



Psychology in Marx According to Fromm

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1) The problem of epistemological discontinuity or continuity in Marx's work.

Marx shows his humanistic inspiration most explicitly in his early works while in his later works it is less obvious. In the later years his style changes and becomes more analytical, abandoning a lot of the earlier terminology. It must also be said that the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* was published in Moscow for the first time as late as 1932, as was the first complete version of *The German Ideology* (part had already been published in 1926). These circumstances engendered widespread scientific debate but they also led to ideological deformations.

The fact that Fromm was actively interested in Marx's thinking was due primarily to reasons that are intrinsic to the development of radical humanism, which responds to each historical epoch by studying its specific problems. However, Fromm also wanted to clear up the misunderstandings over Marx's works, works which were often not even recognized as his and were re-proposed as a series of falsifying ideological and polemical treatises.

Fromm was the first to publish an English translation of the *Manuscripts* in America, and he clarified and interpreted them in an important article of his own¹. He emphasized how both the theorists of Soviet communism and dia-

lectical materialism (or „Diamat“), and superficial and hasty Western scholars had transformed Marx into anti-humanistic and vulgar materialism. The most notable distortion lies in separating the mature from the young Marx and thus forcibly interpreting the former in a materialistic light while ignoring the latter². Fromm, on the other hand, held that „Marx's philosophy constitutes a spiritual existentialism on secular language“³.

To many this assertion may seem provocative. How very convenient it is for the visceral anti-communist to be able to dismiss Marx as a vulgar materialist, without even reading him! And how disagreeable Antonio Gramsci's affirmation that it is possible to be a materialist in philosophy and an idealist in everyday life and, vice versa, an idealist in philosophy and a materialist in everyday life!

Marxist thought has paid dearly for dogmatism, mental laziness and schematism and has been subjected to fragmentation and mutilation, not only by its declared enemies but also by various Marxist scholars.

Eastern European philosophers have been mainly responsible for seeking to understand Marx as a whole. The renewed interest in Marx's early thinking has opened up a new series of debates and comparisons which came out of the reaction to Stalinism. These were followed by an elaboration of radical humanism

¹ Fromm E. (1961b), *Marx's Concept of Man*, Ungar, New York 1961.

² Idem, p. 2-7.

³ Idem, p. 5.



and the presentation of Marxism as an „open system“ which is justified by the debate and comparison with other philosophies.

In 1961, the philosopher Gajo Petrovic published an article in the Zagreb *Telegram* on the continuity of Marxist thought:

„In the post-war years, our philosophy in a certain sense regressed: from the Stalinist version of Marxist philosophy, under whose influence we found ourselves in the immediate post-liberation years, to the original form of this philosophy (...) It must be added that this step 'backwards', from the caricature to the original, could with justification be called a step forwards, from dead to living thought...“⁴.

The re-composition of Marx's thinking is not only taking place inside Marxism, but also signals a resumption of the terms of the debate on humanism which had reached its apex with the confrontation between Sartre and Heidegger. In October 1945 Sartre held a conference, published the following year⁵, entitled *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, which not only provoked strong reactions from French communist intellectuals but which led Heidegger to write his *Letter on Humanism*⁶. This letter, dated 1946 and addressed to Jean Beaufret, was antihumanistic and extremely polemical towards Sartre.

The dividing line between humanism and anti-humanism in no way reflects the divisions between the main philosophical movements but rather cuts across them, especially across Christianity, Marxism and existentialism. It does not cut across neo-positivism or structuralism, which are less successful in answering the questions about the survival of mankind which have been asked in the second half of this century

Feuerbach and Marx's Manuscripts had already provided the background for a humanistic anthropology. Fromm wanted to work towards a shared definition of socialist humanism and put together contributions on the same theme, so he promoted a cultural initiative to collect ideas. *Socialist Humanism. An International*

*Symposium*⁷, edited by Fromm, marks an important step in the history of humanism. It contains praise for Marx's early works, understandable after so much censorship. Svitak wrote:

„This new kind of humanism was formulated for the first time in Paris, in the spring of 1844, by a twenty-six-year-old immigrant from Germany named Karl Marx. His unfinished manuscript had one of the most dramatic fates of any book. Even today any reference to Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* arouses the interest of both orthodox and unorthodox Marxists... Marx's concept of humanism brought a basic change into the history of humanism, since it was more than the mere metaphysical speculation of the German philosophy of the time. It transcended older philosophies and formed an anti-illusionist, anti-ideological social and historical basis for scientific anthropology. Among other things, it brought to a close the philosophy of man by laying the basis for a science of man.“⁸

This ties in with the words of Markovic, which bring some discipline to the enthusiasm and put forward the idea of a well-equipped and critically constructive anthropology on the level of the technique of thought too. Markovic wrote⁹:

By *humanism* I mean a philosophy that tries to solve all philosophical problems in the perspective of Man, that embraces not only anthropological problems, like human nature, alienation, freedom, etc., but also all other ontological, epistemological, and axiological problems. A humanist *ontology* is a philosophical theory of the objects of the *human* world, whose boundaries are constituted by all kinds of human activity, including sense-perception, the construction of theories, mathematical operation with symbols, etc., as well as the physical operations of the human body. A humanist *epistemology* is a theory of human knowledge. Logic should not be reduced to the investigation of

⁴ Cf. Semerari G. (1973), *Filosofia e potere*, Dedalo, Bari, p. 149.

⁵ Sartre J.-P. (1946), *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, Les Editions Nagel S.A., Paris.

⁶ Heidegger M. (1947), „Brief über der Humanismus“, in *Platons Lehre von Wahrheit*, Francke, Bern.

⁷ Fromm E. (1965a), *Socialist Humanism. An International Symposium*, Doubleday, New York.

⁸ Svitak I. (1965), „The Sources of Socialist Humanism“, in: E. Fromm, *Socialist Humanism*, op. cit., p. 20-22.

⁹ Markovic M. (1965), „Humanism and Dialectic“, in: E. Fromm, *Socialist Humanism*, op. cit., p. 77f.



exact, purely formalized schemata of thinking... A humanist *axiology* is a theory of concrete, historically given and variable values - not of certain absolute, transcendental ideals and norms. Such a humanist approach to philosophy demands a philosophical method which accepts the unity of subject and object, and of theory and practice...; critical rather than ideological; and objective, without positivist blindness for human values and practical interests. The philosophical method that meets these requirements is the dialectical method developed and applied by Marx."

The structuralists, on the other hand, suggested a different reading of Marx. This reading divided up the works and assigned a different weight and value to the various writings, undervaluing the early works from a presumed point of view of the later Marx. This division is operated by those Marxists most influenced by structuralism. Louis Althusser in particular formulates clear distinctions using precise and lucid arguments.¹⁰

Adam Schaff, the great Polish philosopher and friend of Fromm's replied calmly and firmly to these extreme ideas. Here is an extract:

"The question of unity - or lack of unity - in the development of Marx's theory must be approached historically. 'Historical' does not, however, mean only investigation of the *sources* of certain ideas and opinions, although this undoubtedly constitutes a very important element of any historical analysis in this field of research. 'Historical' has a far wider significance, tantamount to 'evolutionary,' 'dynamic.' Now we know how to study evolution and dynamics - and this requirement is clearly part of the method of Marxian historicism - from the point of view of the *effects* of certain phenomena in the historical process. How often it is that the historical place and importance of phenomena can only be ascertained *ex post facto*, after the consequences have revealed themselves in certain cause-and-effect connections... This was the meaning of Marx's metaphor that human anatomy is the key to the anatomy of the ape; what he meant was the methodological postulate that

¹⁰ Althusser L. (1965), *Pour Marx*, Maperro, Paris; tr. it. *Per Marx*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1967, p. 16-17.

the full meaning of history can only be grasped *ex post facto*... In my view, there is only one sensible suggestion: the first period is genetically linked to the later ones, for it was then that the problems emerged to whose solution Marx's entire life was devoted. There is, in effect, a continuity of the basic issue that constitutes the axis of the system - although this is not wholly apparent when the various parts of phases of this system are analyzed in isolation."¹¹

Thus Adam Schaff does not emphasize the early works but visualises the works as a whole and assigns to the early works their correct importance. This is a method of philosophical history which proceeds to the "anterior future". Fromm, working independently, reached the same conclusions.

