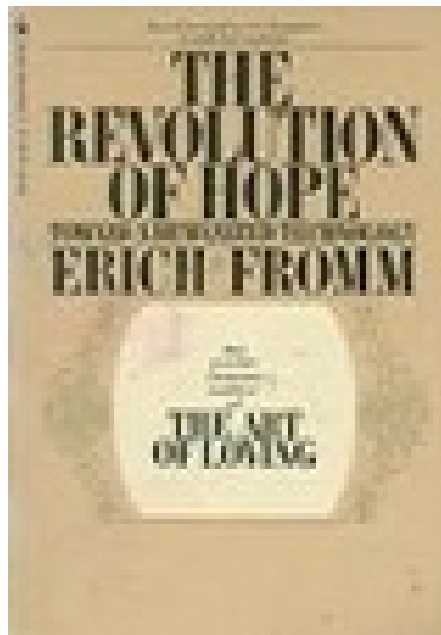




The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology

Erich Fromm

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The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology

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The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology Erich Fromm

First published in 1968, the year of international-student confrontation and revolution, this classic challenges readers to choose which of two roads humankind ought to take: the one, leading to a completely mechanized society with the individual a helpless cog in a machine bent on mass destruction; or the second, being the path of humanism and hope.

The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology Details

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Poorya tirbakhsh says

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Laura says

Not his strongest work. I recommend Escape From Freedom and Marx's Concept of Man.

Stefano Ottolenghi says

Incredibilmente (e inaspettatamente) attuale!

"Sperare significa essere pronti in ogni momento a ciò che ancora non è nato e anche a non disperarsi se nulla nasce durante la nostra vita".

"La forza è la capacità di dire NO quando il mondo vuole sentir dire SI."

Emad (TheBookCritic) says

??????????

“The moment we stand still, we begin to decay.”

I started reading this book because of a specific chapter I found included in its ‘Contents’ page - the chapter on the Messianic Self. I’m truly interested in this issue, the issue of Messianism in literature. Maybe because it is not tackled that much.

This book revolves around the idea of the Messiah, and Fromm discusses it socially and a bit psychologically.

The Messianic Self, according to Fromm, has a special characteristic which is Hope! A very STRONG HOPE! And for a revolution to be successful the Hope mustn’t be weak, because **“those whose hope is weak settle down for comfort or for violence”**.

Fromm’s Messiah is a moderate character, who neither comforts and relaxes nor gets violent and destroys everything. This kind of character is a bit fictional for me! It can’t exist! And I guess that is why Marcuse

used to call Fromm's messianic philosophy a 'Naïve' one. And what makes me agree with Marcuse is the way Fromm looks at and portrays the Messianic Self – or the Prophetic Self.

He says: **“Prophetic language is always the language of alternatives, of choice and of freedom. It is never that of determinism, for better or worse”.**

Now, that seems pretty cool, but when you think about it – take religions for example - you will find the opposite! Prophets don't know the language of alternatives (of course they encourage it in the beginning because they want their own alternative to be heard and followed, but once they accomplish their goal they return back to the old deterministic rule). So, I believe, every Messianic system is a totalitarian system, but what makes it lovable (especially in the beginning) is the fact that it originally comes in order to vanquish an existing totalitarian system.

One of the best chapters is the third chapter ‘Where are we now and where are we headed’ which deals with the ‘Certainty’ issue. It supposes that we all have a lust for certainty which makes us follow anyone who can provide it for us and relieve us from the misery of critical thinking. That is why, according to Fromm, we usually follow dictators and believe in religions.

“This is one of the psychological reasons for man’s belief in idols and political leaders. They all take out doubt and risk from the decision making”.

I strongly recommend this book for everyone who is interested in Fromm and his Messianic approach. It is both useful and entertaining.

Olena Pravylo says

[illegible]

Maica says

This book is born out of the conviction that we are at the crossroads: one road leads to a completely mechanized society; the other to a renaissance of humanism and hope. This book is meant to clarify the issues for those who have not clearly recognized our dilemma, and it is an appeal to action. It is based on the conviction that we can find the necessary new solutions with the help of reason and passionate love for life, and not through irrationality and hate. It is addressed to a broad spectrum of readers with different political and religious concepts but sharing this concern for life and respect for reason and reality.

