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Neo-Freudians in Search of “Truth”

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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century will go down in history as a century of major social upheavals and profound ideological conflict. In the modern world a fierce struggle is under way between communist and bourgeois ideologies, a struggle which reflects in the world of ideas the historical process of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Unlike the anti-communists, whose theoretical principles openly support the capitalist system and are aimed at deliberate falsification of Marxist-Leninist ideas, liberal-bourgeois theoreticians attempt to present themselves as radicals criticizing and castigating capitalist society and putting forward various schemes for its "cure" or "revolutionary change". In so far as they put forward their abstract Utopian and social-reformist schemes for changing capitalism as an alternative to the scientifically substantiated and well-tried Marxist programme for the revolutionary rebuilding of the world, liberal-bourgeois theoreticians often find themselves ranked with the anti-communists against their will. As for the fairly widespread tendency among them to use Marxism to their own ends, adapting it to the bourgeois world outlook, here they are working hand in glove with Right-wing revisionists.

As a result of the complex and contradictory nature of the theoretical and social stand adopted by liberal-bour-

geois ideologists on the one hand, and the original social criticism of capitalist society on the other; as a result of their proximity to anti-communism and Right-wing revisionism and also the extraordinary popularity of their views and ideas among certain sectors of the bourgeois intelligentsia and the young radical Left, a critical Marxist assessment of liberal-bourgeois ideas from a scientific and ideological angle is extremely relevant at the present time.

It is of particular interest in this context to consider the philosophical and political ideas of the American sociologist and psychologist, Erich Fromm, one of the founders of the neo-Freudian trend in psychoanalysis.

Fromm's socio-philosophical ideas represent one of the many varieties of abstract humanist theories which are emerging and gaining popularity in the West as offshoots of a variety of philosophical and religious teachings and which provide a clear and reliable reflection of the views held by the petty and middle bourgeoisie and also the moods and outlook of substantial sections of the liberal and democratically orientated bourgeois intelligentsia and youth rallying to the support of the New Left movement. Fromm's social philosophy constitutes a theoretically formulated ideology of those sections of bourgeois society which are aware of the need for change in their society but do not envisage any realistic paths or methods for effecting such change.

An influential part in the crystallization of Fromm's socio-philosophical views was that played by the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt-am-Main, where he was a staff member from 1929 to 1932. It was there that the so-called Frankfurt school of sociology took shape and made a name for itself. Fromm's social philosophy in many respects provides a faithful reflection of the philosophical searching that preoccupied the representatives of that school (whose number included such famous names as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse) who attempted to liberalize Marxism by synthesiz-

ing it with neo-Hegelianism, existentialism and Freudianism and strove to find a "golden mean", a third path in philosophy.

Fromm came to be known as a specialist in the application of psychoanalysis to the study of social problems after his first major work *Escape from Freedom* was published in 1941 and became a best-seller. Here he attempts to trace the evolution of freedom and the individual's self-awareness from the Middle Ages until the present day. It is in this particular book that he first expounds the basic tenets of neo-Freudian social philosophy. The fundamental principles of this philosophy are then elaborated in his subsequent works: *Man for Himself* (1947), *The Sane Society* (1955), *The Art of Loving* (1956), *May Man Prevail?* (1961), *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962), *The Heart of Man* (1964), etc.

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

Fromm is a liberal radical researcher caught within the framework of bourgeois thought, whose social-theoretical ideas are highly contradictory and incorporate elements of progressive social theory side by side with an idealist-metaphysical philosophical world outlook and a negative attitude to socialism in practice and to the Leninist stage of development in Marxist theory.

Fromm's social philosophy differs from that of his colleagues in that it has grown up on an ideological foundation of Freudianism, one of the most widespread intellec-

tual developments of the twentieth century, while at the same time being subject to the influence of Marx's philosophy.

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

At a time when the traditional schools of bourgeois philosophy are in a state of growing crisis, and more and more interest is being shown in Marxism, the philosophical and political ideas put forward by the Frankfurt school of sociology have in recent years gained considerable ground, leaving their mark on the philosophical and political ideas of the bourgeois intelligentsia and some sections of youth in the capitalist countries of today. A critical analysis of Fromm's social philosophy serves to pinpoint the socio-theoretical illusions and errors to which the liberal-bourgeois intelligentsia is so prone at the present time.

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

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY ORIENTATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

(From Freud to Fromm)

1. The Origins of This Orientation in Psychoanalysis

In the history of bourgeois social philosophy it would probably be difficult to find a more popular theory, a theory which exerted a more powerful influence on all spheres of intellectual life in capitalist society, than the theory of psychoanalysis evolved by the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud.

Psychoanalysis emerged as a distinct theoretical field in the first decade of the twentieth century in answer to the demands of contemporary medical practice. At first it was no more than a specific method for the treatment of neuroses used instead of hypnosis in hospital conditions, but later it was to become the foundation for a new departure in psychology and constitute a whole social philosophy, whose adherents claimed universality for their theory and maintained that their methods could be applied for the resolution of not merely medical and psychological problems, but social problems as well.

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

When considering the evolution of ideas pertaining to social philosophy within the field of psychoanalysis it is as well to distinguish between two stages in the history of psychoanalysis: the bio-psychological stage during which Freud's sociological conception really came into being and the anthropological-psychological stage during which Fromm's social philosophy took shape.

Freud, as he elaborated his theory of the causes of neuroses and the corresponding techniques of treating them, was bound sooner or later to widen his research beyond purely medical issues, because in his analysis of the causes of nervous disorders, he had concentrated from the outset on the role and significance of moral and social factors, although he had not examined the extent of their influence outside the confines of the family. In his study of the causes and character of hysteria symptoms Freud drew the conclusion that pathological phenomena appear as a result of the relegation from the sphere of consciousness to the subconscious of those emotions, urges and reactions which are undesirable or unpleasant to the conscious human ego.

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

within the scope of Freud's theory of psychoanalysis.

Freud's theory is of a distinctly bio-psychological character, centred on instincts. With reference to the theory of immutable innate biological instincts and also to the hypothesis of the eternal irreconcilable conflict between life and death in every organism Freud attempted to find the source of man's mental activity. To him the psyche was biological by nature and did not in any way depend upon the external world, upon social reality. Convinced that man's instinctual make-up determined his behaviour Freud denied categorically that man's environment might influence his mental structure. Modern theoretical and empirical psychological research demonstrates conclusively that the basically metaphysical theory of instincts on which psychoanalysis is based is mystification pure and simple.

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

* Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness", *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, New York, 1963, p. 25 (Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, New York, 1964, p. 11; Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, New York, 1962, pp. 44, 51).

** Sigmund Freud, *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, p. 25.

sexual impulses under pressure of social demands as sublimation. "Sublimation of instinct," he writes, "is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life."^{*} The degree of sublimation is determined by the capacity of this or that individual in question which in its turn depends on the strength of his sexual instinct. When the demands of civilization are in excess of the individual's capacity for sublimation, that is when criminals or neurotics are made, Freud argues.

According to Freud in society there are three paths open to man prey to strong instincts demanding satisfaction. If his inner impulses are not held in check at all he becomes a criminal, if they are suppressed he becomes neurotic, and finally if they are sublimated in socially useful activity he is able to live in the given society without any friction. In order to rule out the first two possibilities which introduce inevitable discord to social life, two types of therapeutic measures are in Freud's view essential: firstly, society must somehow be compelled to reduce the demands it makes on the individual, thus relaxing the unduly rigorous repression of instincts, and secondly, the power of man's consciousness in the struggle with his instincts must be enhanced and his capacity for sublimation increased by means of improved rational control. Freud saw the search for the individual's optimal adaptation to social demands as the only acceptable solution for the conflict between man's biological nature and society. He was convinced that the qualitative diversity of human behaviour could be reduced to aspects of the process of instinct repression, to the various types of conflict between man's biological nature and his social environment.

* Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 44.

The conflicts at work on an unconscious level between social and biological pressures which Freud described do not, we would suggest, reflect complex, so much as real correlations between external and internal factors determining man's mental activity; they do not reveal the true motive forces behind his behaviour. In Freud's writings an immutable system of external social conditions is seen in conflict with a static system of man's inner world in the form of immutable instincts.

The interaction between the internal and the external is also depicted as static. Freud saw the conflict between human nature and society not as a dialectical whole and interpenetration of opposites but merely as a confrontation of two separate sides that were not dependent on each other. Freud did not consider that the external social conditions of man's existence determined his mental activity; he considered that they merely impeded the manifestation of that activity, holding back the realization of man's instinctive urges. This socio-psychological interpretation of the relationship between human nature and society confronted Freud with a dilemma which he found himself unable to resolve: on the one hand he sees the bridling and rejection of instincts as one of the essential conditions for the very existence of society, indeed civilization as a whole, and on the other the unimpeded and total satisfaction of instincts is presented as an essential condition for man's mental health.

Freud saw society as the product of three independent variables: (1) necessity (ananche) stemming from Nature; (2) a dualistic pair of instincts: love and death (Eros and Thanatos); (3) various institutions and ideals which constitute the social environment or society. The advance of civilization is shaped by the interaction of these three variables. Society is seen by Freud as a profoundly tragic phenomenon, since it is unstable and unreliable, given that the synthesis and reconciliation of these three components not only will never be effected but is in principle

quite impossible. Despite the fact that society seeks to make use of man's instinctive impulses so as to preserve and consolidate social life, all it can really do is establish a dubious balance that is always exposed to the danger of man's unbridled instincts. On frequent occasions Freud calls attention to the inner contradictions intrinsic to society, stressing, as he does so, the impossibility of surmounting them.* "Civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations into one great unity, the unity of mankind. Why this has to happen, we do not know; the work of Eros is precisely this. These collections of men are to be libidinally bound to one another. Necessity alone, the advantages of work in common, will not hold them together. But man's natural aggressive instinct, the hostility of each against all and all against each, opposes this programme of civilization. This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it."** The existence of a variety of social systems is in Freud's eyes "a result of the inborn conflict arising from ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between the trends of love and death".*** In this connection the American psychologist Norman Brown aptly observes that in Freud's interpretation "history is shaped, beyond our conscious wills, not by the cunning of Reason but by the cunning of Desire".****

Social life is presented by Freud as an everlasting, unending struggle between instincts and morality, between the individual's biological needs and the demands made upon him by the group or society to which he belongs.

* Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 62.

** Ibid., p. 69.

*** Ibid., p. 80.

**** Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, Middletown, 1959, p. 16.

Society, Freud would have us believe, does not answer any real need stemming from human nature. This theory leads him on to the paradoxical conclusion that man is not created for social living but at the same time needs society. Freud's ideal is a society in which no pressures would be brought to bear on the individual and he would be assured free scope for the satisfaction of his instincts. Yet since this ideal is unfeasible, because instincts by their very nature are antagonistic to society, Freud asserts that violence and coercion are therefore the logical foundation for any society that actually exists.

Each individual is viewed by Freud as a potential enemy of society not only because he bears within himself destructive desires, but also because the overwhelming majority of men are in his eyes lazy, unreasonable, and ill-adapted to community living. Society as interpreted by Freud asserts itself by constantly overcoming the masses' resistance and inertness and its task consists not only in suppressing destructive urges, but also in compelling men to reconcile themselves to those restrictions and sacrifices which society demands of them while offering them in exchange all manner of compensations. The latter comprise a "psychical inventory of a civilization" embracing morals, art, religion and politics. On the strength of the fact that man's instincts—the libido and aggression—are regarded as essentially anti-social, he delegates to society a purely negative, disciplinary role in the evolution of the human race. Freud reduces society's influence on man to little more than a greater or lesser degree of suppression of his instincts. Society, according to Freud, guarantees specific control over men's instincts in order to render possible the existence of human social relations. It emerges as a result of the need to bridle unruly sexual and aggressive desires in man, to restrain and purify his instinctive impulses.

Freud's theory of the human condition and human nature bears a close resemblance to conceptions expounded

by Machiavelli and Schopenhauer; any principle of good is alien to the human essence and therefore evil, destructive tendencies predominate in the world. In Freud's opinion man has never had and still does not have any humane feelings, impulses, and only fear of violence restrains him and holds in check his anti-social nature.

