. xxxi-xxxii)
  - "Under capitalism, man is also alienated from his fellows: human relationships give way to calculating competition, and traditional forms of solidarity break down." (pg. xxxii)
- "Capitalism has acquired a more abstract, diffuse character: a heavier reliance on technology leads to a greater concentration of capital and larger firms, in which functions—including ownership and management—are widely dispersed. As far as authority is concerned, the reduction in blind obedience to individuals would appear to be a step forward: this authoritarianism, however, has not been replaced by autonomy, but by irrational subservience to the "laws of the market", the ethos of capitalism, and by a compulsive conformity, of which Fromm identifies American psychiatry as the most jealous guardian. Furthermore, the role of the consumer is essentially a passive one. Nothing has value in itself, but only as "a good buy" or "a sound investment"" (pg. xxxiii)
  - "The most central ailment of modern society is, according to Fromm, alienation—or idolatry, as he prefers to call it: "the fact that 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 has projected his living substance" (p. 121)" (pg. xxxiii)
- "The churches have become nothing more than dead, dogmatic bureaucracies." (pg. xxxiv)
  - "Fascism and Nazism receive short shrift from Fromm, as we should expect. They are pathological in the purest sense, being a regression to an earlier stage of development—an infantile dependence on irrational authority, an "escape from freedom" into a new idolatry of leader and nation." (pg. xxxv)
- "The two pillars on which the Enlightenment rests, according to Fromm, are the domination of nature by science and the discovery of the individual. Both of these are celebrations of the human will; and if there is one thing that characterizes the majority of the world religions, it is a deep suspicion of the human will, and an insistence on subordinating it to that of God" (pg. xlvi)
- "[M]any of Fromm's concerns in this book are truly prophetic: he was one of the first to formulate problems which are now universally recognized." (pg. xlvi)
- Chapter 1 - Are We Sane? (pg. 3)
  - "[M]any psychiatrists and psychologists refuse to entertain the idea that society as a whole may be lacking in sanity. They hold that the problem of mental health in a society is only that of the number of "unadjusted" individuals, and not that of a possible unadjustment of the culture itself. This book deals with the latter problem; not with individual pathology, but with the pathology of normalcy, particularly with the pathology of contemporary Western society." (pg. 6)
- Chapter 2 - Can a Society Be Sick? - The Pathology of Normalcy (pg. 12)
  - "The species "man," can be defined not only in anatomical and physiological terms; its members share basic psychic qualities, the laws which govern their mental and emotional functioning, and the aims for a satisfactory solution of the problem of human existence." (pg. 12-13)
    - "[T]he Liberals, since the eighteenth century, have stressed the malleability of human nature and the decisive influence of environmental factors. True and important as such emphasis is, it has led many social scientists to an assumption that man's mental constitution is a blank piece of paper, on which society and culture write their text, and which has no intrinsic quality of its own. This assumption is just as untenable and just as destructive of social progress as the opposite view was. The real problem is to infer the core common to the whole human race from the innumerable manifestations of human nature, the normal as well as the pathological ones, as we can observe them in different individuals and cultures. The task is furthermore to recognize the laws inherent in human nature and the inherent goals for its development and unfolding." (pg. 13)
  - "Just as man transforms the world around him, so he transforms himself in the process of history. He is his own creation, as it were. But just as he can only transform and modify the natural materials around him according to their nature, so he can only transform and modify himself according to his own nature. What man does in the process of history is to develop this potential, and to transform it according to its own possibilities. The point of view taken here is neither a "biological" nor a "sociological" one if that would mean separating these two aspects from each other. It is rather one transcending such dichotomy by the assumption that the main passions and drives in man result from the total existence of man, that they are definite and ascertainable, some of them conducive to health and happiness, others to sickness and unhappiness. Any given social order does not create these fundamental strivings but it determines which of the limited number of potential passions are to become manifest or dominant. Man as he appears in any given culture is always a manifestation of human nature, a manifestation, however, which in its specific outcome is determined by the social arrangements under which he lives. Just as the infant is born with all human potentialities which are to develop under favorable social and cultural conditions, so the human race, in the process of history, develops into what it potentially is." (pg. 13-14)
  - "[A] sane society is that which corresponds to the needs of man—not necessarily to what he feels to be his needs, because even the most pathological

aims can be felt subjectively as that which the person wants most; but to what his needs are objectively, as they can be ascertained by the study of man." (pg. 20)

- Chapter 3 - The Human Situation - The Key to Humanistic Psychoanalysis (pg. 22)

