

## **Culture of Peace: A Frommian Affirmation of Modern Life**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores and analyzes the Culture of Peace from the lens of Frommian Social Characterology. I uphold that a Culture of Peace is attainable if our modern social structures center on creativity and productivity which could eventually lead to human growth and development. Such is the argument of Erich Fromm, whose idea is based on the full humanization of every individual through reason and love.

However, modernity is a double-edged sword and somehow institutionalized a culture of violence. It brought tensions in our conformity, freedom, and peace. This culture of violence is conflicts that assault the human individual by too much hatred, misunderstanding, unbalanced judgment, human rights violation, polarization, and others. Modernity also is an ambivalence that creates social structures that push for pragmatic and technological ways of improving human life. It gives hope to build a better life on the promise of human individualization and independence, yet it represses one's desires or wishes, which are not beneficial for growth and development. Modern ways of life one way or another paralyze the individual's capacity to be creative and productive.

That is why in this paper I argue that this is all about the social characterology of modern society. Social characterology affects modernity's social behavior and we need to be critical about this to achieve the Culture of Peace. The Social Character of modern society is the actual problem why we cannot achieve the Culture of Peace

because of the instrumentalization of reason, the acceleration and dynamization of society through capitalism, the extreme individualization of life, the loss of humanity, etc. Therefore, unless we become aware of the immanent dynamics of social character and our ideals must bend towards a totalizing value system that eventually leads to behaviors towards reason and love, the Culture of Peace would just be a vision for modern society.

**Keywords:** Culture of Peace, Erich Fromm, Modern Life, Social Characterology, Violence.

## Introduction

*"Since wars begin in the minds of men,  
it is in the minds of men  
that defenses of peace must be constructed."*

UNESCO Preamble, 1946

Kalilintad, kalinaw, kapayapan, or peace are different words, but they have the same meaning.<sup>1</sup> **This vision of peace is also the desire of the distant past which until now the modern society, peacebuilders and theorists are still struggling in different social discourses just to cultivate the Culture of Peace. There must be a consensus that we need to have a concrete view of peace if we want to move to genuine Culture of Peace. Which is** Erich Fromm believed passionately also in the ideals of universal peace and harmony.<sup>2</sup>

The United Nations describes a Culture of Peace as a "set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of a life that rejects violence and prevents conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve

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<sup>1</sup> Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) / Church Development Service, Ziviler Friedensdienst (ZfD) /Civil Peace Service and Local Government Unit of Alamada, *Alamada Peace Journey*, (Philippine, 2012), cover page. See also *Alamada Peace Journey*, <https://youtu.be/hN3UTLhdmSY>

<sup>2</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, With introduction of David Ingleby, (New York: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1991), p. xxii

problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals groups and nations.”<sup>3</sup> This was supported by Dr. Darryl Macer in his work *Inter-regional Philosophical Dialogues Critical for Our Future*, he mentioned that the Culture of Peace is dependent upon recognition of the respect for cultural differences and diversity. It is essential to this work to plant the seeds of peace through education; education that promotes the values of tolerance, justice, equality, mutual understanding, love and peaceful coexistence. Quality education is also one of the most powerful tools in shaping and conquering the evils of hate and fears that really are threatening us.<sup>4</sup> Also Elise Boulding in *Conceptual Dimensions of Peace Culture* reinforced that “Peace cultures as separate entities exist but are not common. They can be identified in communities that adhere to religious teachings of nonviolence, and in relatively isolated indigenous communities that handle all conflicts with easy but practiced nonviolence.”<sup>5</sup>

Fromm adhere to this and he said that even if peace meant only the absence of war, of hate, of slaughter, of madness, its accomplishment would be among the highest aims man can set for himself.<sup>6</sup> He added that “Peace is more than a condition of no war; it is harmony and union between humans; it is the overcoming of separateness and alienation.”<sup>7</sup> It means that we can attain our new paradise, live in peace, see the truth, act on justice, use logic for a reason, and develop in love.<sup>8</sup> Maria Popova expound this and said, “Full humanization... requires the breakthrough from the possession-centered to the activity-centered orientation, from selfishness and

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *Building A Culture of Peace*, p. 1. See [cpnn-world.org/learn/un.html](http://cpnn-world.org/learn/un.html)

<sup>4</sup> Darryl R.J. Macer and Souria Saad-Zoy, *Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues on War and Peace* (Bangkok: UNESCO 2010), p. 116

<sup>5</sup> Elise Boulding, in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict* (Second Edition), 2008.