Freud's view of the prospects for the development of civilization is equally pessimistic. He holds that as civilization develops, the need to bridle instincts becomes more and more acute and that history cannot help but eventually degenerate into universal neurosis. The successes which society scores in the course of its development are only achieved at high cost, namely man's growing sense of being unsatisfied, which in Freud's opinion permeates the whole history of civilization; "the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt"*—to use Freud's own language.

In his conviction that man has no hope whatsoever of changing the existing state of affairs Freud recommends that he should submit to the inevitable. Life should be courageously accepted such as man finds it, is the conclusion proffered. From Freud's point of view the world in which we live is the best of worlds only in so far as it is the only possible world. The future is an illusion, which means that all fundamental ideals and faith in human progress are also illusory. The only aim in life according to Freud is the process of existence itself, namely the eternal struggle for survival. This pessimism of Freud's is a natural consequence of his psychoanalytical theory of the origin and development of civilization.

Freud extrapolates conclusions drawn from analyses of the behaviour of individual patients to social or ethnic groups and whole peoples. Brushing to one side the qualitative difference between the normal and the patholog-

* Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 81.

ical, he maintains that the healthy individual differs from the neurotic only in so far as the former is subject to a socially useful form of neurosis. In his view neurotic phenomena are not of a coincidental character, but rather a universal character intrinsic to all men without exception at all times; hence Freud's belief that we "can treat peoples as we do the individual neurotic".* The conclusions drawn by Freud from analyses of individual behaviour are used by him to characterize social phenomena, to interpret laws of historical development. This universalization of pathological phenomena makes history, as interpreted by Freud, appear as no more than a progressive neurosis of the whole of mankind.

Freud approaches the history of social development from the angle of his psychoanalytical theory. The idea of the universal neurosis affecting all mankind provides a kind of psychoanalytical analogue for the religious doctrine of original sin.

The philosophical foundation on which Freud's psychoanalytical theory was based, and in particular his sociology, was drawn from the idealist principles of the philosophy of Plato, Kant, Hartmann, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson. Although Freud did not regard himself as an adherent of any one philosophical doctrine, nevertheless his attention was attracted by those philosophical systems which expressed open irrationalism. From Eduard von Hartmann and Henri Bergson Freud borrowed the idea of the unconscious. Nietzsche and Schopenhauer aroused his interest in that they were constantly stressing the importance of unconscious emotions and sexuality in determining various aspects of man's life. On several occasions and in a number of works he acknowledges the influence of their ideas on his work. For example, in *A Problem in Psychoanalysis* he wrote: "Famous philoso-

* Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, New York, 1939, p. 128.

phers can be cited as forerunners, in particular the great thinker *Schopenhauer*, whose unconscious 'will' can be placed on a par with emotional impulses in psychoanalysis."⁶ It is therefore clear why no place was found for reason in Freud's psychoanalytical theory. The vital role in man's diverse mental activity is ascribed to unconscious, biologically determined instincts. Reason is only present as an attendant element. Idealism and metaphysics constitute the philosophical foundation on which the cumbersome edifice of psychoanalytical constructions is built up.

In the context of social history Freud's thought reflected the mood of terror and despair that came over the petty-bourgeois strata of society at the end of the nineteenth century. While studying the mental disorders of the lower and middle strata of the bourgeoisie in the Austrian capital and coming round to the conclusion that the cause of the majority of these disorders lay in the excessive restrictions placed by contemporary morals on man's natural sexual urges, Freud proceeded to generalize from individual cases and build up on that basis a pretentious theory of the universality of human nature. Freud correctly linked many of the neuroses he encountered to conflicts in men's minds between sexual urges and the moral demands of society. Yet he was mistaken in his efforts to extend the characteristics he observed within a specific society, moreover only a part of that society, to the whole of mankind's past and future.

As Freud started referring more and more to his psychoanalytical theory and its clinical applications in his study of social problems, this theory began to play the part of a specific method for explaining various phenomena of social life. Freud was firmly convinced that without prejudice to the essence of psychoanalysis it

* Sigmund Freud, "Eine Schwierigkeit der Psychoanalyse", *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 12, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1966, S. 12.

could be used with the same success in connection with mythology, language, folklore, national character and the study of religion, as for the treatment of neuroses. Freud's sociological ideas are not simply a side-product of his psychoanalytical theory, but the logical outcome of the essential development of that theory, its indispensable ingredient. Stress of the biological, pansexualism, excessive preoccupation with the unconscious, metaphysics, anti-historicism and pessimism form the basis of Freud's social philosophy.

The socio-political conclusions which follow on from Freud's social philosophy are reactionary in character; they have been used on numerous occasions, and indeed still are being used, by bourgeois ideologists to demonstrate the permanence and probity of social injustice, conflict, crime, war, and to demonstrate the impossibility of establishing just human relations.

Although Freud regarded himself as a scholar, and no more than a scholar, and never formulated his ideological and political stand in precise terms, the latter can be unmistakably deduced from his pessimistic theory bereft of all faith in man and prospects for progressive social development. His reduction of all man's social life to unconscious processes, to inner conflict of a sexual character was to prove increasingly inadequate as science developed. It is precisely in Freud's sociological ideas that the weaknesses inherent in the initial methodological principles of his theory come to the fore most strikingly of all, and it is from these principles that radical criticism of all aspects of orthodox Freudian thought started out.

2. The Emergence of Neo-Freudianism

The contradiction between various tenets of Freudian theory and the findings of experimental psychology, anthropology and sociology gave rise to the neo-Freudian trend in psychoanalysis in the thirties, which was characterized by a special emphasis on problems of social philos-

ophy. It was precisely with the emergence of the so-called cultural psychoanalysis that the second stage in its orientation towards social philosophy began. This stage was marked by an abrupt switch from the bio-psychological interpretation of human behaviour to an interpretation based on sociology and anthropological psychology.

The neo-Freudians reject Freud's theory of aggressive and sexual instincts, take a new look at the correlation between the conscious and the unconscious and the structure of man's mind and also make a critical reassessment of other tenets of classical psychoanalysis. Many of the neo-Freudians held that the essence of man's behaviour cannot be explained only with reference to man's universal biological nature; in addition it is essential to analyze social factors and study their influence on the formation of personality.

The neo-Freudian trend was represented by a large number of analysts, anthropologists, and sociologists. Particularly prominent among them were Fromm, Karen Horney, H. S. Sullivan and Abram Kardiner, and to a lesser extent Franz Alexander, H. D. Lasswell, and Margaret Mead. Nevertheless, the most prominent and most colourful figure of all was Erich Fromm.

Erich Fromm was born in Germany in 1900. After graduating from Heidelberg University, where he studied philosophy, inspired by Freud's work, Fromm chose the profession of a psychoanalyst. His study of psychoanalysis took him to Munich and later the celebrated Berlin Institute of Psychoanalysis. It is worth noting that unlike most of his colleagues, who entered the field of psychoanalysis after studying medicine, Fromm had no medical qualification. Apart from his practice of psychoanalysis, on which he embarked in 1925, Fromm devoted a considerable portion of his time to theoretical research in the field of social psychology. Initially Fromm was a faithful adherent of orthodox Freudian theory, but gradually he formulated his own critical reassessment of the Freudian

view of unconscious inner urges, of the role of social and economic factors in the formation of the human personality.

Fromm was the first to point out that orthodox Freudian theory was not equipped to explain the question of the interaction between the individual and society. The sociological slant of his scientific interests exerted a strong influence on Karen Horney; working together in Germany they made a reappraisal of Freud's ideas. They started work in Europe as orthodox Freudian analysts, but soon after emigrating to the United States in the thirties they founded a new school in psychoanalysis, which was joined in 1934 by the American psychiatrist H. S. Sullivan.

One of the factors accounting for the emergence of neo-Freudianism is without doubt the actual process of the gradual adaptation of Freudianism to the needs of the American patient of the thirties. Neo-Freudianism was to become a vivid expression of the Americanization of classical psychoanalysis, and its modification in the conditions of American life.

This reappraisal of orthodox Freudianism, and emphasis of the decisive significance of social factors creates at first the impression that the neo-Freudians are actually breaking with the metaphysical approach to human behaviour and providing an accurate picture of the relationship between man and the social conditions of his existence. Yet closer examination reveals that they are far removed from a true understanding of the real interaction between man and his social environment, and from truly scientific analysis of the role played by society in man's development. The American Marxist Harry Wells noted most aptly that in their view the environment "remains only the stage-setting for the intensive internal psychic drama of conflicting emotions".* It merely provides the back-

* Harry K. Wells, *The Failure of Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1963, p. 103.

ground for all man's "unconscious" psychical activity. While leaving untouched Freud's fundamental thesis concerning the all-important role of the "unconscious" in man's life, the neo-Freudians simply reiterate that manifestation of the "unconscious" is dependent upon the specific essence and qualitative peculiarities of a given society. All theoretical arguments put forward by the neo-Freudians on the subject of the relationship between man and society, although couched in modern sociological terminology, are still confined to the framework of the subjective-idealist, metaphysical conceptions typical of classical Freudianism.

While rejecting the biological approach which characterizes Freud's psychological theory, the neo-Freudians do not leave to one side his views on the role of instincts as such. They replace Freud's biological instincts that determine human behaviour with man's substantialized psychological needs, which are referred to by different names by the various neo-Freudians.

Although they criticize and attempt to improve Freud's theory, the neo-Freudians do not turn their back on the basic principles of his psychoanalytical theory, and in fact present us with a modernized version of the same. Indeed the neo-Freudians themselves openly admit that while criticizing classical Freudian theory, they set out not so much to disclose and emphasize what is wrong with psychoanalytical theory as "through eliminating the debatable elements, to enable psychoanalysis to develop to the height of its potentialities".* It thus follows that their criticism of Freudian theory was not a refutation of its methodological foundations, which had been conclusively compromised in the light of the scientific findings made by that time, but an interesting reinterpretation or reconstruction of psychoanalytical theory in keeping with the

* Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1939, p. 8.

demands of scientific knowledge and the spirit of the times.

Fromm himself, for example, holding that the development of any scientific theory demands as a general principle the "constructive reinterpretation of basic visions rather than repeating or discarding them",* maintains that "Freud's greatest discoveries, that of the Oedipus complex, narcissism, and the death instinct, were hobbled by his philosophical premises [mechanistic materialism.—*U.D.*] and that, freed from them and translated into a new frame of reference, Freud's findings become ever more potent and meaningful".** Fromm sees his philosophy of "dialectical humanism" as providing just such a "frame of reference". He goes on to state: "While in this respect my ideas differ essentially from those of Freud, they are nevertheless based on his fundamental findings..."*** While elaborating their own theories, Sullivan, Horney and Fromm were all intent on "preserving the essence of psychoanalysis, in the first place by sacrificing its Freudian form"****

The neo-Freudians in their reappraisal of classical psychoanalysis reject only such details as do not affect the essence of the theory. While criticizing its unduly biological and pansexual features they leave intact the fundamental principles of psychoanalytical theory: (a) the pre-eminence of the "unconscious" in the determination of man's behaviour; (b) the concept of repression; (c) the concept of resistance and transference; (d) the therapeutic techniques. Most relevant in this connection is the following passage from Horney's book *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* containing the author's main theoretical

* Erich Fromm, "Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis", *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, New York, 1971, p. 516.

** Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, London, 1965, pp. 14-15.

*** Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, New York, 1955, p. VIII.

**** Harry K. Wells, *The Failure of Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1963, p. 136.

premise: "Since many of my interpretations deviate from those of Freud some readers may ask whether this is still psychoanalysis. The answer depends on what one holds essential psychoanalysis. If one believes that it is constituted entirely by the sum total of theories propounded by Freud, then what is presented here is not psychoanalysis. If, however, one believes that the essentials of psychoanalysis lie in certain basic trends of thought concerning the role of unconscious processes and the ways in which they find expression, and in a form of therapeutic treatment that brings these processes to awareness, then what I present is psychoanalysis."^{*}

The paths leading the various neo-Freudians to the culture-orientated form of psychoanalysis differed; while it was mainly experience of practical psychoanalysis on which Horney based her reinterpretation of classical Freudianism, Fromm started out from his sociological findings.