- "When the animal transcends nature, when it transcends the purely passive role of the creature, when it becomes, biologically speaking, the most helpless animal, man is born. At this point, the animal has emancipated itself from nature by erect posture, the brain has grown far beyond what it was in the highest animal. This birth of man may have lasted for hundreds of thousands of years, but what matters is that a new species arose, transcending nature, that life became aware of itself. Self-awareness, reason and imagination disrupt the "harmony" which characterizes animal existence. Their emergence has made man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe. He is part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature. He is set apart while being a part; he is homeless, yet chained to the home he shares with all creatures. Cast into this world at an accidental place and time, he is forced out of it, again accidentally. Being aware of himself, he realizes his powerlessness and the limitations of his existence. He visualizes his own end: death. Never is he free from the dichotomy of his existence: he cannot rid himself of his mind, even if he should want to; he cannot rid himself of his body as long as he is alive and his body makes him want to be alive. Reason, man's blessing, is also his curse; it forces him to cope everlasting with the task of solving an insoluble dichotomy. Human existence is different in this respect from that of all other organisms; it is in a state of constant and unavoidable disequilibrium. Man's life cannot "be lived" by repeating the pattern of his species; he must live. Man is the only animal that can be bored, that can feel evicted from paradise. Man is the only animal who finds his own existence a problem which he has to solve and from which he cannot escape. He cannot go back to the prehuman state of harmony with nature; he must proceed to develop his reason until he becomes the master of nature, and of himself." (pg. 23-24)
  - "Man's evolution is based on the fact that he has lost his original home, nature and that he can never return to it, can never become an animal again. There is only one way he can take: to emerge fully from his natural home, to find a new home - one which he creates, by making the world a human one and by becoming truly human himself. When man is born, the human race as well as the individual, he is thrown out of a situation which was definite, as definite as the instincts, into a situation which is indefinite, uncertain and open. There is certainty only about the past, and about the future as far as it is death - which actually is return to the past, the inorganic state of matter. The problem of man's existence, then, is unique in the whole of nature; he has fallen out of nature, as it were, and is still in it; he is partly divine, partly animal; partly infinite, partly finite. The necessity to find ever-new solutions for the contradictions in his existence, to find ever-higher forms of unity with nature, his fellowmen and himself, is the source of all psychic forces which motivate man, of all his passions, affects and anxieties." (pg. 25)
    - "The child begins to recognize outside objects, to react affectively, to grasp things and to co-ordinate his movements, to walk. But birth continues. The child learns to speak, it learns to know the use and function of things, it learns to relate itself to others, to avoid punishment and gain praise and liking. Slowly, the growing person learns to love, to develop reason, to look at the world objectively. He begins to develop his powers; to acquire a sense of identity, to overcome the seduction of his senses for the sake of an integrated life. Birth then, in the conventional meaning of the word, is only the beginning of birth in the broader sense. **The whole life of the individual is nothing but the process of giving birth to himself**; indeed, we should be fully born, when we die although it is the tragic fate of most individuals to die before they are born." (pg. 26)
- "[T]he birth of man is to be understood in the same sense as the birth of the individual. When man had transcended a certain threshold of minimum instinctive adaptation, he ceased to be an animal; but he was as helpless and unequipped for human existence as the individual infant is at birth." (pg. 26)
- "The fact that man's birth is primarily a negative act, that of being thrown out of the original oneness with nature, that he cannot return to where he came from, implies that the process of birth is by no means an easy one. Each step into his new human existence is frightening. It always means to give up a secure state, which was relatively known, for one which is new, which one has not yet mastered. Undoubtedly, if the infant could think at the moment of the severance of the umbilical cord, he would experience the fear of dying. A loving fate protects us from this first panic. But at any new step, at any new stage of our birth, we are afraid again. **We are never free from two conflicting tendencies: one to emerge from the womb, from the animal form of existence into a more human existence, from bondage to freedom; another, to return to the womb, to nature, to certainty and security.** In the history of the individual, and of the race, the progressive tendency has proven to be stronger, yet the phenomena of mental illness and the regression of the human race to positions apparently relinquished generations ago, show the intense struggle which accompanies each new act of birth." (pg. 27)
  - "Man's life is determined by the inescapable alternative between regression and progression, between return to animal existence and arrival at human existence. Any attempt to return is painful, it inevitably leads to suffering and mental sickness, to death either physiologically or mentally (insanity). Every step forward is frightening and painful too, until a certain point has been reached where fear and doubt have only minor proportions. Aside from the physiologically nourished cravings (hunger, thirst, sex), all essential human cravings are determined by this polarity. Man has to solve a problem, he can never rest in the given situation of a passive adaptation to nature. Even the most complete satisfaction of all his instinctive needs does not solve his human problem; his most intensive passions and needs are not those rooted in his body, but those rooted in the very peculiarity of his existence." (pg. 27-28)
- "The most powerful forces motivating man's behavior stem from the condition of his existence, the "human situation." Man cannot live statically because his inner contradictions drive him to seek for an equilibrium, for a new harmony instead of the lost animal harmony with nature." (pg. 28)
