

Humanistic Climate Philosophy: Erich Fromm Revisited

by

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Abstract

Given the current juncture in history, humanity is faced with the herculean task of adapting to a tumultuous present and a gimmer future. Should climate projections be accurate, there is little time to waste. This work makes the claim that we are not only in a political gridlock but also in an academic one. Researching climate philosophy from its inception, the concluding view is that no major progress, outside of a standardized descriptive analysis, has been achieved. Thus, the work evaluates an array of climate philosophers e.g. Stephen Gardiner, James Garvey, Peter Singer, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, etc., with specific emphasis on the economic philosopher John Broome, suggesting that their recommendations and assessments fall short of being totalizing in scope and therefore of producing viable theories that, if practically sought after, can achieve social sustainability. To fix the problem of a lack of social and strategic trajectory, I offer up Erich Fromm's humanistic philosophy as a suggestive model. In doing so, the argument is made that this can aid in reorienting our external/empirical obsession by shifting our focus toward our 'interiority—our internal worlds and psyches—, since a necessary condition in achieving sustainability is changing our mindset. By focusing on the human psyche, its structure and needs, can our behavior finally shift in a way that compliments scientific recommendations and ecological demands. Hence, Fromm lends the climate philosophy discussion an ontological framework from which to better direct and more readily navigate toward less socially precarious and more ethical inclined waters.

Introduction

Reader beware: the argument made in this dissertation is neither bold nor original but is instead something that, given the current historical juncture of humanity, simply needs to be said.¹ What is special about this particular juncture is that it is the first genuine situation that requires the participation and inclusion of every nation in the world, industrial or otherwise. We are presented with the opportunity to create the first ever cosmopolitan aim. Given all collected data, the failure to do so would be to invite a cataclysm so great and pervasive that life as we have come to know it, over the past 12,000 years or so, would no longer reflect the stability that allowed our species to thrive to the extent that it has. Many point to a currently on-going American Disenlightenment² as a bulwark that acts as a global counter-current and successfully stymies any effort to move forward. But, I am of the opinion that given the data presented by scientists, the entire international community appears to be in a state of “perplexed numbness” induced by contact with a very peculiar “torpedo fish.”³ That torpedo fish? Climate change. While currently only four countries: Costa Rica, Norway, New Zealand, and Iceland,⁴ have managed to achieve carbon neutrality, the rest of the world remains in a stage of teenage rebellion. Whereas some countries are considering adulthood and others are doubling down on

¹ I ask the reader lend me some measure of poetic license for what is not an insignificant portion of the introduction and forgives my brief aberration of academic tone for it twas not me, twere my fingers.

² Cf. Martin Schönfeld, “American Disenlightenment: climate change made in USA” 2015, *Environmental Ethics for Canadians*, 2nd Ed., ed. B. Williston, Oxford University Press.

³ Plato, *Complete Works*, “Meno,” ed. John H. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 879.

⁴ ["UNEP Announces Climate Neutral Network | News | SDG Knowledge Hub | IISD"](#). *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. 2008-02-21. Retrieved 2019-11-09.

continued narcissistic and reckless behavior, both are snugly nestled in maladaptive economies built on unsustainable growth and modes of existence.

Despite the fact that the scientific community has managed to speak with a univocal voice on an international level regarding humanity's circumstance, almost every other institution cannot seem to achieve any momentum due to a lack of consensus and a night sky deprived of a political Polaris. What we see is a continued failure of public policy, a breakdown in national and international politics, a preferential treatment toward outmoded economic models that assist the ultra-wealthy while continuing to disenfranchise and marginalize the great majority, and education systems steeped in globally synchronized 20th century 'factory models.' Confusion, apathy, skepticism, anger, and frustration are some emotional composites coloring the canvas of the modern milieu. Some idolize and attempt to recall a one time "great" 1950's pre-civil rights culture, while others patiently wait for a single savior to arrive and bring salvation to their doorstep. Others yet, believe that the world is coming to an end; if not that, then it's most definitely flat, secretly controlled by NASA along with a few powerful members of an elite class who are part of a pedophile ring overseen by the Clintons.

Our gaze, in a panicked fixation, is ill-fixed, looking to a mythological past, to ill-suited strongmen of unassailable narcissism, to esoteric YouTube conspiracies and prophecies, to an idolatry and fetishization of 'free markets,' all of which, promising answers and security, are put into a blender and ejected in a lidless spew of mass hysteria, social tantrums, and popularized non-cooperation. The truth is that there is no savior and no era in the past that we can recreate to make everything go back to the way it was, and, most importantly, that there is no singular answer. Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back together again despite the petulant protest and irrational convictions of the fervently mad. And though we cannot reverse the hands of time and

crawl back into the womb from which consciousness was evolutionarily torn from, Paradise is not lost. Hope is not lost.

Nietzsche wrote that “All sciences are now under the obligation to prepare the ground for the future task of the philosopher, which is to solve the problem of value, to determine the true hierarchy of values.”⁵ To the future then belongs the philosopher, who is not only poised to solve the problem of the criterion and the hierarchy of values but construct new modes of interaction, models of social engagement, and means for smoother person to person emotive enunciation. To the future belongs those who know how to dream while awake. The answer will not come from a single source but from the active participation of all people in a concentrated creative pulse of a biophilic Will-to-life. The future belongs to each and every participant that helps to bring about a systolic green and diastolic blue; colors of health melded together by humanity’s greatest evolutionary achievement: solidarity. The alternative is to be confronted by a necrophilic brown; a mass death. Evolve or perish is the motto and call to action of the Anthropocene.

The behavior of the individual becomes paramount, and the job of an ethicist, more pertinent now than ever before. Social maturity can only be achieved by the accumulation of individual awareness and a mass overcoming that passes beyond the mere (coincidental) community and transforms into a willful collective of individual members. Contemporary ethicists, while strongly advocating for change, are often still bound by the old ways. Their analysis of current events and future roadblocks, while perspicacious, biting incisive, and necessarily insightful, is confined mainly to investigation but undoubtedly, they leave any

⁵ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kauffman (New York: Random House Inc., 1967), 58.

forward motion firmly within the hands of social whimsy. This is a salient feature of climate ethics in that, though they all agree that climate change is real—that it is harmful to the flora and fauna of the planet, that it is ‘evil’ since it puts not only our way of life in jeopardy but our entire existence in peril, etc.—there has not been a satisfying answer as to what the grounding of climate ethics is comprised of.

So what if it all falls apart?! Would the planet and all creatures that reside within it not stand to benefit from our demise? It seems that the quicker we scorch the planet the quicker ‘environmental justice’ can finally be achieved and planetary flourishing can begin anew with one less parasitic species whose hunger is insatiable and whose thirst is unquenchable. Let us consume until we implode. Perhaps then we might finally behave ethically. Cheers!

If this modest proposal sounds ludicrous, which I presume to be the case to any who are not nihilists or mad, then the remaining motivation for sustainability seems to be purely for survival. At best, given the current discussion in climate ethics, it falls into the realm of aesthetics—and perhaps that is our only genuine answer. Life in total, like a sunset after a storm, is beautiful. A *summum bonum* in and of itself. These are the two answers that I have managed to pilfer and assemble while doing my research for this dissertation. Both fail to satisfy.

Life for the sake of life is not poignant enough of to assert and assume fastidious directionality. After all, ethicists are not only concerned with distinction i.e. whether behavior of some sort or another is acceptable or not, but they are also concerned with the *ought*; the, ‘what is?’ versus the ‘what should be?’ The problem with telling someone that they should behave in one fashion as opposed to another is that it is always met with that prickly question, ‘why?’ This is the question climate ethicists have yet to come to consensus with since to do so would mean to go beyond the simplistic complexity of their empirical analysis. They would have to, in part,

return to their primordial roots of the gleeful shaman and blind soothsayer dancing wildly about the fire. And, by searching inward with one hand placed upon the belly, stretching the other out toward sky—in attempt to reach far beyond the vision of the eye and deep into the beyond of the future—the internal and external would be pulled together and conjoined with an impassioned stomp of the foot; unified and singular become the uniquely peculiar and the knee-clattering sublime. With the forceful exhale, the oracle offers hope. Direction. Medicine. A way to be.

With contemporary ethicists, answers to the ‘why’ are merely implied in their analysis of a global carbon tax, mass migration, the climate’s effect on poverty, etc., and one must academically mine the work of the collective community in order to extract some semblance of a response blasé. I find that to begin to answer the question of why, one (must) quickly become(s) entangled in the problem of ‘the good life.’ A banished question in our modern times, replaced instead with the imperturbable promise of its labyrinthine pursuit; a putrid golem that dares you to enter the maze and forces you to earn your joy. Furthermore, I do not know if such a question can truly be answered without being ontologically tethered. If I am to survive, how shall I live and why shall I live thusly?

For myself, Erich Fromm, one of Frankfurt School’s forgotten philosophers, can yet provide the thread end of the Thesean spool; an ethical starting point that guides our journey in a flutter of whispers that gently command, “Because you are bound by the laws of your being.” Thus, providing a first step in the nebulous journey toward greener virtues. With Fromm comes a renewal of a culturally normative humanism. *Prima facie*, this initially appears counter intuitive. It can be argued that the root of the problem stems from our narcissism, our ego, our endlessly self-centered behavior. If that is true, how can focusing more on ourselves be the solution? Fromm presents us with an obvious solution—we have not paid attention to ourselves but rather

have become infatuated, mesmerized, and possessed by our own creations—to our detriment. Exemplifying this with love, Fromm writes,

The noun "love," which is only an abstraction for the activity of loving, becomes separated from the man. The loving man becomes the man of love. Love becomes a goddess, an idol into which the man projects his loving; in this process of alienation he ceases to experience love, but is in touch only with his capacity to love by his submission to the goddess Love. He has ceased to be an active person who feels; instead he has become an alienated worshiper of an idol, and he is lost when out of touch with his idol.⁶

The problem of climate change is not solely an empirical problem limited to the external but rather, is symptomatic of a divestiture of our self-empowerment—ever patiently waiting for an idol to save us (or remind us) of our ineluctable doom. In a system that actively thwarts self-awareness—an attunement to the working of the internal elements restricted to the laws of psychological mechanisms—comes the creation of a mass pathology as its hellish replacement. While scientists, economists, and politicians work together to solve the problem of economic externalities and planetary externals such as the ecological overshoot, planetary boundaries, mass extinction, pollution, deforestation, over fishing, soil erosion, acidification of the oceans, etc., empirical questions astutely mutate and force us to ask, what attention do we pay to our inner lives, to our interiority? What will become of our inner world? Is it possible to bring about the appropriate culture shift in mindset? And, what is the role of the ethicist in such affairs?

⁶ Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1976), 18.

We might argue about what virtues are necessary to bring about change. We might even come to an answer with respect to which values are the correct ones. But none of that would matter without putting in place a social framework that can provide its members the appropriate tools to achieve individual agency and collective motivation. For Fromm, the psychological maturation of the individual coincides with psychic health. By psychic, he does not mean our relation to the supernatural or paranormal, but to our psyche; the innermost kernel of mind that meets an objective standard before it explodes into the phenomenologically subjective.

Fromm posits that just as our bodies have a standard of health with respect to pathogens, our mental state is similar in terms of pathologies. Therefore, should we attempt to treat Earth as a patient and restore it to a state of planetary health—a homeostatic point where life thrives in abundance—then it follows that human beings, being subsystems entangled within an overarching super-system, should adhere to the same principles of health. The first major provision that Fromm provides is a principle of objective (and therefore universal) health, beginning with the mind and working its way out. Normative humanism bound by natural law offers a balm for exceedingly sensitive creatures so that we may begin to take proper care of ourselves, not only limited to body but also extending to spirit—a holistic and totalized health, something that should be extended toward all areas life and institutions alike.

Below, I offer a brief outline of the dissertation and a synopsis of the arguments contained within. The thesis statement of this dissertation is a simple one: something is missing from the climate discussion among climate ethicists—termed externalists in the work due to their extensive focus on empirical data analyzed in the consequentialist tradition. Furthermore, despite their necessary analysis of ethical debacles amidst a downpour of scientific projections, they fail to offer a sufficient motivation for unified mobilization. However, this is an implication of an

earlier failure to provide a prerequisite unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies. A unifying ethical theory lends an axiomatic requisite necessary to ground a theory and engender a focused behavior by way of culture. In the case of the externalists, as discussed above and will be shown below, while highly effective in analysis, are often disconnected with respect to an adequate theory that leads to apposite actionability. Below I argue that the key component that is missing from the dialogue is a due consideration of our internalities—the objective laws and boundaries of our interiority and its psychic health. Fromm offers such an ethical (and therefore directive) unifying principle that provides such a framework in the form of his existential dichotomies; specific traits found universally in the substrata of the human psyche.