Horney's desire to make a critical re-evaluation of psychoanalytical theories "had its origin in a dissatisfaction with therapeutic results."^{**} As psychoanalysis developed and came to be practised on an increasingly wide scale, analysts raised doubts as to its therapeutic effectiveness on numerous occasions and this matter was soon to be the subject of heated theoretical controversy. Yet until neo-Freudianism took shape as a well-defined trend, it was commonly accepted that the reason for this lay in its imperfections as a method of treatment, and all the efforts of the analysts were confined in the main to more detailed elaboration of various psychoanalytical procedures, to the subtle nuances of the psychoanalytical method of treatment. The practical experience gleaned from the study of American patients suffering from neurotic disorders

* Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, New York, 1937, p. IX.

** Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, p. 7.

demonstrated that their emotional traumas were the result not of sexual perturbations in their childhood, but rather of factors connected with the social aspect of human existence. Horney encountered symptoms quite different from those found in Freud's patients at the end of the previous century. All this led Horney to have doubts not in the therapeutic procedure as such, but in the approach to the treatment. The customary psychoanalytical preoccupation with singling out certain suppressed sexual desires did not yield results of any significance. Horney could not fail to notice that the radical change in the type of patient she was dealing with could be explained to a large extent by the complication of man's social existence since Freud's day.

The exacerbation of social contradictions in the United States in the thirties and forties, the depression, growing unemployment, and the general instability of life could not fail to leave their mark on the inner lives of the men of that time. The patient in this social context was no longer a patient in the ordinary, old sense of that word, because he turned to the analyst not as a patient, but as an individual in need of advice and help, in order to learn how he might cope more successfully with complex social pressures and stand up to those pressures. Face to face with such patients, the psychoanalyst often turned social philosopher, since to treat his patient he would go beyond the confines of the purely clinical aspects of the case and attempt to see it in a specific social context. The new psychological problems that confronted the patient made completely new demands on the analyst and thus gave rise to a radical change in the treatment to be administered. This in its turn demanded a reappraisal of certain tenets of classical Freudianism.

Her practical experience convinced Horney that the diversity and peculiarities of man's mental activity could not be explained in terms of his biological nature, and that such an approach to a large extent obstructed our

understanding of the real forces which determined man's principles and actions.

It became obvious that it would be impossible to go on talking in terms of the structure and motives of the individual's behaviour without taking into account social factors. Horney called for a sociological orientation in psychoanalysis, being convinced that culture should be accorded the central place in the theory of the development of the individual, that culture was the decisive, all-important factor in the formation of the individual's psychological character.*

Unlike Horney, Fromm comes forward first and foremost as a social psychologist, a social philosopher. He came to neo-Freudianism anxious "to understand the laws that govern the life of the individual man, and the laws of society—that is, of men in their social existence".** Although convinced that Freud was "the founder of a truly scientific psychology",*** Fromm nevertheless took a negative view of his social philosophy. The reduction of all man's social life to bio-instinctual conflict situations within the mind struck him as highly improbable. Large-scale historical events such as the First World War, the victorious revolution in Russia in 1917, revolutionary developments in Germany, the fascist take-overs in Italy and then in Germany constituted the "social laboratory" in which Fromm's socio-political ideas took shape. Anxious to grasp the causes behind the emergence, development and consequences of these phenomena Fromm turned to the writings of Karl Marx. His own observation and consideration of socio-historical phenomena and his study of Marx's ideas convinced Fromm that Freud "had only a very naïve notion of what goes on in society,

* Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, pp. 9, 13.

** Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, New York, 1962, p. 9.

*** Ibid., p. 12.

and most of his applications of psychology to social problems were misleading constructions. . . ."

Marx's theory played an important part in arousing Fromm's interest in socio-philosophical problems: ". . . without Marx . . . my thinking would have been deprived of its most important stimuli."** Yet despite this admission it is clear, as we shall see later, that Fromm misinterpreted and misrepresented the fundamental tenets of Marxist theory.

So, while Horney casts doubt on classical Freudianism first and foremost as a method of treatment for neuroses, Fromm arrives at a critical reappraisal of Freud's theory as a specific social philosophy. Both of them—regardless of their view of orthodox Freudianism—eventually come to adopt a common stand which was to provide the starting point for the amended, socially orientated psychoanalysis.

The social philosophy orientation of neo-Freudianism can be approached from either a narrow or a broader point of view. In a narrow sense the sociological aspect of neo-Freudianism consists in no more than the fact that all its adherents regard the origin of mental disorders and man's mental development in general as being dependent on the influence of man's social environment. Although statements of this kind have a declaratory air about them, and do not pinpoint the true link which exists between man and society, nevertheless the neo-Freudians can be seen in this respect to have made a step forward as compared to Freud, who reduced all psychical phenomena to man's bio-psychological nature. The sociological approach of the neo-Freudians in a broader sense is expressed in the fact that in their research a general socio-philosophical theory takes shape, a theory which attempts from the psychological angle to explain the motive forces and advance of social development.

* Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, New York, 1971, p. 23.

** Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 11.

The adherents of the first type of neo-Freudianism include a wide circle of bourgeois academics—psychoanalysts, anthropologists, sociologists, art historians. Only Fromm lays emphasis on the social orientation of neo-Freudianism in the broad sense of the word. It is he that created the theory of neo-Freudian social philosophy. This preoccupation with social philosophy which emerged in the field of classical psychoanalysis and was based on Freud's bio-psychology is not only developed in Fromm's philosophy, but in a way finds its culmination in his work. Fromm's theory, which provides the fullest and most vivid reflection of the social philosophy school in neo-Freudianism, consolidated once and for all the reputation of psychoanalysis as a philosophical method claiming to provide explanations for the essence of social phenomena.

In his philosophical theory Fromm examines first and foremost the laws and principles of action peculiar to the subjective human factor in the socio-historical process. Fromm endeavours to single out "the role which psychological factors play as active forces in the social process",* and to solve the related but wider problem of the interaction of psychological, economic and ideological factors, and their role and significance in social development. This problem constitutes the core of his social theory. The basic principle for its resolution which determined the direction of Fromm's theoretical searchings was his conviction that in order "to understand the dynamics of the social process we must understand the dynamics of the psychological processes operating within the individual, just as to understand the individual we must see him in the context of the culture which moulds him".** The need to resolve the problem of the socio-psychological interaction between the individual and society compelled Fromm to refer to certain other psycho-

* Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 21.

** Ibid., p. 8.

logical and socio-philosophical theories. It was at this point that he turned his attention to Freud and Marx. Taking as his basis Freud's psychological theory and Marx's philosophy, Fromm tried to "arrive at a synthesis which followed from the understanding and the criticism of both thinkers".* He laments the fact that such a fundamental work of Marx's as *Capital*, like various other of his writings, while containing an enormous quantity of pithy psychological descriptions and various psychological concepts was nevertheless not based on any specific, integrated psychological theory. Fromm explains this, in his view regrettable, omission not by Marx's lack of interest in psychology, but by "the fact that during Marx's lifetime there was no dynamic psychology which he could have applied to the problems of man. Marx died in 1883; Freud began to publish his work more than ten years after Marx's death."**

It is to Fromm's credit that in his comparison of Marx and Freud he singles out Marx as a thinker "of much greater depth and scope than Freud",*** and accords him pride of place. "Marx is a figure of world historical significance with whom Freud cannot even be compared."**** When comparing Marx's and Freud's view of the nature of the individual and the essence of society's historical development Fromm calls attention on various occasions to the limitations of Freud's ideas in comparison to those of Marx: "Freud was a liberal reformer, Marx, a radical revolutionist."*****

Justification for the linking together of Marx's sociology

* Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 9.

** Erich Fromm, "The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory", *Socialist Humanism. An International Symposium*. Ed. by Erich Fromm, New York, 1966, p. 229.

*** Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 12.

**** Ibid.

***** Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 26.

and Freud's psychological theory was, according to Fromm, to be found in the fact that the problem of the individual was central to both theoretical systems. The difference lay merely in the motive forces behind the behaviour of the individual as depicted by the two thinkers, these being of a socio-historical nature in Marx's system and of a purely biological order in Freud's theory. This led Fromm to conclude that the theories elaborated by Marx and Freud could supplement each other. Fromm considered that "the kind of psychology necessary to supplement Marx's analysis was, even though in need of many revisions, that created by Freud".*

The revisions Fromm had in mind were of an order designed to lend more sociological emphasis to Freudian psychology, to enrich it with Marxist terminology.

In this way Fromm attempts to bring about his synthesis of psychoanalysis with Marxism by lending Freudian psychology sociological content and Marxist sociology psychological implications. He hoped as a result to create a theory of social philosophy which, as he saw it, by absorbing the advantages of the two systems would eliminate their shortcomings and achieve a more advanced level of social philosophy.

The social theory which Fromm created, presenting as it does the logical result of his injection of a maximum possible dose of sociology into psychoanalysis, while keeping to the framework of general Freudian theoretical propositions, brought into striking relief the utter groundlessness of attempts to find a "third path" outside materialism and idealism.

The evolution of Freudianism at the present time has not only failed to obviate the shortcomings and weaknesses of classical psychoanalysis, but has served to silhouette them even more clearly. No neo-Freudian sociological arguments, with which Fromm endeavours to preserve and

* Erich Fromm, "The Application...", op. cit., p. 229.

uphold "the grain of truth discovered by Freud" can help to conceal the blatant errors and fallaciousness of the idealist and metaphysical methodology intrinsic to Freud's theory.

While on the one hand for the construction of his theory Fromm adopted in toto the ideological and methodological principles of classical psychoanalysis—a fact impossible to disguise even by resorting to new concepts for the presentation of the "old" content of psychoanalytical postulates—his approach to Marx's sociology is blatantly inadequate.

From the very outset, in his attempt to synthesize Marxism and Freudianism Fromm adopts a biased approach in his assessment of Marx's philosophical theory. What Fromm synthesizes with Freud's theory is not Marxism but a neo-Freudian version of Marxism.

Fromm interprets Marx's theory through the prism of his own views, that is from the angle of anthropological psychology. His conviction that "Marx's interpretation of history could be called an anthropological interpretation of history" expresses the overall neo-Freudian approach in connection with the assessment of Marx's philosophy and predetermines the distorted nature of that interpretation.

Fromm, believing that "Marx's philosophy was, in secular, nontheistic language, a new and radical step forward in the tradition of prophetic Messianism",** attempted to present Marx's historical materialism as some kind of "spiritual existentialism",*** assuming as he did so that Marx's materialist interpretation of history was based on a "genetic" concept of man independent of history, the essence of man in general. This view is clearly a long way from any true understanding of Marx's

* Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, New York, 1961, p. 13.

** Ibid., p. 3.

*** Ibid., p. 5.

dialectical and materialist philosophy. Fromm starts out from a false premise to the effect that "Marx's philosophy is neither idealism nor materialism but a synthesis: humanism and naturalism".* His own theory of "humanist psychoanalysis" he refers to as a "dialectical humanism" and considers that from the ideological point of view it represents something absolutely neutral.

Thus Fromm achieves this synthesis of Freudian and Marxist theory by first of all turning Marx into an existentialist thinker of a neo-Freudian slant and thus presenting Marxism in a distorted light. Fromm's work demonstrated time and time again the obvious and indisputable truth that any attempt to "fertilize" Marxism with principles contradictory to it or to link it to philosophical theories whose very essence and methodological principles are diametrically opposed to it, is impossible without distorting and misrepresenting the content of Marxist theory.

In his endeavour to "develop" Marxism and Freudianism through a synthesis of the two Fromm achieves the very opposite. On the one hand, despite his outwardly positive and favourable attitude to Marxism, he distorts its essence, "developing" it in a Freudian style, while in practice not accepting its fundamental revolutionary conclusions. On the other hand, when attempting to develop Freud's theory and bring it up to date with the help of Marxist philosophy, Fromm once again reveals the fundamental incompatibility of the methodological foundations of these theories and thereby to all intents and purposes brings nearer the collapse of psychoanalysis.

