



productively, to develop fully and harmoniously, that is, to become what we potentially are. It is the guardian of our integrity; it is the "ability to guarantee one's self with all due pride, and also at the same time to say yes to one's self." If love can be defined as the affirmation of the potentialities and the care for, and the respect of, the uniqueness of the loved person, humanistic conscience can justly be called the voice of our loving care for ourselves.²⁵⁹

Fromm is quite confident of what the affective quality of humanistic conscience can do for man. He maintains that "if conscience always spoke loudly and distinctively enough, only a few would be misled from their moral objective."²⁶⁰ Why has man become deaf to it? Fromm's answer is that because man has become nonproductive, his conscience has also become weak.

The more productively one lives, the stronger is one's conscience, and, in turn, the more it furthers one's productiveness. The less productively one lives, the weaker becomes one's conscience; the paradoxical--and tragic situation of man is that his conscience is weakest when he needs it most.²⁶¹

The third and last component of productiveness in terms of socialization is rational faith. Rational faith here is defined as "faith in mankind."²⁶² It is the affirmation that

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 159.

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 160.

²⁶¹Ibid. See also "The Human Implications of Instinctivistic Radicalism," Dissent, 1-2, Winter 1954--Autumn 1955, 342-349.

²⁶²MH, p. 207.

. . . the potentialities of man are such that given the proper conditions they will be capable of building a social order governed by the principles of equality, justice, and love.²⁶³

Such an affirmation is still a vision, since it is not yet an actualized reality; nonetheless, it is a rational vision, and not wishful thinking, because it is based upon "the evidence of the past achievements of the human race and on the inner experience of each individual."²⁶⁴ In short, men of rational faith are those who experience "being God."²⁶⁵ Thus, God is a symbol of man's own powers which he tries to realize in his life, and is not a symbol of force and domination, having power over man.²⁶⁶

From our analysis of Fromm's affirmation of the essential goodness of man, it is possible to draw two conclusions. First, he is confident, at least in his discussion of the model of the productive man, that all man needs for the humanization of his technological society is genuine enthusiasm for it. If he seriously seeks it, it will be his, because all the necessary resources are available to him now. Second, the establishment of the truly humanized society can be fully

²⁶³Ibid., p. 207.

²⁶⁴Ibid., p. 208.

²⁶⁵ZBP, p. 92.

²⁶⁶Elsewhere Fromm defines man's faith in himself as "an atheist's rational faith in mankind" (MH, p. 212). Also see "Faith as a Character Trait," Psychiatry, V (August, 1942), 307-319.

established in the near future, if the first presupposition is fulfilled. And it is basically these two points that account for the optimism that dominates Fromm's thought most of the time. It is true that he warns at times that man, if he does not wake up now, will eventually find himself at a point of no return. Nevertheless, the major emphasis of his discussion of the productive man is focused upon the goodness of man and his open future, rather than upon the immediate crises that are endangering human life.

The question to be asked in this context, however, is whether his affirmation of man's capacity for self-salvation is compatible with the basic principle of his doctrine of man, namely the paradoxical relationship between the individual person and society. Fromm, we must conclude, does not seem to have succeeded in this task. His failure lies in the fact that he does not maintain the paradoxical relationship between man and society consistently throughout his analysis of the productive man and thereby fails to apply it to every aspect of the productive orientation.

Our point may be made clear if we focus our attention on Fromm's delineation of the productive man. Here he is concerned almost exclusively with the realization of man's potentialities through his own power, and nowhere does he clarify how this is actually related to the other thesis that man is a social being. In speaking of creativity,

rational thinking, and rational faith, Fromm focuses his attention on the problem of what man does to fulfill his potentialities. He is convinced that man must feel and know that whatever he does is the result of his initiative. In speaking of rational thinking, Fromm insists that this can come about only as a result of man's effort to see the object as it is and not as he wishes it to be. In delineating rational faith, Fromm maintains that man can attain this only when he refuses submission to something given as the authority of his life and, instead, relies upon his own observation and thinking. In his discussion of humanistic conscience, Fromm focuses his attention exclusively upon man's responsibility for developing it through his own initiative. The point which he makes here, therefore, is that man can and indeed must live productively by listening to his own true voice. The question as to what significant roles the good society plays in all this is not raised by Fromm. Thus, he fails to fulfill his original intention to hold man and society in paradoxical tension. It is because of this failure that we are left wondering how human creativity, rational thinking, and humanistic conscience can be recapitulated at all in society.

Only when he comes to love, Fromm begins to touch upon the paradoxical relationship of man and society. Love is defined as a "phenomenon of abundance" which is possible



only when man has been made secure by his own self-seeking. But, at the same time, it is a phenomenon which is nourished by the love which others give him, particularly in childhood. But his discussion of love as a whole again suffers from his one-sided emphasis on what man does to achieve love without paying equal attention to what society can do to make man loving. Love, first of all, is defined as the creative use of man's inherent powers, regardless of whether any external change is manifested. What Fromm is doing is to define man exclusively as the initiator of his own actions. The same is true with love as care, responsibility, and respect. Care means man's attempt to make something grow. Responsibility is man's response to the needs of others for the sake of common humanity. Respect means man's refusal to exploit another person. Thus, in all this, Fromm describes man as the actor. Fromm seems to maintain his original claim of the paradoxical relation between man and society only in his definition of love as self-giving. Man gives himself to another person who, in turn, contributes to the enrichment of his life by returning love. But, unfortunately, Fromm's treatment does not go beyond simply describing the situation. We are not told as to what kind of impact man and society create upon each other in the processes of creating love. In what concrete ways does the interaction between the two take place? Because of Fromm's failure to deal adequately

with this question, his claim that love is the answer to the problems of human existence remains unclear. It is to be concluded that Fromm's intention to maintain the paradoxical relationship between man and society is not successful within the system of his own thought. Herein lies Fromm's major difficulty.

2. The nature of human sickness

a) The definition of the sickness

Fromm defines the sickness of man as alienation. It is safe to conclude that in Fromm's thinking the concept of alienation serves as the central perspective from which he analyzes the whole character of contemporary human life.²⁶⁷

Put simply, alienation is the loss of the self or man's estrangement from himself. Echoing Marx, Fromm writes:

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts--but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship.²⁶⁸

In other words, alienation can be identified with regression toward the pre-human stage of existence. In alienation, man becomes an inanimate entity. That is to say:

²⁶⁷SS, p. 110.

