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Erich Fromm (1955/2002). *The Sane Society*. Routledge.

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Chapter 3,

Reason, man's blessing, is also his curse; it forces him to cope everlastingly with the task of solving an insoluble dichotomy. Human existence is different in this respect from that of all other organisms; it is in a state of constant and unavoidable disequilibrium. Man's life cannot "be lived" by repeating the pattern of his species; he must live. Man is the only animal that can be bored, that can feel evicted from paradise. Man is the only animal who finds his own existence a problem which he has to solve and from which he cannot escape. He cannot go back to the prehuman state of harmony with nature; he must proceed to develop his reason until he becomes the master of nature, and of himself.

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The problem of man's existence, then, is unique in the whole of nature; he has fallen out of nature, as it were, and is still in it he is partly divine, partly animal; partly infinite, partly finite. The *necessity* to find *ever-new* solutions for the *contradictions* in his existence, to *find* ever-higher forms of unity with nature, his fellowmen and himself, is the source of all psychic *forces* which motivate man, of all his passions, affects and *anxieties*.

But inasmuch as *man* is human, the satisfaction of these instinctual *needs* is not sufficient to *make him* happy; they are *not even* sufficient to make him sane. The archimedic point of the specifically human dynamism lies in this uniqueness of the human situation; the understanding of man's psyche must *be* based on the analysis of man's needs stemming from the conditions of his existence.

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Man's life is determined by the inescapable alternative between regression and progression, between return to animal existence and arrival at human existence. Any attempt to return is painful, it inevitably leads to suffering and mental sickness, to death either physiologically or mentally (insanity). Every step forward is frightening and painful too, until a certain point has been reached where fear and doubt have only minor proportions

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There lies also the key to humanistic psychoanalysis. Freud, searching for the basic force which motivates human passions and desires believed he had found it in libido. But powerful as the sexual drive and all its derivations are, they are by no means the most powerful forces within man and their frustration is not cause of the mental disturbance. The most powerful force motivating man's behaviour stems from the condition of his existence, the "human situation."

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There are several ways in which this union can be sought and achieved. Man can attempt to become one with the world by submission to a person, to a group, to an institution, to God. In this way he transcends the separateness of his individual existence by becoming part of somebody or something bigger than himself, and experiences his identity in connection with the power to which he has submitted. Another possibility of overcoming separateness lies in the opposite direction: man can try to unite himself with the world by having power over it, by making others a part of himself, and thus transcending his individual existence by domination. The common element in both submission and domination is the symbiotic nature of relatedness. Both persons involved have lost their integrity and freedom; they live on each other and from each other, satisfying their craving for closeness, yet suffering from the lack of inner strength and self-reliance which would require freedom and independence, and furthermore constantly threatened by the conscious or unconscious hostility which is bound to arise from the symbiotic relationship

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There is only one passion which satisfies man's need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is love. Love is union with somebody, or something, °inside oneself, under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self. It is an experience of sharing, of communion,

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To create presupposes activity and care. It presupposes love for that which one creates. How then does man solve the problem of transcending himself, if he is not capable of creating, if he cannot love? There is another answer to this need for transcendence: if i cannot create life, i can destroy it. To destroy life makes me also transcend it.

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While Freud saw in the incestuous fixation only a negative, pathogenic element, Bachofen saw clearly both the negative and the positive aspects of the attachment to the mother figure. The positive aspect is a sense of affirmation of life, freedom, and equality which pervades the matriarchal structure. Inasmuch as men are children of nature, and children of mothers, they are all equal, have the same rights and claims, and the only value that counts is that of life.

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To sum up: the positive aspects of the patriarchal complex are reason, discipline, conscience and individualism; the negative aspects are hierarchy, oppression, inequality, submission.

