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Beyond Nature and Culture: Fromm's Existentialism

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Though commonly seen as a member of the so-called "culturistic" school of psychoanalysis that rejected Freudian drive theory and embraced an "oversocialized" conception of human nature, Fromm's qualified essentialism and neo-Marxist existentialism significantly transcend both biological and social determinism (although he succumbs to the latter in regard to his theory of the Oedipus complex). His existential Freudo-Marxism contributes to the integration of psychoanalysis and social science. In place of the authoritarian superego and the pseudo-objective stance of the classical Freudians, Fromm offers conscientious, egalitarian, personalistic, and humane values.

Erich Fromm has been widely viewed as a "neo-Freudian" member of the so-called "culturistic" school of psychoanalysis, along with Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, and others who, in rejecting the "biologism" of the classical Freudian theory of the instincts, succumbed to a radically constructivist and culturally relativist "sociologism" that Dennis H. Wrong **(1961)** called "the over-socialized conception of man in modern sociology" (p. 183). While agreeing with Wrong's critique of the one-sided social determinism prevalent in the mainstream structural-functionalist sociology of the 1950s, I subsequently argued against Wrong that to simply replace the *oversocialized* model of human nature with the *undersocialized* and overly *biologized* conception offered by Freudian drive theory is no solution **(Carveth, 1984)**. In my dissatisfaction with both *over-* and *under*-socialized models and my search for a dialectical solution to the *nature/nurture* polarity, I was following in the footsteps of Fromm, who was quite as alert to the danger of sociological as of biological reductionism.

Sociologism, Biologism, Humanistic Existentialism

Like many "symbolic interactionist" sociologists who, forgetting G. H. Mead's **(1934)** "I"-subject, reduced the self to the socially determined "me"-object, Harry Stack Sullivan at times seemed to reduce the self to a product of the "reflected appraisals of others" (Sullivan, **1940**, p. 22). For Fromm, the reduction of the self to the sum of one's social roles manifests the self pathology displayed by the *marketing* type of social character produced by late capitalism. He writes:

> This selflessness of modern man has appeared to one of the most gifted and original contemporary psychiatrists, the late H.S. Sullivan, as being a natural phenomenon. He spoke of those psychologists who, like myself, assume that the lack of the sense of self is a pathological phenomenon, as of people who suffer from a "delusion." The self for him is nothing but the many roles we play in relation to others, roles which have the function of eliciting approval and avoiding the anxiety which is produced by disapproval. What a remarkably fast deterioration of the concept of self since the nineteenth century, when Ibsen made the loss of self the main theme of his criticism of modern man in his *Peer Gynt*! (Fromm, **1950**, p. 139)

That many sociologists accepted such a deteriorated concept of the self (a *situational,* as distinct from a *substantive,* theory of the self)—in which the self is reduced to a subjective echo of the ever-changing roles one plays and in which personality is reduced to performance, a "presentation of self in everyday life" **(Goffman, 1959)**—is a fact that itself requires sociological explanation. Sociologists of knowledge know that ideas often become established for reasons other than their truth-content. Sociological ideas arise in particular historical contexts, in this case a capitalist society in which the marketing orientation is so dominant that individuals are loath to invest heavily in a self that might well go out of fashion or prove difficult to shed or transform, and thus turn out to have been a poor investment. The fact that, beginning in the 1950s, with the shift from productive to consumer capitalism, psychoanalysts became preoccupied with narcissism **(Lasch, 1979)** might be similarly explained. In "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," Marcuse **(1970)** argued that Freud had been

right but was now wrong because the social reality had changed, no longer producing what Riesman **(Riesman, Glazer, & Denney, 1950)**—who, as McLaughlin **(2001)** points out, was for a time an analysand of Fromm's—called an "inner-directed" character, but only an "other-directed" one, that is, a marketing character.