<sup>6</sup> The Prophetic Concept of Peace was first published in S. Yamaguchi (Ed.): *Buddhism and Culture. A Festschrift in Honor of D.T. Suzuki*, Kyoto (Norkano Press) 1960, pp. 163-169 and then included in Erich Fromm, *The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture* (1963a), New York (Holt, Rinehart and Winston) 1963, pp. 203-212. - The numbers in [brackets] refer to the pages of the last mentioned publication. Copyright © 1960 and 1980 by Erich Fromm; Copyright © 1981 and 2011 by The Literary Estate of Erich Fromm, c/o Dr. Rainer Funk, Ursrainger Ring 24, D-72076 Tuebingen / Germany. Pg. 1

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

egotism to solidarity and altruism.”<sup>9</sup> We long for peace because we want to go back to the tribe. For Fromm “The tribe often is not only unified by the common blood, but also by the common soil, and this very combination of blood and soil gives it its strength as the real home and frame of orientation for the individual.”<sup>10</sup>

In this paper, I explore and analyze the Culture of Peace concept from the Lens of Frommian Social Characterology. In particular, I want to answer the following questions: Why is Erich Fromm’s social characterology relevant to modern society? What is the notion of a Culture of Peace? How does Social Characterology realize the Culture of Peace?

### **Philosophical Anthropology and Disobedience**

**In Erich Fromm's book, *The Fear of Freedom*, he mentions, “Man and woman live in the Garden of Eden in complete harmony with each other and with nature. There is peace and no necessity to work; there is no choice, no freedom, no thinking either.”<sup>11</sup> However, this state of harmony is broken when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Consequently, both were expelled, disrupting the original oneness with nature. Fromm explicitly explained this in *On Being Human*. He says:**

*The human was at one with nature in paradise, but he was like the animals without consciousness of himself. But, as the Bible expresses it symbolically, once Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, for the first time, man became aware of himself. That is the first step into freedom. With this step, human history is made for the first time. Man’s original harmony with nature is broken.*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Maria Popova, *The Art of Living: The Great Humanistic Philosopher Erich Fromm on Having vs. Being and How to Set Ourselves Free from the Chains of Our Culture*, p. 1. See <https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/03/23/erich-fromm-the-art-of-living/>

<sup>10</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society. With an introduction by David Ingleby*, p. 47-48

<sup>11</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul,1942), p. 28

<sup>12</sup> Erich Fromm, *On Human Being*, Edited and with a Foreword by Rainer Funk, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), p. 7

This paradise story is only an allegory used by Fromm to reveal humanity's narcissistic tendency, revealing humanity's regression. Although away from the paradisiacal environment, both gained the faculty of reason, which gave them the sense to be free. Freedom becomes the cornerstone of the evolution of human history. From this, the context of peace started, away from paradise, peace is embedded within history. The disobedience of Adam and Eve's according to Fromm was the first act of freedom of humanity: the freedom to disobey and to say "no."<sup>13</sup> In Fromm's *Fear of Freedom*, he says that "The act of disobedience as an act of freedom is the beginning of reason. The myth speaks of other consequences of the first act of freedom. The original harmony between man and nature is broken."<sup>14</sup> Again, Fromm reiterates in *Man for Himself*:

*The sin of Adam and Eve is not explained in terms of the act itself; eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not bad per se; in fact, both the Jewish and the Christian religions agree that the ability to differentiate between good and evil is a basic virtue. The sin was disobedience, the challenge to the authority of God, who was afraid that man, having already "become as one of us, to know good and evil," could "put forth his hand and also take of the tree of life and live forever."<sup>15</sup>*

That is why because of this disobedience there was an oedipal rupture or brokenness in humanity according to Fromm.

## **Oedipal Rapture**

The rupture of the individual begins with the first act of human liberation. Further, Fromm understands Adam's Fall not only as an expression of freedom but also as a symbol of the separation between man and nature. With this first rupture of the ties between man and his matrix, man achieves awareness of himself and history

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<sup>13</sup> C.f. Erich Fromm, *The Concept of Peace*, p. 2

<sup>14</sup> C.f. Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, p. 28

<sup>15</sup> Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself; An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*, (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1947), p. 12

commences.<sup>16</sup> In other words, we are unique with identities that are different from one other, and that's what makes us as individuals. However, we cannot live alone, but in a community. As such, only when we respect differences in diversity and acknowledge diversity and accept it. Such a foundation is laid, can we establish a cohesive community and bring forth harmony and peace among mankind. But, we need to address the brokenness, **we need to** comprehend our broken humanity caused by the existential dichotomy. For Fromm the existential dichotomy, he stated:

