



Erich Fromm's Approach to Psychoanalysis

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Part I:

On social character, its conceptualization, the way it is molded and functions

The term „social character“ is at the very center of Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical thought. The significance of this term in Fromm's approach to psychoanalysis, how he understands it, how it is molded and what its function is will be the topics of this first part. Since I have already dealt with the concept of social character elsewhere, I would like to confine myself to a summary and say some words on the background against which Fromm developed his psychoanalytical approach. The term „social character“ emerges only at the end of the 1930's. A first systematic description can be found in the appendix of the book *Escape from Freedom* in the year 1941. The idea behind the concept of „social character“, however, had already taken shape in Fromm's mind much earlier.

The literature about Erich Fromm either connects Fromm's own psychoanalytical approach to the Freudo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School or to Harry Stack Sullivan's theory of interpersonal relationship. It is certainly true that Fromm formulated his own - namely social-psychologically-oriented - psychoanalytical approach in the context of the Freudo-Marxist discussion at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. The argument with the members of the Institute, especially Horkheimer and Marcuse and in the background with Adorno, at the end of the thirties, which was sparked off by the

Freudian instinct theory, can only be understood, however, if the specifically Frommian approach connecting sociological and psychological thought is taken into account. It was not developed only in the context of the Frankfurt School, but already ten years earlier in Fromm's dissertation in 1922.

In his dissertation, Fromm examined why Jews living in the Diaspora think, feel and act in a certain way despite the lack of state or church institutions. Fromm's answer to this already social-psychological question was: it is a certain way of life of these Diaspora Jews that enables them to realize the spirit of the Torah from within and with passion. It was just at the time when Fromm was writing his Dissertation with Alfred Weber at Heidelberg University that he first came into contact with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. His own psychoanalytical experiences as a patient of Frieda Reichmann in Heidelberg, Wilhelm Wittemberg in Munich, Karl Landauer in Frankfurt and Hanns Sachs in Berlin as well as the education of the sociologist Fromm as a psychoanalyst at the Institute in Berlin enabled him to express his social-psychological thought in the language of Freudian instinct-oriented drive theory and to develop a theory of Freudo-Marxism. Society, Fromm realized, cannot be understood only in terms of its economic, political and cultural structure, but primarily in terms of its libidinous structure. Who discerns and examines this libidinal structure understands how the socio-economic basis affects the ideas and ideals of a society and that „basis“ and „superstructure“ are



conveyed by a libidinal structure.

The fact that Fromm, coming from sociology, formulated his psychoanalytical approach as a social-psychological one, is met with resistance by both psychoanalysts and sociologists. Psychoanalysts find the idea that there should be a social unconsciousness hard to accept, while sociologists have no use for the unconsciousness of society and direct their interest concerning society rather towards the „external support“ and the binding power of the institutions and not so much towards the internal structure. Fromm, however, speaks of such a psychic structure of society and of the unconsciousness of society and thereby makes an extremely fruitful new approach to psychoanalysis possible.

If one takes seriously the basic sociological premise that there are forces and patterns that are rooted in society itself - a premise that is difficult for most psychoanalysts to accept - then the extremely fruitful question can be raised as to whether or not there is something like an unconsciousness of society, and, if so, according to what patterns it develops and whether or not it can be investigated like the unconscious of an individual. If one first accepts the possibility that society has an unconsciousness, which can be called the social unconscious, then the next step is to free oneself from a misguided understanding of society. Fromm emphasizes in his short but important work, „Psychoanalyse und Soziologie“ (1929a), that „the subject of sociology, society, in reality consists of individuals... Human beings do not have one ‘individual psyche,’ which functions when a person performs as an individual and so becomes the object of psychoanalysis, contrasted to a completely separate ‘mass psyche’ with all sorts of mass instincts, as well as vague feelings of community and solidarity, which spring into action whenever a person performs as part of a mass“ (1929a, GA I, p. 3). Rather, the individual must be understood as socialized a priori, and thus the psyche is to be understood as being „developed and determined through the relationship of the individual to society“ (loc. cit., p. 5).

As the basis for his approach, Fromm refers to statements of Freud's in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921c) in order to direct his hypothesis of the socialized individual

back at Freud himself, who wrote (Freud, 1921c, p. 73): „In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first, individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.“

The difference between personal psychology and social psychology can for this reason only be quantitative. Social psychology, just as individual psychology, tries to comprehend psychic structure from the individual's life experiences. So it proceeds according to the same methods: „Social psychology wishes to investigate how certain psychic attitudes common to members of a group are related to their common life experiences.“ (E. Fromm, 1930a, GA VI, p. 17).

The idea of the „common life experience“ is distinguished from the „individual life experience.“ In the latter it is important to know the sibling order or if someone is the only child; sicknesses and „chance“ occurrences of an individual sort are significant because of their strong influence on libidinal structure. On the other hand, the „common life experience“ of a group mainly refers to the economic, social and political conditions which determine the way of life for the group.

Still completely rooted in the metapsychological concept of Freud's instinct theory, Fromm explained in probably his best-known essay by the title of „The Method and Function of an Analytic Social Psychology“ (1932a, GA I, p. 46) that „...the phenomena of social psychology are to be understood as processes involving the active and passive adaptation of the instinctual apparatus to the socio-economic situation. In certain fundamental respects, the instinctual apparatus itself is a biological given; but it is highly modifiable. The role of primary formative factors goes to the economic conditions. The family is the essential medium through which the economic situation exerts its formative influence on the individual's psyche. The task of social psychology is to explain the shared, socially relevant, psychic attitudes and ideologies - and their unconscious roots in particular - in terms of the influence of economic conditions on libido



strivings.“

Fromm had just formulated his psychoanalytical-sociological theory and method between 1929 and 1932 and also exemplified it by means of the authoritarian character when the discontent with Freudian instinct theory arose in him. It was above all concerned with the question of the significance of the Oedipus complex and the patriarchal determinism of Freudian libido theory. What occasioned such criticism was mainly Fromm's questioning of the issue of mothers' rights, as interpreted by Morgan, Briffault, and above all Bachofen. It is precisely the social determinism of the Oedipus complex in Freud's interpretation - namely as a typical product of a patriarchal society - that makes the necessity of a different instinct theory evident, one which takes the individual as a social being seriously and regards libidinal structure as independent from the socio-economic situation of the individual.

Fromm's criticism and new formulation of psychoanalytic theory did not come about without other experts and personal contacts. In the group around Georg Groddeck, to which, besides Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and Erich Fromm also Karen Horney and Sándor Ferenczi belonged, there was hardly any doubt about the insupportability of the Freudian formulation of the Oedipus complex as early as the late twenties. The thinking of Harry Stack Sullivan, with whom Fromm was friends from 1935 on, proved especially helpful to Fromm's formulation of psychoanalytic theory. Fromm's attempt to regard humans not only as primarily influenced by the unconscious, but also correspondingly as being a reflection of society found expression in Sullivan's „theory of interpersonal relationships.“ Here psychological development takes on the same significance as the change from forms of primary ties to forms of subjective independent relatedness.

At the end of *Escape from Freedom* (1941a) Fromm summarizes his new formulation with these words: „We believe that man is primarily a social being, and not, as Freud assumes, primarily self-sufficient and only secondarily in need of others in order to satisfy his instinctual needs. In this sense, we believe that individual psychology is fundamentally social psychology

or, in Sullivan's terms, the psychology of interpersonal relationships; the key problem of psychology is that of the particular kind of relatedness of the individual toward the world, not that of satisfaction or frustration of single instinctual desires.“ (1941a, p. 290; GA I, p. 387)

It may appear that Fromm rejects all instinct-theoretical thinking. But that is not his point. To be sure, the closer psychoanalytic theory came to being identical to libido theory, the more Fromm tended to formulate his criticism of the libido theory as criticism of Freudian instinct theory in general. Fromm's primary interest of study was also „quasi-instinctive“ needs, namely, those which motivate the thought, feelings and behavior of humans as social beings. The application of Freud's instinct theory to social groups permitted Fromm to recognize the limited validity of the libido theory and in 1935 brought him to the recognition that basically two kinds of drives must be distinguished. He was aware that this distinction introduced a principal disagreement with Freud's instinct theory.

