Man for Himself

"The more one reads the more one is impressed by the author's insight and by his passionate conviction that freedom, courage, spontaneity and 'respect for life' are the true bases of happiness and morality."

The Times Literary Supplement

"A notable work."

Listener

"He has enriched our understanding of man in humanity, compassion and love."

Sunday Times

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Introduction to Routledge Classics Edition

Man for Himself: a Classic?

When speaking of a classic we usually think of a book written some time ago that contributes to a subject or a problem in such a way that it has a historic meaning still significant for today. Fromm's *Man for Himself* claims to be an inquiry into the psychology of ethics. Is his inquiry a classic?

Today, ethical problems are the talk of the town, and doubtless Fromm contributes much to our present day moral dilemmas–– over fifty years after the book's first publication. However, his contribution to the field of ethics is fairly different to the expectations readers may have. He gives no ethical answers on a behavioral level but focuses his interest in the psychology of ethics, that is to say in the person who behaves and in the conscious or unconscious psychic strivings that determine behavior. In this respect, Fromm's *Man for Himself* certainly is a classic. He was the first psychologist who championed the psychic determination of ethics from a psychoanalytic point of view, and for the ethical impact of psychoanalysis.

Fostered by present day behavioral sciences, that are only interested in behavior *per se* rather than in the person displaying it, there is a great illusion at work in ethical theory, namely that of focusing all interest on the types of behavior people can be

persuaded of or conditioned to. But, Fromm claims, moral judgment that is oriented to behavior and where ethical norms refer to specific actions does not really do justice to human beings. What qualifies human behavior morally from a psychoanalytic point of view cannot be judged by behavioral acts as such, but only by the person who behaves in a specific way. Thus it is the person himself who gives his actions particular passionate intentions and moral qualities that are rooted in conscious or unconscious strivings. It is these passionate intentions that accompany most of our acts. When we speak psychoanalytically of moral values and norms, it is these intentions we are referring to, not the mostly equivocal behavior as such. And it is these passionate strivings that from a psychoanalytic point of view are the subjects of ethics. This holds especially true for unconscious strivings, which so often motivate our behavior. Accordingly, a first main topic of this book is to describe present-day passionate strivings that determine our thinking, feeling and actions. For this Fromm developed the concept of social character orientation, whose description and psychodynamics are to be found in Chapter III.

Of particular interest is a character orientation that Fromm––long before the business world used this term––called marketing orientation. He observed already in the late 1940s the rise of a socioeconomic system in which a marketing orientation is required. Thus we develop values and norms, which serve the ideal of marketing. To be a success on the market, one has to be adaptable, flexible, mobile, unattached, without genuine feelings, able to slip into any role, and to be identified with whatever traits of personality confer success––independently of one's true identity. The valuable is whatever serves the cause of one's own marketing. It is fascinating to see how Fromm in 1947 described this marketing orientation and how visionary he was in regard to what happens today.

But this present-day marketing orientation leads to an increasing ethical problem (cf. Chapter II). According to a marketing-oriented common sense, the valuable and the normative are simply what people acknowledge through the way of life they choose. We are witnessing a fundamental change of values and norms and it would seem that mankind is endowed with unlimited changeability. Does not the changeability of the human species speak for the arbitrariness of values and norms and against ethics having any binding character, which goes beyond the given historical––economical, cultural, and social––situation?

The postmodern call for a constructivist approach to reality also without doubt carries implications for ethics. Indeed, there is no given and giving authority (call it God, nature, society, culture, or human nature) from which ethical norms can be derived in a particular historical situation. Obviously this claim also holds for Fromm's own psychoanalytic point of view (although Fromm sometimes fails to emphasize that his understanding of human nature is not a naturalistic or essentialistic one and that his understanding of "values and norms" runs contrary to the sociological usage of the term "norms"). In contrast to the postmodern arbitrariness of values and norms (which are only interested in what is possible), Fromm, according to his psychoanalytic point of view, especially asks what effects ethical norms have on man and society. Ethical norms are the key to man's growth or decay; they can further peaceful and fulfilling communal life or they can foster destructiveness and lead to violence. According to Fromm one must therefore distinguish between what is possible and what is good for human beings; indeed merely to call for what is good for human beings can constitute a lasting ethical mandate in postmodernity.

