



tention throughout the second half of the book is that of showing how it is possible to give an empirical justification of moral principles. Two types of justification are offered. One is "a priori" in the special sense that it rests on a basic or congenital "normativeness" in human nature, described by Rice as a goal-seeking tendency. The difficulty with this as a basis for moral principles is that, like the prescriptive element in moral concepts, it seems to be blind and empty of content. Rice appears to acknowledge its inadequacy in this regard. He recognizes, for example, that the fact that we are built in such a way that we seek ends does not in itself support a hedonistic theory of motivation. The question is empirical, and not a priori. And, in any event, what the congenital a priori provides is more of a "must" than an "ought."

A better justification or "vindication" of moral principles, Rice declares, is pragmatic. It occurs when our human nature (not only the congenital part but the "second nature" welded onto the first by experience) becomes involved in normative processes—in the business of decision-making, of living a life. It consists in activity which carries a sense of well-being, a "global sense of directedness." The concept of this "global sense" is perhaps the most important one developed by Rice in the book. It is certainly a key concept for his argument. Unfortunately, it is never anywhere more than roughly sketched, though it recurs frequently. Rice admits that it has no fixedness, that it eludes formulation. The question is whether it too is not blind to a degree which leaves us unclear about how it can provide a sense of direction. To be sure, Rice likens it to "conscience" (p. 194), to our "working sense of 'good' or 'right'" (p. 149), and refers to it as an "operative sense of rationality" (p. 255; my italics). On the other hand, he elsewhere calls it a "manifestation of conation" (p. 212), conation in turn being described as non-cognitive and irrational. If our "global" sense is simply the normative thrust of our nature become mature and capable of making rational integrations, the question arises of how we can know that this development or manifestation of our normative capacity is better than one that took another form or direction. Sometimes even the exercise of normative capacity itself comes into question, as in the despair of a diseased soul. While Rice rejects arbitrary definitions as a basis for ultimate principles, it appears necessary, if we are to get direction from our normative capacity, to stipu-

late for it a directedness which it does not seem per se to possess.

In addition to the topics already mentioned, the book presents valuable and provocative suggestions for the application of the proposed theory of value to questions in aesthetics and to problems connected with the principles of utility, justice, and liberty.

The book as a whole is a consummately fine example of the conscientious scholarship, the honest objectivity in the search for truth, and the rare ability to use language both evocatively and cogently, in terms of which those of us who knew Philip Blair Rice will wish to remember him.

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THE SANE SOCIETY. By Erich Fromm. New York: Rinehart & Co., 1955. Pp. xiv+370. \$5.00.

Erich Fromm is one of the leading exponents of the use of psychoanalytic materials for the study of moral and political problems. Unlike such writers as Lasswell and Riesman, Fromm makes explicit his moral emphasis; and hence the difficulties of the project of basing moral and political critiques on psychological theories also emerge far more clearly in his writings. The present book, which is a continuation of *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart, 1941) and *Man for Himself* (New York: Rinehart, 1947), sets forth a critique of modern society which complements the former work's analysis of modern totalitarian movements and the latter's study of the types of moral character. Like t' earlier books, *The Sane Society* is written from the standpoint of what Fromm calls "humanistic psychoanalysis." This discipline is held to yield the "laws of human nature," which in turn supply "universal criteria for mental health," both in the individual and in a whole society (p. 12). For the study of man reveals "what his needs are objectively" as against "what he feels to be his needs"; and a sane society is one which "corresponds" to these objective needs (p. 20). Thus the premise of what Fromm calls "normative humanism" is a universalistic and objectivistic one:

Mental health is achieved if man develops into full maturity according to the characteristics and laws of human nature. Mental illness consists in the failure



of such development. From this premise the criterion of mental health is not one of individual adjustment to a given social order, but a universal one, valid for all men, of giving a satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence [p. 14].

In the body of the book Fromm undertakes to carry out this premise: first, by setting forth "the human situation: Man's needs as they stem from the conditions of his existence"; second, by indicating what are the norms or criteria of mental health in the individual and in society as corresponding to these objective needs; third, by presenting an elaborate critique of "man in capitalistic society" as characterized by a pervasive trait of "alienation" or "self-estrangement" in which the requirements of mental health are violated on a vast scale; and finally by suggesting "roads to sanity" whereby these pathogenic characteristics of modern society may be corrected and sanity, i.e., mental health, be restored.

The project of this book, then, is very ambitious. In its aim of expounding a criterion of moral and political value which shall be "a universal one, valid for all men," it is reminiscent of the natural-law approach of early modern political philosophy, save that its epistemological basis for this criterion is held to be not reason but the laws of human nature as ascertained by the science of psychoanalysis. In appealing to this basis, moreover, Fromm appears to be reflecting a *consensus hominum eruditorum hodiernum*: a large body of contemporary learned opinion supports his way of doing moral and political philosophy. Consequently, although much of what he says seems to me to be sound and suggestive, I shall confine my review to a brief critical discussion of each of the four phases of Fromm's project.

