



Human Nature and Social Activity: Erich Fromm's Humanistic Worldview

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Abstract: Erich Fromm is one of the prominent philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists of the 20th century, as well as an advocate for ideas of social progress. According to Fromm, a human being is a creature that emerged as a result of evolutionary changes. These very changes, driven by natural instincts and innate emotions, allow humans to transcend the boundaries of their surrounding environment. Human consciousness and intellect create a new system of adaptation that compensates for biological deficiencies. Distinctive characteristics—such as self-awareness as a unique being, the ability to recall the past and foresee the future, the capacity to distinguish between events and phenomena, and the ability to comprehend the world and understand it through reason—serve as the foundation for forming human qualities.

Keywords: Erich Fromm, social activity, human nature, human psyche, being, possession, social responsibility, active human.

INTRODUCTION: In the context of globalization, teachings about humanity are extremely diverse, encompassing alternative doctrines. On the one hand, this allows for a comprehensive, systemic understanding of humanity; on the other hand, it necessitates choosing the most suitable doctrine from this “ocean of teachings.” Consequently, humanity faces the inevitable question of which doctrine can claim scientific-theoretical objectivity and meet the demands of the modern era. In this regard, Erich Fromm’s social philosophy is oriented toward the ideology of social reconstruction and liberal democratic reforms. He is among the scholars who have made significant contributions to the development of contemporary Western social thought.

At the core of Fromm's socio-political concept lies the idea of human essence. He emphasizes his dissatisfaction with many political doctrines, noting that they primarily address the "nature of humanity" but reflect it in a one-sided manner. Such an incomplete and biased approach to human nature justifies specific societal structures, reducing human spiritual foundations to mere commodities. In today's rapidly developing world, Fromm's works consistently highlight the critical role of knowledge and intellect. A clear example of this is Fromm's focus on the human question, as the role of the individual is pivotal in the advancement of science and society. In most of Fromm's referenced sources, we can observe the theme of humanity and nature, or their harmonious interrelation.

Literature Review

Erich Fromm's works have been extensively and thoroughly studied in both the West and Russia, with numerous scholarly works and articles dedicated to this subject. Researchers such as J. Reale [1], B. Russell [2], M. Horkheimer [3; 4], S.G. Semenova [5], S.Y. Levit [6], T.V. Banketova [7], L.A. Chernishyova [8], A.M. Rutkevich [9], G.F. Shveynik [10], A. Laktionov [11], E. Spirova [12], E. Telyatnikova [13], and others have conducted studies on his work. Interest in Erich Fromm's contributions is not limited to the West but extends globally. His works have been translated and published in various foreign languages, as they address pressing issues of their time and skillfully illuminate the complexities and contradictions inherent in societal life. The global appeal of Fromm's works is evident, as they have been translated into numerous languages worldwide.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundations of the research are based on scientific-philosophical principles such as objectivity, impartiality, systematicity, theoretical-deductive reasoning, analysis and synthesis, historicity and logicity, continuity, the unity of universal and national perspectives, and comparative analysis.

RESULTS

Erich Fromm (1900–1980), as a neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, humanistic psychologist, and philosopher, analyzed the role of humans in their social environment from the perspectives of Freudianism, Marxism, and existentialism. His philosophy focuses on human self-realization through freedom, love, and social responsibility. According to Fromm, social activity is the process of a person understanding their own nature and finding their purpose through active participation in society. In his book *Escape from Freedom*, he writes: "A person's relationship with

freedom determines their social activity. Escaping from freedom leads to passivity and conformity to societal molds." [11, 89]. Fromm argues that social activity is realized through unlocking one's inner potential and engaging with society. He does not limit human activity to political or economic spheres but views it as spiritual and creative development.

Fromm perceives humans as both biological and social beings. Their social activity is driven by two fundamental needs: the need for connection and the need for freedom. In his book *The Heart of Man*, he expresses this as follows: "A human is created not only for themselves but to live in relation with others. Their activity stems from the balance between independence and interdependence." [15, 201]. For Fromm, social activity is tied to self-awareness and finding one's place in society. He emphasizes that humans can be active by overcoming internal conflicts and fostering positive relationships with society. For example, in *The Sane Society*, he writes: "An active human is one who strives to combat societal injustices and enrich their inner world." [15, 214].

In Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, social activity is intrinsically linked to love. He views love not merely as a romantic feeling but as an active relationship with others and society. He writes: "Love is not a passive emotion but an active act; it is giving, caring, and responsibility." [9, 102]. According to Fromm, social activity cannot be complete without love, as love strengthens interpersonal relationships and gives meaning to activity. He highlights brotherly love (care for others) and creative love (realizing one's potential) as primary forms of social activity. Love arises only when two individuals interact in profound inner harmony, and it is precisely because of this harmony that both genuinely experience it. Only in such "deep inner sincerity" does the human essence, vitality, and the foundation of love exist. The love experienced in this way is a constant invitation; it is not a source of comfort but rather an effort, development, and collaborative activity. Regardless of whether harmony or conflict, joy or sorrow prevails in such relationships, both individuals remain united not by escaping their essence but by embracing their shared authenticity. From a perspective of vital depth, they feel themselves, which is of secondary importance compared to this essential aspect. The only proof of love is the sincere depth of the relationship, the vitality and strength of both individuals; it is based on this outcome that love is defined.

Fromm frequently criticized the negative impact of capitalist society on human activity. He argues that consumerist society drives individuals toward a "having" mode, which restricts their creative and social

activity. In *The Sane Society*, he expresses this as follows: "In a consumerist society, a person questions not who they are but what they possess. This turns them into a passive consumer." [13, 231]. In opposition to this, Fromm proposes the "being" mode, where individuals focus on their inner world, love, and creativity. He emphasizes that social activity can be achieved by breaking free from material dependence and pursuing spiritual and creative development. Fromm highlights practical manifestations of social activity: addressing societal injustices and actively responding to them; as he writes in *Escape from Freedom*: "Critical thinking is the first step toward human freedom." [11, 155]; self-expression in art, science, and other fields; and contributing to solving societal problems rather than remaining indifferent.

CONCLUSION

Erich Fromm's approach to social activity is based on the idea that humans interact with society through freedom, love, and self-awareness. According to him, social activity is not confined to political or economic spheres but encompasses spiritual and creative development. He concludes in *The Art of Loving*: "An active human is one who is capable of transforming their soul and society, living with love and responsibility." [9, 132]. Fromm's philosophy remains relevant today, inspiring individuals to be active, responsible, and creative in society. His monumental contributions to the study of the human psyche have significantly enriched the field of humanistic studies. It is also worth noting that in today's complex and advanced world, the need for scholars and research exploring the human being and their inner world continues to grow.

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