In an unpublished letter of December 18th, 1936 to Karl August Wittfogel, the central idea of Fromm's re-vision of the instinct theory can be discerned clearly. He writes: „The central point of this fundamental disagreement is that I try to show that drives which motivate social behavior are not, as Freud assumes, sublimations of sexual instincts. Rather, they are the products of social processes, or, more precisely, reactions to certain constellations under which the individual has to satisfy his/her instincts. These drives, which I divide into those having to do with human relations (love, hate, sadomasochism) and those having to do with methods of acquisition (instincts of receiving, taking away, saving, gathering, producing), are fundamentally different from natural factors, namely the instincts of hunger, thirst, sexuality. Whereas these are common to all human beings and animals, the former are specifically human products and not biological; they are to be understood in the context of the social way of life...“

Fromm attempts to apply Freud's insight that libidinal structure is molded by life experience to the acknowledgment of the social unconscious. In other words, he comprehends the



human being as being primarily a reflection of society. In doing this he runs up against the inadequacy of the libido theory explanation. His adherence to the perception that libidinal structure results from adaptation to life experience led him to a new conceptualization of the drive theory, according to which psychological phenomena are disconnected from their physical source, the sex drive, and acquire independence as „psychological drives“ as opposed to „physiological drives,“ among which Fromm includes the drives of self-preservation as well as sexuality.

This re-vision of psychoanalysis also manifests itself in new terminology. Since Fromm used the concept of character for his social-psychological insights, he called drive theory characterology; drive structure became character structure, instinctual impulses became character traits or simply passionate strivings; drive itself is conceptualized as psychological need, libidinal instinct is now called psychological or existential need (in contrast to instinctive or physiological needs); the libidinous structure of a society became the social character, and instead of libido, Fromm, similarly to Jung, now spoke of psychic energy.

Due to his contacts to Harry Stack Sullivan, Fromm himself repeatedly connected his revision of psychoanalysis to Sullivan's theory of interpersonal relationship. It is true of both that „the key problem of psychology is that of the particular kind of relatedness of the individual toward the world, not that of satisfaction or frustration of single instinctual desires.“ (1941a, p. 290; GA I, p. 387) In the meantime it has become customary - especially in the American reception of Fromm - to understand Fromm as a representative of „object relation psychoanalysis“ and to accordingly include him in the „Interpersonal School of Psychoanalysis“. (cf. e.g. D. H. Ortmeier, 1995.). As much as it is true that Fromm „was a central figure in the development of the interpersonal approach to psychoanalysis“ (l. c., p. 18), as little justice is done to the specifically Frommian approach to psychoanalysis because Fromm does not only look at the individual as being related to others and to society but as a primarily „social“ being.

In 1991, I found the manuscript of an essay

dating from 1937, which was never published by Fromm himself because of the criticism of Horkheimer, Löwenthal and Marcuse, but which clearly shows the specifically Frommian approach to psychoanalysis - also in contrast to the approach of the Interpersonal Psychoanalysis. Above all, this difference can be elucidated concerning the view of the individual. In this paper Fromm explains:

„Society and the individual do not stand 'opposite' each other. Society is nothing but living, concrete individuals, and the individual can live only as a social human being. His individual life practice is necessarily determined by the life practice of his society or class and in the last analysis, by the manner of production of his society, that means, by how this society produces, how it is organized to satisfy the needs of its members. The differences in the manner of production and life of various societies or classes lead to the development of different character structures typical of the particular society. Various societies differ from each other not only in differences in their manner of production and their social and political organization but also in that their people exhibit a typical character structure despite all individual differences. We call this the 'socially typical character'.“ (E. Fromm, 1992e, p. 222.)

Fromm's main interest in looking at the individual is always what here he calls the „socially typical character“ and later the „social character“. The point is that if you look at any particular person you are primarily confronted with those psychic strivings and impulses, both conscious and unconscious, which this specific person has in common with other persons living under the same socio-economic circumstances; on the other hand, all that makes this person different from, and unique among, other persons living under the same circumstances (his or her special and often traumatic childhood experiences) is - in this respect - of secondary interest. Of course these character orientations and traits were mediated by parents and other „objects“ to whom the person was and is re-



lated. But these object relations are to be understood as representatives of socially given and molded orientations and expectations.

Doubtless this way of looking at man is plausible if you study society by analyzing the social character of persons living under similar conditions. But the attraction of this specific psychoanalytic approach of Fromm's is not diminished by looking at an individual or a patient: Here you are, in the first instance, acquainted with the social character orientation of a specific person - and it is the *social character* of a specific person that Fromm is always primarily interested in. We are used to thinking just the opposite, namely that one can only understand an individual by looking at the unique conditions and circumstances specific to him. Not so with Fromm:

„Just as in all type forming, in the socially typical character only certain fundamental traits are distinguished and these are such that, *according to their dynamic nature and their weight, they are of decisive importance* for all individuals of this society. The fruitfulness of this category is proved in the fact ... that analysis traces back the individual's character with all his individual traits to the elements of the socially typical character and that an understanding of socially typical character is essential to a full understanding of individual character.“ (E. Fromm, 1992e, p. 223; italics by R. F.)

I want to emphasize that for Fromm it is the orientation and the traits shared with others that assume decisive importance according to their dynamic nature and weight. This focus on common traits and orientations is just the opposite of our normal way of looking at people and also opposite to the way psychoanalysis is looking at patients. Especially in psychotherapy we prefer the individualistic point of view and thereby overestimate what is most individual. We fixate on the highly specific conditions and events in the patient's childhood, what happened there with the object relations and so on. We are used to looking at the individual as an entity clearly distinguished and separated from society, though perhaps endowed with internalized aspects of society (by the Super-Ego or by

inner objects); or we see the individual as only secondarily influenced by society, but principally separated from it.

This is not Fromm's way of looking at a person or a patient. In his dissertation about the function of the Jewish law, or in encountering a patient, or in his analysis of political events - Fromm is always primarily interested in those fundamental traits and orientations that result from a practice of life *common* to many people, and which are therefore of decisive importance for this specific individual or patient. This is the meaning of his statement that „the individual can only live as a social being“ (l. c., p. 222). This is - as far as I understand Fromm - the real meaning of his concept of social character and the essence of his social psychological approach to psychoanalysis.

When Fromm embraced the idea of a socially molded unconscious or an unconscious of society by which each individual is predetermined, he defined the Freudian correlation of individual and society anew. After that it was no longer valid to say „here I am and there is society“; but rather, „I am primarily a reflection of society, in that my unconscious is socially determined and I therefore reflect and realize the secret expectations and wishes, fears and strivings of society in my own passionate strivings.“ In reality neither the real separation of society and individual nor the real separation of conscious and unconscious, nor the real separation of society and unconscious exist. Both dimensions are in the social unconscious of every single human being.

In my own interpretation of Fromm, I try to understand Fromm from his Jewish origin and the mental sources shaping him as they are most clearly visible in his dissertation. With the understanding of the relation of individual and society displayed there, Fromm received Freudian psychoanalysis and modified his understanding of psychoanalysis until not only the determination of the psychic structure by the way of life, i.e. the social-economic situation, was taken into account, but also the individual as a social being, i. e. primarily as a representation of society, and not only as being primarily related (as is claimed by Interpersonal Psychoanalysis).