This book, like all my previous work, attempts to distinguish between individual and social reality and the ideologies that misuse and “coopt” valuable ideas for the purpose of supporting the status quo.

– Erich Fromm, in the Foreword

It came as a surprise to me to have found this little book not from the psychology section, but from the philosophy section at the library, with a title which is less discussed compared to his more popular works namely the Sane Society or Escape from Freedom. And it has something unique in it in addition to the resonating themes found from the two aforementioned titles – Hope.

This book begins by looking into the phenomenon of hope, what it is and what it is not. For it is through this notion of hope that Fromm will then connect the crucial issues that affect modern man– the phenomenon of technological advancement and its effects on man. Through the lens of hope, a productive anticipation is based not only towards the future but also by focusing on the present.

What is it to hope?

Is it, as many think, to have desires and wishes? If this were so, those who desire more and better cars, houses, and gadgets would be people of hope. But they are not; they are people lusty for more consumption and not people of hope.

Is it to hope if hope’s object is not a thing but a fuller life, a state of greater aliveness, a liberation from eternal boredom; or to use a theological term, for salvation, or a political term, for revolution? Indeed this kind of expectation could be hope; but it is non-hope if it has the quality of passiveness, and “waiting for”—until the hope becomes, in fact, a cover for resignation, a mere ideology.

pp.6

This kind of passive hope is closely related to a generalized form of hope, which might be described as hoping for time. Time and the future become the central category of this kind of hope. Nothing is expected to happen in the now but only in the next moment, the next day, the next year, and in another world if it is too absurd to believe that hope can be realized in this world. Behind this belief is the idolatry of “Future,” “History,” and “Posterity,”... I do nothing; I remain passive, because I am nothing and impotent; but the future, the projection of time, will bring about what I cannot achieve.

pp.8

And even if he tackles the phenomenon of hope, Fromm takes a realistic critique of what it actually means to hope, his critique of society and its destructive effects on the individual cannot actually have been truer until today. Scanning through his words makes one realize or re-affirm observations of how alienated people and society had become from the values of what it means to be human instead of being a cog in the machine.

This society produces many useless things, and to the same degree many useless people. Man, as a cog in the machine, becomes a thing, and ceases to be human. He spends his time doing things in which he is not interested, with people in whom he is not interested, producing things in which he is not interested; and when he is not producing, he is consuming.

pp.38

Among the technological society's pathogenic effects upon man, two or more must be mentioned: the disappearance of privacy and of personal human contact.

pp.45

Man is caught up in the endless entrenchment of cultural mores and technological instruments to the extent that his awareness of what matters to him the most as a human being are either blocked off, forgotten, or no longer given importance which eventually lead to alienation, loss of hope, and dehumanization. But,

...some people, while unconsciously they have turned into things, carry unconsciously a sense of their identity precisely because the social process has not succeeded in transforming them completely into things.

pp.84

Whereas man is supposed to be the benefactor of these instruments that he made and that the inherited values from religions are meant to the actualization of his humanity, the loss of hope and alienation had turned him into a slave of these very things that he constructed to the extent that he does not know and has lost grasp of what matters to him or cannot move beyond what society expects of him, all the while being utterly powerless to change the situation for the better. Two results can occur when hope is shattered: either the loss of dependence to others or destructiveness,

It is not primarily the economic frustration which leads to hate and violence; it is the hopelessness of the situation, the ever repeated broken promises, which are just as conducive to violence and destructiveness.

pp. 21-22

With regards to computer technology, here is an insight which is also found on his other work, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* where he expanded the concept of Necrophilia even further to the attraction of man to non-living things such as robotics/AI:

One symptom of the attraction of the merely mechanical is the growing popularity, among some scientists and the public of the idea that it will be possible to construct computers which

are no different from man in thinking, feeling, or any other aspect of functioning... One cannot help being suspicious that often the attraction of the computer-man idea is the expression of a flight from life and humane experience into the mechanical and purely cerebral.

pp.43

The computer can serve the enhancement of life in many respects. But the idea that it replaces man and life is the manifestation of the pathology of today.

pp.44

This work is divided into the discussion of hope and its various manifestations: faith, fortitude, resurrection, messianic hope and the shattering of hope; the dehumanized society (AD 2000) and the present technological society (during the time the book was published, on 1968); what it means to be human; suggested steps to the humanization of technological society; and a proposed movement.