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And mother figures, we *become*, as it were, our own father and our own mother, and we become also *our* own child. The father within ourselves tells its "this you ought to do" and "that you ought not to do." If we have done the wrong thing, he scolds us, and if we have done the right thing, he praises us. But while the father in us speaks in this manner, the mother in us speaks in a very different language. It is as if she were saying "your father is quite right in scolding you, but do not take him too seriously; whatever you have done, you are my child, I love you, and I forgive you; nothing you have done can interfere with your claim to life and happiness." Father's and mother's voices speak a different language;

#### Chapter 4

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The concept of mental health depends on our concept of the nature of man. In the previous chapter the attempt was made to slit that the needs and passions of man stem from the peculiar condition of his existence. Those needs which he shares with the animal hunger, thirst, need for sleep and sexual satisfaction

These depend on the satisfaction of those needs and passions which are specifically human, and which stem from the conditions of the human situation: the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion.

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Man's solution to his physiological need is, psychologically speaking, utterly simple; the difficulty here is a purely sociological and economic one. Man's solution to his human needs is exceedingly complex, it depends on many factors and last, not least, on the way his society is organized and how this organization determines the human relations within it.

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Mental health is characterized by the ability to *love* and to *create*, by the emergence from incestuous I in to clan and soil, by a *sense* of identity based on *one's experience* of self as the clot and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of *oneselves*, that is, by the development *of* objectivity and reason.

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The substratum is not a physical one, but the total human personality in its interaction with the world, nature and man; it is the human practice of life as it

results from the conditions of human existence. Our philosophic premise is not that of the nineteenth-century materialism,

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Any regression today from freedom into artificial rootedness in state or race is a sign of mental illness, since such regression does not correspond to the state of evolution already reached and results in unquestionably pathological phenomena.

mental health cannot be defined in terms of the "adjustment" of the individual to his society, but, on the contrary, that it must *be defined* in terms of the adjustment of society to the *needs* of man, of its role in furthering or hindering the development of mental health. Whether or not the individual is healthy, is primarily not an individual matter, but depends on the structure of his society. A healthy society furthers man's capacity to love his fellow men, to work creatively, to develop his reason and objectivity, to have a sense of self which is based on the experience of his own productive powers. An unhealthy society is one which creates mutual hostility, distrust, which transforms man into an instrument of use and exploitation for others, which deprives him of a sense of self, except inasmuch as he submits to others or becomes an automaton. Society can have both functions; it can further man's healthy development, and it can hinder it; in fact most societies do both, and the question is only to what degree and in what directions their positive and negative influence is exercised.

## Chapter 5

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Briefly, these common features are: 1---- the existence of politically and legally free men; 2 the fact that free men (workers and employees) sell their labor to the owner of capital on the labor market, by contract; 3—the existence of the commodity market as a mechanism by which prices are determined and the exchange of the social product is regulated; 4—the principle that each individual acts with the aim of seeking a profit for himself, and yet that, by the competitive action of many, the greatest advantage is supposed to accrue for all.

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Characterologically, the pleasure in possession and property has been described by Freud as an important aspect of the "anal character." From a different theoretical premise, I have described the same clinical picture in terms of the "hoarding orientation." Like all other character orientations, the hoarding one has positive and negative aspects, and whether the positive or the negative aspects are dominant depends on the relative strength

of the productive orientation within the individual or social character. The positive aspects of this orientation, as I have described them in "Man for Himself" are: to be practical, economical, careful, reserved, cautious, tenacious, imperturbable, orderly, methodical and loyal. The corresponding negative aspects are, to be unimaginative, stingy, suspicious, cold, anxious, stubborn, indolent, pedantic, obsessional and possessive: It can be easily seen that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the hoarding orientation was geared to the necessities of economic progress, the positive characteristics were predominant, while in the twentieth century when these traits are the obsolete feature of an obsolete class, the negative aspects are almost exclusively present.

