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Erich Fromm's Understanding of Karl Marx

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Presentation at a German-Italian Seminar about *Die Marx-Rezeption Erich Fromms*, February 17-19, 1989, Bologna.

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Fromm was not an orthodox Marxist. Until the end of his life he asserted himself as a materialistic thinker, firmly convinced of the fact that in the main he agreed with the theories of Karl Marx. Yet, it should not be concluded that Fromm assigned himself to the orthodox tradition in Western Marxism. It could indeed be that Fromm misjudged himself, but this, as will be easily demonstrated, was not the case. More likely to be the case was (and is) the reproach on the part of the orthodoxy which has time and time again been raised, namely, that in the end Fromm's theory was neither truly Marxist nor materialistic. Therefore, if you sympathize with Fromm's teachings and consider his theory somewhat worthy of discussion, then you also have to prepare yourself for the fact that authoritative parts of Marxism being academically established will not move away from this stigma, and that in the end you, the sympathizer, will be the one who is affected.

An orthodox Marxist is, first of all, someone who does not move away from a definite catalogue of common aphorisms, which, in his opinion, are explained in the works of Karl Marx. First and foremost along with the creed to the labour-theory of value (Arbeitswertlehre) is the view of class antagonism between paid-labour and capital, the theory of the revolutionary role of the proletariat and the crisis vulnerability of capitalist economy, as well as a dialectical way of thinking in general. Furthermore, a theoretically more centered maxim is that of being (Sein) which determines consciousness and

the maxim not entirely identical is the basis upon which the superstructure (Überbau) is imposed. It is also remarkable that Marxist anthropology and the self-realization (Selbstverwirklichung) of man were included in this catalogue. To this end and for this purpose anthropology is usually separated from the late work (Spätwerk) and dismissed as an early work (Frühwerk), (Marx, as mature as he was, would have overcome this with his economic theory).

In addition, I am personally of the opinion that the specific difference lies in the concept of the subject (Subjektbegriff). The decisive question is, whether you think people are forced to think and to act in a certain way by the economic conditions without further appeal, or whether you think that additional explanations are required in this connection. No one less than Engels himself moulded the orthodoxy to see the proletariat just as a multitude economically moved, thus making it dependent upon that what scientific Socialism is and that what it is not. But you are only an orthodox Marxist if in your opinion socialism comes by means of necessity and is independent of an individual's desire.

Fromm independently endeavoured to draw our attention to a person's productivity. For this reason he is certainly not under the suspicion of orthodoxy. Therefore, the following question is extremely interesting: How does Fromm in particular want to agree with this nondogmatic view of Man which presupposes an autonomous factor, when on the other hand he himself largely describes man



as an object dependent on the circumstances. Or, in brief: How can he be a materialist without falling back again into orthodox Marxism? I would answer this the following way: Fromm is most likely to be understood in the way that a materialistic description of Man in all of his dependence only follows, if the individual has failed to make use of his/her own productive forces. For Fromm it is a matter of a materialism which only lasts until those who are ruled and suppressed take their destiny into their own hands. The productive individual ignores his/her materialistic dependence. An orthodox Marxist will indeed raise the reproach of idealism against this statement, and assert that it concerns a non-scientific theory.

From the very beginning there is a kind of materialism on call for Fromm. Already in 1922 in his dissertation on 'The Jewish Law' (Das jüdische Gesetz), the characteristics themselves point out what will later on be characteristic for his understanding of materialism.

In addition, the especially methodical approach of Fromm's work should be mentioned: Fromm attempts to combine new interpretations of the Jewish law with the changes in the economic status. The issue is certain streams of Diaspora Judaism - the Karaites and the Reform Movement - adjusted their interpretation of the Law according to economic interests they pursued. Upon closer consideration, it was the upper classes which were oriented towards profit. The Law was a burden for them and they deviated from it. In opposition, Fromm positively emphasizes how the movement of Hasidism, even in its worst state of poverty and suppression, found out how to enliven the Law anew with the spirit of contemplation. Thus some gave in to their most important economic interests, whereas others raised themselves above them and, by virtue of their own effort and under guidance of the Law, they could break away and set themselves free.