*The nature of man I consider to be not a definable, unchangeable substance which is observable as such, but as an opposition which exists exclusively in the human being: an opposition between being in nature and being subject to all its laws and simultaneously to transcend nature, because man, and only he, is aware of himself, and of his existence, in fact, the only instance in nature where life has become aware of itself.*<sup>17</sup>

Fromm admits in *The Sane Society* that:

*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, effects and anxieties.*<sup>18</sup>

This means that to address the brokenness we need to be one with nature and with other fellowmen. Rainer Funk the executor of Erich Fromm elaborates that "If it is fundamental unity with surrounding nature defines animal life, human existence defines by

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<sup>16</sup> Ramon Xirau, *Erich Fromm: What Is Man's Struggle?*, in: B. Landis and E. S. Tauber (Eds.), *In the Name of Life, Essays in Honor of Erich Fromm*, New York (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 153

<sup>17</sup> Erich Fromm, *My Own Concept of Man*, (The Literary Estate of Erich Fromm, c/o Dr. Rainer Funk, Ursrainer Ring 24, D-72076 Tuebingen / Germany, 2013), p. 2

<sup>18</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society. With an introduction by David Ingleby*, p. 24

the fact that man is a part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature. The social situation is determined by this fundamental contradiction, which manifests itself in several ways that man perceives existentially. These contradictions' distinctive quality is rooted in man's existence and therefore called "existential dichotomies."<sup>19</sup> Fromm also expounds, "The existential dichotomies are explications of the situation and human existence's special conditions. All of them show that man is subject to nature, yet transcends all other life because he is, for the first time, life aware of itself."<sup>20</sup> Funk pointed out that "This conflict is man's essence, and it enables and obliges him to find an answer to his dichotomies"<sup>21</sup> Solution? "Existential dichotomies cannot be abolished....instead, Fromm proposes that he can tame them, react to them, and mitigate them through reason and love, justice, and solidarity..."<sup>22</sup>

However, there are differences in humans, and there are also tensions between peace, conformity, and freedom. These tensions are contradictory in individual and social life produced by ourselves, and Fromm calls these contradictions "historical dichotomies."<sup>23</sup> Hamid Bashiriyeh supports this; he mentioned that "Human history depicts a gloomy portrait of captivity, torture, humiliation, exploitation, destruction, and bloodshed of man. The story of humanity symbolically began with fratricide and continued the same way. The third millennium dawned with a horrific event, which would promise the escalation of a new wave of ensuing violent retaliations."<sup>24</sup> Funk asserted that we could resolve these contradictions wherever it appears, even if later in human history. These historical dichotomies emerge wherever technical, economic, social, cultural, emotional, or

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<sup>19</sup> Rainer Funk, *The Courage to Be Human with a Postscript by Erich Fromm*, p. 57

<sup>20</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man, It's Genius for Good and Evil*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1964; Republished with American Mental Health Foundation 2010), p. 117

<sup>21</sup> Rainer Funk, *The Courage to Be Human with a Postscript by Erich Fromm*, p. 58

<sup>22</sup> Rainer Funk, *Erich Fromm: Courage to be Human*. (Continuum Intl Publ. Group, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Hamid Bashiriyeh, *Culture and Violence: Psycho-cultural Variables Involved in Homicide across Nations*, (University of Koblenz-Landau, 2010), p. vi

physical development begins to contradict the dispositive and creative powers man potentially has to deal with. The present contradiction is between the abundance of technical resources for the satisfaction of human needs and the incapacity to use these resources exclusively for peaceful aims and humanity's well-being.<sup>25</sup>

This is the reason why we need to analyze the prophetic messianism of Fromm to understand the rapture of humanity that result to violence, unproductive and unpeaceful of modern society.

### **Prophetic Messianism vis a vis Modern Society**

Funk surmises that this messianism is, “the point of departure for such a historical view is man’s break with the original unity with nature and his striving for a new unity in reason and love.”<sup>26</sup> The statement means that through these human faculties, humanity could hope for a better society. It is an aspiration to build a vision toward a peaceful community. We yearn for a peaceful society which in this paper focuses on the Culture of Peace because we want our relationship with other humans and nature will unite once again. Federico Mayor expressed also his point that “Peace is reverence for life. Peace is the most precious possession of humanity. Peace is more than the end of armed conflict. Peace is a mode of behavior. Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality, and solidarity among all human beings. Peace is also a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment.”<sup>27</sup> This observation is supported also by Kieran Durkin, who also argues that “As Fromm stresses, again and again, the messianic event is seen in prophetic-humanistic messianism as the outcome of human progress, and therefore actively encourages productive and revolutionary action.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Rainer Funk, *The Courage to Be Human with a Postscript by Erich Fromm*, (New York: Continuum, 1982), p. 63