To decide whether Fromm was a Marxist or even if he was familiar with Marx's works, we should consider the results of his enquiry, their complexity and their consensus with those philosophers who have spent their whole lives studying Marxist thought. It is true that Fromm does sometimes criticize Marx¹² and that certain problems which interested Marx did not interest Fromm, but to deduce from this that Fromm showed superficial interest and lack of familiarity is to be inflexible and schematic. Schaff speaks for many when, in his book *Marxism and the Human Individual*, he adds this footnote:

"Some of the ideas underlying the following remarks on sociology are the outcome of my conversations with Professor Erich Fromm in his house in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in September, 1963. While I am now unable to say which of them stem from him and which are my own responsibility or the result of an exchange of opinions, I must emphasize that the basic outlines of the conception are undoubtedly his contribution. This I gratefully acknowledge; during my several days' stay with him I learned a great deal, including matters which concern the understanding of Marxism."¹³

¹¹ Schaff A. (1965), *Marksizm a jednastka ludzka*, Warszawa; engl.: *Marxism and the Human Individual*, McGraw-Hill, New York, p. 22-24.

¹² Fromm E. (1955a), *The Sane Society*, Rinehart and Winsten, New York, p. 257-269.

¹³ Schaff A. (1965), *Marxism and the Human Individual*, McGraw-Hill, New York, p. 258.



2) From „human essence“ to „human nature“ Universal human nature and human nature as altered by history

In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx used the term „human essence“ but he later considered it to be an abstract and ahistorical concept. In *Das Kapital* he speaks of „human nature“, both in the general sense of human totality, total or universal man, and in the historically relative sense with socio-economic connotations. He thus specifies two concepts: Human nature in general and human nature as modified by history. Fromm traces the development of the thread which connects the *Manuscripts* to *Das Kapital*. The link between these two works is *The German Ideology*, and Fromm's reference to a passage missing from *The German Ideology* was much appreciated by R. Kalivoda¹⁴ who, for reasons of his own, was interested in showing the continuity of the concept of human nature in general in Marx: „E. Fromm's merit lies in having identified the nucleus of the basic thesis of this passage (from *The German Ideology*) in *Das Kapital*“.

This is the missing passage from *The German Ideology* which links the *Manuscripts* to *Das Kapital* [MEGA I,5, S. 596 Anm.]¹⁵

Fromm maintained that this and other passages from *The German Ideology* enable us to see the link between the 1844 *Manuscripts* and *Das Kapital* and thus the unifying thread in Marx, his vision of total man, with both its universal and historically determined aspects. The later Marx did not abandon universal human nature insofar as it transcends historical periods, but he deliberately chose to study the human relative which is fruit of the capitalist mode of production. His need to concern himself with economics resulted in the elaboration of a

method¹⁶, the definition of a historical laboratory¹⁷, and the study of the mechanisms which prevent the emergence of the human universal in a certain period. His grand theoretical design, its nuclei and its density already present in the *Manuscripts*, had to become a science. This science had to alternate induction and deduction, historical analysis and theoretical generalizations, mathematical calculations and rigorous demonstrations of man's exploitation of man. In *Das Kapital* Marx constructed a scientific method which had not yet been elaborated at the time of the *Manuscripts*. This observation gives Althusser's distinction cultural dignity but not the force of persuasion. Even though Fromm was not concerned with Althusser, the arguments the former used to support the idea of continuity in Marx's thought are valid for him too. It was not a question of „epistemological discontinuity“ but of an adjustment in research methodology which led to the conception of an economic science which criticized itself.

As a result of Marx's scientific work we can see that to the distinction between universal human nature and human nature as altered by history, there is a corresponding distinction between „fixed“ impulses, passions and needs, universally present, and „variable“ impulses, passions and needs, which are perceived according to the various historically determined social contexts¹⁸. Marx's famous footnote is most explicit¹⁹:

¹⁴ Kalivoda R. (1968), *Moderni duchovní skutečnosti a marxismus*, Československý Spisovatel, Praha; tr. it. *La Realtà spirituale moderna e il marxismo*, Einaudi, Torino 1971, p. 127.