  - "All passions and strivings of man are attempts to find an answer to his existence or, as we may also say, they are an attempt to avoid insanity." (pg. 29)
    - "In this sense all cultures are religious and every neurosis is a private form of religion, provided we mean by religion an attempt to answer the problem of human existence." (pg. 29)
- "The necessity to unite with other living beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends. This need is behind all phenomena which constitute the whole gamut of intimate human relations, of all passions which are called love in the broadest sense of the word." (pg. 30)
  - "There are several ways in which this union can be sought and achieved. Man can attempt to become one with the world by submission to a person, to a group, to an institution, to God. In this way he transcends the separateness of his individual existence by becoming part of somebody or something bigger than himself, and experiences his identity in connection with the power to which he has submitted. Another possibility of overcoming separateness lies in the opposite direction: man can try to unite himself with the world by having power over it, by making others a part of himself, and thus transcending his individual existence by domination. The common element in both submission and domination is the symbiotic nature of relatedness. Both persons involved have lost their integrity and freedom; they live on each other and from each other, satisfying their craving for closeness, yet suffering from the lack of inner strength and self-reliance which would require freedom and independence, and furthermore constantly threatened by the conscious or unconscious hostility which is bound to arise from the symbiotic relationship. The realization of the submissive (masochistic) or the domineering (sadistic) passion never leads to satisfaction. They have a self-propelling dynamism, and because no amount of submission, or domination (or possession, or fame) is enough to give a sense of identity and union, more and more of it is sought. The ultimate result of these passions is defeat. It cannot be otherwise; while these passions aim at the establishment of a sense of union, they destroy the sense of integrity. The person driven by any one of these passions actually becomes

dependent on others; instead of developing his own individual being, he is dependent on those to whom he submits, or whom he dominates." (pg. 30-31)

- "There is only one passion which satisfies man's need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is love. Love is union with somebody, or something, outside oneself, under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self. It is an experience of sharing, of communion, which permits the full unfolding of one's own inner activity. The experience of love does away with the necessity of illusions. There is no need to inflate the image of the other person, or of myself, since the reality of active sharing and loving permits me to transcend my individualized existence, and at the same time to experience myself as the bearer of the active powers which constitute the act of loving. What matters is the particular quality of loving, not the object. Love is in the experience of human solidarity with our fellow creatures, it is in the erotic love of man and woman, in the love of the mother for the child, and also in the love for oneself, as a human being; it is in the mystical experience of union. In the act of loving, I am one with All, and yet I am myself, a unique, separate, limited, mortal human being. Indeed out of the very polarity between separateness and union, love is born and reborn." (pg. 31-32)
  - ◆ "Love is one aspect of what I have called the productive orientation: the active and creative relatedness of man to his fellow man, to himself and to nature." (pg. 32)
    - ◊ "Love, paradoxically, makes me more independent because it makes me stronger and happier - yet it makes me one with the loved person to the extent that individuality seems to be extinguished for the moment. In loving I experience "I am you," you—the loved person, you—the stranger, you - everything alive. In the experience of love lies the only answer to being human, lies sanity. Productive love always implies a syndrome of attitudes; that of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. If I love, I care that is, I am actively concerned with the other person's growth and happiness; I am not a spectator. I am responsible, that is, I respond to his needs, to those he can express and more so to those he cannot or does not express. I respect him, that is (according to the original meaning of re-spicer) I look at him as he is, objectively and not distorted by my wishes and fears. I know him, I have penetrated through his surface to the core of his being and related myself to him from my core, from the center, as against the periphery, of my being." (pg. 33)
      - "Erotic love begins with separateness, and ends in oneness" (pg. 34)
- "One understands fully man's need to be related only if one considers the outcome of the failure of any kind of relatedness, if one appreciates the meaning of narcissism." (pg. 34)
  - ◆ "Narcissism is the essence of all severe psychic pathology. For the narcissistically involved person, there is only one reality, that of his own thought processes, feelings and needs. The world outside is not experienced or perceived objectively, i.e., as existing in its own terms, conditions and needs. The most extreme form of narcissism is to be seen in all forms of insanity. The insane person has lost contact with the world; he has withdrawn into himself; he cannot experience reality, either physical or human reality as it is, but only as formed and determined by his own inner processes. He either does not react to the world outside, or if he does, reacts not in terms of its reality, but only in terms of his own processes of thought and feeling. Narcissism is the opposite pole to objectivity, reason and love." (pg. 35-36)
  - "The fact that utter failure to relate oneself to the world is insanity, points to the other fact: that some form of relatedness is the condition for any kind of sane living." (pg. 36)