²⁶⁸Ibid., p. 120.

. . . 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, unto whom he has projected his living substance.²⁶⁹

Fromm further observes that in our time the impact of alienation is far more devastating than it has ever been. "Alienation as we find in modern society," says Fromm, "is almost total."²⁷⁰ In this context, however, it must be pointed out, that by alienation Fromm also means something which is entirely different from the negative connotation of pathological alienation. We must uncover the differences of these two kinds of alienation, because Fromm does not always make the distinction clear.

What is the second concept of alienation? It is alienation as a necessary stage of human development, not as a pathological phenomenon of human existence. As we have already seen, according to Fromm, man must first separate himself from nature, fellow men, and himself in order that he may realize himself as truly human. Only when man regards himself and the world around him as distinct entities, can he be reunited to himself and the world on a higher and conscious level. In short, man must be alienated in order

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. Also see Fromm, "Present Human Condition," op. cit., pp. 29-35.



to be reunited; therefore, alienation is a necessary stage for the birth of humanity.

Only when I can distinguish between the world outside and myself, that is, only if the world outside becomes an object, can I grasp it and make it my world, become one with it again. The infant, for whom the world is not yet conceived as "object," can also not grasp it with his reason and reunite himself with it. Man has to become alienated in order to overcome this split in the activity of his reason. The same holds true for love. As long as the infant has not separated himself from the world outside he is still part of it, and hence cannot love. In order to love, the "other" must become a stranger, and in the act of love, the stranger ceases to be a stranger and becomes me. Love presupposes alienation--and at the same time overcomes it.²⁷¹

From this it is to be concluded that in Fromm's thinking, two entirely different concepts of alienation exist side by side. However, it is also clear that whenever Fromm discusses the sickness of man and its causes, his major emphasis falls upon alienation as the regressive answer to the problems posed by man's break with nature. The sickness of man, according to Fromm, is precisely "alienation as a pathological phenomenon."²⁷²

²⁷¹BCI, p. 60. On necessary alienation, Fromm further states that "Seeing alienation as a pathological phenomenon must, however, not obscure the fact that Hegel and Marx considered it a necessary phenomenon, one which is inherent in human evolution" (Ibid.).

²⁷²Ibid., p. 74.

b) The sources of pathological alienation

Thus far, we have concluded that the sickness of man lies in the fact that he is alienated from himself and his world around him without experiencing reunion on a higher level. Our immediate task then is to answer the question as to how the pathological kind of alienation has been brought about. According to Fromm, the sources of pathological alienation are both internal and external: the dialectical nature of human freedom and the suppressive function of society. Let us first examine the dialectical nature of human freedom.

(1) The dialectical nature of freedom

For Fromm freedom always has two aspects: the negative and the positive. In the former aspect it is "freedom from" coercion and irrational authorities. It means the release from "instinctual determination of his actions" as well as from such traditional authorities as that of parents, clan, and nation.²⁷³ Mere negative freedom, however, results in the isolation of the individual if it is not supplemented by positive freedom. Freedom in its positive aspect, on the other hand, always involves the question of how man can relate himself on a higher, conscious level. It is, in short, "freedom to" true humanity.

²⁷³EF, p. 32.

Positive freedom on the other hand is identical with the full realization of the individual's potentialities, together with his ability to live actively and spontaneously.²⁷⁴

This dialectical nature, according to Fromm, can be found in at least two areas of human life: the genesis of the individual child and the history of culture. The child begins life bound to parents by "primary ties." Such ties "offer security and basic unity with the world outside of oneself."²⁷⁵ But for the child to become mature, it is necessary for him to cut himself off from the primary ties. This process of individualization is never an easy process, for it constantly brings with it threats and insecurity; the child becomes aware of being a separate entity, of being alone, and thus becomes afraid.

The primary ties offer security and basic unity with the world outside of oneself. To the extent to which the child emerges from the world it becomes aware of being alone, of being an entity separate from all others. This separation from a world, which in comparison with one's own individual existence is overwhelmingly strong and powerful, and often threatening and dangerous, creates a feeling of powerlessness and anxiety. As long as one was an integral part of that world, unaware of the possibilities and responsibilities of individual action, one did not need to be afraid of it. When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴Ibid., p. 270.

²⁷⁵Ibid., p. 29.

²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 29.

The child will not stand too long this precarious situation. Isolation and concomitant anxiety are intolerable for him. The child tries to escape insecurity regressively, instead of progressively; that is, by surrendering his freedom, by "completely submerging oneself in the world outside."²⁷⁷ Attempts to do this necessitate the character of submission in which the basic contradiction between the authority and the child's essential nature is not eliminated. The result is the child's alienation from the world, his fellow man, and himself.

Thus the result of submission is the very opposite of what it was to be: submission increases the child's insecurity and at the same time creates hostility and rebelliousness, which is the more frightening since it is directed against the very persons on whom the child has remained-- or become--dependent.²⁷⁸

The dialectical nature of freedom is also seen in the history of culture. The emergence of individuality rooted in reason during the Renaissance period enabled man to be free from the ecclesiastical, economic, social, and political restraints of the Middle Ages. But simultaneously "freedom from" meant the loss of the primitive sense of security and of belonging. Man's failure to achieve "freedom to," to supplement "freedom from," eventually resulted in his

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸Ibid., p. 30



pathological alienation. In Fromm's estimation, this failure is most conspicuous in the field of economics. Here his appropriation of Marxism is evident. Man, who was freed from economic bondage, had to face submission to the power of capitalism. Man became free but also threatened by a new form of bondage. Fromm neatly summarizes the thesis as follows:

The individual is freed from the bondage of economic and political ties. He also gains in positive freedom by the active and independent role which he has to play in the new system. But simultaneously he is freed from those ties which used to give him security and a feeling of belonging. Life has ceased to be lived in a closer world the center of which was man; the world has become limitless and at the same time threatening. By losing his fixed place in a closed world man loses the answer to the meaning of his life; the result is that doubt has befallen him concerning himself and the aim of life. He is threatened by powerful suprapersonal forces, capital and the market. His relationship to his fellow men, with everyone a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged; he is free--that is, he is alone, isolated, threatened from all sides. Not having the wealth or the power which the Renaissance capitalist had, and also having lost the sense of unity with men and the universe, he is overwhelmed with a sense of his individual nothingness and helplessness. Paradise is lost for good, the individual stands alone and faces the world--a stranger thrown into a limitless and threatening world. The new freedom is bound to create a deep feeling of insecurity, powerlessness, doubt, aloneness, and anxiety. These feelings must be alleviated if the individual is to function successfully.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 63-64.