In acknowledging this commonality, the discussion of sustainability can then be considered through the lens of a normative humanism—the promotion of a society that is best suited to the creation of a mentally healthy being and lifestyle, and vice versa. From the vantage of systems theory, the societal shift needed to achieve lasting sustainability cannot be completed without being comprehensive/all encompassing. Essentially, *ad hoc* adjustments to our current institutions to provide such drastic changes would be insufficient, and thus short-lived and prone to regression. I argue that the change must be purposeful and holistic in nature, not only rethinking and adapting all institutions from the ground up, but consciously considering the necessary mindset to achieve such a feat. Fromm provides a recalibration of the ethical conversation along with the necessary tools to begin a discussion of health pertaining to the individual, the society, the relationship and duty an individual has to a society, the relationship and duty the society has to the individual, and by and large the relationship the individual has with nature through society.

I would like to point out that I do not find a substantive failure in the work of the climate ethicists but I contend that their analysis is being applied in an improper theoretical juncture, effectively putting the cart before the horse. Therefore, I do not focus on the minutia of their work but rather aim to draw connections in the lack of an underlying cohesiveness in their philosophical mulling which result in practical consequences—this is revealed in my exposition and historical account of John Broome, an economist turned philosopher and an analytic exemplar. Attempting to find the most efficient ways of combatting climate change by first doing an extensive (and interminable) cost-benefit analysis before taking action proved to be inadequate when translated to international actionability—to be shown in the IPCC report. Again, it is not that such analysis is necessarily incapable of generating answers when given a specific set of criteria, but that it is utterly ineffective when it does not have the appropriate values to act as a guide. The externalists fail to agree upon which values are crucial for transitioning and upholding a sustainable mindset, along with a viable defense of such a choice. Fromm’s philosophy grants such measures by contributing a suitable human ontology that can serve as a necessary supplement to the climate conversation.

The dissertation is divided up into two parts: Part I: The Current Climate Conversation: Work and Analysis of Contemporary Ethicists; Part II: Fromm and Humanism.

Overall, Part I, The Current Climate Conversation: Work and Analysis of Contemporary Ethicists, is an exposition of the current dialogue in climate ethics. I present a survey of the most relevant ethicists, their analysis, and conclusions. My intention is to show the type of analysis that is done and to suggest that it is in need of a supplementary perspective—as they themselves note. In Chapter 1: Preliminaries, I argue that in order to effectively combat climate change, partial changes to the system such as merely changing government policy, economics,

technology, is not sufficient to achieve effective mitigation or preservation. While some scholars consider partial changes to be sufficient, the most fundamental shift yet to take place is in culture and mindset. To combat a problem of this magnitude, any changes made must be holistic. In other words, it cannot be partial or limited to a few sectors but must involve the entirety of the system. Using the “iceberg model,” I suggest that while all institutions need to be revolutionized, social outlook and individual participation are vital—far more than merely waiting for governments to establish coercive efforts. Section I: Cape Town, uses the example of the 2017/18 drought in Cape Town, South Africa to make the practical point. In addition to the government taking extreme measures, the most important part in overcoming the drought was active citizen engagement and a shift in values. Section II: A Lack in Step Two: Actionability and section III: Gardiner’s Analysis, examines the analysis and conclusions (Step One) of leading scholars in order to reveal how their proposed solutions (Step Two) are ineffective since they lack a unifying principle; often affirming that something is missing. Chapter 2: Critical Conversations, presents two conversations within the general literature. Section I: The OUP, surveys the discussions in a climate ethics essential reader in order to provide a panoptic view of the current status of climate ethics, while section II: Ethics x Time, observes the literature over time, progress made, and the role that ethics played in section III: A Consequence of Hyper-Analysis.

Part II, Fromm and Humanism, focuses on the works of Erich Fromm and the possibility of applying the ideas contained within to the current discussion of climate ethics. Chapter 4, Fromm Here to There, investigates those areas of Fromm’s understanding that are most pertinent to the needs of the climate ethics discussion. Section I connects the intellectual tradition Fromm comes from with the approach Fromm takes with regards to his theories. Section II, Fromm’s

Ontology: Here, begins a partial exposition of Fromm's work with his general human ontology. This is the key missing element that Broome, and the other externalists looked at in part I, need in order to make headway. Section II, Frommian Dichotomies: Albuquerque, extends this analysis with a focused consideration of dichotomies in Fromm's human psychology. Section IV, Manifest Destiny: There, is then left with the task of bridging the gap between these theories of internal life and the external expression of them.

This provides the foundational prerequisites necessary for chapter 5, Humane Humanism, which offers an application of Frommian thought to some of the issues, discussed earlier in part I, in the climate ethics discussion. Section 1, Humanistic Productiveness, makes a 'Copernican turn' regarding the nature and measure of productivity. It recommends that, from a Frommian perspective, these metrics and related concepts should be defined from the inside and lead to the external, as well as a way to do this. Chapter 6, A Giant Leaf for Mankind, offers a positive account of Fromm's humanistic ethics in section I, Humanistic Behavior. As a concept, this is explored in section II, Being Mode, with a consideration of several real-world examples. This last section completes the application by considering the actual behavior, and biophilic consequences, that could be seen with a proper application of Frommian thought. The lynchpin is a shifting of perspective by society, i.e. a complete culture shift from where we are today to where we need to be to avoid the most drastic possibilities projected by the climate data to date, and to generate a unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies. To make this abundantly clear, this last section (and dissertation as a whole) is not adopting an argument for particular or specific modes of actionability i.e. modes worthy of consensus that ought to be rallied around. Those of the last section serve only as examples that serve to support the main thesis of this work, that to truly

alter the nature of a system one must first shift its values. It is these values that give way to particular behaviors, in this case, values that generate the appropriate mindset geared toward adapting our currently outmoded means of existence, opting instead to adopt a system better suited toward a green and sustainable future. Thus, this dissertation serves to set a pre-actionability foundation laid on a Frommian conception of biophilia and human health. All elements which promote the flourishing of the human spirit instead of its dampening will be referred to as humanism.

Part I: The Current Climate Conversation: Work and Analysis of Contemporary Ethicists

The overall aim of the dissertation is to create a conversation that takes into consideration key qualities found to be essential—and missing—in the academic climate discourse: namely, a reframing, reconsideration, and inclusion of the concepts of health, solidarity, equality, and human evolution. While part II will examine the alternative economic-philosophical approach to climate ethics championed by John Broome in his work *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (2012), part I aims to give a broader account of the discussion among leading climate ethicists for the purpose of making space for a humanistic approach by way of Erich Fromm detailed in part III. This part attempts to shed light on the climate philosophy community in an endeavor to support and further supplement the field through a qualitative analysis. In other words, it seeks to lend explicit recognition of existential matters beyond that of merely existing.

In reference to the scholarship of this part, I will primarily be drawing on *Climate Change: Essential Readings*, published as an authoritative anthology of papers, several selections from *The Monist*, and the works of two leading figures in the field, James Garvey's *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World* and Stephen Gardiner's *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*. I will offer greater detail with respect to these references below, but again, I specifically selected these texts because they offer a snap-shot of the Zeitgeist of the climate ethics community and offer what I believe to be a fair description of climate ethics.

Given the current planetary overshoot⁷ in relation to our historical trend⁸—a consistent lack of economic and biophysical homeostasis in relation to their threshold and the inexorable “speeding up” of this overshoot’s perpetual unfolding⁹—humanity has been placed in a position to consider the determinative factors for the current state of affairs. More drastically, humanity must produce an ethical framework to assist us in the mitigation of our environmental crises by adjusting the means by which we comport ourselves. Therefore, our necessary evolution is two-fold: to achieve sustainability by shifting our behavior, along with our mode of exchange, and to achieve a cultural evolution that will better promote harmony between physical existence and the meaning found therein.

To achieve, maintain, and harness sustainability, an existential ethics that considers survival as a primary task must incorporate and inculcate qualities such as cooperation, equality, solidarity, communally entrenched individuality, assuredness, universality, synthesis, equity, and interdependence. Conversely, concepts and models that assist in the generation of more growth such as non-cooperative/non-regulated market competition, liberty (the freedom *to*, as opposed to freedom *from*¹⁰), self-reliant individualism, value skepticism, relativism, and inequality of

⁷ See Ed Ayres, “The Four Spikes.” *Futures : The Journal of Forecasting and Planning*. 32; no. 6 (2000): 539-554, for insight into impact on climate. For insight into extinction spike and impact of biodiversity loss aka “extinction debt” cf. Tilman, et al., “Habitat destruction and the extinction debt,” *Nature* 371 (1994): 65-66; Barnosky, et al., “Has the Earth’s sixth mass extinction already arrived?” *Nature* 471 (2011): 51-57; Hylander, et al., “The mechanisms causing extinction debt,” *Trends in Ecology & Evolution (TREE)* 28.6 (2013): 341-346; Essl, et al., “Delayed biodiversity change: no time to waste,” *(TREE)* 30.7 (2015): 375-378.

⁸ See Lester Brown. “The Acceleration of History.” In *State of the World*, 1996: a Worldwatch Institute report on progress toward a sustainable society, edited by Linda Stark, 3-20. Norton, 1996.

⁹ See Francis Fukuyama. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, 2006. Fukuyama, is a neo-liberal Hegelian believing that history had “come to an end,” and that the American victory of the Cold War brought an end to ideological struggle. Conversely, L. Brown’s definitive understanding, settling the debate, was that history is actually speeding up, and that Fukuyama, albeit making an observation by means of societal, political, and economic considerations, ignores the biophysical and environmental dimension. This particular reanalysis is such that it promotes and produces a need for a reconsideration of ideologies, this time, with a deadline.

¹⁰ A distinction that will be elaborated later in the dissertation.

opportunity all involve the preservation of the status quo. In other words, they come together to form an outmoded pathological mindset that continues to contribute to our current state of societal maladaptation. Thus, the scope attempts to identify and discuss a valuation and revaluation of these the mindset generated by these values, while ultimately attempting to ground them in human ontology.

Chapter 1: Preliminaries

Climate ethicists, most of whom are externalists,¹¹ are renowned for making the argument for greater empathy toward others, the end of speciesism,¹² and a greater inclusivity of moral worth, extending not only to animals but to entire eco-systems.¹³ While such ethical considerations certainly imply an intellectually progressive lean, they still fall short of an immediate and totalizing paradigmatic revolution. An example of such considerations is illustrated by James Garvey in *The Ethics of Climate Change: right and wrong in a warming world* (2008). Having compared and analyzed varying philosophies, he stipulates that we do not necessarily need to re-think our ideas about human value by creating a new moral framework but that climate change itself presents enough of a challenge as to put us in a position where we can stick to what we are used to in order to solve issues from within our traditional framework.¹⁴ After all, to throw the baby out with the bathwater is to act counterproductively; in a time when

¹¹ Externalism is a term that refers to individual's whose sole analysis is based on the 'external' i.e. the empirical world, that which is tangible and visible. Ergo, half of the life of a human being is that which can be viewed and assessed by others; that which interacts and engages with the world. The other half of human life takes place 'internally;' our 'inner' life/world so to speak. This includes our thoughts, emotions, fears, cares, hopes, wonders, etc. All things not measurable or seen. All things hidden from the external world.

¹² Cf. Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Chap.6, 213-ff. Peter Singer argues that the preferential treatment of humans over animals is a form of "speciesism" and is just as unjustifiable as racism, sexism, or any other thing that allows for arbitrary value judgment.

¹³ Some (environmental) philosophers would take issue with the claim that externalist philosophers, despite 'caring' for animals, are still partaking in an anthropocentric philosophy as the exclusion of non-sentient objects. Aldo Leopold, for example, argues for a greater inclusivity of our bestowal of moral worth. Flora are just as important as fauna, not to mention entire ecosystems that allow for the specific burgeoning, rendering it, such that it is, a land ethic.