- "Man is thrown into this world without his knowledge, consent or will, and he is removed from it again without his consent or will. In this respect he is not different from the animal, from the plants, or from inorganic matter. But being endowed with reason and imagination, he cannot be content with the passive role of the creature, with the role of dice cast out of a cup. He is driven by the urge to transcend the role of the creature, the accidentalness and passivity of his existence, by becoming a "creator."'" (pg. 36)
  - "In the act of creation man transcends himself as a creature, raises himself beyond the passivity and accidentalness of his existence into the realm of purposefulness and freedom. In man's need for transcendence lies one of the roots for love, as well as for art, religion and material production." (pg. 37)
    - "...if I cannot create life, I can destroy it. To destroy life makes me also transcend it. Indeed, that man can destroy life is just as miraculous a feat as that he can create it, for life is the miracle, the inexplicable. In the act of destruction, man sets himself above life; he transcends himself as a creature. Thus, the ultimate choice for man, inasmuch as he is driven to transcend himself, is to create or to destroy, to love or to hate." (pg. 37)
  - "To say that man is capable of developing his primary potentiality for love and reason does not imply the naive belief in man's goodness. Destructiveness is a secondary potentiality, rooted in the very existence of man, and having the same intensity and power as any passion can have. But—and this is the essential point of my argument - it is only the alternative to creativeness. Creation and destruction, love and hate, are not two instincts which exist independently. They are both answers to the same need for transcendence, and the will to destroy must rise when the will to create cannot be satisfied. However, the satisfaction of the need to create leads to happiness; destructiveness to suffering, most of all, for the destroyer himself." (pg. 37-38)
- "Just as birth means to leave the enveloping protection of the womb, growing up means to leave the protective orbit of the mother. Yet even in the mature adult, the longing for this situation as it once existed never ceases completely, in spite of the fact that there is, indeed, a great difference between the adult and the child. The adult has the means to stand on his own feet, to take care of himself, to be responsible for himself and even for others, while the child is not yet capable of doing all this. But considering the increased perplexities of life, the fragmentary nature of our knowledge, the accidentalness of adult existence, the unavoidable errors we make, the situation of the adult is by no means as different from that of the child as it is generally assumed. Every adult is in need of help, of warmth, of protection, in many ways differing and yet in many ways similar to the needs of the child." (pg. 39)
- "Man, being torn away from nature, being endowed with reason and imagination, needs to form a concept of himself, needs to say and to feel: "I am I.'" (pg. 60)
  - "As with the need for relatedness, rootedness, and transcendence, this need for a sense of identity is so vital and imperative that man could not remain sane if he did not find some way of satisfying it. Man's sense of identity develops in the process of emerging from the "primary bonds" which tie him to mother and nature. The infant, still feeling one with mother, cannot yet say "I," nor has he any need for it. Only after he has conceived of the outer world as being separate and different from himself does he come to the awareness of himself as a distinct being, and one of the last words he learns to use is "I," in reference to himself." (pg. 61)
  - "The need to feel a sense of identity stems from the very condition of human existence, and it is the source of the most intense strivings. Since I cannot remain sane without the sense of "I," I am driven to do almost anything to acquire this sense. Behind the intense passion for status and conformity is this very need, and it is sometimes even stronger than the need for physical survival. What could be more obvious than the fact that people are willing to risk their lives, to give up their love, to surrender their freedom, to sacrifice their own thoughts, for the sake of being one of the herd, of conforming, and thus of acquiring a sense of identity, even though it is an illusory one." (pg. 63)
- "Man finds himself surrounded by many puzzling phenomena and, having reason, he has to make sense of them, has to put them in some context

which he can understand and which permits him to deal with them in his thoughts. The further his reason develops, the more adequate becomes his system of orientation, that is, the more it approximates reality. But even if man's frame of orientation is utterly illusory, it satisfies his need for some picture which is meaningful to him." (pg. 63-64)

- "[I]t takes a long evolutionary process to arrive at **objectivity**, that is, to acquire the faculty to see the world, nature, other persons and oneself as they are, and not distorted by desires and fears. The more man develops this objectivity, the more he is in touch with reality, the more he matures, the better can he create a human world in which he is at home. **Reason is man's faculty for grasping the world by thought, in contradiction to intelligence, which is man's ability to manipulate the world with the help of thought. Reason is man's instrument for arriving at the truth, intelligence is man's instrument for manipulating the world more successfully**; the former is essentially human, the latter belongs to the animal part of man." (pg. 64)
- "Reason is a faculty which must be practiced, in order to develop, and it is indivisible. By this I mean that the faculty for objectivity refers to the knowledge of nature as well as to the knowledge of man, of society and of oneself. If one lives in illusions about one sector of life, one's capacity for reason is restricted or damaged, and thus the use of reason is inhibited with regard to all other sectors. Reason in this respect is like love. Just as love is an orientation which refers to all objects and is incompatible with the restriction to one object, so is reason a human faculty which must embrace the whole of the world with which man is confronted." (pg. 64)
