

**Transcending Alienation :
An Analysis of the Works of
ERICH FROMM**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
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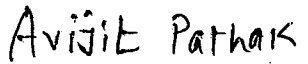
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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation titled "Transcending Alienation: An Analysis of the works of Erich Fromm", submitted by Mr. SWAYAM PRAKASH, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is entirely his own work.

We, recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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PREFACE

All research is a search for something which is missing. Truth or Reality is out there. We can not see it, because we are ignorant. So, quite naturally we open our windows to let some light of knowledge come within and drive away the darkness of ignorance.

I, too, am looking for my own answers and my own reality. Anxiety, loneliness, frustration and despair are the obstacles in my path. I was advised by my guide Dr. Avijit Pathak to choose Erich Fromm as my torch bearer. Fromm who died in the year 1980, had travelled in the same path and has cleared much of the road for those who choose to follow him. Should I thank my guide for helping me in focussing my attention upon Erich Fromm? I think not, because that would be a mere formality. No words would be enough for the faith he had showed upon me. He allowed me to work as well as be a student activist. Right from the choice of the topic to the chapterization of my work, he has helped me.

As a result, I have tried to analyse some of the themes, dealt exhaustively by Erich Fromm. Anyone expecting some easy instruction to overcome alienation, in

my work, would be disappointed. It is just my research,
my search for Answers.

Swayam

Swayam

OPENING

Camerado, I give you my hand !
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself ? Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live ?

Walt Whitman : "Song of the Open Road"
as quoted by Erich Fromm in The Heart of Man,
1964, pp.60-61.

INTRODUCTION

Ours is a self-conscious age. Perhaps never before in history has man been so much a problem to himself. Rocketing through space and on the point of conquering the heavens, he is fast losing touch with his own world. Growing number of writers describe him in various ways as "alienated". What forces have made him so?

Confronted with mighty opposites--with apocalyptic visions of mass annihilation on the one hand, and on the other with dreams of progress and a vastly better life for increasing numbers of people--no wonder modern man feels deeply troubled as he faces the immense gulf between his finest achievements of hand and brain, and his own sorry ineptitude at coping with them and the utter failure of his imagination to give them meaning.

If today man has become atomized, it is not sudden, and not just a series of wars and upheavels have brought on the crisis. Indeed, ever since the great technological and political revolutions of the late eighteenth century, with their shattering impact on a rigid social order and their promise of individual

freedom, started the estrangement process, from the world, from others and from himself. Our present age of pessimism, despair and uncertainty--a period when man had faith in his powers of reason and science, trusted his gods, and conceived his own capacity for growth as endless. Bold in his desires for freedom, equality, social justice and brotherhood, he imagined that ignorance alone stood in his way of these desires. But tumult and violence have unsealed these traditional beliefs and values. Knowledge has spread, but it has not abolished war, or fear; nor has it made all men brothers. Instead, men find themselves more isolated, anxious and uneasy than ever.

Confused as to his place in the scheme of a world growing each day closer yet more impersonal, more densely populated yet in face-to-face relations more dehumanized; a world appealing for his concern and sympathy with unknown masses of men, yet fundamentally alienating him even from his next door neighbour, today modern man has become mechanized, routinized, made comfortable as an object; but in the profound sense displaced and thrown off balance as a subjective creator and power. This theme of the alienation of modern

man runs through the literature and drama, modern art, theology, philosophy, psychology and sociology, as the central problems of our time.

As Erich Fromm writes, "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 his fellows, and to himself." Or as Charles Taylor expresses it, in a mechanical and depersonalized world man has "an indefinable sense of loss; a sense that life... has become impoverished, that men are somehow 'deracinate and disinherited,' that society and human nature alike have been atomized, and hence mutilated, above all that men have been separated from whatever might give meaning to their work and their lives."

Such sweeping statements not only need qualification but translation into recognizable and verifiable terms. Who are the alienated? Is the phenomenon of alienation new in history, or is it age-old? If age-old, are its present day manifestations more widespread? How have major socio-political thinkers of our age reacted to it? Is it merely psychological or sociological too? How can we overcome it?

The aim of my work then is to study this process through the works of a great social-psychologist Erich Fromm. A pioneer in psychoanalytical sociology. Fromm has long been concerned with the obstacles to self-achievement in modern society.

Fromm's socio-political ideas represent one of the many varieties of abstract humanist theories which are emerging and gaining popularity in the West, as offshoots of a variety of philosophical and religious teachings. The influential part in the crystallization of Fromm's socio-philosophical views was that played by the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt-am-Main, where he was a staff member from 1929 to 1932. It was there that the so-called Frankfurt school of sociology took shape and made a name for itself. Fromm's social philosophy in many respects provides a faithful reflection of the philosophical searching that pre-occupied the representative of that school (whose number included such famous names as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse) who attempted to liberalize Marxism by synthesizing it with neo-Hegelianism, existentialism and Freudianism and strove to find a "golden mean", a third path in philosophy.

Fromm came to be known as a specialist in the

application of psycho-analysis to the study of social problems after his first major work "ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM" was published in 1941 and became a best-seller. Here he attempts to trace the evolution of freedom and the individual's self-awareness from the Middle Ages until the present day. It is in this particular book that he first expounds the basic tenets of neo-Freudian social philosophy. The fundamental principles of this philosophy are then elaborated in his subsequent works: MAN FOR HIMSELF (1947), THE SANE SOCIETY (1955), THE ART OF LOVING (1956), MAY MAN PREVAIL ? (1961), MARX'S CONCEPT OF MAN (1961), BEYOND THE CHAINS OF ILLUSION (1962), THE HEART OF MAN (1964), etc.

Erich Fromm is famous not only on the strength of his numerous academic works in the fields of philosophy, sociology, psychology, ethics and religion but also in the light of his wide-scale activities in public affairs. His scathing criticism of the inhumanity of the capitalist system and US action in Vietnam, and his campaigning for peace and general disarmament, both in the press and at public meetings and demonstrations, have attracted the attention of wide circles of progressive people in the United States and elsewhere.

Fromm's social philosophy differs from that of his colleagues in that it has grown up on an ideological foundation of Freudianism, one of the most widespread intellectual developments of the twentieth century, while at the same time being subject to the influence of Marx's philosophy.

He attempts to "synthesize" Freudianism and Marxism, subjecting the latter to an anthropological interpretation and thereby profoundly altering some of its most basic tenets. In his efforts to apply certain tenets of psycho-analysis when elucidating social phenomena and processes, Fromm, carries forward the socio-philosophical trend in psycho-analysis for which Freud originally paved the way in his works on social psychology, morals, religion and various other subjects.

At a time when the traditional schools of western philosophy are in a state of growing crisis, and more and more interest is being shown in Marxism, the philosophical and political ideas put forward by the Frankfurt school of sociology have in recent years gained considerable ground, leaving their mark on the philosophical and political ideas of the western intelligentsia and some sections of youth. A critical analysis of Fromm's social philosophy serves to pinpoint

the central issues involved in the serious theoretical analysis of 'alienation'.

In order to understand the essence of Fromm's philosophical and political ideas it is useful to examine the ideas and theories that shaped them, before embarking on an analysis of Fromm's ideas as such.

CHAPTER I

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The Falcon can not hear the Falconer
Things Fall Apart
Centre can not hold."

W.B. Yeats : "The Second Coming"

CHAPTER I**ORIGINS OF THE PROBLEM**

An inquiry into the origins of the problem, as it is understood in the modern world, would encompass all of western intellectual history, a task I am not about to undertake. Fortunately, the aspects of that history that are central to my inquiry have their origins in the seventeenth century with the rise of modern science. Much of the discussions about alienation have their roots in the discussions on the theory of knowledge.

In its political guise, modernity may have begun with Machiavelli. Yet, it was Galileo and his scientific investigations that gave it its greatest impetus. Descartes' mechanistic philosophy--closely related to the new view of the physical world--produced various offsprings: from the French philosophers to Julien de la Mettrie's *L'Homme machine*, from Berkeley's idealism to the realism of Hobbes and Locke, and from the scepticism of Hume to the Kantian 'Critique of Pure Reason'.

John Locke saw the mind as a blank slate upon which impressions from the external world were received. In spite of his distinctions between primary and secondary

qualities. Truth still existed in Locke's world. However, Bishop Berkeley, who claimed that man knows only representations, could find no objective ground for a belief in this external world, or in the existence of other men, except that belief warranted by a just God. Hume was travelling in a different, but even more sceptical, direction when he "disproved" knowledge of causality by "demonstrating" that representational perceptions were only of sequences and not of causes. Kant awakened from his 'dogmatic slumber' by Hume, established causality as a necessary category of mind. The categories employed by the mind in coping with the world were a priori. But even here truth concerned representations only, lodged in the subjective capacity of the transcendental ego. It did not penetrate to ultimate reality.

Alienation as a key concept, a key philosophical category, arises out of the Hegelian solution to the problem of knowledge.¹ Hegel, taking cue from Fichte, held that man's image of himself, for example, arises out of his interaction with other men and from his recognition of himself in their image of him.

¹ KAPLAN, M.A., Alienation and Identification (Free Press, 1976), pp. 36-37.

The Hegelian (and also the Marxian) theory of knowledge assumed that interactions among men and with the natural world produced knowledge. The young Hegel placed this interactive process in human history. It was no longer enough to speak of man in general or in the abstract. Instead there are historical men whose characteristics represent the concrete conditions of their time. However, as man enters history, he builds institutions, in which essential aspects of him are objectified in the sense that the patterns of activity and institution are perceived as structures. They become alienated from him to the extent that their operations are divorced from his individual control.

The absolute comes to self-knowledge through its partial representations in nature, society, and man. All represent partial, and therefore alienated, aspects of the absolute. Alienation can not be overcome within history but only in the Absolute. Nonetheless, individual alienations can be overcome as higher stages of self-consciousness are reached.

Soren Kierkegaard, who had sat in on Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history, emphasized those aspects of the Hegelian system, that centred on the

illumination of human minds as they interacted with others and the material environment. Alternatively historicist derivations from Hegel--and their positivist counterparts--looked to the "objective" conditions of the material world in their manifold aspects. Thus the breakdown of Hegelian doctrines produced two contrasting and derivative alternatives. Existentialism, in its varied manifestations sought for meaning and identity in self-revelation through intercourse with otherselves. Truth rested on faith that might be absolute in its claims, or, as with Kierkegaard, even irrational in its premises. Such faith was subjective and relative to the holder's psyche.

Historicism found truth in objective culture and society, but its truth was relative to the uniqueness of the source. Whereas Hegel's system was designed to synthesize the external and the internal, its derivatives were oriented towards one or the other.

The antithetical derivatives of Hegelian theory called into question the category of alienation. Although alienation might become theological, in the sense of man's being alienated from his faith, or culture, in the sense of his being alienated from a specific culture,

the intellectual synthesis on the basis of which alienation had been given a specific and important philosophical meaning had broken down. This process reached its critical point in the writings of the Young Hegelians, and notably in Marx's "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" of 1844.

In these writings of Marx, which remained unpublished until 1932 and which became genuinely influential only after 1945, the concept of "alienation" shed the metaphysical aura that it had still retained in Feuerbach and assumed a historical character. Alienation was no longer held to be inherent in man's "being in the world", but rather in his being in a particular historical world, that of alienated labour. Feuerbach's naturalism implied a rejection of the belief that matter was somehow inferior to spirit and thus signalled a reversion to the "materialistic" naturalism of antiquity.

From the sociological viewpoint, Marx is crucial, in the process whereby "alienation" was transformed from an ontological into a sociological concept (George Lichtheim). As an element in the idealist philosophy, alienation had once signified an ultimate datum of human existence, a theme developed at length by Hegel. The

importance of Feuerbach's atheism lies in the fact that his self-alienated man has only an earthly habitation and thus requires a humanized world, a world made man-like, in order for him to feel at home. Feuerbach's deification of man was an crucial precondition, but Marx was even more down to earth, in a manner analogous to contemporary positivism. Where Feuerbach had sought to overcome man's alienation by reintegrating his "split personality" through a religion of humanity, Marx emphasized the need for a radical transformation of society that would permit man to lead a "truly human" existence. This was the gist of the 1845 "Thesis on Feuerbach", which set out the credo of revolutionary humanism.

Marx made use of the Hegelian categories of "externalization" and "estrangement", and transformed Hegel's rudimentary analysis of the labor process, into something new and revolutionary. Man, that is to say, generic man as a "species being", is seen to have his essential being in labor, but this essence is 'alienated' from use, in a capitalist world, where more of labour produces more deprivation.

