

CHARACTER, SOCIETY, & THE POLITICS OF HOPE:

A Comparative Look at

the Theories of Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, and Herbert Marcuse

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A meditation of Freud's work has the advantage of revealing that work's broadest aim: not only the renovation of psychiatry, but a reinterpretation of all psychical productions pertaining to culture, from dreams, through art and morality, to religion. This is how psychoanalysis belongs to modern culture. By interpreting culture it modifies it; by giving it an instrument of reflection it stamps it with a lasting mark.

(Paul Ricoeur. *Freud and Philosophy*.
Yale University Press, 1970, p.4.)

INTRODUCTION

If a recurrent and common theme persists in the theories of these three men, it lies in the question: How is it that society can reach down into the very "instinctual structure" of men and turn them against their own needs and potentialities?

All three theorists were powerfully affected by two twentieth century events: the rise of Fascism in Germany and the apparent betrayal of the hopes invested in the emerging Soviet experiment.

Despite their Freudianism, each was in his own way powerfully influenced by Marx, and the melding of Marxian and Psychoanalytic theory represented a new approach to "the problem of man." How was one to explain the twentieth century phenomenon of totalitarian regimes dominating great

masses of people with relative ease? How could one hope that this condition was not historically inevitable . . . that 1984 was not "just around the corner"? Thus, we find in Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse a concern with the fundamental relationship between character and society, and a still more fundamental concern that *in* that relationship lies a reason to hope and struggle for a future which is an alternative to mid-twentieth century totalitarianism.

Reich's project was primarily that of finding a "prophylaxis of neurosis" and to the extent that social change was fundamental to that end, his theory was sociological. Fromm's central concern was to wed psychoanalysis to a 'critical social science' in the interest of understanding the problem of man. Marcuse's goal has always been to construct a philosophical foundation for the unity of social theory and revolutionary praxis.

Character, Society and the Politics of Hope represent the respective *core* themes of Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse. The attempt to establish a relationship between the three concepts is what unites their theoretical efforts. In discussing Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse I attempt to compare three distinct schools of psychoanalytic and social theory: (1) Ego Psychology, (2) Neo-Freudian Revisionism, and (3) The Frankfurt School for Social Research.

THE FREUDIAN LEGACY

The Case of Wilhelm Reich

As Paul Robinson has pointed out, Reich is representative of that "middle generation" of revisionists of Freudian theory which includes Otto Rank and Sandor Ferenczi. Their deviation was a response to the crisis in psychoanalysis (during the '20's) resulting from a lack of therapeutic technique other than the "talking cure" embodied in the method of free association. Reich, Rank, and Ferenczi all became the proponents of *active* psychotherapy and tended to take therapy into the realm of real life and physical activity.

His stress on the clinical and therapeutic implications of psychoanalytic theory, combined with his fervent support of Freud's original contention that sexuality held the central position in human psychic processes, was to eventually lead Reich into areas unacceptable to the aging mentor.

For Reich, sexuality held the central position for all social and intrapsychic life and it therefore was the key to the neurotic personality. His quest was to establish the etiology of neurosis and his conclusion was that no neurosis existed without sexual conflict or genital disturbance (Robinson, 1969:13-14).

By attempting to concretize and quantify Freud's libido

(psychic energy) metaphor, Reich ventured into the field of biopsychic energy and finally to what he called "sex economy" and orgonomy (Robinson, 1969:15-16).

Reich's most influential psychoanalytic writing was *Character Analysis*, and since it was written during his so-called "Marxist" period, it reveals his early psychoanalytic *core* as he related it to what he understood to be the sociology of Marx.

Character Analysis represented Reich's explication of the "dynamic - economic" conception of the character as a totality. By economic, Reich was alluding to Freud's original metaphor of the equitable or inequitable distribution of libidinal "energy" (Reich, 1972:xix, 12) throughout the total psychic system as he envisaged it.

In this conception the character which determines the subjects 'way of being' is made up of a web of unconscious defenses which repress those impulses which are socially unacceptable. This tends to insulate the individual from the outer world. The ego has formed an armour which protects it from painful stimuli from the outside world as well as from its own already repressed instinctual drives.

In analyzing the role of the armour, Reich concluded that it fulfilled the economic function of establishing and maintaining a psychic equilibrium through the absorption of repressed



sexual energy and the binding of "free-floating anxieties" (Cattier, 1971:44-46). The very character of the individual as manifest in the totality of his behavioral, physical, verbal, and intellectual mannerisms served to drain off libidinal energy and use it in its defense.

Once the armour has been formed . . . the pleasure principle continues to operate inasmuch as the character . . . serves not only to ward off drives and to bind anxiety but also to gratify distorted instincts (i.e., pre-genital or sadistic). . . . the energy of the warded-off instinctual impulses is largely consumed in the establishment and perpetuation of the defence mechanism (Reich, 1972:173).

Reich's central concern was the formulation of a therapeutic technique for breaking down the character armour, to allow the patient to experience the ways in which he defended himself. In his representation of the character as a totality (of physical, behavioral, and psychic mannerisms), Reich dissolved the current and popular distinction in psychoanalytic theory between symptom neurosis and character neurosis (Cattier, 1971:46-47). Since in his view the neurotic symptom was always founded on a neurotic character base, the focus on *character* resistances would create a situation where the *symptoms* would naturally reveal themselves in treatment.

Bringing unconscious characterological defense mechanisms into consciousness paved the way for an orthodox Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation of childhood experiences. In so doing he felt he was releasing the individual from the clutches and distortion of the sexual repressiveness of his family situation.

Since every neurosis, without exception, can be traced back to conflicts of childhood . . . the analysis of the transference, i.e., that part of it which deals with the breaking down of the resistances, constitutes the most important piece of analytic work (Reich, 1972:5)

But, he follows this up by stating

One might say that the making conscious of all manifestations of the unconscious *through* interpretations is a basic principle (Reich, 1972:7).

Reich makes it explicit that 'sex economy' never sought to detach itself from Freud's basic contentions, but rather intended to serve as a continuation of Freudian theory providing it with a foundation in natural science (Reich, 1972:xvi-xvii). His contention that biological energy was governed by definite physical laws, led him to believe that the physical aberrations (he called them biopathies) which Orgone¹ biophysics could detect in the organic sphere, were correlates of Freud's "psychoneurosis" in the psychological sphere. However, this meant that, in his view, therapy must become *biotherapy* and no longer merely *psycho-therapy*.

Despite his initial desire to merely extend the work of Freud, Reich's stress on bio-energetics took him in paths divergent from Freud. As he says in the preface to the third edition of *Character Analysis*, orgone therapy² proceeds bioenergetically and no longer psychologically. This total stress on the *body* was to lead him into some conceptual difficulty, for if neurosis was centered in character *and* muscular armour (and therapy meant breaking down this armour) what was to prevent regression when the patient was

returned to the same environmental conditions which required the armour in the first place? To break down the armour was primary, but one always had to deal with the social and environmental contradictions from which it arose. The answer for Reich lay in political action for social change. Unfortunately, the break with Freud centered chiefly around Reich's political involvement and the sociological dimension which he added to his work (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:33,43-46).