Fromm's specific psychoanalytic approach shows its fruitfulness both in the analysis of social phenomena and in the understanding of and the therapeutical contact with the individual human being. Concerning this, the individual can only be understood in his and her normal and neurotic strivings and drives, if these are discovered as traits and orientations of the social character. Thus the understanding of the individual presupposes the psychoanalysis of society.

Before I speak of a basic character orientation of modern man, namely the marketing orientation, and of strong and deeply rooted strivings (character traits) which originate in the economic and social condition of the so-called market economy I want to draw your attention to the question where the psychic energy comes from if it is not the outcome of innate instinctual drives - as Freud explained psychic energy.

It was Freud's ingenious idea to see the whole spectrum of human behavior as motivated by libidinal strivings and to understand innate physiological instincts as the source of human passions. The drives (firstly the sexual instinct with its libidinous energy, later on life and death instinct) undergo a certain development, in which partial instincts and instinctual impulses develop, which express themselves in completely different passionate strivings (sadism, masochism, envy, love etc.).

Fromm sees the origin and differentiation of psychic energy completely differently. For him, the passionate strivings do not result from innate instincts, but are rooted in the specific human condition, which expresses itself in specific human needs - as for instance the need for relatedness. Depending on the respective economic and social requirements, these „psychic drives“ can be satisfied completely differently. Just because the psychic needs do not have an instinctual source with Fromm, he cannot ascribe the development and differentiation of passionate strivings to the momentum of a drive (as Freud did in his theory of oral, anal, phallic and genital phases and libidinal stages). Instead, the economic and social requirements determine which passionate strivings are developed or not. Thus, with Fromm the respective contemporary historical situation receives a direct molding function: if, in order to function smoothly, a society

needs people who are readily submissive, then the passion of submissiveness is the result of this social necessity acquired by identification with this necessity or requirement.

If for Fromm not „instinctual drives,“ but, rather, the „psychological drives“ which lie beyond the physiological needs and are peculiar to human beings - if these psychological needs are the source for our psychic energy, then the question arises of how they originate. The fact that psychic needs are only observable in humans suggests that they should be grounded in the special placement of the human being (his/her *conditio humana*), and not in the physically-anchored sex drive, which humans have in common with animals. (That does not mean that sexuality is not a very important physiological need for Fromm. But sexuality receives its particular significance because of the fact that sex drive can play an essential role in the satisfaction of the need for relatedness. It is therefore an expression of an ever different kind of object-relatedness and not the other way around, namely that object-relatedness is an expression of an ever different kind of sex drive.) What is the passionate striving of man the result of, if not of instincts rooted in the body? Empathy for the original psychological state of the human being makes the answer evident.

In contrast to instinct-guided animals, man is a contradictory being, characterized „namely by the dichotomy of existing in nature and being subject to all her laws and, at the same time, transcending nature“ through his reason, by means of his capacity for imagination and because of his self-consciousness“ (1977g, GA VIII, p. 244). This peculiarity of the human being creates existential dichotomies with which he must live and to which he must try to answer, without ever being able to resolve the contradictions. Man is thrown into this world without any say and his life is usually ended without his say; he does not know where he came from or where he is going; in his life he always lags behind what he can envision as better and more perfect.

These existential dichotomies are the source of psychic energy. They create psychic needs which are specific to man and for which each person must take responsibility. So, for Fromm,



there are not only physical or physiological needs on the one hand and mental needs on the other. There are also independent psychic needs which are governed by their own rules and are therefore not reducible to physiological needs or drives. These psychic needs always have to be satisfied in some way. Their satisfaction replaces the lost instinct-relatedness to the world. To quote Fromm (1977g, GA VIII, pp. 245ff.): „The specifically human interest in replacing the lost instinct relatedness to the world with new affective-intellectual forms of relatedness is just as vital as the interest in self-preservation and the sexual interest that humans share with all living beings; it follows from this that the various solutions for the existential contradictions are just as energy-loaden, i.e., passionate, as the manifestations of the ego drives and the libido.“

Fromm specified different psychic needs, most importantly, the psychic need for relatedness. The question as to in which way a person satisfies this need, in a productive or a non-productive way, essentially depends on what life experience he has had to adapt to and with which socio-economic structure he must identify with. Even if a person adopts patterns of relatedness that hinder the development of his psychological possibilities, we see attempts at solutions in which the person reacts to existential dichotomies and produces new patterns of relatedness to the human and natural environment. Even the psychotic, who hallucinates his world, nonetheless satisfies the need for relatedness that is found only in human beings.

The question of productive or non-productive orientation in the satisfaction of psychic needs determines growth and development of psychic possibilities as well as psychic health or sickness. The alternatives of a productive or non-productive solution - or, as Fromm later expressed it, the alternatives of a biophilic or necrophilic, being-oriented or having-oriented solution - determine the progression or regression of the psychic system. Psychic health or sickness depends on the orientation one identifies with. A person who has adapted well to the non-productive economic and social structure, who functions well and is capable of working and carrying a load, is in reality the one who is suffering from the pathology of normalcy, the

one who is psychologically crippled.

Psychic needs must be satisfied. The way they are satisfied is, however, socially conditioned and is internalized via the family as the agent of society. Fromm expressed the alternative orientations in the satisfaction of needs in terms of respective types and named them according to their objectives. The psychic need for relatedness for instance can either be satisfied productively by a loving orientation or non-productively by a narcissistic orientation. All forms of non-productive relatedness are characterized by the fact that the person stays fixated on the primary ties (fixations) or regresses to them and therefore is alienated from his own forces, whereas the loving satisfaction of the need for relatedness is characterized by the fact that the loving person increasingly becomes the active part in the relationship and creates relatedness to his human and natural environment from his own psychic energies.

Last, but not least we have to clarify the role that the social character has in social and cultural processes. If we assume that character has the subjective function for each person of leading that person „to act according to what is necessary for him from a practical standpoint and also to give him satisfaction from his activity psychologically“ (1941a, p. 283; GA I. p. 382f.), then we can maintain that, by function, „the social character internalizes external necessities and thus harnesses human energy for the task of a given economic and social system“ (loc. cit., p. 383).

The individual likes to behave the way it has to according to economic and social requirements and expectations. If an economic system is directed toward maximization and quantitative growth one has to make new investments by which new products are created in order to safeguard its functioning. Thus this system needs the individual that loves to consume. What it enjoys doing and what its common sense undoubtedly tells it is reasonable to do - for example, to buy the best bargains at the supermarket and at going-out-of-business sales - that is what it really must do.

„As long as the objective conditions of the society and the culture remain stable, the



social character has a predominantly stabilizing function. If the external conditions change in such a way that they do not fit any more with tradition and social character, a lag arises which often makes the character function as an element of disintegration instead of stabilization, as dynamite instead of social mortar, as it were.“ (1949c, p. 6; GA I, p. 211)

In researching social character as dependent on economic and social requirements, essential passionate strivings of man, even unconscious ones that thus originate from the social unconscious, can be recognized and put to profitable use as means of social change. Just how necessary such a recognition of the social character as a productive force is will be shown afterwards in the second part, which refers to the marketing orientation.

Part II:

Exemplification of Fromm's social character concept by the marketing character syndrome

1. The market-economic mode of production

In the second part I want to exemplify Fromm's social-psychoanalytic approach to psychoanalysis. I shall show the connection of economic and social requirements and their reflection in character traits by means of the social character orientation dominant in today's industrial states: the marketing character syndrome. How fundamental the changes are that have taken place in the last decades becomes evident only when the changes in the mode of production are examined more closely.

Earlier forms of capitalist and state-capitalist modes of production were organized in a more or less authoritarian way. Just as in all authoritarian structures there were, on the one hand, owners of capital, entrepreneurs, employers, bosses who had the say as authorities and who exerted power, and on the other hand, there were workers, employees who had to do their

duty and to work obediently.

