5. The Humanistic Ethic

„Psychoanalysis, in an attempt to establish psychology as a natural science, made the mistake of divorcing psychology from problems of philosophy and ethics. It ignored the fact that human personality can not be understood unless we look at man in his totality, which includes his need to find an answer to the question of the meaning of his existence and to discover norms according to which he ought to live."[1] With this statement, Fromm indicates his opposition to all monistic claims by any scientific discipline that it can „explain" man comprehensively. He also takes issue with the attempt to produce „value-free" knowledge only. A psychoanalysis that takes itself to be free of philosophical and religious presuppositions and that refuses to link its insights to an ethical demand must be assumed to be based on unreflected and therefore ideological premises. Fromm energetically opposes any kind of science that proposes merely to analyze, unmask, and relativize what was valid heretofore, without also having the courage to embark on the attempt to place what has been learned against a new horizon of understanding.

A Comparison Between Humanistic Ethics as an Applied Science of the Art of Life and Other Systems of Ethics

In Fromm's work, the word *ethic* means „a particular orientation that is rooted in man and therefore is valid not in relation to this or that person, this or that situation, but for all human {130} beings."[2] This definition draws certain lines. To begin with, ethics is to be distinguished from custom *(Sitte),* even though there is an etymological relation between the two, because custom represents only what is generally acknowledged in a society. Nor is ethics the same thing as desirable forms of behavior or codices, as is implied by such terms as „medical ethics," „economic ethics," or „military ethics." Here the term „ethics" applies only to specific situations and does not do justice to the claim of universality. *Ethics* is used properly to refer to the one universal ethics that is applied to specific human situations, and without which all „ethics" degenerate into mere behavioral codes because their norms are not governed by the totality of man and what is appropriate to man. A further constitutive clement of ethics is that it is rooted in man as a particular orientation. This means (among many other requirements) that the condition for the possibility of the comprehension as well as the object of ethics must be tied to human potentialities. To elucidate this demand, Fromm compares ethics with other applied sciences.[3]

Every art (in the sense of *technē)* relates to an applied science that is' based in turn on insights of the „pure" sciences. What the art of teaching is, for example, is determined by pedagogy (an applied science) and its object, and pedagogy in turn is shaped by the insights of psychology, sociology, and so on. Ethics is the applied science of the „art"[4] of life, which is also its object. It is based on the science of man.[5] „Its object is not this or that specialized performance but the performance of living, the process of developing into that which one is potentially. In the art of living, *man is both artist acrd the object*

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[1] *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 6-7; cf. ibid., pp. vii-xi.
[2] „Medicine and the Ethical Problem of Modern Man" (1963c) in (1963a), p. 118; on the following, cf. ibid., pp. 118f.

[3] *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 16-20; M. McGrath, „An Examination of Erich Fromm's Ethics with Implications for Philosophy of Education," pp. 38-42.
[4] The term „art" here does not coincide with the Aristotelian *techne;* cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 17, n. 2.
[5] On this concept, see pp. 133-135.

of "his art." [6]

Humanistic ethics thus seen as the applied science of the art of life is clearly different from other systems of ethics.[7] To begin with, it differs from an *authoritarian ethics*.[8] In authoritarian ethics, not man but an authority that transcends him lays down what is good for him. „The norm-giver is always an authority transcending the individual. Such a system is based not on reason and knowledge but on awe of the authority and on the subject's feeling of weakness and dependence."[9] (Authority here is understood as irrational authority.[10]) An authoritarian ethic is based on what benefits the authority (this is true even when ethical action is understood as the glorification of God at the cost of one's own happiness). {131} Obedience to the authority is the highest virtue, rebellion and disobedience the very essence of sin.

Closely related to the system of authoritarian ethics is the *absolute ethic* because it is usually found in an authoritarian system.[11] Its defining characteristic is the immutability and inviolability of the norms laid down by an absolute power. The validity of the norms is permanently beyond doubt because the authority is a superior and omniscient power. But to the extent that absolute truth is excluded as the goal of scientific thought, an absolute ethic disintegrates, usually into a system that is called a *relativistic ethic.* But such an ethic is as antithetical to a humanistic ethic as is an authoritarian or absolute one. A relativistic ethic rejects an objective, norm-giving power, whether such power be an irrational authority beyond man or the rational one of human reason: „.... value judgment and ethical norms are exclusively matters of taste or arbitrary preference and ... no objectively valid statement can be made in this realm."[12] Man is free to decide, and his activity the highest value as long as it is authentic.[13]

There is another kind of relativistic ethic, which replaces the subjective element with the survival of a society or a culture as its highest value. At the same time, it excludes the possibility of arriving at objectively valid norms and values for all men. Fromm calls this variety of relativistic ethic the socially immanent ethic: „by socially immanent ethic I refer to those norms in every culture which contain prohibitions and commands that are necessary only for the functioning and survival of that particular society."[14] In this system, the ethical norms are identical with the norms of the society--that is, the norms of those authorities that run the society. While the governing authorities will always endeavor to justify their claim to rule through these norms by saying that the norms are revealed by God or rooted in human nature, such attempts must be seen as ideologies and disguises of an ethical system that denies the presence of objectively and universally valid norms and denies as well that they can be known or considered binding.

The final example of ethical systems antithetical to a humanistic ethic is the *biologically immanent ethic*.[15] On the basis of the insights of comparative behavioral research, it does not seriously consider that there are specifically human capacities that can {132} modify natural givens. Such an ethic considers the instincts behind animal behavioral mechanisms (such as aggression and care of the young) as the highest values and transfers them to an ethic valid for man. Here also, one cannot speak of objective norms that are valid for all men be-

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[6] *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 17f.

[7] On what follows, cf. (ibid. pp. 8-14; 237-244; Fromm, „Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie" (1935a), p. 395; *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), pp. 86-92.

[8] The criticism of an authoritarian ethic is largely identical with the rejection of an „idealist morality" (cf. Fromm, „Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie" [1935a]) and an „absolute ethic" (cf. *Man for Himself* [1947a], pp. 237-244).

[9] *Man for Himself* (1947a) p. 10.

[10] See pp. 88-91.

[11] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 237-239.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[13] Cf. *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), pp. 87f.

[14] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 241; cf. *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), p. 88.

[15] Cf. *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), p. 88.

Funk, R., 1982 Erich Fromm: The Courage to Be Human, pp. 129-180

Numbers in {those brackets} between the lines indicate the next page in the original book

cause not the whole man but only his animalistic and natural substructure (the mechanism of his drives that he shares with animal life) is made the starting--and endpoint -of the ethical system.

These other systems of ethics having been described, it now becomes possible to define *the characteristics of a humanistic ethic:*

1. Source: A humanistic ethic makes the fundamental assumption that man himself is the measure of all things, that „his value judgments like all other judgments and even perceptions are rooted in the peculiarities of his existence and are meaningful only with reference to it."[16]

2. Goal: Because a humanistic ethic can only base itself on man and his distinctive nature, man with his specifically human qualities rooted in the distinctiveness of his existence is the sole normgiver and also the goal and object of all norms. „Good" therefore is everything that is good for man, „the sole criterion of ethical value being man's welfare.[17]

3. Object: It is in the specifically human quality of reason that a humanistic ethic sees the condition for the possibility of arriving at objectively valid norms and values that satisfy the demand for universality. Only these norms and values are binding on each human being because they have their origin in man's nature and can be recognized as such. „... moral norms are based upon man's inherent qualities."[18]

The Basis of a Humanistic Ethic

The description of the source, goal, and object of a humanistic ethic makes clear that such an ethic must arrive at objective values that represent the basis for its norms. Fromm's thesis is that „values are rooted in the very conditions of human existence. Our knowledge of these conditions, that is of the 'human situation,' therefore leads us to establish values which have objective validity. This validity exists

only with regard to the existence of man; {133} outside of him, there are no values.[19] „ The knowledge of the human situation, or, as Fromm usually puts it, of the „essence" or „nature" of man, is thus the basis and presupposition for the formulation of objectively valid norms and values. Such knowledge is acquired through the „science of man." Fromm's formulation, „objectively valid norms and values," is adopted here as we show how the humanistic ethic is grounded. To forestall any naturalistic misunderstanding, our critical examination[20] will note a rigorous distinction between the „natural values" that result from the knowledge of the human situation, and „ethical norms" as they relate to the process by which norms are discovered.

The „Science of Man" and Its Relation to the „Nature of Man"[21]

The science of man is the theoretical base for the applied science of ethics.[22] Of course, „science" does not mean here what it normally does--that is, a method of investigation patterned after the one used in physics, for example.[23] „Complete rational knowledge is possible only of things. Man is not a thing. He cannot be dissected without being destroyed."[24] Fromm's „science of man" is predicated on a more comprehensive concept of science than the one traditionally used in anthropology.[25] This becomes clear from both the object and the method of the science of man: „The subject of a science of man is human nature. But this science does not start out with a full and adequate picture of what human nature is; a satisfactory definition of

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[16] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 13.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., p. 7.

[19] Fromm, „Values, Psychology, and Human Existence" (1959b), p. 151.
[20] See pp. 152-180.
[21] Cf. especially *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 20-24.
[22] See p. 129f.
[23] Cf. Paul Tillich, „Ist eine Wissenschaft von Werten möglich?" esp. p. 173.
[24] Fromm, „Man Is Not a Thing" (1957a), p. 10.
[25] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 20, n. 4. The term is Karl Marx's (cf. *Early Writings*).

its subject matter is its aim, not its premise. Its method is to observe the reactions of man to various individual and social conditions and from observation of these reactions to make inferences about man's nature."[26] Man's nature itself can never be observed but only its particular expressions in specific situations. A variety of individual disciplines such as history, cultural anthropology, social psychology, child psychology, and psychopathology do this observing. „Human nature ... is a theoretical construction which can be inferred from empirical study of the behavior of man. In this respect, the science of man in constructing a 'model of human nature' is no different from other sciences which operate with concepts of entities based on, or controlled by, inferences from observed data and not directly observable themselves."[27] But precisely for this reason the science of man {134} is not pure speculation: its task is to discover the core beneath man's various expressions and manifestations, and while this core is a theoretical construct, it can be shown to be man's nature that governs all expressions and modes of conduct. At the same time, this core represents a criterion that makes it possible to reveal that certain needs and qualities that are ostensibly part of human nature are artificially produced and are expressions of an alienated condition.[28]

The legitimacy of the method of the science of man ultimately derives from the distinctive character of its object. Pure science (meaning positivistic natural science) turns the object of its study into a thing. But man is not a thing, so an adequate understanding of the „object" man requires an engaged sketch of what man is, and at the same time proof and critique of this sketch by the observation of human expressions and modes of behavior. Be-

hind this argument lies the conviction that complete knowledge is possible only in the experience of fusion. „The only way to full knowledge lies in the act of love; this act transcends thought, it transcends words."[29] For the scientific knowledge of man, this means that one must become speculatively engaged with the object of knowledge, that one discover what, as a being with projects, man truly is. The coincidence of speculative theory and of the observation of expression and modes of behavior will demonstrate that the insights obtained are correct.[30] „The concept of a science of man rests upon the premise that its object, man, exists and that there is a human nature characteristic of the human species."[31] Without such a presupposition, there can be no humanistic ethic, for „if ethics constitutes the body of norms for achieving excellence in performing the art of living, its most general principles must follow from the nature of life in general and human existence in particular."[32]

An indispensable condition for the possibility of a humanistic ethic is the assumption that man has a nature. Fromm's rejection of a relativism, of whatever description, where man is „nothing but" the product of cultural and other conditions that shape him is equally unambiguous. His remarks on man's nature[33] show that he believed that, strictly speaking, it is only the fact of contradiction and the correlative necessity of a desire for a solution that can be called the essence or nature of man. That the solution manifests {135} itself in a variety of forms of human existence does not mean that these forms are the nature of man.[34] Rather, they are responses to the conflict that is man's nature.[35] It was only at a fairly late date that Fromm seems to have given such an unequivocal formulation to this assertion,

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[26] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 23. See Fromm's personal statement about the way he links theory and clinical observation, in *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a), pp. 9f.

[27] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 24.

[28] Cf. G. B. Hammond, *Man in Estrangement*, p. 39, and pp. 60-66.

[29] „Man Is Not a Thing" (1957a), p. 10.

[30] Cf. Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a), pp. 149-151.

[31] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 20; cf. pp. 55-58.

[32] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 19. On what follows, cf. *The Heart of Man* (1964a), pp.115-117.

[33] See pp. 55-66.

[34] Fromm and Marx disagree on this point.

[35] Cf. *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 117.

Numbers in {those brackets} between the lines indicate the next page in the original book

which has an important bearing on the problem concerning the possibility of objectively binding values. In *Man for Himself,* he still maintained that „the drive to live is inherent in every organism"[36] and observed: „Existence and the unfolding of the specific powers of an organism are one and the same. All organisms have the tendency to actualize their specific potentialities. The aim of man's life, therefore, is to be understood as the unfolding of his powers according to the laws of his nature."[37]

In contrast to this substantive definition of the contradiction that characterizes man's nature and the urge to solve it,[38] Fromm later wrote: „Man has no innate 'drive for progress' but is driven by the need to solve his existential contradiction which arises again at every new level of development."[39] At the very least, this means that progress and the productive unfolding of man's inherent potentialities cannot necessarily be inferred directly from the observation of human expressions and modes of behavior and of the nature of man as revealed in them. Nor does the knowledge of man's nature thus understood make apparent what may be characterized as man's highest substantive value and what is to be defined as good and evil from the perspective of that value. Objectively valid norms thus do not simply result from man's nature.

In his later publications, Fromm defined his concept of man's essence or nature more precisely and showed its importance for the grounding of ethics. He did this by formulating human needs that proceed directly from man's nature and represent inalienable areas of responsibility.[40] Beyond that, the concept of human nature tells us something about the possibility of ethics in general, as it does about the creator of ethics. If man's essence or nature is understood as the contradiction between his existence in nature and his transcendence of nature (which is due to self-awareness, reason, and imagination) along with the necessity of answering this contradiction, then ethics is grounded in man's nature and the human being with self-awareness, reason, and imagination is capable of producing an ethics. That man can make ethical statements is thus given with his nature. {136}

The how--that is, how man must respond to the contradiction he experiences--has its basis in human nature only in a formal sense: the formulation of the construct of the „how"[41] is possible only by a human being who possesses consciousness of self, reason, and imagination. It is in the real world that this construct must prove its validity. But the definition of man's nature alone does not enough guarantee the correctness of this construct.[42] Although man's nature can only be shown to be man's dichotomy between nature and reason and is therefore the concept of an aim,[43] man's nature can also be described as a core that persists through all manifestations and forms of behavior. The tension between these two ways of understanding man's nature must be maintained if a „science of man" in Fromm's sense is to be possible. Formally, the „how" therefore has its basis in man's nature in the sense that the specifically human qualities constitute the distinctiveness of human nature and are simultaneously the condition for the possibility of assuming that creative responsibility that is man's because of his specific human qualities.

The Path Toward the Knowledge of objectively Valid Norms and Values

Since Fromm in his later publications takes a more nuanced view of the way norms and values are grounded, he can no longer simply write „that our

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[36] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 18.

[37] Ibid., pp. 19f.

[38] Cf. the critique by A. Gewirth, *Review,* 290f.

[39] „The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory" (1965c), p. 220.

[40] Cf. pp. 60-66.