<sup>27</sup> Federico Mayor, *The Development of Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (1988-2010)*, (Barcelona: S.A. de Litografia. 2011), p. 10

<sup>28</sup> Kieran Durkin, *Review Braune, J.: Erich Fromm’s Revolutionary Hope: Prophetic Messianism as a Critical Theory of the Future; Review Miri, S. J., Lake, R., and Kress, T. M. (Eds): Reclaiming the Sane Society: Essays on Erich Fromm’s Thought*, (Tuebingen, Selbstverlag: Marx and Philosophy, Fromm Forum (English Edition – ISBN 1437-1189), 19 / 2015), pp. 70-72.

As early as 1955, Fromm stated in *The Sane Society* that he was particularly attracted to the Messianic visions of universal peace that:

*“Man has to achieve his own salvation, he has to give birth to himself, and at the end of the days, the new harmony, the new peace will be established, the curse pronounced against Adam and Eve will be repealed, as it were, by man's own unfolding in the historical process.”*<sup>29</sup>

Fromm highlights that “Peace is more than a condition of no war; it is harmony and union between humans; it is the overcoming of separateness and alienation.”<sup>30</sup> It means that we can attain our new paradise, live in peace, see the truth, act on justice, use logic for a reason, and develop in love.<sup>31</sup>

To attain full humanization our human ideas must be wrestled to the tensions that are brought to us by modernity. Fromm was deeply concerned with the impact of modernization upon the collective consciousness of the community.<sup>32</sup> Mika Pekkola supported this and she said, “The emphasis on the ambivalent nature of modernity points to the idea of modernization: modernity as a process, which is in a constant state of flux. Experientially, this state is characterized by the sensation of constant change. On the one hand, modernity sets things in motion, opens up new realities and vistas, and destroys traditional authorities. On the other hand, it forces us to look at the world cleansed of illusions and compels us to give meaning.”<sup>33</sup> A similar position is taken by Lewis Mumford, who, writing in 1951 cited the condition of modern man as one of passivity and quiescence in which all sense of personal creativity, risk-taking and non-conformity were being expunged: “In the end, such a civilisation can produce only a mass man: incapable of choice, incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities: at best patient, docile, disciplined

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<sup>29</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society. With an introduction by David Ingleby*, p. 228

<sup>30</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Concept of Peace*, p. 4

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>32</sup> The same distinction between Modernism and modernisation is made by Marshall Berman in his pivotal postmodern analysis of Modernism. See: Berman, M., *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air (The Experience of Modernity)*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1988, pp. 88-9.

<sup>33</sup> Mika Pekkola, *Prophet of Radicalism: Erich Fromm and the Figurative Constitution of the Crisis of Modernity*, (Finland: University of Jyväskylä, 2010), p. 10

to monotonous work to an almost pathetic degree, but increasingly irresponsible as his choices become fewer and fewer: finally, a creature governed mainly by his conditioned reflexes - the ideal type desired, if never quite achieved, by the advertising agency and the sales organisations of modern business, or by the propaganda office and the planning bureaus of totalitarian and quasi-totalitarian governments.... Ultimately such a society produces only two groups of men: the conditioners and the conditioned: the active and the passive barbarians."<sup>34</sup>

The tensions of modern society somehow imbued with the culture of violence. Even Fromm claims that the concept of violence is rooted in hate and destructiveness.<sup>35</sup> He added that "hate and destructiveness are impulses which obscure rational and objective thinking and easily create polarization in that they reinforce each other on both sides of the political spectrum. The main problem with the idea that aggressiveness is an instinct charged with a spontaneously increasing energy lies in the extraordinary variability of aggressiveness among individuals and societies."<sup>36</sup> According to some researchers who maintained a different ethnological, psychoanalytic, and physiological point of view: that is, fundamentally, that violence is innate to man.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Rodolfo Leyva highlighted that "Fromm's believes that human beings are not genetically aggressive. Destructiveness and cruelty cannot be explained in terms of hereditary. He added that it is not the impulse that we need to criticize but the society, such as the capitalist system.<sup>38</sup> Leyva added, "Fromm argued that rather than marking a fixed or inevitable stage of societal development, liberal-capitalism and the exchange relations, consumer norms and values, and

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<sup>34</sup> Lewis Mumford, *The Conduct of Life*, (Harcourt, Brace & Co. Inc.,: New York, 1951), p. 14-16