### I

Where do we find those "laws of human nature" to which Fromm refers as revealing man's objective needs? He does, in fact, both in this book and in *Man for Himself*, present a large number of wise and shrewd insights into human nature, including the types of human character. It is also true that these insights are based in part on those set forth by Freud, although they go beyond Freud's simple sex basis in many ways. Yet these insights are hardly "laws" even in a loose sense of the word. Apart from very brief references to clinical and other observations, no evidence is presented to show any firm basis in experimentally validated data; they cer-

tainly go far beyond the kinds of elementary propositions which writers like Sears and Kris have shown to possess some such even tentative validation. Moreover, the propositions about "the human situation" which Fromm sets forth, and which presumably constitute his "laws of human nature," are in fact, as he elsewhere admits, similar in large part to the doctrines about man presented by such traditional ethical philosophers as Aristotle and Spinoza. Now these philosophers were indeed wise men; but they were not in any strict sense psychoanalysts. Consequently, it appears that what Fromm is in fact giving us, under the guise of the "laws of human nature" of humanistic psychoanalysis, is a selection from the tradition of philosophical anthropology, but with the presumed added luster of scientific laws as ascertained by psychoanalytic methods.

### II

The relation between the laws of human nature, or the characteristics of man's situation, and the norms or criteria of mental health, is by no means clear. The ground of the lack of clarity is likewise a traditional one, and may be put in this traditional way: That Fromm's propositions or laws about the human situation purport to state facts, while his assertions about man's objective needs present values. Thus he declares that "the decision as to what is good and bad has to be made on the basis of our knowledge of man's nature and the laws which govern its growth" (p. 30). Now Fromm does not seem to be aware of the difficulties in moving from knowledge of facts or laws to decisions about good or bad, as was also the case in *Man for Himself*. There is no need to labor these difficulties in the traditional logical way as involving an illegitimate movement from an "is" to an "ought." I wish to present them here in a somewhat different way: namely, that contrary value consequences are possible on the basis of Fromm's factual antecedents. The chief fact which he presents about the human situation is that "it is in a state of constant and unavoidable disequilibrium" (p. 24); because of man's possession of reason and imagination, contrasted with his background in animal life, he is always confronted by alternatives "between regression and progression, between return to animal existence and arrival at human existence"; he "has to solve a problem, he can never rest in the given situation, of a passive adaptation to nature" (pp. 27-28). Now as Fromm specifies this



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basic fact about the human situation, it turns out that there are contrary, alternative ways of solving the problem: relatedness vs. narcissism, creativeness vs. destructiveness, brotherliness vs. incest, individuality vs. herd conformity, reason vs. irrationality. But this contrariety already shows that bad as well as good solutions, criteria for mental illness as well as for mental health, can be found to "correspond" to man's needs. For example, one of man's needs is to transcend his state of being a passive creature, and while one way of answering this need is by being creative, "there is another answer to this need for transcendence: if I cannot create life, I can destroy it" (p. 37). What, now, is the relation between these various solutions and the central problem? According to Fromm, "one answer corresponds more to the total needs of man, and hence is more conducive to the unfolding of his powers and to his happiness than the other" (p. 29). Note, then, that between the facts on the problem on the one hand and the solution on the other, Fromm inserts concepts of man's "total needs," "the unfolding of his powers," "his happiness." From what source, however, does he derive the content of these concepts? Since the facts themselves, as he has shown, can yield alternative solutions, these facts cannot be the sole source of these differential value concepts. It follows, then, that between Fromm's factual premises and his value conclusions about the better as against the worse solutions of man's predicament other value premises must be inserted, setting forth the content of concepts like "happiness" and "total needs." And the basis of the value aspects of these concepts would likewise have to be determined.

### III

Fromm holds that contemporary man has a definite "social character," that of "alienation," as a consequence of the economic features of twentieth-century capitalism. This character involves such features as "quantification" and "abstractification," a loss of a sense of self, a separation and compartmentalization of the various spheres of living, an asocial and egotistical attitude. Alienation pervades the relation of man to his work—the worker becomes an automaton, the manager a bureaucrat administering people as impersonal objects, the owner a passive and non-responsible possessor of a

piece of paper. The process of consumption is likewise alienated—acquisition is separated from use, and use in turn is a matter of labels rather than of contact with real things. In relation to society and the state, alienation takes the form of man's helplessness in the face of anonymous social forces which dominate him; and men dominate and use one another as commodities without concern for the others' feelings or more general social bonds. In relation to himself, man views himself as a commodity "to be employed successfully on the market," not "as an active agent, as the bearer of human powers"; "his sense of self does not stem from his activity as a loving and thinking individual, but from his socio-economic role," his ability to "sell himself favorably" (p. 142). The same traits of alienation are found in modern man's attitude of conformity before the omnipresent authorities of society, in the principle of non-frustration that "every desire must be satisfied immediately," in the practice of "free talk," in the use of intelligence solely to manipulate symbols for practical ends as against rational understanding which penetrates to the reality behind symbols, in the ethics of "fairness" as against the Christian ethics of love, in the forced labor of work which has no meaning save earning a living, and in a democracy of men who have no will or convictions of their own but whose decisions are largely determined by giant forces outside their control or knowledge.