[41] The term „construct" is intended to convey what Fromm calls „model of human nature" (cf. p. 133). Cf. also Fromm's concept of „rational vision" in *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 205.

[42] Cf. *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), pp. 89-92.

[43] Cf. p.133f.

knowledge of man's nature ... leads to the conviction that the sources of norms for ethical conduct are to be found in man's nature itself."[44] Yet he continues to maintain that objectively valid values can be discovered. An essential presupposition for this discovery is the comprehensive knowledge of man. What is also needed is the adoption of a highest value by which all other data and values would be judged.

It should be stated here that „objectively valid" is not the same thing as „absolute."[45] Rather, objective validity means the maximal congruence of the model (theory, hypothesis, „rational vision") and its verification by observable facts.[46] It is precisely this path that Fromm takes as he searches for a general principle of value[47] by which all observable expressions and modes of behavior can be judged and whose objective validity will be proved when an answer that is adequate to man's nature is discovered. For Fromm, the supposition „that it is desirable that a living system should {137} grow and produce the maximum of vitality and intrinsic harmony, that is, subjectively, of well-being"[48] is such a general principle of value-the sole premise that must be posited to arrive at objectively valid norms. The actual principle of value in this premise is growth and unfolding that lead to the goal, inner harmony or wellbeing. This goal is not the necessary content of the premise, but is directly given with the definition of man's nature as contradictory being.

In Fromm's other formulations also, it is the unfolding and growth of man's potentialities and capacities that is the general principle of value by which the phenomena of life can be judged and objectively valid norms and values found. „Valuable or good is all that which contributes to the greater unfolding of man's specific faculties and furthers life."[49] All the responses man makes to his needs that can be qualified as good „have in common that they are consistent with the very nature of life, which is continuous birth and growth."[50] And to the question concerning man's wellbeing: „What is the optimal functioning of the system 'man?'" Fromm answers, „It means the optimal development of all his faculties, minimal friction and waste of energy within man, between man and man, and between man and his environment."[51]

Fromm knows that the value he ascribes to the growth and unfolding of man's potentialities places him squarely in the tradition of all the great humanistic religions (he names Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam[52]) and of the humanist philosophers from the pre-Socratics to the present (he refers to Aristotle, Spinoza, and John Dewey[53]). At the same time, he takes a strong stand against all attempts to make what is technically possible the general principle of value. Such attempts supplant „man and the unfolding of all of man's potentialities" as a principle of value with one according to which „one ought to do whatever it is technically possible to do,"[54] and the goal is no longer the well-being of man but technical realizability.[55] The

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[44] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 7.

[45] Ibid., p. 16.

[46] Cf. also Fromm's statement in *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a): „... believing in the superior value of blending empirical observation with speculation ... I have always tried to let my thinking be guided by the observation of facts, and have striven to revise my theories when the observation seemed to warrant it" (p. 9) Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 204-206.

[47] *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), p. 89.

[48] Ibid., p. 91.

[49] Ibid., p. 89. See the very similar formulation in *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 20: „Good in humanistic ethics is the affirmation of life, the unfolding of man's powers."

[50] „Values, Psychology, and Human Existence" (1959b), p. 162.

[51] „Humanistic Planning" (1970e), in (1971a), p. 85.

[52] The Revolution of Hope (1968a), p. 89.

[53] *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 25-30.

[54] „Humanistic Planning" (1970e), p. 80; cf. „Zur Theorie und Strategie des Friedens" (1970h), pp. 242f.

[55] In a similar way, Fromm also criticizes the current „fairness ethics" according to which fairness, as ethical principle, governs the life of the marketing-oriented personality (see *The Sane Society* [1955a], pp. 172-174).

rightness of the humanistic principle of value as compared to the technical, for example--both being premises initially--only becomes clear in the application of these principles to the goal of any ethic, the art of life. That means that the validity of the posited general principle of value is proved when these norms enable man to lead an optimal life. Fromm undertook to prove the objective validity of norms and values and {138} of the general principle of value that determines them when he recognized that man's modes of conduct are the expression of specific orientations of the character structure.[56] His analysis of the modes of response to existential needs showed that there are two fundamental orientations and character structures that constitute two utterly different possible answers-the productive and the nonproductive orientation-and two kinds of syndrome-the syndrome of growth and the syndrome of decay, which are characterized by biophilia and necrophilia, respectively. Both possibilities determine individual and social health and sickness, suffering and joy, regression and progression, life and death, function and dysfunction of the system „man." The objective validity of the value „productive love," for example, and of the ethical norms derived from it, according to which man must establish a productive and loving relationship to his fellow man, is proved by the fact that only the productive orientation does optimal justice to the need for relatedness because it optimally develops human potentialities. This proof through the need for a relatedness that stems from man's nature simultaneously justifies the general principle of value that is not contained in a statement about that nature and according to which the good is defined as that which brings about and guarantees the growth and the unfolding of human capacities. Therefore it is possible to arrive at objectively valid norms and values as one advances toward this proof, and „to design a model of character struc-

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[56] Cf. Part One of this study, and „Values, Psychology, and Human Existence" (1959b), pp. 162-164; *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), pp. 89-92; „Humanistic Planning" (1970e), pp. 85f.

ture that is conducive to optimal functioning and minimal waste of energy."[57] With his characterology, Fromm satisfied this demand of a humanistic ethic. The result of his research was that humanistic ethics is identical with a „biophilic ethics."[58]

Man's Capacity for the Moral

Fromm defines man's nature as contradiction from which the various human needs result. It is therefore part of man's nature to respond to these needs. The analysis of the various responses has shown that, fundamentally, two antithetical responses are possible, both of which express the corresponding character structure. It can be demonstrated that the response whose content is the {139} growth and unfolding of man's possibilities can be considered good and therefore ethically normative.

Far from all human beings have subscribed to this general principle of the value of growth and unfolding. They have decided, or were urged to decide, in favor of a different answer. Therefore the question remains whether man truly has the capacity to shape his life in accordance with the principles of a humanistic ethic, or whether he is determined by facts or factors that exclude this possibility either in principle or accidentally. This raises the question concerning man's freedom. The answer to the question concerning man's capacity to act morally is of decisive import for the future of mankind, as well as for the justification of *any* ethic, and a humanistic ethic in particular,

The Question Concerning Man's Potential Goodness

Our analyses of the various character orientations, and even more, their coordination with character structures, have shown that there are fundamentally two categories of response to human needs, a pro-

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[57] „Humanistic Planning" (1970e), p. 86.
[58] *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 47.

gressive and a regressive one, and that the degree of progressiveness or regressiveness can vary.[59] In the regressive response, „man attempts to find again harmony with nature by regressing to a pre-human form of existence, eliminating his specifically human qualities of reason and love."[60] In the progressive response, „his goal is the full development of his human powers until he reaches a new harmony with his fellow man and with nature."[61] Man is capable of both responses, as the multiplicity of human character orientations and their mixtures show. This multiplicity also makes it apparent that the degree of progressive or regressive orientation of the character structure varies among individuals and within each individual, depending on whether his specifically human qualities unfold or atrophy. According to the general principle of value that good is defined as what *serves* growth and the unfolding of human potentialities, and evil as what prevents this, man has the choice between good and evil to the extent that he is capable of progression and regression. „Man is inclined to regress *and* to move forward; this is another way of saying he is inclined to good *and* to evil."[62]

The question that has been debated for centuries in Western philosophy and theology--is man basically evil and corrupt or {140} good and perfect?[63]--is rejected by Fromm as a false alternative if it means to address itself to man's nature; for „the essence of man is neither the good nor the evil, neither love nor hate, but a contradiction which demands the search for new solutions-either in a regressive or a progressive way."[64] The real question is what factors, determinants, and conditions can be held responsible for one man's reacting progres-

sively, and another's negatively to the contradiction of his life, and to what extent are these givens unmodifiable so that they determine man's capacity for the moral?

The Determinants of Man's Capacity for the Moral

Against the background of the classical distinctions „makeup vs. environment" or „constitutional vs. acquired," and using his knowledge of the extent to which man can be molded, Fromm makes the following judgment: „I believe that only exceptionally is a man born as a saint or as a criminal. Most of us have dispositions for good and for evil, although the respective weight of these dispositions varies with individuals. Hence, our fate is largely determined by those influences which mold and form the given dispositions."[65] „Dispositions" refer to temperament, talent, and other constitutional givens.[66] The justification for Fromm's judgment that these psychological givens are relatively insignificant in determining an individual's choice of good or evil stems from his insight into man's incomparably stronger conditioning by factors that only become effective in the course of his psychic development and thus make him what he is. Under the concept „character,"[67] Fromm subsumes all those psychic qualities that, though rooted in the soil of constitutional dispositions, derive their specific orientation from particular influences that mold them. A discussion of the determinants of the capacity for the moral, therefore, involves a more narrow question: What significance does character, its dependence on influences, and its structure have for the capacity for the moral?

The family has the most important influence on character molding. „But the family itself is mainly an agent of society, the transmission belt for those values and norms which a society wants to impress on its members. Hence, the most important

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[59] The concepts „progression" and „regression," which Fromm used especially in his later works, imply the same thing as the terms „productive/nonproductive," „biophilic/necrophilic," „syndrome of growth and syndrome of decay."
[60] *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a), pp. 174f. .
[61] Ibid.
[62] *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 149.
[63] Ibid., pp. 19-21.
[64] Ibid., p. 121.

[65] *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a), p. 177.
[66] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 50.
[67] See p. 27f.

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factor for the development of the individual is the structure and the values of the society into which he has been born."[68] However, the importance {141} of socioeconomic conditions in shaping character becomes apparent only through particular character dynamics and because character functions as a substitute for instinct.[69] For if character is „the (relatively permanent) form in which human energy is channeled in the process of assimilation and socialization,"[70] it is this character that accounts for the decisions every individual has to make because of his nature. Fromm therefore speaks of character structure's governing man's decisions in the sense that man always prefers those values that correspond to his character structure. „The biophilous, life-loving person will decide for biophilous values, and the necrophilous person for necrophilous ones. Those who are in between will try to avoid a clear choice, or eventually make a choice according to the dominant forces in their character structure."[71]

If character structure is thus determinative of man's decisions but a specific character orientation is by definition something man has acquired, both good and evil are potentialities. Man is capable of both. In accordance with the premise that good is the growth and unfolding of man's capacities of reason and love and it is only in and through the development of those capacities that man attains full humanity, the regressive response to the contradiction in man's nature emerges as a possibility only when the progressive response is not or cannot be given.[72] For that reason, only man can be

evil: „Evil is man's loss of himself in the tragic attempt to escape the burden of his humanity."[73]

If good or evil stems from a corresponding character structure and orientation, and human energy is therefore channeled into a good or an evil (i.e., progressive or regressive) form, an individual may commit himself to so regressive a use of his energy that eventually a progressive (biophilic) response is no longer possible. While such a person cannot be called nonhuman, he is profoundly unhuman in his decisions and reactions.[74] An individual who has realized his capacities for reason and love to the highest degree, on the other hand, will no longer be capable of reacting destructively, narcissistically, necrophilically, or in some other regressive fashion. He also is governed by his character structure to the extent that he can hardly respond except progressively.[75] Such a person is closest to the goal of a humanistic ethic and therefore the goal of human development itself because, through the unfolding of his {142} specifically human qualities, he realizes in the best possible way man's new harmony with nature.

Character or Instinct as Determinant of Man's Capacity for the Moral: The Dispute with Konrad Lorenz

Fromm's understanding of character as a substitute for (animal) instinct[76] and as the decisive determinant of man's capacity for the moral stands in sharp opposition to two current views that derive from biologistic thought. One is the Freudian theory that character is shaped by an instinctlike libido organization and that there are two equally fundamental

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[68] *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962a), p. 177. Cf. also the comments on the social character pp. 18-22.

[69] On both points of view, cf. pp. 29-31.

[70] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 59.

[71] *The Revolution of Hope* (1968a), p. 91.

[72] As early as 1941, Fromm wrote as follows on destructiveness *(Escape from Freedom* [1941a], p. 184): „It seems that if this tendency [to unfold life] is thwarted the energy directed toward life undergoes a process of decomposition and changes into energies directed toward destruction. In other words: the drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in a reversed interdepend-

ence. The more the drive toward life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive toward destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life."

[73] *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 148.

[74] Cf. ibid., p. 150.

[75] Cf. the schematic presentation of the syndrome of growth and the syndrome of decay, p. 54.

[76] See pp. 29-31.

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instincts, Eros and the death instinct, that are in conflict with each other. The other is the view of human behavior that starts off from instinctual behavioral mechanisms that can be observed in the animal world and transfers those mechanisms to man. We have already dealt with Fromm's opposition to Freudian theory.[77] Now we will take up his dispute with behavioral research, specifically with the opinions of Konrad Lorenz.[78]

„For Lorenz, as for Freud, human aggressiveness is an instinct fed by an ever-flowing fountain of energy and not necessarily the result of a *reaction* to outside stimuli."[79] Aggression is understood by Lorenz as a drive that, in its destructive orientation, is „a spontaneously arising and growing quantity of excitement whose goal is the destruction of objects, that increases more and more even when controlled and that must ultimately lead to an explosion."[80] In analogy to the pressure created by water or steam in a closed container that eventually causes overflow or rupture, Lorenz' model of aggression has' been called „hydraulic." In the animal kingdom, this aggressive drive serves life positively, as intraspecific aggression, because it assures the survival of the individual or the species. It serves life all the more insofar as in the evolutionary process deadly aggression is transformed into a behavior made up of symbolic and ritual threats that fulfill the same function.

This aggressive drive--which is to be positively valued--is the origin of human aggression. According to Lorenz, there is no destructive instinct that was passed on from animal to man because there is

no reason to believe that such an instinct exists in the animal kingdom.[81] The reason for human destructiveness must {143} therefore lie in a distinctive development of the human species that transformed the life-preserving aggressive drive into destructive aggression. Lorenz hypothesizes that this occurred in the early Stone Age when the improvement of weapons and clothing and the growth of social organization reduced the importance of those natural factors that influence selection (hunger, cold, wild beasts). A negative intraspecific selection whose principal ingredient was war between hostile neighboring tribes now set in.[82]

Lorenz' thesis combines two elements: „The first is that animals as well as men are innately endowed with aggression, serving the survival of the individual and the species. ... The other element, the hydraulic character of dammed-up aggression, is used to explain the murderous and cruel impulses of man (but little supporting evidence is presented)."[83] Lorenz assumes a transformation of the originally defensive and life-preserving aggression in man into a destructive one that expresses itself as an innate destructive drive even when there are no external conditions to stimulate it. „The so-called evil in animals becomes a real evil in man, even though, according to Lorenz, its roots are not evil."[84] To give rein to this inherent destructiveness, man creates conditions in which he can satisfy his innate and ever-increasing destructiveness.[85]

The consequences of such a view of human destructiveness for a humanistic ethic and for the future of mankind are obvious, so it is not surprising that Fromm should have turned quite decisively against it. To begin with, he criticizes the fact that the concept of aggression is inadequately nuanced

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[77] See pp. 18-26 and 49f.

[78] On what follows, cf. Fromm, „Epilogue" (1970g); „Zur Theorie and Strategie des Friedens (1970h), pp. 19-22; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), esp. pp. 16-32. For the extensive secondary literature on Konrad Lorenz, see J. Rattner, *Aggression and menschliche Natur* (with extensive bibliography), esp. pp. 26-55.