Reich encountered his first obstacles in 1929 when the Psychoanalytic Seminar which he conducted in Vienna was very resistant to his paper, "Prophylaxis of the Neurosis." Freud's basic contention in all his social writings was that culture takes precedence over individual human needs. Reich disagreed by maintaining that the logical extension of Freud's libido theory suggested that energy stasis was the cause of neurosis. If orgasmic potency (free flow of energy through orgasm) were to replace neurosis, then the key lay in removing the social blocks to potency. As Reich saw it, the blocks were institutionalized in the patriarchal, sexually-repressive, monogamic family (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:45). Freud wanted nothing of any radical political implications being attached to psychoanalysis.

In this period (1927-30) Reich was actively involved in setting up mass-help sex clinics in Vienna under the auspices of the Austrian Social Democratic Party. His tremendous success and the great popular enthusiasm which the clinics generated frightened not only the conservatives but also the socialists and communists who feared that it might become an autonomous movement. This created a dangerous political situation for Reich. Nevertheless, it was during this period that he formulated the sociological dimension of his work. He gained insight into the institutional sources of mass neurosis and spoke of the need for broad *social* change; it was essential for any change in the condition of mental health for the mass of the population:

. . . the only prophylaxis worthy of serious consideration is one for the practical implementation of which the present social system lacks every prerequisite; that it is only a thorough turnover of social institution and ideologies . . . which will create the preconditions for an extensive prophylaxis of neurosis (Reich, 1972:xxi).

The influence of Marx (in the preface to the first edition) is clear. One of Reich's insights was the concept of the "anchoring" of a social system's ideology in the very *character structure* of its people. He speaks of "the psychic structures" of all the members of society as one mode by which the society reproduces itself. For Reich, this takes place through social utilization and transformation of the instinctual apparatus of people. One of the central mechanisms for achieving this transformation is the family which lays the characterological groundwork in the child. For Reich this explained the conservative nature of tradition. However, if this "anchoring" of a social order obstructs the gratification of people's biological needs (especially sexual needs), "the psychic preconditions begin to develop which undermine this anchoring in the character structure" (Reich, 1972:xxiii-xxv). This is the source of the disintegration of tradition and, therefore, of the society as well.

Reich was very clear about the dependence of character development upon the historic and economic situation, but also felt that another dimension existed: if, "the character

structure is the congealed sociological process of a given epoch," then "a society's ideologies can become a material force only on condition that they actually change the character structures of the people." Reich contended that this must be taken into account by all revolutionaries for it explains how ideologies undergo change at a much slower rate than the socio-economic base (Reich, 1972:xxvi).

This social and political orientation in his work drove the wedge between him and Freud.

The Case of Erich Fromm

Fromm, like Reich, was actively involved in psychoanalytic clinical practice and drew many of his conclusions from this "empirical" data; but, contrary to Reich, his departure point was a sociological interpretation of Freud. Reich was a formidable clinical psychoanalyst but exceedingly weak in the area of sociology.

Though Fromm finds Freud exceedingly naive in the fields of sociology and anthropology (Evans, 1966a:64), he feels that Freud had a particular gift and genius in sensing that to understand man one had to take into account those psychic processes which made him act rationally or irrationally. Although Freud was primarily concerned with the instinctual aspects of man and the characterization of man in terms of distinct structural entities (id, ego, super ego), Fromm believed that the modern departure point must be the reintegration of these now-separated constructs. In other words, man must be understood as a totality.

Despite his frequent use of the terms "psychic force" and "energy," Fromm is a fervent opponent of Freud's libido theory and blames it for the narrowness of Freud's anthropology. This places him in dramatic contrast to Reich. Freud, a true product of the Enlightenment, tried to demonstrate the real power of the instinctive and often irrational passions in man and how they controlled his reason. His theory of the instincts was greatly influenced by the events of his lifetime. What he felt were the creative drives of life (ego and sexual instincts) came to be tainted by the pessimism he felt after the events of the First World War. He assumed that a deep-rooted human destructiveness opposed the forces of life and he characterized it as the "death instinct". Fromm, like Reich, criticizes this concept as highly speculative and not really very helpful in the understanding of human motivation. He was well aware of the conservative ideological implications of the "death instinct" theory.³

In contrast to these aspects of Freud which he sees as negative (libido and instinct theory), Fromm views the 'narcissism' concept as highly creative and fruitful. This concept was useful in the explanation of child development and of what came to be called the narcissistic psychosis. Without going into depth, Fromm felt that narcissism was exceedingly useful in understanding the ways in which masses of people give allegiance to their leaders and more importantly the ways in which people might better overcome "that hindrance to one's development which is the greed for self and for property . . . that which prevents one's being open to the world" (Evans, 1966a:102).

Another Freudian concept central for Fromm's system is the Oedipus, though his use of it is confined to one particular aspect of the theory. Fromm feels that Freud never fully understood the power of this concept. His usage of it stresses the supposed incestuous yearnings of the child in its phallic

stage as fundamentally a desire to return to the womb—to that which is certain and protecting. He calls this a manifestation of the "wish to escape from freedom" — into the past — into the enveloping, protecting, comforting warmth of mother. This tendency in adults and its manifestation on the social level (in the "escape" into authoritarianism) is an attempt to avoid the full responsibility of maturation and personal development. It constitutes "in some significant sense man's rejection of his potential independence, his refusal to actualize his independence." Fromm sees man within authoritarian regimes as escaping from that *self-consciousness* which makes man unique in all nature (Evans, 1966a:70-71).

In Fromm's estimation Freud's greatest discovery was that of "the unconscious," which he saw as a totally new dimension of human reality. It is founded on the idea of repressions, and Fromm states the concept this way: "The phenomenon of repression is a social phenomenon. The individual in any given society represses the awareness of those feelings and fantasies which are incompatible with the thought patterns of that society."

He maintains that a particular weakness in Freud was his limitation of the concept of repression to sexuality. But the concept was even further diluted by Freud in his contention that Western Industrial Society was the highest stage in social evolutionary development and that its survival depended upon a high level of sexual repression. Fromm, Reich, and Marcuse all disclaim this assumption, but the main issue for Fromm is that a potentially critical social concept (repression) was diluted and accommodated to bourgeois society by Freud. "The understanding of the unconscious of the individual, presupposes and necessitates the critical analysis of his society," and this, says Fromm, is where orthodox Freudian analysis has neglected and betrayed its goal of understanding the individual (Fromm, 1959:109-111). Fromm's contention is that there is no way one can understand man, the individual, without understanding man, the social participant.

The central motivating factor of repression is fear of isolation. The fear of isolation is equivalent to the fear of insanity, and, for Fromm, mental illness is nothing more than the ultimate in isolation from the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the society at large.

Contrary to what he considers to be the tenets of orthodox psychoanalytic theory (as manifest in "Ego Psychology"), Fromm returns to Freud's characterization of the Id. He maintains that the Id was the center of attention for Freud's system since it stressed the irrational passions which motivate man apart from his conscious activity (Fromm, 1970:31-33). He sees a dialectical component to Freud's characterization of the Id, represented in the tension and conflict between pleasure and reality principles, mobile and bound energy, primary and secondary processes, and the dynamic interaction between Ego, Id and Super Ego.