For Greenberg and Mitchell **(1983)**, the claim that in the interpersonal tradition "the individual is merely a cultural product … constitutes a serious misreading" (p. 80). It mistakes Sullivan's **(1950)** protest against "the illlusion of unique individuality" (which Greenberg and Mitchell take to mean a kind of narcissistic defense against anxiety) for a denial of "the real unique individuality of each psychobiological organism—an individuality that must always escape the methods of science" (Sullivan, as quoted in Greenberg & Mitchell, **1983**, p. 113). Mead **(1934)** also wrote of the subjective "I" as eluding science, in that any self we know will necessarily be an object of knowledge, that is, a "me" rather than the "I"-subject doing the knowing. So here, like Fromm and Mead, Sullivan seems to recognize an existential element—as does Lacan **(1977)** in distinguishing a "subject" from the "specular ego," and as certainly does Winnicott **(1960)** in distinguishing a "true self" from a "false self." Greenberg and Mitchell **(1983)** argue that Sullivan distinguishes the "self-system," a conglomeration of defenses erected to ward off anxiety, from the "personality" that contains elements of one's "psychobiological organism" not subsumed by the defensive "good me," "bad me," and "not me": "One's personality," they write, "is what one *is;* one's self is what one *takes oneself to be"* (p. 96, emphasis in the original).

I remain unconvinced by these authors' defense of Sullivan against Fromm's charge. If, for Sullivan and the interpersonalists, individuality is not a delusion, why did they choose for the epigraph of their chapter on this psychoanalytic tradition a passage from Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* that associates Apollo, a symbol of the *principium individuationis,* with both the veil of Maya and illusion? They go on to say that, in marked contrast to Fromm, "Sullivan was convinced that adaptation to and integration into contemporary society, despite its failings, is *essential* to mental health" (p. 112) and to acknowledge that whereas "Sullivan is a determinist: the person is a product of past interpersonal integrations … Fromm is an existentialist: the person is continually choosing" (p. 113).

In countering biological reductionism not with sociological reductionism but with existentialism, Fromm anticipated the work of the existentialist sociologists Berger and Luckmann **(1967)** who, despite strong tendencies toward social determinism, recognized this danger and adopted an existentialist solution. Instead of resorting, like Wrong **(1961)**, Trilling **(1955)**, and critical theorists such as Adorno **(1968)** and Marcuse (**1955**, **1956**), to Freud's somatically based drives to counter social internalizations, they adopted a Sartrean (Sartre, **1943**, **1960**) existentialist concept of an ineradicable element of subjective freedom to resist, manipulate, or detach from social pressures—to achieve an "ec-static" consciousness, which to a degree transcends the socially constructed self and world. Without acknowledging Fromm, no doubt due to their ingrained sociological hostility to psychoanalysis, they, like him, transcended both biological and cultural determinism through a humanistic existentialism that recognizes the forces of both nature and culture while at the same time positing a human nature characterized by a degree of irreducible subjective freedom, agency, and responsibility: an "I" in addition to a "me."

Such is the power of academic fashion that even someone like myself, who critiqued the one-sided social constructionism and relativism characterizing earlier sociological thought, was slow to recognize that the antihumanist, structuralist, poststructuralist, and postmodern paradigms that came to predominate in social theory for decades represented an even more extreme and unrealistic version of the same thing. Foucault **(1969)** went so far as to announce "the death of Man"—the negation of any concept of a human nature or essence of the sort that grounded Fromm's **(1956b)** existential humanism and that enabled him to critique the relative success or failure of particular societies in satisfying what he saw as universal human needs for *relatedness, creativeness, rootedness, identity,* and *orientation and devotion.* Today, a range of contemporary thinkers are concerned to "challenge the excessive culturalism and anti-personalism which characterize most 'postmodern' thinking, whether it be structuralist, poststructuralist, or posthuman" and to promote "the *dialectical supersession* of the anti-humanist paradigm" (Durkin, **2014**, p. 211, emphasis in the original) in favor of a renaissance of humanism.

If Fromm at times exaggerated humanity's break with nature, he at least insisted that our existential dichotomy involves our being

bodily immersed in it, even as we transcend it through our symbolizing minds. Against what amounts almost to the "nature phobia" **(Benton, 2001)** of many sociologists, the recognition that humans are primates and share with our primate cousins an unlearned, biologically grounded need for attachment (**Bowlby, 1969-1980**) is invaluable, as is recent research **(Bloom, 2013)** demonstrating that infants *(in fans*: beneath language) as young as three months of age distinguish right from wrong and prefer the former over the latter. While not constituting evidence of an "innate" morality—for by three months infants have already had time to identify with the loving nurturance provided by their caregivers—such evidence, together with research on the prosocial behavior of other species **(De Waal, 1997)** exposes the poverty of one-sided views of the human being as an exclusively culturally programmed "language animal" **(Steiner, 1969)**. Against behaviorism and related forms of environmental determinism, Chomsky **(1957)**, as early as the 1950s, convincingly posited the biological grounding of language and, by implication, of related dimensions of our human nature, a point of view he continued to assert against the exaggerated culturalism of Foucault and other radical constructivists **(Chomsky & Foucault, 1971)**.

