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Erich Fromm, an Ethical Naturalist

submitted to Professor Ferré

January 4, 1974

by Patti Spencer

Ex Libris
Erich Fromm

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PART ONE

"Exposition"

The spectral chains of total mechanization loom menacingly over our society waiting to shackle us in the dungeons of a machine-like existence. Through growing computerization and mechanization, man is losing his sense of himself as an individual. He is well on his way to becoming a mere functional part as a cog in a giant machine - the "megamachine".[1]

Erich Fromm speaks of this increasing mechanization in foreboding terms because with the development of this utterly impersonal life style, he sees the disappearance of the human individual and the "human" values and experiences that are a part of man's ultimate realization. Individuality is an integral part of the structure of a human and it must be expressed, not thwarted in its growth by the stifling categories of the "megamachine".

Essentially, man's individuality and realization come to him only when he is "free", when he has a separate and distinct consciousness and when his creativity and expressiveness are fed by the dialectic within himself not relying on the social context for his function. The problem of freedom for modern man is stated in the thesis given by Erich Fromm for his book

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[1]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 31.

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Escape From Freedom.

> "Modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities. Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable and the alternative he is confronted with is either to escape from the burden of his freedom into new dependencies and submission, or to advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man."[2]

It is important to note here that the word "freedom" is used in several different contexts. First Fromm uses the word to describe the physical release of man from Medieval serfdom. Man is put out on his own and is forced to shift for himself. He is free from the bonds that had tied him to a master who directed his every activity. The first contextual meaning of freedom where man is literally released from a condition of servitude is, of course, a necessary step in the historical progression of man's growing individuation. It is necessary for without this initial "freeing", man would not be able to develop the dialectic that brings the other contexts of freedom into his life.

This dialectic, that is so important to any talk about the problems of freedom for modern man, is due to the interplay of "self-strength" that is developed because man is ultimately

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[2]Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (New York: Avon Books, 1965) p. viii.

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responsible for himself and feelings of isolation and anxiety that are developed because man feels cut off and alienated from other humans.[3] Here we find the second contextual meaning of "freedom". Man finds himself isolated, alone, faced with a spectrum of free choice to decide what he will do, what he will say, where he will go, and perhaps more importantly, how he will express himself as an individual. However, this type of freedom has its limitations. The expressions of individuality that are available are within the societal context. Because man tries to overcome the unbearable feelings of isolation he must express himself so as to be accepted by society. The acceptance must be a superficial one for it is based on no deep interaction or dependencies. Living within society becomes an unfortunate and artificial arrangement. A person in this situation is free in our second contextual meaning of the word. The individual can still choose to change. He still may choose from wide and varied alternatives what niche he will fill. The important word here is "niche" for this type of superficial freedom leads to the idea of the "megamachine". Each person fills their niche. Each person is a functional part - a cog. Soon this aspect of the supposed freedom takes over and the individual is given fewer and fewer choices and ceases to express himself. It is decided for him what expressions he will make.

The third contextual meaning of freedom, the one that we will most often be dealing with, deals with the individual

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[3] Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom, p. 44.

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outside of the social context. The individual is aware of himself as a distinct consciousness and relies on no situations created by society to feed his creativity. He is recognizably creative and responsible for himself without reference to the society around him. This does not mean that this "free" individual is cut off from the rest of society. Rather than being a functional part of society, it would be more appropriate to say that he participates in society and interacts with others on a plane higher than the machinery of society. The free individual acts spontaneously, expressing himself in his relations to others and leaving his fear and isolation behind as he loves those around him. His every work is creative and stems from the seeds of the dialectic within him. He is constantly evaluating and examining, constantly trying to improve his "human" world and never settling down to a pre-set routine that robs him of his individuality and stifles his drive for life.

This third contextual meaning of freedom explained above is the ultimate freedom that is sought by man. It is more than a psychological escape from isolation and anxiety. The important facet of this ultimate freedom is that it allows man to remain an individual, it allows him to remain thinking, doubting, questing, as well as delving deep into the human experiences available with others and in the world around him. This is a freedom that allows the growth and richening of the dialectic that keeps man striving and moving forward. The dialectic

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flourishes and keeps man searching for new things, keeps him working in society and keeps him in love with the people who make up his society.