¹⁴ James Garvey, *The Ethics of Climate Change: right and wrong in a warming world* (New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2008), 54.

we can ill afford to do so, perhaps it is best to simply shake things up.¹⁵ We can note how practical his considerations are.

Section I: Cape Town and Totalizing Systems

One might adduce that the underlying reasoning for holding a conservative perspective is a type of culturally embedded “realism.” While this may seem, *prima facie*, a reasonable starting point, considering the example of Cape Town’s water crisis, it demonstrably is not. Nonetheless, there are attempts by many climate ethicists to preserve as much as possible of the old paradigm’s methodology for judgement.

Garvey, attempting to explain society’s situatedness, quite understandably, says:

There is a sense in which my actions and the actions of my present fellows join with the past actions of my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, and the effects resulting from our actions will still be felt hundreds, even thousands of years in the future. It is also true that we are, in a way, stuck with the present we have because of our past. The little actions I undertake which keep me warm and dry and fed are what they are partly because of choices made by people long dead. Even if I didn’t want to burn fossil fuels, I’m embedded in a culture set up to do so.¹⁶

Though what he says seems plain-as-day in that, insofar as all things are contingent upon one another, they are the consequence of cause and effect, and the context of the day is solely a result

¹⁵ Garvey, *The Ethics of Climate Change*, 52.

¹⁶ Garvey, *The Ethics of Climate Change*, 60.

of past actions. This could also be read as a type of apologia—a justification (and implicit calling) for us to remain within our given social structure or, should any social change be enacted, to generate modifications from within the already extant framework. More seriously, complacency might be misunderstood as pragmatism and efficiency as related to the cultural milieu surrounding these discussions. Note that in all philosophers to be discussed, the evaluation (and potential substitution) of the societal scaffolding and conforming brackets that sustain and perpetuate current institutions is not up for discussion, but we must add them to the conversation if we are to underwrite any major changes.

Part of what makes the advent of climate change particularly treacherous is that our current form of ethical analysis fails to enable the rapid, radical adaptation necessary for our future, assuming that the worst-case scenario/projections are accurate. Gardiner, another one of the leading climate ethicists, in his book *A Perfect Moral Storm*, argues that we are working with one half of our philosophical tool-kit but, while he is doing the necessary analytical work, he is not developing an actionable plan that includes humanism at its core. He writes,

while it is true that, according to the default position [that humans are finite creatures with infinite desires chasing finite resources], I am making some appeal to a narrowly economic motivation...As we have seen from the discussion of political inertia, the world has been aware of the climate problem for a while...and yet has allowed a rapid increase in emissions in the period. This is largely because it has permitted consumption of fossil fuels and the goods that depend on them to continue unchecked, ignoring the dangerous climate externalities. No doubt the claim that individual consumption is the primary driving force behind climate change is much too simplistic. Nevertheless, the basic idea

can easily be extended to other important arenas of decision making, such as business and politics.¹⁷

It is as if this mindset, naturally produced and driven by a very liberal and progressive economic view, misses the larger need of a systematic overhaul. Although Gardiner accurately proclaims that the problem of the carbon overshoot is partly the fault of the consumer, the blame can also be placed on businesses and politics alike. Reasonably, Gardiner attempts to merge responsibility between the private/individual and a public/communal entity by expanding the sphere of accountability. He says that “the basic point [of commercial responsibility] would remain even if we were more generous and said that the time-horizons of a given set of managers, shareholders, and employees extended across their working lives.”¹⁸ Hence, if a greater share of the responsibility were to be shouldered by managers, shareholders, and employees, the greater weight of the blame could and should be fairly pointed in the direction of businesses, i.e. corporate industry, and government(s) alike.

The fundamental issue of the classic liberal perspective is that such a system, *vis-à-vis* ideologically externalist roots, is systemically defective because it has a blind spot for the endemic mindset of its citizenry. In other words, climate change is a crisis potentially so large and complex that it will radically change everything our species has come to know and has long been accustomed to; this cannot be prevented without a radical change in how we conceive of social problems. Nevertheless, many, like Gardiner, espouse that we need not radically change

¹⁷ Stephen Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 58-9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

ourselves in order to preserve what we have always had. If one assesses the situation in terms of systems theory and structural pathways, expanding the blame-game in order to make it more inclusive seems to be missing a vital part of the bigger picture. For example, between mid-2017 and mid-2018, there were severe water shortages in Cape Town, South Africa. In late 2017, there were mentions of a “Day Zero,” or an expected timeline when the city water supply would fall below 13.5 per cent. “Day Zero” would usher in government mandated water restrictions whereby the water supply would be largely turned off and water rationed daily, effectively making Cape Town the first city to run out of water.¹⁹ By September 2018, Cape Town’s government had eased restrictions, indicating that the worst of the crisis was over, having acquired roughly 70 percent of the dam’s water retention level.²⁰ Regardless of who is to blame, this demonstrates the urgency and importance of this problem.

When approaching the outcome of the crisis from the point of view of structural dynamics, one must take note that its success was holistic in nature. Every potentiality of positive action was manifested in order to bring the crisis to an end. Thus, a recognition of events gave way to a recognition of patterns, which in turn took into consideration (institutional) structures, and finally, made necessary a shift in the mental models of Cape Town’s society. Christian Alexander, in an article titled “Cape Town’s ‘Day Zero’ Water Crisis, One Year Later” writes:

¹⁹ Cf. Cassim, Zaheer (19 January 2018). *"Cape Town could be the first major city in the world to run out of water"*. USA Today; Poplak, Richard (15 February 2018). *"What's Actually Behind Cape Town's Water Crisis"*. The Atlantic; Retrieved 22 February 2018; York, Geoffrey (8 March 2018). *"Cape Town residents become 'guinea pigs for the world' with water-conservation campaign"*. The Globe and Mail; *"Day Zero, when is it, what is it and how can we avoid it"*. City of Cape Town.

²⁰ Pitt, Christina (10 September 2018). *"City of Cape Town relaxes water restrictions, tariffs to Level 5"*. News24.

Technical fixes and regulatory controls implemented by the municipality were important to curbing water consumption but reaching such levels of conservation would not have been possible without large-scale cooperation by a wide swath of residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. “It doesn’t matter how much technical expertise you’ve got, but you actually have to stand back and understand the system more broadly,” notes Gina Ziervogel of the University of Cape Town, who has researched the crisis. For the city, this meant using data more effectively to prompt people to save water. Starting in 2017, the municipality had begun ratcheting up its drought-awareness campaign, publishing weekly updates on regional dam levels and water consumption and using electronic boards on freeways to notify drivers of how many days of water supply Cape Town had left. Then, in January 2018 and with Day Zero looming, the city got more aggressive. In addition to announcing its Day Zero countdown, the city launched a city-wide water map to show water consumption on a household level, allowing people to compare their consumption to their neighbors and the rest of the city. Heightened outreach regarding the crisis prompted wide discussion: The municipality’s weekly water report became a regular topic at social gatherings and on the radio. Governmental and civic organizations published water-saving techniques, and people traded tips on social media. In an unusual turn of events, techniques used in the poor, water-strapped township areas gained traction in wealthier areas. Prompted by new water-use tariffs, businesses also began increased efforts to communicate the need to save water to customers and employees. Bathroom signs explaining “If it’s yellow, let it mellow ... ” became ubiquitous in restaurants and

bars, while startup and corporate types initiated “dirty shirt” challenges to see who could go the most days without washing their work shirt.²¹

What we encounter in this success story is a government that took initiative by reallocating water in regions originally earmarked for agriculture and redirected its flow to urban residents, ramped up water tariffs and enforcement of prohibitions on heavy users, and prohibited use of municipal water for swimming pools, lawns, and similar non-essential uses, etc. The city’s government also implemented a new water-pressure system in January, saving roughly 10 percent of overall municipal water consumption, cutting its peak usage by more than half in three years. The January 2018 announcement of “Day Zero” alone galvanized a 30 percent drop in residential consumption after a steady but slower decline in earlier stages of the drought, according to City of Cape Town statistics.²²

Moreover, and more importantly, as noted in the first sentence of the block quote above, despite all the necessary changes adopted by Cape Town’s government, overcoming such a doomsday scenario would have floundered should there have been a lack of mutual cooperation among “residents, businesses, and stakeholders.” Hence, having seen an acknowledgement of events and patterns—namely the lack of fresh water and its causes—in conjunction with a structural change enforced by governmental institutions, i.e. attempting to close the gap on any water externalities, would not have been enough without a shift in the mindset of the citizenry and its culture. Signs in the lavatories, reading “if it’s yellow, let it mellow,” along with “dirty

²¹ Alexander, “Cape Town’s ‘Day Zero’ Water Crisis, One Year Later,” <https://grist.org/article/cape-towns-day-zero-water-crisis-one-year-later/>

²² Ibid., For statistics relating to water usage levels, cf. <https://web1.capetown.gov.za/web1/OpenDataPortal/>

shirt” challenges signal a shift in the rooted behavior of the citizenry and with it, the alteration of a *Zeitgeist* to a more sustainable lifestyle. The movement was total. Add to that a pinch of luck in the form of rainfall during a drought and you have the opposite of a perfect storm, but rather, what could only be best expressed in German as *Perfekter Einschlag* or Perfect Impact—a negative, or reverse, perfect storm, if you will. Hence, in September 2018, with dam levels close to 70 per cent, the city began easing water restrictions, indicating that the worst of the water crisis is over.²³ Note that the solution to this preview of one potential future for humanity required a shift in values and a mindful consideration of others.

In sum, and taking the Cape Town water crisis as an exemplar, such all-encompassing change must include events, patterns, structures, *and* mental models, in order to invoke and establish a new vision. In contradistinction, the very nature of the ideological foundations of the West, more particularly that of the United States, e.g. its businesses, politicians, and people alike, not only enable but produce a citizenry whose understanding of happiness and freedom is seen through the vantage of individual buying power undergirded by a pseudo-Darwinian “survival of the fittest” competitive model. This is what ultimately promotes and gives way to throwing the baby out with the bathwater, idiomatically speaking. The natural default position, polemically speaking, is something akin to an act of insanity: doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. Whether an individual, a businessman, or a politician, decides to

²³ Ibid., The reason the example of Cape Town is so important is not because the citizens succeeded in banding together in order to solve the water crisis. Rather, what is important is the shift in values. While everyone takes for granted that life is special and that a “good” one is preferable, as evidenced by a lack of mindfulness, careless behavior, and the profligate use and expenditure of resources, learning to be mindful about something as simple as the amount of water one uses lends a perspective of existential import, which brings forth from the shadowy background the interrelatedness and meaningfulness of nature and planetary health as a whole along with the role societies and individual members play with the respective impact. Existential homeostasis, therefore, of the (entire) system, including that of the individual, seems to be one and the same. This is a fact that humanity now must come to terms with and is no longer avoidable.

make a change by simply introducing alternative means of consumption, is not enough to curtail the current course of climate change (or water shortages, plastic residuals, chemical pollutants, waste, breakdown of ecosystems, mass extinction of fauna, etc.). Ameliorative action must be introduced and injected into society so that any changes undertaken are made simultaneously from the top-down, i.e. government to citizenry, and the bottom-up i.e. citizenry to government; adaptation must be both holistic in nature and systemic. It is not solely the fault of industry, or the consumer, or the governmental powers that be. It is, by and large, our entire way of life—the fetishization of constant growth and the maximization of happiness via the maximization of individual preferential action which instigates such existential crises as the Cape Town water shortage.²⁴

Examples of analytical thinkers with an externalist lean such as Garvey and Gardiner, on the one hand, rightfully advocate heavily for change—changes in governmental policy, consumer behavior, transnational cooperation, the widening of the ethical sphere to include animals and ecosystems, etc. On the other hand, they appear to naively believe that all necessary adaptations can be achieved piecemeal and within the current institutional framework. As a result, when considered from an evolutionary perspective and structural dynamics, their

²⁴ I am of the opinion that the true metric of the externalist ethos and the utilitarian ethos in particular, a paradigm of classical liberalism, can arguably be attributed to mobility or the simple act of motion i.e. the freedom to move according to one's will and personal preference. Motion presupposes acquisition—albeit it does not guarantee it. Rooted in the foundations of utilitarian ethical theory is the ability to achieve a state of satisfaction and to do so, one must be able to shift position, whether physically or spiritually; change, therefore, is the primary driver of the theory. Again, a brief discussion of the distinction between freedom to and freedom from will be given below. For further insight into the overlap of Utilitarianism and Classical Liberalism, Cf. M.W. Doyle's "Liberalism," where he includes Bentham's philosophy as a building block of classical liberalism, saying "Locke and Bentham, as founders of Liberal institutionalism, and Smith and Schumpeter, as founders of commercial pacifism—share the distinction of defining the ordinary reputation Liberalism in world politics." M.W. Doyle, *War and Peace* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), 213.

recommendations in matters of social adaptation turn out to be incomplete and maladaptive in nature; a perpetuation of the current cultural bubble and societal mindset.