Fromm's attempt to integrate mutually exclusive principles of Freud's idealist and metaphysical theory and Marx's dialectical and materialist theory, to combine essentially anti-historic psychoanalytical theory with Marx's theory of history, introduces nothing constructive to social

* Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, p. 11.

theory and is inconsistent from a scientific point of view. This attempt leads, as we shall see later, to the emergence within the theory elaborated by Fromm of an inner contradiction between acceptance of the role of the external social environment in the development of the individual and the continued belief in unconscious dynamics within the individual's mind as the basic motive force behind that development.

The history of science has known many cases when theoreticians have attempted to give a new lease of life to obsolete idealist philosophical theories by fusing them with Marxism. Suffice it to recall attempts to link Marx's social theory with the philosophy of Kant, Hegel or Mach. Usually these theoreticians, on failing to find convincing arguments in scientific polemics, in ideological debate with Marxists, or to light on any tangible opportunity for countering it with anything serious, make desperate sallies to keep alive theories already bankrupt, with the help of Marxist terminology. Making capital out of the popularity of Marxist ideas theoreticians of this mould, in the name of "objective development of science", attempt to "cleanse", "revise", "rejuvenate" Marxism and adapt it to their own requirements. Regardless of the personal motives and intentions of these theoreticians, who present themselves as "true" exponents of Marxism and try to synthesize Marxism and scientific theories that have already shown themselves to be inadequate, they are perpetrating an act of blatant falsification with regard to the essential principles of Marxism.

Fromm's reference to Marxism, and his endeavour, with Marxism as his instrument, to modernize Freudianism and save it from demise testifies on the one hand to the growing influence of Marxist ideas and on the other to the profound and irreparable crisis which Freudianism as a theory is now passing through.

It is difficult to imagine that Fromm in his theoretical work is deliberately distorting Marxist tenets, yet the

dialectics of the ideological struggle are such that regardless of a scientist's motives his activity is determined by the stand adopted by the camp to which he belongs. Failing to go beyond idealism and metaphysics Fromm has remained a prisoner of the bourgeois world outlook. While attempting to interpret Marxism in an anthropological and humanist spirit and using it to counter Leninism and the whole practical experience of socialist and communist construction in the USSR, he has placed himself on the same side as the representatives of the anti-communist camp.

Fromm's main mistake lies in the fact that after selecting Freud's psychological theory and Marx's social theory as the point of departure for his own philosophy and setting out to bring the two together, he has failed to appreciate that this is a fundamentally impossible task, since the theoretical systems created by Marx and Freud are based on diametrically opposed methodologies. After giving due acknowledgement to the significance of social theory as a means of resolving various problems, and searching for a social theory, which would combine within itself sociological and psychological principles, he found himself faced by a dilemma: whether to evolve his own socio-psychological theory on a basis of Freudian psychology and its subjectively idealist and metaphysical methodology, or alternatively on a basis of Marxist sociology and its dialectical and materialist method. Fromm opted for Freudianism. The Freudian ideological and methodological slant peculiar to Fromm's work was largely instrumental in determining his response to Marx's historical materialism and his anthropological interpretation of the same.

Fromm's attempt to synthesize Freud's theory and Marxism was indeed nothing new. It served merely to resurrect the idea of "Freudo-Marxism" which had been popular in the twenties and thirties in many countries of Western Europe and in Russia too. At the present time a

certain revival of these ideas is to be observed. Fromm's work which provides a modern variant of the old concept of "Freudo-Marxism" makes it perfectly clear where attempts at unprincipled synthesis can lead, attempts to reconcile theories which are diametrically opposed to each other both with regard to their methodology and their ideological core.

MAN AND HISTORY

1. The Neo-Freudian Conception of the Nature of Man

(The Essential Features of Anthropological Psychologism)

The question as to the essence of man is one of the central problems of a wide range of sciences—philosophy, sociology, psychology, ethics, aesthetics, et al. In the course of thousands of years man has been trying to unravel the mystery of his ego. At various historical periods this problem has been approached and attempts made to resolve it in different ways. This was bound up first and foremost with the fact that in the course of historical development and the evolution of social conditions man himself has been gradually changing as well.

There exists an enormous quantity of definitions for the essence of man; however, from this diversity it is possible to single out two main approaches to the question that have become traditional in non-Marxist social philosophy and which are diametrically opposed to each other—namely the substantialist and relativist approaches. In the history of philosophy the problem as to the correlation between the substantial and relative in man has been interpreted both in an idealist and a materialist spirit.

When the substantialist approach is used (one of the most typical examples of its use is provided in Freud's bio-substantialism), man is regarded as a mere biological substance, as a fixed and unchanging conglomeration of specific psychological needs and desires. When man's essence is interpreted in this way, his behaviour and activ-

ity, the existence of various public institutions can be deduced directly from the psychological properties of human nature. The essence of the socio-historical process can then be reduced to the biologically determined behaviour of individuals.

↙ Social theories that pivoted on this conception of the essence of man were of a conservative mould, for their adherents strove to explain all shortcomings of social practices with reference to man's unchanging, eternal nature, the source of all evil. These theories were used by the ideologists of the exploiting classes to justify the arbitrary rule, lawlessness and inhumanity dominating society. The negative character of such theories needs no emphasis, since they presented exploitation, social injustice, wars and similar evils as the product of the eternal features of human nature, thus condemning man to a purely passive existence.

In writings based on the relativist approach the essence of man is presented as no more than a simple projection of the social milieu in which he exists. The idea of the unchanging permanence of human nature is rejected when this approach is used, and the content and evolution of human nature is presented as directly and entirely dependent on a constantly changing social environment, the features and properties of which are supposedly reflected in man. It should be noted that socio-philosophical theories which gave expression to the relativist approach for the definition of human nature played what to a certain extent was a progressive role in the past since they explained the evil in man as a consequence of the existence of unfortunate social conditions, and called for a change in the latter. These theories were particularly popular at the time of the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their weakness, however, lay in the fact that they made man fatally dependent on society, turning him into a blind puppet of the social forces which confront him.

The limitations of these approaches to the problem of human nature and the related problem of the interaction of man and society resulted, as the Marxists brought to light, first and foremost from the metaphysical interpretation of the connection between man and society. In one instance man's unchanging substance was proffered as cause and in the other, society. The contrast between man and society was presented as absolute, while the relationship between them was presented as something preordained for all time.

After making the problem of man central to his socio-philosophical theory, Fromm could not avoid the classical antinomy of bourgeois society—either society moulds man, or man shapes society. The history of social thought reveals that whenever the problem of man and the dynamics of the historical process were made central to a theory, the theoretician in question was obliged to resolve that dilemma. How the problem was resolved determined in the final analysis the nature of the socio-philosophical theory elaborated by the social scientist in question.

Fromm understood the essential inadequacy of the substantialist and relativist interpretations of human nature. In his efforts to define the essence of man he tried to find a different approach to the problem which might enable him to avoid the dualism and one-sidedness of these two methods. "Human nature is neither a biologically fixed and innate sum total of drives, nor is it a lifeless shadow of cultural patterns to which it adapts itself smoothly,"* he wrote, thus rejecting both the bio-substantialist approach to human nature and the relativist one.

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

* Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 22.

an *anthropologico-philosophical concept of human existence*"* [author's italics].

This statement of Fromm's provides the point of departure for his social philosophy and it is precisely this which lends it its strictly anthropological character and predetermines the solutions reached for the problem of the interaction of man and society, and that of historical development, etc. This very starting point provided the source of Fromm's numerous not only theoretical mistakes, but also socio-political errors and illusions, which were subsequently to manifest themselves in his social programme, in the picture he painted of an ideal society of the future.

The possibility of avoiding such extremes as bio-substantialism on the one hand, and social relativism on the other Fromm saw to lie in the definition of man's nature "as a contradiction inherent in human existence".** This approach to the problem of the individual Fromm held to be neither "biological" nor "sociological".** Fromm was convinced that he was "transcending such dichotomy by the assumption that the main passions and drives in man result from the total existence of man",*** or in other words that they derive from the "human situation".**** Refusing to acknowledge biological processes inherent in man's constitution as the source of specifically human needs, Fromm, unlike Freud, maintained that "the most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man".***** Unlike Freud, according to whom the antagonism between the individual, possessed of a specific quantity of

* Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, New York, 1964, p. 45.

** Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 116.

*** Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 14.

**** Ibid.

***** Ibid., p. 28.

***** Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 27.

biologically determined needs, and society, whose role is limited to thwarting, suppressing or sublimating these needs, was irreconcilable, Fromm holds that society performs not only a negative, repressive function, but also a "creative" one. He writes that "man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product, as a matter of fact, man himself is the most important creation and achievement of the continuous human effort, the record of which we call history".* Yet, as we shall observe later, Fromm's acceptance of society's creative role in the development of man leads up to a proclamation of the idea that society should not intervene in the spontaneous process of the self-revelation of the inner potential with which the individual is endowed, no more no less. While believing that society exerts some influence on the development of the individual, Fromm at the same time is sceptical of those psychologists and sociologists who "think of man as a blank sheet of paper on which each culture writes its text".** The relativists, in his view, while denying the existence of any universal human nature but acknowledging in word the oneness of the human race, actually "leave hardly any content and substance to this concept of humanity".***

In answer to the relativists and also the bio-substantialists Fromm, in an attempt to provide his own interpretation of the "substantial" in man, resorts to analysis of the anthropological conditions of human existence. In his opinion, only the "human situation" in which each individual finds himself from the moment of birth expresses the common factor, that which is intrinsic to all men of all historical epochs, which makes them resemble each other in their essential nature and enables them to express through themselves the essence of the human race.

* Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, p. 27.

** Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 29.

*** Ibid.

What are the implications the neo-Freudians read into the concept of the "human situation", which is one of the basic premises for Fromm's anthropological philosophy, analysis of which is imperative for an understanding and explanation of its essential features?

Fromm starts his exposition of the problem of human nature with an analysis of the "human situation", outlining his own philosophy of anthropogenesis. As he sees it, the genetic precondition for the appearance of man was the decline in animals' biological adaptability to their environment which took place at a specific stage of the natural world's evolution. The more inadequate the biological apparatus for instinctive adaptation to the world proved, the more man's brain and capacity for thought and conscious powers of orientation developed.

The emergence of a man endowed with reason and self-awareness disrupts his natural, primitive links with the natural world, destroying the harmonious accord between early men and Nature and gives rise to the existentialist contradiction, which in Fromm's opinion constitutes the heart of the problem of human existence. On the one hand man is a part of Nature and subject to its physical and biological laws, while on the other thanks to his reason he raises himself above the limits imposed on him by Nature confronting it as a self-aware agent. This means that while a part of Nature the individual is at the same time in conflict with it. Fromm writes: "Human self-awareness has made man a stranger in the world, separate, lonely, and frightened."**

This existentialist contradiction gives expression to the specific character and implications of the "human situation" in which each individual finds himself, regardless of the historical conditions of his existence. Man cannot return to the condition of "pre-human" harmony with Nature, and therefore in Fromm's view he should seek

* Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 117.

unity with Nature by developing and perfecting his rational, truly human capacities. This very need to resolve the problem of human existence, the need for the individual to find higher forms of unity with Nature, with other individuals and himself, is as Fromm sees it the source of all human feelings, emotional reactions and worries. All man's inner psychological potentialities are, according to Fromm, determined by his endeavour to find a new harmonious correlation between himself and Nature to replace the original relationship which he had lost, peculiar to the "pre-human", namely purely animal existence. Fromm sees man as the only living creature for whom its own existence presents a problem and he is convinced that he must come to terms with it, for only that can make a man out of him.

The existentialist contradiction places before every individual a vitally important question—how should the conflict inherent in human existence be resolved; what needs to be done and how should man live so as to set himself free from those intolerable tortures of loneliness and fear of abandonment, so as once more to be at one with the world and himself? Fromm holds that the answers which every man must give to this question differ not only within the scope of one specific historical situation, but also in the process of the historical evolution of the conditions of human existence. He stresses that "none of these answers as such constitutes the essence of man; what constitutes the essence is the question and the need for an answer; the various forms of human existence are not the essence, but they are the answers to the conflict which, in itself, is the essence".* So to Fromm it is conflict which is based on the anthropological contradiction between man and Nature and which expresses the universal condition and problem of human existence that determines

* Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 117.

all the psychological needs which taken together have always made up the genetic essence of man.