It is particularly important to observe the effects of capitalism upon the middle class, for, according to Fromm, this class has become a dominant force in the modern world. Relying heavily on Marx, Fromm has analyzed the impact of capitalism upon the Middle class as follows: after the Renaissance the accumulation of wealth became an increasingly dominant concern of the urban middle classes. In the sixteenth century the middle class was caught between the very rich, who made considerable exhibition of their luxury and power, and the very poor. Though threatened by the rising capitalists, the members of the middle class were concerned with preserving law and order. Hence the hostility which members of the middle class experienced in their threatened situation was largely repressed and took the form of indignation and resentment.²⁸⁰

One way of alleviating the sense of insecurity caused by isolation was the frantic activity of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This excessive activism was a curious mixture of the sense of insecurity and the Renaissance idea that the individual's effort is of the utmost importance. Work eventually became a virtue in itself.

. . . men came to be driven to work not so much by external pressure but by an internal compulsion, which made them work as only a very strict master

²⁸⁰See SS, pp. 83-85 and EF, pp. 91-102.

could have made people do in other societies.

. . . The drive for relentless work was one of the fundamental productive forces, not less important for the development of our industrial system than steam and electricity.²⁸¹

The impact of such an expressive activism upon the character formation of man was profound. Since work was regarded as a virtue in itself, the values of the market quite easily became the highest criteria by which man was to be judged.

According to Fromm:

In capitalism economic activity, success, material gains, become ends in themselves. It becomes man's fate to contribute to the growth of the economic system, to amass capital, not for purposes of his own happiness or salvation, but as an end in itself. Man became a cog in the vast economic machine--an important one if he had much capital, an insignificant one if he had not--but always a cog to serve a purpose outside of himself.²⁸²

Thus, man has lost the ability to think for himself and by himself in freedom and independence. Having become a cog, he is alienated from the world, his fellow men, and himself. The degree of insecurity which results from this orientation, in Fromm's view, can hardly be overestimated.

If one feels that one's own value is not constituted primarily by the human qualities one possesses, but by one's success on a competitive market with everchanging conditions, one's self-esteem is bound to be shaky and in constant need of confirmation by others.²⁸³

²⁸¹EF, p. 93-94.

²⁸²Ibid., p. 110.

²⁸³MH, p. 72.

In our time the danger of this mechanism of escape is most acute. Stated briefly, the individual seeks to become exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be by adopting entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns. Fromm describes this "automaton conformity" as follows:

This mechanism can be compared with the protective coloring some animals assume. They look so similar to their surroundings that they are hardly distinguishable from them. The person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him, need not feel alone and anxious any more. But the price he pays, however, is high; it is the loss of his self.²⁸⁴

It is obvious that Max Weber's concept of "worldly asceticism" provides the real basis of Fromm's discussion of the history of culture. In order to substantiate this point, a brief summary of "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" in Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism²⁸⁵ is in order.

Weber holds that the worldly asceticism of Calvinism reached its climax in Puritanism. Headed by Richard Baxter, the Puritans carried the Calvinistic doctrine of work to the farthest extreme. Here one sees more fully than ever the

²⁸⁴EF, p. 185.

²⁸⁵Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

relation between the spirit of capitalism and the Protestant ethic. In Puritanism man is more and more viewed from the perspective of what he does. The Puritan doctrine of man came very close to the capitalistic doctrine: man is as he earns. "Not leisure and enjoyment," observes Weber, "but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestation of His will."²⁸⁶ Thus waste of time is the deadliest of all sins. If the Puritan ethic "did not yet hold with Franklin that time is money," it preached "hard, continuous bodily and mental labour" just as passionately as the spirit of capitalism.²⁸⁷ God will save those who labour to the best of their ability; he will condemn those who are unwilling to work. Thus the difference between the worldly asceticism of Puritanism and the spirit of capitalism is a very subtle one; the former places God as the center of the sanction of hard work, whereas the latter takes the irrational satisfaction of having done well as the ultimate meaning of life.

Honesty, thrift, and diligence were combined with the simplicity and frugality of living. The result was the accumulation of wealth. Luther's concept of the division of labour as a direct consequence of the divine scheme of things

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 157.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 158.



was completely taken over by the Calvinistic idea that God would help those who would help themselves. Weber quotes Richard Baxter.

If God shows you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling and you refuse to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts and use them for Him when He requireth it: you may labour to be rich for God, though not for the flesh and sin.²⁸⁸

Thus wealth in itself is no evil. The duty of the Christian is to use it for God's glory. The Puritan knows that he holds his earthly possessions in trust from God; therefore, he is required to use it in stewardship for the good of his neighbor. What must be emphasized is that Puritanism no longer esteems poverty as a Christian virtue. More than that, it denounces it as a vice. As we have seen, it holds that the poor man is poor because of his laziness, his irresponsibility to God. In Weber's estimation, it is not difficult to see why the Protestant ethic furnished a nest for the growth of the spirit of capitalism. But until the worldly asceticism of the Protestant ethic lost its transcendental aspect, the spirit of capitalism could not be what it is now. As one can clearly see in the thought of Benjamin Franklin, the ultimate purpose of man's life,

²⁸⁸Ibid., p. 162.

according to the spirit of capitalism, is to get rich. What is absent is the religious sense of the calling. Laziness is bad, not because it means disloyalty to the will of God, but because it hinders the development of one's wealth. Weber concluded that the spirit of capitalism is worldly asceticism without religious basis.²⁸⁹

Fromm is deeply indebted to Weber's analysis of how material wealth has come to be valued as the most valuable in itself. Thus, he holds that man loses meaning in his life and becomes a machine when he fails to see that there is something more to life than material gains and worldly prestige. It is precisely this loss of the sense of priority in values that is the cause of the frantic living of modern man. But at one important point he parts company with Weber. Weber holds, as we have seen, that man's exclusive concern for his material wealth is due to his loss of the sense of a transcendent God by whom man is called to be a diligent and earnest worker. Without God, man becomes a law unto himself. Fromm, on the other hand, finds the cause of idolatry in man's failure to grow productively. Contrary to Weber, Fromm implies that it is a credit to man that he has grown out of the theistic concept of God. What man has failed to do, however, is to develop freedom to humanity after having attained

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 180.

freedom from theism. Fromm interprets Weber from a standpoint of atheistic humanism without specifically stating it. Thus, here again we see Fromm's perennial tendency to incorporate another man's viewpoint into his own without delineating subtle but important differences.