¹⁵ Marx Engels (1845-46), *Ideologia tedesca*, Opere Complete V, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1972, p. 254 in nota.

¹⁶ Marx K. (1859), Prefazione e (1857) Introduzione a *Per la Critica dell'economia politica*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1969.

¹⁷ Marx K. (1867) Prefazione alla prima edizione del Capitale, *Il Capitale*, Libro primo I, Edizioni Rinascita, Roma 1956, p. 16.

¹⁸ Heller A. (1974), „Bedeutung und Funktion des Begriffs Bedürfnis im Denken von Karl Marx“; tr. it. *La teoria dei bisogni in Marx*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1974, pp 28 e sgg. FROMM E. (1961b), *Marx's Concept of Man*, p. 13-15.

¹⁹ Marx K. (1867), *Il Capitale*, Libro primo III, Edizioni Rinascita, Roma 1952, p. 56.



3. Real and imaginary needs

Here I cite some extremely relevant passages from the 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*:

„Every man speculates upon creating a *new* need in another in order to force him to a new sacrifice, to place him in a new dependence, and to entice him into a new kind of pleasure and thereby into economic ruin. Everyone tries to establish over others an *alien* power in order to find there the satisfaction of his own egoistic need... The need for money is therefore the real need created by the modern economy, and the only need which it creates... This is shown subjectively, partly in the fact that the expansion of production and of needs becomes an *ingenious* and always *calculating* subservience to inhuman, depraved, unnatural, and *imaginary* appetites. Private property does not know how to change crude need into *human* need; its *idealism* is *fantasy*, *caprice* and *fancy*. No eunuch flatters his tyrant more shamefully or seeks by more infamous means to stimulate his jaded appetite, in order to gain some favor, than does the eunuch of industry, the entrepreneur, in order to acquire a few silver coins or to charm the gold from the purse of his dealy beloved neighbor... The entrepreneur accedes to the most depraved fancies of his neighbor, plays the role of pander between him and his needs, awakens unhealthy appetites in him, and watches for every weakness in order, later, to claim the remuneration for this labor of love... Every want is an opportunity for approaching one's neighbor, with an air of friendship, and saying, 'Dear friend, I will give you what you need, but you know the *conditio sine qua non*. You know what ink you must use in signing yourself over to me. I shall swindle you while providing your enjoyment.' This alienation is shown in part by the fact that the refinement of needs and of the means to satisfy them produces as its counterpart a bestial savagery, a complete, primitive and abstract simplicity of needs... For the worker even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need. Man returns to the cave dwelling again, but it is now poisoned by the pestilential breath of civilization... It is not enough that man should lose his human needs; even animal needs disappear...

The fact that the growth of needs and of the means to satisfy them results in a lack of needs and of means is demonstrated in several ways by the economist... Political economy, the science of *wealth*, is therefore, at the same time, the science of renunciation, of privation and of saving, which actually succeeds in depriving man of fresh *air* and of physical *activity*.²⁰

Fromm notes²¹ that by distinguishing between real and imaginary needs, Marx poses a fundamental problem for the theory of needs. Only a socio-cultural context which is a result of imaginary, arbitrary and cleverly stimulated needs can fail to see the importance of the distinction and not prepare the conceptual and scientific tools necessary to cope with it. A subjectively perceived need is not necessarily genuine although it may seem to justify itself. Imaginary needs also present the emotional and alien conditions for a non-dialectical theory which recognizes and legitimizes them simply because they exist. The loss of the relationship between existence and essence means that modern psychology has lost a lot of its critical strength²².

Marx never wrote anything similar to a psychological treatise nor did he write a book on ethics, as Spinoza and Aristotle did. However, Fromm maintains²³ that there is a psychological vision of man in Marx's theory as a whole, which comes out in certain passages and pervades his entire work.