The Marxian tradition, then, sees human self-estrangement as rooted in the form given to the labour

process by capitalist society. But unlike the romantics, Herder and Schiller, and their predecessors of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, Marx attributed this dehumanization not to the division of labour as such but to the historic form it had taken under capitalism. That specialization was at the root of the trouble Marx did not doubt; but as late as 1875 he believed that "in a higher phase of the communist society" not only would "the enslaving subordination of the individual to the "division of labour" disappear but even the 'antithesis between mental and physical labour' would vanish.

After Marx, in the new social thinkers, the tacit abandonment of the earlier utopian perspective was clearly an element in the emancipation of sociology from philosophy. The role of Marxism in this process was ambiguous, the later writings of Engels forming a link with the general trend of positivism. The dominant schools associated with Weber and Durkheim cut their connection with all branches of philosophy except for the theory of knowledge. The same process occurred in traditional psychology and in the new forms developed after about 1900 by Freud and his followers.

The importance of this break with philosophy is

exemplified by the key role played in modern sociology by the ideal of a "value-free" science which no longer sets itself up as a judge of social institutions, let alone as an instrument for helping men to attain freedom or felicity. This deliberate refusal to transcend the limitations imposed by empirical descriptions is an aspect of the progressive rationalization of life.² The disillusionment inherent in the acceptance of the situation as unattainable is experienced not sadly as estrangement from a bitter world but stoically as the endurance of reality.

The classic statement of this position is to be found in the writings of Weber, where the disjunction of fact finding and valuation is accepted as the necessary fate of science in a disenchanted universe. "Disenchantment" (Entzauberang) is a key concept for Weber, just as 'self-alienation' is for Hegel or 'estrangement' for the Young Marx and the contemporary neo-Marxians. It relates to the discovery that the world is senseless, i.e., not the seat of divinity or some other agency

²BRUBAKER, R., Limits to Rationality (London, 1984).

responsive to human desires. Tacit acceptance of this state of affairs forms part of the process of "rationalization" which Weber saw as the underlying element in the historical process.

As mankind gradually sheds his illusions, it discovers itself in a world which, owing to the progressive application of science, becomes steadily more complex and at the same time less satisfying to the human craving for harmony. Technology imposes fresh burdens upon men at the very moment when--owing to a parallel process of rationalization--the old metaphysical hopes and certainties have crumbled. A broadly similar analysis, likewise remarkable for its stoical pessimism, is to be found in the later writings of Freud, where the stress falls on the abandonment of religious hopes and consolations (of 'Future of an Illusion', and 'Civilization and Its Discontent').

Freud was of the view that science had to face challenges from "the naive self-love of men". Freud suggested that, after Copernicus and Darwin, a third great bait to human vanity and pretentiousness might be seen coming from psycho-analysis, when it showed that consciousness was not even master in its own house but

that, on the contrary, an extensive unconscious existed which could on occasions have far-reaching effects on behaviour, thought and feeling.³ Here too science is trying to be "value-free".

The transformation of socialism into sociology, under the impact of political shocks and disappointments (notably since W.W. II), runs parallel to this development. Its most recent manifestation, the acceptance of a totally rationalized environment as unalterable and common to all major industrial societies, relates back to a theme already present in Saint-Simon, Comte, and Marx: the belief that the study of society discloses a mechanism of causation which asserts itself with relentless force of natural law. In nineteenth century socialism this conviction was balanced by faith in the ability of men--when delivered from their previous ignorance--to plan their lives in accordance with innate human needs and strivings, notably the desire for freedom, understood as the unfolding of personality in every individual. Perhaps in the newer centres of industrial civilization a similar degree of scepticism will presumably have to await the dissipation of the inevitable first flush of technological enthusiasm. The alienation of labour as the self-alienation of man from his essence is a concept

³ FREUD, S., Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Penguin, 1973, p.61.

that presents considerable intellectual difficulties and in any case it fails to satisfy the emotional needs of societies newly launched upon the adventure of modernization.

If one goes by the views held and expressed by thinkers like Schumacher, Ashish Nandy, Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Immanuel Wallerstein then one finds that such a process of scepticism towards science, rationalism, modernization and development has already begun. All of them are sceptical 'towards uncritical acceptance of western model of development and modernization. Without prominently referring to alienation, it is highlighted that, development has not so much been the "deliverer of the people from poverty and injustice" as a "Reason of state providing structures of security, exploitation and exclusive lifestyle to the ruling elites of the world."⁴

In his analysis of 'Ethnicity', Kothari, suggests, that the negative assertions of ethnicity like communalism in south-east Asia, regional and linguistic chauvinism and casteism are all results of alienation. While positive

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KOTHARI, Rajni, Rethinking Development (1988), Ajanta Publications, Delhi, p.i.

ethnicity represents the affirmation of diversity, of indigenous identity against the excesses of the modernization. Modernization is the project of shaping the world, the whole of humanity (and its natural base) around the three basic pivots of world capitalism, the State system and a world culture based on modern technology, a pervasive communications and information order and a 'Universilising' educational system. The project of modernity entails a new mode of homogenising and straitjacketing the whole world.

Kothari writes, "Crucial to the 'alienation' immanent in the contemporary human condition is the alienation of the knowledge system from the larger reality and its mutations. The science of man is moving increasingly along a trajectory and momentum of its own, more often than not unrelated to the dilemmas and traumas of the object of that science -man",* while the stock of knowledge has been expanding rapidly our capacity to deal with human problems is declining.

Asish Nandy takes this argument about the role of science one step further. Science to him is an "added reason of state." In the name of science and development state can demand enormous sacrifices from, and inflict immense sufferings on, the ordinary citizens. He enquires of "something in modern science itself which makes it a human enterprise particularly open to co-option by

*KOTHARI, R. (1988), Ibid., p.24.

the powerful and the wealthy."⁵

Claude Alvares in the same book edited by Nandy takes a Luddite view examines the relationship between science and violence.⁶ He holds the view that because science is inherently violent, its continuing use for violence is assured. The scientific method vetoes or excludes compassion. In actual operation, both its method and its metaphysics require mutilation or vivisection as an integral part of science. Taking cue from Lewis Mumford (The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power), Alvares argues that the Galileo's crime was the extinction of 'historic' man: Galileo's method involved the elimination of all subjective elements, rendering suspect all qualities except the primary qualities. 'Only a fragment of man--the detached intelligence--and only certain products of that detached, sterilized intelligence, scientific theorems and machines can claim any permanent place or any high degree of reality.' Such fragmented and distorted perception of man was bound to intensify human alienation at both individual and social level.

⁵NANDY, Ashish (ed.), Science, Hegemony and Violence (Oxford, 1988).

⁶ALAVARES, Claude, Science, Colonialism and Violence: A Luddite View.

While both Kothari and Nandi are sceptical of modernization as pursued today and also about the role of science, they have not lost faith in the human capacity to better its present condition. Man can still overcome his alienation and reduce suffering, only that he must come out of unquestioned slavery of colonising west and homogenising science. Need is for an alternative ideology. A feeling of fundamental dissonance between not only what is and what ought to be done but also between what is and what can be (if only human agencies intervened decisively) underlies the recent interest in seeking out alternative paradigms.

Writings of Kothari and Nandi or likes of them, is no sheer call, of romanticism. Right since Schiller and Herder we have noted, scepticism towards the achievements of modern science and technology. They could again be compared with Weber who in his study of rationalization, highlighted the phenomenon of alienation among workers in an unparticipatory organization.

Of all the diverse views expressed above one finds a common thread, binding the ideas of alienation. All of them are dissatisfied with the present predicament

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of mankind. And the possible solutions suggested, follow their epistemological and philosophical foundations.

It was precisely because of this reason it was found necessary to trace the roots of our problem. For, in the Hegelian ontology, where identity of the self itself is based upon separate cognition of the object, it is utterly impossible that man can ever, completely, overcome alienation. But Hegel was an absolute idealist, he had the solace of religion and theology with him, which can keep mankind sane.

Quite different from Hegel was Freud, who sought to analyse both individual and social neurosis. Repressive influences of culture and civilization, alienate man, but yet it is highly undesirable to get rid of either of them. One can, however, adjust himself to normalcy by recognising the fact of repression. Freud was a positivist naturalist. He believed that biological instincts are at the roots of human nature, which are largely unalterable. He resolutely rejected vulgar materialistic attempts to explain changes in mental acts by physiological causes. He regarded psychic activity as something independent, existing side by side with material processes, and governed by special psychic forms

trying outside consciousness. Dominating man's psyche, like fate, are immutable psychic conflicts between the unconscious striving for pleasure (Libido) and the 'principle of reality' to which mind adapts itself. Freud subjected all psychic conditions, all actions of man, and also all historical events and social phenomenon to psycho-analysis, i.e., interpreted them as manifestations of unconscious, above all sexual impulses.

Thus we find that problem of alienation is too complex, and thinkers move from one extreme to another in the explanation. If Kierkegaard regards alienation as perennial to human situation the Hegel and Freud are open to the possibility of partial fulfilment. Whereas Marx and his orthodox followers like Althusser, believe that abolition of capitalistic social relations would lead to automatic freedom and happiness of man.

This brings us to Erich Fromm, a German American philosopher, sociologist, representative of the neo-Freudian school of "cultural psycho-analysis". Compared to Freud, Fromm was less inclined to biologise the essence of man. He was more of a social-psychologist. Fromm tried to solve an important problem. He tried to grasp the mechanism of interrelations between the psychological

and social factors of social development. Fromm agreeing with Marx in his criticism of capitalism notes that, Man has been transformed into a "thing" as a result of alienation. Freud, in the end of his work, "Civilization and Its Discontent", discusses the possibility of whole society being neurotic and then without going into details of this possibility, he leaves it to someother future scientist.

Erich Fromm starts from there. Capitalist society, in his view, is a mentally ill, irrational society. But he saw the communist totalitarian societies too as insane, abnormal or neurotic. He saw the way out of the situation in a "humanistic-psychoanalysis" of the whole situation and humanising of socialism. Fromm, in this way, has made a good attempt to "synthesise" Freudianism and Marxism.

CHAPTER II

"The function of reason is to penetrate the surface of things, and to arrive at the essence hidden behind that surface; to visualize objectively, that is, without being determined by one's wishes and fears, what the forces are which move matter and men."

Erich Fromm : "Sigmund Freud's Mission".

CHAPTER II**GOING BEYOND FREUD****Fromm's Humanist Psychoanalysis**

Since it first came into being, psychoanalysis has advanced considerably, particularly as regards the growing importance of its socio-philosophical implications. The expression social philosophy orientation is used to embrace the emergence and gradual development of efforts on the part of psychoanalysts within their field to apply their methodology to the study and exposition of the essential significance of social phenomena.

Freud, as he elaborated his theory of the causes of neurosis and the corresponding techniques of treating them, was bound sooner or later to widen his research beyond purely medical issues, because in his analysis of the causes of nervous disorders, he had concentrated from the outset on the role and significance of moral and social factors, although he rarely goes outside the confines of family, in the examination of their influence. In his study of the causes and character of hysteria symptoms Freud drew the conclusion that pathological

phenomena appear as a result of the relegation from the sphere of consciousness to the subconscious, of those emotions, urges and reactions which are undesirable or unpleasant to the conscious ego.

The study of a number of nervous disorders led Freud to view the social conditions of human existence as the main obstacles to man's mental health. Eventually he was to reduce the problem of cause of neurosis to the conflict between man's natural instincts and society. His first excursion into sociology was an article entitled "Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness"⁷ (1908) in which he expounded his view of the interrelationship between man's instinct and society. He maintained that man's sexual and aggressive impulses inherent in his very nature, always conflict with social necessity and contradict the moral demands and values of any society.

The main cause for the emergence and progression of nervous diseases in Freud's opinion was excessive suppression and bridling of sexual instincts by social morals. Freud's theory is of a distinctly bio-psychological character, centred on instincts. With reference to the theory of immutable innate biological instincts and also

⁷ FREUD, S., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love" (New York, 1963).

to the hypothesis of the external irreconcilable conflict between life and death in every organism Freud attempted to find the source of man's mental activity. To him the psyche was biological by nature and did not in any way depend upon the external world, upon social reality.