- Chapter 4 - Mental Health and Society (pg. 67)
  - "...the needs and passions of man stem from the peculiar condition of his existence" (pg. 67)
    - "These depend on the satisfaction of those needs and passions which are specifically human, and which stem from the **conditions of the human situation: the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion**. The great passions of man, his lust for power, his vanity, his search for truth, his passion for love and brotherliness, his destructiveness as well as his creativeness, every powerful desire which motivates man's actions, is rooted in this specific human source, not in the various stages of his libido as Freud's construction postulated." (pg. 67-68)
  - "If one of the basic necessities has found no fulfillment, insanity is the result; if it is satisfied but in an unsatisfactory way - considering the nature of human existence - neurosis (either manifest or in the form of a socially patterned defect) is the consequence. **Man has to relate himself to others**; but if he does it in a symbiotic or alienated way, he loses his independence and integrity; he is weak, suffers, becomes hostile, or apathetic; only if he can relate himself to others in a loving way does he feel one with them and at the same time preserve his integrity. Only by productive work does he relate himself to nature, becoming one with her, and yet not submerging in her. As long as man remains rooted incestuously in nature, mother, clan, he is blocked from developing his individuality, his reason; he remains the helpless prey of nature, and yet he can never feel one with her. Only if he develops his reason and his love, if he can experience the natural and the social world in a human way, can he feel at home, secure in himself, and the master of his life. It is hardly necessary to point out that of two possible forms of transcendence, destructiveness is conducive to suffering, creativeness to happiness. It is also easy to see that only a sense of identity based on the experience of his own powers can give strength, while all forms of identity experience based on the group, leave man dependent, hence weak. Eventually, only to the extent to which he grasps reality, can he make this world his; if he lives in illusions, he never changes the conditions which necessitate these illusions. Summing up, it can be said that the concept of mental health follows from the very conditions of human existence, and it is the same for man in all ages and all cultures. **Mental health is characterized by the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from incestuous ties to clan and soil, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason.**" (pg. 68-69)
    - "In the theory presented here, there are no corresponding physiological substrata to the needs for relatedness, transcendence, etc. The substratum is not a physical one, but the total human personality in its interaction with the world, nature and man; it is the human practice of life as it results from the conditions of human existence. **Our philosophic premise is not that of the nineteenth-century materialism, but one which takes the action of man and his interaction with his fellow man and with nature as the basic empirical datum for the study of man.**" (pg. 70)
  - "...only the fully developed mature personality can make fruitful use of freedom; if the individual has not developed his reason and his capacity for love, he is incapable of bearing the burden of freedom and individuality, and tries to escape into artificial ties which give him a sense of belonging and rootedness. Any regression today from freedom into artificial rootedness in state or race is a sign of mental illness, since such regression does not correspond to the state of evolution already reached and results in unquestionably pathological phenomena." (pg. 72)
  - "A healthy society furthers man's capacity to love his fellow men, to work creatively, to develop his reason and objectivity, to have a sense of self which is based on the experience of his own productive powers. An unhealthy society is one which creates mutual hostility, distrust, which transforms man into an instrument of use and exploitation for others, which deprives him of a sense of self, except inasmuch as he submits to others or becomes an automaton. Society can have both functions; it can further man's healthy development, and it can hinder it; in fact most societies do both, and the question is only to what degree and in what directions their positive and negative influence is exercised." (pg. 72-73)
- Chapter 5 - Man in Capitalist Society (pg. 78)
  - "Only if we can arrive at such a picture of the "social character," tentative and incomplete as it may be, do we have a basis on which to judge the mental health and sanity of modern man. What is meant by social character? I refer in this concept to the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture in contradistinction to the individual character in which people belonging to the same culture differ from each other." (pg. 78)
  - "Each society is structuralized and operates in certain ways which are necessitated by a number of objective conditions. These conditions include methods of production and distribution which in turn depend on raw materials, industrial techniques, climate, size of population, and political and geographical factors, cultural traditions and influences to which society is exposed. There is no "society" in general, but only specific social structures which operate in different and ascertainable ways." (pg. 79)
    - "It is the function of the social character to shape the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behavior is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of wanting to act as they have to act and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture. In other words, it is the social character's function to mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society." (pg. 79)