[79] *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), pp. 16f.

[80] „Zur Theorie and Strategic des Friedens" (1970h), p. 23.

[81] On this point, Konrad Lorenz' approach differs fundamentally from Freud's death instinct. Cf. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), pp. 19f.

[82] Cf. K. Lorenz, *On Aggression.*

[83] *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), p. 19.

[84] Ibid., p. 20.

[85] „Zur Theorie and Strategic des Friedens" (1970h), p. 24.

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and points to the fundamental difference between kinds of destructive human behavior. Aggression can be either reactive, or sadomasochistic or necrophilic.[86] However, it is Lorenz's hypothesis of an instinctive destructiveness that Fromm subjects to decisive criticism. The opposite hypothesis, held principally by American behaviorists, is that destructiveness is always either the consequence of frustration or learned. In their view, destructiveness can be explained by social or environmental influences and is not part of man's organism.

Neurophysiological knowledge renders both positions untenable.[87] „The solution lies in the assumption that a readiness to be aggressive is inherent in human physiology but that this aggression does not express itself spontaneously or that it constantly intensifies like sexuality but that it must be mobilized by specific {144} stimuli. When such stimuli are not present, aggression does not manifest itself at all because it is always being kept in check by the simultaneously operating inhibiting tendency that has its own center in the brain, neurophysiologically speaking."[88] Therefore neither the thesis that proposes spontaneous self-stimulation nor the one that postulates growing excitement (hydraulic model) is acceptable. The mere fact that the degree of destructiveness varies from one individual to the next, and between cultures, should make one skeptical about the hydraulic model. The important question here concerns stimuli or occasions.[89] In the case of the animal, stimuli are the preservation of

its own life or that of its species, concern for its young, access to animals of the opposite sex, access to sources of food-all vital interests. When these interests are directly threatened, defensive aggression sets in. Man responds aggressively to the same basic stimuli, except that observation shows he reacts incomparably more aggressively and destructively. The reasons he does so lie in his specific situation and specific human qualities.[90] Man can foresee dangers, which means that not just direct but also foreseeable future threats prompt his reactive or defensive aggression. A second characteristic is man's capacity to create symbols and values with which he identifies to such a degree that a threat to them becomes a threat to his vital interests. A third is man's capacity for idolatry, which becomes a necessity in certain phases of development if he wishes to survive spiritually; when such idolatry is questioned, he experiences this as an attack on his vital interests. Finally, various kinds of education and ideologies, using methods that range all the way down to brainwashing, can suggest vital interests to man. This all goes to show that the real problems of reactive aggression are psychological, social, and economic: „The real psychological problems here are: the problem of man's dependence on his idol, a missing critical attitude, suggestibility and all that is connected with a lack of full spiritual development. But all these factors are themselves the result of earlier social structures that were based on the principle of exploitation and force, that continue to be so based and had to be so based because the productive forces were underdeveloped."[91]

A second kind of aggression is peculiar to man. Fromm calls this aggression sadomasochistic to distinguish it from reactive {145} aggression, which, while it takes its own form in man, is nonetheless identical in principal with animal aggression.[92] Sa-

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[86] See pp. 41-43. The reasoning by analogy from animal to man, the incorrectness of which Fromm demonstrates repeatedly (cf. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* [1973a], pp. 20-26), is part of this critique of Konrad Lorenz. The danger of such reasoning was exemplified by Lorenz himself when, in a newspaper article in 1940, he sought to legitimize the Nuremberg racial laws.

[87] Cf. „Zur Theorie and Strategic des Friedens" (1970h), pp. 24f; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), pp. 89-101.

[88] „Zur Theorie and Strategic des Friedens" (1970h), p. 25.

[89] For what follows, see ibid., pp. 25-28.

[90] Cf. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), pp. 188-209.

[91] „Zur Theorie and Strategic des Friedens" (1970h), pp. 27f.

[92] Ibid., pp. 28f; *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973a), pp. 268-299.

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domasochistic destructiveness is rooted in the feeling of impotence that results from the specific human situation, and articulates itself as the need for transcendence to which the individual reacts nonproductively when he sets out to acquire power over others through sadistic and cruel means.

Finally, there is necrophilic destructiveness, which, like sadomasochistic aggression, is observed only in human beings.[93] A person with this orientation is fascinated by nonlife, decay, disease; by what is dead. His goal is not power or omnipotence but destruction for its own sake. Necrophilic destructiveness is the precise opposite of all biophilic strivings, and also of that aggression that is directed toward the preservation of vital interests.

For the question being discussed here, it is important to note that there are specific forms and kinds of human destructiveness whose conditions lie in man's situation. These must be understood as differently oriented responses to human needs. Since the kind of response that finds expression in a given character orientation can be explained by the factors that mold the character structure, it is unnecessary to hypothesize a destructive drive peculiar to man.[94] Precisely because character is a substitute for (animal) instinct in the sense of molding man toward certain character orientations and a specific character structure, by a habitualization of stimulus and response, the distinctively human types of sadomasochistic and necrophilic destructiveness must be understood as pathological deficiencies in man's powers that owe their existence to certain shaping influences.

This understanding of the etiology of human destructiveness offers the possibility of overcoming these deficient forms because it shows that neither instinct nor a distinctively human destructive drive

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[93] Cf. ibid., pp. 325-368.

[94] As early as 1939, in the article „Selfishness and Self-Love" (1939b), Fromm distinguished between a reactive hatred, where it is the situation that creates the hatred, and a character-conditioned hatred, where an „idling" but ever-ready hostility is „actualized" by the situation. Cf. p. 514.

determines man's actions, but rather a character that is acquired and shaped and for whose shaping man is therefore responsible.

Man's Capacity for Making Choices: Freedom as the Ability to Act in Alternative Ways[95]

If we understand character as the decisive determinant in man's choice between good and evil, and if we realize that character is {146} shaped by factors that usually lie beyond the responsibility of the particular individual, we may well ask to what extent can one even speak of man's capacity and freedom for the moral at all? In traditional treatments of the problem, freedom is usually discussed only as a general or abstract concept, without paying sufficient attention to those determining factors that become relevant in a concrete decision. „The will is not an abstract power of man which he possesses apart from his character. On the contrary, the will is nothing but the expression of his character."[96] Our impression that we have freedom of the will comes from knowing our desires. But the decisive question is not what we consciously will, but what are the mostly unconscious motives that determine this or that wish. „Our motives are an outcome of the particular blend of forces operating in our character."[97] If that is true, can there be such a thing as freedom of the will, or is determinism the only possible posi-

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[95] On what follows, cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 231-237; *The Heart of Man* (1964a), pp. 123-143; *Dialogue with Erich Fromm* (1966f), pp. 93-96. On the parallel between the „alternativism" of Fromm and of Spinoza, Marx, and Freud, cf. *The Heart of Man* (1964a), pp. 126f, 143-148; „The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx's Theory" (1965c), pp. 220f.; *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961b), p. 61; and *Dialogue with Erich Fromm* (1966f), pp. 96-98: „Freud's Model of Man and Its Social Determinants" (1970d), pp. 93f. On the connection between freedom and neurosis, cf. Fromm, „Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism" (1959e), pp. 89f.

[96] *Man for Himself* (1947d), p. 233.

[97] Ibid., p. 232.

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The knowledge that motivations are determined by character must not blind us to the fact that inclinations vary in strength. „The problem of freedom versus determinism is really one of conflict of inclinations and their respective intensities."[98] There are individuals who have lost the capacity for choosing the good (growth, unfolding of one's powers) because their character structure has forfeited the capacity to act in harmony with the good. Such individuals are exclusively determined by inclinations that Fromm calls irrational passions because they represent character traits of nonproductive orientations. The opposite case is a person who can no longer choose evil because his character structure has so dominant a biophilous and productive orientation that he has lost all greed for evil. „In these two extreme cases we may say that both are determined to act as they do because the balance of forces in their character leaves them no choice."[99] If freedom is understood as choice between alternatives, both these individuals are unfree. But in the majority of people, who find themselves between these two extremes, a conflict of inclinations is possible. In them, what actually takes place is the outcome of the differing strengths of their conflicting inclinations: „it is precisely the average man with contradictory inclinations, for whom the problem of freedom of choice exists."[100]

There is another sense in which the concept of freedom is used, {147} and it has nothing to do with freedom of the will or the freedom of choice. Just as one can speak of a loving or independent individual, one can also speak of a free one. What is meant here is a mature, fully developed, productive person. „Freedom in this sense has no reference to a special choice between two possible actions, but to the character structure of the person involved and in this sense the person who `is not free to choose evil' is the completely free person."[101]

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[98] *The Heart of Man* (1964a), pp. 128; cf. 131f.
[99] Ibid., p. 132.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid. Freedom is thus the behavior that is appropriate

Within the framework of questions concerning the capacity and freedom of man to make moral choices, there arises the question as to the factors this freedom depends on, especially when the irrational inclination is stronger. „Man, while like all other creatures subject to forces which determine him, is the only creature endowed with reason, the only being who is capable of understanding the very forces which he is subjected to and who by his understanding can take an active part in his own fate and strengthen those elements which strive for the good."[102] This specifically human quality of reason is the „decisive" factor in the choice of the good; it can be called consciousness or „awareness,"[103] and means these things:

1. „Awareness" of what constitutes good and evil.
2. „Awareness" of what correct action to take in a concrete situation as the suitable means for attaining a desired goal.
3. „Awareness" of the unconscious desire behind the obvious one.
4. „Awareness" of the real possibilities among which one can choose.
5. „Awareness" of the consequences of one's choice.
6. „Awareness" of the fact that all „awareness" is effective only when it is accompanied by the will to act, and „awareness" that one must be prepared to accept the pain of frustration if one acts against one's passions.

Every realization of this specifically human capacity of „awareness" takes us one step further into the freedom to choose good instead of evil. Failure to

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to his specifically human powers: „freedom is nothing other than the capacity to follow the voice of reason, of health, of well-being, of conscience, against the voices of irrational passions" (pp. 130-131). Cf. also „Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism" (1959e), p. 90; „Introduction" (1968g), pp. 14f.
[102] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 233.
[103] Fromm uses the word „awareness" but makes clear that this does not refer to pure theoretical knowledge or opinion but rather to experience, experimenting, observing, gaining a conviction.

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act on such awareness, on the other hand, means a „hardening" of the irrational passions that can ultimately result in their total sway.[104] The power of „awareness" is never omnipotence, however, for it has „decisive" power only within a limited number of „real possibilities" in the sense of {148} alternatives.[105] „The real possibility is one that can materialize, considering the total structure of forces that interact in an individual or a society ."[106] This means that the real possibilities are „determined" by the overall situation and that „the possibility of freedom lies precisely in recognizing which are the real possibilities between which we can choose, and which are the 'unreal possibilities' that constitute our wishful thoughts whereby we seek to spare ourselves the unpleasant task of making a decision between alternatives that are real but unpopular (individually or socially)."[107]

Fromm summarizes his understanding of freedom and the freedom to choose in the following sentences: „man's actions are always caused by inclinations rooted in (usually unconscious) forces operating in his personality. If these forces have reached a certain intensity they may be so strong that they not only incline man but determine him-hence he has no freedom of choice. In those cases where contradictory inclinations effectively operate within the personality there is freedom of choice. This freedom is limited by the existing real possibilities.

These real possibilities are determined by the total situation. Man's freedom lies in his possibility to choose bet4veen the existing real possibilities (alternatives). Freedom in this sense can be defined not as 'acting in the awareness of necessity' but as acting *on the basis of the awareness of alternatives and their consequences.* There is never indeterminism; there is sometimes determinism, and sometimes alternativism based on the uniquely human phenomenon, awareness."[108]

Authoritarian and Humanistic Conscience

Freud „explained" both the genesis and the content of an assumption that has persisted throughout Western culture and that tells us that something in man guides him as he chooses between good and evil.[109] The superego comes into existence when the male child, compelled to renounce his oedipal strivings, identifies with the internalized commands and prohibitions of the father. This „explanation" of conscience as the internalized authority of the father deprives it of all objective validity. And because the essential part of the father's norms is merely the „personal mode of social norms," the upshot is a relativization of all morality. „Each norm has its significance, not because of the validity of its contents {149} but on the basis of the psychological mechanisms by which it is accepted."[110]

How unsatisfactory this view of conscience is becomes apparent in a variety of ways. Investigations of matriarchically structured societies by cultural anthropologists especially have shown that not only the father figure but also the mother figure is essential for the growth and content of conscience. „There is a voice which tells us to do our duty, and a voice which tells us to love and to forgiveothers as well as ourselves."[111] Both the fatherly

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[104] The capacity of „awareness" that enables man to do the good does not exist independently of the character structure. Like any part of that structure, it is determined by the whole and conversely helps determine that whole. The efficacy of „awareness" will be the greater the less it is held captive by irrational passions. But if, as in serious neuroses, irrational passions have an excessive strength, the capacity of „awareness" will remain inoperative because it is determined by those irrational passions. Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 233f.

[105] Cf. *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 139. The use of this concept goes back to Hegel; cf. *Dialogue with Erich Fromm* (1966f), p. 94.

[106] *The Heart of Man* (1964a), p. 140.

[107] Ibid., p. 142.

[108] Ibid., pp. 142f.

[109] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 141-143.

[110] „Freud's Model of Man and Its Social Determinants" (1970d), p. 38.

[111] *The Sane Society* (1955a), p. 47.

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and the motherlyconscience are present in the adult human being as its own father and mother, and both are there as opposing voices. „In contrast to Freud's concept of the superego, however, he [the adult] has built them inside not by incorporating mother and father, but by building a motherly conscience on his own capacity for love, and a fatherly conscience on his reason and judgment. Furthermore, the mature person loves with both the motherly and the fatherly conscience, in spite of the fact that they seem to contradict each other. If he would only retain his fatherly conscience, he would become harsh and inhuman. If he would only retain his motherly conscience, he would be apt to lose judgment ... ."[112]

Beyond the critique of Freud's concept of conscience, it is primarily the relativism implicit in this „explanation" that provokes Fromm's opposition. What is at issue is the question „whether there are any norms whose contents transcend a given social structure and correspond better to the demands of human nature and the laws of human growth."[113] It is true nonetheless that with the assumption of a superego, Freud identified a form of conscience that exists in man. Fromm calls it „authoritarian conscience" and sometimes „heteronomous conscience."[114] Authoritarian conscience is the voice of an internalized external authority (parents, state, public opinion, etc.) that, because it is internalized, is a considerably more effective regulator of conduct, for although man can hide from an external authority, he cannot escape his conscience, which is part of himself. The characteristic aspect of authoritarian conscience (the superego) is that its „prescriptions ... are not determined by one's own value judgments but exclusively by the fact that its commands and tabus are pronounced by authority."[115] In other words, the prescriptions of conscience have {150} validity not because they are good but because they are laid down by authorities. For this

reason, they are a function of the accidents of social structure, of traditions and cultural peculiarities.

Authoritarian conscience is rooted in feelings of fear and admiration of authority. „Good conscience is the consciousness of pleasing (external and internalized) authority.[116] The strength of the authoritarian conscience depends on the character structure: the more symbiotically tied to authorities a person is, the more markedly is his conduct determined by a superego conscience; the more someone has developed his own productive capacities and attained independence, the less he listens to the voice of his authoritarian conscience.