While it is with reference to the theory of instincts that Freud attempted to disclose the causes of man's mental activity, it was to the "theory of repression" that he turned in order to explain the dynamics of human behaviour. According to Freud, man is obliged by the harsh demands of self-preservation to suppress his instincts and direct his energies along socially acceptable channels. "Our civilization is, generally speaking, founded on the suppression of instincts"⁸, the mental energy of which is diverted from its original sexual goal and redistributed to satisfy various socially useful needs. Freud then went on to conclude that "from these sources the common stock of the material and ideal wealth of civilization has been accumulated."⁹ Freud refers to this capacity of man

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FREUD, S., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love (New York, 1983), p.25.

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FREUD, S., Civilization and Its Discontent, Hogarth Press, London, 1972, p.44.

to rechannel his sexual impulses under pressure of social demands as sublimation. "Sublimation of instinct", he writes, "is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic, or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life."¹⁰

The danger of sublimation varies according to individual capacity depending upon the strength of his sexual instinct. When the demands of civilization are in excesses of individual's capacity for sublimation, criminals and neurotics are made.

According to Freud, there are three paths open to man, prey to strong instincts demanding satisfaction, in society. If inner impulses are held unchecked, he becomes criminal, if suppressed he becomes neurotic; and finally if sublimated in socially useful activity, he is able to live without friction in that society. In order to rule out the first two possibilities which introduce inevitable discord to social life, two types of therapeutic measures are in Freud's view essential: firstly, society must somehow be compelled to reduce

¹⁰FREUD, S., Civilization and Its Discontent, p.44.

the demands it makes on the individual, thus relaxing the unduly rigorous repression of instincts; and secondly, the power of man's consciousness, in its struggle with his instincts must be enhanced so that his capacity for sublimation increases by means of improved rational control. In Freud's writings an immutable system of external social condition is seen in conflict with a static system of man's inner world in the form of immutable instincts. This socio-psychological interpretation of the relationship between human nature and society confronted Freud with a dilemma which he found himself unable to resolve; on the one hand he sees the bridling of instincts as one of the essential conditions for the very existence of society, and on the other the unimpeded and total satisfaction of instincts is presented as an essential condition for man's health.

Social life is presented by Freud as an everlasting struggle between instincts and morality, between the individual's biological needs and the demands made upon him by the group or society to which he belongs. Society, Freud would have us believe, does not answer any real need stemming from human nature. This theory leads him to the paradoxical conclusion that man is not created

for social living but at the same time needs society. Freud's ideal is a society in which no pressures would be brought to bear on the individual and he would be assured free scope for the satisfaction of his instincts. Yet since this ideal is unfeasible, because instincts by their very nature are antagonistic to society, Freud asserts that violence and coercion are therefore the logical foundation for any society that actually exists. Quite like Machiavelli and Schopenhauer, Freud too holds, that any principle of good is alien to the human essence.¹¹

Freud's view of the prospects for the development of civilization is equally pessimistic. He holds that as civilization develops, the need to bridle instincts becomes more and more acute and that history cannot help but eventually degenerate into universal neurosis.

The successes which society scores in the course of its development are only achieved at high cost, namely, man's growing sense of being unsatisfied, which in Freud's opinion permeates the whole history of civilization; "the price which we pay for our advance in civilization

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GABRIEL (Yianis), Freud and Society, Routledge & Kegan Paul (London, 1983), pp.155-57.

is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt."¹²

In his conviction that man has no hope whatsoever of changing the existing state of affairs Freud recommended that he should submit to the inevitable. From Freud's point of view, the world in which we live is the best of worlds, only in so far as it is the only possible world. The future is an illusion, which means that all fundamental ideals and faith in human progress are also illusory. The only aim in life, according to Freud, is the process of existence itself, namely the external struggle for survival. His critics point out that Freud proceeded to generalize from individual cases and build up on that basis a pretentious theory of the universality of human nature. Freud, they point out, correctly linked many of neuroses he encountered to conflicts in men's minds between impulses and social norms. Yet he was mistaken in his efforts to extend the characteristics he observed within a specific society (Austrian), moreover only a part of that society, to the whole of mankind's past and future.

¹²FREUD, S., Civilization and Its Discontent, p.81.

As Freud started referring more and more to his psychoanalytical theory and its clinical applications in his study of social problems, this theory played the part of a specific method for explaining various phenomena of social life. He was firmly convinced that without prejudice to the essence of psychoanalysis it could be used with the same success in connection with mythology, language, folklore, national character and the study of religion, as for the treatment of neuroses.

Freud's sociological ideas are not simply a side product of his psychoanalytical theory, but the logical outcome of the essential development of that theory. Stress of the biological, pansexualism, excessive preoccupation with the unconscious, anti-historicism and pessimism form the basis of Freud's social philosophy. These however proved increasingly to be inadequate as science developed. It is precisely in his sociological ideas that the weakness inherent in the initial methodological principles of his theory come to the fore, and it is from these principles that radical criticism of all aspects of Freudian thought started out.¹³

¹³BROWN, I.A.C., Freud and the Post Freudians, Pelican Books, 1975, London, pp. 106-8.

The contradiction between various tenets of Freudian theory and the findings of experimental psychology and sociology (anthropology also) gave rise to the revision of Freudian theories, which was characterised by a special emphasis on problems of social philosophy. It was precisely with the emergence of cultural psychoanalysis that the second stage in its orientation towards social philosophy began. This stage was marked by an abrupt switch from the bio-psychological interpretation of human behaviour to an interpretation based on sociology and anthropological psychology.

Freud's theory of aggression and sexual instincts were rejected, a new look was taken at the correlation between the conscious and the unconscious and the structure of man's mind. Many like Fromm, hold that the essence of human behaviour can not be explained only with reference to man's universal biological nature; in addition it is essential to analyze social factors and study their influence on the formation of personality.

Fromm was the first to point out that orthodox Freudian theory was not equipped to explain the question of the interaction between the individual and society.¹⁴

¹⁴ GABRIEL(Yiannis), Freud and Society (London, 1983).

Working together with Karen Horney and H.S. Sullivan, Fromm founded a new school in psychoanalysis. Ruth Munroe¹⁵ in his attempt to integrate various schools of psychoanalytic thought, first divides Freudians in two schools according to their acceptance or rejection of the 'libido theory'. He places Adler, Horney, Fromm and Sullivan, under the rubric of the "non-libido" theory. Munroe finds that, "They all fail to describe the biological push of needs specific to infancy and childhood. More precisely described, the contribution of these schools could be characterized by their emphasis on the 'self' as the primary factor in psychodynamics, in contradiction to the instinctual drives and their consolidation into structures (id-ego-super'ego) emphasized by Freudians."¹⁶

Yet Adler, Horney, Fromm or Sullivan do not entirely agree on the concept of the 'self'. Perhaps one may say that the Freudians derive the sense of the self from experience defined in terms of instinctual needs, whereas the 'non-libido' schools consider such needs as incidental to the primary needs of the human self.

¹⁵ MUNROE (Ruth L.), School of Psychoanalytic Thought (New York, 1955).

¹⁶ Ibid.

Fromm seems less antagonistic to the Freudian libido theory than do Adler and Horney, but he does not propose to let it get in his way. Bodily (sexual) needs are frankly acknowledged as universal; individual differences in native endowments and temperament are given explicit importance. "Specifically human" problems, he says, begin where these matters leave off, however, and are to be seen mainly in terms of man's relationship to his human environment.

Fromm's imagination is caught by the panorama of biological evolution. The point he stresses is the growing individuation of the organism, reaching its culmination in man. Beyond all other creatures, man has freed himself from the matrix of nature, is least bound by outside events or by his own constitutionally prefigured reaction patterns (instincts). He can follow and to a large extent create his own destiny. But he also belongs to his evolutionary past, to his historical past as a social being, and to his childhood, when his individual reactions were very largely conditioned by biological and social forms.

Individuation is not an easy process, it leaves man feeling alone and insignificant, often uncertain

about what he should take. The title of Fromm's first book, *Escape from Freedom*, presents his position vividly. Over and above (but also including) the kind of conflict stressed by the Freudians, Fromm sees a general dichotomy between the biologically conditioned trend of the organism towards instinctual gratifications and authoritarian commands (which provides a very deep security)--and a need for freedom--that is, for rational, individual choice- to satisfy the needs specifically human.

Therefore it became obvious that it would be impossible to go on talking in terms of the structure and motives of the individual's behaviour without taking into account social factors. Fromm comes forward first and foremost as a social psychologist, a social philosopher. He came to neo-Freudianism anxious, "to understand the laws that govern the life of the individual man, and the laws of society--that is, of men in their social existence."¹⁷ Although convinced that Freud was "the founder of a truly scientific psychology",¹⁸ Fromm nevertheless took a negative view of his social philosophy. Anxious

¹⁷ FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion (New York, Abacus, 1962), p.9.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.12.

to grasp the causes behind the emergence, development and consequences of great historical events, Fromm turned to the writings of Karl Marx. His own observation and consideration of socio-historical phenomena and his study of Marx's ideas convinced Fromm that Freud "had only a very naive notion of what goes on in society, and most of his applications of psychology to social problems were misleading constructions...."¹⁹ Marx's theory played an important part in arousing Fromm's interest in socio-philosophical problems: "...without Marx my thinking would have been deprived of its most important stimuli."²⁰

In his philosophical theory Fromm examines first and foremost the laws and principles of action peculiar to the subjective human factor in the socio-historical process. Fromm endeavours to single out "the role which psychological factors play as active forces in the social process,"²¹ and to solve the related but wider problem of the interaction between psychological, economic and ideological factors, and their role and significance

¹⁹ FROMM (Erich), Escape From Freedom (New York, 1971), Avon, p.23.

²⁰ FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion (New York, 1962), p.4.

²¹ FROMM (Erich), Escape From Freedom (New York, 1971), p.21.

in social development. This problem constitutes the core of his social theory. The basic principle for its resolution which determined the direction of Fromm's theoretical searching was his conviction that in order "to understand the dynamics of social process we must understand the dynamics of the psychological processes operating within the individual, just as to understand the individual we must see him in the context of the culture which moulds him."²²

Taking as his basis Freud's psychological theory and Marx's philosophy, Fromm "tried to arrive at a synthesis which followed from the understanding and the criticism of both thinkers."²³ He laments the fact that such a fundamental work of Marx as *Capital*, like various other of his writings, while containing an enormous quantity of pithy psychological descriptions and various psychological concepts was nevertheless not based upon any specific, integrated psychology. Fromm explains this, in his view regrettable, omission not by Marx's lack

²² FROMM (Erich), Escape From Freedom (New York, 1971), p.8.

²³ FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.9.

of interest in psychology, but by "the fact that during Marx's lifetime there was no dynamic psychology which he could have applied to the problems of man. Marx died in 1883; Freud began to publish his work more than ten years after Marx's death."²⁴ When comparing Marx's and Freud's view of the nature of the individual and the essence of society's historical development, Fromm calls attention to the limitations of Freud's ideas in comparison to those of Marx: "Freud was liberal reformer, Marx a radical revolutionary."²⁵

Justification for the linking together of Marx's sociology and Freud's psychology was, according to Fromm, to be found in the fact that the problem of the individual was central to both theoretical systems. The difference lay merely in the motive forces behind the behaviour of the individual as depicted by the two thinkers, those being of a socio-historical (largely economic) nature in Marx's system and of a purely biological order in Freud's theory. This led Fromm to conclude that the theories elaborated by Marx and Freud could supplement each other. Fromm considered that, "the kind of psycho-

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FROMM, E. (ed.), "The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory", *Socialist Humanism. An International Symposium*. (New York, 1966), p.229.

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FROMM, E., Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.9.

logy necessary to supplement Marx's analysis was, even though in need of many revisions, that created by Freud." ²⁶

The revisions Fromm had in mind were of an order designed to lend more sociological emphasis to Freudian psychology, to enrich it with Marxist terminology. He hoped as a result to create a theory of social philosophy which, as he saw it, by absorbing the advantages of the two systems would eliminate their shortcomings and achieve a more advanced level of social philosophy.

As to the essence of man, Fromm rejects both the substantialists approach and the relativist approach, because neither gives true picture of man. The Substantialists, taking human nature as fixed (eg. bio-substantialism of Freud) are conservative and ignore the influence of society on man, while the relativists, going to the other extreme, approach the essence of man, as no more than a simple projection of the social milieu in which he exists. Such absolute contrast between man and society presented the relationship between them as something preordained for all time.

²⁶ FROMM (Erich), "The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory", *Socialist Humanism. An International Symposium*. (New York, 1966), p.229.