(2) The suppressive nature of society

In the previous section we defined the dialectical nature of man's freedom to be the internal source of man's pathological alienation. In this section we shall examine the nature of the external source of alienation. For Fromm it is clear that the external source of alienation is society. Fromm has the tendency to identify the source of human evil solely with society whenever he speaks of the possibilities for the restoration of true humanity. This tendency in his thought often leads many of his interpreters to conclude that in his way of thinking "man is naturally good, but society is the great corrupter of man."²⁹⁰ This interpretation is not entirely correct since Fromm also regards man as the initiator of his own actions. But it must be admitted that Fromm does give this impression whenever he fails to maintain the paradoxical relationship between man and society.

According to Fromm, society suppresses man by structuring man in such a way that he is prevented from the full

²⁹⁰Schaar, op. cit., p. 15.



realization of his potentialities. Therefore, Fromm's thesis can be termed as essentially Marxian in that in so far as man is socially determined, he invariably regresses; insofar as he is free and dependent to express what is natural in himself, he is invariably productive. The content of the suppressive nature of society is twofold: the selfish demands of authoritarian parents and subtly coercive nature of anonymous authority. The external threat to man's integrity begins most frequently with the selfish demands of authoritarian parents. The child is not allowed to be spontaneous, free, and independent because his parents impose on him an unquestionable obedience. Faced with their irrational demands, the child fails in his fight for his freedom and eventually submits himself to his authoritarian parents. The consequences which the child suffers are extremely grave.

The one who remains on mother's breast is the eternally dependent suckling, who has a feeling of euphoria when he is loved, taken care of, protected, and admired, and is filled with unbearable anxiety when threatened with separation from the all-loving mother. The one who remains bound to father's command may develop a good deal of initiative and activity, yet always under the condition that an authority is present who gives orders, who praises and punishes.²⁹¹

²⁹¹ZBP, p. 89. Fromm here differs from Freud in his interpretation of the origin of neurosis. He agrees that the Oedipus complex is at the center of the neurosis, but disagrees with Freud's sexual interpretation of it. A neurosis, according to Fromm, results from the consequence of a failure to protect one's potentialities from the smothering effects



Beyond the realm of authoritarian parental demands, Fromm discusses a more subtle but even more dangerous suppressive method of society: its anonymous authority. It means public opinion which imposes its will upon the individual in such a way that it often stifles his freedom and independence. The most dangerous aspect of anonymous authority is its power of coercing man with an atmosphere of subtle suggestion so that he obeys without knowing that he is being ordered. By far most persuasive in this regard, according to Fromm, is society's subtle means of compelling man to adopt the role of personality that goes with his particular cultural demands and status.²⁹² Here again Fromm finds in modern man the most acute danger of the pseudo personality. In our time, man does not only sell commodities, but he also sells himself; consequently, he feels himself to be a commodity.

The manual laborer sells his physical energy; the business man, the physician, the clerical employee, sells their "personality." They have to have a "personality" if they are to sell their products or services. . . . As with any other commodity it is the market which decides

of irrational parental demands. See "Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis," American Sociological Review, IX, 1944, p. 382.

²⁹²We shall examine later in some detail the question of how human society molds the individual's consciousness and experience.

the value of these human qualities, yes, even their very existence. . . . Thus, the self-confidence, the "feeling of self," is merely an indication of what others think of the person. . . . If he is sought after, he is somebody; if he is not popular he is simply nobody. This dependence of self-esteem on the success of the "personality" is the reason why for modern man popularity has this tremendous importance.²⁹³

c) Symptoms of alienation

Thus far, we have examined Fromm's concept of the sources of alienation. We have discovered that for Fromm they are essentially two: the dialectical nature of freedom and the suppressive function of society. In this section we shall discuss the major symptoms of alienation. For this purpose we shall again divide them into two categories: the internal and the external.

(1) The internal symptoms of alienation

By the internal symptoms we mean affects upon the psychological well-being of both individual and collective man. The internal symptoms of alienation therefore are not always readily empirically observable. Therefore, careful psychoanalytical investigations are necessary in order to discover their precise nature.

One of the internal symptoms of alienation is anxiety. Fromm agrees with Auden, as Rollo May points out, that the present age is an age of anxiety.

²⁹³EF, pp. 119-120.

. . . there is also a remarkable similarity between the picture of our culture presented in Auden's poetry and that given in Fromm's psychological interpretations. Auden and Fromm are impressed by the same characteristics of our society: the automaton conformity, the alienation of man from himself and his fellows, and the destruction of individuality and originality resulting from the apotheosis of commercial values.²⁹⁴

The reason for modern man's constant anxiety can be found in the fact that the sole criterion of his worth lies in others' acceptance of him. Man therefore must ceaselessly strive for the approval of his peer groups by submitting himself to the prevailing fashions. Faced with the possibility of rejection by others, man remains constantly anxious. Fromm writes:

. . . most people are deeply--although mostly unconsciously--anxious in their personal lives. The constant battle to rise on the social ladder and the constant fear of failure create a permanent state of anxiety.²⁹⁵

Yet, as long as he is human, he cannot remain satisfied with the condition of complete selflessness. That is to say, man's anxiety is compounded by his own awareness that his freedom and independence are being suppressed by his very act of conformity. Anxiety produces the powerful feelings of inferiority complex and helplessness.

²⁹⁴Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), p. 173.

²⁹⁵HM, p. 56.

It is to be pointed out, however, that elsewhere Fromm defines anxiety other than as man's awareness that his worth is contingent upon other's acceptance of him. As we have seen in our discussion of the essential nature of man, Fromm also defines anxiety as the product of man's separation from nature. This separation causes man to be anxious, because it is painful; but it is also a progressive step, because in his continuous attempt to overcome alienation, man truly differentiates himself from the animal. In Fromm, then, there are two different concepts of anxiety--productive and destructive. The productive anxiety is the source of progressive life; the destructive anxiety is the source regressive life. In his discussion of the internal symptoms of alienation, however, Fromm defines anxiety strictly in the destructive sense of the word.