Freud's goal of making the unconscious conscious through the study of the Id is lost if one conceptually neutralizes the internal conflicts by defining them away. This is what Fromm feels the Ego Psychologists have done. Ego psychology's stress on the ways in which the "rational" ego can help the individual *adapt* to his social environment is untrue to the Freud who spoke of collective neurosis and social pathology. It, therefore, negates the truly creative and potentially critical aspects of psychoanalytic theory (Fromm, 1970:32-34).

Finally, let us move to Fromm's novel use of one additional Freudian concept: character types. Fromm uses the



anal-hoarding and oral-receptive character types in a historic sense, as archetypes which prevail within the two epochs of capitalism-entrepreneurial and monopoly. These he feels are exceedingly helpful in understanding how society manifests, utilizes, and reproduces itself in the character of the individual. He sums up his concept of social character by describing it as: the way in which society creates people who *want* to do what they *have* to do (Evans, 1966b).

The Case of Herbert Marcuse

As has been mentioned, Marcuse's experience with Freudian theory is more limited than that of Fromm and Reich since he did not draw his material from any clinical experience. This perhaps explains why he uses the most speculative and least empirically verifiable aspects of Freudian theory. Marcuse is characteristically impatient with that which is empirical.

His first book dealing with Freud was *Eros and Civilization*, where he states at the outset that "in the contemporary period psychological categories become political categories to the degree to which the private individual psyche becomes the more or less willing receptacle of socially necessary aspirations, feelings, drives and satisfactions" (Marcuse, 1962:viii). This represents Marcuse's attempt to fill a 'lacuna in Marx's thought,' i.e., a social psychological theory of the conditions for the growth of working class consciousness. This 'gap' in Marx's theories had allowed 'vulgar Marxists' to presuppose an automatic reflexive change in consciousness which would come about with the change in the socio-economic base. The events of the middle twentieth century in Germany and the Soviet Union in particular proved this view to be inadequate, and further, it could not explain the ways in which (under capitalism) men came to be dominated by *forms of consciousness* which prevented them from liberating themselves (MacIntyre, 1970:42-43).

Alasdair MacIntyre maintains that, considering Marcuse's Marxian orientation (although much is actually *pre-Marxian*), it is quite strange that Marcuse should look to Freud for his explanation of consciousness considering Freud's conservative political orientation and pessimistic cultural views.

Marcuse's use of Freud is largely based on the manipulation of Freudian terminology. This he does not only at the expense of clarity but often at the expense of the Freudian meaning altogether.

The core argument of *Eros and Civilization* is this; The commonly held assumption that Freud proposed that civilization is based on the permanent subjugation of the human instincts, and that the process was inevitable and irreversible, does not take into account that Freud's own theory provides reasons for rejecting these assumptions. The notion of a non-repressive civilization is neither speculative nor utopian since it can be justified by the fact that the very achievements of repressive civilization are creating the preconditions for the gradual abolition of repression. This contradiction (in Marcus's view) is emerging through technological advancement and its potential to liberate mankind from the need to repress his sexuality for production purposes (MacIntyre, 1970:3-5).

Marcuse states that Freud's theory is sociological; even its 'biologism' is social in nature. In his view it is this point which the "neo-Freudian revisionists" refuse to recognize, since they cannot see that the roots of the instincts lie in society itself. That this is so is revealed in the series of working hypotheses

upon which Freud's metapsychology is based. For Marcuse the neo-Freudians have done a great disservice in attempting to eliminate the metapsychology from Freud (MacIntyre, 1970:6-7). In attempting to support these contentions Marcuse begins by defining some of his terms.

Repression is used in the non-technical sense to designate conscious and unconscious, external and internal processes of restraint, constraint, and suppression. Based on this definition, his argument moves as follows: If Freud has said repression as an individual psychic phenomenon emerges only after (or concurrently with) the development of consciousness, then the term necessarily includes a social dimension . . . that dimension being the institutions and agents of the socialization process. Marcuse assumes that Freud's reality principle, rather than being universalistic and a-historical, is specific to particular socio-economic systems. In contemporary capitalist society, the historically specific form of the reality principle is the "performance principle." Modern sexual morality based on performance demands the suppression of all sexual instincts except those which serve the aim of "legitimate reproduction." This is where "surplus repression" comes in. Marcuse defines surplus repressions as the subordination of *excessive* amounts of libidinal energy to specific laws, customs, and institutions which extract a *greater toll on the individual than is necessary*. The sublimation of sexual instincts beyond necessary levels is the underpinning of a society whose performance principle functions at the expense of the health and happiness of the individual (Ober, 1970:106-109).

Thus, *Eros and Civilization* is an attempt to present the possibility for removal of surplus repression by the radical transformation of the society which necessitates it. This is the point at which Marcuse makes the distinction between a society based upon "repressive de-sublimation" and one based upon "non-repressive sublimation." The former pertains to the release of sexuality in modes and forms which reduce and weaken erotic energy. The latter pertains to Eros in the sense of "the impulse to persevere and enrich life by mastering nature in accordance with the developing vital needs" (Marcuse, 1962:114) and for Marcuse this is lost in a society which drains off erotic energy by introducing "sexiness" into business, politics, and propaganda. This 'sexuality with a sales value' (sexuality played within the context of socially defined "rules of the game") becomes a means of domination and social control. This is repressive de-sublimation.

Non-repressive sublimation is the release of sexual impulses in such a way that they retain their erotic energy, transcend their immediate object, and "eroticize normally non-erotic or anti-erotic relationships," (not only between individuals, but also between man and nature) (Marcuse, 1962:ix). This could only come about through deep-rooted political changes that would see technology serving human needs rather than class interests; life rather than death. But an emancipation of this type requires much more than the unhampered release of private desires and hostility. It requires a long and arduous struggle of revolutionary enlightenment and education (Marcuse, 1969) practical revolutionary activity and struggle against a repressive, technological society.

The underlying theme in *Eros and Civilization* is the juxtaposition of Eros and Thanatos—the instincts of life and the instincts of death. Despite Freud's own indication that he considered the death instinct to be a hypothetical construct (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:71-73), Marcuse interprets the events of the mid-twentieth century in the same way that

Freud interpreted the events of the First World War. However, for Marcuse the outcome of the dialectical interaction between Eros and Thanatos amidst the terror and destruction of the twentieth century might well be a "dialectical emergence of human fulfillment out of the depth of depravity and oppression" (Lowenfeld, 1970:144).

Nurtured in the Hegelian commitment to logos, Marcuse constructs an image of a technological society where reason and imagination come together in men no longer compelled to work. Through reason the death instinct can become sublimated into the service of life and men can liberate themselves from the bonds of repressions. The creative use of science and art could produce a society in which eroticism would pervade the whole fabric of human relationships as well as man's relationship to nature (Keen and Raser, 1971:60).

. . . progressive alienation itself increases the potential of freedom; . . . Relieved from the requirements of domination, the quantitative reduction of labour time and energy leads to a qualitative change in the human existence; the free rather than the labour time determines its content. The expanding realm of freedom becomes truly a realm of play . . . thus liberated they will generate new forms of realization and of discovering the world . . . The altered relation between the two realms of human reality (freedom and necessity) alters the relation between . . . instinct and reason (Marcuse, 1962:203-204).