Caused by new techniques of production, new materials, new possibilities of exploitation, trade and sale, in this century a fundamental change has come about which can be described by the term 'market-economic mode of production' or, respectively, in short 'market economy'. Authoritarian and hierarchical structures are too rigid for the market-economic mode of production and therefore unsuitable. How is this 'market-economic mode of production' to be understood?

The most important characteristic of market economy is a different understanding of the market and what is happening on the market. The main purpose of the market, one could assume, is to have a space for selling utility goods, to the effect that it is regulated by the utility value of an article. Human beings buy what they need to live. What human beings need for realizing their own abilities and possibilities, they acquire - but it is always the human being and its needs that is the subject of the events on the market.

Just exactly this is not - or hardly - anymore the guiding mechanism of the market. In contrast to earlier times, the market is not regulated by the utility value of an article but by the laws of supply and demand. Today everything depends on whether the demand can be increased and whether something can be sold and therefore can be turned into a commodity (cf. E. Fromm, 1991b, p. 61). The obvious expression of this is the mere existence of advertising in general, but especially the way things are advertised: because utility goods are no longer considered utility goods but commodities that have to be sold independent of their utility value, they are ascribed what can be sold: emotions, needs, moods, symbolizations of care, experience, success or advantage. A yogurt is no longer a yogurt, but an experience or a sweet dream. And you do no longer buy sports shoes, but a piece of youth and sportiness etc.

Not enough that utility goods are only interesting as commodities, also the human beings themselves became a commodity on the market. Already in his book *Man for Himself* from 1947 Fromm states: „The market concept of value... has led to a similar concept of value with regard



to people and particularly to oneself. The character orientation which is rooted in the experience of oneself as a commodity and of one's value as exchange value I call the marketing orientation." (E. Fromm, 1947a, p. 68.) Therefore, the success of human beings depends to a large extent on their selling themselves on the market. What is decisive for the marketing of the human beings is the personality they 'portray' not the one they are. „The principle of evaluation is the same on both the personality and the commodity market: on the one personality is offered for sale; on the other, commodities.“ (L. c., p. 69)

We are here primarily interested which changes these market economic ways cause in the human being. Therefore, we ask for the market-economic values and requirements to which the human being has to adapt. The individual adapts by emphasizing those „character traits“ which this mode of production needs for its functioning - so that, eventually, he or she willingly and readily does and strives for exactly what he or she has to do in accordance with the market economic requirements to make the system work.

2. Market-Economic Modes of Production and Their Reflection in Character Traits of the Marketing Character Syndrome

a) Conformism

If not the human being and its needs, but the market and what can be sold is the subject of the whole economy, then the be-all and end-all of the economy is the *adjustment* to the market situation. Market-adequate behavior as an economic requirement is reflected in the human character trait of *conformism*, thus in the passionate striving to adapt always and everywhere. Instead of sticking to one's own individuality and one's convictions, „convenient or not“, it is necessary to act according to the expectations true to the motto „I am what you want“. Important and right is what „everyone“ does, reads, buys, wears etc. Accordingly, there are no persistent values and orientations. Values can be ascertained by means of surveys or by sales figures or best-seller lists or charts. Valuable is what goes, what can be sold. And what is

right at the top of the hierarchy of values today can be „out“ already tomorrow. *Relativism* and *disorientation* are typical consequences of the conformism generated by the marketing-orientation.

b) Flexibility

No matter if someone produces material goods or - as in the field of the media or in the art scene - cultural goods or if they work in trade and industry or the services trade, today everybody knows that a market-oriented economy calls for a far-reaching *flexibility* in order to adjust to the changing demands.

Flexibility is a very important requirement and one of the most basic values of a market-oriented economy, which is therefore reflected in an equally strong wish of the human beings. Also here it is true, as with all socially generated passionate strivings felt by the individual: what the individual *has to* do for economic reasons, it is identified with and does it with passion. The human beings today love flexibility, changes, always something different and something new, the non-established, the challenge. Their flexibility shows mainly in the fact that they are able to play as many different personality roles as possible for which there is a demand on the market.

„The very changeability of attitudes,“ Fromm says (1947a, p. 77) „is the only permanent quality of such orientation... Not one particular attitude is predominant, but the emptiness which can be filled most quickly with the desired quality. This quality, however, ceases to be one in the proper sense of the word; it is only a role, the pretense of a quality, to be readily exchanged if another one is more desirable.“

c) Mobility

Another central requirement of market-oriented economy is *mobility*. Concerning this, we are long past the point where this affects only the mobility of the employees. It is nothing special anymore that an employee of IBM is expected to be mobile around the globe, no matter what the family and schoolchildren say. It is also nothing new that the seriously handicapped are not mobile enough and are therefore employed only unwillingly. Women at a child-bearing age



or mothers still are less wanted employees than single young men. However, mobility does not only play an important part with respect to the employees, but also concerning the production and the product. The globalization of economy is primarily a globalization of production. If the paper for the production of books is cheapest in Brazil, because no costs for keeping the environment clean have to be taken into account there, then the paper is produced there and then brought to the Philippines, because there the wages for book production are lowest. The shipping of the books to Italy is carried out by a Nigerian subsidiary of an American haulage firm, because in Nigeria there is no taxation on that and no control of the safety regulations. The mobility of production and of the product has become the unchallengeable „sacred cow“ of market economy. Research of the Wuppertal Traffic Institute yielded the result that on the average a yogurt travels a total of 8000 km before it gets to the consumer.

With such high regard for the mobility of the product, the production and the „producers“, it is no wonder that the urge of mobility is one of the strongest driving forces of today's human beings. „Modern man“ feels no connection to a place and is not rooted anywhere, he can be at home everywhere - and nowhere. The „drive for mobility“, however does not result from the fact that here a nomadic trait suppressed in the bourgeois-settled society re-emerges. Rather, the wish for mobility is an expression of the mobility of the marketing orientation. Therefore, there is nothing worse for the „automobilist“ or the jet-setter than to no longer be able to travel - e.g. for health reasons - or losing their driving license or that the Green Party limits their mobility by increasing the tax on petrol and oil. Not being able to be mobile anymore is one of the worst strokes of fate in a leisure society in which tour companies have an increase in turnover even in times of economic regression.

d) Detached Relatedness by „Individualization“

Beside conformism, flexibility and mobility there is the strong need for a detached relatedness, which originates from a market-oriented economy. The sociologists have coined the term of

„individualization“ for this. From a psychological perspective, behind this need for individualization, experienced as striving for liberty and independence, hides the wish for relatedness without emotional attachment. How can this passionate striving be understood as a result of the market economy?

Among the essential market-economic changes is that a management, with innovative creativity, a readiness to experiment and an openness towards new forms of co-operation, leads and organizes a business and, in addition to this, there is staff which shows co-operativity and considers themselves a team or, respectively, members of the business family. Here, the property situation plays a subordinate role. It is expected both from upper executives and the regular staff that they develop some kind of „positive“ sense of belonging to the business and a „positive“ relatedness to their work without feeling the need for a deeper attachment to their professional position and their work. What is asked for is a „corporate identity.“ What plays a central part in the life of human beings, namely their ability to attach and separate themselves, would be fatal for the market-oriented economy. Employees on whatever level have to be replaceable and exchangeable at any time, it must be possible to hire and fire them. People who attach themselves or who are paralyzed by the threat of separation are a burden. What counts is a kind of relationship that has no depth, wants no attachment and shows no further interest, but is at disposal at any time.

This market-oriented requirement of relatedness without attachment is reflected in the psyche of the individual in an increasing wish for *detachment* and *non-commitment*. The wish for detachment is displayed not only in the increase of single-person-households and of divorce figures. Also within relationships, the question of attachment, closeness, intimacy is problematic where all this is not temporarily produced by sexual attraction for a limited period of time.