As a whole, this book is a means of personal re-affirmation especially to those who are becoming increasingly wary of the present times: the increased use of gadgets with the compulsion to use them, the loss of genuine human connectedness in daily life, the mixed effects of technology on daily life alongside its benefits and its threats to human existence i.e. nuclear weapons, the reduction of human beings to instruments of production or objects of consumption/gratification, the loss of humanity by constant bombardment, destruction and humiliation of human life and dignity by it being reduced to headlines, pictures, videos and forms of entertainment, and the list goes on.

They constantly need the stimulus from the outside, be it other people's chatter, or the sight of movies, or travel and other forms of thrilling consumption excitements, even if it is only a new man or woman as sexual partner. They need to be prompted, to be "turned on," tempted, seduced. They always run and never stand. They always "fall for" and never get up. And they imagine themselves to be immensely active while they are driven by the obsession to do something in order to escape the anxiety that is aroused when they are confronted with themselves.

pp.12

Erich Fromm's work is not a feel-good psychology or philosophy book, it is words describing life in the raw, a refreshing and truthful critique of society and its superficiality and hypocrisies, and how it disrespects the individual human being and eventually the whole of humanity. Regardless of what belief, religion, or ideology one has, one can definitely agree that when it comes to human life and dignity, one has to make the conviction that it should not be used as a means to an end.

The critique took almost the entire book, but Fromm suggested a concrete solution, which is far more suited on the American context. Perhaps, this is the weakest point in the book because of its culture-specific dimension.

Another weak point is the lack of directive approach on how to achieve a passionate love for life when it is clear that modern man is faced with a lot of obstacles that are beyond his control. How to achieve the kind of

Sadam Husaen Mohammad says

Apa yang dimaksudkan menjadi manusia modern yang humanis? Mungkin begitu kira-kira yang ingin disampaikan oleh Erich Fomm (EF) melalui buku Revolusi Pengharapan ini. Melalui ilmu pengetahuan manusia begitu sukses menguasai alam. Kemudian semangat manusia untuk memaknai dirinya sendiri berpusat pada kebutuhan teknis dan materi akhirnya manusia kehilangan spiritualitas dan keyakinan, manusia seperti menemukan Tuhan yang baru yaitu “kalkulasi impersonal” atau semua yang dapat dikalkulasikan, diramalkan, dan difaktualisasikan sehingga mesin dijadikan sebagai berhala dan pada akhirnya menentukan pemikiran manusia.

Mungkin sekarang kita sedang menghadapi sebuah ancaman. Bukan ancaman yang remeh dan bukan juga komunisme ataupun fasisme melainkan masyarakat yang dimesinkan secara total untuk memproduksi dan mengkonsumsi. Manusia diberi makan dan hiburan secara pasif dan nyaris tidak punya perasaan, bahkan untuk mengungkapkan kesedihan dan kegembiraan pun sulit. Maka di sini EF menolak semua persepsi dan perspektif tentang pengharapan yang di setir oleh mesin dan kaum borjuis itu. Menurut EF pengharapan bukanlah hidup menghambur-hamburkan uang, serakah dan tak bermartabat tapi pengharapan adalah hidup yang disertai pengorbanan untuk mengupayakan kualitatif dan produktif sebuah kehidupan yang berkecukupan dan wajar agar dapat selamat di kehidupan.