On the basis of this unity of instinct and reason Marcuse builds his idea of the "new sensitivity" and the "new sensibility" through which the instincts themselves might change. Under such circumstances authoritarian domination and repression would so repulse the individual that he would effect "the Great Refusal," which Marcuse feels is already exhibited in a variety of forms (Marcuse, 1972:11). Within the Freudian framework this idea of "changing instincts" is unacceptable since instincts are defined as "innate responses" which are species-specific. Marcuse, however, takes the liberty of bending the concept to his needs.

One other interesting concept in this particular work is 'phantasy.' Marcuse maintains that it is in phantasy that our allegiance to the pleasure principle (and opposition to the reality principle) is preserved and it is in imagination and creativity that our repressed instinctual drives become manifest. He further maintains that phantasy anticipates new forms of human life where repression does not exist.

The analysis of the cognitive function of phantasy is thus led to aesthetics as the "science of beauty": behind the aesthetic form lies the repressed harmony of sensuousness and reason – the eternal protest against the organization of life by the logic of domination, the critique of the performance principle (Marcuse, 1962:130).

The truth value of imagination relates not only to the past *but also to the future*: the forms of freedom and happiness which it involves claim to deliver the historical *reality* (Marcuse, 1962:135).

In speaking of the Freudian legacy in the work of Marcuse two questions arise: first, how well does he represent Freud, and second, how solid are his extrapolations from Freud. Alasdair MacIntyre notes that Freud's starting point was empirical (clinical) data. His primary concern was to explain neurotic symptoms. Through this effort he introduced the concept of unconscious motivation and, of course, came to develop a theory of *normal* behavior based upon what he saw to be *abnormal* behavior. From this he moved to a theory of

human development and eventually to art, politics, and religion. Freud advanced into ever more speculative assertions and it is precisely from these assertions that Marcuse departs (MacIntyre, 1970:41-42). What Marcuse deals in is not psychoanalytic theory, but rather a "philosophy of psychoanalysis." He moves exclusively in the field of theory and is detached from the technical discipline which is the truly rich aspect of psychoanalysis (Fromm, 1970:25-26).

Fromm maintains that Marcuse misuses the terms pleasure principle and reality principle in such a way as to entirely mutilate their Freudian meaning. Reality principle in Freud was a *modification* of pleasure principle, not its dialectical contradiction. Reality principle is the aspect of the human being which has the capacity to observe reality and ascertain the harm which might come about if unchecked instinctual gratification were to prevail. For Fromm this *function* is something quite different from the *norms* of a given social system, which is the way in which Marcuse uses it. In Freud the reality principle serves the same function no matter what the particular social structure (Fromm, 1970:27).

Further, if Fromm is correct, Marcuse's use of the term 'repression' is a distortion of its original Freudian meaning. The indiscriminate use of the term for both conscious and unconscious, internal and external restraint obscures the intricacies of its Freudian meaning (for example, the ways in which Freud saw the character as protecting *itself* from feelings which might prove socially threatening). Unconscious repression is deep rooted in a person's character structure and has a dimension of permanence which is integral to the way society reproduces itself in its people. In Freud it is not continuous with external or conscious restraints and Marcuse's use of the term gives no account of its complexity as a psychological process (Fromm, 1970:28).

Marcuse's loose application of Freud's terminology and perhaps the worst aspects of Freudian metapsychology has not made *Eros and Civilization* an overly impressive example of his work. However, his goals of establishing: (a) an instinctual basis for revolutionary praxis, (b) a biological foundation for socialism, and, (c) a "creative human existence" (disciplined by reason, enriched with passion, suffused with joy) are commendable. Marcuse exhibits a tradition of European romanticism and idealism which is refreshing amidst the bleak pessimism of the Cold War era.

FREUD CRITICIZED

As has been stated, Reich saw his work mainly as an extension of Freud's work. He saw Freud opening the unconscious, and he saw himself giving the unconscious a mode of physical and verbal emotional expression. He saw Freud as attempting to understand human nature on the basis of word association, whereas he attempted to understand human nature on the basis bioenergetic expression, movement, motion and emotion (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:5-8). He saw Freud as putting forward the notion that the energy source of neurosis was sexual energy (energy stasis) but that sexual energy was dangerous any way and had to be channelled in "healthy" ways. Reich saw sublimation not as the curbing of a dangerous impulse but rather as the source of the highest cultural achievements, the psychic apparatus being the beneficiary. However, for Reich a "healthy" sublimation is only possible in the absence of sexual repression (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:19). Where there is no dammed up sexual



energy which can cause stagnation and "vegetative" processes, erotic energy can be sexually or culturally channelled without the pomographic and aggressive build-up which occurs with sexual repression. Freud didn't explore these areas for fear that his sexuality theories might have too radical social implications. Reich saw him as being pressured into his "Death Instinct" theories by followers who sought to legitimize psychoanalysis, by accommodating it to conservative Viennese society.

Reich's refutation of the death instinct theory in "The Masochistic Character" (Reich, 1972:225-269) is a masterpiece of psychoanalytic work and was denounced by Freud as communist propaganda. "The Masochistic Character" deals with Freud's contention that primary masochism is the psychological manifestation of what is actually a *biologically* rooted death instinct linked to the process of dissimulation supposedly displayed in every cell of the organism during the process of aging. Freud saw this irreversible transformation of body cells into solid, indissoluble substances (calcification) as an assimilation of the life processes (instincts) toward the *accomplishment* of death. This made the death process a biologically rooted "instinct". Reich, in countering this position, held that the "calcification" is in fact a hindrance to the life processes and that "instinct" cannot be used to describe it. Freud was contradicting his own definition of instinct:

This disturbance of the life process is the exact antithesis of what we have come to know as the basic characteristic of the instinct.... To accept these processes as the basis of an instinct, we would have to change our concept of instincts (Reich, 1972:230).

Further, as Freud maintained, if anxiety is taken to be the expression of the "liberated death instinct" and anxiety is defined as the inner perception of the calcification or "structure-forming" process, then anxiety would have to be either less or absent in childhood and adolescence. Clinical observation suggests that indeed, the opposite is the case.

Reich then gives clinical evidence that anxiety is actually nothing other than the sensation of constriction, "a condition of stasis." Restriction on sexual gratification accelerates the stasis that accompanies the "structure-forming" process and, therefore, might well accelerate the process of dying. This conception is antithetical to Freud's thesis that the human being possesses an "innate drive" to return to the stability of inorganic matter.

The Death Instinct theory had tremendously conservative sociological implications. It provided a conceptual path for avoiding the development of a sociology of human suffering. Human suffering conveniently became ineradicable because of innate destructive impulses. It shifted the source of human suffering from the outer world and society (Reich, 1972:233), to the inner world – the self – the "dark forces" within us (to use Ernest Jones' terminology).