The lack of attachment is also always accompanied by *non-commitment* and an *attitude of arbitrariness*. I will illustrate this tendency towards non-commitment with some examples from completely different areas: the first example comes from the everyday field of bringing



up one's children where what the parents say is simply not valid anymore. Instead it always has to be negotiated anew who is to clear out the dishwasher each and every week or whether the homework has to be done first before the TV is switched on. There is nothing that is binding, everything has to be negotiated anew in each respective case or has to be re-negotiated in family conferences. Of course, this example shows that there still is a claim to commitment; in many families, however, the parents have given up the fight for commitment and submitted to the free interplay of forces just as on the market - causing a complete inability to commitment.

We can also observe the increasing arbitrariness and non-commitment in ourselves: most of us have difficulties getting really involved with somebody, being interested in what is going on in others and feeling what is really going on in our own child or in the person we talk to - and this is, in fact, because of our lack of an inner bond, because we do not reach out to the other, because we are not emotionally attached.

Detachment, arbitrariness and non-commitment are not the only character traits accompanying „individualization“. Also typical of market economy is the character trait of *indifference* as well as a completely peculiar *superficiality* of relatedness. The indifference shows both with respect to life and towards the consequences of our actions. To quote Fromm himself: „Since the marketing characters have no deep attachment to themselves or to others, they do not care, in any deep sense of the word, not because they are so selfish but because their relations to others and to themselves are so thin. This may also explain why they are not concerned with the dangers of nuclear and ecological catastrophes, even though they know all the data that point to these dangers... The lack of concern even for their children and grandchildren... is the result of the loss of any emotional ties, even of those 'nearest' to them. The fact is, nobody is close to the marketing characters; neither are they close to themselves.“ (E. Fromm, 1976a, p. 149.) In this point the marketing-character differs decisively from the narcissistic who is not related to the world out-

side himself either, but instead completely to himself and his fantasies of grandiosity about himself. Concerning the marketing character, Fromm himself (l. c., p. 151) draws a parallel to the „schizoid character.“

e) „Coolness“ by De-Emotionalization

Another effect of the market-economic requirement of relatedness without attachment is the *de-emotionalization* which shows in the repression, denial and splitting off of emotions and manifests itself in the character trait of „coolness.“ The „coolness“ of the marketing character differs decisively from the „coldness“ of the necrophilic person, who has to „kill“ the emotions because they are an indication of biophilia, the love of life. The marketing character experiences emotions as a hindrance and as to be avoided because they are attributes of relatedness and attachment. Since feelings (of love, enthusiasm, joy, but also of hatred, jealousy, envy, guilt, shame etc.) are primarily closely related to attachment and separation, they are not compatible to the ideal of detached relatedness. Emotions are the „spanner in the works“, impede the ability to performance, they are equated with irrationality. Therefore, the marketing character wants to repress them, split them off, deny them. The cool, clear head is what matters, the purely cerebral, intelligence unburdened by the emotional.

From a psychological perspective, the market-economically prescribed repression, denial and splitting off of emotions has a number of consequences, which I would like to at least mention:

- (1) If experiencing and realizing emotions has to be avoided, then this affects all emotions, thus also the experience of the positive emotions of contentment and satisfaction by work, the feeling of happiness and the emotions of joy and enthusiasm for what you do.
- (2) A second possible consequence is intellectualization, with brain work taking the place of experience of feelings, with never-ending arguments, sophistications and rationalizations in order to - at any rate - avoid feelings and emotional reactions. Since therapists know this consequence well from their treatment of neuroses, there is no need for



further illustration.

(3) A third possibility is the thinking of feelings, the development of pseudo-feelings and of false feelings. When we think feelings, we assume that we have a feeling, but in reality we sense or feel nothing. (cf. the examples in E. Fromm, 1958d, GA IX, S. 326f. and in E. Fromm, 1966g, GA IX, S. 429f.) The development of pseudo-feelings can best be clarified with respect to the phenomenon of sentimentality. For Fromm (1991b, pp. 73-74), „sentimentality is feeling under the condition of complete detachment... Unless you are really insane, you have feelings, but if you are detached, remote, unrelated to things... then you have a very peculiar situation. You have feelings, but you do not refer really, concretely to something which is the reality. You are sentimental. Your feelings overflow. They appear somewhere... Sentimental people give the impression of being rather detached, rather remote, of not being related to anything particularly, and then you find these outbursts of feeling. You can see it in the movies, at a football game or at some other occasion where suddenly there is great emotion, great excitement, or great what seems joy, or great what seems sadness in their faces, and yet you can see that this facial expression is at the same time vacuous, empty. Here is a great difference between the person who experiences joy in a state of relatedness to something, and a person who has this kind of sentimental joy because there is some situation where his sense of joy is touched somewhere, but he is still perfectly detached from everything. He doesn't feel.“

(4) Finally, a fourth possible consequence of the avoidance of feelings is the somatization of feelings. Here it is not feelings that are experienced, but the body aching, stinging, convulsing, tensing up, pinching, tiring etc. If in this connection feelings are „only“ repressed, this leads to the well-known conversational symptoms and functional disorders, with which the repressed feeling and the avoided affect express themselves in bodily dysfunctionality. If, however, a denial and splitting off of affects occurs, the emotional hides in psychosomatoses, one important

feature of them being exactly that the bodily symptom (e.g. Asthma Bronchiale) must remain split off and is much harder to treat psychotherapeutically.

f) Egoism by Commercialization

So far, I have talked of conformism, flexibility, mobility, detached relatedness and „coolness“ as requirements and basic values of market-oriented economy and their reflections in the respective passionate strivings of the marketing character. One further basic value of a market-oriented economy is marketing in the original sense, the *commercialization* of products or - in the services trade or in the caring professions - of the own personality turned into a product. Since the market economy today is not concerned with the utility value a product has for the human being, but with the increase of the demand, the whole attention is shifted towards the success on the market and the attractiveness of the goods for sale. Therefore the question of the quality of the product or the service is, in actual fact, secondary. The departments for advertising and public relations, for presentation and market analysis gain more and more importance. For „public relations“ all possibilities of suggestion are wanted in order to make a product or a service a success on the market. The exterior, the outward appearance, the image, the packaging, the „outfit“ decide whether or not something can be sold.

What the marketing departments show us in commercializing products or personalities, we have already internalized only all too well. The marketing character has a deep need to present himself, to self-assuredly portray himself, to make himself attractive and irresistible, to style his outfit, to come across well with his words. Everybody tries to *sell themselves as well as possible*: with one's education, one's marks and grades, one's positions and success, one's in-service training courses, one's general knowledge, one's knowledge of languages, one's secure and self-assured appearance or also with one's „nutty“ ideas. The packaging industry is booming despite the pollution crisis because even with simple utility goods the outfit decides the chances on the market. In the area of education, didactics gain more and more importance,



because what use are the cleverest thoughts and the most scientific insights if they cannot be made come alive, if they cannot be conveyed, or: sold, as it were. In Media Studies, Rhetorics has newly established itself as the discipline that shows how to go down well. News in radio and television is not news, but goods that have to be sold and which therefore are processed with music, pictures and stimulating quick sequences of cuts.

If you want to sell, you have to present yourself as a specialist, as the best, the lucky one, the biggest, most competent, most trustworthy. The compulsion to sell oneself leads to a strong egoistic striving to always and everywhere present oneself well, to thus go down well and to be appreciated and admired by others. This wooing appreciation and admiration wears the frock of narcissistic self-inflation, but in most cases is no narcissism, but *egoism as a marketing strategy*. What matters is going down well with others and *not* a narcissistic inflation of oneself.