Man's real needs are an expression of his universality, the nature of the species which is reborn in each individual. They are essential needs which lead to relationships with both the human and the natural world, in a reciprocal dialectic between the naturalness of man and the humanization of nature²⁴. Eyes to see with, ears to hear with, a brain to reason and perceive with, a heart to feel with, organs and their use,

²⁰ Marx K. (1844), *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* quoted according E. Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961), p. 141-144.

²¹ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, in *Gesamtausgabe V* cit., p. 424.

²² Ibidem.

²³ Idem, p. 421.

²⁴ Marx K. (1867), *Il Capitale* cit., Libro primo I, pp. 195-196.



faculties and functions²⁵, this is the Marxist concept of human nature, „dynamic and full of energy“²⁶. The concreteness of human nature lies in its position as the need for self-affirmation, self-production, in the world. In the *Manuscripts* work is called „self-activity“ insofar as human beings and nature are in a reciprocal relationship in which the naturalness of man shows its worth as an expression of active need which interacts with nature and humanizes it. However, the psychologist in Marx sees the „ambiguous character of needs“²⁷. Needs can be artificial even if they are not perceived as such.

Marx's status as a psychologist is not only due to the lessons he learnt from Spinoza, who was the first to conceive of a model of human nature. It is also due to his adherence to that great German movement that was idealism, at the height of which Hegel elaborated the technique of dialectical thinking and advanced the idea of the process of alienation. Marx's logic is dialectical and so is his economic theory, which is critical and non-descriptive. His psychological vision, expressed in terms of opposite poles, is a predecessor of psychoanalysis, even though the time was not ripe to recognize and accept it²⁸.

Marx's theory of alienation is not the same as Hegel's, although it is related, and an enormous amount has been written on this subject. Dal Pra's statement explains:

„It can be said that the difference between the Hegelian and the Marxist dialectical processes lies in the fact that the former, based on self-consciousness, identifies alienation with objectivisation, therefore the suppression of alienation coincides with the suppression of objectivisation. The latter, on the other hand, is based on real man with all his feelings and engaged in his relationship with objects. It distinguishes objectivisation from alienation, which is a particular form, and equates the suppression of alienation with the suppression of the particular and inhuman way in which the relationship between man and objects is expressed and not with the

suppression of objectivisation which is a permanent human condition“²⁹.

Mankind's needs can therefore be his enemies, alienated and foreign even though they are lodged in his spirit and are felt as his own. Thus, by applying the concept of alienation to needs, Marx noticed that imaginary needs took the place of real ones and frustrated them. His dialectical conclusion was that, in terms of alienated needs, wealth and poverty are not opposites but are rather the same thing. A man is rich only in authentic terms, insofar as he is a vehicle for a totality of the needs for self-realization, for his needs as a human being, deep-rooted in their universality.

4. Passion, activity and passivity

„Die Leidenschaft, die Passion ist die nach seinem Gegenstände energisch strebende Wesenkraft des Menschen“ (Passion is a substantial human force which energetically tends towards its object). This statement of Marx's, with its Spinozian influence, is fundamental to Erich Fromm's psychoanalysis³⁰. He saw it as a concept of relations, which is superior to a concept of instinct. According to Fromm, as Marx criticized the vulgar and mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century, so would he have criticized Freudian instinctualism, where instinct is seen as a chemically-determined internal drive which produces such relationships as the exchange of advantage and exploitation.

Passion is already a relationship, a relationship where the subject does not place itself in front of the object taking care to distinguish itself, but it participates, allowing itself to participate. In „industry“ the objectivization of humans and the humanization of nature is expressed.

„It is only when objective reality everywhere becomes for man in society the reality of human faculties, human reality, and thus the re-

²⁵ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man, in *Gesamtausgabe* V, cit., p. 424.

²⁶ Idem, p. 423.

²⁷ Idem, p. 428.

²⁸ Idem, p. 421.

²⁹ Dal Pra M. (1965), *La dialettica in Marx*, Laterza, Bari 1972, p. 156.