  - "While it is true that man can adapt himself to almost any conditions, he is not a blank sheet of paper on which culture writes its text. **Needs like the striving for happiness, harmony, love and freedom are inherent in his nature.**" (pg. 81)
  - "The structure of society and the function of the individual in the social structure may be considered to determine the content of the social character." (pg. 82)
  - "The economic functioning of the market rests upon competition of many individuals who want to sell their commodities on the commodity market, as they want to sell their labor or services on the labor and personality market. This economic necessity for competition led, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, to an increasingly competitive attitude, characterologically speaking. Man was driven by the desire to surpass his competitor, thus reversing completely the attitude characteristic of the feudal age— that each one had in the social order his traditional place with which he should be satisfied." (pg. 88)

- "...in a society where no person has power over another, each person fulfills his functions on the basis of co-operation and mutuality. No one can command another person, except insofar as a relationship is based on mutual co-operation, on love, friendship or natural ties." (pg. 94)
- "The use of man by man is expressive of the system of values underlying the capitalistic system. Capital, the dead past, employs labor - the living vitality and power of the present. In the capitalistic hierarchy of values, capital stands higher than labor, amassed things higher than the manifestations of life. Capital employs labor, and not labor capital. The person who owns capital commands the person who "only" owns his life, human skill, vitality and creative productivity. Things are higher than man. The conflict between capital and labor is much more than the conflict between two classes, more than their fight for a greater share of the social product. It is the conflict between two principles of value: that between the world of things, and their amassment, and the world of life and its productivity. Closely related to the **problem of exploitation and use**, although even more complicated, is the **problem of authority** in nineteenth-century man. Any social system in which one group of the population is commanded by another, especially if the latter is a minority, must be based on a strong sense of authority, a sense which is increased in a strongly patriarchal society where the male sex is supposed to be superior to and in control of the female sex." (pg. 94-95)
  - "Authority is not a quality one person 'has,' in the sense that he has property or physical qualities. Authority refers to an interpersonal relation in which one person looks upon another as somebody superior to him." (pg. 95)
    - "The nineteenth-century social character is a good example of a mixture between rational and irrational authority. The character of society was essentially a hierarchical one, though no longer like the hierarchical character of feudal society based on divine law and tradition, but rather on the ownership of capital..." (pg. 97-98)
      - ◆ "Closely related to this sense of intellectual and moral conscience is another trait characteristic of the nineteenth century: the sense of pride and mastery." (pg. 98)
- "Summing up then, we may say that the social character of the nineteenth century was essentially competitive, hoarding, exploitative, authoritarian, aggressive, individualistic. Anticipating our later discussion, we may already emphasize here the great difference between nineteenth- and twentieth-century Capitalism. Instead of the exploitative and hoarding orientation we find the receptive and marketing orientation. Instead of competitiveness we find an increasing tendency toward "teamwork"; instead of a striving for ever-increasing profit, a wish for a steady and secure income; instead of exploitation, a tendency to share and spread wealth, and to manipulate others-and oneself; instead of rational and irrational but overt authority, we find anonymous authority - the authority of public opinion and the market; instead of the individual conscience, the need to adjust and be approved of; instead of the sense of pride and mastery, an ever-increasing though mainly unconscious sense of powerlessness." (pg. 99)
- "Another fundamental change from nineteenth-century to contemporary Capitalism is the increase in significance of the domestic market. Our whole economic machine rests upon the principle of mass production and mass consumption. While in the nineteenth century the general tendency was to save, and not to indulge in expenses which could not be paid for immediately, the contemporary system is exactly the opposite. Everybody is coaxed into buying as much as he can, and before he has saved enough to pay for his purchases. The need for more consumption is strongly stimulated by advertising and all other methods of psychological pressure. This development goes hand in hand with the rise of the economic and social status of the working class." (pg. 107-108)
- "...I have chosen the concept of alienation as the central point from which I am going to develop the analysis of the contemporary social character." (pg. 110)
  - "The development of philosophical or scientific thought is based on an increasing ability for such abstractification, and to give it up would mean to fall back into the most primitive way of thinking. However, there are two ways of relating oneself to an object: one can relate oneself to it in its full concreteness; then the object appears with all its specific qualities, and there is no other object which is identical with it. And one can relate oneself to the object in an abstract way, that is, emphasizing only those qualities which it has in common with all other objects of the same genus, and thus accentuating some and ignoring other qualities. The full and productive relatedness to an object comprises this polarity of perceiving it in its uniqueness, and at the same time in its generality; in its concreteness, and at the same time in its abstractness. In contemporary Western culture this polarity has given way to an almost exclusive reference to the abstract qualities of things and people, and to a neglect of relating oneself to their concreteness and uniqueness. Instead of forming abstract concepts where it is necessary and useful, everything, including ourselves, is being abstractified; the concrete reality of people and things to which we can relate with the reality of our own person, is replaced by abstractions, by ghosts that embody different quantities, but not different qualities." (pg. 114)