<sup>35</sup> Erich Fromm, *Forum* (English version) 8 / 2004, Tuebingen (Selbstverlag), pp. 43-48.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Santiago Genovés, *Social and Cultural Sources of Violence*, in: UNESCO, *From a Culture of Violence to Culture of Peace: Peace and Conflict Issues Series*. (Vendôme: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), pp. 93-101

<sup>38</sup> Leyva, Rodolfo, *On the Psychology and Libertarian Socialism of Erich Fromm*. In: Miri S.J., Lake R., Kress T.M. (eds) *Reclaiming the Sane Society, Imagination and Praxis, Criticality and Creativity in Education and Educational Research*, (Sense Publishers, Rotterdam 2014).

psychopathologies that it generates, is one of many possible societal manifestations.”<sup>39</sup> The culture of violence may be traced to self-serving value on the part of each person like in business (protectionism cartel/monopoly behavior, tax evasion, and others.), in government (graft and corruption, others.), other sectors (dishonesty, lack of concern for the common good, others.) or personal interest. Fromm asks this question in his book, the *Sane Society*:

*Are we sane? Why we have created a greater material wealth than any other society in the history of the human race. Yet we have managed to kill off millions of our population in an arrangement which we call "war."? Is it sanity or insanity? A few days after the mutual slaughter is over, the enemies of yesterday are our friends, the friends of yesterday are our enemies and again ... we begin to paint them in with appropriate colors of black and white.*<sup>40</sup>

We need a social system in which we have place and in which our relations to others are relatively stable and supported by generally accepted values and ideas. What has happened in modern industrial society is that traditions, and common values, and genuine social personal ties with others have largely disappeared. The modern mass man is isolated and lonely, even though he is part of a crowd; he has no convictions which he could share with others, only slogans and ideologies he gets from the communications media.<sup>41</sup> That is why to address this concern we need to look at the social character of the society.

## **Social Character**

What is meant by social character? Fromm refer in this concept to the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture in contradistinction to the individual character in which people belonging to the same culture differ from each other. The concept of social character is not a statistical concept in the sense that it is simply the sum total of

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society. With an introduction by David Ingleby*, p. 4

<sup>41</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York Chicago San Francisco, 1973), p. 107

character traits to be found in the majority of people in a given culture. It can be understood only in reference to the function of the social character which we shall now proceed to discuss.<sup>42</sup> Fromm directs us to learn the language of the unconscious and at the same time evaluate our actions and institutions in terms of whether or not they stimulate us to wake up and act according to reason, whether or not they move us and our culture toward community rather than tribalism. Even if one does not believe it is possible to create utopia, it is possible for many of us to develop our productive capabilities of love and reason. By engaging in a serious dialogue with Erich Fromm, we expand our awareness of the choices, sharpen our concepts and deepen our sense of meaning.<sup>43</sup>

According to Funk, for Fromm human is a primarily social being, molded by the adaptation to the requirements of the mode of production and the patterns of society.<sup>44</sup> Fromm “believes 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.” Instead, he followed Marx, he said it is not the “pleasure principle” that drives a man to act, rather the interplay between the psychic drives and socio-economic conditions.<sup>45</sup> From then, Fromm develops Freud-Marxist analysis of society which he developed and called the Social Characterology.

By studying Fromm's social characterology, we may know the power of social forces that sway the libidinal drives towards human growth or human perdition. Fromm's social characterology of a

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<sup>42</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society. With an introduction by David Ingleby*, p. 76-77

<sup>43</sup> Michael Maccoby. The Two Voices of Erich Fromm: The Prophetic and the Analytic. First published in: *Society*, Vol. 32 (No. 5, July-Aug. 1995), pp. 72-82. This article is adapted from a lecture given at the Erich Fromm International Symposium, Washington, DC, May 6 1994. The following text is taken from the Internet. Copyright © 1995 and 2011 by Michael Maccoby, Ph.D., 4825 Linnean Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, USA. P. 13

<sup>44</sup> Rainer Funk. Fromm's Method of Social Psychology. Lecture presented at Saturday, December 8, 1990, at the American Academy of Psychoanalysis 34th Winter Meeting, Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, Texas. The Congress was entitled Clinical Psychoanalysis in the 1990's and had a Erich Fromm Anniversary Paper Session. Copyright © 1990 and 2011 by Dr. Rainer Funk, Ursrainer Ring 24, D-72076 Tübingen. P. 2

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4

particular social system is vital in this study because it is a binding force on each individual. The social characterology of a particular group, community, or society binds each member to attune their psychic libidinal drives towards a specific goal, either towards peace or violence. The result of the interplay between the economy and libidinal structure is what Fromm termed "social character". Social character is the formation of social libidinal drives *common* to all members of a group or class. Social character shows how human energy is channeled and operates as a productive force in a given social order. It is the transmission belt of a certain society. Each society is structuralized and operates in certain ways which are necessitated by a number of objective conditions. These conditions include methods of production and distribution which in turn depend on raw materials, industrial techniques, climate, size of the population, and political and geographical factors, cultural traditions and influences to which society is exposed. There is no "society" in general, but only specific social structures that operate in different and ascertainable ways.