All changes suggested pertain to the external life of the individual but none are suggestive of a shift in our internal life. As will be shown in the next section, these analytical thinkers are well aware of the broad and complex issues at hand, yet they tend to make arguments which often begin from empirical data and applied ethics, and end with normative ethics. Instead, their arrival at normative ethics should have begun in meta-ethics and human ontology. Essentially, we must ask what is it to be human and what are the things necessary for us to flourish existentially, not just physically?

Section II: A Lack in Step Two: Actionability

In the previous section, two prominent climate philosophers were used as a means of showing the extent of the systemic problem. In an effort to more fully articulate the point above and the position of general externalist climate ethics analysis—a Step One of a two-step philosophical strategy—this section will examine the analyses of leading scholars of climate ethics along with their conclusions. This has a two-fold purpose: First, it serves to bridge the gap between the philosophy of John Broome—which tackles the issues of valuation and how economics is poised to solve the problem of climate change—, a philosopher-economist who will feature prominently in chapter 3, and the rest of the climate philosophy community. Second, it attempts to reveal how their conclusions and proposed solutions often remain either too short-sighted, often missing a unifying underlying principle for dealing with climate change—this further prevents any agreed upon action to be taken—a “Step Two” so-to-speak—or affirms that

something is missing and that new ways of thinking need to supplant and replace the old.

Therefore, these motions will be referred to below as “Step One” and “Step Two.”

Briefly, the problem of valuation is being able provide and justify, in rank order, our value priorities so as to make them actionable. Thus, for the subsequent authors to be discussed, the intellectual procession appears to follow a pattern of recognizing the problem, understanding the problem—what (physical acts) generated it along with the extent of its (physical) impact and effects—, taking stock of how much energy can and should be allocated toward correcting the problem, and finally, taking action. Hence, if Step One, the articulation of one’s comprehension of the issue and position on the matter, is overly uncertain, one sacrifices immediate action for potential future accuracy. This makes Step Two, the generation of an actionable plan, less likely or effective—this, of course, depends on the overall urgency of the problem at hand.

Nevertheless, the problem of valuation that Broome et al., continuously points to is a pressing matter for problem solving in general. First, even though it deals with the difficulties of empirical uncertainties, the actual problem at hand rests in gauging the information. In other words, the most important issue is the application of practical wisdom since it is seldom the case that when a decision is made, given the particularity and uniqueness of each and every situation, the answer is cut and dry. Information is always missing and often the best we can do is take an educated guess based on prior experiences and knowledge already accrued. Second, it is also possible that the values that underlie and govern the ‘eye’ that scans for and interprets information, have long become dated and ill-fitting. For example, in *Climate Matters*, which will be more fully explored in chapter 3, Broome takes up four specific issues regarding values: how to take uncertainty into account, how to compare harms and benefits that are widely separated in time, how to set value on human lives, and the problem of population. Many of the climate

ethicists to be discussed below tackle the same issues in some shape or form and similar to Broome, when discussing a Step Two, a next step, many fall into the category of a “transitional” plan, at best. This reveals either an outdated mode of thinking or a missing yet critical cog in the vast network of intellectual interplay.

The question remains, regardless of any plans or solutions offered, towards what system exactly are we to transition into? A more stable national/international economy? A more bio-friendly tech industry? Green consumerism? While each of these proposed solutions might bring humanity more in line with the demands of planetary ecology, whichever solution is being proposed, none of them independently offer reasons as to why that solution ought to occur versus another. Proposed solutions are taken as obvious or as a matter of fact, often using the current institutional framework as a spackle to fill in any holes. Thus, Broome enters the conversation with the problem of valuation. He foists the responsibility of taking a next step upon the data and lets the data show the way. But, as Broome noted, “economists need philosophers for moral grounding.”²⁵ The implication here is that though data reveals the lay of the land, action is governed by principles. Therefore, one might conclude that if particular cultural principles that are the impetus for motivating factors, data analysis, and future-orientation dispositions, are no longer fully functional or applicable, decisive action will quickly stall; stagnation will become prevalent along with hyper-analytical thinking. A sure sign of a decaying institution that has succumbed to paralysis from over-analysis.

To begin with and to give credit where it is due, analytic climate ethicists readily spot and freely admit many of the entangled social and climate issues that lie before the current

²⁵ Broome, John, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (New York: Norton, 2012), 46.

generation. The multifarious debacles exposed by climate change are surgically disentangled and assessed individually in the form of ethics, economics, public policy, etc. Thus, analytic climate ethicists generally depict the consequences of climate change, in all its individuated realms, with accuracy and nuance. Below is a brief breakdown of Gardiner's assessment and metaphorical explication of the ethical complexities manifested and revealed by climate change.

Gardiner speaks of "A Perfect Moral Storm," whereby he astutely notes that the complexities of climate change seemingly prevent us from discussing any issues without "invoking ethical considerations."²⁶ Ethics, therefore, has become the most salient and thorny of all subjects. Unfortunately, ethical considerations, according to Gardiner, are exceedingly complex since they are often conjoined with any conversation that might be had about the economy, the competence (or lack thereof) of government, the durability and efficacy of infrastructure, etc. We are left with an unfortunate dichotomy. If we attempt to get as clear as possible with our terminology, then we must inevitably restrict our discussion to a single area of consideration lest we muddy our terms with vague and ambiguous application across unrelated fields. Alternatively, if we attempt to utilize broad and inclusive language, then our terms are necessarily fuzzy when applied across wide intellectual gaps. With either option, the attempt at a strict analytic analysis of the intermingled topics is stymied by our perceptual and linguistic limits. The result, according to Gardiner, is that we often lack the appropriate perception and language to effectively deal with such a looming ethical crisis.

²⁶ Gardiner, "A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics, and the Problem of Corruption," in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 87.

Briefly, Gardiner notes that this perfect moral storm is generated by three distinct storms all set on an ineluctable collision course with each other. The first storm, which he refers to as the “Global Storm” is a description of the current crises and humanity’s inability to adequately adjust to the oncoming threat. He describes the first storm as the practical difficulty resulting from “dispersion of causes and effects,” e.g. one place emits carbon while another feels the impact of those emissions, a “fragmentation of agency,” i.e. there is no one person or institution directly responsible, and “institutional inadequacy,” which is responsible for generating a non-unified global response to the crisis.²⁷ Taken together, this means that there are multiple actors behaving unilaterally and often solely with personal economic considerations.

In addition, the remaining two storms compound the issue with the onset of the “Intergenerational Storm.” Here, Gardiner acknowledges that the addition of time to the equation, makes things even harder. Where the aforementioned issues of the “Global Storm” are spatial in nature, issues of posterity and intergenerational responsibilities only serve to further complicate things. What might then keep each generation on task and on the same page? Gardiner suggests that “this problem will be iterated. Each new generation will face the same incentive structure as soon as it gains the power to decide whether or not to act.”²⁸ In other words, in addition to the difficulty described by Gardiner regarding the Global Storm, he points out the exponentially increasing complexity of this Global Storm once we begin to consider it across time as well as space.

²⁷ Cf. Gardiner, “A Perfect Moral Storm,” 88-90.

²⁸ Ibid., 92.

Lastly, Gardiner discusses a “Theoretical Storm,” which is “constituted by our current theoretical ineptitude.”²⁹ He suggests that our theoretical ineptitude is comprised mainly by the fact that most of our theories are built to derive immediate and short term solutions and have difficulties addressing issues such as “scientific uncertainty, intergenerational equity, contingent persons, nonhuman animals, and nature.”³⁰ Climate change involves all of these things on a long-term timeline. The final picture that Gardiner paints of this perfect moral storm is the dire crisis of the global storm compounded by the intergenerational storm, both of which we are incapable of adequately confronting due to the theoretical storm. These “storms” present philosophers with a firm and clear account of the ethical conundrum rooted in practical considerations.³¹

Section III: Gardiner’s Analysis

Taking Gardiner’s assessment as he presents it, for the moment, the next iteration of Gardiner’s thought needs to be addressed. In addition to the excellent articulation of the problem at hand, Gardiner also offers an attempt at something in the way of a solution as well. This solution has its own set of ontological realities and must be examined to develop a fuller understanding of the current climate ethics zeitgeist.

In his paper, “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?” Gardiner expresses doubts about the ethics of geoengineering and the manipulation of the climate system. He begins by briefly talking about the problem of political inertia³² and, after

²⁹ Ibid., 94.

³⁰ Ibid., 94.

³¹ Ibid., 94.

³² Stephen Gardiner, “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?: Some Doubts about the Ethics of Intentionally Manipulating the Climate System,” in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 285-312. Gardiner here cites Crutzen (list book), agreeing with him that mitigation is the preferred way to address climate change and that the efforts to lower carbon emissions have been grossly unsuccessful.

briefly describing his perfect moral storm theory, segues into the subject of geoengineering after highlighting the importance of the “Theoretical Storm.”³³ The Theoretical Storm does not only serve to characterize Gardiner’s position on the difficulty of adequate analysis due to inadequate information,³⁴ but rather appears to be representative of reasons for institutional breakdown.

Given Gardiner’s poignant ethical analogy, there are, alongside the given ethical difficulties, further complications that give way to more skeptical deliberations; issues that add to the problem of valuation and forward thinking. Gardiner writes,

We do not yet have a good understanding of many of the ethical issues at stake in global warming policy. For example, we lack compelling approaches to issues such as scientific uncertainty, international justice. This causes special difficulties³⁵

Compounding these problems, the quote continues:

In particular, given the intergenerational storm and the problem of skewed vulnerabilities, each generation of the affluent is susceptible to arguments for inaction (or inappropriate action) that shroud themselves in moral language but are actually weak and self-deceptive. In other words, each generation of the affluent is vulnerable to moral corruption: if members of a generation give undue priority to what happens within their

³³ Stephen Gardiner, “Arming the Future,” 286-87.

³⁴ For further elaboration on Gardiner’s take on scientific uncertainty, see *Ethics and Global Climate Change* sec. Scientific Uncertainty.

³⁵ Gardiner, “Arming the future,” 287.

own lifetimes, they will welcome ways to justify overconsumption and give less scrutiny than they ought to arguments that license it.³⁶

Gardiner is making the argument that action should be taken and that time should not be wasted. Unfortunately, not only do ethical problems abound alongside (purported) scientific uncertainty and international politics, but one must also take into consideration those who refuse to “play ball” because of self/national-interest, ignorance, or a stubborn unwillingness to change their behavior. Similar to Garvey’s assessment above whereby society need not throw out the baby with the bathwater, Gardiner’s incisive description of forces that maintain the current political as well as individual psychological entrenchment, can be seen/used as an argument for “practical” adaptation, thereby risking only a superficial and ineffective change, instead of a holistic and systemic one.³⁷ In other words, we should do what is feasible: write and enact laws that will force particular industries or means of consumptions to alter.

Though Gardiner focuses mainly on describing general ethical challenges posed by climate change, he does recognize that despite these challenges—intergenerational ethics, international justice, environmental philosophy and scientific uncertainty—“it does not follow that ethics has nothing substantive to say about our current predicament, and the shape of the direction forward.”³⁸ Importantly, Gardiner, taking from Rawls’ conception of *ideal theory*,³⁹ which aims to work out the best way in which to deal with some domain or issue in an otherwise

³⁶ Ibid., 287.

³⁷ I ask the reader to once again keep in mind that I am not saying that future oriented ethical theories acting as transitions are not necessary. Indeed, we must begin somewhere. I am simply arguing that it is not enough.

³⁸ Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 399.