Fromm understood this essential inadequacy of the substantialist and the relativist interpretations of human nature. In his efforts to avoid the dualism and one-sidedness of these two methods. "Human nature is neither a biologically fixed and innate sum-total of desires, nor is it a lifeless shadow of cultural patterns to which it adapts itself smoothly."²⁷

He considers the dualist interpretations ill-equipped to reveal the true essence of man's social activity, his social creativity. In order to grasp the essence and significance of the psychological factor in history it is necessary, in Fromm's opinion, to base socio-psychological theory "on an anthropologico-philosophical concept of human existence."²⁸

The possibility of avoiding such extremes as bio-substantialism on the one hand, and social relativism on the other, Fromm saw to lie in the definition of man's nature "as a contradiction inherent in human existence."²⁹

²⁷ FROMM (Erich), Escape from Freedom, p.22.

²⁸ FROMM(Erich), Man for Himself, Fawcett, New York (1947, 1965), p.45.

²⁹ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.31. (AWO, The Heart of Man, p.116).

Fromm was convinced that he was "transcending such dichotomy (biological-sociological) by the assumption that the main passions and drives in man result from the total existence of man",³⁰ or in other words they derive from the "human situation".³¹ Refusing to acknowledge biological processes inherent in man's constitution as the source of specifically human needs, Fromm, unlike Freud, maintained that "the most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man".³² Unlike Freud, according to whom the antagonism between the individual, possessed of a specific quantity of biologically determined needs, and society, whose role is limited to thwarting, suppressing or sublimating these needs, was irreconcilable, Fromm holds that society has a creative function too.

Fromm starts his exposition of the problem of human nature with an analysis of the "human situation", outlining his own philosophy of anthropogenesis. He argues with Darwinian evolutionary theory, and then speculates, that, the emergence of a man endowed with reason

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FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.14 (Fawcett Premier, New York, 1955).

³¹ Ibid. p.28.

³² FROMM(Erich), Escape from Freedom, p.27.

and self-awareness disrupts his natural, primitive links with the natural world, destroying the harmonious accord between early man and Nature and gives rise to the existentialist contradiction, which in Fromm's opinion constitutes the heart of the problem of human existence. Man cannot return to the condition of "pre-human" harmony with Nature, and therefore in Fromm's view, he should seek unity with Nature, with others and with himself, by developing perfecting his rational, truly human capacities.

Fromm was convinced that Freud was profoundly mistaken in singling out man's biological constitution as the source of all human motivation and believed that "all passions and strivings of man are attempts to find an answer to his existence",³³ and that "the understanding of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence."³⁴

Analysis of the concept, the "human situation", on which Fromm bases his theory of the essence of man, makes it quite clear that from the psychological point of view, his theory is based on instincts as much as that of Freud's. His theory differs from his predecessor

³³ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.29.

³⁴ Ibid. 25.

only in so far as it is based upon anthropological rather than the biological aspect. While in Freud's theory innate biological instincts are anti-social in character, in Fromm's unchanging needs, intrinsic to human nature and extra-historical in origin manifest themselves in positive urges.

Fromm sees human nature as shaped by man's "imperative drive to restore a unity and equilibrium between himself and the rest of nature".³⁵ For him it constitutes a highly specific system of needs incorporating--the need for relationships with other people, the need for self-preservation, for devotion and a frame of orientation, transcendence, sense of identity, and rootedness. Then fundamental needs of man which determine all his mental activity are presented by Fromm as needs of a markedly abstract, innate and anthropological character.

In the course of both man's ontogenetic and philogenetic development the satisfaction of his natural needs predetermined by the anthropological 'human situa-

³⁵ FROMM (Erich), Man for Himself, pp.46-50.

tions' is effected in Fromm's view in two totally different ways. One of these methods furthers the development and advance of man and the other obstructs the advance. Each of the methods for satisfying man's needs provides a specific answer to the problem of human existence, the one a progressive answer and the other a regressive. Fromm believes that each individual in his attempts to resolve the problem of man's existence "can either return to an archaic, pathogenic solution, or he can progress toward, and develop his humanity."³⁶ If man attempts to destroy that which makes him man and at the same time tortures him--his reason and self-awareness--in his anxiety to regain his lost oneness with Nature and to free himself from the fear of loneliness and uncertainty, he sets foot on the regressive path for the resolution of the problem of human existence. If man seeks unity through full development of his human capacities then he selects a progressive path.

As Fromm sees it, progressive resolution of the existential problem is in the interest of man's mental

³⁶ FROMM (Erich), The Man for Himself

health and development. A regressive decision on the other hand leads to mental disturbance and degradation. As for the history of human society, Fromm says, at various stages of its development (slave-owning, feudal, capitalist and socialist stages) it was always specific, socially accepted types of answer to that problem which held sway (progressive or regressive).

Lastly, it would be difficult to give a correct evaluation of the Fromm's humanist psychoanalysis without defining Fromm's view of the nature of the "Unconscious". Any society is capable, by means of specific methods, of regulating and determining the degree of man's awareness of the social reality in which he finds himself. He criticizes those psychoanalysts who see the "unconscious" as something which the individual is biologically equipped. According to Fromm, Freud's approach to personality as the receptacle for "unconscious" biological and instinctive desires, at odds with society, that prohibits their emergence into a conscious plane, played an enormous part in the acceptance of the idea.

Fromm considers that the very "term the 'unconscious' is actually a mystification.... There is no such thing

as the unconscious; there are only experiences of which we are aware, and others of which we are not, that is, of which we are unconscious."³⁷

In psychoanalysis, the conflict between the 'unconscious' and 'conscious' nearly always results in neurosis and this conflict will certainly disappear as soon as the 'unconscious' is brought to the threshold of man's consciousness. While leaving untouched the basic assumptions of classical psychoanalysis concerning the 'unconscious' and the mechanism of repression, Fromm sets out to reinterpret and analyze both these in a new light.

First of all, unlike Freud, who regarded 'unconscious' as an extra-historical, anti-social phenomena biological by nature, Fromm maintains that "the unconscious, like consciousness, is also a social phenomenon, determined by the 'social filter'..."³⁸ He centres his attention on the "social unconscious", namely those "areas of repression" which are not individual but "common to

³⁷ FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.98.

³⁸ FROMM (Erich), The application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory, Socialist Humanism. An International Symposium (New York, 1966), p.240.

most members of a society";³⁹ and thus manage stable functioning, in spite of many inner contradictions. Language, logic and social taboos act as "socially conditioned filter", limiting the 'conscious'. However society cannot dehumanize and repress man ad infinitum for "man is not only a member of society, but he is also a member of human race."⁴⁰

He divides "unconscious" into two types, firstly those which can bring disorganization in the function of society. It is for this reason, Fromm explains, alienation is mystified in the capitalist society. Secondly, "universal unconscious", is seen to embrace everything which constitutes human nature. Awareness of this type of "unconscious" gives rise to that type of activity, which leads to change in existing reality and creation of society more computible with human nature. Both are social by nature, resulting from repression.

When analysing the 'unconscious' and its role, Fromm devotes a good deal of attention to the problem of de-repression, that is the elaboration of methods

³⁹ FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.88.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.127.

of social therapy, which in his opinion should free man of the heavy burden of the "unconscious". Derepression requires, elimination of those psychological barriers (cliches and fictions) which society has "created" in the consciousness of each individual, and secondly, to acquire critical consciousness and thirdly dissemination of humanist ideas to further the intellectual development of each individual. He, unlike Freud, had deep hope in the possibility of creation of a so-called "non-repressed" society.

The chief merit of Fromm's approach seems not so much his specific formulations of significant historical and socio-economic patterns as his insight into the principle of constant interplay between social and psychological factors. However, Ruth Munroe objects to subtle reductionism in Fromm's basic theory, "Although in practice he deals flexibly with varieties of social and psychological part-systems, he seems to feel as keenly as Freud the need for an underlying psychological universal. He finds it in the process of individuation--an evolutionary event, the corollary of which is the psychological conflict between growing independence and dependence on primary ties." ⁴¹ This formulation tends towards a

⁴¹MUNROE (Ruth L.), Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought, p.397.

certain monotonous reiteration of the same constillation
of psychic events.

CHAPTER III

One Day, thou sayst, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be.
-- Ah ! We shall know that well when it comes near;
The band will quit man's heart, he will breath Free.

MATHEW ARNOLD : "REVOLUTIONS"

CHAPTER III

GOING BEYOND MARXISM

Erich Fromm's Politico-Economic Analysis

The common soil from which both Marx's and Freud's thought grew is the concept of humanism and humanity. The humanistic ideal of the Renaissance was the unfolding of the total universal man, who was considered to be the highest flowering of natural development. Freud's defence of the rights of man's natural drives against the forces of social convention, as well as his ideal that reason controls and enables these drives, is part of the tradition of humanism. Marx's protest against a social order in which man is crippled by his subservience to the economy, and his ideal of the full unfolding of the total, unalienated man, is part of the same humanistic tradition. However, Fromm remarks that Freud's vision was narrowed down by his mechanistic, materialistic philosophy which interpreted the needs of human nature as being essentially sexual ones. Marx, by taking note of the crippling effect of society and vision to humanize whole society is definitely more sociological in scope.⁴²

⁴² FROMM (Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.25.

Doubt and the power of truth and humanism are the guiding and propelling principles of Marx's and Freud's work. Having been impressed by certain hypotonic experiments which demonstrated to what extent a person in trance can believe in the reality of what is obviously not real, Freud discovered that most of the ideas of the persons who are not in trance also do not correspond to reality, and that on the other hand most of that which is real is not conscious. Marx thought the basic reality to be the socio-economic structure of society, while Freud believed it to be libidinal organization of the individual. Yet they both had the same distrust of the clichic ideas, rationalizations and ideologies which fill people's minds and which form the basis of what they mistake for reality.

Fromm says that "this scepticism towards 'common thought is insolubly connected with a belief in the liberating force of truth."⁴³ Marx wanted to liberate man from chains of dependency, from alienation, from exploitation and from slavery to the economy. His method was not primarily coercive but enlightening. He wanted to influence not by demagogic persuasion, creating semi-hypnotic states supported by fear or terror, but by an appeal to the sense of reality, by truth. The assump-

⁴³ FROMM(Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, p.25.

tion underlying Marx's 'weapon of truth' is the same as with Freud: that man lives with illusions because these illusions make the misery of real life bearable. If people can recognize the unreality of illusions and wake up from the half-dream state, he can mobilise proper forces and powers, and change reality in such a way that illusions are no longer necessary. While for Marx truth was the weapon to induce social change, for Freud it was weapon to induce individual; change.

The contrast between Marx and Freud with regard to history is quite clear. Marx had an unbroken faith in man's perfectibility and progress, rooted in the Messianic tradition of the west from the prophets through Christianity, the Renaissance, and Enlightenment thinking. Fromm notes that Freud after the first world war was very sceptical. Freud was pessimistic about the outcome of human evolution, which he found, as an essentially tragic. Most of human efforts ended up in frustration. But that does not mean that return to Primitive state would be the solution. Primitive man was happy but it lacked wisdom. On the other hand, "the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and that the price we pay for our advance

in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt."⁴⁴

Fromm finds close connection between the phenomenon of alienation and the phenomenon of transference. But in spite of Freud's interest in the 'social neuroses' one fundamental difference between Freud's and Marx's thinking remains: Marx sees man as formed by his society, and hence sees the root of pathology in specific qualities of the social organization. Freud sees man as primarily formed by his experience in the family group, Freud looks at various societies mainly in terms of the quantity of repression they demand, rather than the quality of their organization and of the impact of this social quality on the quality of the thinking and feeling of the members of a given society.

Thus we find that both Marx and Freud are concerned with the sickness of civilization and suggest their own solutions. But before we examine what Erich Fromm himself has to say about this 'social neurosis', it would be better to go into some detail about the Marxian notion of alienation. Fromm has based his entire

⁴⁴FREUD, S., Civilization and Its Discontent, p.71.

formulation on the Marxian concept of alienation.

The theory of alienation is the intellectual construct in which Marx displays the devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and on the social process of which they are a part. Centred on the acting individual, it is Marx's way of seeing his contemporaries and their conditions. Brought under the same rubric are the links between one man, his activity and products, his fellows, inanimate nature and the species.