Nevertheless, I cannot entirely agree that this will be the social character of the society in this modern life because I believe that this social character can be directed towards progressive, productive and creative. We are peace-loving; we have families, friends, beliefs, knowledge, reason, and, most of all, capable of loving. Fromm goes on to note that in any given society it follows that a pathological condition may be the norm and that in such circumstances, the pathology expressed as personal defects may be invisible to its individual members:

*"... If a person fails to attain freedom, spontaneity, a genuine expression of self, he may be considered to have a severe defect, provided we assume that freedom and spontaneity are the objective human goals to be attained by every human being. If such a goal is not obtained by the majority of members in any given society, we deal with the phenomenon of socially patterned defect. The individual shares it with many others; he is not aware of it as a defect, and his security is not threatened by being different, of being an outcast, as it were. What he may have lost in richness and in a genuine feeling of*

*happiness, is made up by the security of fitting in with the rest of mankind - as he knows them. As a matter of fact, his very defect may have been raised to a virtue by his culture, and thus may give him an enhanced feeling of achievement."*<sup>46</sup>

That is why I discourse that, to unravel the difference that causes tensions in peace, conformity, and freedom, we need to comprehend modern society's pathology. We need to evaluate modern society's psychic impulses if it is toward the Culture of Peace or adversely redirected towards opposite directions. Implicit in Mumford's analysis is the notion that a "healthy" human being is one who is active, self-directed, risk-taking, and spontaneous, and that the conditions of modern industrialized life are creating conditions whereby the preponderance of citizens are unhealthy.<sup>47</sup>

## **Culture of Peace**

It was in 1989, during the *International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men*, in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, that the notion of a "Culture of Peace" was first mentioned. Over the past ten years, the idea has come a long way. In 1994, Federico Mayor, Director-General of the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#), launched an international appeal on the establishment of a right to peace; in February 1994, UNESCO launched its *Towards a Culture of Peace programme*; in 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the year 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace"; and in 1998, the same Assembly declared the period 2001-2010 the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World".<sup>48</sup>

The expression "Culture of Peace" took shape in 1989, such a culture already existed before the word was created. UNESCO's creation is a testimonial to the existence of such a culture as early as

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<sup>46</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, (Fawcett, Greenwich, Conn, orig. Holt Reinhart, Winston: New York, 1955), pp. 23

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Adams, David, *The Year 2000: International Year for the Culture of Peace and the Manifesto 2000*, December 2005. See <https://www.culture-of-peace.info/copoj/iycp.html>

1945. The culture of peace was first analyzed by United Nations as a **“set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals groups and nations.”** The notion of a “Culture of Peace” was first mentioned during the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, about putting this mandate into practice (1989). It stated: “Peace is reverence for life. Peace is the most precious possession of humanity. Peace is more than the end of armed conflict. Peace is a mode of behavior. Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality, and solidarity among all human beings. Peace is also a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment.”<sup>49</sup>

The Culture of Peace is a framework of sustainable peace consisting of values, attitudes, and behaviors. It reflects and inspires social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity. It further rejects violence, endeavors to prevent conflict by tackling the root causes of the problems through dialogue and negotiation, and guarantees the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development processes of the society.<sup>50</sup> This was supported by Elise Boulding, the main point about the Culture of Peace is that it deals creatively with difference and conflict, and it is a listening culture. The Culture of Peace needs lots of space for problem-solving. So, what we need to do is create a lot of space for problem-solving. I believed that the Culture of Peace is building a society centered on human creativity and productivity. This is how the notion of a Culture of Peace conquered the world. That is why Erich Fromm is still relevant in this modern society.