³⁹ Which “assumes strict compliance and works out the principles that characterize a well-ordered society under favorable circumstances” (Rawls 1999, 216)

neutral or even moderately practical setting, contrasts the ideal with an *ethics of the transition*, which “articulates how we might proceed ethically, starting from existing, and sometimes deeply constrained or ethically compromised, social realities in the direction of better solutions and general circumstance.”⁴⁰

As seen above, Gardiner’s moral description of the problem we are confronting is robust and, juxtaposed with the difficulties of uncertainty as well as ideological entrenchment, can leave us in a vulnerable state without an actionable plan. Gardiner suggests that while, on the one hand, “ideal theory has an important role to play in addressing the global environmental crisis”⁴¹ such as being able to envision the target at which people of reasonably good will would like to aim without having to include current and contingent constraints, e.g. the existence of background injustice, maladapted institutions, or hostile agents,⁴² on the other hand, ethics of the transition can offer “thought as to how or even if [an] aim might be feasible under current real world conditions.”⁴³

Thus, Step Two, according to Gardiner, is an actionable plan for dealing with climate change that will assist in breaking the political logjam and begin the process of taking climate change into consideration. Constructing an ethics of the transition is therefore akin to taking action. According to Gardiner, such

...projects operate in the service of a robust ideal theory, but more often the challenge is how to muddle through even in the absence of a guiding ‘grand theory.’ Either way, the

⁴⁰ Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 400.

⁴¹ Ibid., 400.

⁴² Cf. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 399.

⁴³ Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 399.

ethics of the transition aims to identify how policies should be targeted and assessed given our actual constrained starting position. This is typically done through the use of intermediate normative criteria, parameters, benchmarks, and so on.⁴⁴

What these intermediate normative criteria, parameters, and benchmarks might be are not made explicit. Nonetheless, Gardiner attempts to give a Step Two by focusing “on how we might make some modest progress with the ethics of the transition.”⁴⁵ He outlines Step Two in a total of five brief sections:⁴⁶ section I points out how the foundational international agreement taken up by the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change) already takes a first step toward an ethical direction and how this in turn creates a strong duty to act. Since the convention has been ratified by all major nations, the main actors have acknowledged that they have ethical duties. Furthermore, since the convention was ratified nearly three decades ago, those nations responsible for any progress are subject to ethical criticism for their inaction in solving a problem they had themselves recognized as crucial. For Gardiner, ethics is and has been acknowledged by all nations who ratified the UNFCCC as a key component for mobilization. This shows a step in the right direction.

In sections II-V, Gardiner outlines and confronts key arguments obstructing effective action. Thus, section II addresses objections based on scientific uncertainty. Gardiner concludes that, “We are far from understanding nothing about the climate threat, and what we do

⁴⁴ Ibid., 400.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 400.

⁴⁶ Cf. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, chap. 11-12

understand seems more than sufficient to justify significant action.”⁴⁷ Claims of scientific uncertainty are therefore not legitimate reasons to halt action, since a) uncertainty is “a fact of life;” b) inaction due to claims of scientific uncertainty faces a burden of proof that climate science is theoretically potentially certain, i.e. to demonstrate that it is possible to know anything for certain with respect to climate; and, c) even if it is technically uncertain, this does not justify inaction.⁴⁸

Section III confronts objections considering past emissions such as arguments from *ignorance*, that polluters were unaware and therefore not responsible for what they did not know; *first-come, first-serve* arguments, that many past emitters are now dead, or political infeasibility. Despite these considerations of alternatives, Gardiner concludes that “the burden of proof remains on those who would reject all historical accountability.”⁴⁹ Section IV involves future emissions—which will be shown below, is a major fixation in climate philosophy—and the problem of intergenerationality.⁵⁰ Section V addresses the problem of reconciling individual and collective responsibility. Gardiner asks the reader what is to be done if we suppose that it is true that humanity currently lacks the appropriate institutions to deal with global environmental climate change. He concludes the section by saying that,

If political institutions normally operate under delegated authority from the citizens, the answer seems clear. This is a case where the delegation has either not happened, or else

⁴⁷ Ibid., 401.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 401. Also, cf., Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 405-414.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 402. Also, cf. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 414-420.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 420-431.

has failed to be successful...If the attempt to delegate effectively has failed, then the responsibility falls back on the citizens again—either to solve the problems themselves, or else, if this is not possible, to create new institutions to do the job. If they fail to do so, then they are subject to moral criticism, for having failed to discharge their original responsibilities.⁵¹

Here, Gardiner is refusing to let the question of responsibility fizzle out: either it is the government's burden, or it is the citizens', it is at the very least one of the two. Further uncertainty regarding who is to be held accountable is not sufficient enough of a reason to believe that no one is responsible at all, or that it absolves everyone of responsibility. Finally, section VI considers the interplay between ideal theory and ethics of the transition attempting to influence and modify institutional constraints. In this concluding section, Gardiner pivots in an interesting fashion, perhaps to better segue into his final chapter, titled "The Immediate Future." Gardiner does not dismiss ideal theory but recognizes the important role that it plays in generating a trajectory for human values and subsequent actions. Unfortunately, ideal theories are often based on a model of atomistic, self-sufficient nation-state, but, according to Gardiner, "If we truly entered a new epoch on the earth, a geological era dominated by humanity—the 'Anthropocene'—then such a model seems at least seriously incomplete, and perhaps hopelessly outdated."⁵² He continues, writing in a tone of admonition, that, "Theorists should ask whether this requires revising their grand visions of ethics and justice,"⁵³ given that the issues of climate

⁵¹ Ibid., 433.

⁵² Ibid., 435.

⁵³ Ibid., 435.

change overrun and undercut any current theory that we might have to tackle such a mammoth problem.

Conversely, Gardiner suggests that “we should not be too quick to dismiss the ethics of transition” and that “Even if existing institutions and theories are hopelessly inadequate” humanity still needs intermediate theories that would assist and begin social transformation.⁵⁴ He ends this section by pointing to the importance of background beliefs playing the role of assessment. In this case, beliefs about political reality raise serious questions about the boundaries of the ideal. Gardiner uses Rawls as an example of someone who apparently claimed to have founded his own political philosophy on a notion of a “realistic utopia” that aimed at reconciling the real constraints of human nature and the world with the concept of “utopia.”⁵⁵ Gardiner pessimistically asks, “how are we to decide what the ‘real constraints’ on ideal theory are?”⁵⁶ and proceeds to suggest that “perhaps the differences between ideal and non-ideal cases are more a matter of degree than of kind.”⁵⁷

In sum, what we see in Gardiner’s Step Two at the end of *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, is the claim that ethics is playing a vital role with respect to how we engage the future, what are the major issues currently preventing progress, and how crucial the role of theory is — more particularly theories which can assist in a pragmatic way. Thus, Gardiner stresses the importance of a transitional ethics, one which perhaps blends itself with ideal theory, to take into consideration “reality” and alternative approaches (along with potential outcomes) therein. His final message in chapter 12, to be discussed below, is an

⁵⁴ Ibid., 436.

⁵⁵ Cf. Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 436.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 436.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 436

endorsement of a shift in values; an implicit argument being made when beckoning philosophers to change gears in their theoretical approach.⁵⁸

Conclusion

This chapter focused on three essential matters in the climate conversation. The section brought to light the nature of systems theory, suggesting that any permanent change to be enacted within a system must change the system altogether. Using the “Iceberg” model as a *modus operandi* for instituting genuine change and the water crisis in South Africa as an anecdotal analogy, it was proposed that to alter a system one must take note of events, be able to anticipate patterns/trends, and recognize and delineate underlying structures and sub-systems that create the impetus of the problem. Having understood these things, it is still not enough to generate genuine change as the deepest part of the iceberg are mental models—the mindset/mental state that provide the support for the perpetuation of the (sub-)system(s) at hand. The claim being that without a shift in outlook there can be no change; change must be totalizing.

Climate philosophers such as Garvey and Gardiner, avant-garde philosophers in climate philosophy, often suggest that we can maintain social structures and simply adapt them to fit the current demands of climate change; a thing which I argue is not really possible since it fails to fulfill the demands of iceberg model. Furthermore, a deeper dive into Gardiner’s work and one notices that he often hints at an underlying problem, revealing that there is a key component missing from the conversation e.g. the mental models. Thus, often Step Two of climate philosophers falls short of providing an effective theory that expressly articulates practical

⁵⁸ As we will see in the following chapter, Broome offers an example of externalist thinking and how it has not genuinely offered progressive solutions.

boundaries and assists in generating a space for practical action to take place. The issue becomes obvious. Whether a theory is of a transitional type or the ideal sort, neither would suffice in the long-run—which may be why Gardiner might be calling for some type of hybrid theory. Ethics of transition are just that, temporary ideas to be used as a means for immediate action.

Critically, Step Two measures often flounder due to a lack of consensus. Similarly, as Gardiner notes, current ideal theories are “hopelessly inadequate,”⁵⁹ due to the fact that “existing institutions and theories must be radically reconceptualized to reflect new global and ecological realities.”⁶⁰ Theorists then find themselves between a rock and a hard place. To do away with ideal theory would be to do away with description and explanation, which would in turn lend value-principles for action. Without such grounding, our actions would be morally arbitrary and ethically unprincipled, adrift amidst the ethical Doldrums.

Additionally, without a viable theory to ground our actionable trajectory, the compounded worry is that a) an ambivalent attitude will result in hyper-analytic thinking that only focuses on more analysis instead of action and b) that theories of a descriptive nature, e.g. Gardiner’s Perfect Moral Storm theory, or of a transitional nature, may root themselves in such a way that non-holistic theorems become standardized and considered adequate in nature. The intellectual lacunae of adaptation can only evolutionarily succeed if the effort of the climate philosophy community is total in effort. One must therefore include and embrace matters of existential (both of physical and psychological) import and needs as part of the conversation, i.e. a humanistic approach. Ideas such as: What does it mean to be a human? What does it mean to have a good life? What are the things that make life worth living? In essence, these are questions that are

⁵⁹ Ibid., 434.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 433.

about *Being* rather than *Having*; about relating rather than quantifying. It seems poignant that such questions are being brought to bear despite the current lack of widespread application of a humanist mindset—as though in exploring the inhuman we are brought back to the human. This is easily seen throughout the demonstrated conversations in the current literature, which will be the focus of chapter 2 that demonstrates the inefficacy of non-binding conversation. In other words, a conversation which does begin with agreed upon principles of life.

Chapter 2: Critical Conversations

In order to demonstrate the mindset of the general approach of contemporary climate ethicists, and to offer some intellectual cartography to situate Gardiner, and later Broome, we need to take a broader view. Below, I present two conversations within the general literature taken mainly from Oxford University Press's essential reader of climate ethics. The first is currently one of the most crucial topics in climate ethics and potentially primary in its importance with respect to international progress. It revolves around the subject of dividing up future carbon entitlements along with the expenditure thereof. The second conversation, which will conclude the chapter, discusses explicit arguments for the need for a culture shift. The reason I have decided to proceed with this chapter in this fashion is so that I can give the reader a brief survey of the climate dialogue but also to supplement my previous points regarding the conversations circumscribed to an externalist account, along with all that comes with it—a lack of communal consensus from an increase in complexity of issues and the absence of an analytical criteria that unifies all assessment and provides a clear trajectory.

Section I: The OUP

With respect to the first conversation, the purpose of an anthology or reader is to provide a general lay of the land for the current conversations in climate philosophy along with the most pressing issues at hand. The OUP's climate ethics reader is divided up into five parts: Part I: Introductory Overview, Part II: The Nature of the Problem, Part III: Global Justice and Future Generations, Part IV: Policy Responses to Climate Change, and Part V: Individual

Responsibility. In terms of broad-brush strokes, one might say “fair enough,” and that these topics are a decent place to begin when attempting to familiarize oneself with the subject at hand. But, given that this book is compiled in such a way as to provide the audience with what is recognized as most important and pressing within the field, any issues pertaining to existentialism, humanism, culture, evolution, human and planetary convergence of health, and an analysis of contemporary values, often take a backseat and are far less prevalent, if included at all. Furthermore, the conversation below is of a particular import since it represents an issue that needs practical solutions but that is precariously bounded by current ethical and economic doctrines.

Peter Singer’s paper, “One Atmosphere”—located in Part IV: Policy Responses to Climate Change—demonstrates the difficulty in sorting out emission contributions. By and large, who would be responsible for what? Briefly, he gives a quick survey of different types of justice, specifically, that of Robert Nozick’s famed “historical” versus “time-slice” principles, the former of which takes a “polluter pays” or “you broke it, you fix it” approach, while the latter principle advocates that everyone is in this together and that each person should do their part in an effort to help. At the very least, according to the “time-slice” principle, all should pitch-in to aid the worst-off.