Since the Masochistic Character was said to be a manifestation of the death instinct, Reich went on to criticize it in terms of its relationship to other Freudian concepts. In terms of the pleasure principle concept, the problem of how unpleasure could become pleasurable in the masochistic character was a very difficult one to decipher. Reich's answer came from observations which led him to refute the formula that the masochist experiences unpleasure as pleasure:

... while (The Masochist) strives after pleasure like any other

person, a disturbing mechanism causes this striving to miscarry.... The Masochist, far from striving after unpleasure, demonstrates a strong intolerance of psychic tensions and suffers from quantitative over-production of unpleasure, not to be found in any other neurosis (Reich, 1972:236).

The salient traits of the masochistic character according to Reich are found individually in all neurotic characters and are not unique until they "all converge and predominantly determine the basic tone of the personality and its typical reactions." What seemed to be the pleasure of a particular punishment was in actuality the relief experienced by *not* receiving punishment which *in fantasy* was much more severe. Self punishment is therefore the execution of a milder, substitute punishment in replacement of the extreme form of the fantasy punishment.

Reich also explored Freud's contention that guilt was the motive force of masochism. In his interaction with other people the masochist (by provoking those around him) is not seeking gratification for his feelings of guilt but rather puts the analyst (or the parent) 'in the wrong.' This gives the masochist the "right" to hate and repel the analyst and protect himself. The need and desire for love, tenderness, and support exists in the masochist, but fear of the unpleasure and trauma of rejection is much more threatening than the limited and negative contact brought on by provoking the other person to anger. The response of another person is predictable and safe; it is without "chance" and without "investment."

By continually conducting himself in a disagreeable fashion, he neutralized the steadily flowing fear of punishment (rejection); therefore, being bad was a source of pleasure (Reich, 1972:244).

The importance of these two departures from Freud is that Reich took the mystical "death instinct" explanation of masochism and replaced it with a social and psychological explanation based on clinical evidence. In so doing he was undermining the death instinct concept with existing psychoanalytic theory and "empirical" evidence.

Civilization and its Discontents represented (in Reich's view) Freud's turning psychoanalysis into an instrument of conservative ideology and further removing it from its prime focus on sexuality. The death instinct concept was merely an up-dated version of the "doctrine of original sin" and of about the same conceptual value.

Reich believed that Freud was completely aware of the sociological dimension of psychoanalysis but his conservatism and his wish to make psychoanalysis legitimate prevented his exploring its implications (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:23). Freud accepted that the psychological level was his principle domain and that he was incapable of delving into the biological manifestation of mental ill-health; Reich contended that both facets of the phenomenon *must* be dealt with. Freud's psychoanalysis was not oriented towards a prophylaxis of neurosis nor the alleviation of mass misery. As Calvin Hall has pointed out (1954) Freud was first a scientist, then a philosopher; psychotherapy was not his central concern. He told Reich, "It's not our purpose to save the world" (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:52). Reich held that if psychoanalysis was not a method for the alleviation of mass misery, then it was purely an intellectual exercise.⁴ Reich's stance upset Freud and the Psychoanalytic Association.

Finally, and perhaps most important in terms of modern therapeutic technique was Freud's anti-emotional, purely rationalist approach to human emotional disturbance.

Contrary to this view, Reich saw intellectualism itself as often militating against the free expression of anxiety. Intellectual activity often provided the individual with a device for anesthetizing himself against feelings which, if expressed, might become socially threatening. Intellectualism thus became a character defense able to project and eschew 'threatening' emotions. In contrast to Freud's rationalist positions, Reich maintained that intellect was neither objective nor necessarily "reality" oriented. Intellect and emotion cannot be separated from one another. An 'unemotional,' purely rational, self-manipulative attitude will destroy the quality of intellectual work. The relationship of emotion to intellect is exemplified in the severely restricted intellectual capabilities of highly intelligent people who are suffering from emotional stress. In the absence of healthy expression of primary drives, secondary drives will emerge which (in Reich's terms) are 'Pornographic' and usually destructive (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:64-70).

Fromm was much less gentle with Freud than Reich. His critique of Freud takes place on a different level. Fromm *situates* Freud socially and historically, and criticizes his work in the context of its bourgeois orientation.

Freud was obviously never a radical critic of capitalist society, its social or economic foundation, or its ideologies. Freud's man (rooted in a simplistic enlightenment view) was universal and had a fixed "nature." Man was a closed system of drives; he was primarily isolated, interested in the optimal satisfaction of his ego- and libidinal needs. Only secondarily was man a social being (Fromm, 1970:44-45).

For Fromm, Freud's "sexual man" is merely a variant of the classic "economic man" of the nineteenth century political economy. He is isolated, self-sufficient, seeking satisfaction through exchange in a market place of other individuals with similar physiological and libidinous needs. Despite this limitation, Freud's theory does provide a *description* of interpersonal relations in a specifically bourgeois society. However, as a description of man as such, it is inadequate because it is a-historical and a-social.

Freud's conception of the psyche was mechanistic and materialistic. It assumed that psychic phenomena could be explained ultimately through knowledge of physiological processes. It was reductionistic in that it assumed that all neurosis and all human behavior is determined by conflict between sexual and self-preservative drives.

The obvious sociological critique of this view is that Freud's "human nature" (especially the static instinctual system) was based upon an already existing system of social conditions which have remained the same since the emergence of capitalist society. Were the specific social conditions to change, the system of influences would lose its stability and so would the behavior patterns (Fromm, 1970:44-45). Freud's "human nature" was based upon late nineteenth and early twentieth century bourgeois society. He was unable to grasp the amazing flexibility of human social behavior.

Fromm's critique of the death instinct is similar to Reich's in that it shows a conflict within Freudian theory between "instincts" defined as original life forces and "instincts" as defined in the 'Eros vs Thanatos' dichotomy. However, Fromm makes an additional point. Since Freud's system had no sociological dimensions (no revolutionary implications or concepts of man which allowed for essential social change) he *had* to look for the causes of destruction and tragedy in the very nature of man (Fromm, 1970:49). Freud was unable to

accommodate his earlier 'life-instincts' theories with his later metapsychological speculations for this very reason. This accounts for the "theoretical patchwork" of his later years.

Another fundamental point where Freud went off the track was in the characterization of the superego. In recognizing that "Good" is what the internalized authority commands and "Bad" is what it prohibits, the seed is sown for a social criticism which recognizes that society implants in the individual those norms which are necessary for its optimal functioning. In capitalist society those norms may be in contravention of basic human social and psychological needs. Freud's theory of the superego veils the issue by suggesting an inherently conservative character to the superego whereas in reality it is *society* which is conservative.

Fromm makes a forceful indictment against Freud's view of women. Freud saw the male as the only fully 'human' being. Only the male manifested libido – the female was by nature inferior. This particular bias led him into some serious problems. For instance, no distinction could be made between merely sexual and erotic love, which for Fromm is an important distinction; secondly, he overlooked the primary tie of child (male or female) to the mother (Fromm, 1970:54-54). Since in his Oedipus myth the mother was merely a sexual object, Freud was blind to the implications of the mother as a center of power in child development and character growth.⁵

In his earlier years, Freud was a defender of the integrity and freedom of the child as a curious, imaginative, sensitive being which required stimulation and intellectual exercise. In his later years the child was viewed as a "little criminal and pervert" who only became normal in adulthood. Freud's earlier indictments against parental threats and sexual seduction soon were replaced by an artificial and idealized view of the "always well-meaning parents" (Fromm, 1970:56-57), which again accommodated the myths of conservative Viennese society.