Alienation is used by Marx to refer to any state of human existence which is 'away from' or 'less than' unalienation. He refers to alienation as "a mistake, a defect, which ought not to be."⁴⁵ Both the individual and his way of life can be alienated. Marx claims that one of manifestations of alienation is that "all is under the sway of inhuman power", and adds, "this applies also to the capitalist."⁴⁶

For Marx, the process of alienation is expressed in work and in the division of labour. Work is for him the active relatedness of man to nature, the creation

⁴⁵MARX (Karl), EPM, 1844. p.71.

⁴⁶Ibid. Trns. T.B. BOTTOMORE in Erich Fromm's Marx's Concept of Man (New York, 1963).

of a new society, new world and including the creation of man himself. In his only treatment of the subject, Marx presents alienation as partaking of four broad relations which cover the whole of human existence. These are man's relation to his production activity, his product, other men and the species.⁴⁷ Productive activity in capitalism is spoken of as "active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation."⁴⁸ Asking 'what, then, constitutes the alienation of labour?' Marx offers the following reply:

"First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labour. It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means

⁴⁷ Opp. cit. p.72.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.72.

for satisfying other needs."⁴⁹

Thus as private property and division of labour develop, whole character of man changes. Marx attributes to man certain powers, which he divides into natural and species, and maintains that each of these powers is reflected in one's consciousness by a corresponding need. The individual feels needs for whatever is necessary to realize his powers. The object of nature, including other men, provide the matter through which these powers are realized. Realization occurs through the appropriation of objects. 'Appropriation' is Marx's most general expression for the fact that man incorporates the nature he comes into contact with, into himself. Productive activity of the worker is the chief instrument of this appropriation. Marx sees such activity in three special relationships to man's powers: first, it is the foremost example of their combined operation; second, it establishes new possibilities for their combined operation and it also establishes new possibilities for their fulfilment by transforming nature; and third, it is the main means by which their own potential, as powers, is developed.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.72.

⁵⁰ OLLMAN Bertell, Alienation, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.270.

In asserting that labour in capitalism does not belong to man's essential being, that he denies himself in this labour and that he only satisfies needs external to it. With the development of the division of labour and the highly repetitive character of each productive task, productive activity no longer affords a good example of the operation of all man's powers. It also decreases the possibilities in nature for the fulfilment of man's power. And, instead of developing the potential inherent in man's power, capitalist labour consumes these powers without replenishing them, and leaves the worker that much poorer. The qualities that mark him as a human being become progressively diminished. In this way, labour loses its character of being an expression of man's powers; labor and its product assume an existence separate from man, his will and his planning. "The object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labor is labour which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical being (thing); this product is an objectification of labour."⁵¹ Labour is alienated because the work has ceased to be a part of the worker's nature and

⁵¹EPM., p.95

"consequently, he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than wellbeing, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies." Thus in the act of production the relationship of the worker to his own activity is experienced "as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation"⁵², while man thus becomes alienated from himself, the product of labour becomes "an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world."⁵³

After explaining the alienated workers relationship to his activity and then to his product, Marx goes still further. In alienated work man not only realizes himself as an individual, but also as a species-being. For Marx, as for Hegel and many other thinkers of the enlightenment, each individual represented the species, that is to say, humanity as a whole. In the process of work he "no longer reproduces himself merely

⁵²
EPM., p.98

⁵³ Ibid., p.89.

intellectually, as in consciousness, but actively and in a real sense, and he sees his own reflection in a world which he has constructed. While, therefore, alienated labor takes away the object of production from man, it also takes away his species life, his real objectivity as a species-being, and changes his advantage over animals into a disadvantage in so far as his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him. Just as alienated labor transforms free and self-directed activity into a means, so it transforms the species life of man into a means of physical existence."⁵⁴

Marx assumed that the alienation of work, while existing throughout history-reaches its peak in capitalist society, and that the working class is the most alienated one. This assumption was based on the idea that the worker, having no part in the direction of the work, being 'employed' as part of the machines he serves, is transformed into a thing in its dependence on capital. Hence, for Marx, "the emancipation of society from private property, from servitude, takes the political form of the emancipation of the workers; not in the sense that only the latter's emancipation is involved, but because this emancipation includes the emancipation of humanity as a whole. For all human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and all types of servitude are only modifications or consequences

⁵⁴ EPM., pp.102-3.

of this relation."⁵⁵

Marx's aim, however, is not limited to the emancipation of human being through the restitution of the unalienated and hence free activity of all men, and a society in which man, and not the production of things, is the aim, in which man ceases to be a "crippled monstrosity, and becomes a fully developed human being."⁵⁶

Capitalist production transforms the relationships of individuals into qualities of things themselves, and this transformation constitutes the nature of the commodity in capitalist production. "It can not be otherwise in a mode of production in which the laborer exists to satisfy the need of self-expansion of existing values, instead of on the contrary, material wealth existing to satisfy the needs of development on the part of the laborer. As in religion man is governed by the products of his own brain, so in capitalist production he is governed by the product of his own hands." Marx's concept of the alienated product of labour is expressed in one of the most fundamental points

⁵⁵EPM., p.107

⁵⁶Capital, vol.1. p.338.

developed in "Capital" , in what Marx calls "the fetishism of commodities."

The alienation of work in industrial production is much greater than it was in handicraft and manufacture. "Machinery is adapted to the weakness of the human being, in order to turn the weak human being into a machine."⁵⁸ "In handicrafts and manufacture, the workman makes use of tool.... in the factory we have a lifeless mechanism, independent of the workman, who becomes its mere living appendage."⁵⁹

It is not only that the world of things becomes the ruler of man, but also that the social and political circumstances which he creates become his masters. "This consolidation of what we ourselves produce, which turns into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to nought our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up to now."⁶⁰ For Marx,

⁵⁸EPM., p.143

⁵⁹Capital, vol.1.

⁶⁰German Ideology, p.23.

alienation in the process of work, from the product of work and from circumstances, is inseparably connected with alienation from oneself, from one's fellowmen and from nature.

The social relationship that unites man with nature and men with their fellows is the real, fundamental relationship, and it is this relationship that is alienated from the very origin of historical development. The being of man and the nature of things are alienated from the beginning. For man, in the course of his natural history, performs actions only as self-externalization in self-alienation. By his social labor he creates a whole world of objects which is nevertheless foreign to him, having no part in his being.

Natural drives and essential, objective forces urge human being toward the objects of their needs; yet this reign of objects implies the reification of everything there is. The activity of man, which by its essence is to be natural and human, stands as neither natural nor human in that it remains to be reifying and alienated. The oppositions and antagonisms, the contradictions and conflicts, that pit men against men and human beings against the world develop on a terrain

that is alienated in a real way, and it is on this real terrain that battle must be taken up.

Everything that appears to be cut in two actually is so, because of alienation. "The (alienation), which therefore forms the real interest of this (externalization) and of the transcendence of this, is the opposition of in itself and for itself, of object and subject-- it is the opposition between abstract thinking and sensuous reality."⁶¹

Viewing things within the perspective of many sided, total alienation in no way constitutes the final term of Marx's thinking. The alienation of man is given direct treatment in that thinking in order that mankind may be led to transcend the alienation of material forces, thought, and consciousness. "Thought of Marx culminates in the prospect of universal and total reconciliation; it is even inspired from one end to the other by this vision."⁶² Universal reconciliation means the abolition of these contradictions, the unification of thought

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MARX, Manuscripts of 1844, p.175

⁶² AXELOS, K., Alienation, Praxis and Techne...Marx., p.306, University of Texas Press, Austin & London.

and sensuous reality; it means the conquest that founds the unity of the totality, and not a reconquest of a lost state.

The premise for universal reconciliation is given by the true nature of man, his essence. In the course of history man has reached only an imperfect self-realization, since his realizations have been his reifications. One of the most important passages on this point, in the Manuscripts of 1844, reads as follows:

"This material, immediately sensuous private property is the material, sensuous expression of estranged human life. Its movement--production and consumption--is the sensuous revelation of the movement of all production hitherto--i.e., the realization or the reality of man. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only particular modes of production and fall under its general law. The positive transcendence of private property as the appropriation of human life is, therefore, the positive transcendence of all estrangement--that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human i.e. social mode of existence."

Erich Fromm says that solution suggested by Marx is based on the idea that in the capitalistic mode of production the process of self-alienation has reached its peak. Marx holds that working class being the most alienated class, will for the same reason, lead the fight of human emancipation. In the socialization of the

means of production he sees the condition for the transformation of man into an active and responsible participant in the social and economic process, and for the overcoming of the split between the individual and the social nature of man. "Only when man has recognised and organized his 'forces propres' as social forces and, consequently, no longer cuts off his social power from himself in the form of political power, only then will the emancipation of mankind be achieved."⁶³

Marx saw in the economic transformation of society from Capitalism to Socialism the decisive means for the liberation and emancipation of men. His main criticism of capitalism was exactly that it had crippled man by the preponderance of economic interests, and socialism for him was a society in which man would be freed from this domination by a more rational and hence productive form of economic organization. Marx, like many other socialists, was convinced that the emancipation of man was not primarily a political, but an economic and social quotation; that the answer to freedom was not to be found in the change of the political form of the state, but in the economic and social transformation of society. But on the other hand, he was still in many ways caught

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MARX (Karl), On the Jewish Question. p.25.

in the traditional concept of the dominance of the political over the socio-economic spheres. It was in 'The German Ideology' that Marx and Engels first spoke of the necessity for the proletariat to conquer political power as the only way of carrying out a communist revolution. They pointed out: "...every class which is aiming at domination, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat..., must first conquer political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest..."⁶⁴

Fromm accepts that the theory of historical materialism offers important concepts for the understanding of the laws of history, but he goes beyond Marx in his analysis of the correlation between the development of economy and culture. In his book "THE SANE SOCIETY" Fromm presents a remarkable criticism of Marxism, as the method of transcending alienation. He points out that Marx had underestimated the complexity of human nature and passions. Marx "had not sufficiently recognized that human nature has itself needs and laws which are in constant interaction with the economic conditions

⁶⁴Marx & Engels, The German Ideology, Progress Publication, p.52-53.

which shape historical development."⁶⁵

This underestimation of the complexity of human passions "led to the three most dangerous errors in Marx's thinking".⁶⁶ Marx assumed that the goodness of man would assert itself automatically when the economic changes had been achieved. He did not recognise the necessity of a new moral orientation, without which all political and economic changes are futile. The second error was his grotesque misjudgement of the chances for the realization of socialism. Marx and Engels believed in the immediate advent of the "good society", and were only dimly aware of the possibility of a new barbarism in the form of communist and fascist authoritarianism. The third error, of which Fromm takes note of, was Marx's concept that the socialization of the means of production was not only necessary, but also the sufficient condition for the transformation of the capitalist into a socialist co-operative society.

Most of these errors originate from a naive

⁶⁵ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.230. Also in: Escape from Freedom.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.231.

psychology followed by Marx. Fromm wishes to supplement the theories presented by Marx, through the application of a humanist-psychology. Approaching as he does the process of historical development through the prism of the contradiction between the needs of human nature and the possibility of their actualization in specific social conditions, Fromm attempts to demonstrate the nature of that contradiction with reference to concrete historical material.

In his own analysis of the modern capitalist society, Fromm points to its incompatibility with the demands of human nature, and sees the values intrinsic to the latter as the absolute in humanism. Fromm uses his conception of human nature as a specific device for criticism of that society. He holds that his theory of "humanist psychoanalysis" is the theory of "normative humanism" and enables us to appraise man and the social conditions, in which he finds himself, with criteria based on a "norm" and deviations from that norm. He is firmly convinced that societies obstructing the actualization of the needs inherent in human nature are diseased and inevitably engender "neurotic" alienated individuals.

Alienation, according to Frmm, is the main distinctive characteristic of present industrial societies. The foundation for an understanding of the problem of alienation was laid by Hegel and Marx--this Fromm himself admits--and in particular by the Marxist concepts "the fetishism of commodities" and the "alienated labour".⁶⁷ Assuming that the category of "alienation" was the most exact for characterization of the inner essence of personality, Fromm proceeds to choose it as a theoretical instrument in his socio-psychological research.

In a whole number of works and numerous articles Fromm gives a fairly vivid description of various manifestations of alienation in modern industrial society, the aim and purpose of which is the mass production of "things". In the course of the universal worship of things man too cannot help but gradually turn into a thing: "Things have no self and men who have become things can have no self."⁶⁸

The whole economic system of capitalism hinges on the market which provide the main regulator and co-ordinator of life in that society. Everything is bought

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FROMM(Erich), Marx's Concept of Man, pp.43-58.