Qualified Essentialism

None of the preceding discussion is meant to in any way deny the validity and importance of the critique of essentialism in social and psychoanalytic theory, of ahistorical and ethnocentric notions of an unchanging and unchangeable human nature or essence. As Fromm himself frequently pointed out, Marx (and not, be it noted, merely the early Marx) distinguished between "human nature in general" and "human nature as modified in each historical epoch" (Marx, 1967, *Capital,* vol. 1, chap. 24, sect. 5, n.50). Fromm follows Marx in this distinction, adopting a "qualified essentialism" that recognizes the existence of a human nature grounded in very general, universal, biological, and existential aspects of the human condition, but shaped by particular personal, historical, and cultural circumstances. Both reductive, ahistorical essentialism and reductive, extreme social constructionism are rejected in this dialectical model.

While Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse were also determined to resist radical social determinism and cultural relativism, they felt it necessary to defend Freud's reductionist theory of the drives in order to do so. They offered a manifestly self-contradictory critique of Fromm, castigating him, on the one hand, for rejecting Freud's undersocialized and overly biologized theory in favor of social factors (Fromm, **1955**, **1956a**; Jacoby, **1975**; Marcuse, **1955**, **1956**), and, on the other hand, for failing to recognize that the human essence he posited is a social product. In Ingleby's **(1991)** view, such an attack on Fromm "is to some extent based on a misreading of his work: he does not, as Adorno claims, reduce psychology to sociology, and many of his criticisms of Freud remain more convincing than the defense offered by Adorno and Marcuse" (p. xxiv). Critical theory failed to recognize that Fromm had placed the critique of the oversocialized model on a far more solid footing than Freudian drive theory through his qualified essentialism and existentialism, a perspective that while differing in important ways from Sartre's **(1960)** existential neo-Marxism, nevertheless shares some affinity with it.

Fromm rejected both biological and environmental determinisms in favor of an existentialist view of the human being's "emergence" as a self-conscious creature, rooted in nature by the body and yet significantly transcending it thanks to its capacity for symbolic processes, relatively free from instinctual determination and, hence, as in the Sartrean **(Sartre, 1943)** vision, suffering from a "fear of freedom" and a marked temptation to surrender it. Like both early and the later Sartre **(Laing & Cooper, 1964)**, Fromm in no way minimizes the limitations on our practical freedom ("freedom to …") arising from the force of material and social circumstances, even while he insists on an ineradicable degree of psychological freedom ("freedom from") possessed by human agents, at least as long as we remain subjects as yet unreduced to material or biological objects.

Because Fromm's qualified essentialism enables him to distinguish human nature in general from its manifestations under particular historical and cultural circumstances, he is able to recognize a range of universal human needs and dilemmas as revealed by the human sciences. In the face of the anxiety and loneliness arising from our existential situation as "freaks of nature," both

immersed in and separated from it, Fromm recognized five possible "solutions," four regressive and one progressive, comprising his revised version of Freud's characterology. In addition to the *receptive, exploitative, hoarding,* and *marketing* orientations, there is the *productive* orientation that includes the capacities for love and reason. In *Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics,* Fromm **(1947)** advances the idea of "objective" or "naturalistic ethics," in which "'good' is synonymous with good for man and 'bad' with bad for man" (p. 18). I have elsewhere (Carveth, **2015b**, **2016**, **2017**) addressed the naturalistic fallacy to which Fromm here succumbs but which Sartre's existentialism transcends.

Authoritarian versus Humanistic Superego

Fromm differentiates two types of superego: authoritarian and humanistic. In seeking to replace the former by the latter, he was in essential agreement with Freud, Alexander, and Ferenczi, each of whom conceived the therapeutic task as the "demolition" (Freud, **1940**, p. **180**) or "complete dissolution" (Ferenczi, **1928 [1927]**, p. 100) of the superego as an "anachronism in the mind" (Alexander, **1925**, p. **25**), an outmoded and infantilizing internalized parental and societal authority operating "like a garrison in an occupied city" (Freud, **1930**, p. **123**), sometimes even taking the form of a "pure culture of the death instinct" (Freud, **1923**, p. **52**). But in seeking to transfer moral functions to the rational ego, Freud and his colleagues failed to understand that because reason is *descriptive,* not *prescriptive,* and because we cannot deduce an *ought* from an *is,* the rational ego cannot serve as a conscience. Hence, I have argued (Carveth, **2013**, **2016**, **2017**) in favor of reversing Freud's **(1923)** decision to merge conscience with the superego and instead recognizing it as a separate mental function originating in early identification with the nurturer while the superego is grounded in early identification with the aggressor.