There are certain peculiarities of the contents and hierarchy of values of the authoritarian conscience. „The prime offense in the authoritarian situation is rebellion against the authority's rule. Thus disobedience becomes the 'cardinal sin,' obedience, the 'cardinal virtue.'"[117] For the authoritarian conscience, all disobedience is disobedience toward the authority because the authority alone decides what is good, and what is evil.[118]

Consequently, the person who seeks independence from his symbiotic fixation in order to become productive and self-reliant has a bad conscience, at least until he manages to reduce his symbiotic relatedness to the point where it is no longer the authoritarian conscience that determines his moral feelings but the value of his individuality and integrity that governs his conduct.

This consideration introduces a second kind of conscience, which Fromm calls „humanistic con-

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[112] *The Art of Loving* (1956a), p. 37.
[113] „Freud's Model of Man" (1970d), p. 39.
[114] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 143-158.
[115] Ibid., pp. 144f.

[116] Ibid., p. 146.
[117] Ibid., p. 148.
[118] This characteristic of the internalized authoritarian conscience results in a double role, i.e., to submit to authority and to be compelled to exercise it. „Man thus becomes not only the obedient slave but also the strict taskmaster who treats himself as his own slave" (p. 151). This means that an authoritarian character must always develop a measure of sadism and destructiveness if he is to play the role of taskmaster. Cf. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents.*

science" or „autonomous conscience."[119] „This conscience is an inner voice that calls us back to ourselves. By this 'ourselves' is meant the human core common to all men, that is, certain basic characteristics of man which cannot be violated or negated without serious consequences."[120] The more precise meaning of this „core" was indicated in the comments on man's nature and needs--that is, man is to react productively to the dichotomies of his life by unfolding all his powers and potentialities. „The humanistic conscience is the voice of our self which summons us back to ourselves, to become what we potentially are.[121]

In contrast to the authoritarian conscience, for which good is everything that is obedience to authority, the humanistic conscience {151} sees everything that promotes growth, unfolding, and life as good, and everything that runs counter to this as evil. The criterion for good and evil is man's nature itself, in which the general principle of value, growth, and unfolding proves its validity. The humanistic conscience depends on the degree of development of specifically human powers. The relationship of conscience „to one's own productiveness is one of interaction. The more productively one lives, the stronger is one's conscience and, in turn, the more it furthers one's productiveness. The less productively one lives, the weaker becomes one's conscience; the paradoxicaland tragicsituation of man is that his conscience is weakest when he needs it most."[122]

The forms of expression of a bad humanistic conscience are usually unclear because it „speaks" only indirectly: through a feeling of depression, fatigue, apathy, a vague sense of guilt, an unease that can turn into intense fear, and physical and psycho-

logical illnesses. In many people, dreams are the only chance for the (humanistic) conscience to express itself, for „the dream is the language of universal man"[123] and the place „where we think and feel what we think and feel."[124]

The distinction between authoritarian and humanistic conscience is fully justified, yet in the (average) individual, both are always present at one and the same time; they do not exclude each other. The decisive question, therefore, is their relative strength and interaction. Feelings of guilt often find expression in concepts of the authoritarian conscience (a failure to act, for example), although their dynamics are rooted in the humanistic conscience (the incapacity to free oneself from a symbiotic tie, for example). To attribute guilt feelings to the authoritarian conscience in such a case is to rationalize the claim of the humanistic conscience.[125]

The closeness of the authoritarian and the humanistic conscience is also due to the fact that the contents of norms in the two are often identical, the difference being merely the motives that prompt conscience to speak. Such motives can themselves be subject to an evolutionary process during the course of which the humanistic conscience develops out of the authoritarian one as an individual or a society finds itself and unfolds its productive powers. The possibility for the development of the humanistic conscience then depends on the strength of individual and social {152} authorities. But development will be almost wholly arrested if the conscience reverts to a strict and unshakable irrational authority such as certain religions postulate. „No power transcending man can make a moral claim upon him," Fromm writes from his humanistic perspective. „Man is responsible to him-

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[119] On this, see *Man forHimself* (1947a), pp. 158-172; „Medicine and the Ethical Problem of Modern Man" (1963c) in (1963a), pp. 119-121; *You Shall Be as Gods* (1966a), pp. 54-56; P. A. Bertocci and R. M. Millard, *Personality and the Good*, pp. 81-84.

[120] „Medicine and the Ethical Problem of Modern Man" (1963c), p. 119.

[121] *You Shall Be as Gods* (1966a), p. 55.

[122] *Man for Himself* (1947a), p. 160.

[123] The title of a radio talk by Fromm (1971a).

[124] „Der Traum ist die Sprache des universalen Menschen" (1972a), p. 12. In this connection, cf. the probably incorrect critique of Fromm's view of dreams and his interpretations of them by Medard Boss, *Der Traum und seine Auslegung*, pp. 67-71.

[125] Cf. *Man for Himself* (1947a), pp. 165f.

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self for gaining or losing his life."[126] All decisions are his. They rest „upon his courage to be himself and for himself."[127] Man for himself!

The Meaning of the Humanistic Ethic
for the Discovery of Norms in a Theological Ethic

To set forth the meaning of Fromm's humanistic ethic one needs a comprehensive understanding of his concept of humanism. Such an understanding can only be acquired by analyzing the sources and forms of Fromm's thought, which we will do in the latter part of this study. Although we cannot do justice to his concept of humanism here, what we have said about his humanistic ethic up to this point suffices to relate that ethic to a theological ethic and to make some tentative critical judgments about it. A sketch of the self-understanding of theological ethics as understood by presentday Catholic moral theologians will introduce these considerations.

On the Present Self-Understanding of Theological Ethics

Theoretical reflections suggest that ethics is a science that goes beyond research in the natural sciences because it necessarily has to do with meaning.[128] For this reason, ethics can be called a „hermeneutic science."[129] Its „meaning is not made, it is found, and always presupposed in every decision."[130] To reflect on already existing or emerging norms is an essential task of a scientific ethic. But although scientific ethics is principally concerned with what is already there, its interest extends beyond reflection

on the factual validity of norms because the postulate that calls for responsibility and obedience vis-à-vis already existing norms is not all there is. Scientific ethics aims at the grounding of norms and of normativeness through an inquiry into the rationality of norms („normative reason").[131] Showing how norms are grounded involves the discovery and the rationale of norms.[132] {153}

Norms are human creations, which means that man is responsible for them. It must be possible to advance valid reasons for norms, that is, „the rationality of the grounds on which normative decisions, valuations and convictions rest must be demonstrable."[133] It is only on this premise that „normative reason can be thought of as reason, that normative procedures are possible as scientific procedures, and that ethics is possible as science."[134] On the basis of this scientific and theoretical self-understanding of ethics as a science of meaning, the following constitutive elements may be noted: Ethics as a science begins with the unreflected anterior understanding of what morality is and „initially sets forth moral demands and how they are grounded in a historical nexus of meaning in what is essentially a fact-finding process."[135] Ethics attempts to show that the prescientific understanding of the moral is rational, and to justify that understanding scientifically. This occurs in a „continuing collaboration between ethics and the human and social sciences on the one hand, and philosophical anthro-

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[126] Ibid., p. 170.
[127] ibid., p. 250.
[128] On this, see A. Auer, „Ein Modell theologisch-ethischer Argumentation: 'Autonome Moral,'„ pp. 28-41; W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, pp. 26-28; Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 9-11.
[129] Auer, „Ein Modell theologisch-ethischer Argumentation: 'Autonome Moral,'„ p. 31.
[130] Ibid., p. 30.

[131] Cf. W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, pp. 18f.
[132] As regards the distinction between the process of discovering norms and the grounding of the meaning of norms, see also the distinction between grounding and ultimate grounding of norms and between the „natural and the theological grounding of the normative": in W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 42. The pair of concepts being used here, „the discovery of norms" and the „grounding of norms," was adopted from A. Auer, „Tendenzen heutiger theologischer Ethik."
[133] W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 27.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., p. 41; cf. A. Auer, „Ein Modell ...", p. 32.

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pology on the other."[136] The goal is the awareness of those positive and normative criteria that operate in moral demands. As a science, finally, ethics proposes to confront the meanings, values, and structures of the world (normative potency)[137] that it has discovered in its collaboration with the other disciplines with the „normative explicatiors"[138] in existing moral demands, and to develop out of that confrontation a critical distance from the moral norms as articulated in any anterior understanding.

All this can be accomplished by ethics as a science where the discovery of norms is concerned. But where it is a matter of the ultimate grounding of the meaning of ethical norms and where their claim to bindingness is to be established, the limitations of such a nontheological ethics become apparent and the task of a theological ethics emerges. For an ethics that excludes the dimension of faith cannot „go beyond logical and ethical criteria of validity and identify some ultimate and absolute order that applies to all action."[139] It is precisely a theological ethics that seeks an ultimate meaning-conferring ground for all being and action.[140] The assumption of such a „meta-empirical, meta-logical, theonomous meaning"[141] is constitutive when „definitive conditions, ways and goals of what human beings can and should be"[142] are articulated. But theonomy must not be understood as even the {154} final material norm, and is therefore not heteronomous. Theological ethics does not contradict the autonomy of ethics but is simply concerned with the conditions under which ethics is possible.

The scientific and theoretical postulates of ethics and theological ethics lead to a specific *understanding of the moral* that, under the concept „autonomous morality," is currently the subject of animated discussion, at least in the theological ethics of Catholic provenance.[143] The question is how the moral in a theological ethic becomes binding. In contrast to a position that stipulates that the bindingness of the moral is solely grounded in faith, and therefore postulates specifically Christian norms that can only be understood and realized in and through faith,[144] the exponents of an „autonomous morality" follow Thomas Aquinas[145] and view the moral as constituted in human reason. Moral norms must be accessible to rational reflection if their content is to be morally binding. For this reason, the exponents of „autonomous morality" view the content of morality „as autonomous in the sense that the specifically Christian does not originally and authentically determine, modify or add to it."[146]

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136 Ibid., pp. 32f.

137 Cf. W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 41; and A. Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, p. 22. „It is thus the task of ethics to translate into the language of bindingness the insights into reality, into its significant forms and structures of order, and to transform indicatives about reality into imperatives for action."

138 Cf. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 41.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid., pp. 41, 27; Cf. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 70-79; and Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, p. 27.

141 W. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, p. 73.

142 Ibid., p. 70.

143 A general overview of the development of Catholic moral theology in our time is in F. Furger, *Zur Begründung eines christlichen Ethos--Forschungstendenzen in der katholischen Moraltheologie*, and A. Auer, „Tendenzen heutiger theologischer Ethik."

144 Other positions that see the bindingness of the moral grounded in revelation, in tradition, in „nature," in the teaching of the church or other „authorities" need not be considered here because they must refer to the positions of the *Glaubensethik* or to that of „autonomous morality" if they are going to define the grounding nexus more closely; or they must define the moral apodictically or positivistically, which would mean that they would fail to fulfill their task of grounding the moral in its claim to be binding. A presentation of such „authoritarian" views of the moral is in A. K. Ruf. *Grundkurs Moraltheologie, Vol. I, Gesetz and Norm*.

145 Cf. A. Auer, „Die Autonomie des Sittlichen nach Thomas von Acquin."

146 F. Böckle, „Glaube and Handeln," p. 32. Discussions about the moral in Christianity are as old as the history of the Christian mission: the discussion centers

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around what is specifically Christian. But during the last few decades, it has been especially historical findings and the discoveries of the modern human sciences that have called into question the understanding of the moral. As „autonomous morality," it again became a topic of discussion. Franz Böckle (p. 30, n. 37) has the debate about the specific characteristics of a Christian ethic within theological ethics begin with a scientific meeting of the *Societas Ethica* in Lund in 1966. (But cf. the comments and bibliographical material in F. Furger, *Zur Begründung eines christlichen Ethos--Forschungstendenzen in der katholischen Moraltheologie*, esp. p. 15, n. 13, and p. 85, n. 174; and A. Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, pp. 160-184). The following contributions can be considered especially productive of further discussion (additional literature in F. Böckle, „Glaube and Handeln," p. 30, n. 37; p. 32, n. 40, where an [incomplete] listing of representatives of an „autonomous morality" can be found): F. Böckle, „Was ist das Proprium einer christlichen Ethik?"; W. van der Marck, *Grundzüge einer christlichen Ethik;* J. Fuchs, „Gibt es eine spezifisch christliche Moral?" J. Gründel, „Ethik ohne Normen? Zur Begründung and Struktur christlicher Ethik"; A. Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube;* „Ein Modell theologisch ethischer Argumentation: 'Autonome Moral' „, „Die ethische Relevanz der Botschaft Jesu"; W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit;* B. Schüller, *Die Begründung sittlicher Urteile;* „Zur Diskussion um das Proprium einer christlichen Ethik," esp. pp. 322-334; D. Mieth, „Autonome Moral im christlichen Kontext." In addition, see the contributions in J. Gründel, F. Rauh, V. Eid, eds., *Humanum (Festschrift Egenter);* and K. Demmer and B. Schüller, eds., *Christlich glauben and handeln (Festschrift Fuchs).* Because Alfons Auer's views on „autonomous morality" provoked the most intense discussion, the comments below are primarily statements of his opinions. They have recently been presented in A. Auer, „Die Bedeutung des Christlichen bei der Normfindung," and in *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube* (1977). In the latter essay, all contributions that are relevant to the subject are listed. Auer also enumerates all those others who, in his opinion, represent an „autonomous morality in the Christian context." He names J. Fuchs, F. Böckle, B. Schüller, D. Mieth, R. Hofmann, St. Pfürtner, B. Fraling, H. Juros, Th. Styczen, P. Hofmann, V. Eid, H. Rotter, E. McDonagh, and W. Korff.

According to Alfons Auer, the moral can be defined as yea-saving to the claim that reality makes on the individual.[147] The concept „reality" *(realitas)* means „a being that presses toward unfolding and perfection";[148] thus it implies a dynamics of self-realization. To the extent that it is perceived by man, reality is personal, social, and material. And because it can only be experienced within the horizon of history, it is always historical.[149] If the moral is understood as yea-saving to the given historical reality, the moral has a dvnamic character and „concrete ethical norms cannot be seen as immutable but are subject to historical change.[150]

With his reason, man has been given the capacity to perceive the claim of reality, its values, meanings, and structures. The rationality and intentionality of reality enable the *animal rationale* to perceive the claim of reality. The moral as yea-saying to the claim of reality thus has a „rational structure"[151] and the bindingness of the moral does not derive from the demand of an irrational authority but from its own rationality. The rationality of reality--that is, of both the reality of the pcrceiving subject and the reality of its object that makes possible the rationality of the moral--is possible only as historical rationality. This entails a necessary {155} „perspectivism of moral insight" and „varied forms of the moral."[152] „The rationality of the moral also means its autonomy."[153] If the moral does not have its ground and its reason (principium) in belief in God but rather in that rationality of the real that also governs man's reason, the moral is autonomous because it is posited by reason and grounded in it.[154]

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[147] Cf. Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, pp. 16f.
[148] Ibid., p. 35.
[149] Cf. ibid., pp. 17-21.
[150] A. Auer, „Ein Modell ...", p. 35.
[151] Cf. ibid.; *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, p. 29; „The rationality of the moral results from man's rational nature."
[152] Auer, „Ein Modell ...", p. 29.
[153] Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, p. 29.
[154] Ibid., pp. 132f, 32f.