The source of man's mental activity, of "the specifically human dynamism" lies according to Fromm in "the uniqueness of the human situation".* All man's activity both in the process of his ontogenetic and also that of his philogenetic development is subordinated to a single aim—the resolution of the problem of human existence. In Fromm's view the process of man's historical development is a reflection of "the dynamics of a search for new solutions"***—a process which "goes on until he has reached the final goal of becoming fully human and being in complete union with the world".***

It is most important to stress that in Fromm's view the separation of man from Nature and the resulting contradiction is not only the primary stimulus, the motive force behind the development of man and history, but also the principle which as it were predetermines for all intents and purposes the ultimate goal and inner significance of that development. Thus in Fromm's view the universal and unique problem of human existence which has faced all men at all times and in which are concentrated all historically concrete problems stems from the natural conditions of human evolution. He points out that "the very fact of being born poses a problem".****

Fromm was convinced that Freud was profoundly mistaken in singling out man's biological constitution as the source of all human motivation and believed that "all passions and strivings of man are attempts to find an answer to his existence"***** and that "the understanding

* Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 25.

** Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 120.

*** Ibid.

**** Erich Fromm, D. T. Suzuki and Richard de Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1960, p. 87.

***** Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 29.

of man's psyche must be based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence".*

Analysis of the concept, the "human situation", on which Fromm bases his theory of the essence of man, makes it unmistakably clear that from the psychological point of view his theory is based on instincts as much as that of Freud's. His theory differs from his predecessor's only in so far as it is based on the anthropological rather than the biological aspect. While in Freud's theory innate biological instincts are anti-social in character, in Fromm's unchanging needs, intrinsic to human nature and extra-historical in origin, manifest themselves in the form of positive urges. Anxious to refute Freud's bio-substantialist interpretation of the essence of man, Fromm goes to the other extreme, a kind of anthropological panpsychism. He depicts human nature as a psychical substance made up of man's existential extra-temporal needs. His conception of man's essence proves in the final analysis to be a purely theoretical, ideal construction bereft of any kind of socio-historical significance.

Fromm sees human nature as shaped by man's "imperative drive to restore a unity and equilibrium between himself and the rest of Nature".** For him it constitutes a highly specific system of needs incorporating the need for relationships with other people, the need for self-preservation, for devotion, for frames of orientation and devotion and the need to make sense of his own being. It is worth noting that three of these five needs—for relationships with other people, for devotion, and for frames of orientation and devotion—have much in common. These fundamental needs of man which determine all his mental activity are presented by Fromm as needs of a markedly abstract, asocial and purely anthropological character, and this of course makes itself felt in Fromm's choice of solutions for various socio-psychological problems.

* Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 25.

** Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, pp. 46-50.

In the course of both man's ontogenetic and philo-genetic development the satisfaction of his natural needs predetermined by the anthropological "human situation" is effected in Fromm's view in two totally different ways. One of these methods furthers the development and advance of man and the other obstructs that advance. Each of the methods for satisfying man's needs provides a specific answer to the problem of man's existence, the one a progressive answer and the other a regressive one. Fromm believes that each individual in his attempts to resolve the problem of man's existence "can either return to an archaic, pathogenic solution, or he can progress toward, and develop his humanity".* If man attempts to destroy that which makes him man and at the same time tortures him—his reason and self-awareness—in his anxiety to regain his lost oneness with Nature and to free himself from the fear of loneliness and uncertainty, he sets foot on the regressive path for the resolution of the problem of human existence. If man seeks new harmony with the world by means of full and comprehensive development of the human capacities he was born with, then he selects a progressive means for resolving the existential problem.

As Fromm sees it, progressive resolution of the existential problem is in the interests of man's mental health and development and in keeping with the needs of human nature. A regressive decision on the other hand leads to mental disturbance and degradation. Fromm is convinced that both the mentally normal individual and the neurotic are prompted to act by an insuperable need to find an answer to the question of human existence and move beyond the state of uncertainty into which they have been plunged by the very fact of separation from Nature. For precisely this reason in Fromm's view man's behaviour can never be explained as the result of the repression or

* Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 119.

sublimation of the individual's instincts, as did Freud. Says Fromm: "In order to understand the individual patient—or any human being—one must know what his answer to the question of existence is."^{*}

As for the history of human society, as Fromm sees it, at various stages of its development (slave-owning, feudal, capitalist and socialist stages) it was always specific, socially accepted types of answer to that problem which held sway (progressive or regressive).

What does Fromm depict for us as alternative ways of satisfying the needs inherent in man's nature?

The need for relationships with other people can be satisfied by means of domination and subordination. However, this leads to the loss of the individual's freedom. Only in love, which Fromm sees as the one positive and ideal link between man and the world, other people and himself, can this need be satisfied in a truly human way; only with the help of love can man, while achieving oneness with the world, at the same time preserve his independence and the integrity of his unique self.

The need for self-preservation can be satisfied either in the creative process, thanks to which "man transcends himself as a creature, raises himself beyond the passivity", or in destructivism which is presented as the opposite form of human activity, for "to destroy life makes me also transcend it".^{**} Only the creative method for satisfying this need can lead to joy and happiness; as for the destructive method, this in the long run gives rise to great inner suffering both for the individual concerned, who resorts to such a means of self-preservation, and also to the people around him.

The need for devotion can be satisfied regressively, through preservation of original links with Nature, which guarantee man that peace and confidence in existence

* Erich Fromm, D. T. Suzuki and Richard de Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, p. 91.

** Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 37.

which he lost through birth, or progressively, i.e., through the breaking of these "natural ties" typical of an animal existence and the full development of his human essence, resulting from the establishment of new solidarity with other people and a harmonious sense of oneness with the world. This last means of satisfying the need for devotion provides man with a chance to develop his individuality.

The need for man to make sense of his own being can be satisfied either through revival of his original links with Nature—being absorbed in the herd—or through full creative development of all human capacities. In the latter case man becomes aware of his unique individuality, his inner self and as a result acquires inner strength and confidence.

The need for frames of orientation and devotion can be satisfied by irrational or rational means. The diverse systems of orientation and devotion which have been devised by man in his efforts to resolve the problem of human existence constitute various religious and ideological systems. Fromm maintains that only rational means for satisfying this need provide a feasible basis for man's full and comprehensive unfolding of his life forces.

Thus, according to Fromm, each individual regardless of when he was born—at the dawn of human history or at the present time—always finds himself confronted by the choice between a progressive answer to the problem of human existence, which would facilitate the satisfaction of his natural needs, and a regressive one, which leads to the stifling of those needs. From there it is but one step to the question as to what predetermines man's choosing one of the above alternatives. The answer Fromm gives here is not man's conscious will but rather factors outside man, the action of which, according to Fromm, does not depend in any way on man.

Fromm points out that in every individual there is an innate potential for development, for growth, since from birth he is equipped with the ability to walk, talk, think

and love. In so far as he believes that "the power to act creates a need to use this power",* it seems perfectly natural to him that when there are no outward obstacles man endeavours in progressive ways to satisfy his psychological needs which constitute the core of his very nature. He is convinced that the inner potentialities of human nature are always actualized spontaneously "if the proper conditions are present".**

Yet since man must, in view of his body, rank as belonging to the animal world and is bound by thousands of strands to his biological past, Fromm insists that owing to the nostalgia resulting from his lost oneness with Nature man bears within him a hidden desire or urge to return to a purely animal existence. Then, if external conditions are such as to obstruct the actualization of human potentialities, the purely animal urge hidden within him will come to the surface.

From there Fromm goes on to state that within every individual, on account of his ambivalent socio-biological nature, two principles are simultaneously at work from the very day of his birth—the "animal" and the "human"—each of which is the product of the existential contradiction between man and Nature, the result of the "human situation".

The purely ethical approach to the assessment of human nature elaborated by Fromm makes it possible to conclude that he rejects both the idea that man is by nature an evil creature (Hobbes) and the opposite idea that man is essentially good (Rousseau).

Fromm counters these two extremes with the idea that the essence of man cannot be in any one, straightforward way categorized as either wholly good or wholly evil. At the same time he does not accept Freud's idea that good and evil are simultaneously present within man and con-

* Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 219.

** Ibid., p. 218.

stantly warring against each other. "If one believes in the goodness of man as the only potentiality, one will be forced into rosy falsification of the facts, or end up in bitter disillusionment. If one believes in the other extreme, one will end up as a cynic and be blind to the many possibilities for good in others and in oneself. A realistic view sees both possibilities as real potentialities, and studies the conditions for the development of either of them."*

Fromm proposes that human nature is completely neutral in the ethical sense—"neither good nor evil". How man will emerge in the concrete historical conditions of a given reality will depend on the external conditions in which he finds himself. In man there are, according to Fromm, simultaneously inherent two potentialities that are neutral in regard to each other: the so-called primary potentiality which is actualized if normal social conditions are to hand, and the secondary potentiality which embodies all that is opposed to the productive orientation and which is actualized in case of abnormal, pathogenetic conditions which impede the actualization of the primary potentiality. This means in Fromm's system of things that both potentialities serve to express man's nature and that "evil has no independent existence of its own, it is the absence of the good, the result of the failure to realize life".**

In his work *The Heart of Man*, Fromm refers to the primary potentiality as biophilia and the secondary potentiality as necrophilia. Biophilia—or love for life—finds its fullest expression in the productive orientation. Necrophilia, the opposite of the former, provides an answer to the problem of human existence which is in complete contradiction with life, for its goal is not progress but destruction, love of death. Unlike Freud's death

* Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, p. 123.

** Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 218.

instinct, which is an integral part of man's normal biological constitution side by side with Eros, Fromm's necrophilia is of a psycho-pathological order, in other words a phenomenon which makes its appearance when the primary potentiality is not realized.

Thus the realization of the primary potentiality—the fundamental needs intrinsic to human nature—coincides in Fromm's view with the actualization of the "good", the "human" principle. The realization of the secondary potentiality, which is none other than "man's loss of himself in the tragic attempt to escape the burden of his humanity"* in conditions which obstruct the realization of the primary potentiality, coincides with the actualization of the "evil" or "animal" principle.

Making the satisfaction of the needs inherent in human nature subject to conditions of the social environment, Fromm assigns man a purely passive role. Which of the two potentialities is realized in him depends not on the man in question, but on the social structure of which he is a part. This is because the social structure which according to Fromm takes no part in the formation of these potentialities, predetermines the character of the self-manifestation of human nature. Fromm leaves open the question as to whether man can assume an active role in relation to the social reality around him, that is change it and create conditions which would further the actualization of biophilia.

In his work *The Sane Society*, Fromm makes various allusions to the fact that man, existing as he does in conditions that do not correspond to the demands of his nature—the demands stemming from the growth and development of his essential potentialities—is unable, in his view, not to react to them. He must either perish or create such social conditions as would further more effectively the satisfaction of the needs stemming from

* Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 148.

his very nature. However, Fromm does no more than throw out a few statements in this vein, he does not develop the idea. Indeed it would be difficult in the framework of his theory, without contradicting himself, to explain in a positive light the essence of man's reactions to unfavourable conditions of his existence. In actual fact the need to change the existing social order since the latter fails to provide a satisfactory progressive answer to the problem of human existence is a need which can be placed in the biophilia category, that of the productive orientation. Yet how can we then explain the fact that in unfavourable social conditions—which according to Fromm give rise only to necrophilia—there sometimes suddenly appears and is actualized a need which is compatible with the idea of biophilia?

Having now described in overall terms the essence of the neo-Freudian approach to the problem of man, we now have grounds for raising the question as to whether in his definition of human nature Fromm succeeded in superseding that dualism between man and society which inevitably enough followed on from the mechanistic bio-substantialist and socio-relativist interpretations of the essence of man.