Finally, Freud's philosophy of history comes under attack by Fromm, who suggests that the dichotomy of sexual repression and cultural achievement is not so much the universal tragedy (which Freud saw) but rather a picture of a particular repressive social structure. The particular conditions can be historically transcended and in this area Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse hold a very similar position. However, Reich's "Genital Character" (as he portrayed it in *Character Analysis*) is a model of man which is clearly utopian... similar in many ways to Marcuse's "man in non-repressive society." The difference between Marcuse and Reich is that Marcuse sees sexual "perversities" as healthy acts of rebellion against the restrictive sexual practices of modern capitalist society. Reich and Fromm agree with the general Freudian view of genital sexuality. In this case they both would condemn Marcuse's view of sexual behavior as degenerative, regressive, and infantile. Fromm is the only one of the three who does not construct a non-repressive utopia. Instead he merely states that the future must not be defined by a current socio-historical situation.

One final comparative note: both Reich and Fromm refute Freud's view of culture as *necessarily* repressive. Marcuse, of course, states that Freud didn't really know what he was saying.

A section based on Marcuse's criticism of Freud can (quite understandably) be short since anyone who would accept and apply Freud's most speculative metapsychology without serious criticism could not be considered a very serious critic



of Freud. However, the problem with the 'Freud' in Marcuse is that Marcuse claims to agree with orthodox psychoanalytic theory while twisting and revising its definitions to meet his own needs.⁶ Does this suggest a lack of understanding of Freud or a quite serious deviation from his principles?

Marcuse depended upon a socio-historical interpretation of Freud's metapsychology to find a biological foundation for Hope. Thus, a serious critical look at Freud was not in his repertory of philosophical projects. In his later work he came to state that some of the Freudian concepts were obsolescent in the "new era of repression". Freud's theory has as its "object" the individual exhibiting a dynamic mental structure with constant dialectical interaction between id and ego; ego and super ego; pleasure principle and reality principle. He presupposed an irreconcilable conflict between the individual and society and an awareness within the individual that this conflict existed (Marcuse, 1970:44-45). The family as the socializing agent provides a theatre whereby the child can build his strength, maturity, and autonomy through the initial rebellion against the father who represents society's demand that "pleasure" be subordinated to "reality".

As Marcuse sees it, the historical dissolution of the father-dominated family in advanced industrial society has created a situation where society directly manages the "nascent ego" through mass-media, school, and "culture" generally. Socially defined repressions are no longer internalized through the long struggle with father, but rather are brought to bear directly by artificial 'ego ideals' (i.e., advertising role models) before the ego has become fully personally formed or has achieved any kind of autonomy. This condition destroys the original process whereby the ego could mediate the "him-self"/"other" dichotomy. This is the ground for the formation of *Masses* rather than people, where the individual become the conscious and unconscious object of administration because the ego has not had the opportunity to sustain itself as a self apart from the *social* onslaught of the super ego (Marcuse, 1970:46-48). Under these circumstances individuals merge into masses where the ego ideal, conscience, and responsibility are all projected and embodied in an external agent. This external agent is, of course, not a personalized leader but the rather nebulous "system," "government," "society." This is a regression to a more primitive level of mental activity which Freud described as the primitive horde. The accompanying psychological processes include: dwindling of the conscious individual personality; focusing of thought and feeling into common direction; tendency toward the immediate carrying out of intentions, as they emerge.

This "shrinking of the ego" into a pure collective mentality is manifest in modern western society by such tendencies as the constant avoidance of self and fear of aloneness (always noise – transistor radio in ear – constant onslaught of external stimulation – constant identification with the Big Ones). This is the weakening of the critical mental faculties of consciousness and conscience.

Deprived of its power of negation, the ego, striving to "find identity" in the heteronomous world, either spends itself in the numerous mental and emotional diseases which come to psychological treatment, or the ego submits quickly to the required modes of thought and behavior, assimilating its self to the others (Marcuse, 1970:51).

But this "assimilation" alternative takes place under certain

very negative conditions since the "other" is either competitive or superior . . . hostile or clearly predatory in a possessive - individualist society. Thus, for those who opt for integration into society, the ego ideal (generalized "other" and "leader") which guides the spending or energy activates a necessarily aggressive attitude towards others within the society. This aggression is "controlled" by certain rules but the residue is directed toward the *external* enemies of the ego ideal.⁷ Thus, as Marcuse sees it, the individuals of modern capitalist society are "mentally and instinctually pre-disposed to accept . . . social necessities which demand the permanent mobilization . . . (of) destruction . . ." (Marcuse, 1970:51). "Destruction" refers to the horrendous weapons for mass extermination.

In the context of these conditions (i.e., ego formation in and by the masses; shrinkage of ego; collectivization of ego ideal: activation of aggressive energy toward an out-group) psychoanalysis cannot offer political alternatives. Psychoanalysis *can* stimulate a counter movement to these "regressive" tendencies by encouraging the restoration of private autonomy and rationality by helping people to live with a *personal* conscience and a *personal* ego ideal . . . by providing a mode of living in opposition to the "Establishment" (Marcuse, 1970:60).

Marcuse does a curious turn in this particular piece of work. He starts by recognizing the inadequacy (in present-day terms) of the Freudian concepts of dynamic character, conflict of individual and society, dynamics of father-dominated family, and generally Freud's interpretation of the individual's place in contemporary society, but at the conclusion states that in its very obsolescence (insistence on *individual* needs and potentialities) it is "invoking not only a past left behind, but a future to be re-captured." The recapturing of a past in the creation of a future is a rather questionable program for a dialectician, and especially a thinker who has his roots in concepts of progress laid down by Hegel and Marx.

THE IMPACT FOR SOCIOLOGY

Considering the diversity of interpretation and utilization of Freud (by Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse, respectively) it is difficult to expect any accommodation among them with respect to the *relationship* between Marx and Freud . . . sociology and psychoanalysis. Further, each of the three is considered to be representative of a particular "school" of psychoanalytical thought. Reich's "resistance" and "defense mechanisms" theories have been associated with the so-called "Ego Psychologists" (Anna Freud, Heinz Hartmann, de Saussure). However, Reich rigorously criticizes the members of this school as having been fundamentally opposed to his 'character analysis' and 'prophylaxis of neurosis' themes since they were critical sociological concepts.

Similarly, Fromm, who is often called a *neo-Freudian revisionist* (in the same camp with Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan), vigorously excludes himself from this group (Evans, 1966:58) because of his critical "Marxian" mode of analysis and what he perceives to be his greater "closeness" to Freud.

Finally, Marcuse (considered to be a representative of the Frankfurt School) is in direct opposition to Adorno and Horkheimer in his interpretation and utilization of Freud. This sets him against the two key figures in the Frankfurt Institute.