Guilt is another inward symptom of alienation. The feeling of guilt, though in many cases not conscious, is just as strong today as it was in the era of the Protestant Reformation.

. . . if we scratch the surface, we find that people feel guilty about hundreds of things; for not having worked hard enough, for having been too protective--or not protective enough--toward their children, for not having done enough for Mother, or for having been too kindhearted to a debtor; people feel guilty for having done bad things; it is almost as if they had to find something to feel guilty about.²⁹⁶

296ss, p. 205.

Suzuki, Y., 1971a: An Examination of Doctrine of Man of Erich Fromm and Reinhild Niebuhr, University of Virginia, Dissertation 1971, 355 + 4 pp.



As with anxiety, guilt is caused by man's knowledge of his failure to adjust as well as by his awareness of the regressive nature of the very act of adjustment; man feels guilty because he is poorly adjusted and also because the voice of his conscience tells him that he is not realizing his potentialities. "Thus, alienated man feels guilty for being himself, and for not being himself, for being alive and for being an automaton, for being a person and for being a thing."²⁹⁷

The third internal symptom of man's alienation is unhappiness. Being anxious and overwhelmed by guilt, man possesses nothing which he can honestly claim as his own. Unhappiness is a natural consequence of such a situation.²⁹⁸

(2) External symptoms of alienation

By the external symptoms of alienation, Fromm means the symptoms of alienation that are manifested in culture. Being readily available to empirical observation, they manifest themselves in the religious, political, social and economic realms of human life.

The most basic and oldest symptom of alienation which is conspicuous in modern culture is idolatry. Fromm maintains that the concept of idolatry must not be confined to

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 206.



the various forms of primitive worship. Rather, it has to do with man's nonproductive attitude toward himself and the world around him. Put simply, it is man's valuation of that which is less than human as being supremely important and his consequent failure to realize his true potentialities.

. . . the essence of idolatry is not the worship of this or that particular idol but is a specifically human attitude. This attitude may be described as the deification of things, of partial aspects of the world and man's submission to such things, in contrast to an attitude in which his life is devoted to the realization of the highest principles of life, those of love and reason, to the aim of becoming what he potentially is, a being made in the likeness of God. It is not only pictures in stone and wood that are idols. Words can become idols, and machines can become idols; leaders and the state, power, and political groups may also serve. Science and the opinion of one's neighbors can become idols, and God has become an idol for many.²⁹⁹

In the realm of religion, God has become the fairy tale view of an Old Man in the sky. Consequently, God possesses no significance whatsoever to the concrete daily life of the individual. People who regard themselves as religious may constantly speak about God, but their God makes no difference to the ethical and spiritual realms of their life.

²⁹⁹PR, p. 118. It is important for us to recall here Fromm's view that the essence of religion is man and that he interprets every form of religion from a humanistic point of view. Fromm maintains that the major emphasis of the Old and New Testaments is that God is not some supernatural power outside man but the fullest realization of man's potentialities.



Neither belief nor disbelief cause any sleepless nights, nor any serious concern. In fact, whether a man in our culture believes in God or not makes hardly any difference either from a psychological or from a truly religious standpoint. In both instances he does not care-- either about God or about the answer to the problem of his own existence. Just as brotherly love has been replaced by impersonal fairness, God has been transformed into a remote General Director of Universe Inc.; you know that He is there, He runs the show, (although it probably would run without Him too), you never see Him, but you acknowledge His leadership while you are "doing your part."³⁰⁰

In the realm of politics, totalitarianism provides a powerful symptom of alienation. Just as in the case of religious idolatry, the authoritarian character of political leadership compels man to submit himself to its irrational demands. Submission to a totalitarian government and to an authoritarian leader is an act of transferring man's powers to an irrational force, making himself its tool. Here Fromm basically reiterates Rousseau's theory of the relationship between the authoritarian state and the individual.

In Rousseau's theory of the state, as in contemporary totalitarianism, the individual is supposed to abdicate his own rights and to project them unto the state as the only arbiter. In Fascism and Stalinism the absolutely alienated individual worships at the altar of an idol, and it makes little difference by what name this idol is known; state, class, collective, or what else.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ss, p. 176.

³⁰¹Ibid., p. 123.

In the realm of interpersonal relationship, alienation manifests itself most conspicuously in the form of "bureaucratization."³⁰² In short, bureaucratization is an absolute alienation seen in our modern mass society. "Due to the bigness of the apparatus to be administered, and the resulting abstraction, the bureaucrats' relation to the people is one of complete alienation."³⁰³ Consequently, man's relationship with his fellow men is mechanical and impersonal; it is "one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other."³⁰⁴ In other words, human relationship becomes exactly like that of the manager and the worker.

They, the people to be administered, are objects whom the bureaucrats consider neither with love nor with hate, but completely impersonally; the manager-bureaucrat must not feel, as far as his professional activity is concerned; he must manipulate people as though they were figures, or things.³⁰⁵

In the realm of economics, alienation manifests itself in man's relationship with the things he uses. Here Fromm persuasively argues that what is so unique with our modern

³⁰²Ibid., p. 126.

³⁰³Ibid.

³⁰⁴Ibid., p. 139.

³⁰⁵Ibid., p. 126. Fromm cites as an example H. Kahn's complacent attitude toward effects of nuclear war on man (May Man Prevail? Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1961, pp. 180, 190, 196, 197, 199).

economy is that it is directed exclusively by the principle of prestige rather than the principle of practical use.

With regard to many things, there is not even the pretense of use. We acquire them to have them. We are satisfied with useless possession. The expensive dining set or crystal vase which we never use for fear they might break, the mansion with many unused rooms, the unnecessary cars and servants, like the ugly bric-a-brac of the lower-middle-class family, are so many examples of pleasure in possession instead of in use.³⁰⁶

Alienation in the realm of economics is seen not only in the purpose of acquisition, but also in the method of acquisition. There is little appreciation for the things he possesses, because he has produced none of them on his own. Instead, money enables man to acquire whatever he wishes to possess with no effort of his own.³⁰⁷ This easy accessibility to the things man possesses eventually leads him to the motto typical to our society: "Every desire must be satisfied immediately, no wish must be frustrated."³⁰⁸ Consumption then has become the principle upon which the meaning of man's life is based. Fromm describes graphically such human life as follows:

Modern man, if he dared to be articulate about his concept of heaven, would describe a vision which would look like the biggest department store in the world, showing new things and gadgets, and himself having plenty of money with which to buy them. He would wander around

³⁰⁶SS, pp. 132-133.