It is therefore remarkable that Fromm didn't take on this methodical approach of the Marxist tradition. He was much more indebted to Alfred Weber's Cultural Sociology the terminology of which Fromm continually falls back upon in his dissertation. For Alfred Weber, there is the civilization and societal process, which urges on

Man's dominion over the internal and external Natures. He contrasts this with the movement of culture (Kulturbewegung), which includes philosophy, religion, and art, all of which are the actual activities of Man, all of which pervade the intellectual and fill one with a continually new feeling of life (Lebensgefühl). It is only when this activity wanes, that the totality of the historical process, which according to Weber unites these partial processes, loses its consistency and the ability to reproduce. The production of meaning, then, succumbs to the unrestrained tendencies of civilization and society. Actually the intellectual forces have a primacy in prevailing against their material foundations at their disposal.

Expressly un-Marxist is Alfred Weber placing the crucial point of contact on man's acquisition of the world in the superstructure (Überbau), and therein perceives an ideal occurrence, which only turns away from the legalities of the material foundation that he touches upon. According to Alfred Weber, the central category in this connection is that of the 'productivity of culture', which in accordance with its meaning Fromm calls 'creative effort'. Fromm continues further with Weber's concept of an ideal basis for meaning (Sinnstiftung), and hastens it in the direction of a psychic dimension. If you exactly consider what Fromm so liked about Hasidism, you will notice, that it was their high regard for contemplative introspection.

This un-Marxist aspect is the distinguishing mark for the origin of the methodical approach from a synthesis of Jewish faith and an understanding of sociology. Fromm constantly continued to develop the approach in a great part of his work - he never gave up. He himself was never really that clear about the contrast with orthodox Marxism, otherwise he would have tried to justify it. But perhaps he personally didn't have any reason to deal with the dogmatists position in more detail - he anyway had often enough characterized them as wrong and useless. Therefore, he well did without an immanent critique. Contrary to this, I am of the opinion, that within the context of an academic adoption of Fromm, wherever it may take place, that it is always precisely this point which



delays the adoption of Fromm, i.e. which stagnates it. In my opinion, a defensive argumentation with respect to this is pointless because it won't take the sting out of the reproach. That will only succeed in the form of an offensive strategy, which will expose the implicit idealism of the orthodoxy. In any case, Fromm remained free from certain materialistic scruples with one exception which I will soon address. However, everyone who postulates psychic self-liberation from a Marxist point of View isn't entirely free from certain materialistic scruples. Nevertheless, he still expects to materialistically lead the act of liberation.

The aforementioned exception constitutes Fromm's contribution as the so-called Freudo-Marxism. It thereby concerns the attempt by some outsiders to extend Marxism to include the insights of a Freudian psychoanalysis. Along with Siegfried Bernfeld and Wilhelm Reich, Fromm essentially took part in it as well. Therefore, it seems legitimate for me to speak of scruples as regards Fromm to the extent that this brief period is the only one in his long period of activity, wherein he renounces every attempt of bringing in positions, which somehow or another could have made him look guilty of being an idealist. The most important contribution of the authoritarian character is, so to speak, a strict materialistic derivation of sociopsychological statements from the given conditions of dominion and the proof of a stabilizing function of psychic structures. According to Fromm materialism is anyway by and large identical with that, as individuals psychically reproduce conditions of dominion (Herrschaftsverhältnisse). There is, indeed, also the 'revolutionary character', which is just postulated as an ideal image (Idealbild) and remains a political construction corresponding so far to the self-understanding of Marxist orthodoxy that it is not able to see the implicit idealism of this position. In this respect attacks were thus virtually impossible.

It is also necessary to clearly hold apart Fromm's lines of development. At this point in time Fromm is critically inspecting the Freudian theory, when he for example talks about Freud making the Oedipus Complex absolute, which fails to notice the social determinants of

psychological categories. It easily escapes one's attention, that Fromm, at the same time, takes up a completely uncritical attitude towards the positions of the Marxist orthodoxy. Apparently, there is no systematic study of Marx, nor even of only Marx texts - a somewhat more intensive Marx adoption of this nature fails to appear. Rather as much as Fromm knows about Marxism, he appears to have picked it up from the intellectual environment which surrounded him. Presumably, this was similar to that which took place in Horkheimer's writings, as well as those of Adorno and Marcuse.