### **Social Character vis a vis Culture of Peace**

The Culture of Peace sets the social character of society towards the syndrome of growth. This echoes Fromm's notion of biophilic

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<sup>49</sup> Federico Mayor, *The Development of Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (1988-2010)*, (Barcelona: S.A. de Litografia. 2011), p. 10

<sup>50</sup> Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) / Church Development Service, Ziviler Friedensdienst (ZfD) / Civil Peace Service and Local Government Unit of Alamada (2012), p.43.

character, the love of life, independence, and the overcoming of narcissism. However, following his Judaist tradition, Fromm remains hopeful about the human being's capacity to promote those human ideals that the modern way of life also wants to project. He declares, "I believe that every man represents humanity. We may differ with concerning intelligence, health, and talents, yet we are all one. We are all saints and sinners, adults and children, and no one can set himself up as anybody's superior and judge him."<sup>51</sup> His thought is asserted again in *The Heart of Man*, Fromm said: "This profession of belief means no less than the "human condition (*conditio humana*)" is the same for all men, despite unavoidable differences in intelligence, talents, height and skin color."<sup>52</sup> The unity of humanity is also shared by Alaine Touraine's thought, emphasizing the "us," which calls for the community's element.<sup>53</sup> So, Fromm vouches in *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, he said:

*Individuals within a given society differ, of course, in their characters; in fact, it is no exaggeration to say that if we are concerned with minute differences, there are no two people whose character structure is identical. Yet if we disregard minute differences, we can form certain types of character structures, which are roughly representative of various groups of individuals. Such types are the receptive, the exploitative, the hoarding, the marketing, and the productive character orientations.*<sup>54</sup>

Fromm identifies two-character orientation of escaping insecurity prevalent in modern society that can be the key to attain the Culture of Peace. They are the nonproductive and productive orientation.<sup>55</sup> The social characterology of modern society either

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<sup>51</sup> Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion, My Encounter with Marx and Freud, Part of the series "Credo Perspectives,"* planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962), p. 27

<sup>52</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man. Its Genius for Good and Evil*, p. 49

<sup>53</sup> Alaine Touraine, *Can We Live Together?: Equality and Difference*, (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 6-7

<sup>54</sup> Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion, My Encounter with Marx and Freud, Part of the series "Credo Perspectives,"* planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen, p. 178

<sup>55</sup> Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby, *Social Character in a Mexican Village*, (New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK), Transaction Publishers, 1996), p. 68

moves towards the two character orientation which is based on the psychic libidinal drives towards a particular goal. This characterology serves as an orientation that, as Lawrence Wilde explains, either regressive or progressive.<sup>56</sup>

To attain the Culture of Peace the progressive orientation must be the orientation of modern society. Fromm argues in *Man for Himself*:

*The productive orientation of personality refers to a fundamental attitude, a mode of relatedness in all realms of human experience. It covers mental, emotional, and sensory responses to others, to oneself, and things. Productiveness is man's ability to use his powers and to realize the potentialities inherent in him.*<sup>57</sup>

Productive orientation entails the four essential elements of love and reason where every person lives in one destination with mutual respect, care, responsibility, and knowledge as essential to attain full humanization.<sup>58</sup> Funk repeats this Frommian idea by asserting that psychic needs must be satisfied; however, it must be socially conditioned and internalized via family as society's agent. The psychic need for relatedness can be satisfied productively by a loving orientation. It is characterized by the fact that the loving person increasingly becomes the active part of the relationship and creates relatedness to his human and natural environment from his psychic energies.<sup>59</sup> Maric stated that humanity could only progress if we strengthen social forces, which are beneficial for the individual's growth.<sup>60</sup> The productive social character entails freedom in a general sense, i.e., freedom towards fulfilling humanistic ideals such as peace.<sup>61</sup> Fromm then argues, in *The Heart of Man*,

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<sup>56</sup> Lawrence Wilde, *The Ethical Challenge of Touraine's 'Living Together'*, (The Journal of Global Ethics 3 (1), 2007), p. 9

<sup>57</sup> Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD., 1956), p. 26

<sup>59</sup> Rainer Funk, *Erich Fromm's Concept of Social Character*, Erich Fromm Archive, Tuebingen, Social Thought & Research, 1998, Vol. 21, No. 1-2, p. 226

<sup>60</sup> Mark Maric, *Review Fromm, E.: The Heart of Man, Its Genius for Good and Evil*, p. 596

<sup>61</sup> Ramon Xirau. *Erich Fromm: What Is Man's Struggle?* p. 150-160.