The ultimate freedom for man is always an ideal. It is not a final, static state of being that one can arrive at eventually. One does not suddenly attain freedom and settle back to enjoy it. The ideal is most nearly approached by striving constantly toward it. The absolute freedom that we strive for always stands ahead of us and keeps us alive, forever stimulating us to be fully conscious of our distinctness and to be working creatively and productively. Here again we see the importance of the dialectic and the role it plays as we move forward and then fall back from the goal.

On examining the movement that allows these three contextual meanings of freedom to develop out of each other, we see that the second contexual meaning (that in which man's freedom and creativity are discussable only in the social context) developed from the physical breakdown of the Medieval hierarchical structure. This second contextual meaning was due to a transformation of society and was a means of adjustment for the anxiety and isolation that man felt by being forced out on his own.

The next step - that to the third contextual meaning where man truly recognizes his distinctness as an individual and expresses himself creatively from within - does not seem to stem from any change in the societal arrangement. If anything, the increasingly machine-like character of society seems

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to be a severe limiting factor to human freedom - not a stimulus for more growth. In fact, it almost seems to put man in a societal arrangement not unlike the first contextual meaning of freedom. The modern man who is a slave to the computer and social planning is in a position not unlike the medieval serf. Where then does this third contextual meaning find its impetus?

The answer is - in love.

The answer is to be found in love because as Fromm says, The deepest need of man is to overcome his separateness and this can only be successfully done through love.[4]

Man is born into the world and soon becomes aware of himself as disjoint from the rest of his surroundings. He becomes isolated and realizes that he is alone among others and the world around him.

> "This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness or separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existences an unbearable prison."[5]

> "The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love - is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety."[6]

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[4]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Bantam Books, 1956), p. 8.

[5]Ibid., p. 6.

[6]Ibid., p. 8.

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Man tries to cope with this isolation and to escape from it. The mother supplies an unconditional love to the child and thus overcomes for the child some of its separateness. The mother cares for the child and is responsible for it. The child learns about the world he lives in, grows, and learns to love because he is loved.[7] The father loves conditionally and the child finds that to overcome his separateness from his father he must fulfill the fathers expectations and do certain duties. As the child grows older and matures, these functions of his parents change and "eventually, the mature person has come to the point where he is his own mother and father."[8]

What is meant by the statement that a mature person becomes his own mother and father is that the efforts of the parents to help overcome the child's separateness are taken over by the child and the individual in maturity accepts the responsibility for these functions. The unconditional approval of the mother is to be replaced by self-trust and self-respect while the conditional love of the father is replaced by a conscience that directs the individual in his moral decisions. These are characteristics of someone who is free. A person who is a complete individual in and of himself is prepared to interact with other people without being a burden and a demand.

Mature love is a correlative part of the third contextual meaning of "freedom". As discussed above, a part of this mature love is that each individual must in effect become his own

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[7]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 34.

[8]Ibid., p. 37.

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mother and father. Developed to its fullest extent, mature love is an activity spurred onward by the dialectical interplay of joy and pain.

Another part of the composite of mature love is erotic love. This love reflects "the craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person" in Fromm's words.[9] It is a successful step to the overcoming of isolation. It is in love that the paradox occurs that two people become one and yet remain two.[10] It allows the individual to retain his distinctness and allows him to overcome the isolation that his separate consciousness deeply needs to overcome. It is a union under the condition of preserving one's integrity.[11] Erotic love is not to be a slavery to another person. It must not obliterate the work and character of the individuals involved, but rather it must be a source of inspiration and strength. It must provide a base for interaction and understanding and provide some of the stresses and strains that cause the lovers to be constantly re-examining and changing and growing.

One should never forget that love brings with it pain. Loved ones die or circumstances whisk them away from our grasp. Our lovers find new lovers and we are misunderstood by our lovers. And it is very painful to see those you love, or the one you love, hurt or suffering. That part of you that is now a part

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[9] Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 44.

[10] Ibid., p. 17.

[11] Ibid., p. 17.