We cannot entirely eliminate the hate that fuels the superego, and not because it is grounded in biological drive. Fromm's rejection of that kind of biologically reductionist drive theory is entirely warranted. Hate is a reaction to frustration, but there is no human existence, no infancy, no childhood without serious frustration that is *basic* and unavoidable, not to mention the *surplus*

frustrations due to trauma, abuse, neglect, injustice, and socialization into pathological patterns. An important element of Fromm's existentialism is his recognition of the tragic fact that a portion of our suffering is nobody's fault. Siblings are born. We all die. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. Since frustration is unavoidable even with the best carers imaginable, and since frustration generates aggression, and aggression is both projected and turned on the self, some degree of persecutory guilt and paranoia is inevitable.

Our therapeutic task is to strengthen the forces of love (Fromm's *biophilia,* Freud's *Eros,* and Klein's *depressive/reparative* dynamics) over hate and destructiveness (respectively, *necrophilia, Thanatos,* and *paranoid-schizoid* dynamics). But instead of conceptualizing this transformation of character as disempowering the superego in favor of the conscience, mainstream psychoanalysis chose to follow Strachey **(1934)** rather than Freud, Alexander, and Ferenczi, conceiving it as the modification of an "archaic" into a "mature" superego, while failing to understand that we need a conscience precisely in order to know in what directions the superego needs to be modified. Beyond this, the transformation we seek is radical, less a process of continuous than of emergent evolution, more akin to revolution than reform. It involves the demolition of the superego, not in favor of the ego but in favor of the conscience.

The roots of our difficulty lie deeper than at least the early Fromm **(1944)** wanted to recognize. Certainly, authoritarian socialization pressures, which repress the true self with its sexuality, aggression, and spontaneity, are important. But it is a mistake to think that the problem of human guilt is reducible to such external social causes. Here Freud is, in a sense, more existential than Fromm, for he recognized that in addition to the guilt inflicted by the superego (internalization of social authority via the parental superegos and turning of aggression on the self), there also exists a pre-superego guilt arising from simple ambivalence: from hating those we love. Although Freud **(1913-1914)** mostly advanced a view of morality as socially constructed, in *Totem and Taboo* he described the remorse stemming from the killing of the ambivalently loved primal father that led to the establishment of the moral law in the first place. In Freud's historical myth (and implied in his account of the oedipal development of the individual)

guilt, instead of resulting from the superego, precedes and motivates its formation. This is not the persecutory guilt inflicted by the superego, but the depressive or reparative guilt arising from conscience.

The Oedipus Complex *is* Universal

Fromm advanced a revisionist, socially conditioned and relativistic (as opposed to a universal and existential) theory of the Oedipus complex, in which it is not primarily about sexual jealousy but about authority and, in Western culture at least, about the father-son conflict. He comments: "Freud gives a universal meaning to a feature that is characteristic only of patriarchal society.... [where] the son is subject to the father's will; ... As always, oppression leads to hate, to a wish to liberate oneself from the oppressor, and in the last analysis, to eliminate him" (Fromm, **1980**, p. 29). Other Marxists also made the Oedipus about hostility and domination rather than sex, utilizing Malinowski's **(1927)** data on the Trobriand culture where the boy's hostility is not toward the man who sleeps with mother (his father) but toward the man who holds authority over him (his maternal uncle).

Anthropologist Anne Parsons **(1964)** reviewed Malinowski's data and found Trobriand culture full of brother-sister incest myths, jokes, and taboos, because the culture makes her brother the most important man in a woman's life. Her son perceives that his father merely sleeps with his mother, but has little importance in his mother's and uncle's matrilineal and matrilocal milieu and is easily divorced. The mother's brother is the really significant man in her life. So while the Oedipus is not about narrow sexual jealousy, it *is* about jealousy in a wider and more fundamental sense. It stems from narcissistic desire more than sexual desire: *the desire to be the apple of the mother's eye.* This narcissistic desire is universal, existential, though directed differently under different kinship arrangements. So Fromm is right that the Oedipus is not fundamentally about sex, but neither is it fundamentally about authority, though resentment of authority certainly plays a part, and in our society the male authority figure also sleeps with mother and is often the most important person in her life.