But Fromm goes one step further and also supplies a psychoanalytic foundation for this through his particular concept

of the unconscious. For Fromm, there is not only an almost unlimited variety of situations and historical conditions which determine ethical behavior; there is also an almost unlimited adaptability and changeability to them on the part of human beings, because in every human being slumbers infinite possibilities as to how to adapt to these very different situations and requirements, although we are usually not aware of them. Thus it is up to man to ascertain which (conscious and unconscious) passionate strivings lead on to human growth––psychically and spiritually––and to a "sane" life together.

We must distinguish between what is possible and what is good for human beings. Much more is possible than what is good for us. And only relativism, pragmatism or authoritarianism––and in our days postmodernism––maintain that what serves their social system is *eo ipso* good. At the end of Chapter IV Fromm states "It is the task of the ethical thinker ... to recognize what is good or what is bad for man, regardless of whether it is good or bad for society at a special period of its evolution."

The title of the book, *Man for Himself*, stresses this humanistic conviction of Fromm: what is good for man. But it is not only a humanistic conviction or quasi-religious attitude. According to Fromm we are able to recognize empirically what is good or bad for man. His distinction between productive and nonproductive character orientations (Chapter III), between authoritarian and humanistic conscience, selfishness and self-love, pleasure and happiness, and between rational and irrational faith in ourselves and others (all Chapter IV), are psychological instruments to experience what is good for man and that man's destiny finally is "to be himself and to be for himself."

Rainer Funk
October 2002

FOREWORD

This book is in many respects a continuation of *Escape from Freedom*, in which I attempted to analyze modern man's escape from himself and from his freedom; in this book I discuss the problem of ethics, of norms and values leading to the realization of man's self and of his potentialities. It is unavoidable that certain ideas expressed in *Escape from Freedom* are repeated in this book, and although I have tried as much as possible to shorten discussions which are overlapping, I could not omit them entirely. In the chapter on Human Nature and Character, I discuss topics of characterology which were not taken up in the former book and make only brief reference to the problems discussed there. The reader who wishes to have a complete picture of my characterology must read both books, although this is not necessary for the understanding of the present volume.

It may be surprising to many readers to find a psychoanalyst dealing with problems of ethics and, particularly, taking the position that psychology must not only debunk false ethical judgments but can, beyond that, be the basis for building objective and valid norms of conduct. This position is in contrast to the trend prevailing in modern psychology which emphasizes "adjustment" rather than "goodness" and is on the side of ethical relativism. My experience as a practicing psychoanalyst has

confirmed my conviction that problems of ethics can not be omitted from the study of personality, either theoretically or therapeutically. The value judgments we make determine our actions, and upon their validity rests our mental health and happiness. To consider evaluations only as so many rationalizations of unconscious, irrational desires—although they can be that too—narrows down and distorts our picture of the total personality. Neurosis itself is, in the last analysis, a symptom of moral failure (although "adjustment" is by no means a symptom of moral achievement). In many instances a neurotic symptom is the specific expression of moral conflict, and the success of the therapeutic effort depends on the understanding and solution of the person's moral problem.

The divorcement of psychology from ethics is of a comparatively recent date. The great humanistic ethical thinkers of the past, on whose works this book is based, were philosophers *and* psychologists; they believed that the understanding of man's nature and the understanding of values and norms for his life were interdependent. Freud and his school, on the other hand, though making an invaluable contribution to the progress of ethical thought by the debunking of irrational value judgments, took a relativistic position with regard to values, a position which had a negative effect not only upon the development of ethical theory but also upon the progress of psychology itself.