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FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.143.

and sold and this applies to human relationships which, according to Fromm, are impregnated with buying and selling interests. Man whose whole life is centred around the production, sale and consumption of commodities, himself turns into one. Man's attitude to life becomes indifferent, superficial, purely mechanical, and his attitude to his fellow men, one of cold calculation. He ceases to experience any love for his fellow men or to trust them and he can no longer see any meaning in life.

As capital becomes centralized and concentrated, as the number of large enterprises grows and small ones go bankrupt (when the private ownership of capital invested in them ceases to have any direct bearing on the function of their administration), the importance of bureaucratic methods of administration grows more and more in all sections of the modern social system. Enormous capitalist industrial centres are administered by professional bureaucrats, interested above all in ensuring that everything runs smoothly on well-oiled wheels. Those who administer and those who are administered are turned into mere things and become subject to the laws of commodity circulation. In that society 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, onto whom he has projected his living substance."⁶⁹ He becomes the prisoner of those very economic and political conditions which he created. The life of the individual under capitalism is filled with feeling of fear, powerlessness, anxiety, uncertainty and guilt. Fromm considers that "in the nineteenth century the problem was that god is dead; in the twentieth century the problem is that man is dead."⁷⁰ Fromm is quite persuasive when he says that the monopolistic phase of capitalist development that granted man "negative freedom", did not at the same time provide him in exchange with any other universal orientational framework and patterns of subordination or give him the chance to realize his "positive freedom", that is freedom to actualize the potentialities inherent in his nature.⁷¹

In addition to declaring capitalist society of today sick, diseased and neurotic Fromm asserts that it should be replaced by a sane society which "conforms

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The Sane Society, p.124.

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FROMM(Erich), The Dogma of Christ (New York, 1963), p.101.

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FROMM(Erich), Escape from Freedom.

to the needs of man, needs which are rooted in the very conditions of his existence."⁷²

He assumes that his conception of human nature enables us not merely to assess the extent of social disease, but also to forecast what the sane society should be like. In his opinion, knowledge of the needs intrinsic to human nature makes possible precise determination of the actual social conditions necessary for their actualization, and of the nature of society that would further the unfolding of man's natural essence. Unlike Freud who considered that the question of human progress was a tragic one, in view of the irreconcilable conflict between man's pansexual instincts and society's moral demands, Fromm is quite optimistic about the possibility of a better tomorrow.

The best constructive way to resolve the problem of total alienation under capitalism, according to Fromm, is provided by socialism as constructed by him which constitutes the ideal of the sane society. To break our way out of the vicious circle of the capitalist society, Fromm suggests, that we should resort to

⁷² FROMM(Erich), The Dogma of Christ, p.103, Bantom Books, New York.

"humanist-psycho analysis". Since capitalist society as a whole is sick and constitutes a universal disease, we should be able to apply to it those "therapeutic methods" which are used for the treatment of individual cases. He is convinced that capitalist society can be changed and turned into a sane society by means of so-called social therapy, i.e., by changing the psychological make-up of each individual constituting that society.

To this end it is essential to embark upon moral re-education of man, so as gradually to replace his "marketing" behaviour with "productive" behaviour.

Fromm places his social programmes on a very high pedestal and it includes not merely a demand for moral re-education and treatment for the mentally sick, but also a demand for indispensable change of the capitalist system as a whole, as a vital condition for changing capitalist society into a socialist one. He does not confine himself to demanding criticisms of social conditions which engender the forms of alienation, but he goes on to say that "important and radical changes in our social structure are necessary."⁷³ In many of

⁷³ FROMM(Erich), The Art of Loving, p.132
Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1957.

his works he stresses how man "must think of the economic and political changes necessary in order to overcome the psychological fact of alienation."⁷⁴ The creation of a sane society demands, "a fundamental re-organization of our economic and social system in the direction of freeing man from being used as a means for purposes outside of himself of creating a social order in which human solidarity, reason and productiveness are furthered rather than hobbled."⁷⁵

Fromm holds the capitalist structure of society to be responsible for alienation and calls for its change, yet it has in mind not the mode of production but the form of industrial organization. In the language of Fromm the "structure of society" and the "social factor" are none other than the "form of industrial organization" for production shaped in its development by technical discoveries, something external in relation to man and his natural potentialities.

In so far as alienation represents for Fromm first and foremost a consequence of the negative influence

⁷⁴ FROMM(Erich), The Dogma of Christ, p.102.

⁷⁵ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.277.

of the forms of organization of production, his demand for change in the social structure does not really touch on the capitalist production relations. It merely applies to forms of organization of production. Ignoring the class principle in his approach to investigation of such a complex social problem as alienation, Fromm assumes that it is possible to eliminate it without eliminating private property. Fromm comes out more or less clearly against "socialization of the means of production" and puts forward a scheme for "humanizing" modern industrial society. He suggests transforming the "bureaucratically managed industrialism in which maximal production and consumption are ends in themselves... into a humanist industrialism in which man and the full development of his potentialities--those of love and reason-- are the aims of all social organization"⁷⁶

The purpose and motive of such ideas reflecting an extended and abstract interpretation of the essence of alienation is to eradicate the qualitative difference between capitalism and socialism and to attribute to modern industrial organization, the reason behind this process. Indeed he holds that "man today is confronted

with the most fundamental choice, not that between capitalism or communism, but that between robotism (of the both capitalist and the communist variety), or Humanistic Communitarian Socialism."⁷⁷ Fromm holds that modern industrial organization of society is faulty in both its capitalist and communist forms and proposes that it should be countered with a society organized on the basis of small decentralized social units in which all members would be involved in administrative functions. This type of organization he sums up as "an industrial organization in which every working person would be an active and responsible participant, where work would be attractive and meaningful, where capital would not employ labour, but labour would employ capital."⁷⁸ Fromm went on to indicate that for the transition to such a variety of socialism the principal point would not be "ownership of the means of production, but participation in management and decision-making."⁷⁹ In his opinion "the transfer of property rights from the private capitalist to society or the state has, in itself,

⁷⁷ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.315.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.248.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.244.

only a negligible effect on the situation of the worker." ⁸⁰

Fromm holds that the overall organization of work and labour conditions are of far greater significance for the worker: he writes that "nationalization (the abolition of private property in the means of production) is not an essential distinction between 'socialism' and 'capitalism'." ⁸¹ He puts forward as an alternative to the Marxist programme of socialist revolution a programme for the "humane" organization of economic life that is petty-bourgeois in character, a programme of "managerial revolution" that must "decentralize work and the state so as to give them human proportions, and must permit centralization only to the point necessary for the requirements of industry." ⁸² Managerial revolution must of necessity transform the character of work, change labour conditions for the worker and introduce universal co-management of production. Fromm emphasized upon liberal and technical educated training of the workers. Yet Fromm does not take sufficient note of how the

⁸⁰ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.253.

⁸¹ FROMM(Erich), May Man Prevail ?, p.81.

⁸² FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.252.

change in modern industrial society, is fundamental to his social philosophy and in a number of his writings he makes a point of underlining where his own stand differs from that of Marx. Fromm's categorical imperative incorporating the demand for simultaneous change in all spheres of social life, in practice, despite its apparent radicalism, amounts to little more than an appeal for reconciliation with capitalist reality.

CHAPTER IV

Dostoyersky: "If god is dead, everything is allowed."

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Fromm: "If man is alive, he knows what is allowed."

CHAPTER IV

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Erich Fromm's Socio-cultural Analysis

The view that in the modern age, characterized by social dynamics which touch upon the destiny of every individual, psychological problems become political problems and "private disorder reflects more directly than before the disorder of the whole, and the cure of personal disorder depends more directly than before on the cure of the general disorder,"⁸⁶ is widely subscribed to in the west nowadays by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and historians.

The tendency to interpret and present the overall crisis of the modern social system first and foremost as a psychological crisis of the individual, referred to as "dehumanization", "depersonalization", "total alienation and self-alienation", the collapse of the individual's autonomy", etc., can be explained by the fact that socio-economic contradictions in modern highly

⁸⁶ MARCUSE (Herbert), Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud (New York, 1956), p.XI.

industrialized society find their most striking expression in the psychological crisis of the individual. Fromm's theory which represents an attempt to apply a purely psychological approach to the interpretation of the essence of historical development served to reflect the need for an interpretation of social processes at work within society.

In many of his writings Fromm, who attributes tremendous importance to the subjective factor in history, turns directly to analysis of various socio-psychological phenomena as a means of explaining the historical process. Fromm's conception of historical development stands out by virtue of its inclusion of certain elements of scientific analysis, against an overall rather metaphysical background. One of these is his concern with a whole number of important socio-psychological problems--study of basic principles for the socio-psychological definition of the individual (his social character), the role and significance of unconscious factors in men's historical activity (the "social unconscious), the analysis of the mechanism for the formation of the "unconscious" (repression)--the correct resolution of which could make a definite contribution to our understanding of the socio-psychological conditions

pertaining to the functioning and development of society. While very few can raise objection to Fromm's formulation of socio-psychological problems relating to the patterns underlying the psychological interaction of man and society, some may find themselves unable to accept the solutions to these problems which Fromm puts forward.

One of the best exposition of Fromm's methodology used in his theoretical searchings comes particularly clearly to the fore in his absorbing interpretation of the concept "social character". In his analysis of the psychological aspect of various concrete historical societies Fromm draws the conclusion that there is a constant feature in each of them. Individuals in any society despite certain individual psychological differences, always, in his opinion, have something in common when it comes to their psychological properties, and thus constitute typical representatives of the given society. This common element is what Fromm refers to as "social character",⁸⁷ by which he understands "the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture in contradistinction

⁸⁷ FROMM(Erich), Escape From Freedom, p.304.

to the individual character in which people belonging to the same culture differ from each other." ⁸⁸ This character Fromm sees as the psychological core of the individual which shapes not only his behaviour, but also his thought patterns, emotions, indeed his whole perception of the external world and relationship to that world. Fromm maintains that the character system can be considered "the human substitute for the instinctive apparatus of the animal" ⁸⁹ the adaptive role of which possesses major significance for the individual.

In so far as the individual's behaviour, as Fromm sees it, has to correspond to the demands of society, the main function of social character is "to shape the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behaviour 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". ⁹⁰

⁸⁸ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.78.

⁸⁹ FROMM(Erich), Man for Himself, p.59.

⁹⁰ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.79.

It is precisely because of this that Fromm believes social character as a psychological factor capable of enhancing the stabilization of society's functioning. For the individual as such, the significance of social character consists, according to Fromm, in the fact that it allows him to adapt to the requirements of society as effectively as possible involving the least psychological disruption. Fromm on frequent occasions repeats the idea that man is above all a social being and that "the structure of society and the function of the individual in the social structure may be considered to determine the content of social character,"⁹¹ when it comes to the psychological implications of the concept of social character, as reflected in the concrete historical individual, Fromm qualified character as "the specific form in which human energy is shaped by the dynamic adaptation of human needs to the particular mode of existence of a given society."⁹² The form of this adaptation and therefore social character are variable and are determined by the type of social structure.

⁹¹FROMM(Erich), Beyond the Chains of Illusion, pp. 82-83.

⁹²FROMM(Erich), Escape From Freedom, p.305.

When analysing the history of human society, Fromm postulates the existence of the following types of social character: receptive, exploitative, hoarding and marketing types. Specific psychological mechanisms and methods by means of which individuals resolve for themselves the problem of human existence--masochistic, sadistic, destructivist and conformist--underlie each of these different types of character. Fromm refers to these mechanisms as defence mechanisms--compulsive reactions on the part of the individual to a frustrating situation, the essential feature of which is that it does not allow the individual to realize his natural potential within the given social structure.

By means of psychological mechanisms such as masochism and sadism man attains illusions of independence and power, while either voluntarily submitting to or on the contrary, dominating something or someone. Feelings of powerlessness, helplessness or a lack of confidence in the face of the existential problem can be compensated for by destructivism, the individual's urge to destroy or annihilate all which exists outside himself as the outside course of his inner anxiety. The individual himself can in the final analysis be the apogee of destructivist mechanism. By explaining destruction

as emergent solution rather than through Freudian in-built "thanatos", Fromm is able to steer out of sad pessimism of Freud. Riots, killings and wars thereby become specific features of specific society, which suffers from an alienated general social character.