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of the other screams with pain when the other is hurt. To love is to commit oneself without a guarantee.[12] There is no assurance that because one loves, because one gives as much care and compassion to another as is possible, one will be loved in return. For the mature lover this assurance is not needed for the joy and happiness that love brings is from the giving itself. There need be no appreciative or reciprocal response from the object loved. The mature person loves because that is what he must do. It is of his essence, his very nature to be giving and helping and caring. The pain of love is not that it is unrequited but that those you care for, those that you love, will be hurt and scarred and you will see this suffering and be torn. Love can cause pain but there is no fuller expression of what it is to be alive, to be caught up in the stream of life than to be loving, to be loving all people, or to be loving one, even painfully.

It is important that erotic love is a part of the composite love of the mature lover. We must not be confused and think that they are one and the same. To a couple in love, or to a small selective group of people sharing this intense love, does not the rest of society appear as "other"? Those involved in this select "love" perhaps can successfully share their joy and pain but their love remains in a separate realm from the area of their work and relations with the rest of society. Isolation of this sort is still present. We see that erotic love is not the full expression of human love. We have already

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[12]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 107.

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recognized the role of mother and father love in mature love and now we see the place of brotherly love.

Brotherly love is "the sense of responsibility, care, respect, knowledge of any other human being, the wish to further his life."[13] It is a love for all human beings, a concern for all of those around us. It is different from the exclusivity of mother-father love or erotic love, it joins all of humanity in a union that works to overcome the isolation and anxiety of mankind. Our third contextual meaning of "freedom" finds much ground in this love. Each of those involved remain separate, expressing themselves as they can best and striving on to work creatively with other men. This brotherly love does not make all men alike. It is responsible for no stereotype, it is just a human solidarity, a recognizing of the "human core that is common to all men".[14]

The dialectic is fed by this brotherly love as we find ourselves trying to live with others and love them as much as we can. There are differences and there are those feelings, attitudes, and circumstances that work against the love. Against this there is the basic feeling of human unity. The dialectic is again exemplified as we note that the source of man's isolation and anxiety in the first place is other people. The individual feels cut off from all those others and the others compete against him and ignore him and use him. At the same time that the "others" are the source of anxiety and separation

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[13]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 39.

[14]Ibid., p. 40.

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to a certain extent, they are also the means to overcoming these unbearable feelings. Man necessarily becomes separate before he can become free. The ultimate freedom for man can only be nearly approached by the constant juxtaposition and interplay of man's fundamentally **separate**, individual nature and his love and need to be united with other men. Man's individuation must be established before he can be truly free and responsible for himself and express himself creatively. Though it be painful to be cut off, it is a part of the dialectic that allows man to be a man and be a part of the "humane experiences" that are available.

Man must be seen in the light of a shifting emphasis from his separateness to his need for union. His ultimacy can be reached only through constant interaction and struggle.

Brotherly love puts man in a loving and giving society - a way of living with others. Erotic love unites him with an exclusive loved one or lovers. Mother and father love provides a basis for a certain self-acceptance and moral fibre. Next is self-love.

Fromm cites Meister Eckhart as summarizing the importance of self-love best:

> "'If you love yourself, you love everybody else as you do yourself. As long as you love another person less than you love yourself, you will not really succeed in loving yourself, but if you love all alike, including yourself, you will love them as one person and that person is both God and man. Thus he is a great and righteous person who, loving himself, loves all others equally.'"[15]

[15]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 53.

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Self-love is not selfishness. If anything, it is exactly opposite of selfishness. Love for oneself and love for others is not mutually exclusive.[16] One must have respect for his own integrity and uniqueness. This is inseparable with any concept of love for another.[17] "Love, in principle, is indivisible as far as the connection between 'objects' and one's own self is concerned."[18] A love for one must imply a love for the other. "Love of one person implies love of mankind as such. . . If an individual is able to love productively, he loves himself too; if he can love only others, he cannot love at all."[19]

To make our composite of mature love complete we must add the love of God.

> "It has been stated above that the basis for our need to love lies in the experience of separateness and the resulting need to overcome the anxiety of separateness by the experience of union. The religious form of love, that which is called the love of God, is, psychologically speaking, not different."[20]

A man's idea or concept of the God he loves changes with the degree of maturity that the individual reaches. We recognize a parallel development here with the mature person becoming his own mother and father as such and thus changing his conception of the idea of parents. Also, we see that as the nature of a love of God changes with maturity, so does the

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[16] Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 49.