This marketing-oriented egoism can be observed in all areas, because there is no longer anything that cannot be turned into a product. Even God, the own I, aspects of one's self, emotions, dreams, fantasies become a part of my ego and hence something I have, sell or acquire. To quote Fromm: „The experience of my 'ego' is the experience of myself as a thing (or a commodity), of the body I have, the memory I have - the money, the house, the social position, the power, the children, the problems I have. I look at myself as a thing and my social role is another attribute of thing-ness.“ (E. Fromm, 1968a, p. 83). What distinguishes the marketing character is exactly that he confuses „the identity of ego with the identity of 'I' or self“ (l. c.).

I would like to demonstrate this kind of egoism as a marketing strategy also by an example that shows quite impressively that this egoism is especially successful when it gets you to believe that it is interested in you. From three psychological studies which, independent of each other, all examined the question as to how to go down best, the following seven recommendations can be formulated: (quoted here as in a newspaper article by Udo Flade in: Südwestpresse, Ulm, 20. 7. 1994, p. 26):

1. „Give compliments! People cannot hear enough of them, but you should really mean them. Tell people completely openly what you like about them. Maybe it is the new hairdo, something new they wear, the way they give their attention to you.
2. Take an interest in others! Share the minor and major problems of your friends, colleagues, neighbors; ask more questions. They will also find your life and you yourself interesting.
3. Activate contacts! Have you met new people you like, then keep in touch. Write down their telephone number and address, give them a call, make a date to meet again: for a walk, for a weekend trip, for a glass of wine. People who show initiative are popular.
4. Give appreciation! It is easy to honestly say 'I think its great how you treat your kids, how you bring job and household into line.' Or: 'You've done that well and fast.' Praise creates a friendly climate.
5. Listen! Do not always try to impress with your own stories. No, encourage others to talk about themselves.
6. Smile! To smile is free and yet so effective. Smiling stimulates, reduces aversions, simply puts you in a good mood.
7. Pay attention! Even if your relationship has been going on for a while: surprise your partner now and again...“

I can imagine that you consider the sentences I have just read out the most helpful of my whole lecture. This would, of course, only confirm that also your passionate striving is marketing-oriented and that it is also your most ardent wish to go down well - instead of being yourself.

So far I have elucidated some of the character traits of the marketing orientation more closely and tried to explain them as the result of an identification with market economic requirements. Doing this, it has become quite clear that the marketing orientation alienates the human being from its own productive forces. The extent of the alienation in connection to this is decisive for the degree of non-productivity. The



character traits described above are not to be regarded as inherently negative. The ability to adapt, flexibility, mobility, an unfixated relatedness, a rationally dominated experience of emotion and self-assured appearance - all these features are abilities of the human being which only receive their non-productive qualification by the domination of the psycho-dynamic of the non-productive marketing orientation. Which alienating driving force, which psycho-dynamic is at work in the marketing orientation?

3. The Psycho-Dynamic of the Marketing-Oriented

a) Alienation and Marketing-Oriented

To illustrate what Fromm means by alienation let me start with some statements of a 21 year old patient I had in practice. Tom is a student who, in the course of three semesters, has twice switched his major and who suffers, more and more, from an inability to achieve satisfying relationships with others. He says:

„I am always forced to blend in with my surroundings;“ „the colors of the world around me rub off on me;“ „I can't help slipping into the character of another person and hearing and feeling as this person does;“ „in any case I must keep up my cover because this is all I have;“ „I am a sponge that soaks up everything.“

This student is alienated from himself and suffers from the absence of a sense of an authenticity. Thus to feel himself at all, to experience any sense of identity, he has to soak up feelings, ideas, and stimuli from others to compensate for his inner emptiness. Maybe some of you will answer that Tom's manner of living and experiencing himself, while somewhat exaggerated, is on the whole quite normal and usual. Yes, this manner of sensing his or her identity is „normal“ today. But it is only „normal“ because it is so widespread in industrial societies that it is usually not felt as alienation.

„Literally speaking“ - says Fromm, in a lecture given 1953 at the New School for Social Re-

search in New York - alienation „means that we are aliens to us or ourselves, or the world outside is alien to us“ (E. Fromm, 1991b, p. 59). The process of becoming alien to oneself was first described by the prophets' critique of idolatry in the Old Testament; later Hegel and Marx coined the term „alienation“ in the same sense; likewise the phenomenon of transference, as discussed in psychoanalysis, can be understood as a process of alienation (cf. E. Fromm, 1990a, pp. 45-52).

„The idolator is a person who prays to the product of his own hands. He takes a piece of wood. With one part, he builds himself a fire in order, for example, to bake a cake; with the other part of the wood, he carves a figure in order to pray to it. Yet what he prays to are merely things.“ (E. Fromm, 1992b, p. 24.)

Transference as known in psychoanalysis is a manifestation of idolatry:

„A person transfers his own activities or all of what he experiences - of his power, his love, of his power of thought - onto an object outside himself... As soon as a person has set up this transference relatedness, he enters into relation with himself only by submitting to the object onto which he has transferred his own human functions. Thus, to love means: I love only when I submit myself to the idol onto which I have transferred all my capacity for love... The more powerful an idol becomes - that is the more I transfer to it - the poorer I become and the more I am dependent on it, since I am lost if I lose that onto which I have transferred everything that I have.“ (L. c., p. 24.)

Here, Fromm describes alienation by symbiosis which typically manifests itself under authoritarian conditions - and to the extent that psychoanalysis is organized along dogmatic and authoritarian lines, one can expect transference to be still understood in the symbiotic-authoritarian sense sketched above. But Tom is not suffering from a symbiotic dependency; his problem is that he is neither able to develop a stable rela-



tionship with another person nor to stabilize his empty self by a constant - even alienating - symbiosis. What has happened here? How has the phenomenon of alienation managed to shift from relating symbiotically to being unrelated but dependent on identity-giving figures?

To illustrate how this has come about, Fromm refers to the fairy tale of „The Emperor’s New Clothes“ by Hans Christian Andersen.

„Modern man’s perception of reality is fundamentally different from that of the people in the fairy tale of ‘The Emperor’s New Clothes’... (There) the emperor still exists. The issue is only that he is in reality naked, although people believe that he is wearing clothes. Today, though, the emperor is no longer present. Today, man is real only insofar as he is standing somewhere outside. He is constituted only through things, through property, through his social role, through his ‘persona’; as a living person, however, he is not real.“ (E. Fromm, 1992a, p. 26.)

People who are self-alienated in the authoritarian mode project their living substance - their love, wisdom, strength, all human potentialities that grow through practice - onto unliving, wooden, golden or whatever things, thus making the idols into living things. Submitting to these idols allows one to participate in one’s own projected psychic forces. This does not hold true for people who are self-alienated because of their marketing orientation. The market is not a concrete superimposition; the market is an anonymous entity which, chameleon-like, changes its color every day. Nevertheless the market forces us to sell our personality on the marketplace, to renounce all human potentialities that are not sellable on the market, i. e. it obliges us to become commodities.

But, even as commodities, we cannot deny our psychic need for a sense of identity and our need for relatedness to others. These needs are parts of our human nature, are inherent in our *conditio humana*. They qualify man being a member of the human race. So what happens now? Being unable to project our own psychic

forces onto idols (because the market is an anonymous entity) and being unable to deny our needs (because they are part of our nature) we proceed to deny our own potentialities by expropriating them, by expecting all growing, loving, humanly satisfying attributes of life to flow from consuming and appropriating commodities. The „having“ mode of existence now predominates and replaces our being really related and our productive way of sensing our identity.