While many phases of this depiction of "alienation" are by no means new, as Fromm himself points out, this massive description of the phenomenon exhibits a skilful synthesizing of many different aspects of modern life. Among the many questions which arise, the following may be mentioned. There is the old question of the relation between the atomistic and the collectivistic views of modern man. Fromm views man in modern society as an egoistic individual who has lost all ties with his fellow men, and also as a man who has too many and too strong ties with his fellows; as a man who is concerned only with the private, and also as one who has no privacy but only "togetherness" (cf., e.g., pp. 139-43, 158-59). There may well be no contradiction here, as there is none between atomism and mechanism; but Fromm is somewhat too incautious in his ways of relating these. Moreover, one might ask to what extent the phenomena of alienation are peculiar to and effects of modern capitalism. And to what extent are the bad features of alienation simply



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the price we have to pay for the good features of modern economic and political freedom and progress?

## IV

The “road to sanity” which Fromm suggests as the cure for alienation is “humanistic communitarian socialism.” Its chief feature is “active participation and responsibility for everybody” in all major spheres of social life—economic, political, cultural. The chief difficulty with Fromm’s discussion in this section of the book is one which likewise confronts many other psychological approaches to politics. In his concern with removing alienation and its effects he seems to lose sight of other kinds of social realities which do not fit in with his conception of the psychological realities. Among these other realities are those of politics and of economics. In respect of each Fromm tends to adopt a utopian attitude. The political utopianism is epitomized in such a statement as: “in a society where no person has power over another, each person fulfils his function on the basis of co-operation and mutuality” (p. 94); the economic utopianism in such a statement as: “If the wealth of society corresponded to the actual needs of its members, there would be no problem of distributing it” (p. 87). Concomitantly with these, respectively, Fromm can advocate a rather far-reaching regulation (and presumably censorship) of movies, books, and newspapers (p. 334), and a “guaranteed subsistence minimum” which would be given to all men for a certain definite period whether they worked or not (pp. 335–38). He does not analyze the enormous political and economic problems on which his well-meaning psychological intentions impinge. On the other hand, I believe that any sound approach to political and economic improvement must keep in mind something very much like Fromm’s concept of alienation and the need for its removal so far as possible. Which is another way of saying that Fromm has by no means done the complete job which confronts political philosophy in the contemporary world; but he has done one important part of it. The book which is as adequate on the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural realities as it is on the psychological ones, and which fits all of these with the proper perspective both for the analysis and the amelioration of the central problems of man today, has still not been written.

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MORAL JUDGMENT. By D. Daiches Raphael. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955. Pp. 224. 16s.

This book is not primarily concerned with “what silly people mean when they say silly things”—to quote Bertrand Russell’s evaluation of the prevailing common-sense school in philosophy (*British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, Feb., 1953). For Mr. Raphael the data of moral inquiry are “the moral judgments of ordinary life,” but only the judgments men will defend upon *reflection*, not their emotive utterances. Moral philosophy, according to Raphael, must not be content merely to describe linguistic usage, however “reflective.” Although it must (1) define basic moral concepts and judgments, from the standpoint of intent, it must make them analytically “coherent and systematic” (“the logic of morals”); and (2) it must reveal their underlying “nature, purpose, and presuppositions” (“the metaphysics of morals”).

This is especially interesting coming, as it does, from one who has been known in England as a deontological intuitionist. According to Raphael, deontologists and non-naturalists have kept close to the actual moral judgments of ordinary life; whereas naturalists have not. Although some deontologists have attempted to go beneath the level of surface meanings to order their intuitions, their attempts have been abortive; and we are left with an “unconnected heap” of obligations. Raphael’s theory combines “deontology without intuition” and “Kant in naturalistic dress.” But even though Raphael does take us beyond common everyday verbal usage, he does not go far enough; and in his “logic of morals” we are still left with the language of common sense as the “data” of morals. Raphael does not show that this “logic” is the logic of morality, rather than the logic of the moral language of twentieth-century educated Englishmen (or Indo-Europeans). His procedure may tell what is implied in ordinary concepts and judgments, but it does not tell us whether these are true or worthwhile. One can imagine, for instance, what we would think of a physicist who claimed to have discovered the deeper meaning and relationships of “space” and “time,” or of a psychologist, of “behavior” and “personality,” merely by analyzing these terms as they appear in ordinary life. This reliance on ordinary natural language is all part of the current conservative ideology of leaving things as they are.

In the “logic of morals” Raphael takes as two