The most notable exception to this trend in psychoanalysis is C. G. Jung. He recognized that psychology and psychotherapy are bound up with the philosophical and moral problems of man. But while this recognition is exceedingly important in itself, Jung's philosophical orientation led only to a reaction against Freud and not to a philosophically oriented psychology going beyond Freud. To Jung "the unconscious" and the myth have become new sources of revelation, supposed to be superior to rational thought just

because of their nonrational origin. It was the strength of the monotheistic religions of the West as well as of the great religions of India and China to be concerned with the truth and to claim that theirs was the true faith. While this conviction often caused fanatical intolerance against other religions, at the same time it implanted into adherents and opponents alike the respect for truth. In his eclectic admiration for any religion Jung has relinquished this search for the truth in his theory. Any system, if it is only nonrational, any myth or symbol, to him is of equal value. He is a relativist with regard to religion—the negative and not the opposite of rational relativism which he so ardently combats. This irrationalism, whether veiled in psychological, philosophical, racial, or political terms, is not progress but reaction. The failure of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century rationalism was not due to its belief in reason but to the narrowness of its concepts. Not less but more reason and an unabating search for the truth can correct errors of a one-sided rationalism—not a pseudoreligious obscurantism.

Psychology can not be divorced from philosophy and ethics nor from sociology and economics. The fact that I have emphasized in this book the philosophical problems of psychology does not mean that I have come to believe that the socio-economic factors are less important: this onesided emphasis is due entirely to considerations of presentation, and I hope to publish another volume on social psychology centered around the interaction of psychic and socio-economic factors.

It might seem that the psychoanalyst, who is in the position of observing the tenacity and stubbornness of irrational strivings, would take a pessimistic view with regard to man's ability to govern himself and to free himself from the bondage of irrational passions. I must confess that during my analytic work I have become increasingly impressed by the opposite phenomenon: by

the strength of the strivings for happiness and health, which are part of the natural equipment of man. "Curing" means removing the obstacles which prevent them from becoming effective. Indeed, there is less reason to be puzzled by the fact that there are so many neurotic people than by the phenomenon that most people are relatively healthy in spite of the many adverse influences they are exposed to.

One word of warning seems to be indicated. Many people today expect that books on psychology will give them prescriptions on how to attain "happiness" or "peace of mind." This book does not contain any such advice. It is a theoretical attempt to clarify the problem of ethics and psychology; its aim is to make the reader question himself rather than to pacify him.

I cannot adequately express my indebtedness to those friends, colleagues, and students whose stimulation and suggestions helped me in writing the present volume. However, I wish to acknowledge specifically my gratitude to those who have contributed directly to the completion of this volume. Especially Mr. Patrick Mullahy's assistance has been invaluable; he and Dr. Alfred Seidemann have made a number of stimulating suggestions and criticisms in connection with the philosophical issues raised in the book. I am very much indebted to Professor David Riesman for many constructive suggestions and to Mr. Donald Slesinger who has improved the readability of the manuscript considerably. Most of all I am indebted to my wife, who helped with the revision of the manuscript and who made many significant suggestions with regard to the organization and the content of the book; particularly the concept of the positive and negative aspects of the nonproductive orientation owes much to her suggestions.

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E. F.

I

THE PROBLEM

Surely, I said, knowledge is the food of the soul; and we must take care, my friend, that the Sophist does not deceive us when he praises what he sells, like the dealers wholesale or retail who sell the food of the body; for they praise indiscriminately all their goods, without knowing what are really beneficial or hurtful: neither do their customers know, with the exception of any trainer or physician who may happen to buy of them. In like manner those who carry about the wares of knowledge, and make the round of the cities, and sell or retail them to any customer who is in want of them, praise them all alike; though I should not wonder, O my friend, if many of them were really ignorant of their effect upon the soul; and their customers equally ignorant, unless he who buys of them happens to be a physician of the soul. If, therefore, you have understanding of what is good and evil you may safely buy knowledge of Protagoras or any one; but if not, then, O my friend, pause, and do not hazard your dearest interests at a game of chance. For there is far greater peril in buying knowledge than in buying meat and drink ...