Fromm's attempt to resolve the problem from a purely anthropological angle, to avoid narrowness and a limited approach such as those of both bio-substantialism and social relativism when defining the essence of man, led him to draw conclusions, according to which on the one hand man embodies innate panpsychic needs and on the other he is the product of the historical process. Fromm's conception of human nature is the result of a compromise all his own between the substantialist and relativist definitions of the essence of man. In practice his theory of the essence of man turns out to be a philosophy of the golden mean aimed at reconciling the diametrically opposed definitions of the essence of man, rather than advancing beyond them.

In his opinion man, as he develops, appears as the end-product of the self-actualization of a psychical substance anthropological by nature, while at the same time Fromm makes this development dependent on society, to which he allocates no more than an auxiliary role in the actualization of man's substantialized psychological nature.

Unlike the substantialists and relativists who, starting out from recognition of the actual fact of the interaction between man and society, stressed in a partial way the importance of one of the sides of that interaction, making it absolute, Fromm attempts to single out the dynamics of that interaction, allocating a specific role to each of the two sides and emphasizing their equal importance. The relations between man and society he depicts as some kind of dynamic parallelism. When considering the problem "man and society" he starts out from recognition of the complete autonomy and separateness of the two phenomena. This prevents him from correctly analyzing the real nature of their interaction. Fromm believes that human nature has its laws and goals of evolution and development which are completely different from those of society's socio-economic organization. Their existence and inner development are not interdependent, but having coexisted in time throughout history they are permanently involved in a definite relationship with each other.

According to Fromm "any given social order does not create these fundamental strivings but it determines which of the limited number of potential passions are to become manifest or dominant".* Society only develops or deforms that which is already potentially inherent in man's very nature. It is something outside the needs stemming from human nature and constitutes an entity existing side by side with man's essence and contradict-

* Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 14.

ing it at the same time. The existence of the needs inherent in human nature as some kind of potentialities does not in any way depend on this or that concrete historical society, whose role consists in either bringing nearer the realization of those potentialities, or not, as the case may be.

Fromm reduces the dynamics of the historical process to the psychological conflict between the needs of human nature and the possibility of their satisfaction within a concrete social structure. History in his opinion bears witness merely to the degree to which those needs are satisfied and to the nature of the influence of a given social structure on these needs.

While approaching man and society from this angle, Fromm points out that a major problem, once conflict has set in between society and human nature, is the reconstruction of society on a new basis which would correspond to the primordial needs of man's nature. As soon as such a reconstruction is effected society would at once become "sane", all the goodness and rationality peculiar to the primary potentialities of human nature could be actualized in the life of society. Yet Fromm does not succeed in finding any social forces which might call that new society into being. The reason for this lies in the fact that for Fromm man's psychological needs are asocial in content. They emerge not as the reflection of the contradictions of an evolving social world, but from an existential situation, which Fromm places higher than either the "biological" or the "social". The concrete reality of the social process appears to Fromm as something homogeneous that excludes any inner contradictions.

In Fromm's scheme of things society with its economic, socio-political and cultural institutions stands counter to human nature as something self-sufficient, and it exists in its own right, as a separate entity.

Fromm's construction of an abstract psychological model for human nature reveals the inconsistency of his

methodological approach not only to the problem of the "substantial" and "relative" in man, but also to the correlation between the "social" and "biological". The neo-Freudian theory of anthropogenesis presents the process of the origin of man as something purely negative in the course of which instinctive biological adaptation of a specific species of animal only attains its minimum; man's needs are defined with the help of an analogy with animal instincts. Marxist theory links the origin of man and the nature of his needs with labour activity, which, as it breaks the old original links between animal and Nature, establishes a new relationship, a new oneness with Nature. Man's creative and active relationship to Nature, which proved the basic motive force behind his evolution and development, is not brought to light, indeed hardly touched upon in the neo-Freudian theory of anthropogenesis.

Not in a single one of his numerous works does Fromm analyze the formation of man's biological inclinations which made him capable of social activity. While stressing early man's "biological unadaptability" to Nature and his loss of those advantages which animals possess, Fromm assesses man in terms of an "animal existence". He contrasts the reason which man developed with the instincts he has lost, and thus ignores the historical character of the evolution of human consciousness as a more developed and universal capacity than any mere instinct.

The specific nature of man as a rational being consists not in "biological inadaptability" as Fromm suggests, but on the contrary man's special adaptability in relation to Nature, for precisely thanks to his reason man is able to establish a new oneness with Nature at a higher level.

The neo-Freudian conception of human nature in which the "human" (social) is to be found side by side with the "animal" (biological) leads on to the conclusion that only by chance were the biological and social elements in the evolution process brought together, as a result of which

the "existential situation" brought forth man. Fromm does not set out to trace the origin of the social element and depict its qualitative nature or what distinguishes it from the biological element; he contents himself with simply drawing a distinction between the two and establishing a kind of parallelism between them.

The emergence and development of the social element is a lengthy process which is still going on now. The animal element is completely dependent on Nature, and its development is entirely determined by the laws of biological existence (natural selection). The evolution of man, who set himself apart from Nature and is possessed of consciousness, is by now determined by the laws of social development. From the biological creature, over which external necessity held sway, man has evolved as a social creature, an agent of development. The more diverse and complex man's activity becomes, the further he leaves his "old" nature behind him and the more significant is his dependence on social reality which he himself creates, on his "humanized" nature which now moulds his essence. The discovery of his "humanized" nature and the demonstration of what distinguished it from external Nature was Marx's scientific achievement. Emphasis of the decisive role of man's "humanized" nature in the formation of man's essence is peculiar only to a Marxist, genuinely materialist view of history. Man's "humanized" nature which came into being in the course of human history—the process of the emergence and development of human society—is "man's real nature"*. The "social" factor in man, shaped in its evolution by his "humanized" nature, which constitutes a historical product, the result of the activity of a whole number of generations, is something higher than the "biological" factor which in its evolution is determined by the necessity of "external"

* Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1974, p. 98.

Nature. The "social" factor is a qualitatively different designation of a new, more complex form of material existence. Fromm's establishment of the parallelism which he draws between the "social" and "biological" principles in man does not, in our opinion, have anything in common with the actual state of affairs.

When examining the problem of the individual, Fromm does not go beyond the framework of the perennial bourgeois contrasting of two abstractions—the "individual" and "society"—and does not resolve the problem of the correlation between the "substantial" and the "relative" in human nature. Accordingly Fromm singles out the active, creative psychological principle in man and contrasts it to the "social" factor, whose role in man's development he reduces to a purely external, positive or traumatic influence on the unchanging potentialities inherent in human nature. His conception of the individual suffers from an innate contradiction. While acknowledging in word the role of man's social environment in his development, Fromm attributes decisive importance in the determination of various forms of social activity to an inner innate system of man's essential needs. Fromm's conception of human nature is a naturalistic conception, for it presents man in the form of some fixed psychological structure, which determines in advance all his intentions, strivings and actions.

One of the typical features of Fromm's neo-Freudian theory of the individual, resulting from its peculiar "instinctivism", consists in the fact that the relationship between the individual and his social environment is viewed one-sidedly—only from the angle of adaptive, defensive "reactions": supposedly genuine, truly humane instinct-needs in relation to an external environment which is alien and hostile to man. Naturally when this metaphysical approach is adopted for an examination of the relationship between the individual and the conditions of his existence, problems of the psychology of the

individual are reduced to the problem of the individual's adaptation to his social environment or to that of his utilization of this environment to further his utilitarian ends. When this approach is used the question as to the true source of man's socio-transforming activity is left open.

In his critical assessment of Freud's views on the nature of the individual Fromm attempts to make use of certain tenets of Marxism. In his writings on human nature Fromm frequently refers to Marx and when he takes over one or other of his ideas adopts it to suit his abstract psychological constructions. Everything which he cannot tailor to fit his own logical scheme is ignored.

After correctly noting for example that Marx's interpretation of man's essence is a socio-historical one, Fromm accedes in words to this point of view, according to which "the practice of life, as it is determined by the economic systems, determines the feeling and thinking of the people involved".* Yet while formally accepting this interpretation, Fromm proceeds to distort this Marxist premise, by imparting to it completely new implications. While for Marx "practice of life" always and without exception means practical experience of *social* existence and just that, Fromm sees it as resulting "from the conditions of human existence".** While for Marx the essence of social determination of consciousness consists in the fact that consciousness *reflects* practical experience of life, that is social being, for Fromm man's feelings and thoughts are the result of the refraction of the needs inherent in human nature through historically shaped "practice of life" (the progressive or regressive answer to the problem of man's existence).

In his books *Marx's Concept of Man* and *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, Fromm lays insistent emphasis on one

* Erich Fromm, *May Man Prevail?*, New York, 1961, p. 70.

** Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 70.

and the same idea to the effect that Marx not only accepted the existence of man's independent nature separate from his social one, but also attributed decisive significance to that independent nature. He supposedly drew a distinction between a "modified" nature of man, and "human nature in general" and accordingly he divided man's needs into "relative" and "constant" ones. Fromm is profoundly convinced that Marx shared the view that man in the process of history, although he is subject to change, at the same time actualizes some unchanging innate potentiality.

In Fromm's eyes Marx, being an opponent of bio-substantialist and social-relativist definitions of man's essential nature, "never arrived at the full development of his own theory concerning the nature of man, transcending both the unhistorical and the relativistic positions";* but came close to formulating a theory like that of his own.

The legacy of classical Freudianism prevented Fromm from reaching an objective assessment of Marx's social theory; his psychologist's interpretation of it in anthropological vein serves to distort its very essence. In his incorrect interpretation of Marx's statements with regard to human nature, Fromm is so convinced of the infallibility and veracity of his own views that in defiance of the facts he goes out of his way to demonstrate that Marx was more or less the forerunner of the neo-Freudians.

Marx, however, never acknowledged any abstract, extra-historical human nature. Together with Engels he severely criticized any subjective, idealist speculations concerning "human nature in general" seeing the main weakness of such arguments to lie in the fact that they upheld "not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philo-

* Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, p. 31.

sophical fantasy".* In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx wrote that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."** His greatest achievement consisted precisely in the fact that he elaborated a scientific substantiation of man's social essence, revealing the dialectics of the interaction between the individual and society.

Marx believed that the development of man proceeded hand in hand with changes in society itself and that there was no such thing as "human nature in general" but only a historically determined human nature which is modified in each new epoch as history itself develops: "Just as society itself produces *man as man*, so is society *produced by him*."*** If the life of the individual serves to express and affirm social life, then society is the product of man's activity. Man, as he modifies his environment, in doing so modifies himself as well, realizing those of his opportunities which reflect the objective trends to be discerned in that environment. The needs of a concrete historical individual serve to express the demands of evolving social reality, which eventually become the individual's life forces. As a result the realization of man's needs always coincides with change in his social environment.

Psychological needs are not simply intrinsic to man from birth, but they take shape in the process of his active life directed towards modification of the historical conditions in which he exists. For man the concrete historical world around him represents both the foundation of his essence, and also the limit of his possibilities. The development of man in the course of history is a creative, active, and constructive process. Man, as he changes re-

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 131.

** *Ibid.*, p. 14.

*** Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 91.

ality, extends the limits of his possibilities, and as he realizes those possibilities, he broadens the horizons of his current existence. Only in purposeful activity which transforms the surrounding world and humanizes it does man change and mould anew his essence. This self-perfecting process, this development of man's essential nature is unending, just as is the development of the real world itself. Marx wrote: "...history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature."²

It is precisely while engaged in this creative, socially practical activity that man emerges as both a precondition of history, and its result. Thus, according to Marx, in order to understand the essence of the interaction between man and society it is vital to analyze man's practical, purposeful activity, in which the inner link between man and society and their interdependence are manifested, for this activity is at one and the same time both a means for the historical change of human nature and a means for the affirmation and renewal of social life.