All in all there are, ultimately, barely more than just diverse aphorisms of orthodox marxism on the part of the early critical theory (which has to be ascribed to Fromm), which are merely somewhat neutralized in an emphatically academic style by means of their investiture. In addition to this there is scepticism concerning the revolutionary potential of the proletariat which had a substantial part in the project of Freudo-Marxism. The central question of Freudo-Marxism also corresponds to this: i.e. - Why didn't the masses take revolutionary action as the theory required. Among the orthodox maxims, the question about which basis would determine the superstructure (Überbau), was of great significance for this project. Fromm saw his crucial task strategic to the theory in extending the paradigm of the foundation and the superstructure (Überbau) around the category of the structural drive (Triebstruktur). It was interpolated mediating between foundation and superstructure, and thus, according to Fromm, it can only be explained by seeing how the destinies of the lives of individuals are being converted into a false consciousness on the basis of psychic structures in ideology.

In retrospect, it deserves to be emphasized that Fromm at that time had introduced the crucial steps into the critical theory, in order to establish a materialistically sound psychoanalysis. This is basically a so-called socio-scientific interpretation of psychoanalytic categories, which amounts to the aforementioned critical inspection of the Freudian theory. A right to materialism sufficed the productive perspective which to an extent succeeded in the repatriation (Rückführung) of



deeper and deeper classes of the bourgeois individual into repressive conditions and ruling structures (Herrschaftsstrukturen). In the end this intention should have been extended to the Freudian drive category.

But there is a special explanation for that, which is worthwhile looking at in more detail. The category of drive was simultaneously put to work in a most remarkable attempt of justification. As one can probably imagine, the Freudo-Marxists had problems to assert themselves into the context of historical materialism

right from the very beginning, and to defend themselves against the appropriate hostilities. That is why they thought up the idea to pass off the scientific foundation of psychoanalysis claimed by Freud as their essential materialistic character. Therefore, in the end result, it was the Freudian Biologism, itself (as he also especially adhered to the concept of drive) in which the material foundation of the individual was seen, and which should have established the claim to a materialistic psychology. For this reason, Fromm had to keep to the category of drive, as long as he was exposed to the pressure of justification and to encounter it in this manner.

The constellations changed in 1938 with his resignation from the Institute for Social Research. Now, Fromm no longer needed to make concessions to a questionable drive materialism (Triebmaterialismus). He finally moved away from the Freudian concept of drive, which he now sees without reservation as a product of the bourgeois individual egotism. At the same time, he retains his own line: one can say that the heart of Frommian materialism is always identical to the method of an analytical social psychology, the core of which is the category of the social character (Gesellschafts-Charakter). (Compare, for example, the appendix to *Escape from Freedom*, 1941a). It is a matter of a critical expansion of orthodox Marxism, especially a resolute refusal of all Economicism (Ökonomismus). Before something can be stated about the potentials for action (Handlungspotential) in a historical situation and before the revolutionary potential of a class can be somewhat defined, an analysis is required of that specific character structure

which individuals have developed based on the same materialistic living conditions.

This critical relation between the Marxist orthodoxy and Economicism can be explained as a theoretical reaction to the proletariat becoming bourgeois. The economic variants of scholastic and party Marxism clearly failed to explain this phenomenon, whereas Reformism itself appeared to be the ideological expression of adaptation to capitalistic relations. Why didn't the proletariat take revolutionary action, even though academic socialism unwaveringly maintained that in the crisis of capitalism, the masses would seize power under the direction of the party? Instead of this, they were proven to be too weak to give a radical turn to the events of 1918, and, in the meantime, the worst thing happened; they also proved themselves to be too weak to stop barbarity. As Fromm knew from his empirical studies, even they themselves were not free from the desire to subject themselves to a greater authority. The Marxist orthodoxy still wanted to see the revolutionary subject in the masses, and indeed the masses themselves exhibited fascistic traits.

Fromm was also represented together with those who made substantial contributions to the psychological aspect of the analysis of Fascism. It is exactly this aspect, which implies more or less directly a critical distance to scholastic Marxism. But, I also would like to point out that this aspect implies just as much a critical distance to the worker's movement. That is significant to the extent that there was a possibility to evade the problematic of value (Werteproblematik) in marxism, as an intellectual, by stating partiality (Parteilichkeitserklärung) towards the proletariat. The outlook of the socialistic future can confidently be left to the liberated masses. The whole thing gives the appearance that one would follow a historical materialistic line even in moral issues. Fromm was now cut off from this possibility to retreat just as all the others who single-mindedly pursued the psychological aspect of analyzing Fascism. In this way he was compelled to face the problem of resignation from the critical theory, and as we know, he avoided it by turning to ethics, which the dogmatists reject as idealism.