—Plato, *Protagoras*

A spirit of pride and optimism has distinguished Western culture in the last few centuries: pride in reason as man's instrument for his understanding and mastery of nature; optimism in the fulfillment of the fondest hopes of mankind, the achievement of the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Man's pride has been justified. By virtue of his reason he has built a material world the reality of which surpasses even the dreams and visions of fairy tales and utopias. He harnesses physical energies which will enable the human race to secure the material conditions necessary for a dignified and productive existence, and although many of his goals have not yet been attained there is hardly any doubt that they are within reach and that the *problem of production*—which was the problem of the past—is, in principle, solved. Now, for the first time in his history, man can perceive that the idea of the unity of the human race and the conquest of nature for the sake of man is no longer a dream but a realistic possibility. Is he not justified in being proud and in having confidence in himself and in the future of mankind?

Yet modern man feels uneasy and more and more bewildered. He works and strives, but he is dimly aware of a sense of futility with regard to his activities. While his power over matter grows, he feels powerless in his individual life and in society. While creating new and better *means* for mastering nature, he has become enmeshed in a network of those means and has lost the vision of the end which alone gives them significance—*man himself*. While becoming the master of nature, he has become the slave of the machine which his own hands built. With all his knowledge about matter, he is ignorant with regard to the most important and fundamental questions of human existence: what man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies *within* man can be released and used productively.

The contemporary human crisis has led to a retreat from the

hopes and ideas of the Enlightenment under the auspices of which our political and economic progress had begun. The very idea of progress is called a childish illusion, and "realism," a new word for the utter lack of faith in man, is preached instead. The idea of the dignity and power of man, which gave man the strength and courage for the tremendous accomplishments of the last few centuries, is challenged by the suggestion that we have to revert to the acceptance of man's ultimate powerlessness and insignificance. This idea threatens to destroy the very roots from which our culture grew.

The ideas of the Enlightenment taught man that he could trust his own reason as a guide to establishing valid ethical norms and that he could rely on himself, needing neither revelation nor the authority of the church in order to know good and evil. The motto of the Enlightenment, "dare to know," implying "trust your knowledge," became the incentive for the efforts and achievements of modern man. The growing doubt of human autonomy and reason has created a state of moral confusion where man is left without the guidance of either revelation or reason. The result is the acceptance of a relativistic position which proposes that value judgments and ethical norms are exclusively matters of taste or arbitrary preference and that no objectively valid statement can be made in this realm. But since man can not live without values and norms, this relativism makes him an easy prey for irrational value systems. He reverts to a position which the Greek Enlightenment, Christianity, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth-century Enlightenment had already overcome. The demands of the State, the enthusiasm for magic qualities of powerful leaders, powerful machines, and material success become the sources for his norms and value judgments.

Are we to leave it at that? Are we to consent to the alternative between religion and relativism? Are we to accept the abdication

of reason in matters of ethics? Are we to believe that the choices between freedom and slavery, between love and hate, between truth and falsehood, between integrity and opportunism, between life and death, are only the results of so many subjective preferences?

Indeed, there is another alternative. Valid ethical norms can be formed by man's reason and by it alone. Man is capable of discerning and making value judgments as valid as all other judgments derived from reason. The great tradition of humanistic ethical thought has laid the foundations for value systems based on man's autonomy and reason. These systems were built on the premise that in order to know what is good or bad for man one has to know the nature of man. They were, therefore, also fundamentally psychological inquiries.

If humanistic ethics is based on the knowledge of man's nature, modern psychology, particularly psychoanalysis, should have been one of the most potent stimuli for the development of humanistic ethics. But while psychoanalysis has tremendously increased our knowledge of man, it has not increased our knowledge of how man ought to live and what he ought to do. Its main function has been that of "debunking," of demonstrating that value judgments and ethical norms are the rationalized expressions of irrational—and often unconscious—desires and fears, and that they therefore have no claim to objective validity. While this debunking was exceedingly valuable in itself, it became increasingly sterile when it failed to go beyond mere criticism.