[17] Ibid., p. 49.

[18] Ibid., p. 50.

[19] Ibid., p. 50.

[20] Ibid., p. 53.

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concept of freedom. The different contextual meanings must be dealt with and only the mature person can be free in our third meaning of the word.

Fromm sees "mature" religion as a monotheism that has evolved or "matured" from the matriarchal and patriarchal phases of religious love and belief. For the mature person -

> "God becomes to him a symbol in which man, at an earlier stage of his evolution, has expressed the totality of that which man is striving for, the realm of the spiritual world, of love, truth and justice. He has faith in the principles which "God" represents; he thinks truth, lives love and justice, and considers all of his life only valuable inasmuch as it gives him the chance to arrive at an ever fuller unfolding of his human powers - as the only reality that matters, as the only object of 'ultimate concern'; and, eventually, he does not speak about God - nor even mention his name. To love God, if he were going to use this word, would mean, then, to long for the attainment of the full capacity to love, for the realization of that which "God" stands for in oneself."[21]

In the development of religion or in contrasting various religious beliefs we see that "paradoxical logic" plays an important part. The eastern religions talk of the reconciling of the multiplicity with the absolute. Christianity talks of Christ as both human and God. The so-called "paradoxical logic" has a close kinship with the needed dialectic that we found necessary for the mature and free person to be involved in. The importance of love of God and religion for man is not so much exactly what he believes about the supreme being but what his belief and love for his God have him do. "Love of

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[21]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 60.

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God is neither the knowledge of God in thought, nor the thought of one's love of God, but the act of experiencing the oneness with God."[22]

Indeed, mature love encompasses all these ideas of mother and father love, erotic love, brotherly love, self-love, and love of God. This mature love is necessary for man's ultimate realization in the third contextual meaning of freedom. To be a distinct and separate individual, responsible for oneself and working and creating from within, one must love, one must reach out to others and seek to be one with them.

Love may be the answer to the problem of how man can be free but it may seem to be an answer that we cannot reach, that we cannot implement.

We find ourselves in a society where things "work-out" well. We are well-fed, entertained, pacified, and as a consequence, unfortunately, passive. Computers make our decisions and order our lives. The machines that man had originally intended to lighten man's burden are now controlling our lives. We are slaves to an economy concerned with maximum production and output. The mature love that will break us out of this bondage to freedom seems a long distance away.

There are several alternatives. Fromm recognizes three, specifically. We can for one, continue in the direction we are going and ultimately destroy ourselves in a nuclear holocaust, an ecological disaster, or fall prey to "severe human pathology".

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[22]Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, p. 65.

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The second alternative would be to try to change the direction of our technological advance by violent revolution. Thirdly, the alternative supported by Fromm, is the humanization of technology to allow for the preservation and growth of man and his nature. Fromm believes that we can, and further that we should, use our material resources, our inventions, and our computers to further the goals of humanity. This third alternative is the "Revolution of Hope".[23]

It is only fair that we examine all of the alternatives. The first alternative soon will have our society in a state not unlike the one described by George Orwell in his 1984. There would be a decrease in privacy and in the possibility of deep inter-personal relationships. Such activities would be strictly regulated and planned. The human would be regarded as a functioning machine with certain needs - food, sleep, recreation, sex, and so on. The spontaneity of human work and creativity would be gone. In its place would be precise statistical data and its application. As Fromm says, "our age has found a substitute for God: the impersonal calculation."[24] The concept of the sacred has become one of precision, probability, factuality, and statistics.

This "1984" world is not far off. Looking around us now we see the dreaded symptoms. There is a lack of contact between people. We are satisfied with the television, or the

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[23]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 147-158.

[24]Ibid., p. 54.

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radio, or the tape-recorder. Person to person contact is not necessary to deliver messages or to achieve the ends you want since we have the telephone and the form letter. The individual simply adjusts to his own small sphere of action, whether it be a house-wife, a student, or a member of the professional world. The rest of the world is of no consequence except in so far as it affects the stock market, the price of food, or any physical threat such as war.