Fromm underestimated the universal narcissistic desire to be preeminent, and the rivalry, jealousy, envy, and aggression that result from competition. The narcissistic project is, in my view, an unavoidable by-product of attachment. Although certainly not drawing on attachment theory, Lacan **(1977)** argues that "man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other" (p. 58)—that is, I desire to be desired. While such desire is universal, the resulting competition is inflamed in a competitive capitalist culture, while a socialist culture could mitigate it in various ways. A qualified essentialism recognizes that the narcissistic project is reducible neither to nature nor to culture but is existential, inevitable. But it also understands that it can be either socially inflamed or tamed; channeled into positive, prosocial directions; and creatively sublimated.

Humanistic Religion: An Oxymoron?

Fromm's radical humanism had its early roots in prophetic messianism **(Braune, 2014)**, in the Judaism that he, like Marx, broke away from in favor of an atheistic secularization of these ethical and messianic themes. Fromm **(1950)** chose to distinguish humanistic from authoritarian religion instead of distinguishing humanism from religion as such. Today, many consider supernaturalism as religion's defining quality: "Religion is a belief system which includes the notion of a supernatural, invisible world, inhabited by gods, human souls, angels, demons, and other conscious spirit entities…. A supernaturalist belief system does not have to refer to gods, but it does always refer to spirit entities (ancestors, ghosts, angels, etc.) which have some power over humans and can affect their lives" (Beit-Hallami, **2015**, p. 3). Freud demanded that adherents of demythologized, metaphorical, "as if" or secular readings of religious traditions admit that in abandoning literalism and supernaturalism, they had in fact embraced atheism: "One would like to mix among the ranks of the believers in order to meet these philosophers, who think they can rescue the God of religion by replacing him by an impersonal, shadowy and abstract principle, and to address them with the warning words: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!'" (Freud, **1930**, p. **73**). Similarly, for Beit-Hallahmi, as for me, if there are

no supernatural elements central to the belief system, it is not a religion.

While no doubt some religious traditions are more authoritarian and less humane than others, if we define humanism as a human-centered or anthropocentric perspective, it is clearly incompatible with religion as a god- or spirit-centered system of belief.

In his later years Fromm became interested in Buddhism, which, unlike the Abrahamic religions, is not a form of theism. But many Buddhist traditions nevertheless qualify as religious in that they are permeated by supernatural beliefs. Forms of Buddhism and related meditative practices that are absent of any supernatural elements or claims would qualify as types of philosophy and related ways of life rather than religion. Whether they qualify as humanistic is open to debate, since in seeking forms of transcendence of egocentricity they may in fact be seeking to transcend the anthropocentrism central to humanism as such.

Anthropocentrism

Beit-Hallahmi **(2015)** refers to the supernaturalist experience of "mystical union with a deity or with nature" (p. 68), as if there were no valid distinction between the former and the latter, as if all experiences of unity with nature must somehow entail supernaturalism when in fact they may reflect the expanded naturalism that recognizes our intrinsic connectedness or embeddedness in nature. Just as Freud **(1930)** reduced the "oceanic" experience to infantile primary narcissism prior to differentiation of self and other (a stage, which, thanks to empirical infant research, we now know does not exist), so Beit-Hallahmi appears to relegate it to the realm of religion. But it is our failure to recognize our continuity with nature (a connectedness which, however celebrated by mystics, is now recognized by physicists as the "butterfly effect") that has resulted in the exaggerated sense of human exceptionalism, the anthropocentrism that I believe has contributed greatly to anthropogenic climate disruption (ACD).