Psychoanalysis, in an attempt to establish psychology as a natural science, made the mistake of divorcing psychology from problems of philosophy and ethics. It ignored the fact that human personality can not be understood unless we look at man in his totality, which includes his need to find an answer to the question of the meaning of his existence and to discover norms according to

which he ought to live. Freud's "homo psychologicus" is just as much an unrealistic construction as was the "homo economicus" of classical economics. It is impossible to understand man and his emotional and mental disturbances without understanding the nature of value and moral conflicts. The progress of psychology lies not in the direction of divorcing an alleged "natural" from an alleged "spiritual" realm and focusing attention on the former, but in the return to the great tradition of humanistic ethics which looked at man in his physico-spiritual totality, believing that man's aim is *to be himself* and that the condition for attaining this goal is that man be *for himself*.

I have written this book with the intention of reaffirming the validity of humanistic ethics, to show that our knowledge of human nature does not lead to ethical relativism but, on the contrary, to the conviction that the sources of norms for ethical conduct are to be found in man's nature itself; that moral norms are based upon man's inherent qualities, and that their violation results in mental and emotional disintegration. I shall attempt to show that the character structure of the mature and integrated personality, the productive character, constitutes the source and the basis of "virtue" and that "vice," in the last analysis, is indifference to one's own self and self-mutilation. Not self-renunciation nor selfishness but self-love, not the negation of the individual but the affirmation of his truly human self, are the supreme values of humanistic ethics. If man is to have confidence in values, he must know himself and the capacity of his nature for goodness and productiveness.

II

HUMANISTIC ETHICS

THE APPLIED SCIENCE OF THE ART OF LIVING

Once Susia prayed to God: "Lord, I love you so much, but I do not fear you enough. Lord, I love you so much, but I do not fear you enough. Let me stand in awe of you as one of your angels, who are penetrated by your awefilled name."

And God heard his prayer, and His name penetrated the hidden heart of Susia, as it comes to pass with the angels. But at that Susia crawled under the bed like a little dog, and animal fear shook him until he howled: "Lord, let me love you like Susia again."

And God heard him this time also.[1]

1. HUMANISTIC VS. AUTHORITARIAN ETHICS

If we do not abandon, as ethical relativism does, the search for objectively valid norms of conduct, what criteria for such norms can we find? The kind of criteria depends on the type of ethical system the norms of which we study. By necessity the criteria in authoritarian ethics are fundamentally different from those in

humanistic ethics.

In authoritarian ethics an authority states what is good for man and lays down the laws and norms of conduct; in humanistic ethics man himself is both the norm giver and the subject of the norms, their formal source or regulative agency and their subject matter.

The use of the term "authoritarian" makes it necessary to clarify the concept of authority. So much confusion exists with regard to this concept because it is widely believed that we are confronted with the alternative of having dictatorial, irrational authority or of having no authority at all. This alternative, however, is fallacious. The real problem is what *kind* of authority we are to have. When we speak of authority do we mean rational or irrational authority? *Rational authority* has its source in *competence*. The person whose authority is respected functions competently in the task with which he is entrusted by those who conferred it upon him. He need not intimidate them nor arouse their admiration by magic qualities; as long as and to the extent to which he is competently helping, instead of exploiting, his authority is based on rational grounds and does not call for irrational awe. Rational authority not only permits but requires constant scrutiny and criticism of those subjected to it; it is always temporary, its acceptance depending on its performance. The source of *irrational authority*, on the other hand, is always power over people. This power can be physical or mental, it can be realistic or only relative in terms of the anxiety and helplessness of the person submitting to this authority. Power on the one side, fear on the other, are always the buttresses on which irrational authority is built. Criticism of the authority is not only not required but forbidden. Rational authority is based upon the equality of both authority and subject, which differ only with respect to the degree of knowledge or skill in a particular field. Irrational authority is by its very nature based upon inequality, implying difference in value. In the use of the

term "authoritarian ethics" reference is made to irrational authority, following the current use of "authoritarian" as synonymous with totalitarian and antidemocratic systems. The reader will soon recognize that humanistic ethics is not incompatible with rational authority.