³⁰⁷Ibid., p. 131.

³⁰⁸Ibid., p. 164.



open-mouthed in this heaven of gadgets and commodities, provided only that there were ever more and newer things to buy, and perhaps that his neighbors were just a little less privileged than he.³⁰⁹

It is clear then that for Fromm, man's sickness is the pathological form of alienation which is caused both internally and externally. The impact of the sickness is such that its symptoms are found in all realms of human life.

At the end of our discussion of Fromm's concept of the essential nature of man and the problem of human existence, we said that Fromm's difficulty lies in the fact that he does not accomplish what he set out to do: to maintain the paradoxical relationship between man and society consistently within the system of his own thought. We attempted to substantiate our thesis by showing that, in his delineation of the productive man, Fromm speaks exclusively of man as the initiator and actor of his own actions without clarifying how this is related to society as the producer of human character. In our discussion of Fromm's concept of alienation, it is necessary for us to underscore the same point.

In identifying the internal source of alienation with the tension between the negative freedom and the positive freedom, Fromm holds that man is in the predicament of having to solve the tension either progressively or regressively by

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 135.

his own initiative. Being the initiator and actor of his own actions, he is held accountable for whichever choice he makes. But in his discussion of the history of culture as an illustration of the internal source of alienation, Fromm speaks of the accumulation of capital as the basic cause of automaton conformity. In so doing, he fails to elucidate how the paradoxical tension takes place in the individual person. Instead, he goes on to describe how society suppresses the potentialities of man by way of capitalism. In short, without clarifying the internal source of alienation, he tries to describe the external source of it. Consequently, the paradoxical relationship between man and society is not clearly set forth.

To substantiate our point further, let us see how he deals with the other half of his thesis: society as the creator of the quality of man. The selfish demands of parents are one of the two means with which society suppresses man's potentialities. Faced with their irrational demands, the child fails in his fight for his freedom and succumbs to submissiveness. The other means is anonymous authority. Its coercing power is so subtle that man obeys its demands without knowing that he is being ordered. Thus, the point Fromm makes throughout his analysis of these two means of suppression is that society is responsible for the quality of man. Fromm's difficulty is that he identifies the source of evil



with the suppressive character of society without clarifying how the individual person is also responsible for bringing about the suppressive society. Since here man is described totally as a helpless victim of the bad society, we are left wondering how such a view can be reconciled with man as the initiator of his actions without further clarifications from Fromm.

Fromm's failure to maintain the paradoxical relation between man and society is also evident in his discussion of the symptoms of alienation. In fact, this failure is a natural consequence of his ambiguous concept of the relationship between the internal and external sources of alienation. Since the relationship of the sources is vague, Fromm's position of the symptoms of alienation is also ambiguous. In his estimation both anxiety and guilt are caused by the fact that man's worth is dependent upon others' acceptance of him. Therefore, anxiety and guilt are the results of man's awareness that his potentialities are not fully developed, because he has let others decide his own destiny. But, at the same time, society is involved in the thwarting of human potentialities through its suppressive demands upon man.

However, when Fromm discusses other symptoms of alienation, the paradoxical tension collapses. Thus, in defining idolatry as man's regressive attitude toward himself and the world about him, Fromm completely ignores the question as to

what impact society makes upon man's idolatry. This is true also with his description of bureaucratization, totalitarianism, and the modern syndrome of acquisition-consumption. The point Fromm makes here is that although man is essentially productive, society does not allow him to be productive due to its impersonal character, its open suppression and its false concept that every desire must be satisfied. Thus, man is described exclusively as an innocent victim of the bad society. The other part of the paradox, man as a self-determining being, is ignored.

We are forced to conclude, from the above analysis, that although Fromm's intention is to maintain that both man and society are involved in alienation, this paradoxical relation is not maintained consistently. Consequently, Fromm's analysis of the symptoms of alienation does not rise above the level of describing various forms of alienation without probing further into their ultimate cause.

C. A proposed cure

Thus far, we have examined Fromm's doctrine of man in two parts: (1) the essential nature of man and of his problematic existence and (2) the nature of the sickness of man and its symptoms. It must be pointed out that what distinguishes Fromm from other sociologists and psychoanalysts lies primarily in his unfaltering conviction that the sickness of

man is not only completely curable, but also that the resources are readily available here and now. In this section we shall seek to uncover the bases of Fromm's proposed cure and then to examine the specific nature of his proposal.

1. Bases for Fromm's proposed cure for man's sickness

What makes Fromm so confident that the sickness of man is curable if man really works at it? The answer lies in the fact that, for Fromm, man's character is transformable. To say this, of course, is to say that man is basically a product of society. That is to say, not only his physical existence but also his mental and psychological well-being is constantly molded in and by his interaction with others in society. Fromm writes:

. . . the whole personality of the average individual is molded by the way people relate to each other, and it is determined by the socioeconomic and political structure of society to such an extent that, in principle, one can infer from the analysis of one individual the totality of the social structure in which he lives.³¹⁰

The question still remains, however, as to how it is possible for society to mold human character. The answer is found in the following statement of Fromm.

Every society, by its own practice of living and by the mode of relatedness, of feeling, and perceiving, develops a system of categories which determines the forms of awareness. This system works, as it were, like a socially conditioned

³¹⁰MH, p. 79.



filter; experience cannot enter awareness unless it can penetrate this filter.³¹¹

It is therefore necessary for us to understand more concretely how this social filter operates in Fromm's thought. According to Fromm, experience becomes awareness only when it penetrates the three-fold filter of language, logic, and social character. Language is the first aspect of the filter that makes awareness possible. In certain cultures people are capable of experiencing such subtle things as a rosebud in the early morning, the singing of a bird, and the rising sun in the early morning which normally escape the English-speaking people.³¹²

In a language in which different affective experiences are not expressed by different words, it is almost impossible for one's experiences to come to awareness, and vice versa. Generally speaking, it may be said that an experience rarely comes into awareness for which the language has no word.³¹³

The function of language is not confined to its ability to denote certain affective experiences in words. It denotes certain affective experiences also by its syntax, grammar, and the root meaning of its words. Fromm concludes:

Language, by its words, its grammar, its syntax, by the whole spirit which is frozen in it, determines how we experience, and which experiences penetrate to our awareness.³¹⁴

³¹¹ZBP, p. 99.