I would now like to come to what is



perhaps my most important thesis for Fromm's adoption of Marx. If we once place ourselves at the viewpoint, that a adoption of Marx only merits the name through what was inspired by the intensive study of essential texts of the complete Marxian work, and, therefore briefly stated, it is based upon a discussion with Marxian writings, then, one must consequently ascertain that for a long time there was no mentioning about a more discriminating adoption of Marx than by Fromm. If one considers it well, it was practically the half of his total time of work, during which Fromm allowed himself to be entangled with other matters, until he sat down for the first time and completed a serious reading of Marx, the fruits of which, then, were to be gleaned in 1955 in *The Sane Society* (1955a). This is, therefore especially remarkable, mainly because Fromm had already produced a script *Man for Himself* in 1947 (1947a), which already contains the outline of his ethics and all of the essential building blocks of his mature teaching. Apart from the rather diffuse influences from the intellectual surroundings, in which Fromm lived, the effective influence of Marx upon the conceptualization of the Frommian doctrines was accordingly imaginably little. His system of theories stood steadfast for a long time in its essentials, when Fromm for the first time endeavoured to produce an intensive reading of Marx.

At this point, I want to comment on the relationship between syncretism and productivity. It may as far as Fromm is concerned seem contradictory, that up until now, Fromm has been portrayed as a critical thinker furthering Marxism, and now, at the same time, it is being emphasized, that he himself owed only very little to Marxism, and, in particular, to Marx. At the same time it can be said that one of Fromm's idiosyncrasies was that he always contradicted the pupils and protagonists of one of the teachings with which he had occupied himself. He was an academic loner and without exception of influences which he was exposed to, or to which he exposed himself to, he relatively quickly sought the productive relationship of critical distance. Thus, the result is a considerable number of

predominantly great philosophers who taught Fromm, and whom Fromm immediately incorporates into his own theoretical outline. With regard to Marxism, this was perhaps especially fortunate in that it spared him from identifying himself with these categories, and from making him have to work through the long series of pestering aporia like many others before him. These often take the best years of creativity in theoretical work, until one succumbs to them and, in the end, becomes oneself set in dogmatics, or however has to break away from them. Fromm never entered so far into Marxism just for the sake of becoming one of his productive progressive thinkers (Weiterdenker).

The result of all this was still that Fromm went his own way even after the turning point at the beginning of the 1950's, when he began to read Marx. Fromm followed his way and pursued his project without essentially adding new aspects for which he would be in due thanks to the readings of Marx. To the point: what had really changed was Fromm's image of Marx. The further postulation of his teaching remained largely uninfluenced by this change, and steadily followed in the direction taken before. Therefore, I maintain that the more or less comprehensive representations of the Marxian teaching, which one can now pursue in Fromm's publications, have ultimately illustrative characters. That is, they are incorporated into the existing structures of the Frommian theories, and serve as the explanation for their present aspects. It is, therefore, also not that surprising that Fromm's image of Marx is in a way selective.

I would therefore, like to focus on the details of two writings, which, in my opinion, are of value as standard readings for anyone who wants to be occupied with Fromm's matured interpretation of Marx. The first work is *The Sane Society*, which appeared in 1955. In this document Fromm refers to his occupation with Marx for the first time, as I have already mentioned. Soon thereafter, in 1961, his book *Marx Concept of Man* (1961b) was published. This work embodies the only monograph by Fromm on this topic, which also signifies as one would expect, something of a peak and



conclusion at the same time. It was through this work during the student movement that Fromm's name became familiar to us. Immediately thereafter, Fromm published once again a comparison between Marx and Freud (*Beyond the Chains of Illusions*, 1962a); later he then published occasional essays on Marxism and the Marxian teachings, and of course, references to this or that place in Marx's writings belong to the customary repertoire. But, be means of all this, he still only offers variations and a deepening to the topic. In all respects, both of the writings really mark the peak of Fromm's analysis of Marx.

The first of the aforementioned writings, *The Sane Society*, is significant in that it includes a critique of Marx, which can't be found anywhere else in Fromm's writings in so much detail (cf. 1955a, pp. 177-188). The fact that the first detailed discussion of the Marxian teachings contains, at the same time, the most far-reaching critique which Fromm had ever made about Marx, is yet again an example of how quickly Fromm becomes critically distant. In detail, he reproaches Marx for centralistic concepts and following a bourgeois revolutionary model, which remains fixed upon the seizure of governmental power. Socialization of the means of production would by far not suffice the establishment of a truly socialist society. Moreover, Marx had overlooked the danger of totalitarianism, and thus the possibility of a capitalist, as well as a socialist system of terror. The cause of these errors was ultimately to be sought in the fact that Marx didn't possess an adequate notion of the irrationality of psychic structures.