The postulate of the autonomy of the moral affects the understanding of the process by which norms are discovered. The rationality of the real in the moral can be articulated only if the following ythree constitutive elements are taken into account: (1) without a base in the human sciences and (2) anthropological integration, there can be (3) no ethical norms.[155]

From the point of view of Christian and theological ethics, the autonomy of the moral in the process of the discovery of norms means that there is nothing uniquely and distinctively Christian in concrete ethical statements precisely because what is moral is determined by the rationality of the real.'[156]

When people speak of the autonomy of the moral, it must be made clear that they cannot refer to the absolute autonomy of the world and of morality. The autonomy of the moral is implicit in the autonomy of reality, but this autonomy „is possible because of certain transcendent relations. ... These relations do not adversely affect the self-subsistence of the world although they ground it.“[157] When autonomous morality is discussed, what is meant is always a „relational autonomy,[158] not a secularist understanding of autonomy. On the basis of such an understanding of autonomy, the specific characteristic of a theological ethics turns out to be a horizon of meaning that is grounded in faith and relevant in both the discovery and the grounding of norms.

Although what is specifically Christian is morality should not be looked for in concrete ethical in-

junctions, it is true nonetheless that a specific horizon of meaning that is grounded in the faith prompts the Christian to adopt a specific ethical position. And his ethical conduct also is motivated by this horizon. Regarding the process of discovery of ethical norms, the „autonomous morality“ speaks of a critical, stimulating, and integrating effect of the new horizon of meaning that Jesus' life and teaching opened up for the Christian.[159] Jesus' call for conversion (Mark 1, 15), for example, is „primarily motivated by the divine compassion that becomes {156} manifest in Jesus himself“[160] and leads to his fundamental criticism of the prevailing morality because that morality is marked by legalistic rigidity, cultic self-assurance, hypocrisy and self-righteousness, excessive preoccupation with material well-being, and a hardened attitude toward social concerns.[161] The critical effect of Jesus' message here consists in a new attitude toward the norms that may mean both a critique of the Torah and greater rigor in its application.

For „autonomous morality,“ what is uniquely and distinctively Christian in morality does not lie „in concrete ethical instructions that are developed from an understanding of the faith“[162] but in a specific horizon of meaning peculiar to the faith that motivates the Christian in his concrete ethical acts and therefore prompts a different attitude toward autonomously developed demands.

The distinctive quality of a theological ethic becomes apparent when the autonomy of the moral is given its ultimate ground. „The autonomous human rationality that guides action is ultimately theonomously grounded,“[163] not to establish a heteronomous claim over man and his world but, on the contrary, to create the conditions for the possibility of man's belief in man, in his autonomy, and in his intrinsic worth.

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[155] Cf. ibid., pp. 39-48.

[156] Cf. F. Böckle, „Unfehlbare Normen?“ pp. 287, 289: „Norms which are meant to directly govern our responsible behavior toward man and world must be open to rational human insight as a matter of principle... There are mysteries of the faith but there can be no mysterious moral norms of action whose rightness in interpersonal action would not be clearly understandable and unambiguously determinable.“

[157] Auer, *Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, p. 173.

[158] Cf. A. Auer, „Ein Modell ...“, p. 173.

[159] Cf. especially A. Auer, „Die ethische Relevanz der Botschaft Jesu.“

[160] Ibid., p. 59.

[161] Cf. ibid., pp. 60-67.

[162] A. Auer, „Ein Modell ...“, p. 42.

[163] W. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 34f.

As understood by Christians, theonomy is precisely not heteronomy but the condition for the possibility of autonomy.[164] But the compatibility of theonomy and autonomy is not only the precondition for the Christian attempt to ground the rationality of the autonomy of the moral in something ultimate, for it is only the theonomous relation that creates the „unconditional ethical dignity"[165] of human autonomy. It is true that man's reason has an inherent dynamics of self-affirmation and self-determination. But the conviction that human life is an unconditional value and that human dignity is inviolable does not suffice to ground an unconditional moral demand. To find the unconditionality of autonomous morality convincing „requires grounds that are anterior to anthropological reason and ground it. These grounds reveal themselves to man only in that transcending faith through which he recognizes God as the ultimate ground of meaning and as the God who became incarnate so that humanness might participate in his own absolute meaning."[166]

Thomas Aquinas was the first to make a comprehensive attempt {157} at „autonomous morality in the Christian context,"[167] at theonomously grounding man's dignity and the autonomy of the moral in an ultimate rationality.[168] In his teaching on the law *(lex)*, he presents an ethical system in which „human normativeness in its logical grounding is understood theologically and ethically in such a way that God is recognized and preserved as the ground and the goal of this normativeness on the one hand, and man as a being that gives norms to itself on the other."[169] The presupposition for this system is the insight that reason is required if the natural order is to be seen as making a moral demand.[170]

The rational character of the moral implies the autonomy of the moral.[171] But this autonomy requires grounding in God's reason, which itself is not grounded but is the ultimate ground. Both the rational character of the moral and God's reason, which ultimately grounds this reason--that is, both the autonomy of the moral and the theonomous ground that makes it possible--are conceived of by Thomas Aquinas as „law" *(lex)*. Because the phenomenon of the law includes both grounding and being grounded, it can serve as an interpretive key that „reflects all normativeness in its validity, its basis and its operation as stemming from the one, encompassing reason of God that alone can create validity since God is both creator and perfector."[172]

A law must always articulate normative reason. In so doing, it mediates „the reason of its author with the reason of those to whom it addresses itself."[173] But although the concept of the law mediates divine and human reason so that all human reason has its ultimate ground in divine reason, the relation of the two remains an analogous one. Divine reason is not simply given to man as law; rather, it is given to his rational understanding. This

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[164] Cf. ibid., pp. 31-33; and A. Auer, *Autonome Moral und christlicher Glaube*, p. 172: „The transcendental causal efficacy of the creator and the dependence this entails do not in any way jeopardize the autonomy of the world. On the contrary, they ground its possibility."

[165] Cf. W. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 37-39, here p. 37.

[166] Ibid., p. 39.

[167] Cf. the essay of the same title by Dietmar Mieth.

[168] On what follows, cf. A. Auer, *Autonome Moral und christlicher Glaube*, pp. 127-131; „Die Autonomie des Sittlichen nach Thomas von Aquin;" W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, pp. 42-61; *Theologische Ethik*, pp. 79-86. In their reception of Thomas Aquinas, both Auer and Korff rely principally on W. Kluxen, *Pkilosophische Ethik bei Thomas von Aquin*, esp. pp. 230-241; and L. Oeing-Hanhoff, „Der Mensch: Natur oder Geschichte?" Cf. also Oeing-Hanhoff, „Thomas von Aquin and die gegenwärtige katholische Theologie," esp. pp. 281-290.

[169] W. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, p. 79.

[170] Cf. Auer, *Autonome Moral und christlicher Glaube*, pp. 128f.

[171] Ibid., p. 130. Auer explicates this autonomy of the moral as autonomy vis-à-vis physiological and biological laws, metaphysics, and the faith.

[172] W. Korff, *Theologische Ethik*, p. 80; cf. *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 49.

[173] W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 49.

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makes the autonomy of the moral possible and preserves man as a being that gives himself norms.[174]

Theologians are increasingly arguing against the assumption of „autonomous morality" according to which moral norms are discovered autonomously by the Christian as well as by everyone else because they are grounded in man's reason. Their contrary belief has been termed *Glaubensethik* (ethics of faith),[175] although the meaning of this term must be inferred from their critique of „autonomous morality" because a systematic exposition of the *Glaubensethische* position that could claim to be taken seriously as {158} an alternative to „autonomous morality" does not yet exist. Besides, a great many of the arguments advanced by the *Glaubensethiker* against autonomous morality stem from misunderstandings and incomprehensions.[176]

The controversy between *Glaubensethik* and „autonomous morality" is sparked by the question „whether living up to moral demands and discovering and implementing those ethical norms that are decisive for the preservation of humanness necessarily require [Christian] belief ... ."[177] The *glaubensethische* position ultimately defines the relation between Christian message and moral reason by saving that Christian morality goes counter to human reason:' The Christian ethos must be capable of avowing a position that human reason will consider paradoxical."[178] A „theonomous ethic" is set against the autonomy of the moral, and the incompatibility of theonomy and autonomy of the moral is noted.[179] The assumption that Christian faith is required to make the moral binding shows scant respect for human „reason as a principle and yardstick of the moral."[180] „Because it lives by the faith, the Christian ethos gives moral action a degree of

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[174] Cf. ibid., p. 61.

[175] The following publications advocate this position, which in the meantime has also come to be the one Germany's Catholic bishops prefer: R. Stoeckle, *Grenzen der autonomen Moral; Handeln aus dem Glauben*, esp. pp. 9-32; „Christlicher Glaube and Ethos der Zukunft"; A. Laun, „Zur Frage einer spezifisch christlichen Ethik"; G. Ermecke, „Katholische Moraltheologie am Scheideweg," esp. pp. 52f; J. Ratzinger, „Kirchliches Lehramt-Glaube-Moral"; J. Rief, „Normen and Normenfindung." The discussion of *glaubensethische* positions being carried on among Protestant theologians cannot be considered here.

[176] Especially Bernhard Stoeckle's writings give evidence of a number of misunderstandings that obviously cannot be cleared up here. Although Auer, „Ein Modell ..."discusses these misunderstandings in Stoeckle's *Grenzen der autonomen Moral* and clarifies both the autonomy concept and what is meant by the autonomy of the moral, and also explicates the effect the Christian horizon of meaning has on the discovery and grounding of norms (cf. Auer, „Die ethische Relevanz der Botschaft Jesu"), Stoeckle wants „the title 'Handeln aus dem Glauben' to express more than is inferred by those who limit the moral function of belief to the opening up of a particular horizon of meaning and the discovery of new motives" (B. Stoeckle, *Handeln aus dem Glauben*, p. 11). But it cannot be determined what this „more" really is.

[177] B. Stoeckle, *Handeln aus dem Glauben*, p. 9.

[178] 178. B. Stoeckle, *Grenzen der autonomen Moral*, p. 130. It must be asked, however, whether Stoeckle's own position actually realizes this paradox or whether he merely postulates this contrast because it alleges a necessary difference of the Christian. Such contrasts, which are always accompanied by a suggestive „must," are quite popular with Stoeckle. He also constructs a threat: „It must finally be understood how decisively the Christian faith is being challenged by the growing propagation of 'autonomous morality.' „ Josef Rief's expression of unease regarding „autonomous morality" is not much more persuasive: „The approach of autonomous morality misses the essence of the moral and represents no innerworldly possibility" („Normen and Normenfindung," p. 31).

[179] B. Stoeckle, *Grenzen der autonomen Moral*, p. 133, speaks of a „theonomous ethic that is to be preferred to an autonomous conception of morality." This is another instance in which he documents his misunderstanding of the autonomy of the moral. The same applies to Rief, „Normen and Normenfindung," p. 17.

[180] A. Auer, „Die Autonomie des Sittlichen nach Thomas von Aquin," p. 31, which deals with Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 90, 1c: „*Regula autem et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum ... .*'

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certainty that can never be attained by purely rational argument."[181]

In their estimate of the relevance of Christian belief to a Christian ethos and a theological ethic, the representatives of *Glaubensethik* differ in principle from the upholders of an „autonomous morality." The theological ethicist of the two camps agree that there are specifically Christian orientations (of belief, hope, and love) that have their basis in Christ's redemptive action, and that the Bible contains a number of concrete moral demands. What they do not agree on is whether the commands and demands that accompany the manifestation of God's redemptive intent in Jesus Christ are recognizable by, and binding on, the faithful only, or are accessible to the same degree to nonreligious, rational moral reflection, and whether they must indeed be so accessible if their content is to be morally binding.[182]

It is the *glaubensethische* position that the content of a Christian ethic is determined by a specific assessment of man or of humanness. The question concerning the content of the Christian ethic is therefore the same as the „question concerning those relationships between God and man, and between the saved among each other, that are the effects of the spirit of God or of love and not the result {159} of any objective conditions but transcend those conditions in favor of the new man that God intends."[183] Regarding the relationships that obtain among men, it is not objective principle--that is, urgencies, values, and meanings deriving from man's physical nature and intersubjectivity--that apply. What is relevant is that the Christian „view of man that establishes a positive moral relation between him and his fellow as a matter of principle, i.e. a relation of mutual help or of being-there-for others."[184]

The dichotomy of autonomous reason and Christian rational faith that the *Glaubensethik* postulates is the expression of a fundamental mistrust of the power of scientifically discoverable urgencies and laws. Whenever in discussing man it is asked what is objectively given and what the normative relevance of these givens *is, Glaubensethik* suspects that man himself is being betrayed.[185] In the name of a total image of man, it takes the moral reason of the Christian as the expression of a specifically Christian concept of God, and this is why the reason of faith with an autonomous, innerworldly reason must be contrasted with it.

For the *Glaubensethiker,* the moral reason of the Christian is indissolubly tied to his faith and can neither be understood nor realized without it. According to Joseph Ratzinger, it is Christ himself who furnished the model: „in saying who would be admitted to, who excluded from, God's Kingdom, he established an indissoluble link between this central theme of his sermons and the fundamental moral decisions that flow from the image of God and are an intimate part of it."[186] To speak of an autonomy of the moral in the Christian sense, therefore, means surrendering the reason of faith to the spirit of the times. Only when the moral „is an indissoluble element in the fundamental concept of what is Christian"[187] is a distinctively Christian ethic preserved. That is why, in moral matters, belief „includes fundamental decisions that are substantive in nature."[188]

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[181] B. Stoeckle, *Grenzen der autonomen Moral*, p. 139.

[182] Cf. Böckle, „Glaube and Handeln," p. 32.

[183] J. Rief, „Normen and Normenfindung," p. 21.

[184] Ibid., p. 27. Against his own better knowledge, and counter to the insights of an „autonomous morality" oriented around the human sciences, Rief simply as-

serts this although Wilhelm Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit,* e.g., has shown that in his intercourse with others, man always plays the triple role creature of need, aggressor, and keeper (pp. 76-112).

[185] Cf. J. Rief, „Normen and Normenfindung," p. 20.

[186] J. Ratzinger, „Kirchliches Lehramt-Glaube-Moral, p. 59.

[187] Ibid., p. 56.

[188] Ibid., p. 65. For a critique of these statements, cf. Schuller's review of J. Ratzinger's book. For a critique of the *glaubensethische* position on the basis of a humanistic ethos, see p. 285f.