In view of his anthropological approach to the essence of man, which he robs of its historical content, Fromm is incapable of explaining correctly the link between man and society. It is impossible to overlook the fact that many of his assertions relating to the core of the problem under discussion suffer from an extremely abstract character. For example, there is reason to agree with Fromm's assertion that the need to change capitalist society is dictated by men's desire to adjust the structure of society to the needs inherent in human nature, if we start out consistently from the fact that the structure of capitalist society is a class structure. However, the need to change capitalist society is dictated not by the demands of some abstract human nature in general, as Fromm would have us believe, but by demands stemming from the needs of concrete historical individuals, the needs of that class in

* Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1962, p. 141.

society which expresses progressive tendencies and the demands and potentialities of evolving historical reality, and which emerges as the subject of historical action.

Fromm considers that an understanding of man's mind must be based on an analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of human existence. This would also be an acceptable point if Fromm implied by conditions of human existence concrete historical reality, as opposed to the anthropological situation. Then these needs would assume not an abstract generalized character but the concrete needs of real individuals.

It is quite incomprehensible how the existential situation, which in Fromm's view represents the original, anthropological conditions of human existence, brought forth such human needs as are only feasible in a socially developed situation.

The historical situation, in which alone it is possible for man's real needs to crystallize, is substituted in Fromm's theory by the anthropological, existential situation, which once gave birth to all man's possibilities and needs. In Fromm's view the individuals' concrete historical needs are none other than a system of needs stemming from man's abstract-psychological nature, a system modified in specific historical conditions of existence.

Yet man's needs, being social by their very nature, grow and find fulfilment in accordance with the changes in economic relations, which they serve to express. Man's essence cannot precede his existence. Fromm skirts the obvious fact that precisely historical conditions of human existence constitute the only possible and real existential situation for man. The "human situation", Marx reminded us, cannot be conceived of outside historical conditions, for "the *social* character is the general character of the whole movement".³

* Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 91.

Thus while Fromm in his attempt to resolve the problem of man turns back to the beginning of human evolution, hoping to find the answer to the question of man's essence in the past, and takes for the starting point of his theory the contradiction between man and Nature, Marx and Engels in their dialectical and materialist theory "set out from real, active men...".* When expounding the main points of the materialist interpretation of history in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels wrote: "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way."** From the very outset Marx, starting out as he does from the dialectical materialist interpretation of human history, attempts to reveal the material basis of historical change and the evolution of human relations.

The vicious circle in which the substantialists and relativists found themselves in their attempts to resolve the problem of the relations between man and society, and from which Fromm vainly tried to extricate himself, was overcome by Marx. The basic premise for his theory was provided not by the abstraction "man and society", but that sphere, aspects and features of which they represent in its dialectical development. This sphere is none other than man's concrete social activity. "What is life but activity?"*** Marx asks. It is thus clear that the concept of man's essence and his vital activity are regarded by Marx

* Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 37-38.

** Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, p. 31.

*** Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 67.

as categories of one and the same order. This approach, according to which man is a tangibly active creature, makes possible a profoundly scientific solution to the problem of the correlation between the substantial and the relative in man.

The Marxist interpretation of man's social essence which is based on his social and economic-cum-productive activity in its historical development, not only makes it possible to overcome the limitations of substantialist and relativist definitions of the essence of man, but at the same time enables us to discover the true source of man's creativity and identify the levers of social change, the motive forces behind historical progress.

The essence of man is not an innate complex of psychological needs, nor is it a projection of external circumstances. It is man's universal productive activity which is realized in historically changing forms of social relations. Man's vital activity, in which he figures simultaneously as subject and object, and in the process of which objective demands of the social environment are transformed into properties of human capacities, while these in their turn are objectified and become an inseparable part of social reality, represents the only mode of existence for social reality, for man's social being. The dialectics of man's socio-historical activity and its underlying principle—namely the identity of opposites, of subject and object—find their most adequate expression, when this activity is manifested in its most developed form as "revolutionary critical activity" in which "the changing of oneself coincides with the changing of circumstances".*

The Marxist conception of the essence of man thus makes it possible to single out both the general factor intrinsic to all men in any conditions of their historical existence, and also the historically individualized make-up of each particular individual. The essence of man reflects

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 234.

his social existence which is expressed in man's activity, in man's constant creation of himself in the process of changing and transforming the conditions of his existence. It is precisely here that in Marx's view we find man's "species-character", and not in the substantially qualitative extra-temporal identity, as put forward by Fromm. Marx wrote in this connection that "the whole character of a species—its species-character—is contained in the character of its life activity; and free, conscious activity is man's species-character".*

At the same time the essence of man does to some extent represent an abstraction, in which there is reflected the same principle, but by this time already in a reduced, petrified, non-objectified form as it were, which makes it possible to describe the individual at a specific stage in his concrete historical activity. Marx observed that "man's individual and species-life are not *different*, however much—and this is inevitable—the mode of existence of the individual is a more *particular* or more *general* mode of the life of the species, or the life of the species is a more *particular* or more *general* individual life. . . . Man, much as he may therefore be a *particular* individual (and it is precisely his particularity which makes him an individual, and a real *individual* social being), is just as much the *totality*—the ideal *totality*—the subjective existence of imagined and experienced society for itself; just as he exists also in the real world both as awareness and real enjoyment of social existence, and a totality of human manifestation of life."**

Thus social man, when viewed together with the material conditions and products of his concrete historical activity, gives expression to the only possible form of social existence. Only the Marxist view of the problem of man, based on the dialectical materialist method and the

* Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 68.

** *Ibid.*, p. 93.

recognition of man's social, concretely active essence, makes it possible to correctly appreciate the essence of the interaction between the individual and society, the essence of the laws underlying the historical process, and to provide the one reliable and truly scientific picture of socio-psychological processes at work in social history.

2. The Neo-Freudians on the Motive Forces, Goals and Meaning of Historical Development

Fromm's efforts to chart out the mechanism of the relations between the individual and society proved fruitless. He fails to overcome the dualism in the presentation and resolution of that problem. The dialectical nature of the link existing between them remains for Fromm a mystery. In Fromm's work both man and society come over as isolated abstractions. Man with his needs is cut off from concrete historical reality and set up over against it in the form of a psychological abstraction.

The basic methodological stance peculiar to abstract anthropological psychologism prevents Fromm's finding correct ways in which to solve the problem of the relations between the individual and society. Instead of analyzing concrete reality in his work on the above-mentioned problem, he resorts to lifeless, empty-sounding concepts of "man" and "society" in his unsuccessful attempts to probe the mechanism of their interaction.

The content of human nature as Fromm sees it is none other than an abstraction of the concrete needs of the historical individual, an abstraction divorced from real individuals and placed over against that reality which gave birth to it. In his analysis of the problem of man and society Marx stressed frequently that "above all we must avoid postulating 'society' . . . as an abstraction vis-à-vis the individual".* Fromm not only fails to take this

* *Ibid.*, p. 92.

into account, but goes to the other extreme. His concept of human nature is examined outside society altogether, as an abstraction that has always existed, since the first moment of man's appearance on Earth, before all forms of concrete historical society. The dynamics of the interaction between human nature—viewed as some kind of abstraction—and society, that is the real social content of the needs of concrete individuals, is regarded by Fromm as the mechanism by means of which the development of history is effected.

His failure to accept the materialist interpretation of the essence of man leads Fromm to the point where, in his theory, the development of man in the historical process is seen only as a manifestation of that unchanging essence which comes into being and exists from the moment of man's birth. The transformation of social reality is seen by Fromm as a purely negative process, which eliminates from that reality all those elements which stand in the way of the actualization of the primary potentialities of human nature.

While paying special attention to the role of the psychological factor in history, Fromm exaggerates its importance and as a result loses sight of the concrete historical content of man's social creativity. He substitutes for the active concrete individual creating history a general picture of man's abstract psychological nature.

Fromm's unwarranted emphasis of the psychological element in the historical process comes to the fore above all in the fact that the needs of human nature are presented by him in the light of pivotal motivating forces that mould the development of human history. In Fromm's view needs like the striving for happiness, belonging, love and freedom, which exist in themselves, independently of social being, nevertheless determine the goal and direction of man's historical activity. He holds that social changes are brought to pass not so much by the interests of the new classes entering the historical arena, as Marx suggest-

ed, but by "the fundamental human needs". The second estate which emerged victorious in the French bourgeois revolution was, according to Fromm, anxious to cast aside its feudal fetters not only because this step was in keeping with its economic interests, but also because in every representative of that estate there had manifested itself an innate but hitherto deeply concealed and dormant need for freedom as such. Only in this way, Fromm assures us, is it possible to explain the fact that after the victory of the French revolution the finest, the most progressive section of the bourgeoisie, despite the fact that its immediate practical goals had been achieved, was not satisfied with the extent of its newly gained freedom and went on and on searching to extend that freedom. Fromm does not appreciate that "individuals in their self-liberation satisfy a definite need actually experienced by them"* and not some abstract need of a generalized nature. In the neo-Freudian theory of historical development, to use Marx and Engels' words, "'Man' appeared instead of actual individuals, and the striving for a fantastic ideal, for freedom as such, for the 'freedom of Man' appeared instead of the satisfaction of actual needs".**

When writing of the dynamic factors of historical development, Fromm always approaches human nature as a phenomenon which is at one and the same time man's guiding ideal and the motive force behind all historical actions. For example on the ground that the striving after freedom can be found among the Old Testament Jews in Egypt, the slaves of Rome, the German peasants of the sixteenth century, and German workers fighting against fascism, Fromm concludes that the source of this striving, despite differences in the historical circumstances of its manifestation, is one and the same—namely human nature.

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 338.

** Ibid.

Fromm separates man's needs and social ideals from the evolution of material reality and places them within the framework of his own abstract psychological scheme. In so far as he bases his ideas on the existence of a source of human endeavours and ideals which is independent of concrete historical reality, Fromm for all intents and purposes denies the objective content of these endeavours and ideals and abandons the realm of historical reality.

Fromm refuses to appreciate the fact that the ideals of freedom cherished by the Old Testament Jews, the slaves of Rome and the German peasants in the sixteenth century were not identical. Each of the ideals of each of the three groups reflected the needs and interests of people living in a specific historical context. The link between various ideals of freedom is provided not by the innate need for freedom as such, but the continuity of socio-economic development. Marx's achievement lay in the fact that he always made it a point to single out the down-to-earth concrete historical content of human ideals. Marxists always presented the existence of specific ideals as dependent on the previous historical development of man and concrete social relations, maintaining that these ideals are not an ethical model to be emulated, as Fromm would have us believe, but the expression of the historical necessity for the development of objective reality. Marx wrote in this connection that the working class has "no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant".*

Marxist theory does not deny the important role of ideals in the historical process, but "argues exclusively about the construction of these ideals and their realization".** It rejects the approach to human ideals as some

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 224.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 416.

kind of predetermined phenomena, independent of concrete historical reality. While subjectivist sociologists "base their arguments on 'ideals', without bothering about the fact that these ideals can only be a certain reflection of reality, and, consequently, must be verified by facts, must be based on facts", the Marxist on the other hand "proceeds from the same ideal; he does not compare it with 'modern science and modern moral ideas, however', but with the existing class contradictions, and therefore does not formulate it as a demand put forward by 'science', but by such and such a class, a demand engendered by such and such social relations (which are to be objectively investigated), and achievable only in such and such a way in consequence of such and such properties of these relations. If ideals are not based on facts *in this way*, they will only remain pious wishes, with no chance of being accepted by the masses and, hence, of being realized."*

Marxists start out from the premise that in historical process it is not any independent needs of an abstract nature, bearing no relation to concrete historical activity, which provide motive forces, as Fromm asserts, but needs which spring from human activity itself and which express the socio-historical nature of man as an agent of history. The problem of human existence is none other than the problem of man's realization of his concrete historical needs and interests. In the course of their historical activity men seek to implement not mere speculative ideals, but rather reach those concrete goals closely related to the realities of their day-to-day lives.