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Since the modern capitalist "employs" labor, the social and political form of this exploitation has changed; what has not changed is that the owner of capital use other men for the purpose of his own profit. The basic concept of use has nothing to do with cruel, or not cruel, ways of human treatment, but with the fundamental fact that one man serves another for purposes which are not his own but those of the employer. The concept of use of man by man has nothing to do even with the question whether one man use another, or uses himself. The fact remains the same, that a man, a living human being, ceases to be an end in himself, and becomes the means for the economic interests of the another man, or himself, or of an impersonal giant, the economic machine

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The other objection is that all social life, even in its most primitive form, requires a certain amount of social co-operation, And even discipline, and that certainly in the more complex form

industrial production, a person has to fulfill certain necessary and specialized functions. While this statement is quite true, it ignores the basic difference: in a society where no person has power over another, each person fulfill his functions on the basis of co-operation and mutuality. No one can command another person, except insofar as a relationship is based on mutual co-operation, on love, friendship or natural ties. Actually we find this present in many situations in our society today: the normal co-operation of husband and wife in their family life is to a large extent not any more determined by the power of the husband to command his wife, as it existed in older forms of patriarchal society, but on the principle of co-operation and mutuality. The same holds true for the relationship of friends, inasmuch as they perform certain services for each other and cooperate with each other. In these relationships no one would dare to think of commanding the other person; the only reason for expecting his help lies in the mutual feeling of love, friendship or simply

human solidarity. The help of another person is secured by my active effort, as a human being, to elicit his love, friendship and sympathy. In the relationship of the employer to the employee, this is not the case. The employer has bought the services of the worker, and however human his treatment may be, he still commands him, not on a basis of mutuality, but on the basis of having bought his working time Par so many hours a day.

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Authority is not a quality one person 'has,' in it sense that he has property or physical qualities. Authority refers to an interpersonal relation in which one person looks upon, in another as somebody superior to him. But there is a fundamental difference between a kind of superiority-inferiority which can be called rational authority and one which may described as inhibiting, or irrational authority.

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Looked upon from the standards of the nineteenth century, we have achieved almost everything which seemed to be necessary for a saner society, and indeed, many people who still think in terms of the past century are convinced that we continue to progress. Consequently they also believe that the only threat to further progress lies in authoritarian societies, like the Soviet Union which, with its ruthless economic exploitation of workers for the sake of quicker accumulation of capital and the ruthless political authority necessary for the continuation of exploitation, resembles in many ways the earlier phase of Capitalism. For those, however, who do not look at our present society with the eyes of the nineteenth century, it is obvious that the fulfillment of the nineteenth-century hopes has by no means led to the expected results. In fact, it seems that in spite of material prosperity, political and sexual freedom, the world in the middle of the twentieth century is mentally sicker than it was in the nineteenth century. Indeed, "we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more, but of becoming robots," as Adlai Stevenson said so succinctly." There is no overt authority which intimidates us, but we are governed by the fear of the anonymous authority of conformity. We do not submit to anyone personally; we do not go through conflicts with authority, but we have also no convictions of our Own, almost no individuality, almost no sense of self. Quite obviously, the diagnosis of our pathology cannot follow the lines of the nineteenth century. We have to recognize the specific pathological problems of our time in order to arrive at a vision of that which is necessary to save the Western world from an increasing insanity.

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What kind of men, then, does our society need? What is the social character" suited to twentieth-century Capitalism?

It needs men who co-operate smoothly in large groups;who want to

consume more and more, and whose tastes are standardized and can be easily influenced and anticipated.

It needs men who feel free and independent, not subject to any authority, or principle, or conscience-yet willing to be commanded, to do what is expected, to fit into the social machine without friction. How can man be guided without force, led without leaders, be prompted without any aim--except the one to be on the move, to function, to go ahead ?

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We must introduce the discussion of alienation by speaking of one of the fundamental economic features of Capitalism, the process of quantification and abstractification.