³⁰ Biancoli R. (1986), „Controllo e creatività“, in *Incontro con Erich Fromm*, atti del Siposio Internazionale Erich Fromm, Firenze, novembre 1986, Edizioni Medicea, Firenze 1988, p.53.



ality of his own faculties, that all *objects* become for him the *objectification of himself*. The objects then confirm and realize his individuality, they are *his own* objects, i.e., man himself becomes the object. *The manner in which* these objects become his own depends upon the *nature of the objects* and the nature of the corresponding faculty; for it is precisely the *determinate character* of this relation which constitutes the specific *real* mode of affirmation.³¹

Human beings are in relationships with themselves, with each other, with nature. They express themselves in a complex series of relationships and the study of these relationships and of their objects is also the study of human beings. Human psychology can be deduced from things done by humans. Marx continues:

„It can be seen that the history of *industry* and industry as it *objectively* exists is an *open* book of the *human faculties*, and a human *psychology* which can be sensuously apprehended... No psychology for which this book, i.e., the most sensible present and accessible part of history, remains closed, can become a *real* science with a genuine content.“³²

According to Marx, man's „essential forces“ can only be seen in their active use. Marx uses Spinoza's idea of activity to represent a human world where man actively produces objects and actively relates to them. Work, which is self-activity, reveals human faculties which are generative and relate actively, creatively, and spontaneously to what is generated. Otherwise the freedom to exercise human forces is lost and the things produced are alienated, they elude the generating source, no longer recognize it nor are they recognized by it, they turn against man the creator and subjugate him.

Human faculties live insofar as they are actively exercised. Passivity cancels them out as an act, abandons them to a state of potentiality where they remain unused and concealed virtualities. Marx advanced a model of sane man along the lines of Spinoza: man who is integrated in the use of his faculties and of his senses, dedicated to forming impassioned rela-

tionships with himself, with others, with the world; man who needs innumerable responses which he tries to encourage. According to Marx, sane man lives in *passional* harmony. If one passion spreads at the expense of the others, if its object becomes so important that man loses himself in it so that it becomes stronger than him, he becomes alienated, dehumanised, and we have pathology. If affirmative and correlating activity is missing, if the harmony of relations is weakened, if man is no longer whole, impulses which were integrated in him break away and remain as animal impulses. But human beings are not animals and such impulses make merely them sick and fragmented³³.

„It is nonsense to believe...one could satisfy one passion separated from all others without satisfying *oneself*, the whole living individual. If this passion assumes an abstract, separate character, if it confronts him as an alien power, that is...as an one-sided satisfaction of a single passion - this by no means pertains to consciousness or good will...but to *being*; not to thought, but to life. It is caused by the empirical development and manifestation of life of the individual...if the circumstances under which this individual lives permit him only the one-sided development of one quality at the expense of all others...the result is that this individual achieves only a one-sided, crippled, development.“³⁴

Thus Marx provides a sketch of the psychology of sane human beings who are whole and productive and he also outlines human psychopathology, indicating its causes. These causes lie in the way in which human beings relate to each other, in the „modes of production“, and consequently psychopathology is widespread. In human terms, alienation does not only impoverish the exploited but the exploiters too. Fromm³⁵ believed that Marx saw normal man

³¹ Marx K. (1844), Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 quoted according E. Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (1961), p. 133.

³² Idem, p. 135.

³³ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, in *Gesamtausgabe* cit., pp. 425-426.

³⁴ Marx Engels (1845-1846), *The German Ideology*, quoted according E. Fromm, Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man, in: E. Fromm, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1970, p. 51f.

³⁵ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, in *Gesamtausgabe* cit., p.



as sick (normal in the statistical sense of the most frequent), and that he was in a way concerned with the „pathology of normality“, a Frommian concept that is both descriptive and explicative.

5. Consciousness and illusion Biophilia in Marx's thought

Marx considered consciousness to be a superficial element in human passions, although it is functional and conforms to what has generated it. In a passage from *The German Ideology* he states: „...consciousness does not determine life, life determines consciousness“. The clearest formulation of the social conditioning of consciousness can be found in the well-known *Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economics*³⁶:

„In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.“ (36)

The idea that human beings have of themselves is „false consciousness“. Ideologies formed on the basis of material conditions and constraints are not genuine but they are functional in terms of the real needs of the social structure. As a member of a certain class in a certain society, man justifies himself as a member of the human race insofar as he is total man. Consciousness is an illusion. Fromm immediately notes the analogy between Marx's concept of ideology and Freud's concept of rationalization.