Conformism is man's rejection of his own ego and acceptance of pseudo-self through which he lets himself be absorbed into the mass, into the crowd. "In order to overcome the panic resulting from such loss of identity, he is compelled to conform, to seek his identity by continuous approval and recognition by others. Since he does not know who he is, at least the others will know--if he acts according to their expectation; if they know, he will know too, if he only takes their word for it."⁹³ Thus Fromm says that alienated man is ready to submit to new authorities which offer him security and relief from doubt. Fromm uses this tendency to escape from freedom to explain rise of various forms of dictatorial, authoritarian regimes in modern times. Further Fromm comments that the majority of modern men have not yet acquired the maturity to be

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FROMM(Erich), Escape From Freedom, p.230.

independent, rational and objective. The crucial difficulty is that the development of man's intellectual capacities has far outstripped the development of his emotions. "Man's brain lives in the twentieth century; the heart of most men lives still in the stone age."⁹⁴

Fromm looks at these methods of resolving the existential problem as universal. However, the individual's option for one or another method is utterly predetermined by society. He concludes that social conditions always lead to predominance of one or another type of character. The receptive orientation is, for example, typical of feudal society, the exploitative and hoarding orientation became widespread under the capitalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and finally the marketing orientation is the most typical of modern capitalist society. Marketing orientation is the most prevalent of all the non-productive orientations in modern times. The market concept of value, the emphasis on exchange value rather than on use value, has led to a similar concept of value with regard to people and particularly to oneself. Fromm defines "the character orientation

⁹⁴FROMM(Erich), Escape From Freedom, p.xiv.

which is rooted in the experience of oneself as a commodity and of one's value as exchange value"⁹⁵ as the marketing orientation. Here man is not concerned with his life and happiness, but with becoming salable. Thus it is not the human qualities which give value here to man but success in the competitive market. Hence one is driven to strive relentlessly for success and any setback is a severe threat to one's self-esteem; helplessness, insecurity, and inferiority feelings are the result. In this marketing of human personality, human dignity and pride is destroyed. Over and above that man is alienated from his powers and he loses his identity.

In so far as each of these character orientations is merely a special apparatus for the individual's adaptation to society, his specific reaction to those social conditions in which it is impossible for human nature to come into its own, so each one of them proves, in Fromm's opinion, unproductive, since it fails to effectively solve the problem of human existence.

Fromm's criticism of modern ethics of utilitarianism,

⁹⁵ FROMM(Erich), Man for Himself, p.77.

pragmatic hedonism is also based on the explanation through unmitigated egoism as most modern social character. Egoist social character is marked by "having mode of existence". Fromm says that "having and being are two fundamental modes of experience, the respective strengths of which determine the differences between the characters of individuals and various types of social character."⁹⁶

A selfish egoist person wants everything for himself, to him possessing, not sharing gives pleasure. He must become greedy because if his aim is having, he is more the more he has, that he must feel antagonistic towards all others. He can never be satisfied, because there is no end to his wishes. As long as everybody wants to have more, there must be formations of classes, there must be war.

The nature of having mode of existence follows from the nature of private property. Fromm finds that in this mode of existence all that matters is my acquisition of property and excluding others from its use. Buddhist craving or christian coveting have similar form of behaviour. In his very precise and accurate

⁹⁶ FROMM(Erich), To Have or To Be, p.4.
Bantam Books, New York, 1976, 1981.

analysis, Fromm touches the very core of selfish 'having mode of existence.' He says, "the statement 'I (subject) have O (object)' expresses a definition of I through possession of O."⁹⁷ The subject is not what He Is but what He is what He Has. His property constitutes his self and his identity. In the having mode, there is no alive relationship between subject and his possession. Also because his sense of identity is based upon his possessions, the relation of real possession is easily reversed. It is the object which starts possessing the subject.

Fromm says that having mode of existence has penetrated all the spheres of our daily life too, to the extent of becoming even the only acceptable way of life. Learning becomes practically memorising to pass some examination. It does not enrich or widen the horizon of learner's vision. It does not stimulate them, affect them or make them respond creatively. Similarly, remembering too is diminished to storing up information and mechanical recalling. It fails to envision the past in its active, alive form. Even in

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FROMM(Erich), To Have Or To Be, p.65.

regular conversational debate, one's attitude to the opinion of other parties gives hint as to what is our mode of existence. If we debate for the sake of debating and boosting our ego, then it is vain and unproductive. Alienated conversation can not fully respond to the other person and his ideas. It merely remains an exchange of informational commodities. It is quite same with reading too. While knowing in having sense is functional and part of the productive thinking. It does not dispel any illusion, it is superficial and fails to penetrate the surface of the common sense. Knowledge which can not go down to the roots and hence the courses is alienated. It can not see reality in its nakedness. Fromm cites the examples of such thinkers as the Buddha, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Master Eckhart, Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, for whom the aim of knowing was, not the certainty of "absolute truth", something one can feel secure with, but the self affirming process of human reason.

Educational system of our times, true to having mode of existence, train people to have knowledge as possession, by and large commensurate with the amount of property or social prestige they are likely to have in later life.

Society to a large extent shapes ideas and ideals

held by different individuals, a view shared by both Marx and Fromm. But Fromm going beyond Marx, declares that ideals rooted in human nature are independent of society. Such ideals as of freedom, justice and love, being rooted in human nature, influence society through social character. But while talking of alienated social character it would be necessary to talk of what happen to faith and religion, or how does having mode of existence influences our object of devotion and our frame of orientation. "Faith", according to Fromm, "is the possession of answer for which one has no rational proof. It consists of formulations created by others, which one accepts because one submits to those others--usually a bureaucracy."⁹⁸ Faith here is used as a shelter against insecurity of daily life even at the cost of loss of independence. Faith, in the being mode is an orientation based on experience.

Fromm is of the view that social change interacts with a change in the social character, that "religious" impulses contribute the energy necessary to move men and women to accomplish drastic social change. New society can be brought about by changing our present

⁹⁸ FROMM(Erich), To Have or To Be, p.30.

object of devotion. He defines religion as, "any group shared system of thought and action that offers the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion."⁹⁹ But today in advanced industrial societies, the marketing character neither loves nor hates. It is a cerebral society which considers feelings and emotions to be unfit for success in life, leading to emotional underdevelopment. The "cybernetic religion" of the marketing character corresponds to that total character structure. Hidden behind the facade of agnosticism or christianity is a thoroughly pagan religion. Man makes machine as his god and in the image of his god, man becomes himself a machine. Even otherwise, alienated worship of god is nothing but worship of idol, quite same as worshipper of "other idols: the sovereign, the state, the flag, the race, material production and efficiency, political leaders or themselves."¹⁰⁰

The only reliable are reasonable means of resolving the problem of human existence is, according to Fromm, through love and the productive character orientation

⁹⁹ FROMM(Erich), To Have or To Be, p.121.

¹⁰⁰ FROMM(Erich), You Shall be As Gods, p.179.

rooted in it. Fromm sees mature love as the union between the individual and the world, the individual and another of his kind, in which his integrity and individuality are preserved. He says, "Love is an active power in man; a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself."¹⁰¹ Love answers one of the deepest need of man, that is to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. It is not that love is the only available or even practical answer. The answer varies. The same need can be answered by "...animal worship, by human sacrifice, or military conquest, by indulgence in luxury, by ascetic renunciation, by obsessional work, by artistic creation, by the love of god, and by the love of Man."¹⁰² Answers, other than those based upon love are either temporary or are alienating in nature.

The capacity to love in an individual living in any given culture depends on the influence this culture

¹⁰¹ FROMM(Erich), The Art of Loving, p.24.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.16..

has on the character of the average person. Fromm finds that social structure of contemporary western culture and the spirit resulting from it, not to be conducive to the development of love. He believes that any objective observer of the western life will without doubt find love--brotherly love, motherly love, and erotic love--is a relatively rare phenomenon, and their place have been taken by a number of forms of pseudo love, which are in reality so many forms of the disintegration of love.¹⁰³

The cause of this degeneration and disintegration of love, is attributed by Fromm to capitalism and advanced industrialization. Both useful things and useful human energy and skill are transformed into commodities which are exchanged without the use of force or fraud. The organization of work is such that the big centralised enterprises with a radical division of labour lead to the loss of individuality, man becomes just another cog of the "megamachine".¹⁰⁴ The initiative has been shifted from the individual to the bureaucracy. Man

¹⁰³ FROMM(Erich), The Art of Loving, p.72-74.

¹⁰⁴ MUMFORD, L., The Conduct of Life, Harwart Press (New York, 1981), pp.14-16. He expresses many ideas which are in common with Fromm.

has been reduced to the levels of automatons and automatons can not love; they can exchange their 'personality packages' and hope for a fair bargain. Marriage, therefore, turns out to be some sort of compromise, for the sake of quite selfish reasons between two accommodating persons. All this kind of relationship amounts to is the well-oiled relationship between two persons who remain strangers all their lives.

The whole social and economic organization of modern times is based on each seeking his own advantage. It is governed by the principle of egotism tempered only by the ethical principle of fairness. Therefore Fromm finds, like many other of his time as Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer and Simon Weil, that it is very difficult to act within the framework of existing society and at the same time practise love. But at the same time he is not resigned to cynicism like some others as Herbert Marcuse.

According to Fromm modern society seen concretely is a complex phenomena. He says, "A salesman of a useless commodity, for instance, can not function economically without lying; a skilled worker, a chemist, or a physician can. Similarly, a farmer, a worker, a teacher,

and many a type of businessman can try to practise love without ceasing to function economically."¹⁰⁵

Therefore change is possible. If there is suffering there must be some cause of this and if one can remove such causes then redemption from suffering is possible. These are like four noble Truths of Buddhism, which Fromm prescribes for modern man also. Once the causes of suffering have been identified then its remedy too will not be impossible. The very first step in that direction would be that man must first know himself. By which, Fromm means, that we all must be very clear about real human needs. True awareness of human nature will be the source of humanitarian ethics and humanitarian science. Our new, Fromm says, "goal is not control over nature but control over technique and over irrational social forces and institutions that threaten the survival of western society, if not the human race."¹⁰⁶ Also if the economic and political spheres of society are to be subordinated to human development, the model

¹⁰⁵ FROMM(Erich), The Art of Loving, p.108.

¹⁰⁶ FROMM(Erich), To Have or To Be, p.161.

of the new society must be determined by the requirements of the unalienated, being-oriented individual. Being a different disciple of Marx, Fromm highlights consumption more than production. Consumption must be regulated because, to Fromm, consumers are generally not aware of what their real needs are. To regulate consumption, we will also have to regulate production, by restricting the rights of the owners, for which industrial and political participatory democracy is necessary. Participation will require change in size and movement towards decentralization through industry and politics. Fromm says that active and responsible participation further requires that humanistic management should replace bureaucratic management.

Considering the power of the corporations and the technocracy experts, the apathy and powerlessness of the large mass of the population, the inadequacy of the political leaders in almost all countries, the threat of all destructing wars, the ecological threats, chance for human redumption do seem very bright. But as Fromm has said, salvation lies in knowledge of the reality, and luckily the awareness of the malaise is dawning upon ever larger and larger number of people everyday. Now what we need is conscious, continuous,

action in that direction, with all the urgency as any disaster demands.

Erich Fromm, being the true child of enlightenment and Germanic tradition, takes full note of culture and nature of man, along with the proposed economic changes, for the creation of sane society. His man is a total man, his needs are not confined to instincts as of Freudian man, nor is his man overtly economic as that of Marx. Fromm's sane man living in a sane society will be a man for himself. He will have "the ability to love and to create, will emerge from incestuous ties to clan and soil, will have a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, will grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ FROMM(Erich), The Sane Society, p.68.

CONCLUSION

An appraisal of Fromm's social philosophy could be just as applicable to all abstract humanist conceptions. It provides a relatively apt illustration of the critical but humanist outlook which, as noted earlier, is at present fairly widespread in the west. There is in Fromm, on the one hand a perceptive criticism of modern civilization, the desire to root out and destroy the evil born of that society and on the other sincere moralizing and utopianism in forecasts of ways and means for the eradication of that evil. Such moralising is seen sometimes by the orthodox Marxists as an effort to belittle the revolutionary practical experience of social development summarized and substantiated in Soviet brand Marxist-Leninist theory.

Erich Fromm is the product of post-war generation of intellectuals. In Germany, during the 1920s and 1930s, debate over what constitutes Marxism, or the scope of a theory designed with a practical intent, to criticize and subvert domination in all its forms, was in great heat. Turbulent events of the period provide

the context in which such ideas developed. The defeat of left wing working class movements in western Europe after the first world war, the collapse of mass leftwing parties in Germany into reformist or Moscow dominated movements, the degeneration of the Russian revolution into Stalinism and the rise of Fascism and Nazism.