Even the following reproach, which, in my opinion is the most characteristic for Fromm, has its origins in the fact that Marx underestimated 'the complexity of human passions.' Fromm continues to say:

'First of all, to this neglect of the moral factor in man. Just because he assumed that the goodness of man would assert itself automatically when the economic changes had been achieved, he did not see that a better society could not be brought into life by people who had not undergone a moral change within themselves. He had no attention, without which

all political and economic changes are futile.' (1955a, p. 264)

In order to prevent misunderstandings, one may add, that the moral change, which is being addressed here, is most closely connected by Fromm to the question of a 'New Man', that is, new psychic structures upon which, for him, everything is dependent in the end. In brief, he therefore reproaches Marx for his concept of liberation being superficial and being the emancipation of Man missing in the end. In contrast, Fromm's entire sympathy lies with the early socialists and anarchists who exactly form the counterbalance in the socialist camp. Their concept of liberation includes the self-alteration of Man as an initial factor (initial Moment), and touches close up to a psychic dimension.

But, in the entire critique Fromm's positive turn to Marx still predominates. The access to this deeper understanding of Marx presented itself to him through the concept of alienation, and, that of materialization (Verdinglichung) respectively. According to Marx, Man is alienated under capitalist conditions from the product of his work, from his activity, from his fellowmen, and, finally, from himself. This self-alienation is explained with respect to Marx against the background of a completely different disposition having been awarded him. Accordingly, Man is all in all a universal, active, and passionate being, all of which things he initially has to acquire himself. As long as this does not occur, he produces a world of goods and merchandise, which oppose him as an alien and rule over him.

Fromm himself explains why he prefers the concept of alienation in Marx's writings:

'For one reason, because this concept seems to me to touch upon the deepest level of the modern personality; for another, because it is the most appropriate if one is concerned with the interaction between the contemporary socio-economic structure and the character structure of the average individual.' (1955, p. 110f.)

In fact, Fromm's specific affinity for the Marxian concept of alienation is proven in his analysis of the character of modern society. The outcome of this affinity is that the so-called 'marketing orientation' is predominant, by



which he diagnoses a maximum loss of relatedness (Beziehungsverlust). The interchangeability between objects and attitudes is one of its striking features, and thereby, individuals are helplessly subjected to a gigantic machinery, which keeps them both at the same time. This fact provides a very good explanation of the concept of alienation in Marx' writings:

'By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of the world, as the creator of his own acts - but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship.' (1955a, p. 120.)

The concept of alienation in Marx' writings, then, is an essential part of his anthropology. The final reason for the positive turn to Marx and the more intensive discussion of his writings, is also because Fromm believed that he could establish a positive agreement between Marx' anthropology and that of his own. Fromm's anthropology - that must once again be emphasized - was already at this point in time long since finished, by which crucial point my thesis is confirmed, i.e. - that Fromm's matured (ausgereifte) interpretation of Marx ultimately has an illustrative character, which further means in this case, that Fromm interprets Marxian anthropology according to the standard of his own anthropology.

For Fromm, anthropology serves as the foundation of his ethics. This of course is well-known. In brief the central axis of the Frommian theory structure depicts itself somewhat as follows: in the nature of Man are founded a series of basic needs (Grundbedürfnissen); these can be satisfied by a limited number of characterological (charakterologischer) orientations, whereby by nature one proves him/herself to be the happier, which means productive orientation. Fromm then goes on and interprets the anthropology in his book, *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961b), exactly along this axis. First

'Marx did not believe, as do many contemporary sociologist and psychologist, that there is no such thing as the nature of man; that

man at birth is like a blank sheet of paper, on which the culture writes its text. Quite in contrast to this sociological relativism, Marx started out with the idea that man is a recognizable and ascertainable entity; that man can be defined as man not only biologically, anatomically and physiologically, but also psychologically' (1961b, p.24)

In the further course of the representation, it becomes immediately clear, why this statement is so important. Fromm comments the dialectic of being (Wesen) and appearance (Erscheinung) in the works of Hegel and Marx. Thereafter, alienation (Entfremdung) is the condition in which Man has not realized his nature of being (Wesen), a concept which is identical to the nature of Man for Fromm. But, one's being can and should be realized by productive Man. The thought of human productivity is central in the works of Hegel, and also, in connection with him, in the writings of Marx.