By expropriating their own human faculties and denying what they can produce out of themselves, in reliance on their own feelings, thoughts, or activities, human beings turn themselves into things, make idols of themselves. At the same time, they hallucinate that things that can be bought, consumed, appropriated are actually living, human entities that will bring back what they have turned their backs on. To be active and alive is an attribute of human beings who are related to reality and other human beings by their own reason and love. Since denying one’s own faculties makes it impossible to feel one’s own vital wellsprings, the „solution“ is to smoke a cigarette hoping for a surge of energy, to buy jogging shoes hoping this will restore a sense of aliveness, and so on. Of course it is a hallucination, but we don’t worry about it, because we need this hallucination to compensate for a fundamentally terrifying feeling of emptiness, boredom, loss of identity, inability to relate, deadness. And since it is a socially accepted and economically enforced way of relating to oneself and to others, we usually manage to avoid experiencing the perversion of life it implicates.

With this short sketch of alienation as a socially accepted disease aggravated by the loss of authoritarian structures and the predominance of the market economy, I have sought to illustrate the basic strivings people today suffer from: namely alienation from their own productive forces by turning themselves into things, dead commodities, the upshot being that they seek to enliven themselves by hallucinating acts of appropriation. By drawing up the alienation resulting from the market-economic mode of production, at the same time the psychodynamic of the non-productive marketing orien-



tation is described. Its essentials are to be analyzed more comprehensively in the following.

b) Essentials of the Marketing Character Syndrome

(1) A first essential of the marketing orientation is the animation („enlivening“) and *humanization of things* and commodities produced by human beings. When the subject of the market is not anymore the human being with its needs, but the market situation and the success on the market, and when the saleability of commodities is the real agent, the place of life, then it is only consistent that the commodities offered on the market are brought to life, that they have a human name and human qualities. Economically, it is all about „livening up“ the market. The question as to how the market can be stimulated and with which products, commodities, offers is secondary. The main thing is the market breathes, pulsates, stays in motion and the circulation of supply and demand does not collapse. The market can not only *be compared* to a living, human body, it *is* one: it breathes, pulsates, moves and can collapse.

The animation and humanization of the market and the commodities is omnipresent today. This begins already where commodities are given human names. The Swedish furniture chain IKEA has been selling shelves by the name of ‘Billy’ for decades. Nearly each and every piece of furniture there has a human first name. In the catalogues of department stores meanwhile most products have human names. But also services or meals are given first names. And who would not like „Mr. Muscle“ to revive the house - although, of course we are not talking about a „Mr.“ called „Muscle“ but a mixture of chemical detergents powerful enough to obliterate even the smallest of microbes. In catalogues and brochures, commodities do not only have human names but they are also able to speak. Shopping bags have a face with a speech bubble bubbling forth from it.

The animation and humanization of things show most impressively in the fact that the commodities are ascribed attributes which only exist in animate, or for that matter, human be-

ings but which never ever have anything to do with the products themselves. People are led to believe that they buy human brightness with their washing powder, activity with the cigarette, attractiveness and liveliness with the deodorant, trust with the insurance, cheerfulness with the chips, love with the piece of jewelry, tenderness with the brandy, receptivity to experiences with the sports shoes, etc. - In reality brightness, activity, attractiveness, liveliness, trust, cheerfulness, love, tenderness, receptivity to experiences are exclusively features of the living.

The animation and humanization of the commodities and the market threatens to pervert our perception of reality more and more because in principle it is hallucinatory. The market is only alive, though, when commodities are ascribed human features. The question is now in which passionate striving this market-economic requirement re-emerges in the human being. The answer to this leads us to the second essential.

(2) If marketing brings things to life and makes them representatives of human features, then the human being reacts by developing the passionate striving to *find everything material more attractive* than the living and what is „human-all-too-human“. (There is another important root for this attractiveness of the material which I will not further go into in this context, namely the attractiveness of the mechanical and automatic, made possible by technical progress - energy in the form of steam, electricity, gas or oil brings a dead object to life, which then, in turn, is more powerful than the human being, as is proven by e.g. the car, the plane, the computer. Erich Fromm described this fascination with the dead, the mechanical, material, lifeless, purely objective, calculable and the avoidance of and low regard for everything living connected to this as a basic orientation in its own right, namely „necrophilia“. This is opposed by „biophilia“ the attraction to everything human and living. Concerning this point, cf. above all E. Fromm, 1964a, as well as E. Fromm, 1973a.)

The man-made thing, the product, the commodity has one great advantage over everything human. It is thought out, invented and constructed by human beings, it has a clearly evident logic and regularity according to which



it functions, it is therefore calculable and can be broken down into partial regularities. In contrast to human beings the things created by them are generally more perfect because their functioning is not affected by moods, emotions or sickness. Something material is therefore much more reliable, controllable and easier to handle than everything that is human. All this makes plausible why human beings love their cars more than their spouses or children and why we find a computer more attractive than the body or the emotions of another human being. „Technology you'll fall in love with“ is the headline on a brochure of the top-class firm „Bang & Olufsen“ for their audio and video systems.

The urge to sell leads to turning everything into commodities to which features can be arbitrarily ascribed. Today they are preferably equipped with human features, to the effect of an animation and humanization of commodities and the market. In the human beings, this produces the fascination with all material things produced by human beings because they have a greater ability and function better than their creator.

(3) A third essential of the marketing orientation results from the application of this fascination with everything material to the human being itself: the inclination *to reify and to objectify the human being*. Isn't it wonderful when someone thinks, works and functions as reliably as a machine? There are lots of examples for this. Controlling is the be-all and end-all of business. Job evaluation, efficiency control, output etc. are further keywords. Even in the field of therapy reification and objectification of the human being is spreading: the effective factors of respective individual therapeutical methods are examined in order to measure their efficiency and to then - as e.g. in the case of the neurolinguistic programming therapy - develop a more efficient method. In the field of education, for quite some time now, the pupil or student has been regarded as a stupid computer that has to be fed more data - knowledge - so it has the know-how for marketing its personality well.

Many people in leading positions have to admit as their greatest weakness that they oftentimes are impatient with their co-employees and

workers. This impatience is the expression of a deeply rooted driving wish to organize work and the business so efficiently as if it were a giant machine and the staff were appliances that just have to function. In fact, human beings are judged by the efficiency and performance of a well-functioning machine. They simply have to function otherwise they are exchanged, replaced, put on the scrap heap. The pleasure of functioning and the suffering when something does not function does not only dominate our handling of machines, but also of other human beings and of ourselves. The human being as a machine must not have mistakes, emotions, moods, weaknesses, peculiarities, rough edges - unless they could be utilized and commercialized.

(4) The events on the market make the human being get rid of its humanity and include the attributes of its humanity and aliveness in the products it creates, strictly separated from itself. And they have to remain at this distance. This *schizoid element* essentially determines the psycho-dynamic of the marketing orientation and is a basic feature of the „*having mode of existence*“ described by Fromm (E. Fromm, 1976a, 1989a, and 1993b). It is characterized by the fact that everything outside the human being is more valuable and that what belongs to the human being as a human being has to be denied and split off. To once again quote the words of Fromm: „Today, man is real only insofar as he is standing somewhere outside. He is constituted only through things, through property, through his social role, through his 'persona'; as a living person, however, he is not real.“ (E. Fromm, 1992a, p. 26.)

(5) The having mode of existence produced by the market-economic mode of production does not only promote a schizoid relation to reality but also an *addiction-like controlling dependency* on the objects of having, those things (hallucinatorily) brought to life, which in the process of self-alienation became the bearers of one's own living powers by the selling of humanity. Such objects of having are not only material entities, but also other people, one's own children, people in need or also one's own knowledge,



one's persistence, conviction or the values and ideals one represents, etc. The marketing-oriented person is dependent on these objects of having without having a direct, alive and human relation to them. He cannot live without them because they are his basis and the basis of his being: „I am what I have.“ This dependency on having, on the reality outside is accompanied by the fact that any form of „livening up“ and being is expected to come from the outside - as in the own perception the products created by human beings are the real bearers of everything human and alive.