Manusia menjadi tokoh fiksi dalam sebuah novel yang tak pernah jelas judulnya. Novel yang penuh dusta. Dusta kata-kata, dusta gerak gerik mata, dan dusta ekspresi wajah. Manusia inginnya selalu tampil dengan kesibukannya sendiri tanpa sadar mereka tidak menghasilkan apa-apa atau bisa disebut pasif. Mereka ingin dipahami, dipelihara dan dipuji. EF tidak setuju semua itu disebut sebagai proses pengharapan, berharap bukanlah kesibukan yang akan mendapat pujian atau penghormatan. Pengharapan itu bersumber dari kekokohan batin yang bersentuhan secara erat dengan visi kehidupan yang prospektif.

Pada bab terakhir buku ini (BAB VI) EF menawarkan beberapa perubahan yang mendasar untuk menyelamatkan manusia dari modernisasi, antara lain perubahan pola produksi dan konsumsi sehingga aktivitas ekonomi menjadi sarana pemekaran dan perkembangan manusia. Transformasi manusia yang sebelumnya manusia hanya menjadi masyarakat yang pasif berubah menjadi masyarakat yang aktif, kritis dan bertanggung jawab. Dan suatu revolusi kultural yang didasari oleh gerakan humanisme radikal yang mencakup banyak ideologi yang berbeda dan kelompok-kelompok sosial. Dan semua itu untuk mendesain sebuah revolusi pengharapan yang bermuara pada humanisasi teknologi .

Manusia modern yang meletakkan teknologi sebagai pelayan bagi cita-cita humanis itu yang diinginkan oleh EF, tetapi di buku ini EF kurang jeli melihat bahwa masyarakat seluruh dunia selain butuh demokrasi dan humanisasi mereka juga membutuhkan peran birokrasi dan teknokrasi walaupun disamping itu ada rasa suka dan tidak suka pada diri mereka. Apabila EF bisa meramu semua antara birokrasi, teknokrasi, humanisasi dan demokrasi menjadi satu mungkin kehidupan masyarakat modern yang lebih humanis akan bisa dinikmati.

Tetapi buku revolusi pengharapan ini sangat layak untuk dibaca, karena cita-cita yang diinginkan semua Negara berawal dari pengharapan dan itu dibedah di sini oleh EF agar kita mengerti bagaimana menjadi masyarakat modern yang semakin manusiawi.[]

Dariusz P?ochocki says

"Okazuje si? i? obowi?zkowa konsumpcja rekompensuje niepok?j. Jej potrzeba wynika bowiem z poczucia wewn?trznej pustki, zagubienia, napi?cia i braku nadziei. Przejmuj?c artyku?y konsumpcyjne, cz?owiek upewnia si?, ?e istnieje , a jego niech?? do zmniejszania konsumpcji, ma swoje ?r?d?o w obawie przed wzrostem niepokoju."-pisze w ko?cu lat 60 Erich Fromm. Diagnozy Fromma dotycz?ce tego w jakim kierunku zmierza rzeczywisto??, jak zagubiona b?dzie jednostka zaprz?gni?ta do pracy w sztucznie tworzonej grupie (tak, tak korporacjonizm), jak wyprana z jednostkowego my?lenia i podejmowania samemu decyzji. Pokazuje nam ?wiat gdzie dost?p do sztuki i literatury jest ogromny i naj?atwiejszy w historii, ale i tak po wyj?ciu z muzeum dzisiejsze "elity" siadaj? przed durnym telewizorem. Jak niebezpieczny staje si? post?p, jeszcze nie skomputeryzowany, ale zmechanizowany i zrobotyzowany. Krytykuje Fromm m.in. Marcuse pisz?c, ?e tylko dziecienn? mrzonk? jest twierdzenie, i? "wszelkie problemy, konflikty mi?dzyludzkie, tragedie znikn?, gdy nie b?dzie ju? nie zaspokojonych potrzeb. I ma niestety racje. Nale?y pami?ta?, ?e lata 60 to jeszcze czas stabilizacji Johnsonowskiej, jeszcze autor nawet nie ?ni jak strach przez kryzysem za dekad? i kilka dekad b?dzie napiera? ze wszystkich stron.

TarasProkopyuk says

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