*To develop our individuality to attain our full humanity is to embrace the opposite of the necrophilous orientation, which is the biophilous; its essence is the love of life in contrast to the love of death. Like necrophilia, biophilia is not constituted by a single trait but represents a total orientation, an entire way of being. It is manifested in a person's bodily processes, in his emotions, in his thoughts, in his gestures; the biophilous orientation expresses itself in the whole man.<sup>62</sup>*

But it should be made clear by analyzing the dominant character orientations and their usually non-productive impacts, the marketing, the narcissistic and the Ego-oriented character. This could interpret particularly in regard to the question of aggression, violence and destructivity (which is different in the authoritarian vs. the marketing character orientation and so on). Though, the individual will interact with the world towards self-preservation (physiological and cannot postpone) and sex drive (always give us pleasure and can be postponed), and all of this is not instinct and not a product of impulses but a product of society. Society is the one that activates the impulse to be creative and productive. Our social mentality is swayed by society and the impact or demands of society is powerful; if we do not follow it, there will be a chance for regression; instead of moving forward, the individual will regress in time. In the market enterprise, we act not like humans or brothers and sisters, but we act because we need to act, and there is somebody that dictates us unconsciously to survive.

Therefore, the individual is only a replica of what the ideologies of the system want to tell us. Ideology is just an ordinary set of beliefs, the way we eat, walk, the dress we use and the social character of the capitalist world permits consciousness that this world becomes the normative structure and no one can question that. It is a pattern already as normal life and becomes a system and becomes ideological and this creates false consciousness. This system alienates the individual because we express our thought and that it is already normal to the individuals. The individual aspires for a better life but because of this system, we don't have a choice anymore. This is not

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<sup>62</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man, Its Genius for Good and Evil*, p. 20

living life but top-down, we can express our thoughts but the capitalist doesn't care. There are only two ways and that is to move forward or regress. Fromm said that humans attain already have modernity and the pick of his nature being human, individual, autonomous, free, and subject to our actions but we don't think collectively or as one to traverse to one destination, to comprehend the world must be through love and reason, the elements of which consist of care, respect, responsibility and knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

Few of the initiatives to direct the social character of modern society to productive orientation is Peace Education. Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) promote peace through education where bottom-up approach for global peace through establishing international peace law,<sup>64</sup> also through conference like International Ethics and Peace Education Conference 2022 where Sen. Win Gatchalian address his message and he said "Education is the key to sustaining Peace and Progress,"<sup>65</sup> another one is the Tri-people hybrid conflict resolution approach adopted in Alamada, North Cotabato as a model for enabling a culture of peace in Mindanao, Philippines,<sup>66</sup> and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao approval to stop the conflict with govern and promote Culture of Peace. These are few of the many of the activities that promote Culture of Peace. If there is peace there will be business, tourism, etc.

According to **Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the Culture of Peace concept has now grown into a global movement.** It encompasses tolerance, disarmament, sustainable economic and social development, democratic participation, gender equality, freedom of expression, and respect for human rights. The transition from a culture of violence to a Culture of Peace requires the transformation of individual behavior and institutional practices. Learning to live in peace and harmony is a long-term process and

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<sup>63</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, p. 26

<sup>64</sup> See <http://news.hwpl.kr/en/initiative/lawForPeace>

<sup>65</sup> See <https://social-ethics-society.blogspot.com/2022/08/education-is-key-to-sustaining-peace.html?m=1&fbclid=IwAR2A5-ojXavSdXS00nR9dD3pbvYroCiQ-qjiHTzjfl7pKochU-lPTdb2o>

<sup>66</sup> Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) / Church Development Service, Ziviler Friedensdienst (Zfd) / Civil Peace Service and Local Government Unit of Alamada (2012), p.43.

begins with developing inner peace and nurturing attitudes that promote the expansion and integration of peaceful principles. Education and awareness-raising play vital roles in this process.<sup>67</sup> This initiative drives the modern society from alienation, hate and destruction. So, if we adopt to become productive and creative, we promote the Culture of Peace and realized our full humanization.

## Conclusion

The Culture of Peace is still possible even in this modern society. We need to evaluate modern society's pathology using Fromm's Social Characterology to know whether the direction is toward productive or unproductive orientation. The direction of the Culture of Peace will be through productive orientation. Hence, the researcher proposes that the Culture of Peace could only be realized when the social character could bring forth productive orientation.

Therefore, to be in productive orientation we experience life directly through relating to others and practicing individual freedom and responsibility. In this modern and interactive world, everything is a matter of awareness, mobilization, education, prevention and information at all levels of society and in all countries. The elaboration and establishment of a Culture of Peace require the whole-hearted participation of everyone. Countries must cooperate, international organizations must coordinate their different actions and populations must fully participate to the full in the development of their societies. The researcher recommends further that only when society becomes conscious of their social character as a group, community, or society that their psychic dispositions could be redirected towards the attainment of the Culture of Peace, which in return becomes the practical affirmation of modern life.

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