³¹²Ibid., p. 100.

³¹³Ibid.

³¹⁴Ibid., p. 101.

The logic which directs the thinking of people in a given culture is the second aspect of the filter which makes awareness possible.

Just as most people assume that their language is "natural" and that other languages only use different words for the same things, they assume also that the rules which determine proper thinking, are natural and universal ones; that what is illogical in one cultural system is illogical in any other, because it conflicts with "natural" logic.³¹⁵

Fromm finds in the difference between Aristotelian and paradoxical logic a good example of the role which logic plays in influencing human experience. The former is based upon the law of identity and the law of contradiction. For those who live in a culture in which Aristotelian logic is believed to be true, it is extremely difficult to understand some of the subtleties of paradoxical logic. It is for this reason, says Fromm, that the Westerners often fail to understand the Freudian concept of ambivalence which holds that an individual can love and hate another person at the same time.³¹⁶

The third aspect of the filter is the social character, concisely defined as the "nucleus of the character structure which is shared by the most members of the same

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 103.

culture."³¹⁷ The social character does not allow the contents of experiences which are incompatible with it to enter the realm of awareness. A good example is found among peaceful minded members of a primitive tribe of warriors. In all probability they will not become aware of their revulsion against killing, because such a feeling is incompatible with the feeling of the whole tribe. If they should become aware of their genuine feeling, they will eventually suffer the sense of complete isolation and ostracism. Thus, Fromm concludes:

Every society excludes certain thoughts and feelings from being thought, felt, and expressed. There are things which are not only "not done" but which are even "not thought."³¹⁸

Thus far, we have tried to show that Fromm's proposed cure for the sickness of man is rooted in his belief that man's character is a product of society. The second factor

³¹⁷SS, p. 78. Thus, the function of social psychology is to investigate "how certain psychic attitudes common to members of a group are related to their common life experiences" (Fromm, The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1941, p. 9).

³¹⁸ZBP, p. 102. Fromm here maintains that the criterion of the compatibility and incompatibility of any given thought and feeling is precisely this: whether or not they contribute to the unity and coherence of the society in which they are expressed. Fromm writes, ". . . if . . . 'social character' loses its coherence and firmness, many individuals would cease to act as they are expected to do, and the survival of the society in its given form would be endangered" (Ibid., p. 103).



we must point out with regard to Fromm's cure is his conviction that man's reason has discovered both the nature of the cure and the means by which he is cured. In short, man's health will be restored, if he wants it badly enough; it is up to man himself.

. . . the potentialities of man are such that given the proper conditions they will be capable of building a social order governed by the principles of equality, justice, and love.³¹⁹

The third thing to be pointed out in regard to Fromm's proposed cure is what John Schaar calls the "law of simultaneous advance."³²⁰ It describes Fromm's thesis that the restoration of man can be brought about only by transforming all aspects of society. In other words, restoration must proceed simultaneously on all fronts, namely, the economic, political, ethical and philosophical realms of human society.

No change must be brought about by force, it must be a simultaneous one in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Changes restricted to one sphere are destructive of every change.³²¹

³¹⁹MH, p. 207.

³²⁰Schaar, op. cit., p. 246.

³²¹SS, p. 361. For example, Christianity has preached spiritual renewal without changing the existing social order. Marxism has emphasized the necessity for social and economic changes, neglecting the spiritual renewal of man. "Each of these great reform movements . . . has emphasized one sector of life to the exclusion of the other; their proposals for reform and renewal were radical--but their results were almost complete failure" (Ibid., p. 292).

Fourthly, Fromm's concept of freedom as the power of contrary choice must be mentioned. Freedom in this sense simply means " . . . nothing other than the capacity to follow the voice of reason, of health, of well-being, of conscience, against the voices of irrational passions."³²² Since man is still capable of choosing a solution on the basis of reason and rejecting demands made by irrational passions, Fromm concludes that man's failure to choose productiveness over against regression is due to his moral laziness.

. . . most people fail in the art of living not because they are inherently bad or so without will that they cannot live a better life; they fail because they do not wake up and see when they stand at a fork in the road and have to decide.³²³

Finally, it must be pointed out that for Fromm the cure consists of the reconstruction of the present social system, and not its destruction. In his most recent book, Fromm makes this point most explicit.

For many of the young generation who belittle the value of traditional thought, I should like to stress my conviction that even the most radical development must have its continuity with the past; that we cannot progress by throwing away the best achievements of the human mind and that to be young is not enough.³²⁴

³²²HM, pp. 130-131.

³²³AL, p. 86.

³²⁴RH, p. vii.

Since we can do away with none of the value of traditional thought without destroying society itself, the only course left open to us is "the humanization of the system in such a way that it serves the purpose of man's well-being and growth, or in other words, his life process."³²⁵

2. Fromm's proposed cure for the sickness of man

Having seen the basic presuppositions that underlie Fromm's proposed cure for man's sickness, we are now ready to examine its content. It is defined as follows:

. . . the change of the social, economic, and cultural life of our society in such a way that it stimulates and furthers the growth and aliveness of man rather than cripples it; that it activates the individual rather than making him passive and receptive; that our technological capacities serve man's growth.³²⁶

In this section we shall attempt to lay bare what this definition of the cure entails. For this purpose, we have divided Fromm's proposed cure into the following areas of human life: economics, culture, and politics. Let us examine each one of them separately.

a) Economic transformation

Here Fromm argues persuasively that economic transformation must mean the transformation of economic systems to serve man for the growth of his innate potentialities, and

³²⁵Ibid., p. 98.

³²⁶RH, p. 100.

not for their destruction. In short, the aim of economic transformation is the establishment of a society in which;

. . . every working person would be an active and responsible participant, where work would be attractive and meaningful, where capital would not employ labor, but labor would employ capital.³²⁷

How can such an extraordinary transformation be brought about? Fromm suggests three practical steps toward its attainment. The first step has to do with the important question of how industry should be governed. Humanized industrial management, according to Fromm, depends upon the worker's personal interest in his own work and upon his ability to participate actually in management and decision-making. Convinced that modern man's dissatisfaction, apathy, boredom, and sense of meaninglessness are the direct results of the loss of his personal interest in his own work, Fromm argues that to rekindle his interest in his own work is absolutely necessary. Fromm's thesis is clear: even technically monotonous work can be interesting, if the work situation as a whole permits interest and active participation on the part of the worker. Economic transformation in this sense then must be aimed not at the nature of industrial work, but at the circumstances in which it is performed.