Here lies the major flaw in Fromm's work, the anthropocentrism that pervades it from beginning to end. Beyond his exaggeration of human uniqueness and minimizing of the intelligence

and complexity of other species is the collective human narcissism that places humanity at the center with, as the Bible says, *dominion* over the rest of creation. Is anthropocentrism not an inextricable element of humanism? Can one envisage a postanthropocentric humanism capable of meaningfully addressing anthropogenic climate disruption in what is increasingly recognized as the anthropocene, the likely site of the coming sixth mass extinction (**Carveth, 2015a**; **Kolbert, 2014**)? Durkin **(2014)** writes that "by his last work, *To Have or to Be,* he [Fromm] is clear on his need for a relationship of balance and respect with nonhuman nature" (p. 210). If so, this came late and does not exempt the main body of his work from the charge that Durkin rejects: that it reflects "a vainglorious speciesism" (p. 210).

Following Marx, Fromm located human nature, our "species-being," in *productive activity.* Herein lies the existentialist element in both Marx's and Fromm's thought: the capacity of human beings for creative realization of their "projects": their freely chosen, future-oriented goals or ends. Yet it is unrestrained Promethean activity, industry, and "growth" in both capitalist and "socialist" forms, that has and is destroying our ecosystems and, hence, ourselves. It is true, as Durkin **(2014)** points out, that "in all the influences Fromm draws upon, a central stress is laid on achieving greater awareness, becoming open and responsive and on the need to experience oneself in the act of being, not in having, preserving, coveting, using.… Common to all, then, is the goal of overcoming greed, narcissism, and egoism" (p. 186). However, Fromm's equation of mental health with *productive* activity exists in tension with his later groping toward the values of *being.* It is true that in his later years Fromm began to distinguish *being* from *having*—but notably not from *doing.* Given the centrality of productive activity in Fromm's very definition of human nature and his devaluation of passivity, I was not surprised to learn from Friedman **(2013)** of his hyperactive personal style (hence Friedman's title, not *The Life* but *The Lives of Erich Fromm).*

Like Freud, Fromm was too sophisticated a thinker to simply equate masculine with activity and feminine with passivity. Unfortunately, Fromm chose not to substitute terms like "humanity" or "human" for the generic "man" used so frequently in his texts, even after most scholars had become alert to gender issues. While,

as Kellner (n.d.) points out, Fromm's early essays on Bachofen's theory of matriarchy "contain some provocative perspectives on the question of women's liberation" and celebrate matricentric over patricentric values, his major postwar texts "either lack a discussion of gender or reproduce cultural commonplaces on the differences between men and women." The values of nurturance, care, and responsibility toward the other (unnecessarily gendered as "matricentric") might have mitigated the destructiveness arising from an unbalanced embrace of the values of individuation, activity, and achievement (unnecessarily gendered as "patricentric"). Our obsession with *doing* over *being* has contributed to our malaise, even perhaps to our demise. While it might have been possible for us to learn from indigenous cultures to see ourselves as *part of* rather than *apart from* nature, we chose instead to destroy them and it. Fromm offers an insightful critique of narcissism in favor of an ethic of love and concern for the other, but seldom extends such concern to Mother Nature, thus manifesting the collective narcissism that is anthropocentrism. In its stress upon separation and individuation from "regressive" and "primitive" symbiosis with nature and community, Fromm's radical humanism, while insightfully identifying and criticizing many aspects of our cultural pathology, at the same time reflects and fails to transcend it. As Ingleby **(1991)** argued, Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis "remains firmly rooted in the suspicious attitude to nature, the body, and woman, which characterizes modernism" (p. l).

Conclusion

Despite such limitations, Fromm nevertheless has much to offer contemporary psychosocial science, both theoretically and clinically. His qualified essentialism and neo-Marxist existentialism offer an *Aufhebung,* an abolition, preservation, and transcendence (Kaufmann, **1966**, p. 144) of the polarities of nature and nurture, of both biologistic essentialism and extreme social constructivism and relativism. While not as well-known as his work in social and psychoanalytic theory, Fromm's important contributions to clinical theory seek to counterbalance the remote, pseudo-objective and at times authoritarian stance of the classical Freudians with his egalitarian, personalistic, and humane clinical values

(Buechler, 2017). His efforts to integrate Marx and Freud can contribute to healing what has recently been called "the unhappy divorce between sociology and psychoanalysis" **(Chancer & Andrews, 2014)**. Although Fromm conceives human love more as a solution to existential anxiety and alienation arising from our separation from nature than as rooted in the innate needs for attachment we share with our primate cousins, his existential revision of psychoanalytic characterology has much to offer—provided the healthy orientation is redefined in terms of one of Fromm's own most prominent personal characteristics: a *caring* orientation to life.

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