Preliminary Critical Examination of Fromm's Humanistic Ethic

Now that we have sketched the background of the questions raised by a theological ethic, we can undertake a preliminary critical appraisal of Fromm's humanistic ethic. The above section on the self-understanding of contemporary theological ethics {160} suggests that the distinction between the discovery of norms and the grounding of meaning should be retained, but that attention should be focused on the discovery of norms. The problem of the ultimate grounding of normativeness and moral norms raises the question how a humanism that understands itself as the negation of any and every theonomy can be grounded. We refer to the comments on „humanistic religion," especially the „mysticism of the ONE"[189] and the reflections on Fromm's understanding of humanism and the grounding of it, in Part Three of this study.[190]

The Search for a Natural „Unbeliebigkeit" [= not left to discretion] of Human Normativeness

Despite decisively different approaches to the question of the ultimate grounding of the moral, there is a wide area of agreement between a theological ethic in the sense of „autonomous morality" and a humanistic ethic as Fromm understands it. The autonomy of the moral is the point of departure for both ethics, and both reject authoritarian and absolute ethics, be they fundamentalist or decisionist, be they inaugurated by ecclesiastical, social, or political entities.[191] Both ethics also agree that the cultural and ethnic diversity of ethics does not justify ethical relativism, that the factual validity of norms and convictions does not guarantee that the

norms in question are moral („socially immanent ethics"[192]), and that the natural substructure man shares with all other living beings does not imply moral normativeness („biologically Immanent ethics").[193]

In considering how moral norms can be found-Fromm speaks somewhat imprecisely of „objectively valid norms and values"--the theological and the humanistic ethic premise man's right and capacity to discover norms through his reason.[194] But they can do this „rationally" only if they view man's reason itself as a „part and function of a human nature"[195] to which human reason must address itself. Human nature is something with which reason must deal; it is also anterior to it. Yet reason interprets, orders, and shapes this nature. As a reason that discovers and decides, it is a normative principle.[196] {161}

The fact that reason is tied to human nature means that in the discovery of norms, it is the human and social sciences[197] that must be made the starting point for a discovery of the „natural Unbeliebigkeit"[198] of human normativeness. The signifi-

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[189] See pp. 83-128, esp. 112-117, 119-121, 124-128.
[190] See especially pp. 205-218 and 239-244.
[191] This shared characteristic may be noted independently of the criticism that Fromm's concept of authority neglects the possibility of rational authority in a number of respects.

[192] Cf. p. 131f.
[193] Cf. p. 132. This last variant has been given a new boost by research in comparative behavior. The kind of contribution ethology can make in the discovery of moral norms is discussed extensively by W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, esp. pp. 76-101, 113-128. Also in F. Rauh, „Die Funktion der vergleichenden Verhaltensforschung fur das Humanum," esp. pp. 143-145, 156f. Cf. also B. Schüller, *Die Begründung sittlicher Urteile*, esp. pp. 102-107; and W. Lepenies, „Schwierigkeiten einer anthropologischen Begründung der Ethik," esp. pp. 321-324.
[194] Cf. W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, pp. 68, p. 65: „.... because his nature is a rational nature, man is a rational, moral and normative being."
[195] Ibid., p. 71.
[196] Ibid., p. 72.
[197] Cf. A. *Auer, Autonome Moral and christlicher Glaube*, pp. 39-43.
[198] The terms „*naturale Unbeliebigkeit*" and „*naturale Unbeliebigkeitslogik*" were formulated by Wilhelm Korff and are based on the concept „*Unbeliebigkeit,*" which was introduced by Max Müller (cf. Korff,

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cance of these empirical sciences is not so much that they can demonstrate the natural nonarbitrariness of an individual and singular norm, but rather that they provide those data and materials through which it becomes possible to arrive at „laws of human normativeness that are general by virtue of the logic of their claim."[199] Such an ultimate natural Unbeliebigkeit that is anterior to all concrete material forms of normativeness and grounds these must hold for all men. It cannot be discretionary, and the claim to being a determinant that lies in its Unbeliebigkeit notwithstanding, it can have no more than a predisposing role as regards possible forms of humanness, moral norms, and possible moralities.[200] Finally, it must be applicable when one attempts to understand either an individual personality or social entities and their reciprocal dependence.[201]

Fromm's humanistic ethic presupposes the knowledge of an ultimate natural Unbeliebigkeit, a knowledge that comes from investigating the possibilities and the specific conditions of human existence („conditio humana"). With his definition of the „nature of man" as that of a contradictory being who has inalienable human needs, and with his identification of certain character orientations, he has demonstrated an Unbeliebigkeit that is universally applicable and that exerts a binding and decisive claim on all persons in regard to the kinds of existence they can lead, their potential for development, the elaboration of moralities and their realizability. It is the peculiarity of human needs that they must be responded to, and it is the task of character to structure the response to these needs in a particular way. Needs and character orientations match each other and represent laws of human normativeness that have a generally predisposing function.[202]

Character as the Principle of the Methodological Unity of Empirical Data, Philosophical-Anthropological Reflection, and the Creation of Ethical Norms

The significance of Fromm's attempt to define the

Norm und Sittlichkeit, pp. 10, 76). With the concept „Unbeliebigkeit," Korff characterizes the self-acting, naturally dispositive reason of human action. Because he uses the terms *„naturale Unbeliebigkeit"* and *„naturale Unbeliebigkeitslogik,"* he avoids the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that the concepts „natural law" and „nature" give rise to. The natural dispositive reason of human action that is referred to by the term *„Unbeliebigkeit"* does not imply an ethical statement. For what is naturally given is not normative (ibid., p. 70).

[199] Ibid., p. 76.

[200] The peculiarity of ultimate natural constraints to be predisposing only is the reason terms such as „dispose" and „dispositive" were used in preference to „determine" and „determinative."

[201] Cf. W. Korff, Norm und Sittliclekeit, p. 78. In the field of theological ethics, Wilhelm Korff was the first to attempt to work out such a logic of natural nonoptionality *(naturale Unbeliebigkeitslogik). He* views all social interaction as configurations of ultimate, coordinate laws of motivation whose internal referential nexus first assures the humane rationality of such interaction. This interdependence of the satisfaction of needs, self-assertion, and the readiness to care for others that Korff characterized as „social perichoresis" (cf. ibid., p. 97) is the structural law of everything social and a result of the phenotypicalness of man's intercourse with man. In contrast to Alfred Vierkandt

and Hans Georg Gadamer, who had worked out this phenotypicality before him, Korff does not stop here but develops the insight that the differing forms of man's intercourse with man are structural laws without which the social would not exist. Research in the physiology of behavior and its analysis finally confirmed Korff in the view that in their relations with each other, men play the triple role of creature of need, aggressor, and keeper (ibid., p. 91). The „social perichoresis" as natural-social fundamental law is the norma normarum and an ultimate motivational law; it is no norm but a metanorm. For it is the „true standard and criterion for the evaluation and classification of concrete styles of social action. It permits no extrapolation because only a form of action that unfolds within the perichoresis defines itself as humanly rational on this, its natural basis" (ibid.).

[202] On the meaning of these insights for a theological ethic, see below.

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natural Unbeliebigkeit of man's being and acting lies first in the way he arrives at its definition. His method must be distinguished from {162} „phenomenological" analyses of human existence that have their basis primarily in reflection on the *conditio humana* or some human essence that is posited *a priori*, and not in the diverse possibilities of humanness that can be discovered with the help of the empirical sciences.[203] Fromm's method also differs from the many attempts to formulate a psychological, sociological, ethological, biological, or other kind of anthropology that relies on the various sciences and their findings.[204] These attempts are unsatisfactory. Where they use empirical data, their contribution is from the perspective of a particular science and employs the insights of a particular science (e.g., psychoanalysis) to investigate phenomena that come under the purview of another scientific discipline (e.g., conflicts between social groups). Although the aim of such anthropologies is the formulation of a more complex understanding of man, they attain this goal only by universalizing a particular perspective--the sociological one, for example. Such an anthropology does not develop a method that does justice to the various aspects of the object under study.

The difficulty that attends the discovery of a method that will do justice to the various aspects of an object relates principally to the twofold aspect of man, as individual personality and as social entity. From the point of view of the sciences that investigate this twofold aspect of man, the primary task is to combine a psychological and a sociological approach in a method that will do justice to both aspects. Fromm, hoxvever, developed a method that takes seriously the unity of man as individual and as social being. The principle that connects both aspects is man's character, which unfolds in accordance with man's aspects as both individual and social character. Seen ideal-typically, character may be defined in terms of various character orientations. In contrast to Freud's concept of character as instinctual, Fromm believes a person's dominant character orientation is the result of the shaping influence of socioeconomic conditions. The character orientation that prevails in a society molds the individual's character through the family, which is the psychic agency of society. Consequently, man's unity as individual and as part of society is guaranteed in the entity called character, which combines both aspects.

This functional view of character as a substitute for animal instinct permits Fromm to do justice in yet another respect to the {163} variety of perspectives under which man may be seen. Behavioral research, which is based on comparisons between man and animal, nonetheless offers no precise definition for the relationship between the two. Since it postulates a merely analogous relationship, it is not really prepared to think about the specific differences that distinguish man as a culture-creating being. But when character is understood as a substitute for the animal's instinctual apparatus that is adequate to the possibilities and limitations of the human species, the unity of man is preserved and the method of the scientific investigation of man has its unified ground in the concept of character.

Fromm developed a specific view of the empirical human and social sciences as perspectives on man according to which these sciences are unified in a sociopsychological method based on the concept of character. Before we evaluate his philosophical and anthropological reflections that are based on his empirical insights, we will examine the significance of some of his findings for a theological ethic.

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[203] Examples would be Martin Heidegger's analysis of Dasein and the philosophical anthropologies that predate the emergence of the human and social sciences.

[204] The possibility of arriving at (philosophical)-anthropological statements by way of a summation of the diverse data of diverse disciplines need not be considered since it is immediately apparent that man is a unity that permits at most a perspectivist view but never a division.

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The Empirical Data and Their Significance
for an Ethical Perspective

The discovery of character as a dynamic entity is the achievement of Freud. The term *dynamic character* means that it is character that predisposes and. determines human behavior. Although this insight is part of the very foundation of psychoanalysis and analytic psychotherapy, it has hardly been considered in theological ethics, partly because of the strong influence American behaviorism has had on European thought, and partly because of academic psychology's aversion to psychoanalysis. Behind both phenomena lies a positivistic concept of science that cannot penetrate beyond the behavior of the individual. While behavior is seen as motivated and directed, inquiry does not address itself to a character that orients behavior. If character were an object of scientific interest, man would no longer be observed, measured, and judged exclusively by his behavior. Instead, behavior would be understood as the expression of a character that has been shaped in a particular way. Identical or similar forms of behavior (such as the readiness to help others) would then have to be seen as qualities of altogether different characters (loving or domineering, {164} for example), while quite divergent forms of behavior (loving and hating, e.g.) could be viewed as expressions of one and the same (i.e., the authoritarian) character. Only the attempt to investigate the character of an individual and a society can lead to a better understanding of their behavior. Knowledge of character makes plausible the most widely divergent forms of behavior of an identical subject because all behavior is grounded in character.

The understanding of human behavior as the expression of a specific character can already be found in the theological and philosophical and ethical tradition, specifically in Aristotle's doctrine of the moral virtues and, more importantly, in Thomas Aquinas' theory of the virtues that are the result of training.[205] Especially where human behav-

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[205] On „virtue" as a key concept in ethics, cf. W. Korff,

ior was evaluated morally, and moral and pedagogic criteria and contents were needed, the doctrine of the virtues could convey a deeper understanding of man, without an expressly empirical method. In contrast to the doctrine of virtues and its understanding of man, casuistics is not interested in the habits that determine behavior. Its reduction of man to his behavior is also characteristic of positivistic behaviorism in psychology and social psychology and in so-called analytic ethics.[206]

Fromm's theory of character can be seen as an attempt to use the modern human and social sciences to provide a new foundation for the traditional doctrine of virtues. There is an obvious affinity between Fromm's and Aquinas' understanding of man. It is Fromm's achievement to have provided a scientific explication of this understanding,

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Theologische Ethik, pp. 50-53; and, as a representative example, V. Eid, „Tugend als Werthaltung." Cf. also the bibliography in Eid.

[206] With certain qualifications, this also applies to Bruno Schüller's approach, although he tried to overcome the narrowness that lies in restricting himself to the characteristics of an act by viewing and judging human behavior in terms of the consequences of acts so that he can say that „the moral character of an act is wholly determined by its good or evil results" (B. Schüller, „Neuere Beiträge zum Thema 'Begründung sittlicher Normen,' " p. 117; also, Schüller, *Die Begründung sittlicher Urteile*, esp. pp. 22f). But one wonders if such a „teleological" theory of ethical normativeness can really overcome the reductionist quality of traditional casuistic morality. For the rejection of a „deontological" theory of ethical normativeness in favor of a „teleological" one implies the exclusive orientation around man's behavior that also characterizes casuistry and will therefore continue to be subject to the criticism of wanting to reduce man to his behavior and of making what is moral conform to optimal adaptation. But this criticism is not intended to deprecate the merits of a „teleological" ethic as compared to a kind of casuistry that is exclusively interested in the so-called casus *conscientiae* and wants to know above all „when, where and how a particular fact should be judged sinful or tolerable" (F. Furger, „Katholische Moraltheologie in der Schweiz," p. 222).

Funk, R., 1982 Erich Fromm: The Courage to Be Human, pp. 129-180

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and to have done so by utilizing his sociopsychological method: he adopts Freud's dynamic concept of character and the insight that the various character traits of an individual are structured, but he takes the concept out of the framework of the instinctivist libido theory. In this way, Fromm arrives at a new definition of character orientations that does justice to man's unity as individual and social being. At the same time, he introduces a principle of classification of the various character orientations, according to which they are judged as either life-promoting or life-inhibiting.

In a theological ethics, the ideal-typically formulated orientations in man's relation to his natural and social environment represent empirical data by which the causes, motivations, and goals of human behavior can be interpreted comprehensively. {165}

Since character orientations also represent economic conditions and production processes and the social and political structures and concepts of value that are their function, they are concentrations or condensations of the world in which-and of the human beings among whom-they exist. In their specific orientation, they can therefore serve as keys to a detailed understanding of human behavior. Specifying an individual's character orientation makes possible an inclusive interpretation of his behavior because in a given character orientation the various determinants of human behavior are understood as a unity.

An example of the relevance of these comments for a theological ethic follows:

A child is given money by his parents to buy a friend a birthday present. Instead of spending the entire sum on the present, the child secretly saves half of it.

A casuistic morality of whatever description will attempt to measure the moral quality of this act by what the child actually did. It will also consider certain circumstances in order to mitigate or avoid the severity of a statement that the child's act is intrinsically good or bad. Finally it may be content with the observation that a truly serious moral

conflict is not involved here.[207] An ethical consideration that makes use of the human and social sciences to examine the child's behavior will attempt to discover its determinants. This means that it will try first to understand that behavior, and then to make a moral judgment based on insights into the conditions of that behavior.

In the effort to show the logic of the child's behavior, Fromm would go back to character as the dispositive and determinant entity. For if the behavior can be shown to be the expression of a particular character orientation, the other social, cultural, political, religious, and economic determinants that are represented in a given character orientation will become apparent and a comprehensive understanding of the child's behavior will be possible.

In our example, it seems plausible to interpret the child's behavior as avarice. „Avarice" is a character trait that probably, though not necessarily, belongs to Fromm's hoarding orientation (the degree of certainty with which a form of behavior can be ascribed to a character orientation depends on how precise the description is). The fact that the child did not use the money he kept to buy {166} candy or something else he wanted but put it aside, and the fact that he acted surreptitiously, support the classification „hoarding." Assuming that the child's behavior can be determined to flow from the

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[207] It would certainly be of interest if this case were to be decided according to all the rules of casuistic art, including a „teleologically" understood casuistry. Is the child's behavior to be interpreted as thrift or as avarice? To what extent does a morally negative evaluation of the fact that the child decides on a different use for the money and thereby opposes the parents' purpose compete with a possibly morally positive evaluation of thrift? What criteria can decide whether something is a good or a virtue or set up an order of rank for virtues („nonmoral" and „moral" value in Schüller's sense) and have this ranking be binding? Isn't the child actually very well behaved when he is thrifty and thus obediently reproduces the character trait of his parents, as he does his share to meet their economic needs?

strong dominance of a hoarding character orientation, inferences can be drawn about the social situation of the child's family, the educational maxims he has been exposed to, the nature of the parent-child relation, the family's bourgeois response to the capitalist economic order, the importance of money in interpersonal relations, the social order in which rank is determined by the magnitude of one's fortune, concepts of value according to which the accumulation and saving of money are seen as ways to achieve happiness, and so on. And all this makes possible further inferences about other forms of behavior and character traits that are also typical of a hoarding orientation. Beyond that, certain boundary lines can be predicted within which, given certain demands, the child's behavior will run its course.