The confusion is difficult to dispel. Fromm and Marcuse,

though strongly opposed to one another, share a common 'straddle' position on the fence between orthodox Freudianism and neo-Freudian revisionism. Both claim to represent the 'real' Freud but both join the 'revisionists' in their sociological approach to psychoanalysis. Reich, though the most 'orthodox' in his Freudianism, is both anti-Revisionist (Fromm and Horney) and anti-Ego psychology (Hartmann, Anna Freud, Fedem)⁸

It is sufficient to say that each of the three theorists contributed something to sociology through their specific brand of Freudianism. It is necessary, however, to suggest that the extreme confusion, fence straddling, and eclecticism may well be the symptom of a deep-rooted contradiction between psychoanalytic and sociological theory (critical, Marxist) which may or may not be resolvable.

Psychoanalysis and Sociology

As Paul Robinson points out, Reich's only attempt to apply "the fruits of this theoretical rumination" to concrete social issues was in his study of *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. In this work Reich pre-dated Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* by a decade, and his influence on Fromm's work is obvious. Despite the lack of sophistication in historical scholarship, Reich's analysis was more "conscientiously" Freudian than Fromm's. His central theme was that one could not totally explain the rise of Nazism in Germany by either a study of Hitler's charisma or by the manipulations of the German capitalists. The psychological structures of the masses of people in Germany have to be taken into account, and one could not describe or explain them without examining the family. As Reich saw it the distinguishing feature of lower middle class life in Germany was the "correspondence of familial and economic structures," i.e., the small business operated by family members. In this situation the father's familial authority was backed by economic authority. His insistence on sexual abstinence then, was much more powerful than the proletarian father who was often away from his family and whose children could escape into the anonymity of urban society. It was upon this (and the resultant authority fixation) that Nazism fed. Reich's stress on the family and how authority and sexual repression became entwined (plus his utilization of sociological and sexual dimensions to explain the roots of a social phenomenon) is both intriguing and fruitful. However, like Marcuse, Reich shows disdain for providing empirical support for his arguments. *Mass Psychology of Fascism* degenerates into an attempt to "diagnose the ills of humanity as a whole" (Robinson, 1969:46-48). Despite this, the central idea of looking at the family as a focal point in the social matrix (and dealing with sexuality as a very important aspect of the family) is very fruitful for sociological enquiry.

Regrettably, Reich never progressed beyond this point and as his study of orgone bio-physics progressed he came to have a covert contempt for sociology and an overt rejection of Marx, principally because sociology could not accept Freud's libido theory. His goal of giving psychoanalytic theory a foundation in natural science took precedence over any unification of psychoanalytic theory with social scientific investigation. Therefore, in the context of exploring the relationships of psychoanalysis to sociology, we must at this point leave Reich behind. The issue of science in psychoanalysis and sociology can be more fruitfully explored in viewing the controversy between Frankfurt and the

neo-Freudian Revisionists.

The 'parting of the ways' between Fromm and the Frankfurt School came about because of fundamental differences with respect to (a) the meaning of psychoanalytic theory for critical social theory and (b) the fundamental relationship of man to society.

Adorno states his case this way:

Rigorous psychoanalytic theory, alive to the clash of psychic forces, can better drive home the objective character especially of economic laws as against subjective impulses, than theories which, in order at all costs to establish a continuum between society and psyche, deny the fundamental axiom of analytic theory, *the conflict between id and ego* (Adorno, 1967:75).

The "fundamental axiom" of which he speaks is part of what Fromm rejects as Freud's biological determinism and metapsychological instinct theory. The grounds on which Fromm rejects them is that they are incompatible with the humanistic reading of Marx to which he subscribes. For Horkheimer and Adorno Freud's instinct and libido theory expresses the dialectical opposition of the individual to the claims of the 'totality.' It also undermines the revisionists' attempt to read *society* as a manifestation of the "creator-subject," man (Jay, 1972:291-292). For Frankfurt, the establishment of a continuum between society and psyche belies the fundamental dialectical antagonism which could alone provide the grounds for human freedom:

The specific differences between individuals are equally scars inflicted by society and emblems of human freedom (Adorno, 1967:73).

It is for this very reason that Adorno and Horkheimer press for the autonomy of the psychological sphere and resist the conceptual integration of psychology and sociology. For them, the attempted integration (a la Talcott Parsons and others) has represented the further conceptual and ideological *accommodation* of man to society. Neo-Freudian revisionists (like Fromm, by attempting the disciplinary integration of psychology and sociology, play into the same "conservative" schema. Now it must be re-emphasized that by "autonomy of the psychological sphere," Adorno is not falling into an idea of man as creator subject where history is reducible to the "continuous unfolding of the subject," as Therborn quite irresponsibly says he does (Therborn, 1970:293). On the contrary, Adorno forcefully asserts that the "cult of psychology," which segregates the social acts which reproduce men's lives from their private human sphere, is part of an individualistic ideology which allows the loss-to-consciousness of the social nature of man. It is a necessary concomitant of the process of dehumanization and domination. Even the argument of crude economic determinism is superior to the psychological argument that the economic system is reducible to the private motivations of individuals. The problem (as Adorno sees it) can be stated this way: the authentic sphere of *psychoanalysis* is the report on the forces of destruction rampant within the individual amidst a destructive society. What is not its authentic sphere is any claim to totality (Adorno, 1968:96). In the same way, a *sociology* which melds these antagonistic instinctual drives into cultural traits (for example, Horney, 1937) is violating *its* proper sphere, which is the study of the "antagonistic whole."

Adorno and Horkheimer saw Fromm's "Social Character" as the negation of the idea of a level of human existence beyond immediate social control. It therefore was the



affirmation of a reconciliation between society and the individual. This tied the individual personality to all of society's unfulfilled potentialities (Jay, 1972:301-303). For them, Freud's greatest legacy was the dissolution of the man-society totality, since his "a-social, biological premises expressed (metaphorically at least) one aspect of the non-identity of man in an unreconciled totality." Their hope is that the "socialization of the world" (which Marx celebrated) could never fully eradicate the *natural side of men*.

This self contradiction (man and society) was to produce a tension in man which would not allow the condition to go unaddressed. This fear of becoming "one dimensional" - this anxiety - must be the focus of analysis, but not on the psychological level. Analysis must take place at the philosophical and social-theoretical level. This is the role of Critical Theory.

It is quite obvious that Marcuse straddles several fences when it comes to neo-Freudian revisionism and the Frankfurt School. In maintaining that Freud's theories suggest a possible accommodation of man and society in a non-repressive civilization, he is directly opposed to the views of Adorno and Horkheimer. When he speaks of one-dimensional man and the tension of Eros and Thanatos, he is in agreement with them. When he speaks of a socialist-humanist society based on a new sensitivity and a new sensibility where human instincts actually change (and Eros prevails over Thanatos) he not only stands in opposition to their interpretation of Freud, but he is even using the term "Humanist," which to them is the philosophic source of the attempt to negate the *real* conflict between man and society (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1969).

In criticizing the revisionists (like Fromm) Marcuse says, "they cut off the roots of society in the instincts." If he conceives the roots of society as being in the instincts, he is far closer to Fromm than to Horkheimer or Adorno.

Now, it seems clear that Adorno and Horkheimer are much more internally consistent and 'true' to Freud than Marcuse. All three claim to start from a firm acceptance of Freud's libido and instinct theory but Adorno and Horkheimer do not distort Freud's concepts by redefining them in such a way as to include a socio-historical dimension. They propose (in straight forward fashion) that the libido theory and its biological determinism provide them with an instinctual foundation for man's resistance to social oppression. Marcuse's attempt to find a sophisticated socio-historical (Marxian) dimension in Freud was interesting, but at the same time misleading.