    - "The process of abstractification, however, has still deeper roots and manifestations than the ones described so far, roots which go back to the very beginning of the modern era; to the dissolution of any concrete frame of reference in the process of life." (pg. 118)
- "Science, business, politics, have lost all foundations and proportions which make sense humanly. **We live in figures and abstractions**; since nothing is concrete, nothing is real. Everything is possible, factually and morally. Science fiction is not different from science fact, nightmares and dreams from the events of next year. Man has been thrown out from any definite place whence he can overlook and manage his life and the life of society. He is driven faster and faster by the forces which originally were created by him. In this wild whirl he thinks, figures, busy with abstractions, more and more remote from concrete life." (pg. 120)
- "By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts - but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively." (pg. 120-121)
  - "Just as in the case of religious idolatry, he has projected all his richness into the other person, and experiences this richness not any more as something which is his, but as something alien from himself, deposited in somebody else, with which he can get in touch only by submission to, or submergence in the other person. The same phenomenon exists in the worshiping submission to a political leader, or to the state. The leader and the state actually are what they are by the consent of the governed. But they become idols when the individual projects all his powers into them and worships them, hoping to regain some of his powers by submission and worship." (pg. 123)
    - "The person who is given to the exclusive pursuit of his passion for money is possessed by his striving for it; money is the idol which he worships as the projection of one isolated power in himself, his greed for it. In this sense, the neurotic person is an alienated person. His actions are not his own; while he is under the illusion of doing what he wants, he is driven by forces which are separated from his self, which work behind his back; he is a stranger to himself, just as his fellow man is a stranger to him. He experiences the other and himself not as what they really are, but distorted by the unconscious forces which operate in them. The insane person is the absolutely alienated person; he has completely lost himself as the center of his own experience; he has lost the sense of self. **What is common to all these phenomena - the worship of idols, the idolatrous worship of God, the idolatrous love for a person, the worship of a political leader or the state, and the idolatrous worship of the externalizations of irrational passions - is the process of alienation. It is the fact that man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished "thing," dependent on powers outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance.**" (pg. 124)
  - "Alienation as we find it in modern society is almost total; it pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to the state, to his fellow man, and to himself. Man has created a world of man-made things as it never existed before. He has constructed a

complicated social machine to administer the technical machine he built. Yet this whole creation of his stands over and above him. He does not feel himself as a creator and center, but as the servant of a Golem, which his hands have built. The more powerful and gigantic the forces are which he unleashes, the more powerless he feels himself as a human being. He confronts himself with his own forces embodied in things he has created, alienated from himself. He is owned by his own creation, and has lost ownership of himself." (pg. 124-125)

- "Man is not only alienated from the work he does, and the things and pleasures he consumes, but also from the social forces which determine our society and the life of everybody living in it." (pg. 137)
  - ◆ "This anonymity of the social forces is inherent in the structure of the capitalist mode of production." (pg. 138)
- "What is modern man's relationship to his fellow man? It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other. The employer uses the ones whom he employs; the salesman uses his customers. Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later. There is not much love or hate to be found in human relations of our day. There is, rather, a superficial friendliness, and a more than superficial fairness, but behind that surface is distance and indifference." (pg. 139)
  - \*there is much hate today
- "One cannot fully appreciate the nature of alienation without considering one specific aspect of modern life: its routinization, and the repression of the awareness of the basic problems of human existence." (pg. 144)
- "Reason, on the other hand, aims at understanding; it tries to find out what is behind the surface, to recognize the kernel, the essence of the reality which surrounds us." (pg. 170)
  - "Reason requires relatedness and a sense of self." (pg. 170)
  - "Ethics...is inseparable from reason" (pg. 172)