From this example, it becomes apparent that man's behavior is the expression of a character orientation that has a typical structure. It follows that behavior is not a matter of choice: ascribing behavior to a character orientation makes the child's actions plausible. But this example also shows that the attempt to understand behavior brings to light the whole complexity of an individual's aspects and their interconnectedness. This makes moral judgment considerably more difficult, yet no ethics can renounce the effort to understand human behavior before pronouncing judgment.

Fromm's attempt to use the character concept to understand man in his totality affects both ethical perspective and moral pedagogy. It is only within the field defined by the character orientation that governs behavior that an individual's actions can be judged or changed. Where a given orientation such as the hoarding one is clearly dominant and behavioristic methods are used to promote a better adaptation to social, professional, or other demands through stimulus-response techniques, behavioral changes can only be expected within this hoarding orientation. This conclusion also applies to moral pedagogy that believes it can change man through his consciousness (by information, sermonizing, catechism, etc.) without taking him seriously in his manifold dependencies and entanglements

(two thousand years of Christian moral education are eloquent testimony to the failure of the {167} attempt to change man by piecemeal adaptation). A genuine change of behavior becomes possible only when, along with personal and intellectual effort, an effort is also made to change the factors that shape character so that a shift in the dominance of the character orientation occurs.

The fact that behavior is determined by the orientation of the character structure also affects the moral judgment of behavior. That character governs behavior means that the factors that mold character must be included in the moral judgment. Man has a creative responsibility that always extends to the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres, since these all have a share in the molding of character. Thus moral judgment can never be reduced to the moral judgment of concrete instances of behavior.

In questions concerning individual guilt, it is not possible to abstract from existing dispositive factors. Here it is not a matter of asking how an immoral act can be explained, and thereby excused, and substituting this approach for an inquiry into personal culpability. To distinguish between subjective guilt and objective conditions, and to excuse subjective error by citing objective factors that cause culpability, is no more acceptable. If flawed objective conditions arc not seen as the responsibility of the subject, the concept of guilt will be reduced to subjective behavior and a process that will cause the perpetuation of subjective misconduct will be institutionalized. To give the question of personal responsibility for flawed behavior its correct place value, two things are necessary. One, the fact that socioeconomic factors shape the character structure and are dispositive and determinative of behavior must be taken seriously; and two, it must be realized that man has a decisive responsibility for these forces and can therefore be culpable. Of course, this makes the problem of guilt and the moral judgment of behavior more difficult. On the other hand, to distinguish between varying degrees of guilt and to make behavior the only yardstick is questionable when the relevant moral entity is the character and

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the forces that conditioned it, not the actual behavior in question. The understanding of man in his totality and on the basis of an insight into the complexity of conditions that predispose his behavior is something we owe to the human and social sciences. In Fromm's concept of character, the conditions are given a unity that brings the various influences together in a {168} single entity: the character structure with a particular dominant orientation.

The significance of the empirical data in Fromm's social psychology is not limited to the understanding of character and the formulation of specific orientations of the character structure. The observation of the various character orientations with reference to their total functionality or dysfunctionality yields *an evaluation of character structures* that remains empirical and does not yet imply an ethical judgment, although it is relevant to one. The origin of the idea of evaluating character orientations must be looked for in Fromm's psychotherapeutic practice. He observed that certain kinds of relatedness to the world and to others occur with greater frequency among persons who suffer neurotic symptoms, and that an analytical therapy is successful when the nature of the relatedness to the environment changes. The change in the kind of relatedness is an expression of the fact that the dominance of the orientation of the character structure has altered. Orientations that become clear in psychoanalytic therapy and can be called „sick" or „healthy" apply generally to every individual human being and to the character of social entities. There arc dominanccs in character orientations that further both the individual and society, and therefore promote a well-being and happiness based on the freedom to realize one's own life. There are others that enslave men and turn them into cripples, and admit of human well-being only on the basis of unfreedom and the surrender of one's independence--cases where, in line with what is dominant, apparent well-being turns into illness and unhappiness.

During the course of his life, Fromm provided a number of reformulations of the distinctive qualities of character orientations, partly because he wished to emphasize aspects he had not emphasized previously and partly because he wanted to arrive at the most comprehensive understanding possible. They are always expressed as opposites, the fundamental antithetical character orientations being almost always present simultaneously and in a mixture so that the only question to be settled is whether a nonproductive or a productive orientation is dominant. The paired opposites are: productive / nonproductive; active / passive; biophilic / necrophilic (or syndrome of growth/syndrome of decay); mode of having/mode of being. Whatever aspect the character orientations {169} are viewed under, one orientation always inhibits unfolding and the other always furthers it. If the character structure is productive and biophilic and thus oriented toward growth, man lives in the mode of being--that is, he lives from within himself, rationally, immediately, related in love: he lives by being himself. But if the character structure is nonproductive and necrophilic and therefore oriented toward decay, man lives in the mode of having--that is, he *is* only to the extent that he *has,* be it property, education, family, honor, children, laws, others who control him or whom he can control: he lives only to the extent that he owns things.

Fromm's evaluation of the character orientations in terms of two opposing, fundamental possibilities of living one's life was the result of observations he carried out with the aid of the empirical human and social sciences, and of his assumption that the concept of character is to be understood as a principle that gives coherence to all observations. The evaluations express man's fundamental intentions, according to which he can conduct himself. In the concept of the orientation of a character structure, the intentionality of the reality that is man is thus interpreted with reference to two alternative potentialities. But this definition of the character orientation does not imply a moral judgment. The question as to which orientations are to be preferred, which are morally good, cannot be answered merely by understanding the intentionality of the character structure toward unfolding or inhibition. The ethical question transcends the sphere of

the empirical, of the data of the human and social sciences, because empirical knowledge does not unambiguously tell us what is morally good and what is morally evil. Even so, the furthering and unfolding of life is a definition that results from the very intentionality of character and therefore makes a dispositive normative claim.

This distinction between the evaluation of the character orientations and the question of moral judgment--that is, between the normative claim of empirical data and a moral norm that transcends empirical knowledge--demonstrates the *critical contribution that Fromm's insight based on empirical data* can make to an ethical perspective. Because character orientations can be defined as „life promoting" or „life inhibiting" within the sociopsychological context without its therefore being possible to decide what is {170} morally good, empirical data can be used to criticize existing ethics and the convictions by which people live. On the basis of his empirical concept of character, Fromm is in a position to criticize an economic order whose only concern is maximizing the gross national product, and to oppose a philosophical and anthropological view that postulates the *homo homini lupus* thesis or the notion of the *bellum omium contra omnes.* Again on the basis of empirical data, he can criticize a traditional natural law ethic fur incorrectly identifying natural and moral value. Fromm's concept of character thus has a threefold critical function: it evaluates other empirical data, other philosophical-anthropological assumptions, and other ethical arguments. Beyond its critical function, the concept of character has a constructive use for philosophical-anthropological reflection and the creation of ethical norms.

The Philosophical-Anthropological Reflections and Their Significance for an Ethical Point of View

Ethics is a hermeneutic discipline that arrives at moral judgment by way of a philosophical-anthropological interpretation of empirical data. In this process, the philosophical-anthropological interpretation has its own scientific place value. Rather than simply interpreting empirical data to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of man, it begins with the fundamental fact that man is endowed with reason and then takes this fact into account as it confronts empirical data. Not just empirical insights are decisive in the explication of philosophical-anthropological reflections but also certain preferred forms of thought and conceptual models that are rooted in the thinker's own philosophical and religious traditions.[208]

Fromm's philosophical-anthropological reflections are thematized in *the question concerning man's nature or being. Two* elements form the starting point of his thought: the gift of reason by which man differs from the animals; and the character of man, which represents the principle of unity of individual and society, of economic, political, social, cultural, religious, and other shaping factors, and in which all behavior insofar as it expresses relatedness to the surrounding world has its base. Both elements come together in Fromm's definition of character as a substitute for animal instinct. In man, character takes on the functions that are {171} discharged by instinct in animals *and* it is the expression of man's reason. This definition of character legitimizes philosophical-anthropological reflection-namely, as reflection about the changes that occur in man as the security instinct gives is lost.

The comparison between man and animal that is based on the premise that human character replaces animal instinct is amplified by Fromm into a question about the unity or harmony of animal and man and their environment („nature"). Viewed formally, he examines the original sociopsychological situation that obtains as man is born (both individual man and the species mankind, whose birth continues to this day) in order to determine what general biological and particular (socio)psychological relevance the gift of reason and the formation of character, accompanied by the concurrent loss of instinct, may have. Thought about the specifically human situation leads to the

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[208] Cf. Part Three of this study.

insight that man must be defined as a contradictory being. The contradiction that defines his nature is grounded in reason itself, for reason is the counter-principle to the instinct that governs autoplastic behavior. Endowment with reason means that humanness, in contrast to animal existence, is not a given but a task. There are solutions to the contra-dictoriness of human existence, but no resolution of the contradictoriness itself. Character represents the specifically human agency that mediates the task of humanness. Its orientations are types of possible re-action to this contradictoriness.

The relevance for ethics of the philosophical-anthropological definition of human nature only becomes apparent when the fact that human exis-tence is a task is interpreted with references to cer-tain inalienable existential needs. In contrast to an-thropologies that define man's being ethologically and with reference to his animal ancestors, and dis-cover in the parallelism between animal behavior and patterns of human interaction ultimate ines-capable structures of the species man,[209] Fromm views the existential needs as ultimately not-optional *(unbeliebig).* An understanding of these

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[209] Although discoveries in the physiology of behavior have significance for Wilhelm Korff's „social pericho-resis" of the satisfaction of needs, self-assertion, and the readiness to care for others because such findings confirm that the varying forms of man's intercourse with man are laws that structure the social, which would not exist without such laws, this criticism does not apply to him since for him the analysis of discov-eries in the physiology of behavior is merely empirical confirmation of the fact that the phenotypicalness of man's dealings with man actually represents those structural laws. Fromm's and Korff's approaches can therefore be constructively mediated with each other. In Fromm's account of the nonproductive character orientation, it can be shown that the nonproductivity results from the destruction of the stable configuration of satisfaction of need, selfassertion, and readiness to care for others that obtains in a given instance. In the description of the productive character orientation, on the other hand, Fromm himself recurs to criteria that show that the configuration of the three compo-nents remains intact.

needs is stimulated by empirical data but born of reflection about man as a contradictory being, and then confirmed, in turn, by empirical data. It can be-said very generally that character is the human reaction to man as contradictory being, and that the various character orientations represent the an-swers (both {172} productive and nonproductive) that can be given to this contradiction at a particu-lar moment. The orientations of the character relate to the explications of man's contradictory existence. They arc kinds of reaction to various questions that arc understood as needs and that interpret the one contradiction. Fromm's postulate of existential needs is the fruit of his philosophical-anthropological reflection about an empirical con-cept of character that initially provokes, and later confirms, philosophical-anthropological reflection.

Since man always and everywhere has existen-tial needs, renouncing their satisfaction is as impos-sible in the long run as not satisfying physical hun-ger or thirst. These needs inescapably shape human life and action, not by how they are satisfied, but by the fact that they must be satisfied. For this` rea-son, every human being is primordially related to his natural and human environment and must re-main so throughout his life. This is true even of the narcissistic or psychotic individual who has a wholly disrupted relation to his environment. „According to nature"--that is, to the extent that he reacts with his reason to the contradiction between nature and reason-man is a social being *(homo socialis).* His ex-istential needs for the experience of identity are in-escapable, as are his needs for rootedness, tran-scendence, and a frame of orientation and an ob-ject of devotion. Every act and every form of be-havior is a certain kind of reaction to these needs. The fact that every human being ahvays and neces-sarily reacts to existential needs signifies an ultimate natural *Unbeliebigkeit* about what humanness is and what it ought to be. It is here that the existen-tial needs have direct relevance for an ethical per-spective. Existential needs are normative, for al-though they do not decide .vhcther an individual will react morally or immorally in a given instance, they do point up the natural constraints within

which moral action becomes possible. Thus they are the natural ground for human, moral action. The fact that existential needs must be met becomes obvious whenever changes in the process of production or the social order, for example, in the hierarchy of values or the structure of meanings, limit or altogether suppress the possibility of reaction to existential needs. Dehumanization and psychological and physical death are the consequences. In such a situation, man will normally attempt to find substitute objects to satisfy his {173} needs. A living religion, for instance, can never be „abolished" by decree or by the threat of reprisals unless the world view that functions as a substitute religion (or a party ideology) at least comes close to substituting for the many-sided religious phenomenon. Where no such substitute for a frame of orientation and an object of devotion is created or permitted, interest in life is paralyzed, and this paralysis is expressed in psychic and psychosomatic illnesses, even widespread suicide and the decline of civilization.[210]

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[210] The depression of entire civilizations has recently been even more marked in capitalist than in communist states. The so-called oil crisis and the collapse of the international monetary system have resulted in the destruction of the frame of orientation according to which happiness lies in maximizing the standard of living, and this disintegration has affected large parts of the population of the Western world. Consumption-oriented capitalism cannot maintain its function as a substitute religion. It brings on not only a depression in finance and enterprise but also among the masses that spreads like an epidemic that can be dealt with only over time, and usually by new, mostly irrational substitute religions. The necessity to find a substitute for the frame of orientation and the objects of devotion and to rebuild when natural causes or socioeconomic and political changes have destroyed its validity also explains in part why periods of change and optimism are followed with an almost lawlike regularity by periods of reaction and authoritarianism. In such phenomena, we see the desperate effort to react at least regressively and nonproductively to an existential need when no other kind of reaction is possible, for the failure to satisfy existential needs would threaten life itself.

To recapitulate: Existential needs are the direct result of man's nature as a contradiction. Because they must be satisfied, they represent ultimate constraints on human normativeness. While the manner of their satisfaction does not necessarily derive from reflection on human nature, observations made when the factors affecting the satisfaction of needs undergo change clearly show that there are only two fundamental possibilities for the satisfaction of needs and that these are alternatives. They correspond to the valuations of the character orientations, which are nothing other than ideal-typical answers to the whole question of the contradictory being that is man: the reaction to existential needs is necessarily either productive and biophilous, or nonproductive and necrophilous.

As regards an ethical perspective, it should be noted that it is not only the necessity to satisfy needs that grounds human-moral action in nature but also the fact that man must always react in either/or fashion to his existential needs. Wherever man reacts to his existential needs, he necessarily satisfies them either productively or nonproductively, and this alternative forms part of the conditions under which human action as moral action first becomes possible.[211]

Formally stated, man's freedom to react to his needs can be reduced to the freedom of choice between a productive and a nonproductive satisfaction. But such a definition does not mean that the productive reaction is morally good. The question concerning moral norms is answered neither by demonstrating the natural *Unbeliebigkeit* of human normativeness nor by recognizing the natural value that productive satisfaction is life promoting. The productive satisfaction of needs can become a moral norm only when man decides to affirm as morally good natural values {174} that are life promoting. Of course, the ability to affirm them is predicated on the insight into the ultimate, naturally given *Unbeliebigkeit* of being a creature of need that is part and parcel of man's specific situation. It

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[211] Fromm's „alternativism" theory is grounded in this distinctive quality of moral action. See pp. 145-148.