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³⁶ Marx K. (1859), Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy, quoted according E. Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man, p. 17.

Freud believed that rationalizations were procedures through which the individual strives to give logical coherence and moral credit to ideas, feelings and unconsciously motivated and often unacceptable acts. In his book „Beyond the Chains of Illusion. My Encounter with Marx and Freud“, Fromm writes at length on the similarities and differences between Marx and Freud. But he had already understood the psychological aspect of ideologies in his early works³⁷ where he elaborates the concept of „social character“, which derives from Marx's theories:

„In particular, (psychoanalysis) has unmasked individual and collective ideologies as the expression of specific wishes and needs rooted in the instincts and shown that our 'moral' and idealistic motives are in some measure the disguised and rationalized expression of instinctual drives.“³⁸

Although Fromm discerns similarities between Marx's and Freud's thinking, they are not identical. For example, having put forward the relationship between ideology and rationalization³⁹ and between alienation and transference⁴⁰, he goes on to explain their conceptual and contextual differences. The reasons for tracing the analogies between Marx's thinking and psychoanalysis are part of a theoretical move aimed at recovering the humanistic core of Marxist thinking and in part of the work on psychoanalysis.

Fromm is not interested only in the explicit formulations of psychology but also in the psycho-dynamical aspects implicit in Marx's statements. Although they worked in different fields, Marx and Freud had in common the aim of freeing man from his illusions. Fromm took up this aim and believed that Marx gave more importance to the „function of becoming con-

³⁷ Fromm E. (1932a), „Über Methode und Aufgabe einer Analytischen Sozialpsychologie: Bemerkungen über Psychoanalyse und historischen Materialismus“, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Leipzig; in *Gesamtausgabe* I, cit., p. 37-57; engl. in: E. Fromm, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, p. 110-134.

³⁸ Idem, p. 110.

³⁹ Fromm E. (1962a), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion. My Encounter with Marx and Freud*, New York.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.



scious⁴¹. In Fromm's psychoanalysis there are two fundamental steps: „de-repression“⁴² and complete consciousness, or „Aufhebung der Verdrängung“ or „conscientiation“ (a Spanish neologism⁴³ which expresses this concept of internal movement and the consequent praxis of acting on the basis of the transformation of consciousness very well). In other words: destroy illusions and act as a consequence. Fromm quotes⁴⁴ an incisive passage from Marx's „Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law“⁴⁵: „Asking someone to give up the illusions of their condition means asking them to give up a condition that needs illusions“. This is an excellent plan of work both in politics and psychoanalysis.

Fromm believed that Marx's thinking presented an underlying biophilia⁴⁶ and was intensely life-oriented. This is not only because it examines love in the Spinozian sense of activity with rare and intense effectiveness, but also because the categories used, the dialectic itself, are marked with the conflict between the living and the dead. Apart from economic considerations, there is a certain fascination in the idea that capital is past work which has been accumulated and is dead, and that labour is living work. The dead struggling against the living, the past trying to dominate the present, the labour of the workers as a living thing opposed to accumulated capital, dead work as a part of death. Likewise there is no doubt that Fromm's attempt to retrieve these aspects of Marx's economic theory for humanistic and biophilic ends is extremely interesting although it is only an outline. It remains to be seen if an operative methodology can be elaborated which is both humanistic

and rigorous enough to distinguish those theoretical structures which are favourable to mankind from those which are unfavourable, together with the practical effects of their application.

⁴¹ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, *Gesamtausgabe* cit., p. 431.

⁴² Fromm E. (1960a), *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*, Harper & Brothers, New York; in *Gesamtausgabe* VI, cit. p. 341ff.

⁴³ Fromm E., Unpublished chapter of *To Have Or to Be?*.

⁴⁴ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, *Gesamtausgabe* cit., p. 432.

⁴⁵ Marx K. (1843-44), Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.

⁴⁶ Fromm E. (1968h), „Marx's Contribution to the Knowledge of Man“, *Gesamtausgabe* cit., p. 430.