Singer argues that utilitarian principles of justice would reject Nozick’s libertarian principles in favor of placing the burden on the countries that could most easily bear it. Singer continues the discussion on justice, contra Nozick, touching upon the Greatest Happiness Principle, stating that “Classical utilitarians would not support any of the principles of fairness discussed so far [i.e. those principles given by Nozick].” and that, in their conception of fairness,

“would ask what proposal would lead to the greatest net happiness for all affected.”⁶¹ He concludes by saying that the utilitarian view would otherwise lead to the United States, Australia, and other rich nations bearing much of the burden of reducing GHGs in lieu of the poor nations, or “perhaps even the entire burden.”⁶²

Singer eventually goes on to propose an equal per capita share for future entitlements with respect to the sharing of atmospheric sink capacity.⁶³ In other words, in the future, the accepted capacity of a nation to pollute the atmosphere should be based on its population. He argues that despite some saying that this would be excessively harsh on industrialized nations, it would be fairest due to its “simplicity, hence its suitability as a political compromise, and because it seems likely to increase global welfare.”⁶⁴ Emissions trading would be the mechanism that would best ensure that countries that have benefited from a historical industrial advantage would bear the largest burden. Singer believes that when trading for emissions one needs to do so with those who would be less likely to use theirs, it would serve to mutually benefit both parties. He writes that an “equal per capita share principle, can make this transition much easier for the industrialized nations, while at the same time producing great benefits for the developing nations.”⁶⁵ He goes on to state that such a situation gives impetus to the need to think about developing institutions and principles of international law that limit national sovereignty, since “It should be possible for people whose lands are flooded by sea-level rises...to win damages

⁶¹ Peter Singer, “One Atmosphere,” in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 193.

⁶² Singer, “One Atmosphere,” 194. H. Shue (1999) also says “the costs [of mitigation] should initially be borne by the wealthy industrialized states.”

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 196. Singer also takes population growth into account.

from nations that emit more than their fair share of greenhouse gases.”⁶⁶ He ends his paper by suggesting that sanctions might one day be used as means to promote international environmental protection.⁶⁷

Conversely, Gardiner, along with Dale Jamieson, express their hesitation at an equal per capita proposal. Both suggest that it might encourage an increase in population growth.⁶⁸

Gardiner states in “Ethics and Global Climate Change”—located in Part I and introductory of the reader—that Singer merely suggests that an equal per capita system will give nations insufficient incentives to combat population growth and that this is an issue because under a fixed ceiling, such growth effectively reduces other countries’ shares.⁶⁹ Gardiner is hesitant with this idea, saying that

whether there is an incentive to increase population is an empirical issue, involving more than one factor: while it is true that the growing country’s allocation will go up, that country will then have an extra person to look after. So, a larger population is desirable only if an extra person ‘costs’ notably less than the emissions allotment.⁷⁰

Thus, what is seen in a conversation with respect to justice and fairness of allotment is that it becomes increasingly more complicated when injecting additional priorities such as population,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 198.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 198. Cf. Peter Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2002, 40.

⁶⁸ See, D. Jamieson, 2001, 301.

⁶⁹ Stephen Gardiner, “Ethics and Global Climate Change,” ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 29.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 29.

carbon sink allocation, poverty, etc. into the conversation. Finding a determining factor which will adequately balance the spreadsheet becomes increasingly more difficult the more variables are added making further analysis a never-ending process. There is also the additional conundrum pertaining to whether we should still attempt to mitigate climate change or simply forfeit such efforts and focus solely on the aftermath.⁷¹

Furthermore, in “Greenhouse Development Rights”—also located in Part IV—, Paul Baer, Tom Athanasiou, Sivan Kartha, and Eric Kemp-Benedict,⁷² having taken climate mitigation into consideration,⁷³ also “reject allocation based on equal per capita emissions rights.”⁷⁴ The issue Baer et al. take with Singer’s proposed equal per capita proposition is the same as Singer, poverty. While Singer argues that an equal per capita system takes into consideration each nation’s contribution to the shared atmosphere spread across the Earth, Baer notes that “it is normal to see the world as largely being divided into rich countries and poor countries”⁷⁵ and that a more nuanced view of the world points out precisely that “many of these countries that are still grouped as ‘developing’ are hardly poor.”⁷⁶ This might indicate that these not-so-poor developing countries have a greater than initially thought responsibility for mitigating the effects of climate change. As stated earlier, the complexity of climate change

⁷¹ Gardiner outlines this issue nicely in *Ethics and Global Climate Change*, breaking up the issues into several categories under the headlines: The Cost Argument, The Adaptation Argument, and Risk Management and the Precautionary Principle. For more on this topic, Cf. Jamieson, 1992, 2005., Broome, 1992. Gardiner 2006. Schelling 1997. I am currently of the opinion that it is too late to mitigate anything and that we are well past the any point of return. Though, I do have the advantage of hindsight being that the reader was published in 2010.

⁷² When referencing the paper from this point forward Baer will used as a reference to it with the understanding that this includes and credits all authors listed above.

⁷³ Paul Baer, “Greenhouse development rights: A Framework for Climate Protection That Is “More Fair” Than Equal Per Capita Emissions Rights,” in *Climate Change: Essential Readings*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 216.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 217.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 217.

increases when attempting to take into consideration all of the related morally relevant concerns, including the prioritization of poverty.

Interestingly, Baer et al. propose that the best way to combat climate change is to focus on poverty, saying, “the world can, and should continue to prioritize human development rather than climate policy for many more than those just barely escaping poverty.”⁷⁷ Thus, for Baer, greenhouse development rights (GDR) should be calculated by the allocation of obligations in proportion to capacity (income) and responsibility (historical pollution) and the calculation of those indicators (capacity and responsibility) in a way that takes into account the distribution of income within countries and is relative to a development threshold (money required to purchase necessities as opposed to disposable income) as it relates to individuals within a nation and not the national GDP overall.⁷⁸ The purpose of this is twofold: first, as stated by Baer et al., the calculations generate a more detailed approach to national “shares” of global climate obligations—shares that could be applied toward the obligation to reduce carbon emissions, to pay for adaptation or compensation. Second, it focuses on the responsibility and capacity index (RCI), the number which determines the national share of obligation based on GDP per capita growth, as opposed to national growth.

Baer et al. say that, should a grand international fund be created in order to support both mitigation and adaptation, “the RCI [responsibility and capacity index] could serve as the basis for determining each nation’s financial contribution to that fund”⁷⁹ and because of the “expected rapid growth of GDP, energy use, and emissions...in developing countries, they will have a

⁷⁷ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 224.

larger (and some cases much larger) share of global obligations.”⁸⁰ In sum, international obligations can be better assessed and understood by taking the RCI of a given country and comparing it to a global total, thereby minimizing national shirking.⁸¹ This, for Baer, would bring about a more equitable distribution of climate obligation commitment.⁸²

While the sources above are notable figures within the field of climate ethics, the snapshot given of these three views—that of Singer, Gardiner, Jamieson, and Baer et al.—do not encapsulate the breadth and depth of the dialogue found within this conversation. The arguments presented in this first ‘dialogue’ demonstrate two crucial things. First, the moral complexity of the crisis is abundantly understood. By this I mean that there is a crisis and that the nuances of the intersectional complexities are nothing to be scoffed at. These ethicists have managed to elucidate multitudinous facets of the moral issues presented by climate change and have attempted to present a Step Two, i.e. how to proceed forward. However, equally well demonstrated is the second: the immediacy of the crisis, while appreciated, fails to motivate action. Any underlying values that would assist in untying the intellectual Gordian knot are not present. Without such a unifying ethical foundation, these thinkers lack the motivational power to turn mere suggestions into actionable solutions thereby displaying the analytic camp as unsuited in generating consensus and a clear call to specific action.

Singer, Gardiner, Jamieson, and Baer et al., demonstrate that the complexities of climate change require the radical revaluation and replacement of social norms. Though the aforementioned representatives of analytic climate philosophy agree on the whole, many of them

⁸⁰ Ibid., 224.

⁸¹ Ibid., 225.

⁸² Baer, in a paper titled “Adaptation to Climate Change: Who pays Whom?,” similarly suggests that “liability can be disaggregated...the distribution of liability can be differentiated between classes within nations.” (248).

find themselves at odds with one another about how best to address the problem of global climate change, ultimately preventing consensus and action at a time when both are crucial for humanity and all species alike. This conversation is not as productive as it was once believed to be, particularly if the values these externalist climate ethicists claim to promote are applied to a general assessment of the combination of their works. This issue becomes the subject of another conversation, which quickly transforms into a discussion about culture, the need to change it, and what to change it into. While this section has been an endeavor to broadly consider the current state of the climate ethics literature, section II will consider the historically consistent nature of this discussion.

Section II: Ethics Across Time

Shifting to the second conversation, the need for a shift in culture is revealed more explicitly in the climate literature as well as by observing the conversational pattern across time. Prior to beginning the exposition, I would like to note that the climate conversation has been going steady now for roughly thirty years. Previously, it has been occasionally alluded to that hesitancy and the call for changing some things while preserving others is seen as a reasonable response; one that is rooted in the skeptical tradition and gives way to a (mis)perception that any ‘drastic’ measures appear as an overreaction and forfeit any claim to composed critical thought. The call for moderation and for finding the ideal solution to appease all parties by not requiring sacrifice (or urgency) is perceived, or masquerades (depending on intentions), as a type of practical wisdom; practical wisdom and redundancy then, become interchangeable implications. Therefore, despite having all the pertinent information at hand⁸³—much of the literature remains

⁸³ As I show Gardiner himself to mention in section II of his concluding chapter in *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 401. Cf. p. 33 above.

constant, with the addition of minimal new insight, when looking at the overall timeline of climate dialogue from its inception to present.⁸⁴ This forces one to ask, “what’s missing?”

Climate Ethics: Essential Readings, a compendium of climate papers published in 2010 by Oxford University Press, as mentioned in the previous section, attempts to present what the editors believe to be a collection of some of the most important works written by the most prominent scholars in the field, and offers them up as an example of contemporary relevance. In the preface to the Reader, by way of exposition, Gardiner writes, “The aim is to capture the best work so far, work that is currently dispersed across two decades and many venues.”⁸⁵ The earliest paper published in this edition was written in 1983 by Derek D. Parfit titled, “Energy Policy and the Further Future: The Identity Problem.” The latest paper is by Simon Caney, published in 2010, specifically written for this printing, and is titled “Climate Change, Human Rights, and Moral Thresholds.” The thirty odd year interim separating these works is populated by other works in the field, ranging from the early 90’s and early 2000’s, and lends the reader an authoritative sampling of what the editors of this volume believe to be the essence of the climate ethics discussion so far. Among the authoritative literature compiled, only two papers—one by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and another by Dale Jamieson (further discussed below)—refer to individual responsibility and the importance of values or lack thereof—both can be found in Part V: Individual Responsibility. Gardiner, the author of the introduction of the essential reader, acknowledges that “one of the surprising facts about twenty years of climate policy is how little

⁸⁴ A deep look at this will be made in the next chapter when looking AT Broome, one of the founders of the climate conversation in the field of philosophy, and his corpus.

⁸⁵ Stephen Gardiner, Preface to *Climate Ethics: Essential Reader*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.ix.

has changed” and goes on to say that “rather than hide that fact, we recommend it for future study.”⁸⁶

These academic conversations should take a turn toward the future, expressing urgency, demanding immediate action, and providing new theories that will act as a beacon for humanity, contingent upon all likely and unlikely scenarios that might come to pass, and the promotion of a new culture which takes into consideration qualities that make existence itself worthy of having been experienced. Given the largely heretofore fruitless discussion, the academia of the future should not solely be concerned with rummaging through historical texts and current data, but with invoking a sort of philosophical engineering by supplementing a humanistic approach.

Briefly, one can see how the intellectual inertia over the course of the past thirty years—given a saturation of analytic climate analysis—ultimately ‘bottomed-out.’ W. Sinnott-Armstrong’s paper titled “It’s Not My Fault” is a prime example of hitting such an analytic dead-end. In it, he goes through many ethical theories only to astoundingly conclude that none of them can give an adequate ethical response to “whether I have a moral obligation not to drive a gas guzzler just for fun on this particular sunny Sunday afternoon.”⁸⁷ In the current academic culture, Sinnott-Armstrong expresses that regardless of the “assumed”⁸⁸ horrors that the scientific and academic communities believe will come to pass, that “even assuming all of this, it is still not clear what I as an individual morally ought to do about global warming.”⁸⁹ The reason he

⁸⁶ Ibid., x.