Fromm's use of Freud is the most sociologically significant since he jettisons the speculative metapsychology and develops what is most sociologically relevant while at the same time attempting to enrich it with a sophisticated socio-historical analysis. Fromm does not try to twist Freud, rather he accepts Freud's limitations, situates them historically, and moves on to the 'meat,' which for him is the dynamic concept of the character (and specifically the unconscious).

Fromm defines *Social Character* as the "matrix of the character structure common to a groups," assuming that its formation is based on "the practise of life as it is constituted by the mode of production and the resulting stratification." In psychoanalytic terms it is: "that particular structure of psychic energy which is molded by any given society so as to be useful for the functioning of that particular society" (Fromm, 1966:231).

The testing of this definition requires a method for the

psychoanalytic interpretation of statements made in a carefully devised questionnaire which would facilitate the uncovering of unconscious elements of the character structure which emerge under the influence of new circumstances (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970:226). Such a study was attempted in Fromm and Maccoby's *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (1970).

The principal methodological problem which Fromm and Maccoby had to overcome was distinguishing ideological (conventional) opinions from emotionally rooted characterological traits.

The principal critique of Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality* was that his questioning techniques did not allow distinction between ideology and character. Fromm maintains that the interpretative questionnaire, combined with the Rorschach test, provides a clear distinction between the two and a "projective questionnaire" would take socio-historical changes into account. It is not possible here to criticize the methodology or the findings of this study. However, according to Maccoby and Fromm the following conclusions can be drawn: In the social process human energy is structuralized into character traits common to *most* members of a class and/or the whole society. This motivates them to behave so as to fulfill their socio-economic function. *Social Character* is the *adaptation* of "human nature" to the socio-economic conditions and tends to stabilize and maintain these conditions (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970:226-230). However, inasmuch as the individual's *character* affects his *behavior* it has consequences within his socio-economic situation. Whether the individual deals with his tensions through alcoholism (on the one hand) or political activity (on the other) is of prime *social* significance.

Character typologies are often manifest in behavioral syndromes which have importance for the way the individual relates to others. It is in the study of such syndromes that one comes to appreciate the interaction between character, socio-economic conditions, and cultural traditions (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970:231).

The affinity for personal change in adjustment to changing social conditions is for Fromm directly related to the character structure of the individual and the group. The central principle in the process of social change comes to be what Fromm and Maccoby call "social selection." This represents the process whereby formerly "deviant" characters within the traditional social structure prove to be more adaptable to the new socio-economic conditions and therefore form the new leadership or class within the society.

... historical evidence shows that deviant and secondary trait personalities never fully disappear and hence that social changes always find individuals and groups which can serve as the core for a new social character (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970:232).

At his point it is sufficient to say that Fromm has made a fine attempt at showing that Freud's "dynamic character" concept can be useful in the study of social stability and social change and that the tools for dealing with the characterological aspects of individuals and societies can be forged with the help of psychoanalytic interpretative techniques.

One point to be made is that Freudian interpretation itself must undergo rigid self-examination without using (as Fromm often does) some rather old and worn interpretative modes dating back to Freud himself. In the light of new clinical data

and applications the basic Freudian modes of interpretation must be appraised and revised. The typologies of character and their manifestations (acquired through interpretation) can be up-dated through the same type of research that Fromm and Maccoby have undertaken.

Conclusion

Hope is a psychic concomitant to life and growth. Hope is an intrinsic element of the structure of life, of the dynamic of man's spirit. It is closely linked with another element of the structure of life: *faith*. . . Faith, like hope, is not prediction of the future; it is the vision of the *present* in a state of pregnancy (Fromm, 1968:12-13).

Although this optimistic vein is not so prevalent in Reich or Marcuse, it can be said that all three theorists tried to find in the tenets of Freudian theory a reason for hope. But all three display a Freudianism which is far from orthodox. It is a Freudianism seasoned with a critical social attitude and critical social theory.

Freud dealt with individual needs. He dealt with a dynamic

unconscious and repression and the way in which men repressed the expression of 'needs' which were *socially* unacceptable. Reich, Marcuse, and Fromm saw the repression and distortion of 'needs' that were specific to advanced capitalist society. Men were being dominated from 'without,' but even more tragically they were being dominated from 'within.' Marx's analysis did not deal with this situation. If in Freud one could find no biological source for revolt against oppression and domination, one could turn to no other quarter. For Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse Freud's man (possessing a dynamic character with needs which were often opposed to the manipulations of society) could stem the tide of the pessimistic previews of the "Behavior Shapers." However, as each of these theorists found, the courtship of Freud and Marx is a thorny matter. But Marcuse's search for hope in a newly constituted and powerful Eros; Reich's search in the 'discovery' of the orgone; and Fromm's role for psychoanalysis as "Physician of the Soul" (1950) all represent admirable attempts to find an incentive for *action* and a reason for *hope*.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Orgone Energy which Reich claimed to have discovered in 1939 was the very "stuff of life" (Rieff, 1966:144) . . . the bluish green, flickering, and vibrant life energy of the universe. The smooth and uninhibited flow of this energy within the body was what constituted biological and psychological health for Reich. Muscular armour, the concomitant of total characterological defence mechanisms (character armour), inhibited the flow of this energy and therefore became the source of "biopathies." Cancer was to be understood in these terms, according to Reich.
2. Reich believed that verbalization in therapy was potentially a defense against the feeling and expression of emotion. *Orgone Therapy* attempted to have the patient express himself in a total, biological sense. This required that the therapist "destroy the armour . . . to restore the motility of the body plasma." His techniques provided the foundation for contemporary Bio-Energetic Therapy techniques.
3. As will be seen later on in this paper the death instinct theory allowed human suffering to be justified by political conservatives as the product of the dark unconscious forces within man rather than the product of exploitative or repressive social systems which could conceivably be changed by man.
4. In terms of the Marxist concern with *praxis*, it is also noteworthy that Freud is purported to have told Reich: ". . . understanding is more important than doing" (Higgins and Raphael, 1967:71).
5. Excellent work refuting Freud's theoretical stance on the nature of women can be seen in Horney (1932) and Montague (1968).
6. One further example becomes clear as Marcuse states: "Instinct, in accordance with Freud's notion of *TRIEB* refers to primary "drives" of the human organism which are subject to historical modification; . . ." Now, "modification" is unacceptable since as Paul Roazen points out (1968:47) Freud's 'primary instincts' only showed cultural or historical variety in terms of *modes of gratification*. To suggest that Freud meant they were subject to historical modification is misleading.
7. The obvious example here is the tremendous amount of popular hatred and aggression which can be mobilized against a virtuously anonymous "enemy": the Vietnamese filled that role for a time.
8. Reich's biophysics and orgonomy took him on a tangent which alienated just about everyone. His core concept (Libidos) satisfied the orthodox Freudians but placed him in opposition to the revisionists. His critique of the family as sexually repressive (and his sociological bias) fits with the revisionists and alienates the orthodoxy. Reich had few alliances.



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