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**Review Giorgio Risari:  
Erich Fromm. La visione del mondo e l'interpretazione dell'uomo.**

Marco Bacciagaluppi

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Giorgio Risari: *Erich Fromm. La visione del mondo e l'interpretazione dell'uomo*. Con intervento di Ezio Benelli, Andrea Galgano, Giuseppe Panella. Roma (Aracne), 2017, 832 pp.— ISBN: 978-88-255-0209-1.

This is a monumental monograph on Erich Fromm, 832 pages long, which implies a commitment of many years. The author teaches at the “Erich Fromm” School of Psychotherapy, Prato, Italy. The book is divided into two parts. The first part concerns Fromm as a philosopher. It has this title: Erich Fromm. *The Vision of the World. Philosophy, History, Sociology, Religion*. In turn, the first part is divided into five sections. 1. The Man, the Philosopher, the Psychoanalyst. 2. Philosophy, Ethics, Psychology. 3. Man. 4. The Historical, Sociological and Political Thinking. 5. Religion.

The second part concerns Fromm as a psychoanalyst. It has this title: *Erich Fromm. The Interpretation of Man. The Interpersonal Self and Intrapsychic Origins*. In turn, the second part is divided into four sections. 1. Pedagogical and Educational Thinking. 2. The Revision of Freudian Psychoanalysis. 3. Psychoanalysis, Psychotherapy, Psychopathology. 4. An Attempt at Interpretation. In connecting all these aspects, the author stresses the circularity of Fromm's thinking.

This list of the sections of the book in itself gives the idea of the breadth of this work. The length of the book is commensurate with the magnitude of Fromm's work. Risari seems to have read every line of Fromm's, including such little-known items as Fromm's 1937 paper, discovered by Rainer Funk at the New York Public Library in 1991 (p. 114). The text is interspersed with many quotations from Fromm.

In the Preface, Giuseppe Panella states that this is the first Italian account of Fromm's work. However, in his Introduction to Part One, Andrea Galgano mentions the earlier 1984 book by Cusimano and Luban Plozza.

Risari, who is a philosopher, has a special affinity for Fromm, who integrated psychoanalysis, born from Medicine, with philosophy. The culmination of his philosophical discussion, in my view, occurs on p. 245, in terms of classical Greek philosophy, where he points out Fromm's affinity with Heraclitus, who stressed Becoming, rather than with Parmenides, who stressed the



immobility of Being. In the later philosophical tradition, Fromm was especially interested in Spinoza (pp. 213, 215, 217).

Section 4 of Part One is particularly interesting. Here Risari presents Fromm's concept of the social character (p. 406), his discovery of Bachofen's matriarchal culture (pp. 408-409), the emergence of the individual from the Middle Ages (p. 412), and his discussion of Marx's humanism (p. 416 ff.).

Greenberg and Mitchell, in their 1983 book, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, place Fromm firmly within the relational model in psychoanalysis, juxtaposed by them to Freud's drive model. They place him alongside Sullivan, who was Fromm's colleague at the William Alanson White Institute in New York, and alongside John Bowlby, the author of attachment theory, much admired by Fromm. They state that Fromm antedated certain psychoanalytic concepts by many years, although this is seldom acknowledged. In my own book, *Paradigms in Psychoanalysis*, on p. 138, I gave as an example Fromm's concept of "pseudo-self", which antedated Winnicott's 1960 notion of "false Self". However, I traced this concept of Fromm's to *Man for Himself*, of 1947, and said that he antedated Winnicott by 13 years. I owe to Risari the discovery that Fromm had used that term already in 1941, in *Escape from Freedom* (pp. 205-206). He thus antedated Winnicott by as much as 19 years.

As regards Bowlby, I would like to point out a convergence between Fromm, who speaks of the art of therapy, and Bowlby, who published a paper on "Psychoanalysis as art and science" (reprinted in 1988 in *A Secure Base*). In reference to schizophrenia, Risari, on p. 151, cites R. D. Laing. He might also have mentioned Silvano Arieti, the author of *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, who was Fromm's pupil at the William Alanson White Institute in New York.

Risari has the stylistic peculiarity of using long sentences. On pp. 140-141 I discovered one sentence 30 lines long, without any full stop. For a comparison, I turned to the Introduction to Fromm's *The Forgotten Language*. In the first paragraph, there are six sentences in 14 lines. These differences may be due to the differences between the two languages. The Italian language tends to long and involved sentences. English, in which Fromm wrote all his books, is characterized by short and clear sentences. Likewise, also the sections are very long. They could be divided into subsections, and this would make reading easier.

Another remark concerns the Fromm quotations. At times, they lack the references (for instance, on pp. 342-343). The book lacks an index. Given its length, a subject index may have been too long to make, but the publisher could at least have prepared a name index. There are also several misprints. On p. 256 I counted no less than 15 misprints. Again, the publisher is to blame. Some more careful editing should have been done. In the list of works on Fromm, on p. 829, two recent books by Friedman and Durkin are missing. I list them in the References to this review.

Aside from these formal remarks, this book is a valuable addition to the Fromm literature

## References

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