⁸⁷ W. S.-Armstrong, “It’s not my fault,” p334.

⁸⁸ Sinnott-Armstrong begins his paper by listing a series of eight “assumptions” that are presumably expected to occur. Some examples he gives are, since climate change is underway, it is likely to increase over the next century; global warming is due to human activities; global warming will create serious problems for many people over the long term including violent storms, floods, heat-waves, and that millions of people are expected to perish, etc. For all ‘assumptions’ given, cf., sec. 1, p332-333

⁸⁹ Ibid., 333

assesses differing theories and whether they can adequately answer the question (of whether taking a joy ride with a gas guzzler on a particular Sunday is ethically permissible given his list of climate impact premises) is largely due to the fact that even though he believes that it is morally permissible, he still does “not feel confident in this judgment.”⁹⁰ He is tentative in his answer since he knows that others would disagree with him and that he “would probably have different moral intuitions about this case if he had been raised differently or if [he] now lived in a different culture.”⁹¹

Sinnott-Armstrong looks to theories of reason to bridge the gap between a subjective moral intuition and objective reason. He also makes the additional point that “individual moral obligations do not always follow directly from collective moral obligations”⁹² and that “The fact that your government morally ought to do something does not prove that you ought to do it, even if your government fails.”⁹³ Thus, Sinnott-Armstrong, armed with the sword of analytic skepticism, attempts and fails to use the same toolkit as a means to solve the problem of individual responsibility to the larger collective.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ibid., 334

⁹¹ Ibid., 334.

⁹² Ibid., 333

⁹³ Ibid., 333.

⁹⁴ I would agree with him in his assertion that his perception is culturally skewed. In footnote 9 of his paper, he writes, “I do not have an obligation to do what the government has an obligation to do...I have no parallel moral obligation. That is what is at issue here.” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 344). In the actual paper, when discussing bridge repair, he writes, “If the government fails to do its duty, it does not even follow that I have a moral obligation to fix the bridge, even if the bridge would be fixed if everyone filled in one crack, even if I drove over the bridge many times, and even if I still drive over it every day. Fixing the bridge is the government’s job, not mine” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 333). This type of mentality appears to be a type of cultural entrenchment consigned to a neo-liberal delusion, namely, that the individual is exactly that, an atom with no responsibility to the whole even though he lives in a democracy and continuously uses it for his own benefit. I point out that in Armstrong’s 10th footnote, he writes, “I do not have the same moral obligation to teach my neighbors’ children when our government fails to teach them. Why not? The natural answer is that I have a special relation to my children that I do not have to their children. I also do not have such a special relation to future people who will be harmed by global warming” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 344). This type of atomistic detachment is precisely the mindset embedded in a culture based on personal entitlement and an unnerving ignorance that prevents a person from recognizing their overall impact and

After dissecting fourteen different philosophical principles—ranging from Utilitarianism, to Virtue Ethics, Deontology, Contractarianism, and more—Sinnott-Armstrong confidently concludes that “we are left with no defensible principle to support the claim that I have a moral obligation not to drive a gas guzzler just for fun.”⁹⁵ In his view, none of the theories grounds the argument that individuals owe a responsibility to the whole. Ironically, he undermines his argument by saying that,

the fact that we cannot find any principle does not show that we do not need one...we seem to need a moral principle, but we have none. This fact does not show that such wasteful driving is not morally wrong. It only shows that we do not *know* whether it is morally wrong ... My fundamental point has been that global warming is such a large problem that it is not individuals who cause it or who need to fix it. Instead, governments need to fix it, and quickly. Finding and implementing a real solution is the task of governments.⁹⁶

Unsurprisingly, Sinnott-Armstrong’s conclusion lands him in intellectual *aporia*. Since principles do not apply to wasteful driving, and since moral intuitions are unreliable, one cannot know that his/her wasteful driving is morally wrong. But, paradoxically, according to Sinnott-

true role within their community and the world at large. The only thing they believe themselves to be responsible for is themselves and their own. This psychological entrenchment appears to be the fundamental reason for the lack of momentum with respect to civic mobilization within the U.S. Moreover, the relationship between the individual and the whole seems to be a philosophically pervasive fascination in the West and could be interpreted as a tell-tale sign that we are a society which lacks a genuine social cohesion aside from earning greater profits.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 343.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 343.

Armstrong, even if individuals have no such moral obligations, it is “still morally better and morally ideal for individuals not to waste gas.”⁹⁷ Despite offering multiple negative arguments against all principles that attempt to provide an answer, he in no way attempts to defend this contrarian claim using “reason.” Thus, having arrived at such a perplexing conclusion, he does two things: he claims that we cannot justify such behavior with knowledge, i.e. principles of morality, and he asserts that despite not being able to generate a flawless and precise answer, we should nonetheless not desist from attempting to behave ethically.⁹⁸

Given the discussion of Sinnott-Armstrong’s work, it should be clear that this branch of the climate discussion has hit a cul-de-sac. The apparent contrarian sheen to his arguments is symptomatic of the larger, underlying difficulties externalist climate ethicists have been having for many years. It seems that a genuine shift in discussion is called for to break out of this ineffective cycle, which has been circling around the same debates for some time with little to no forward progress. Ironically, one alternative, offered by D. Jamieson, in his work “When

⁹⁷ Ibid., 343.

⁹⁸ Sinnott-Armstrong is an odd read in that he initially strikes you as a pragmatist or trickster contrarian, but he has externalist undertones. For example, in this paper he states that people, more especially purported environmentalists, “should focus their efforts on those who are not doing their job rather than on those who take Sunday afternoon drives just for fun.” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 344). He appears to believe that there is an improper focus on seemingly inconsequential matters, e.g. that of taking a joy ride in a gas guzzler. Therefore, his conception of morality (despite not being able to hold up to rigorous reasoning) allows the individual to behave according to pleasure and pain, while demanding that governments provide the greatest good for the greatest number; this cannot be done by the individual, therefore the individual shouldn’t believe that what s/he does is genuinely effective. He evinces this ideal when he (almost sarcastically) states that “Some environmentalists keep their hands clean by withdrawing into a simple life where they use very little fossil-fuels. That is great. I encourage it. But some of these escapees then think that they have done their duty, so they rarely come down out of the hills to work for political candidates who could and would change government policies. This attitude helps nobody... It is better to enjoy your Sunday driving while working to change the law so as to make it illegal for you to enjoy your Sunday driving” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 344). While he appears to “encourage” the effort on the part of the individual, his true argument is that it is not enough—perhaps even pointless—and that the individual “should come down from the hills” and “work for political candidates” instead. Laughably, according to Sinnott-Armstrong, having individuals desist from taking a joy ride on a Sunday afternoon of their own volition is not to be acknowledged as legitimate until there is a law preventing you from doing so. Only then does it become moral action proper, and justifiable.

Utilitarians Should Be Virtue Ethicists,” is to make Utilitarians—a brand of externalism in ethics and the prevailing climate ethicists—more like a different group of moral theorists; in Jamieson’s case, virtue ethicists. As always, while correct in spirit, this solution is representative of the need for a culture shift. Not only do both philosophers offer explicit reasons for why current climate ethics is insufficient, but one (Sinnott-Armstrong) disagrees with the other (Jamieson) in his suggested course of action. Once again, this leaves the field at large without consensus, and no legitimate course of action toward the new paradigm to come.

Jamieson, in an attempt to shift gears, calls for the self-transformation of the individual. Whereas Sinnott-Armstrong believes that no real change can be achieved without government mandate and that individual behavior evades ethical scrutiny, Jamieson argues the alternative. He writes, “it is true that our problem cannot fully be addressed without the use of state power,” it is also true that “investigating” which virtues would generate “shared or collective intentions of the right sort” is equally important to achieving a “solution to the problem.”⁹⁹ In a contrasting fashion, one scholar argues that to behave as a collective, we all need to make specific demands of governments and hold them accountable, while the other suggests that in order to do that, the individual first needs to possess particular virtues. That people are not likely to take up such responsibility because of a culture comprised of a neo-liberal laissez-faire mindset would be undermine and ultimately prohibit a concerted effort that involve communal cooperation and consideration.

⁹⁹ Jamieson, Dale. “When Utilitarians Should Be Virtue Theorists.” 2007. In *Climate Ethics Essential Readings*, ed. by Stephen Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 320.

Thus, Jamieson, in a couple of paragraphs toward the end, sketches out what he would consider to be “green virtues”: humility, temperance, and mindfulness.¹⁰⁰ In his paper, “Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming,”—found in Part II: The Nature of the Problem—he puts it neatly, saying that “rather than being management problems that governments or experts can solve for us, when seen as ethical problems, they become problems for all of us to address, both as political actors and as everyday moral agents.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, to address the individual first would be expedient when addressing action. Recognition of individual responsibility along with the willingness to suggest that the individual should, at a minimum, be rebuked on some level, is to begin the process of transitioning from a culture of individual liberty to a culture of communal solidarity and interdependent cooperation. After all, to say the individual snowflake in the avalanche is not at fault, and to blame the avalanche as a whole for the mess deprives the individual snowflake of its inherent power regardless of its infinitesimal nature. It is only through the power of coordinated aggregation that something weak, on an atomistic level, can become powerful. Simply because it is impossible to accurately measure the impact of the contributing individual and its causal relation to the whole, does not absolve that individual of responsibility to do and to be better.

Once again, in the concluding chapter of *A Perfect Moral Storm*, Gardiner arrives at a similar insight. After invoking the difficulties of navigating through the complex nature of the Perfect Moral Storm, he acknowledges that “conventional approaches may not only fail the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 325-326.

¹⁰¹ Jamieson, Dale. " Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming," 2007. In *Climate Ethics Essential Readings*, ed. by Stephen Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 84.

global test, but also be accused of a basic abdication of moral responsibility.”¹⁰² This analysis is worsened when other considerations are brought to bear, such as moral corruption and the de facto plurality of human motivations aside from morality. Gardiner, in his closing paragraph, offers a prescription as a means to treating institutional intractability, namely with a correct attitude and an appropriate mindset. He writes,

What then should we say? How might future climate policy succeed where the past has failed? If I am right to suggest that mutual self-regulation is needed, then it is unlikely that the conventional grab bag of public motivations will deliver. Self-interested consumption and interest group politics as conventionally understood do not seem up to the task. Instead, our best chance of addressing the storm seems to rest with ethical motivation, and especially concern for future generations. If this is correct, knowing how to channel such motivation into appropriate institutions, capture it in good moral theories, and support its development in people’s characters and lives becomes a major task.¹⁰³

He continues by acknowledging that this task of channeling motivations into appropriate institutions and capturing good moral theories is not and should not be limited to specific or particular professions but rather should involve everyone in a concerted effort that leaves no stone unturned.

Many can contribute here, at all levels of society. In the academy itself, psychology, law, economics, political science, sociology, and many other disciplines all have a role to

¹⁰² Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, 440.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 442.

play. But we should not lose track of philosophy, especially moral and political philosophy. Clearly, the perfect moral storm in general, and the pure intergenerational problem and global test in particular, pose substantial challenges to business-as-usual.¹⁰⁴

The difference between this paradigm shift involving climate change and those of the past is that, with this one, timing plays a governing role. To postpone and procrastinate is to roll the dice with mass extinction. Humanism can aid in our quest for survival not only by shedding light on what is functional but also by using such arguments to promote a cohesive trajectory that would, for the first time in history, put evolution into our hands with a unified thrust.

Section III: A Consequence of Hyper-Analysis

While the section I of chapter 1 focuses on a lack of academic consensus on the part of climate philosophers as well as an underlying criterion to aid their analysis, and section II discusses a philosophical ‘logjam’ over the course of the past thirty years and a call for culture change, this section will attempt to demonstrate how such intractable musings within the academies, if not directly aiding/impacting stagnancy in international environmental forums, at the very least, are guilty of partaking in them. As mentioned in the previous sections, though these philosophical conversations might include substantive assessments of events, patterns, and sub-system structures, they are, as Jamieson and Gardiner note, in need of concrete dialogue pertaining to cultural values and social mental models. Said outright, what the discussions seem to lack is a unifying ethical foundation that is interdisciplinarily penetrative and promotes a conjoined and systemic principle of internal health for individuals and society by helping to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 442.

provide a comprehensive plan that can yield actionable behavior. Thus, when engaging with climate analysis, it is as though the philosophical community is exclusively considering the minutia of external forces without first creating a foundational holistic methodology to assist in resolving such matters. The failure to do so in the academies has greater consequences which in turn bleed into the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), partaking and contributing to a culture of international immobilization.

