

**THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS AND THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION OF MODERN MAN
IN ERICH FROMM'S ARTICLE "WHAT IS THE PRESENT CONDITION OF
MANKIND?"**

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Annotation. One of the famous representatives of twentieth-century German philosophy is Erich Fromm, a social psychologist, humanist, philosopher, and psychoanalytic scholar. Fromm's views, which deeply analyze human nature, the influence of society on the human psyche, and at the same time the spiritual problems of modern civilization, are manifested at the intersection of sociology, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology.

Keywords: Erich Fromm, alienation, spiritual crisis, humanistic philosophy, modern man, civilization, society and individual, psychoanalysis, anthropology.

INTRODUCTION

"The philosophical ideas of the thinker, who departed from Freud's biologism and sought to reveal the interplay of psychological and social factors in personality formation, are also reflected in his articles. It is expressed that 'in Erich Fromm's existential philosophy, the inclination of the human soul toward creativity and destructiveness, the drive for dominance or the propensity for submission among individuals, and the essence and social significance of love for life and hatred'¹. Exploring the spiritual existence of man and society, he reflects upon the extent to which humanity can reach. In particular, his article 'What is the Current State of Humanity?' serves as a vivid illustration of this."²

ANALYSIS AND METHODS

At the very beginning of this article by Erich Fromm, the issue of freedom arises. In particular, it begins with the illumination of the theological worldview characteristic of the Middle Ages, liberation from the authority of the church, and humanity's attainment of freedom. Through the article, the philosopher sheds light on the era of scientific and technological progress and how man became captive within it. The main idea of the work is summarized in the thought: "Man, striving for freedom, built with his own hands such a system that this very system enslaved him again." The "images" of modern man further reveal the article in a fuller way.

Analytical, historical, philosophical-anthropological, and psychoanalytic methods were used to fully disclose this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this article by Erich Fromm, within the relationship between man and the market, the human being turns into a "commodity." In the modern era, within market relations, a person determines the value of his happiness and success through the commodity he has sold. Human worth, his inner world, and his ability to feel love are measured not as intellectual processes, but by how well he can "sell himself" in the market. If a person cannot "sell himself," he considers himself unsuccessful. This creates a feeling of unhappiness and meaningless life. In general, market relations make a person "alien" to himself.

¹ Asatullayev, I. A. (2025). Analysis of the human soul in the existential philosophy of Erich Fromm. *Development of Pedagogical Technologies in Modern Sciences*, 1(1). – P. 77.

² *The Present Condition of Humanity: Philosophical and Psychological Articles* / B. Russell, A. Schopenhauer, E. Fromm, S. Freud, G. Orwell, C.G. Jung. – Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2024. – P. 69.



Next, man becomes an eternal consumer, and in the article he is described as “a devouring and absorbing being.”³ That is, people have an abundance of free time, and instead of dedicating it to creativity, they increasingly spend it on consumption. A person turns into a mere consumer of everything. For example, cinema, drinks, books, music, and so on. Nevertheless, a state of insatiability remains in man. According to Fromm, man begins to see the whole world as a product for satisfying his appetite. He becomes dissatisfied with life and turns into an endlessly greedy being. Man reaches the condition of a social machine. In the growing industrial age, humanity became stratified, as if within the boundaries of faith. In other words, which type of person is necessary for society? In this process, society and industry pass into the hands of professional bureaucrats. Under such circumstances, society comes to require “automaton-men.” In such a state, man does not separate himself from society but swims together with its current. In this condition, man lives as though he feels free, yet in reality he merely performs his function as a part of the “social machine.”

Since man accepts the things he has created as idols, he becomes an idol worshipper. One of the central ideas of the article is revealed through statements such as “Man worships what he himself has created.” That is, man spends his life energy on everything he creates and then worships the result like an idol. For example, money, technology, and similar things. Money was created by man, yet it turned into an idol for him. Even today, these factors determine a person’s value in society. “I am convinced that mankind is a product of natural evolution, a constituent part of nature, yet because it possesses thought and consciousness, it occupies a dominant position over existence.”⁴ At this point, instead of evaluating himself as a creator, man distances himself from his own essence and bows before the things he has created. Since man lives in connection with external processes, he constantly feels dependent.

Man is politically and professionally alienated. Describing the dual life of man, Fromm raises the issue of the citizen and the individual. In this case, as a citizen, a person has surrendered his social feelings to the state, yet as an individual he is selfish. This is because, as a person, he thinks of his own interests. Likewise, in his professional activity, he resembles a “robot.”⁵ For example, workers and managers. While workers are merely parts of the economic system, managers are those who govern workers as “objects.” In reality, if a superior governs managers through orders, then the devices and mechanisms that create needs according to demand ultimately govern that superior as well.

People have already begun to perceive religion as a business and have turned into businessmen of religion. Today, people perceive religion as an instrument. That is, religion is no longer regarded as purification of the soul or spiritual perfection, but rather functions as a “psychological assistant” in attracting people. In the modern era, it has become a technical tool in the hands of developing businessmen. Human beings are increasingly becoming addicted to entertainment and laziness. The idea “Do not postpone today’s entertainment until tomorrow”⁶ points to one of the central problems of the article. This indicates that humanity has reached its final condition. Humanity has come to a state where people exert no effort, live by enjoying ready-made things, and laziness has become absolute. Attractive slogans such as “Press the button, we will do the rest”⁷ once again prove that alienated people live in a mechanized world.

³ *The Present Condition of Humanity: Philosophical and Psychological Articles* / B. Russell, A. Schopenhauer, E. Fromm, S. Freud, G. Orwell, C.G. Jung. – Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2024. – P. 70.

⁴ Erich Fromm. *My Faith*. Translation by Abduhamid Pardayev // “Jahon adabiyoti” journal, 2003, No. 10.

⁵ *The Present Condition of Humanity: Philosophical and Psychological Articles* / B. Russell, A. Schopenhauer, E. Fromm, S. Freud, G. Orwell, C.G. Jung. – Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2024. – P. 72.

⁶ *The Present Condition of Humanity: Philosophical and Psychological Articles* / B. Russell, A. Schopenhauer, E. Fromm, S. Freud, G. Orwell, C.G. Jung. – Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2024. – P. 73.

⁷ This source. – This page.



Although the satisfaction of human needs through a single button is a product of intellectual development, it also determines a conscious life that has stopped and cannot return backward.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we observe how humanity has lived in every era and how people have changed and adapted according to the demands of the time. The question of what condition humanity has reached—from societies that lived according to religious principles to the present age of technology—remains unanswered. The answer lies in the succession of eras and in people who adapt themselves accordingly. At the end of the article, the author presents the prophecy: “In the nineteenth century God died, and in the twentieth century man is dying.” Through this, he fully reveals the image of the modern human being. Human IQ levels have increased, yet certain aspects have declined. As a result, the people of the modern era have turned into decorated and dressed-up robots. The death of humanity is not a physical end, but a spiritual death. In this state, although people live feeling as though they are free, in reality they have surrendered their freedom, lost their emotional feelings, and limited their abilities.

In another part of the article, the work *Brave New World* is also mentioned. In this work, processes are described from the creation of human beings up to the stage where they are created for specifically specialized purposes. That is, each person can perform only one task and is incapable of other work or actions. In the end, man brings himself to such a level of emotional numbness that he becomes nothing more than a producer.

REFERENCES

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