Authoritarian ethics can be distinguished from humanistic ethics by two criteria, one formal, the other material. Formally, authoritarian ethics denies man's capacity to know what is good or bad; the norm giver is always an authority transcending the individual. Such a system is based not on reason and knowledge but on awe of the authority and on the subject's feeling of weakness and dependence; the surrender of decision making to the authority results from the latter's magic power; its decisions can not and must not be questioned. *Materially*, or according to content, authoritarian ethics answers the question of what is good or bad primarily in terms of the interests of the authority, not the interests of the subject; it is exploitative, although the subject may derive considerable benefits, psychic or material, from it.

Both the formal and the material aspects of authoritarian ethics are apparent in the genesis of ethical judgment in the child and of unreflective value judgment in the average adult. The foundations of our ability to differentiate between good and evil are laid in childhood; first with regard to physiological functions and then with regard to more complex matters of behavior. The child acquires a sense of distinguishing between good and bad before he learns the difference by reasoning. His value judgments are formed as a result of the friendly or unfriendly reactions of the significant people in his life. In view of his complete dependence on the care and love of the adult, it is not surprising that an approving or disapproving expression on the mother's face is sufficient to "teach" the child the difference between good and bad. In school and in society similar factors operate. "Good" is that for which one

is praised; "bad," that for which one is frowned upon or punished by social authorities or by the majority of one's fellow men. Indeed, the fear of disapproval and the need for approval seem to be the most powerful and almost exclusive motivation for ethical judgment. This intense emotional pressure prevents the child, and later the adult, from asking critically whether "good" in a judgment means good for him or for the authority. The alternatives in this respect become obvious if we consider value judgments with reference to things. If I say that one car is "better" than another, it is self-evident that one car is called "better" because it serves me better than another car; good or bad refers to the *usefulness* the thing has for *me*. If the owner of a dog considers the dog to be "good," he refers to certain qualities of the dog which to him are useful; as, for instance, that he fulfills the owner's need for a watch dog, a hunting dog, or an affectionate pet. *A thing is called good if it is good for the person who uses it.* With reference to man, the same criterion of value can be used. The employer considers an employee to be good if he is of advantage to him. The teacher may call a pupil good if he is obedient, does not cause trouble, and is a credit to him. In much the same way a child may be called good if he is docile and obedient. The "good" child may be frightened, and insecure, wanting only to please his parents by submitting to their will, while the "bad" child may have a will of his own and genuine interests but ones which do not please the parents.

Obviously, the formal and material aspects of authoritarian ethics are inseparable. Unless the authority wanted to exploit the subject, it would not need to rule by virtue of awe and emotional submissiveness; it could encourage rational judgment and criticism—thus taking the risk of being found incompetent. But because its own interests are at stake the authority ordains *obedience to be the main virtue and disobedience to be the main sin*. The

unforgivable sin in authoritarian ethics is rebellion, the questioning of the authority's right to establish norms and of its axiom that the norms established by the authority are in the best interest of the subjects. Even if a person sins, his acceptance of punishment and his feeling of guilt restore him to "goodness" because he thus expresses his acceptance of the authority's superiority.

The Old Testament, in its account of the beginnings of man's history, gives an illustration of authoritarian ethics. The sin of Adam and Eve is not explained in terms of the act itself; eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not bad *per se*; in fact, both the Jewish and the Christian religions agree that the ability to differentiate between good and evil is a basic virtue. The sin was disobedience, the challenge to the authority of God, who was afraid that man, having already "become as one of Us, to know good and evil," could "put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever."