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also hinges on the investigations of natural values by the human and social sciences. The natural *Unbeliebigkeit* of being a creature of need constitutes the ultimate natural ground of human, moral action as such. The various existential needs and the necessarily alternative reaction to them are therefore ultimate natural grounds of moral action, grounds on which those natural values that are dispositive and determinative of moral action are based.

The critical cotribution of philosophical-anthropological reflection is threefold. First, the claim to autonomy of philosophical-anthropological reflection grounds a criticism of such empirical research that refuses in principle to go beyond empirical data and to inquire into a certain understanding of man. From the perspective of the theory of science, such a positivist reduction to „empiricism" is an attempt to veil the fact that certain prior, mostly unreflected, understandings underlie all research in the human and social sciences. The demand to reflect on these prior understandings is tantamount to the postulate that philosophicalanthropological reflection is autonomous.

When, because of a certain view of man, communication between empirical research and reflection is neglected or rejected in principle as unscientific, empirical research evades evaluation of its scientific program and of` certain specific presuppositions and consequences of` research. A critique of a research project that wishes to discover, for example, how to improve the mechanisms of persuasion through which certain consumer needs might be more effectively stimulated so that these artificially produced needs enjoy the same claim to satisfaction as inalienable physiological and existential needs-such a critique is possible only vvhcn the intrinsic value of philosophical and anthropological reflection is first acknowledged and its significance for empirical research not denied.

The critical function of philosophical-anthropological reflection for the empirical human and social sciences embraces more than a critique of the position that empirical research is not influenced by the question concerning the image of man. As the above example {175} makes clear,

Fromm's philosophical and anthropological reflections criticize any understanding of the human and social sciences that excludes all ethical questions *a priori.* Beyond this, the formulation of existential needs yields a substantive critique that can be used to examine empirical data and research to discover whether their effect is dehumanizing or furthers the unfolding of human potentialities. The analysis of man as a contradictory being with defined existential needs thus implies a criticism of the insights of the human and social sciences in their entirety when they set ethical questions aside, and of their individual insights when they contribute to preventing the satisfaction of existential needs.

Fromm's philosophical and anthropological reflections provide a further critical contribution. In contrast to other philosophical and anthropological definitions of man, his statements are coordinated with empirical data and have a principle of methodical unity, the concept of character. They can thus criticize ways of understanding man that do not include an empirically tangible entity (such as character) in which the most widely divergent aspects of human existence come together. Their critique addresses itself principally to anthropologies whose point of departure is either an underived definition of being, which they interpret, or whose basis is some ascertainable aspect (such` as the biological or psychological; or man's *natura physica, homo faber, homo oeconomicus, homo ludens,* etc.), which they universalize. Substantively, they criticize either the missing relation to the empirical or the claim to an encompassing definition that shows no methodical unity of aspects and therefore fails to overcome a substantive perspectivism.

Finally, the philosophical-anthropological reflections are capable of criticizing attempts at ethical normativeness that either elevate a natural value to a moral norm and favor a casuistic natural law, or that represent an ethical relativism that denies the possibility of binding natural values. Ethical norms are not the arbitrary creations of a situation, culture, or period, but are grounded in ultimate natural *Unbeliebigkeiten* that can be defined as particular existential needs and their alternative satisfac-

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tions. It is only because they have intrinsic value that the philosophicalanthropological reflections can make a contribution to the {176} problem of hom ethical norms arc created. Philosophical-anthropological reflections are not empirical data, but a constructive interpretive frame that has its ground in empirical data. Neither are they moral norms, but rather their natural ground.

Summary: Ethical Norms as Based on a Human-Natural „Unbeliebigkeit"

Whether a humanistic ethic can contribute to the discovery of norms in a theological ethic depends in part on the self-understanding of theological ethics. If theological ethics understands itself as „autonomous morality within the Christian context,"[212] it must have recourse to empirical data and philosophical and anthropological reflection because where decisions of moral reason are involved, it depends on the knowledge of natural *Unbeliebigkeiten* as generally dispusitive laws. In the process of discovery of norms, however, metaphysics and faith make no claim to determine the content of ethical norms.[213] Both a theological and a humanistic ethic demand that the mural be autonomous.[214] Consequently, the problem of the discovcry of norms and of ethical normativeness is the same for both ethics. Therefore one may justifiably ask what contribution Fromm's humanistic ethic makes to the process of discovery of norms in a theological ethic.

Both ethics follow Thomas Aquinas in seeing

the principle and the criterion of the moral in man's reason: actions are called „human or moral insofar as they are determined by reason.[215] This identification of humanity, morality, and reason demands the rejection of any heteronomy in the definition of the content of the moral. Neither God nor society, nor an idea nor nature (as in the stoic „living according to nature"), nor the empirical data of the modern human and social sciences, but only human reason can be the principle of moral action. „What is proper for man lies in *'secundum rationem esse,'* in the orientation toward reason which is the real principle of human action. That is why we call those manners and morals good that agree with reason, and bad those that contradict it."[216]

It has already been shown that reason as the reason that cognizes and decides can be a normative principle only if it is understood as a component of a human nature that is antecedent to reason and something with which reason must deal. The reason {177} that makes moral decisions is thus part of a complex network of natural conditions and must respect these natural structures and mechanisms as nonarbitrarv.[217] When reason takes cognizance of natural structures and mechanisms, it discovers „that the rationality of natural ends *(inclinationes naturales)* points in the same direction as human reason."[218] Although it is true that reason as the agency of moral decisions alone determines what is good and what is evil, reason itself rests on what an antecedent nature intends. And although it is also true that it is not the empirical or nature but reason that is the principle of the moral, the substantive definition of moral norms and values is nonetheless tied to the knowledge of natural values and norms.

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[212] See note 167.

[213] Cf. A. Auer's contribution in the *Festschrift* for Josef Fuchs, „Die Autonomie des Sittlichen nach Thomas von Aquin." More extensively than in his *Autonome Moral und christlicher Glaube*, Auer shows here that Thomas Aquinas asserted the autonomy of the moral vis-à-vis the natural order, metaphysics, and the faith. The postulate of an autonomous morality can be demonstrated in the tradition of Thomistic thought.

[214] It is only when the meaning of moral norms is grounded that the distinguishing characteristics of the two ethics articulate themselves.

[215] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 18, 5c, quoted according to A. Auer, „Die Autonomic des Sittlichen nach Thomas von Aquin," p. 33.

[216] Auer, „Die Autonomie ...," with reference to Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1-11, 100, 1c.

[217] See p. 159f, and Auer, „Die Autonomie ..., p. 34f.

[218] Ibid., p. 35, with reference to *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 1,3 ad 3.

Any attempt to establish ethical norms in which reason is the principle of the moral must be able by its method to do justice to the interdependence of reason and nature in man. Fromm's achievement and his contribution to a theological ethic are to have defined the character of this interdependence on the basis of man's empirically ascertainable rational nature, and to have introduced the concept of character to give systematic unity to his idea. This assertion will now be explained.

If reason as the principle in establishing norms must refer to human nature and its fundamental intentionalities when it defines the contents of the moral, an *Unbeliebigkeit* of natural structures and mechanisms that is relevant to moral action can be discovered only where this human nature is addressed as governed by reason. Already in the formulation of the problem human nature must not be defined „biologically," as if man's biological or physiological nature were complemented by a psychological and intellectual one. From the very beginning, human nature must be understood as determined by reason and therefore as inquiring and modifiable. In questions involving man and his nature, this human nature must always be antecedently defined as rational nature. Fromm succeeds in this approach because both in his research in the human and social sciences and in his philosophical and anthropological reflection he starts with a primary understanding of human nature whose defining characteristic is the substitution for instinct.[219]

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[219] The concept „instinct substitution" serves to indicate the difference between Fromm's and Arnold Gehlen's anthropological views. While Gehlen considers that in the case of man, we are dealing merely with a reduction of instinct for which reason institutions become equivalents that compensate for his lost instinctual sureness, Fromm's concern is clearly the substitution of character for instinct. Of course, the actual difference between Gehlen's and Fromm's anthropologies is not the subtle distinction between instinct reduction and instinct substitution, but the fact that for Gehlen, it is institutions that are the equivalent. In Fromm's case, the equivalent is character, i.e., a psychic or psychosocial entity that replaces instinct and gives human

The assumption that human nature is guided by instinct or that it is quasi-instinctual turns out to be false because in the genesis of {178} man there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the gift of reason and the loss of instinct. The situation that results from the presence of reason is seen by Fromm as the *conditio humana,* and he makes use of his knowledge of the human and social sciences to reflect on this birth of man. Reflection leads to the insight that it is not instinctual needs but certain rational and therefore „human" or „existential" needs that express man's natural *Unbeliebigkeit.* The fact that these human needs are rooted in man's reason and that their adequate satisfaction is possible only through reason justifies Fromm's assertion that character is the substitute for animal instinct, for it is only in and through character that man's nature can be appropriately appreciated. Character makes it possible to take man seriously in his relatedness to his surrounding world and to refuse to reduce his biological nature to the sociological. Only in character is the psychic quality of human nature respected and not limited to the merely physiological (instinct).

Fromm's characterological definition of human nature does justice to two facts: that human nature is determined by reason, and that human reason is governed by nature. In man, nature is always characterologically mediated rational nature. Because man is preserved in his wholeness, ultimate natural conditions and laws represent ultimate human-natural *Unbeliebigkeit.*

It is initially in the empirical concept of character as a substitute for animal instinct that the interdependence of man's reason and nature is respected. But the empirical concept of character en-

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thought, feeling, and action a specific orientation. The concept „(character)-orientation" therefore implies an openness and a lack of fixity that are not present in the concept „institution" and that are present even where man is a part of institutional entities. On the concept of instinct reduction in the context of the theory of institutions, cf. A. Gehlen, *Der Mensch*, p. 79; or Gehlen, *Anthropologische Forschung*, pp. 69-77.

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tails that of human needs, a concept that is also significant in philosophical and anthropological reflection. Methodologically, therefore, empirical insights guide philosophical-anthropological reflection. Because „character“ and „need“ have been defined as rational, not only the empirical but also the philosophical-anthropological insights are legitimated as scientific insights. A positivism that limits itself to purely empirical research and disputes the cognitive value of philosophical and anthropological reflection must be viewed as a truncated and falsified version of the very idea of science.

Fromm's proposal can serve as a model for a theological ethic that confronts the problem of mediating empirical and philosophical-anthropological forms of thought and knowledge by attempting, for example, to „integrate“ the findings of the human and {179} social sciences philosophically and anthropologically. In his work, both levels, the empirical and the philosophical-anthropological, are brought into relation as the problem is formulated, and the concepts of „need“ and „character“ enable him to do justice to both levels. It should also be noted that a theological ethic whose distinctive characteristic is its grounding of the meaning of human normativeness will find useful a model for the discovery of ethical norms that takes seriously the autonomy of the moral, yet does not reject a grounding of the meaning of human normativeness that is independent of-though not without significance for-the discovery of norms. Fromm's model for the discovery of norms can accomplish this because in the task of discovering ethical norms, he recurs to a human and natural *Unbeliebigkeit* that is itself marked by this openness: human needs, especially the need for a frame of orientation and an object of devotion, imply the task of establishing a meaning that cannot be solved by the methods of empirical science or of philosophical-anthropological reflection alone. It is here that Fromm points to religion, even though he understands religion humanistically and nontheistically.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that the identification of what is ultimate human-natural *Unbeliebigkeit is* an important contribution to the problem of ethical normativeness. The determination of individual human needs is the result of reflection on man's situation that makes use of empirical, especially psychological and sociopsychological, findings. The distinctive rational quality of human nature means that man has certain needs that differ from physiological ones in that they represent an ultimate humannatural *Unbeliebigkeit* with respect to what man can and should be. Needs inescapably mold human normativeness because they must be reacted to either productively or nonproductively. This necessity to react in one of two ways becomes truly significant only when one examines individual needs, for in previous ethical models it cannot always be taken for granted that the need for relatedness and rootedness, or for a frame of orientation and an object of devotion was recognized as a natural *Unbeliebigkeit*.[220]

It is in problems of sexual ethics that the difference between the two perspectives becomes very clear. While the need for the preservation of the species in the form of sexual need cannot lay claim to making human normativeness generally choiceless, the need for {180} relatedness is universal and inalienable and therefore the expression of an ultimate human and natural *Unbeliebigkeit.* Man must always react to this need. Sexual need has no universality, which means that it, in contrast, does not put constraints on what humans are and should be. Consequently, it must be subordinate to the need

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[220] In theological ethics, Thomas Aquinas is probably the only one who pursues a similar goal with the „*inclinationes naturales*“ (self-preservation, preservation of the species, the search for truth, communal life, rational and virtuous action). There is, however, „a methodical insufficiency in his work where he inquires into the *ratio* of the natural inclinations for this *ratio* does not derive from scientific analysis but is prereflective, and based on experience ...“ (W. Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit*, p. 52). With the concept of character, Fromm attempts to do justice to the methodical demand. But that concept also leads him to exclude all instinctive or quasiinstinctive components from the concept „human needs“ and to see those needs as a result of instinct substitution.

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for relatedness. Sexuality can have a certain role as the need for relatedness is reacted to, but man's love (as a reaction to his need for relatedness) is not determined by his sexual need. This difference in the two needs as regards their claim to determine human normativeness is decisive and makes itself felt in specific problems of sexual and marital morality.

This example shows the significance of identifying and designating human needs as naturally *unbeliebig* and generally dispositive of human normativeness. The kind of reaction to such needs must still be determined, but the mere fact of identifying these needs is of decisive importance for the setting of ethical norms because that very identification entails a claim to shape normativeness not-optionally *(unbeliebig).*

Fromm's contribution to the problem of ethical norms goes beyond the designation of human needs to the insight that reaction to these needs must al-vavs be either productive or nonproductive, and that only a productive (biophilic) reaction does justice to human needs in the sense that it prevents the dysfunction of the system „man" and thus furthers man's unfolding. With the help of Fromm's theory of character, the productive reaction can be defined more precisely: Fundamentally,

human beings and social entities can react to any human need in countless different ways. But the reactions in all their variety and distinctiveness still express either a dominant productive or a dominant nonproductive character orientation. The conduct of every individual and social entity is the expression of a character orientation. Therefore the moral quality of a form of behavior is defined by whether it expresses a productive or a nonproductive reaction to a human need. Consequently, there is a correspondence between, on the one hand, the ultimate and natural *Unbeliebigkeit* of reacting to needs, be it productively or nonproductively; and on the other hand, the distinctive quality of character orientations that shape human reactions not-optionally *(unbeliebig),* by qualifying them as productive or nonproductive.[221] {183}

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[221] The fact that Fromm was able to limit the nonproductive character orientations to a certain number of ideal types has particular practical value in the matter of establishing concrete ethical norms. And the various nonproductive character orientations in the process of assimilation and socialization also have the heuristic function of defining a *contrario* what productive character orientation means.

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