We seem to be unable to plan successfully for overcoming pollution. It seems that we quite intelligently recognize that there is an environmental problem and simply go on about our business of production and consumption for maximum profit without reagrd to the disaster we are creating for the future.

The only way we can conceive of progress is as an increase in quantity. Qualitative evaluation seems to have lost its relevance as we see how we can get maximum production for the least expenditure of effort and funds.

This is where the first alternative leads. Surely, there can be no gain, surely man will lose all that is of value. He cannot even work successfully to avert the possibility of thermonuclear attack. There <u>is</u> the danger of a nuclear holocaust. The water and the air <u>will</u> become polluted with filth and be no longer able to support life. Man will be little more than machines doing what they are told and being kept alive by their respective allotments of food and rest and recreations, such as are available. Once this state is reached there is no

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hope for a return. The mechanization will have taken over.

The second alternative - that of a violent revolution - is also unviable. Such an overthrow of the government by force and the seizure of power would not work. We have no mass base for such a revolt.[25] "A highly complex society like that of the United States, based on a large group of skilled managers and managerial bureaucracy, could not function unless equally skilled people took the place of those who run the industrial machine now."[26] We have no group large enough and skilled enough to effect such an overthrow successfully. If there is to be a change it must come from within the system.

> "'To take effect and to hold its own even for the time being, any movement of overturn must from beforehand provide for a sufficiently productive conduct of the industrial system on which the community's material welfare depends, and for a competent distribution of goods and services throughout the community. Otherwise, under existing industrial conditions, nothing more can be accomplished than an ephemeral disturbance and a transient season of accentuated hardship. Even a transient failure to make good in the management of the industrial system must immediately defeat any movement to overturn in any of the advanced industrial countries. At this point the lessons of history fail, because the present industrial system of close-knit community life enforced by this industrial system have no example in history.'"[27]

Finding the first two alternatives unacceptable, we are then left with the third - the humanization of technology. This is more than a physical re-organization. It is a change in the attitudes of all people within the society. It cannot

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[25]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, p. 148.

[26]Ibid., p. 148.

[27]Ibid., pp. 149-150

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be accomplished by any amount of careful planning by experts. It must be a revolution in the attitudes and hopes of all those involved.

We must have a "Renaissance of Humanism". The human values that man has must be applied to the industrial system. People must be ready to have their society take a turn toward the more human characteristics of love and freedom. They must be optimistic and be looking to the future eagerly.

Now we will look at some of the elements that will be important in instituting any sort of social change that we have been speaking of.

The first of these is hope - active and dynamic hope. It is not a passive hope, the kind where one sits back and waits to see what will come, thinking that it would be preferable if things would happen a certain way. "To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime."[28] Hope implies an awareness of the way things are and also an awareness of the possibility of change. It is a sort of inner preparedness that gives a spark of vitality to the individual. Hope is not some developed thing, it is not some fleeting emotion that some have and some don't. It is a part of what it means to be human.

> "Hope is a psychic concomitant to life and growth. . . Does the suckling not hope for his mother's breast? Does the infant not hope to stand erect and walk? Does the sick man not hope to be well, the prisoner to be

[28] Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, p. 9.

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> free, the hungry to eat? Do we not hope to wake up to another day when we fall asleep? Does love making not imply a man's hope in his potency, in his capacity to arouse his partner, and the woman's hope to respond and to arouse him?"[29]

This hope must be expressed actively by each of us. It is a part of our individual natures that we must use creatively for ourselves and for others.

If hope is the dynamic of man's spirit it must also work with faith. Faith is "the vision of the present in a state of pregnancy."[30] It is not some irrational conviction that something will happen without fail. Faith gives man a certainty. It is not a certainty of something that we predict for the future. Rather, it is a certainty that there are real possibilities and real options. It is a sort of confidence that makes us sure that we can preserve our humanity.

Fortitude is another element that is interwoven with faith and hope to provide a matrix for the proposed humanization of technology. Fortitude is that courage or strength that allows us to keep our faith and our hope without changing them into important wishes and irrational beliefs. It is a fearlessness that one who "rests within himself and loves life " is found with.[31]

There are other interacting human elements that act correlatively with these of hope, faith, and fortitude. One is the idea of resurrection - a transformation of the reality

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[29]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, p. 13.