- "From the standpoint of normative humanism we must arrive at a different concept of mental health; the very person who is considered healthy in the categories of an alienated world, from the humanistic standpoint appears as the sickest one although not in terms of individual sickness, but of the socially patterned defect. Mental health, in the humanistic sense, is characterized by the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from the incestuous ties to family and nature, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason. The aim of life is to live it intensely, to be fully born, to be fully awake. To emerge from the ideas of infantile grandiosity into the conviction of one's real though limited strength; to be able to accept the paradox that every one of us is the most important thing there is in the universe-and at the same time not more important than a fly or a blade of grass. To be able to love life, and yet to accept death without terror; to tolerate uncertainty about the most important questions with which life confronts us—and yet to have faith in our thought and feeling, inasmuch as they are truly ours. To be able to be alone, and at the same time one with a loved person, with every brother on this earth, with all that is alive; to follow the voice of our conscience, the voice that calls us to ourselves, yet not to indulge in self-hate when the voice of conscience was not loud enough to be heard and followed. The mentally healthy person is the person who lives by love, reason and faith, who respects life, his own and that of his fellow man." (pg. 203-204)
- Chapter 6 - Various Other Diagnosis (pg. 209)
  - See text
- Chapter 7 - Various Answers (pg. 233)
  - "Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism have in common that they offered the atomized individual a new refuge and security. These systems are the culmination of alienation. The individual is made to feel powerless and insignificant, but taught to project all his human powers into the figure of the leader, the state, the "father-land," to whom he has to submit and whom he has to worship. He escapes from freedom into a new idolatry. All the achievements of individuality and reason, from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century are sacrificed on the altars of the new idols. The new systems were built on the most flagrant lies, both with regard to their programs and to their leaders. In their program they claimed to fulfill some sort of Socialism, when what they were doing was the negation of everything that was meant by this word in the socialist tradition. The figures of their leaders only emphasize the great deception. Mussolini, a cowardly braggart, became a symbol for manliness and courage. Hitler, a maniac of destruction, was praised as the builder of a new Germany. Stalin, a cold-blooded, ambitious schemer, was painted as the loving father of his people." (pg. 237)
- Chapter 8 - Roads to Sanity (pg. 270)
  - "Although [many other philosophers] express it in different concepts, they all find that man has lost his central place, that he has been made an instrument for the purposes of economic aims, that he has been estranged from, and has lost the concrete relatedness to, his fellow men and to nature, that he has ceased to have a meaningful life. I have tried to express the same idea by elaborating on the concept of alienation and by showing psychologically what the psychological results of alienation are; that man regresses to a receptive and marketing orientation and ceases to be productive; that he loses his sense of self, becomes dependent on approval, hence tends to conform and yet to feel insecure; he is dissatisfied, bored, and anxious, and spends most of his energy in the attempt to compensate for or just to cover up this anxiety. His intelligence is excellent, his reason deteriorates and in view of his technical powers he is seriously endangering the existence of civilization, and even of the human race." (pg. 270-271)
  - "The mentally healthy person is the productive and unalienated person; the person who relates himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time feels one with his fellow man; who is not subject to irrational authority, and accepts willingly the rational authority of conscience and reason; who is in the process of being born as long as he is alive, and considers the gift of life the most precious chance he has." (pg. 275)
  - "What society corresponds to this aim of mental health, and what would be the structure of a sane society? First of all, a society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself; hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers; where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth. A sane society is one in which qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness, narcissism, have no chance to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. Where acting according to one's conscience is looked upon as a fundamental and necessary quality and where opportunism and lack of principles is deemed to be asocial; where the individual is concerned with social matters so that they become personal matters, where his relation to his fellow man is not separated from his relationship in the private sphere. A sane society, furthermore, is one which permits man to operate within manageable and observable dimensions, and to be an active and responsible participant in the life of society, as well as the master of his own life. It is one which furthers human solidarity and not only permits, but stimulates, its members to relate themselves to each other lovingly; a sane society furthers the productive activity of everybody in his work, stimulates the unfolding of reason and enables man to give expression to his inner needs in collective art and rituals." (pg. 276)
- Chapter 9 - Conclusion (pg. 353)
  - "In the nineteenth century the problem was that God is dead; in the twentieth century the problem is that man is dead. In the nineteenth century inhumanity meant cruelty; in the twentieth century it means schizoid self-alienation." (pg. 360)
  - "Man can protect himself from the consequences of his own madness only by creating a sane society which conforms with the needs of man, needs which are rooted in the very conditions of his existence. A society in which man relates to man lovingly, in which he is rooted in bonds of brotherliness and solidarity, rather than in the ties of blood and soil; a society which gives him the possibility of transcending nature by creating rather than by

destroying, in which everyone gains a sense of self by experiencing himself as the subject of his powers rather than by conformity, in which a system of orientation and devotion exists without man's needing to distort reality and to worship idols." (pg. 362)

d. Further Readings:

- *Psychosis and Civilization*, by H. Goldhamer & A. Marshall
- *Culture and Personality*, ed. by G. S. Sargent & M. Smith