While Marxists maintain that any social changes are always of a concrete historical nature, since they are brought about by the objective course of development of social production, for Fromm on the other hand they are shaped by the "human situation" and find expression in men's desire to adapt the structure of society to the de-

* Ibid., pp. 416-17.

mands stemming from human nature, if that structure impedes the satisfaction of man's needs to an excessive degree. The crux of the question is the need to define the degree to which human nature and a given society should be made compatible. If human nature is immutable, as Fromm asserts, and the realization of the potentialities latent in man has always been possible, at all times, then it is natural to ask what stops men from immediately creating a society which would correspond to their ideal inner essence, and in which all the potentialities of each individual would have scope to unfold. Fromm does not answer these questions and indeed it would not be possible within the framework of his methodology. Having wrested man out of the concrete conditions of his existence and established a highly individual psycho-social parallelism between man and society, Fromm has barred his own way to an understanding of the true dialectical unity and interdependence of man and society.

There is nothing really original about Fromm's view of the individual. Similar ideas on this subject were refuted in detail by Marx and Engels in their work *The German Ideology*: "The individuals . . . have been conceived by the philosophers as an ideal, under the name of 'Man'. They have conceived the whole process which we have outlined as the evolutionary process of 'Man', so that at every historical stage 'Man' was substituted for the individuals and shown as the motive force of history. The whole process was thus conceived as a process of self-estrangement of 'Man' . . . Through this inversion, which from the first is an abstract image of the actual conditions, it was possible to transform the whole history into an evolutionary process of consciousness."^{*}

The difference between Fromm and those idealist philosophers criticized by Marx and Engels consists merely in the fact that he starts out not from consciousness, but

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 86.

psychological phenomena which he constructs in keeping with his conceptions of human nature. According to Fromm human nature, providing the metaphysical mono-determinism of history and the only independent force shaping history, predetermines the latter's development and lends it meaning and importance.

Fromm's teleological approach to history comes to the fore in his attempts to single out the fulfilment of man's abstract psychological nature as the goal of historical development. He writes: "Just as the infant is born with all human potentialities which are to develop under favourable social and cultural conditions, so the human race, in the process of history, develops into what it potentially is."^{**} For Fromm man is a totality of inner potentialities shaped as it were by human existence as such from the very outset. In specific historical conditions some of these potentialities are realized, while others remain dormant. History is thus seen by Fromm as a drama, man's birth pangs, a chain of uninterrupted discovery and revelation of potentialities with which human nature as such is endowed. The realization of these potentialities inherent in the individual constitutes for Fromm the purpose of each individual human life and indeed that of the whole of human history. "Birth is not one act, it is a process. The aim of life is to be fully born, though its tragedy is that most of us die before we are thus born."^{***}

History is thus delegated the role of midwife in the alleviation of man's birth pangs, the role of helping-hand in the manifestation of the potentialities inherent in human nature. Attainment of the final goal of historical development—the establishment of a new harmony between man and Nature, between man and his fellows, and man and his own self on the basis of the individual's

* Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, p. 14.

** Erich Fromm, D. T. Suzuki and Richard de Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, p. 88.

actualized essence—Fromm relegates to a distant and undefined future. The essence of man has not found fulfilment in any previous historical age. Such fulfilment was made impossible by various historical forms of social existence. For Fromm the specific individual is merely a modification, a pale shadow of human nature, a form of its manifestation. All human history to date he sees as the history of the tragic disparity between the needs intrinsic to human nature and the opportunities for these needs to find fulfilment in society. All concrete historical types of society that existed in the past were profoundly inadequate, rotten through and through, and man was quite simply sacrificed to history.

A logical consequence of the neo-Freudian teleological interpretation of history is the underestimation of the role of man in earlier epochs, the significance of whose activity was reduced to the preparation and paving of the way for the blissful paradise to be enjoyed by man in the future, destined to be filled with happiness in his knowledge that his natural essence had found complete fulfilment. The ultimate goal of history in Fromm's view will compensate for the tragic existence of those, who at the moment of physical birth were destined to die before being fully born, that is without the essence of their nature coming into its own. This belief, according to Fromm, should comfort any individual who is unable to find fulfilment as a result of objective circumstances and is constantly torturing himself in the knowledge of his own insignificance and powerlessness.

Of course it is always possible when looking back over any part of the path already traversed by history to represent it as a trend moving in a particular direction; however, to hold that history in its development pursues a goal that is preordained would be to deny the course of society's actual historical advance. With regard to this question Engels pointed out that "history is not a person apart, using man as a means for *its own* particular aims; history

is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims".* History cannot glean its goals from some other world outside history. The meaning and purpose of history can only be found in man's concrete historical activity. Man's attainment of one set of goals is constantly confronting him with a whole chain of new ones, which in no way conflict with social reality, as Fromm would have us believe, but which serve to express the objective logic, the real dialectics of the historical process. Ideals and goals are interwoven in the logic of the historical process, in the pattern of man's activity and they organically stem from the latter. Goals or purposes in history are no more than man's conscious apprehension of his concrete historical needs that reflect the progressive trends of development to be found in objective reality.

While approaching human nature as the motive force and purpose of historical development, Fromm at the same time adopts it as his criterion for assessing the degree of such development reached and for defining types and forms to be found in both individual and social disease. In broad terms the ideal of actualized human nature is put forward by him as a universal criterion which retains its significance and force for men of all ages. Human nature is held by Fromm to be the source of those principles and norms which are relevant to men everywhere and at all times.

As Fromm sees it malaise and disease are bound to result from the conflict between the individual's inner human potentialities and society which stands in the way of their actualization. Societies which promote the proper satisfaction of the needs inherent in human nature are regarded by Fromm as healthy or sane, while, on the other hand, societies in which social conditions impede the actualization of truly human potentialities are de-

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow, 1975, p. 110.

scribed by him as sick, "diseased" at root, and bound to engender men and women, who in the psychological sense are profoundly indifferent to life, if not downright hostile towards it.

The ideal of human nature, as seen by Fromm, enables us to assert that the conditions of human existence under capitalism are distorted in that they hold back the development and actualization of human nature's inner potentialities and give rise to universal alienation, total neurosis—social disease.

To Fromm it seems unrealistic to seek for a criterion within society that might be used to evaluate this or that historical type of society. He cannot imagine the possibility of finding criteria within modern capitalist society, in which the "inhumane" means for satisfying men's needs has been elevated to a system of social usage, for evaluating that society. He holds that only a criterion taken from outside that society, indeed outside history, could be objective and lasting. He then proceeds to "discover" a supra-historical sphere of human existence, a universal frame of reference which he defines as the "human situation". Those needs which stem from it and determine the content of human nature are seen by Fromm as the "norm" for every concrete historical society and in general for history as a whole. Human nature is the only criterion which enables us objectively and impartially to evaluate a historically more progressive society. This latter type of society, according to Fromm, is one which, by virtue of its social structure, promotes the positive satisfaction of the needs inherent in human nature and the actualization of its primary potentialities.

After rejecting metaphysical and abstract criteria of this sort Marxists turn to history itself and point out that evaluations, which can be made in relation to actual historical development, are determined not by any gauge arbitrarily devised by the theoretician, but by laws, the logic of the social process itself. The reason for the cor-

respondence or coincidence of historical necessity with man's actual needs lies in the socio-historical, active essence of man. Man, while representing the product of social relations, is at the same time the subject of historical activity. After assimilating the achievements of his predecessors, he makes use of them for his accomplishment of those historical tasks dictated by the demands of development inherent in his objectively real surroundings. In man's transforming activity the past is linked with the future, and all man's historical activity represents a single logical process of progressive, onward development, an uninterrupted moulding of man at his own hands.

In order to appreciate the essential nature of the historical process, it is essential to have a criterion rooted in the inner logic of that development. While Fromm criticizes the reality presented by the modern capitalist world for its failure to satisfy the true demands of human nature, Marxists for their part criticize capitalism for holding back the satisfaction of those of real man's concrete historical needs, which he himself envisages as opportunities for his own subsequent development. In his assessment of society's historical development Fromm starts out from abstract humanist considerations, while Marxists evaluate the degree of society's progressive development in the light of concrete contemporary problems connected with man's social life.

While Fromm sees the motive force behind historical development to be the contradiction between abstract human nature and social reality, Marx and Engels opt instead for the contradictory nature of the development of society, of which the concrete individual is an inseparable part. Marxists hold that historical change stems not from eternal and unconscious needs inherent in human nature, which do not find satisfaction in the framework of a specific society, but from those quite concrete needs engendered by new social conditions and historical circumstances. In other words, the levers determining the course

of history are not to be found outside the current of socio-historical change and transformation but within it.

When searching for the source of man's psychological needs there is no reason to delve into mankind's distant past, it is sufficient to refer to the actual contradiction to be found in the social conditions of man's existence. Precisely this internal contradiction provides the source of the individual's social activity, the cause and mainspring of historical development. Marx revealed this contradiction, pointing out that the real dialectic of historical development is based on the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. The essence of this contradiction can be summed up as follows: any concrete historical society with its specific qualitative identity which finds expression in a corresponding social structure will, as production develops, be constantly subverting that identity, negating itself and creating new opportunities for further development. The realization of those opportunities will always imply movement beyond the confines of the previous identity.

Until recently resolution of this contradiction was only ever effected in an antagonistic form, namely by means of struggle between classes, historically determined agents representing the different sides of that contradiction. Marx and Engels held that "society has hitherto always developed within the framework of the contradiction—in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat".* One class—the ruling one—was interested in preserving its former identity, while the other, oppressed class was interested in actualizing those opportunities which negated it. This meant that the contradiction between productive forces and production relations always found expression in a contradictory relationship between two

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 487.

classes with different needs. The picture changes once the antagonistic class structure has been eliminated and socialist relations have been established and have started to develop. The contradiction still exists and possesses crucial importance under socialism, but it is no longer of an antagonistic character and it can be resolved, once conditions have been created allowing for the actualization of those potentialities engendered by the evolving society. In socialist society the resolution of the contradiction takes place within the framework of the existing social structure.

Marx's invaluable contribution lay in the fact that he sought for the means to resolve the problem of the relationship between the individual and society by analyzing real existing contradictions in relations between social classes. It is impossible to reach an understanding of the essence and inner workings of historical development by merely considering the interaction between man in the abstract and an unidentified society.

Unlike Fromm, who in his abstract psychological analysis of the dynamics of history loses sight of the subject of historical action absorbing him into his abstract concept of human nature, Marx spotlights this subject in his analysis of class relations. He presents us with man as a totality of social relations, and insofar as these relations are contradictory in character, there can naturally be no such thing as man in general, the individual is always seen as the representative of a specific social group. It is not man as such who steps forward on to the stage of history but men representing the interests of this or that specific class.

Marxism put an end once and for all to the subjective idealist cult of man in the abstract, substituting in its place the science of real people and their historical development, and providing the one correct answer to the question as to the goal and direction of man's creative activity, linking the latter with the struggle of progressive social forces. When considering the historical activity of

classes from the socio-ethical angle, it can be said that progressive trends of social development are embodied in that class, in whose activity historical necessity and the demands of evolving social reality find their expression. Regressive trends are embodied in that class, whose action reflects a conservative attitude to historical necessity and the demands of evolving social reality. Society, in which there exists, on the one hand, a class reflecting the essential forces of human growth and advance, and, on the other, a class which obstructs the actualization of those forces, testifies to the existence of the aforesaid contradiction and a gulf between man's essential nature and his existence. This contradiction between the individual's changing social needs and the social structure can be removed or sublated in a society which is totally committed to the realization of all its progressive potential, and it is resolved in classless society under communism, which represents, according to Marx, the principle of constant, truly humane development, the constant realization of those opportunities which emerge in the process of historical development.*

* See: Karl Marx. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 114.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF CONCRETE HISTORICAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

1. The Neo-Freudian Conception of Social Character

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

The tendency to interpret and present the overall crisis of the capitalist social system first and foremost as a psychological crisis of the individual, referred to as "dehumanization", "depersonalization", "total alienation and self-alienation", the "collapse of the individual's autonomy", etc., can be explained by the fact that socio-economic contradictions in modern highly industrialized capitalist society find their most striking expression in the psychological crisis of the individual. Typically enough these trends in bourgeois social philosophy and the endeavour on the part of academics to provide a psychological interpretation of social reality are not confined to analyses of the present situation. A number of social scientists call for

* Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization. A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, New York, 1956, p. XI.