These events posed fundamental questions for those inspired by Marxism but prepared to recognize how misleading and dangerous were the views of those who maintained either that socialism was an inevitable part of 'history's plan' or that 'correct' social action would follow merely from the promulgation of the 'correct' party line. The anti-Bolshevik radicalism and an open-ended or critical Marxism, led to the formation of the Institute of Social Research established in Frankfurt in 1923. It was exiled from Germany in 1933, relocated in the United States shortly thereafter and re-established in Frankfurt, in the early 1950s. Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas are the great names associated with this institute.

Erich Fromm too, was, a member of this school in its early years and many of his ideas and concerns were certainly influenced by the other members of the

school. He too like the other members of the school was involved in a series of critical dialogues with important past and contemporary thinkers. He, for instance, tried to synthesize aspects of the works of Freud and Marx. One also finds a striking parallel between the deep cultural pessimism of Weber's sociology--especially in its treatment of the rationalization process of modern societies--and the thorough going critique of bourgeoisie culture and intellectual thought developed by Fromm.¹⁰⁸ Tom Bottomore finds similar parallel in the other thinkers of the school too and says that they were led by their pessimism into a retreat from Marxian social theory, and then towards an essentially philosophical and neo-Hegelian critique of ideology. Caught in a climate of cultural loss and decline which was certainly linked with rising Fascism in Germany, the 'critical theory' developed in this school was overwhelming concerned with the mounting irrationality of social and cultural values, and their reflection in the ideas of positivism and scientism.¹⁰⁹

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HAMILTON(Peter), in his editorial forward to Bottomore's "The Frankfurt School".

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BOTTOMORE, T.B., "The Frankfurt School". p.30-35, Travistok Publications.

Erich Fromm's version of 'critical theory' shares many of these aspects of Ideologiekritik, conducted not from elaborate empirical observation but philosophical speculation. This happened despite the fact that he preferred to stay on in the United States after the school returned from exile, and was thus open to the influence of the strong empirical traditions of American social thought. His best known works like "ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM" and "THE ART OF LOVING", thus remain firmly within the contemplative cast of the Frankfurt School. Its nature as a philosophical critique of advanced capitalism perhaps explains why its great popularity did not lead to any significant attempts at extension or empirical demonstration of the thesis which it contains.

Nevertheless, Fromm's decision to stay back was quite fruitful for him and his works. Here he came into contacts with Karen Horney and Sullivan, the American psychologists, who were concerned with the interactionist revision of the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis. Erich Fromm, along with Horney and Harry Sullivan was the founder of the 'culturalist' school of psychoanalysis. He developed a psychology that was at more explicitly sociological and less Freudian.

By the time he published ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM (1941), Fromm posited against Freud the notion of an original unity between people and nature. The seeds of both an historical and existential approach were laid. In the appendix of this important text he argued, that "man is not infinitely adaptable." In seeming contradiction to the main thesis of his work, he stated that--

"the striving for justice and truth is an inherent trend of human nature.... Man's inalienable rights of freedom and happiness are founded in inherent human qualities; his striving for life, to expand and express the potentialities that have developed in him in the process of historical evolution." 110

In short, Fromm was more and more committed both to the idea of an essential human nature, which could, of course, be perverted and repressed, and to the view that Freud's work needed to be supplemented by a more sociological and historical approach.

Fromm rejected Freud's "Death Instinct" as a weak "intermingling of biological and psychological tendencies". Fromm held, as we have seen in the chapter

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FROMM(Erich), Escape From Freedom, pp.316-17.

dealing his relationship with Freud, that, the idea of a death instinct was poorly supported by clinical evidence, and it seemed rightly to him to lead to a false view of humans--abstracted from the status quo--which could justify civilization in its present form.¹¹¹ One certainly finds Fromm more logical when he says with evermore vehemence that the elements of Freud's work are bound to bourgeoisie and patriarchal values. Freud's neglect of social structure had led him to generalize phenomena like the oedipus complex into universal mechanisms. It failed to register the historical specificity of the phenomena as the product of capitalism of nineteenth century variety.

Fromm gradually granted societal interaction not only a logically independent position in the socialization process but moreover assigned it, nearly like an instinct theory, the role of constitution driving force in social development. This revision of Freud, brings Fromm, closer to many Post-Modernist thinkers, who believe in the de-construction of the subject. Since, he now conceived the socialization operation

¹¹¹FROMM(Erich), The crisis of Psychoanalysis, p.143.

as a whole as a process of communicative individuation. Providing for an ego as a medium between societal demands and behavioural leanings, Fromm again attempts to protect the autonomy of the subject. However, after the analysis of Fromm's works, the post-modernist analysis of modernism as the phase of unique individualism, like T.S. Eliot, Freud & Marx seems untenable. Fromm takes individualism to mean not uniqueness but individual freedom, here individual is able to choose and take his decisions.¹¹²

The neo-Freudian revisionism of Fromm had evoked strong opposition from his erstwhile colleagues of the Frankfurt school. His rejection of death instinct and toning down of the role of libido created such heat that he had to leave the school ultimately. But in this heat was lost the really fruitful core of his revision of psychoanalysis. It is still largely unexplored horizon. Fromm has created a new social-theoretical approach, which harmonizes the good in Marxism with good in psychoanalysis. His theory of human nature, human needs demands closer attention so that more micro-- as well as-- macro studies could be based upon them.

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KAPLAN, E. Ann. (ed.), Post-Modernism and Its Discontent, Verso (London, New York, 1988), p.20.

Fromm was influenced by, and he also influenced, the various protest and civil rights movements of his time. The promise of an "intellectualized and culturally sophisticated quasi-Marxism had undeniable appeal."¹¹³ His opposition to both the big contending systems as dehumanizing, evoked much popular interest among students as well as intellectuals. The post second world war movements were influenced by a wide ranging and diverse analysis of the changing class structure and of the significance of technocracy and bureaucracy to which sociologists made a notable contribution.

Following Weber's account of the inexorable spread of rationalized production and administration there first emerged a theory of the 'managerial revolution' (James Burnham, Putman & Co., London, 1943) and the early discussions of technocracy (Georges Gurnvitch 1949) and then more comprehensive studies of 'industrial' and 'post industrial' society. The conservative interpretation of these phenomena, for example in the writings of Raymond Aron and Daniel Bell, emphasized above all the gradual obliteration of major class differences, the moderation or virtual elimination of class conflict, and the associated decline of 'ideologies' (e.g., Marxism).

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BOTTOMORE, T.B., The Frankfurt School, p.52.

The radical interpretation, notable in the writings of Allain Tourraine (1969), while claiming that the class structure of the nineteenth century has been profoundly transformed, argues that a new fundamental rift has appeared in the western societies (in a different context) also in the former socialist societies of eastern Europe (Konrad, G. + Szelenyi I: *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, Brighton Harvester Press, 1977) and the New Left Movement of '60s, have partly replaced, partly substituted the old style class conflict. In Tourraine's view the major groups engaged in conflict in Post-Industrial Societies are on the one side, those who command the structures of economic and political decision making and on the other, those who have been reduced to a condition of dependent participation.

The work of Marxist sociologists diverges significantly from both conservative and radical interpretations of 'post-industrial society', by its emphasis upon the continuing dominance of capital (more particularly in the form of large corporations and multinationals) and upon the importance of labour movement.

By contrast with these numerous investigations of 'industrial society' or 'late capitalism' by Marxist

and non-Marxist sociologists, it is the absence of any serious and detailed analysis of the capitalist economy, of the class structure, and of the development of political parties and movements, which makes the studies and works of Erich Fromm, now seem, extraordinarily narrow and sometime inadequate.

Leszek Kolakowski says that "Fromm's writings are imbued with goodwill and faith in the human capacity and co-operation."¹¹⁴ It was for this reason, perhaps that he found Freudianism, which had a very pessimistic view of human nature, unacceptable. Fromm did not agree with Marx as to the role of the proletariat, Alienation for Fromm was a phenomenon, affecting all classes. He however did not share Adorno's negativism and pessimism. Although he had no faith in historical determinism and did not expect the laws of history to bring about a better social order, he was convinced that human beings had an immense creative potential. This could be brought into play to overcome their alienation from nature and from one another and to establish an order based on brotherly love.

Fromm may be called Fuerbach of our own time.

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KOLAKOWSKI, L., Main Currents of Marxism, vol.III, p.381, Clarendon Press (Oxford, 1978).

His books are simple and readable. Their didactic and moralistic intention is not concealed, but is expressed plainly and straightforwardly. All his works are inspired by critical and constructive thought. His endorsement of Marx rests on a true interpretation of his humanistic outlook, but is nevertheless selective. He does not consider the positive functions of alienation, the role of evil in history, for him alienation is simply Bad. Moreover, he adopted from Marx only the "ultimate idea of the 'whole human being', the utopia of reunion with nature and perfect solidarity among mankind, helped and not hindered by individual creativity."¹¹⁵ Fromm endorses this utopia but ignores all that part of Marx's doctrine which tells us how to bring it about--his theory of the state, the proletariat and the revolution. Thus, he has chosen the most acceptable and least controversial aspects of Marxism, for anyone would agree that people should live on good terms and not cut out one another's throat, and it is better to be creative and free than stifled and oppressed.

In short his Marxism "is little more than a series of trite aspirations."¹¹⁶ Nor is it clear from his writings,

¹¹⁵ KOLAKOWSKI, L., Main Currents of Marxism, vol. III, p.381, Clarendon Press (Oxford, 1978).

¹¹⁶
Ibid., p.386.

how men came to be dominated by evil and alienation, or what ground there is for believing that, healthy tendencies will in the end prevail over destructive ones. His ambiguity is typical of utopian thought in general. On the one hand, he professes to derive his ideal from human nature as it actually is, although it is not at present realized--in other words, it is man's true destiny to develop his personality while living in harmony with others; but, on the other hand he is aware that 'human nature' is also a normative concept. Clearly the concept of alienation and also the distinction between false and true needs must, if they are to be more than just arbitrary norms, be based on some theory of human nature as we know it from experience, albeit in an 'undeveloped state'.¹¹⁷ But Fromm does not explain how we know that human nature requires, for instance, more solidarity and less aggression. It is true that people are in fact capable of solidarity, love, friendship and self sacrifice, but it does not follow that those who display these qualities are 'more' human than their opposites.

Fromm's account of human nature thus presents

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FROMM(Erich), Man For Himself, pp.47-58.

an ambiguous mixture of descriptive and normative ideas, which is likewise characteristic of Marx and many of his followers.

Fromm did much to popularize the idea of Marx as a humanist, and was undoubtedly right to combat the crude and primitive interpretation of Marxism, as a 'materialistic' theory of human motives and short cut to despotism. But he did not discuss the relationship between Marxism and modern communism in detail, which may help in overcoming some more shortcomings of Marxism.

The positive significance of Erich Fromm's social philosophy lies in the fact that it represents the critical trend in modern western social philosophy and exposes the social vices and evils of the modern industrial societies. Being part of the general democratic movement, its universal attractive ideas of freedom, dignity and happiness help in some degree to further democratic consciousness and its humanism wins a large number of representative from a variety of social groupings. Also he has been able to highlight properly the necessity of democratic decentralization in the processes of production as well as in different levels of decision

making. His views regarding the ideal of "communitarian" or "democratic" socialism, just as the appeals for moral improvement and for the individual's rebirth by means of social therapy, and propagation of "humanist psycho-analysis" are splendid and worth further exploration.

But still, the most significant of his contributions remains his analysis of human alienation. He went beyond both Freud and Marx in understanding the locus of alienation. He combined the two partial theories, which along with some of his very original ideas, come to make a nearly total theory of alienation. He makes alienation a historical and existential phenomena, derived from typical nature of human situation. Alienation for Fromm is, alienation from Nature, from self and from others, therefore de-alienation also requires action at all the three levels. An individual can become a non-alienated, free and creative being only through his own activity. But not only can de-alienation not be reduced to de-alienation of society, the de-alienation of society in its turn cannot be conceived simply as a change in the organization of the economy that will be followed automatically by a

change in all other spheres or aspects of human life. The de-alienation of society is therefore dependent upon the already divided, mutually independent and conflicting spheres. The de-alienation will demand action at all levels and all spheres. This will require a humanistic ethic, a sane consumption and participatory democratic polity, economy and culture.

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