[30]Ibid., p. 14.

[31]Ibid., p. 16.

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that is this life. Also, there is a Messianic Hope - a hope for the individual and society which is based on the dialectic between "what existed or was still there and was yet to be".[32] This would be reflected in any sort of hope for a new society of mature love and true freedom of the individual. Also, a part of the elements necessary for the society to transform itself into a humanized system would be the shattering of hope. "If a man did not experience the disappointment of his hope, how could his hope become strong and unquenchable?"[33] Sometimes, the shattering of hope is a horribly disillusioning experiences. It may be so shattered that a man may never recover from it. Of course, this is certainly not an element needed for man to humanize our society but it is a source of strength. Man learns to accept his setbacks and still retain his optimism, faith, and hope. Sometimes this shattering of hope is a tempering force and makes our drive stronger and our goals more pressing on us. It is indeed a part of the human experience.

These basic attitudes and human traits given their proper perspective in our lives, the impetus will be present for a more humanized technology. With these human elements in their proper place in the forefront instead of being pushed back and stifled, humane experiences will be possible for all. Fromm goes into considerable detail describing these experiences that he thinks clearly manifest what it is to be human and are good experiences in so far as they promote human mature love

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[32] Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, p. 18.

[33] Ibid., p. 21.

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and ultimate freedom.

Some of them are non-greedy sexual desire and tenderness, compassion for others and empathy, whole-hearted interest in what goes on in the world, responsibility for oneself and loved ones, integrity, vulnerability (in the sense that one is faced with dangers of slipping into a machine-like existence to be kept away by alertness and aliveness), hope, faith, and courage.[34]

We have now been warned of the dangers of what is to come. The vision of the "megamachine" has been shown and the threat to the very essence of what it means to be human has been exposed.

Man is ultimately seeking a true freedom where he maintains his individuality and yet can be a part of society, maturely loving and acting creatively and naturally within it. The avenues to the humanization of our society are made clear. Their physical implementation is viable if people accept the need to develop their humanistic values to the fullest extent.

The actual governmental or public programs needed to actually begin revision for a humanized technology are not our concern here. Here the problem is presented and the only viable solution, in Fromm's eyes is offered.

We have left to examine the basis for Fromm's remarks about human values and the philosophical basis for his ideas.

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[34]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, pp. 77-91.

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PART TWO

"Criticism"

Erich Fromm believes that by studying the system of man, the well-being of man can be empirically determined and empirically described.[35] This is the mark of an ethical naturalist. The theory of the ethical naturalist is that ethical judgments can, after all, be confirmed, ethical questions answered, by observations and inductive reasoning of the very sort that we use to confirm statements in the empirical sciences.[36] The proponents of ethical naturalism are members of the objectivists' camp as they argue that ethical judgments are sometimes true and can sometimes be known or at least justifiably believed to be true.[37] The ethical naturalist's refinement of pure objectivism is that the truth or falsehood of these moral judgments which the objectivist asserts are objectively ascertainable can always in principle be established by the use of observation and the method employed in the natural sciences.[38]

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[35]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, p. 100.

[36]Richard B. Brandt, Ethical Theory (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 152.

[37]Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap, A Modern Introduction to Philosophy (New York: The Free Press, 1973), "The Objectivity of Moral Judgments", A. C. Ewing, p. 312.

[38]Ibid., p. 292.

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It is important to any criticism of Erich Fromm in his stance as an ethical naturalist to have a firm grasp on the theory of ethical naturalism and an understanding of its place among meta-ethical theories. A non-naturalist holds that there are two distinct classifications of statements. There are ethical statements dealing with questions of right and separate from these, there are non-ethical ststements dealing with questions of fact. To the non-naturalist these non-ethical statements of fact are statements about the world as it is. Ethical statements dealing with questions of right are evaluations of non-ethical statements about the world as it is. Opposing this view, the ethical naturalist denies prima facie the distinction between establishing facts about the world as it is and making evaluations of these facts.[39] He maintains that ethical judgments are a special subclass of facts about the natural world. From the ethical naturalist's point of view, it is an unfounded assumption to divide statements into the categories ethical and non-ethical.

