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### Narcissism and Destructiveness at the Heart of Anne Landsman's The Devil's Chimney

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#### ABSTRACT

The present article opens, by way of introduction, with presenting the Frankfurt School of critical theory, of which Erich Fromm was an active member until his break from it the late 1930s. The school dedicated itself to the aim of combining Sigmund Freud's psychological insights with Karl Marx's economical views. In spite of the widespread popularity that some of Fromm's works achieved during his lifetime, he was relegated to oblivion after his death both in the West and in Iranian academic circles, where his views are seldom taught at universities and applied to works of literature. Fromm's strong belief in the existence of human essence proves to be unpopular nowadays among post-structuralist thinkers, and the eclectic nature of his work is similarly problematic in today's specialized world. Attempts have been made in recent years by scholars to rescue him from oblivion. Despite recent scholarship devoted to Fromm's oeuvre, the fact remains that he has received scant academic attention and his psychoanalytical theories have been seldom applied to literary texts, particularly South African literature. To fill this void, this article first elucidates key Frommian concepts such as the social unconscious, the social character and sheds light on non-productive character structures such as the hoarding orientation, the exploitative orientation, the marketing orientation, the necrophilous-destructive orientation as well as the productive character orientation before applying them to Anne Landsman's debut, postmodern, South African novel *The Devil's Chimney* (1997) which remains relatively untouched by scholarship. The plot features the white settler Beatrice Chapman, who is forced to leave England at the beginning of the twentieth century and migrate to Oudtshoorn, a town located in South Africa due to the many gambling debts that her husband, Mr. Henry, has accumulated. At the height of the ostrich feather boom, the couple buys the ostrich farm Highlands. After contracting new debts in the Western Cape province, Mr. Henry vanishes into the Swartberg Mountains for a long period of time, during which Beatrice attempts to manage the farm with the help of Mr. Jacobs known as the 'Ostrich King', her foreman September and his wife Nomsa, who serves as her maid. The article argues that the Jacobs family and Miss Beatrice embody the marketing orientation; whereas September, by contrast, is posited as the epitome of the productive orientation who, as an artist, engages in creative activity and loves people and animals alike. This research focuses furthermore on various characters' wish of satisfying the passions of narcissism and destructiveness.

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