Humanistic ethics, in contrast to authoritarian ethics, may likewise be distinguished by formal and material criteria. *Formally*, it is based on the principle that only man himself can determine the criterion for virtue and sin, and not an authority transcending him. *Materially*, it is based on the principle that "good" is what is good for man and "evil" what is detrimental to man; *the sole criterion of ethical value being man's welfare*.

The difference between humanistic and authoritarian ethics is illustrated in the different meanings attached to the word "virtue." Aristotle uses "virtue" to mean "excellence"—excellence of the activity by which the potentialities peculiar to man are realized. "Virtue" is used, e.g., by Paracelsus as synonymous with the individual characteristics of each thing—that is, its peculiarity. A stone or a flower each has its virtue, its combination of specific qualities. Man's virtue, likewise, is that precise set of qualities

which is characteristic of the human species, while each person's virtue is his unique individuality. He is "virtuous" if he unfolds his "virtue." In contrast, "virtue" in the modern sense is a concept of authoritarian ethics. To be virtuous signifies self-denial and obedience, suppression of individuality rather than its fullest realization.

Humanistic ethics is anthropocentric; not, of course, in the sense that man is the center of the universe but in the sense that his value judgments, like all other judgments and even perceptions, are rooted in the peculiarities of his existence and are meaningful only with reference to it; man, indeed, is the "measure of all things." The humanistic position is that there is nothing higher and nothing more dignified than human existence. Against this position it has been argued that it is in the very nature of ethical behavior to be related to something *transcending* man, and hence that a system which recognizes man and his interest alone cannot be truly moral, that its object would be merely the isolated, egotistical individual.

This argument, usually offered in order to disprove man's ability —and right—to postulate and to judge the norms valid for his life, is based on a fallacy, for the principle that good is what is *good for man* does not imply that man's nature is such that egotism or isolation are good for him. It does not mean that man's purpose can be fulfilled in a state of unrelatedness to the world outside him. In fact, as many advocates of humanistic ethics have suggested, it is one of the characteristics of human nature that man finds his fulfillment and happiness only in relatedness to and solidarity with his fellow men. However, to love one's neighbor is not a phenomenon *transcending* man; it is something inherent in and *radiating from* him. Love is not a higher power which descends upon man nor a duty which is imposed upon him; it is his own power by which he relates himself to the world and makes it truly

structure and in the chapter dealing with happiness and pleasure.

An important step in the direction of a more objective criterion of value was the modification of the hedonistic principle introduced by Epicurus, who attempted to solve the difficulty by differentiating between "higher" and "lower" orders of pleasure. But while the intrinsic difficulty of hedonism was thus recognized, the attempted solution remained abstract and dogmatic. Nevertheless, hedonism has one great merit: by making man's own experience of pleasure and happiness the sole criterion of value it shuts the door to all attempts to have an authority determine "what is best for man" without so much as giving man a chance to consider what he feels about that which is said to be best for him. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that hedonistic ethics in Greece, in Rome, and in modern European and American culture has been advocated by progressive thinkers who were genuinely and ardently concerned with the happiness of man.

But in spite of its merits hedonism could not establish the basis for objectively valid ethical judgments. Must we then give up objectivity if we choose humanism? Or is it possible to establish norms of conduct and value judgments which are objectively valid for all men and yet postulated by man himself and not by an authority transcending him? I believe, indeed, that this is possible and shall attempt now to demonstrate this possibility.

At the outset, let us not forget that "objectively valid" is not identical with "absolute." For instance, a statement of probability, of approximation, or any hypothesis can be valid and at the same time "relative" in the sense of having been established on limited evidence and being subject to future refinement if facts or procedures warrant it. The whole concept of relative vs. absolute is rooted in theological thinking in which a divine realm, as the "absolute," is separated from the imperfect realm of man. Except for this theological context the concept of absolute is meaningless

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