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By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts—but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively. The older meaning in which "alienation" was used was to denote an insane person; aliene in French, alienado in Spanish are older words for the psychotic, the thoroughly and absolutely alienated person. ("Alienist," in English, is still used for the doctor who cares for the insane.) In the last century the word "alienation" was used by Hegel and Marx, referring not to a state of insanity, but to a less drastic form of self-estrangement.

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Alienation is called that condition of man where his "own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him."

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The alienated attitude toward consumption not only exists in our acquisition and consumption of commodities, but it determines far beyond this the employment of leisure time. What are we to expect? If a man works without genuine relatedness to what he is doing, if he buys and consumes commodities in an abstractified and alienated way, how can he make use of his leisure time in an active and meaningful way? He always remains the passive and alienated consumer.

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The worship of the state can only disappear if man takes back the social powers into himself, and builds a community in which his social feelings are not something added to his private existence, but in which his private and social existence are one and the same.

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producing, consuming and leisure activities. I want now to deal with some specific aspects of the contemporary social character which are closely related to the phenomenon of alienation, the treatment of which, however, is facilitated by dealing with them separately rather than as subheadings of alienation.

i. Anonymous Authority—Conformity The first such aspect to be dealt with is modern man's attitude toward authority.

Authority in the middle of the twentieth century has changed its character; it is not overt authority, but anonymous, invisible, alienated authority. Nobody makes a demand, neither a person, nor an idea, nor a moral law. Yet we all conform as much or more than people in an intensely authoritarian society would. Indeed, nobody is an authority except "It." What is It? Profit, economic necessities, the market, common sense, public opinion, what "one" does, thinks, feels. The laws of anonymous authority are as invisible as the laws of the market—and just as unassailable. Who can attack the invisible? Who can rebel against Nobody?

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The mechanism through which the anonymous authority operates is conformity. I ought to do what everybody does, hence, I must conform, not be different, not "stick out"; I must be ready and willing to change according to the changes in the pattern; I must not ask whether I am right or wrong, but whether I am adjusted, whether I am not "peculiar," not different. The only thing which is permanent in me is just this readiness for change. Nobody has power over me, except the herd of which I am a part, yet to which I am subjected. It is hardly necessary to demonstrate to the reader the degree which this submission to anonymous authority by conformity has reached. However, I want to give a few illustrations taken from the very interesting and illuminating report on a settlement in Park Forest, Illinois, which seems to justify a formulation

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The Principle of Nonfrustration As I have pointed out I )(fore, anonymous authority and automaton conformity are 'largely the result of our mode of

production, which requires quick adaptation to the machine, disciplined mass behavior, common taste and obedience without the use of force. Another Law of our economic system, the need for mass consumption, has been instrumental in creating a feature in the social character of modern man which constitutes one of the most striking contrasts to the social character of the nineteenth century. I am referring to the principle that every desire must be satisfied immediately, no wish must be frustrated.

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So people do worry, feel inferior, inadequate, guilty. They sense that they live without living, that life runs through their hands like sand. How do they deal with their troubles, which stem from the passivity of constant taking in ?

iii. Free Association and Free Talk.

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Indeed, psychology and psychiatry are in the process of changing their function fundamentally. From the Delphic Oracle's "Know thyself!" to Freud's psychoanalytic therapy, the function of psychology was to discover the self, to understand the individual, to find the "truth that makes you free." Today the function of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis threatens to become the tool in the manipulation of men. The specialists in this field tell you what the "normal" person is, and, correspondingly, what is wrong with you; they devise the methods to help you adjust, be happy, be normal. In the Brave New World this conditioning is done from the first month of fertilization (by chemical means), until after puberty.

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How can a sensitive and alive person ever feel secure? Because of the very conditions of our existence, we cannot feel secure about anything. Our thoughts and insights are at best partial truths, mixed with a great deal of error, not to speak of the unnecessary misinformation about life and society to which we are exposed almost from the day of birth. Our life and health are subject to accidents beyond our control. If we make a decision, we can never be certain of the outcome; any decision implies a risk of failure, and if it does not imply it, it has not been a decision in the true sense of the word. We can never be certain of the outcome come of our best efforts. The result always depends on many factors which transcend our capacity of control. Just as a sensitive and alive person cannot avoid being sad, he cannot avoid feeling insecure. The psychic task which a person can and must set for himself, is not to feel secure, but to be able to tolerate insecurity, without panic and undue fear.