³²⁷SS, pp. 283-284. Fromm argues that, particularly in the realm of consumption, economics often gives man the false sense of security. A good example is cigarette consumption. "Cigarette consumption allays hidden anxiety and tension, and people would rather risk their health than to be confronted with their anxiety" (RH, p. 125).

The aim then would be to create a work situation in which man gives his lifetime and energy to something which has meaning for him, in which he knows what he is doing, has an influence on what is being done, and feels united with, rather than separated from, his fellow man.³²⁸

This particular aim, insists Fromm, can be achieved by making oneself acquainted with the technical problems involved in the production of the whole product and the relation of the enterprise he is working for to the economic needs of the community as a whole. Through such knowledge, the worker can assure himself of the fact that he is doing something significant for human life; when it becomes clear to him that the primary purpose of his work is to serve mankind and not to make a profit, his motivations for work will change from money and prestige to motives of love for humanity.³²⁹

The worker's ability to participate actually in the management and decision-making of his company is the second principle upon which humanized industrial management depends. As a matter of fact, according to Fromm, this is the only way the worker can employ capital for his sake and refuse to be employed by it.³³⁰ How can the average worker participate in the management and decision-making of his industry? The

³²⁸SS, p. 321.

³²⁹Ibid., pp. 321-322.

³³⁰Ibid., p. 323.



answer lies in the "principle of co-management and co-determination." Industrial management must be democratic. All who have an interest in the industry must have a voice in it. This principle, says Fromm:

. . . can be worked out in such a way that the responsibility for management is divided between the central leadership and the rank and file. Well-informed small groups discuss matters of their own work situation and of the whole enterprise; their decisions would be channelled to the management and form the basis for a real co-management.³³¹

The third step toward economic transformation is "the revolution of the consumer." It means the active role of the consumer to supervise and regulate the qualities and kinds of industrial production. Let Fromm define it in his own words: "What I have in mind is that the consumer challenge the corporation to respond to his wishes and that the managers begin to respond to this challenge.³³² This objective will be accomplished in three ways: The consumer's effort to establish a sound knowledge of what is essential and what is peripheral to the pursuit of productive life,³³³ "legal restrictions on present methods of advertising," and a "redirection of production itself" in such a way that the production of useful things may be furthered and the production of useless things may be discouraged.³³⁴

³³¹ Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., p. 127.

³³² RH, p. 128.

³³⁴ Ibid., pp. 128-129.

The final step to be taken for economic transformation is the provision of an "annual guaranteed income."³³⁵ Its purpose is to provide every individual an adequate and comfortable standard of living.

The guaranteed annual income would have to be definitely below the lowest income for work in order not to arouse resentment and anger in those who work. If it is to guarantee a modest but still adequate material basis, the present wage level would have to rise considerably. It is feasible to determine a minimum standard of living which is as high as the present minimum standard for a modest and adequate material basis. Anyone who is attracted by a more comfortable life would be free to achieve a higher level of consumption.³³⁶

The presupposition that underlies this plan is two-fold. One is Fromm's conviction that every man has an inalienable right to live whether he works or not. No one must be forced to work, because forced labor produces a slave, instead of a free man.

Work and all other social obligations would be made sufficiently attractive to urge man to desire to accept his share of social responsibility, but he should not be forced to do so by the threat of starvation. If the latter principle is applied, society has no need to make work attractive and to fit its system to human needs. It is true that in many societies of the past the disproportion between the size of the population and the available techniques of production did not permit the freedom to dispense with the principle of what is, in fact, forced labor.³³⁷

³³⁵ Ibid., pp. 131-132.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

³³⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

The other presupposition of Fromm concerning the annual guaranteed income is that once man has attained "freedom from" the material necessities of ordinary life, he has a great opportunity to go on to establish "freedom to" as well.

. . . if a man, woman, or adolescent could be sure that whatever he did his material existence would not be in jeopardy, the realm of human freedom would be immensely enhanced.³³⁸

This second presupposition becomes even clearer when we read Fromm's rebuttal to the objection that man is lazy and would not want to work if he is guaranteed his annual income.

As overwhelming evidence shows, man has an inherent tendency to be active, and laziness is a pathological symptom. . . . If the whole social system is changed in such a way that coercion and threat are removed from the work obligation, only a minority of sick people would prefer to do nothing.³³⁹

b) Cultural transformation³⁴⁰

The reconstruction of the present social system will not be achieved without correcting the prevailing attitude of modern man that regards man as a cog. Rather, it must be maintained that every individual is to be treated always as an end and never as a means. The objective of psychospiritual transformation is defined as "the solidarity of all men and

³³⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

³⁴⁰ In The Sane Society, Fromm equates cultural transformation with "psychospiritual transformation" (see pp. 270-275, 343-352).



the loyalty to life and to humanity which must always take precedence over the loyalty to any particular group."³⁴¹

Being convinced that the essence of religion is the affirmation of the humanity of man as the highest among all values, Fromm maintains that we do not need new ideals or new spiritual goals.

We, today, who have easy access to all these ideas, who are still the immediate heirs to the great humanistic teachings, we are not in need of new knowledge of how to live sanely . . .³⁴²

What we need is moral courage and strength to put into action what we already know. "The revolution of our hearts does not require new wisdom," says Fromm, "but new seriousness and dedication."³⁴³ Fromm's ultimate confidence in radical humanism is expressed elsewhere as follows:

I submit that if people would truly accept the Ten Commandments or the Buddhist Eightfold Path as the effective principles to guide their lives, a dramatic change in our whole culture would take place.³⁴⁴

The crucial question is how radical humanism can become effective. Fromm's answer lies in the following three areas: education, rituals, and religion. With regard to education, Fromm makes his presupposition very clear.

Man, in order to feel at home in the world, must grasp it not only with his head, but with all his senses, his eyes, his ears, with all his body.

³⁴¹RH, p. 143.

³⁴²SS, p. 344.

³⁴³Ibid.

³⁴⁴RH, p. 143.