If the distinction or lack of distinctions between ethical and non-ethical statements are to be examined, it must be understood what is meant by these labels. Non-ethical statements, in so far as they are statements about the world as it is, are factual - meaning that they "can be expressed by sentences whose copula is 'is' or 'is not' but cannot be expressed by sentences containing 'should', 'must', 'ought',

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[39]Jonathan Harris, "Ethical Naturalism", The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Paul Edwards, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), Vol. 3, p. 69.

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and so forth."[40] The discrepancy arises, however, when the ethical naturalist asserts that ethical statements can be derived from factual ones and the non-naturalist staunchly maintains that an ethical statement can never be drawn from any factual statement or any combination of factual statements.

The ethical naturalist in his view that ethical statements are actually disguised statements of empirical fact is a definist. Definist theories hold that ethical terms can be defined in terms of non-ethical ones. The metaphysical moralist (who is a definist) regards ethical statements as disguised assertions of theological fact.[41] Here we are concerned with the ethical naturalist and his method of revealing ethical statements to be disguised empirical facts - in other words, deriving "ought" from "is".

Various naturalistic definitions for good or right have been proposed. In Part One we described Erich Fromm's definition of the well-being of man or the "good" for man. As another example R. B. Perry said "a thing - any thing - has value, or is valuable, in the original and generic sense when it is the object of an interest - any interest."[42] To protect his definition from the criticism that "interest" is an evaluative term not empirically evident, he adds that "interest is denoted by a train of events determined by expectation of its outcome."[43]

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[40]Max Black, "The Gap Between 'Is' and 'Should'," Philosophical Review, LXXIII (April 1964), p. 166.

[41]William K. Frankena, Ethics (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 81.

[42]Jonathan Harris, "Ethical Objectivism," The Encylcopedia of Philosophy, op. cit., p. 104.

[43]Ibid., p. 104.

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Perry himself admits that his proposed definition of value is reforming rather than reportive, that is - providing an alternative to unclear, vacillating usage rather than describing the usage of the word as it is commonly employed. As Perry's definition does not prove to be inclusive of all the usages and implications of the defined term, it is an example of the criticism offered by the open question argument.

The open question argument was presented by G. E. Moore. What is meant by the open question argument is that "whatever the property one attempts to say is identical with goodness - the question can always be raised, are things which possess this property good? The fact that this question can be raised shows, he [Moore] thought, that posessing the property cannot be just what I mean by 'good.'"[44]

An example of the open question argument can be constructed by adopting the definition "desired on reflection" for "good". Now, when one asks "Peace is desired on reflection, but is it good?" one has the type of question spoken of by Moore. The question is "open" if it is intelligible and can be significantly asked. This means that it must contain no logical contradiction or linguistic impropriety and must not be pointless.[45]

If the question <u>is</u> found to be "open" then it illustrates Moore's point that no property or combination of properties

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[44]Jonathan Harris, "Ethical Naturalism," <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 70.

[45]Kai Neilsen, "Problems of Ethics," <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 127.

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is sufficient to give an adequate, functional, reportive definition of "good".

In supporting his open question argument, Moore says that the most important sense of "definition" is that in which a definition states what are the parts that invariably compose a certain whole and describes their interrelationships. In this way one can define a horse, ennumerating its parts and their relations, one to the other. However, in this defining process, one eventually hits bedrock and comes down to certain simple, undefinable terms. An example of one of these unique, unanalysable terms is "yellow". There is no way that one can explain to someone what the sensation of yellow is unless he already knows. Moore asserts that experienced "good", like experienced "yellow", is one of these simple, unanalysable, undefinable qualities.

Since Moore believes that "good" is absolutely undefinable, any proposed definition of the word will fall prey to the open question argument. This is explained by Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy. By the Naturalistic Fallacy, Moore means to say that "it may be true that all things that are good are <u>also</u> something else . . . but far too many philosophers have thought that when they named these properties, they were actually defining good."[46]

The Naturalistic Fallacy as stated above raises some questions about what mistake or mistakes are sufficient to

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[46]Jonathan Harris, "Ethical Naturalism," <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 69.

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