Life, in its mental and spiritual aspects, is by necessity insecure and

uncertain. There is certainty only about the fact that we are born and that we shall die; there is complete security only in an equally complete submission to powers which are supposed to be strong and enduring, and which relieve man from the necessity of making decisions, taking risks, and having responsibilities. Free man is by necessity insecure; thinking man by necessity uncertain.

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The alienated person, however, tries to solve the problem in a different way, namely by conforming. He feels secure in being as similar as possible to his fellow man. His paramount aim is to be approved of by others; his central fear, that he may not be approved of.

## Chapter 8

P263-264

Although they express it in different concepts, they all find that man has lost his central place, that he has never been made an instrument for the purposes of economic aims, that he has been estranged from, and has lost the concrete relatedness to, his fellow men and to nature, that he has ceased to have a meaningful life. I have tried to express the same idea by elaborating on the concept of alienation and by showing psycho-logically what the psychological results of alienation are; that man regresses to a receptive and marketing orientation and ceases to be productive; that he loses his sense of self, becomes dependent on approval, hence tends to conform and yet to feel insecure; he is dissatisfied, bored, and anxious, and spends most of his energy in the attempt to compensate for or just to cover up this anxiety. His intelligence is excellent, his reason deteriorates and in view of his technical powers he is seriously endangering the existence of civilization, and even of the human race.

Marxists stressed the significance of economic factors. They believed that the alienation of man resulted from his role as an object of exploitation and use. Thinkers like Tolstoy and Burckhardt on the other hand, stressed the spiritual and moral impoverishment as the cause of Western man's decay;

What holds true for the causes holds, of course, true for the remedies by which modern man's defect can be cured. If I believe that "the" cause of the illness is economic, or spiritual, or psychological, I necessarily believe that remedying "the" cause leads to sanity. On the other hand, if I see how the various aspects are interrelated, I shall arrive at the conclusion that sanity and mental health can be attained only by simultaneous changes, in the sphere of industrial and political organization, of spiritual and philosophical orientation, of character structure, and of cultural activities.

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As a result, symptoms are produced. In the frame of reference of humanistic psychoanalysis, the causes of pathology lie in the failure to develop a productive orientation

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2.) The first step necessary to permit this tendency for health to operate is the awareness of the suffering and of that which is shut out and disassociated from our conscious personality.

3.) Increasing self-awareness can become fully effective only if a next step is taken, that of changing a practice of life which was built on the basis of the neurotic structure, and which reproduces it constantly.

The same conditions --- conflict with the requirements of human nature and resulting suffering, awareness of what is shut out, and change of the realistic situation and of values and norms—are also necessary for a cure of social pathology.

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The mentally healthy person is the productive and unalienated person; the person who relates himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time feels one with his fellow man; who is not subject to irrational authority, and accepts willingly the rational authority of conscience and reason; who is in the process of being born as long as he is alive, and considers the gift of life the most precious chance he has.

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society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself; hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers; where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth.

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The aim of all these various forms of Socialism, which we may call "communitarian Socialism," was an industrial organization in which every working person would be an active and responsible participant, where work would be attractive and meaningful, where capital would not employ labor, but labor would employ capital.

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"First, then, what is the nature of the ideal at which Labour must aim? What is meant

by that 'control of industry' which the workers are to demand? It can be summed up in two words direct management. The task of actually conducting the business must be handed over to the workers engaged in it. To them it must belong to order production, distribution, and exchange. They must win industrial self-government, with the right to elect their own officers; they must understand and control all the complicated mechanism of industry and trade; they must become the accredited agents of the community in the economic sphere."