„In the having mode,“ Fromm says (1976a, pp. 77-78), „there is no alive relationship between me and what I have. It and I have become things, and I have *it* because I have the force to make it mine. But there is also a reverse relationship: *it has me*, because my sense of identity, i. e., of sanity, rests upon my having it (and as many things as possible). The having mode of existence is not established by an alive, productive process between subject and object; it makes *things* of both object and subject. The relationship is one of deadness, not aliveness.“

Does man, despite all this, want to experience himself, he needs permanent stimuli that prove to him that he exists. This dependency on enlivening objects also shows in the different forms of addiction-like dependency such as in the dependency on sensual stimulation by permanent, extremely loud music or also by the quick sequence of pictures as a visual stimulant.

(6) A sixth essential of the marketing character syndrome is *the loss of an authentic experience of self-esteem*, which can lead to massive and panic fear of self-loss and is preferably compensated for narcissistically - with the split into grandiose self and threatening environment typical of narcissism. Sooner or later it is inevitably leading to a withdrawal from the events on the market. The problem of self-esteem in the marketing-oriented character and that narcissism is becoming rife in our society cannot be dealt with here due to lack of time. (Cf. R.Funk, 1994 and 1995.)

The marketing orientation produced by market economy is „de-animating“ and „deadening“ the human and leads to a self-alienation

in which the reality - i.e. what is „really working“ - is on the outside. Only the market, in whatever form it appears, is seen as enlivening, it has the function of a temporary „surrogate mother“ that has to bring to life what only a real mother can or the humanity a maturing human being can bring to life from practicing its own powers („pro-duce“).

At this point I would like to quote Tom once more; he says:

„I have to replace my missing character by martial art, sailing, surfing... these are things I have acquired and which I can put on the credit side of my account.“

What he can put on the credit side of his account enables him, just like the human beings into whose characters he slips, to experience a secondary, borrowed identity. This borrowed experience of identity oftentimes requires the real presence of the „surrogate mother“ as a precondition; this is why there is such an extremely strong dependency on the existence-providing environment.

Yet, the dependency on his environment has no symbiotic quality. As soon as there is real closeness, the fear of being really touched emerges and he tries to gain distance:

„I cannot be together with my acquaintances for more than four or five hours at the most“, says Tom, „then the emotions fail me. Then I am so exhausted that I have to be on my own...“

In conclusion let us ask: Can the human being deadened by market economy - alienated from itself and rendered lifeless - be revived? What aspects give reason to hope that there can be a revival of the human being *as a human being*? Which possibilities do we have to take counter-measures against the marketing of the human being and the selling of humanity in market economy?

4. Aspects for the Revival of the Human Being as Human Being

A revival of the human being as *human* being



can only be possible if the human beings can re-establish a relation to their own forces and powers and thus experience a productive relatedness to themselves and the reality outside themselves. „Productive“ is to be taken quite literally: something that is rooted in the human being and its specifically human abilities and powers is led out of (*pro-ducere*) the human being. The market-economic mode of production continually makes us believe that the human being is enlivened by what he can acquire, thus what goes into him, what he consumes. In reality, however, it is exactly the other way round. Everything we know about the laws of the psyche is in favor of the fact that a human being only grows psychically if it practices its own psychic powers and thus realizes the potentials inside.

The psychic powers of growth have in common with one's physical and mental powers that they only come into being and grow to the extent they are practiced. The physical power of the muscles is only available and contributes to the development of the body's physical power when it is practiced. It regresses when it is not practiced. Also in the mental area, some of one's own powers have the quality of only being available to the extent they are practiced. People who do not practice their imagination do not develop this mental power and remain unimaginative. What is true of one's own physical and mental powers, holds also true for one's own psychic powers of love, reason and of productivity, with which we can be positively related to ourselves and to reality. They can only be acquired by actualization and practice.

A main feature of the alienation of the human being from itself and its environment is exactly that people, in a schizoid way, are no longer emotionally related to themselves and others and thus cannot feel and experience themselves and others, but instead regard themselves and others as well-functioning, well-oiled machines. If we want to stop the selling of humanity and revive ourselves as human beings, this can be achieved by, above all, fostering the powers inside ourselves that enable us to again really feel the drives, wishes, powers, emotions, forces, peculiarities in us.

For this, also a conscious re-orientation is

necessary. It is not what makes me sell well that is valuable and desirable, but what I am, which peculiarities, emotions, inclinations and abilities are inside of me. Being instead of having and selling, really being in touch with oneself, does not only mean to have a positive relationship towards all the dimensions of one's own personality: one's body, one's soul and one's mental powers. Especially in the area of the psyche what matters is establishing a far-reaching contact with all powers and forms of expression of the psychic: with the loving *and* aggressive impulses, the own generosity *and* sadism, jealousy *and* empathy, with desires and wishes, even if they can only hardly be upheld before oneself or one's partner. Who lives a productive relatedness to oneself, who is able to feel oneself as a human being can also be related to others and permit an emotional contact with others. People who, on the other hand, have to taboo and repress aspects and features of themselves will only be scared of the other as soon as they observe in others aspects they have repressed in themselves.

Countermeasures to the sellout of humanity can only be taken when there are still people who dare to be themselves and to practice their own human powers. People are and stay themselves, even if they are severely under attack, only if they stand on their own feet instead of being carried by the favor of others; only if people perceive their own voice instead of being stimulated by the thrill of sensation, they grow concerning their humanity; only people who feel their own emotions instead of repressing them or replacing them by pseudo-feelings are really related to themselves and others; and only people forming their own convictions instead of subscribing to the public opinion practice their own powers and grow with respect to their humanity.

I would like to summarize what I have said above from an energetic perspective. Many people today feel empty inside, burnt-out, without energy. They have worn themselves out, used up their energy. Because marketing requires the selling of their humanity, of their emotional relatedness, their peculiarities and own powers, their own psychic energy is exhausted. We gather our psychic energy from



two different sources. One „is purely physical, which is rooted in the chemistry of our body, and we know that that energy is on the decline after the age of twenty-five...“ The other source „... springs from our being related to the world, our being concerned“ (E. Fromm, 1991b, p. 75.) This source, however, dries up with marketing-oriented people.

If we manage to again practice our own powers, then from the practice of our productive relatedness energy flows back at us. Most people have made this experience, at least the beginnings of it, e.g. when they are in love or get completely involved in reading a thrilling book: not only can we be completely concentrated, experience with interest and alertness, not realize how time passes by because we are directly related to another person or an exciting story, and not only can we permit very much closeness and oneness and do we have the need to share and communicate - we also feel fresh, active, alive, awake, alert because this kind of productive relatedness in itself is a source of psychic energy.

A life shared and communicated never means exhaustion of powers and waste of energy, but always a *gain* of energy - contrary to what all those who want to sell themselves and their product want us to believe today. Also in relationships, the dynamic must work exactly opposite to the market economy. There, people relate to others already with the intention of instrumentalizing and utilizing them. In alienated relatedness, the question is always whether the relationship with somebody is of use to me. The need for relation does not originate from my urge to give something to the other person, what matters is if I am loved and not my wish to love. It is all about the question what kind of advantage I have because of the relationship and if it pays off and not about my genuine interest in or care for somebody. To conclude quoting Fromm: „Joy, energy, happiness, all this depends on the degree to which we are related, to which we are concerned, and that is to say, to which we are in touch with the reality of our feelings, with the reality of other people, and not to experience them as abstractions which we can look at like the commodities at the market.“ (E. Fromm, 1991b, pp. 75-76.)

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Note: A list of the literature about Fromm´s psychoanalytic approach to psychotherapeutic practice by and about Fromm is enclosed in Erich Fromm: *The Art of Listening*, New York: Continuum, 1994 (Italian: *L'arte di ascoltare*, Milano: Mondadori Editore, 1995).

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