'For Spinoza, Goethe, Hegel, as well as for Marx, man is alive only inasmuch as he is productive, inasmuch as he grasps the world outside of himself in the act of expressing his own specific human powers, and of grasping the world with these powers. Inasmuch as man is not productive, inasmuch as he is receptive and passive, he is nothing, he is dead. In this productive process, man realizes his own essence, he returns to his own essence, which in theological language is nothing other than his return to God.' (1961b, p. 29f.)

I would like to take this opportunity to recall once again what I stated earlier on at the beginning about the methodical approach in Fromm's writings: productive people overcome their materialistic dependence. Fromm always adhered to that. Logically, the materialistic categories are observed as consequent under this reservation. Concerning the relation between being (Sein) and consciousness (Bewusstsein) Fromm expressed himself in this way: indeed being determines consciousness, and according to his own amendment it likewise determines the psychological structures. But, strictly speaking, this maxim is only true for the wrong (falsche) consciousness and the wrong needs. Wherever individuals loosen themselves from



these determinants and become productive, they set more likely a reverse (gegenläufig) dynamic into motion. A discussion taking this approach serious can, in my opinion, only be a matter of how that should be attainable. How, then, is productivity possible in the midst of alienation?

The being of Man, alienation, and following this productivity are the central ideas in the Frommian interpretation of Marx. Fromm thereby almost exclusively refers to the early Marxian writings and to the anthropology contained therein. This could hardly be ignored. In this respect, one could describe Fromm's image of Marx as selective, which has already been indicated. The predominant part of Marxian orthodoxy also takes the view that Marx had overcome the anthropology in his early writings in his economic works, and in the end he moved away from this idealistic early phase. Fromm objects to this with respect to the thesis of continuity of the early and late Marx. Marx did indeed concentrate on the problems of economy in his later work, yet, he never gave up his former views, and he always implicitly retained the concept of Man's being, as well as that of alienation.

This thesis of Marx' continuity was important since the publication of his early writings in the thirties, for all of those who represented a encompassing concept of liberation and who wanted to defend themselves against the orthodox positions without themselves abandoning the ground of the Marxian theory. The early writings were, in this respect, the preferred material of all those who pursued something like an inner-Marxist opposition, after having recognized the Stalinist perversion of the original idea of Marxism. In general, one can also assign Fromm to this direction, which splits up by itself into the most different and also the most opposing circles and groupings. Fromm characterized himself as a socialistic humanist, and he declared solidarity with the Marxist opposition within the soviet system and with the non-dogmatic approaches in Western Marxism.

However, one may stand in relation to this very clearly outlined inner solidarity which was also, at the same time, the reason for Fromm's

interest in Marx always remaining in a sense limited. Even the thesis from the continuity of the early and late Marx can not obscure the fact that Fromm hardly took notice of the main Marxian work. This applies to the political analyses and the role of the proletariat, the teaching of class oppositions, the crises of capitalism, etc., in brief, no longer that which was philosophical and what erected itself above the critique of the political economy. Therefore Fromm did not at all search for possible contradictions in Marx himself. He interpreted him rigorously as a great humanist, and also as a person (1961b, p. 391f.), which I, quite frankly, regard as a false estimation (Fehleinschätzung).

In conclusion, I would like to refer to yet one more point. As was mentioned previously, within the context of a certain core thesis, Fromm always had the habit of citing a whole series of philosophers at the same time which he then brought to a common denominator. One could relate that to a type of eclecticism, or also simply, to redundancy. However, Fromm always meant some thing more by this; it mattered a great deal to him to show that not only he himself, but also, for example, Aristotle, Spinoza, and John Dewey, or Goethe, Hegel and Marx among many others thought in the same way as he did, and they all agreed with each other in the depth of their philosophies. Fromm wanted to demonstrate that in the end every truly great thinker was convinced by the idea of humanity (Humanität) and also about its roots being in the nature of Man. Marx is no exception to this, he is also placed in this great tradition, and it can also be concluded from his writings that in the nature of man that which constitutes humanity is founded in human nature.

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