Singer, Gardiner, and Baer, et al. focus on what would be most fair and would allow for political compromise by benefitting all parties, a task which becomes increasingly impossible when adding further complexities such as population, poverty, international economic competition, and so on. Unsurprisingly, a practical attempt on the international level similarly fails to address the very issues on which analytic climate ethicists fail and arrive at consensus. With this failure in the theoretical discussion, there is bound to be a concomitant failure in the practical application across all levels of discussion, especially where it matters most.

To illustrate this failure at the international level, I will be referring to the IPCC's fifth (and latest) Assessment Report, aka the AR-5. This is the United Nations (UN) climate report indicating where we are currently situated and includes multiple possible avenues for forward action. Within the IPCC AR-5 there is the implicit suggestion that we are in desperate need of direction—in this case, policy action to help manage all the increasing difficulties—for an internal principle of health, providing a social vector. Here, the hope is placed in the hands of economic analysis and refined cost-benefit analysis:

Economic analysis can help to guide policy action, provided that appropriate, adequate, and transparent ethical assumptions are built into the economic methods. The significance

of economics in tackling climate change is widely recognized. For instance, central to the politics of taking action on climate change are disagreements over how much mitigation the world should undertake, and the economic costs of action (the costs of mitigation) and inaction (the costs of adaptation and residual damage from a changed climate).¹⁰⁵

The report continues, claiming: (1) there needs to be a guiding force, (2) there is wide recognition of the importance of such force, in this case, economics, (3) a preference to an attitude expressing skeptical hesitancy, (4) there is the problem of cost.

Here is a demonstration of the panel's focus on the minutia surrounding climate action rather than recommending a specific action itself. Such a set of considerations would be acceptable if the report ultimately offers an actionable solution. Unfortunately, much like the works underpinning the theoretical grounding of the report, we are left in aporia.

Section III of the report is a prime example of an underlying non-sacrificial ethos:

Decision-making about climate change is therefore likely to be contentious. Since values constitute only one part of ethics, if an action will increase value overall it by no means follows that it should be done. Many actions benefit some people at the cost of harming others. This raises a question of justice even if the benefits in total exceed the costs.

¹⁰⁵ IPCC, 2014: Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Edenhofer, O., R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel and J.C.Minx (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA. sec. 3.1, 213.

Whereas a cost to a person can be compensated for by a benefit to that same person, a cost to a person cannot be compensated for by a benefit to someone else.¹⁰⁶

Here, the authors are framing a way to approach the discussion that involves a trade-off of values, with the appearance of applicability across different value schemas. However, it ends by ultimately falling back on an economic cost-benefit analysis applied metaphorically to ethics and considerations of justice, as though rights and duties are tradable commodities. This lip service to alternative value schemas fundamentally serves to perpetuate the economic tools currently being given priority in the discussion.¹⁰⁷

Finally, and most importantly, ethical assumptions must be made for economic methods to inform policy choice. When we finally arrive at the ethics portion of the report, astonishingly no ethical claim is ever made and nothing is said about how ethics should assist us in the data complexities of climate and economic analysis.¹⁰⁸ Instead, what we have are broad descriptions of differing ethical theories and current moral conundrums.¹⁰⁹ It is not until section 3.4.3, entitled, “Wellbeing,” that we get some type of definition, though again, not a definitive one:

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., sec. 3.4, 220.

¹⁰⁷ While my overall tone of the dissertation can be interpreted as a general disapproval of cost-benefit analysis, this is furthest from the truth. It can be argued that it is impossible to extract ourselves/oneself from cost-benefit type of thinking. Indeed, the moment one prefers something to another, one has created a rank order; a hierarchy to be assessed. My argument merely posits that cost-benefit analysis ranks things according to its underlying value schemas and that it is this that needs adjusting. Doing a cost-benefit analysis based on outmoded values, or values that are not explicitly discussed and agreed upon, will only lead to further confusion. Thus, any semblance of practicality that such practical measure posits becomes null and void. The useful tool that it can be becomes blunt.

¹⁰⁸ An account of the complex inner-workings and dealings of the IPCC’s WGIII can be read in Broome’s paper, titled “Philosophy in the IPCC.” We should keep in mind that the internal politics of 195 member nations does not allow for thorough or explicit analysis within the field of ethics. Broome tells us that, “The process of writing started with bidding for space. I thought we did well in the bidding. But now that I count pages in the report, I see we ended up with only 5% of our chapter, which is definitely less than our fair share.” Much of the work got discounted for one reason or another. Nevertheless, it is revealing of each nation’s attempt to maintain the upper hand. Broome discusses these difficulties in detail in the section titled *Success* in “Philosophy in the IPCC.”

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Sec. 3.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3.

Most policy concerned with climate change aims ultimately at making the world better for people to live in. That is to say, it aims to promote people's wellbeing. A person's wellbeing, as the term is used here, includes everything that is good or bad for the person — everything that contributes to making their life go well or badly.¹¹⁰

Given the phrasing and careful presentation, this manages to say nothing. We are given no insight into what wellbeing is by this definition, merely further questions. From this point forward, all that is given is a survey of different views of what constitutes 'wellbeing.' Again, no definitive claim is made, and no unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies, legitimizing one ethical model/theory over another.

Aside from broad ethical terms, such as wellbeing, no specific ethical stance is taken by way of rational justification as a means to promote and insist on particular behavior. Hence, despite the fact that all might agree that something needs to be done or that the wellbeing of humanity (and potentially animals/nature) is important, what that means or what criterion is used to establish such a definition is not on the table for discussion whatsoever. Climate literature as well as intergovernmental assessment reports seem deficient in the same way; they are both missing an existential quality that would lend a unifying ethical grounding along with a pragmatic trajectory.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 221.

Conclusion

Considered broadly, the goal of Chapter 2 has been to offer a general accounting of the conversation within the climate ethics community in order to showcase a blind-spot within the conversation that warrants a need for a humanistic philosophy to politely interject. This was done by observing three major instances where the field tends to intellectually elide inadvertently engendering (a perception of) intellectual intransigence at the global level. I attempted to show these dialectical lacunae by shedding light on a) the OUP's publication of 'well-rounded' literature over the course of the past thirty years. This revealed the continuous effort of rigorous analysis, no collective agreement has been established within in the field—not even whether profligately emitting carbon emission by driving around for pure joy might be pushing the unethical boundary. The argument was made that it would be nearly impossible to achieve consensus when continuously adding additional intersectional variables (thereby increasing the order of complexity) to the analysis e.g. applying justice to the impoverished, to women, to minorities, to ecology, to Annex I nations, to Annex II nations, and so on; furthermore, that there is no criteria with which to base that assessment on—each paper focused its analytical critique toward its own small corner of discussion and not in alignment with a prevailing discussion as a whole. This was evinced in the example conversation above between Singer, Jamieson, Gardiner, and Baer et al. Furthermore, the topics discussed within the scope of climate ethics were often to narrow, focusing solely on external issues limited to, the intergenerational problem, climate justice, population, and poverty and analyzed mostly from a utilitarian position, but almost always failing to include broader topics such as appropriate transitions, existentialism in a paradigm, humanistic values, the role of ideology, conscious and purposeful evolution, a reinterpretation of health that factors in human and planetary homeostasis, living in a sustainable

i.e. non-expansive economy, all approached from an alternative ethical system i.e. deontological, African Ubuntu, Indigenous philosophies, Virtue Ethics, Humanistic philosophy, etc. Thus, b) over the course of thirty years, admittedly by the very same philosophers, the subject matter had not progressed much. Lastly c) that assessment undergirded by skepticism breeds stagnancy and non-compliance, a fact that has practical consequences on the international level as revealed in the IPCC report, where no plan of action was proposed. To reiterate the point, while scholars are unified in their appreciation of the issues at stake, this section revealed the lack of unifying ethical foundation that promotes principle of internal health for individuals and societies. The picture that has come into focus is more along the lines of a patchwork of potential external solutions, rather than a unified front among moralists for facilitating and easing the oncoming paradigm shift and moving past this evolutionary bottleneck.

The conclusions reached foreshadow the difficulties that will be noted in the next part regarding the economist-philosopher John Broome, his faith in economics and his recommended solutions. However, before outlining how to move past this bottleneck, a deeper understanding of the exact nature of the problem at hand is needed. To that end, chapter 3 will discuss Broome more thoroughly, and offer a more specific delineation of the problem facing humanity via climate change. Rather than solely trying to avert or mitigate this very specific, existential crisis, there should be a supplementary conversation that explores a mode of being that might more adequately combat evolutionary catastrophe by adapting to a unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies. Part II, will then attempt to offer a coherent view of this concept, drawing from the works of Fromm, in order to motivate the inclusion of those crucial, but absent, concepts into the climate ethics discussion: health, solidarity, equality, and our evolution.

Chapter 3: Broome and Climate Ethics

This chapter will attempt to show that despite externalist ideology often being on the right side of the argument, it can easily sideline itself by failing to see the bigger picture. More specifically, I will take a closer look at the economist turned philosopher John Broome as an analytic climate ethicist who is a specific example of such an instance. The analysis of John Broome, and externalism writ large, will be considered from the position of Erich Fromm's normative humanism, keeping in mind four key elements to be used as analytical filters: health, solidarity, equality, and evolution. In part II, Fromm's conception of mankind will assist in filling any intellectual lacunae left open by externalist arguments/proposals and even help to orient the conversation toward existential matters in a time when the topic of existence itself is most prevalent and necessary.

This chapter will touch upon Broome's work, especially *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (2012),—since it is his latest book published on climate ethics—with the hope of opening a dialogue and shedding light on the potential shortcomings of externalist thinking. This is not meant to condemn Broome in any way but to simply assist in expanding the sphere of philosophical discussion within the climate ethics community as discussed above. Broome himself has been part of the avant-garde of that community and a leading voice for realistic and practical answers grounded in morality from its inception. As an analytic climate ethicist, Broome has situated himself as a bridging figure. On the one hand, he is utilizing the methodologies and mindset of his fellow analytic climate ethicists. On the other hand, he is

calling for actionable solutions to practical problems. Thus, he will be taken as a paragon instance of his intellectual ilk.

Broome began his academic career as an economist in 1968. After publishing a book largely on theoretical market equilibria in 1991 Broome published his second book, *Weighing Goods: Equality, Uncertainty, and Time*, which was his philosophical debut. In the first line of his preface he informs the reader that “This is a book about ethics, which uses some of the methods of economics.” He continues, noting that “it is already widely recognized that formal methods derived from economics can contribute to ethics” and that “this book is concerned with some features of the structure of good, and in that area I believe these methods are especially fruitful.”¹¹¹ Thus, he joins an old tradition of merging philosophy and economics, urging economists to be patient with philosophers and their remedial mathematics and philosophers to be patient with economists and their predilection towards preference-value as a means to ground judgment.¹¹²

A brief overview of John Broome’s corpus reveals two things: first, he consistently reaches into his economic toolkit in order to gain greater clarity in philosophical matters, and second, he continuously attempts to tackle problems of seemingly impossible complexity and to offer pragmatic solutions to them. It would be safe to call him an analytic thinker who, over the course of a lifetime, has shed light on the ever-looming but seldom acknowledged problem of choice, otherwise known as “decision theory,”¹¹³ as well as the overlapping grey area between ethics and value. Thus, much of his work is centered on garnering insight into evaluation proper.

¹¹¹ Broom, *Weighing Goods: Equality, Uncertainty, and Time*, ix.

¹¹² Ibid., ix-x.

¹¹³ *Weighing and Reasoning: Themes from the Philosophy of John Broome. My Long Road to Philosophy* by John Broome. ed. by Iwao Hirose and Andrew Reisner. 5.

His work on decision theory, being a mix of philosophy and economics, primed him to be one of the leading voices in climate ethics, and as a principal contributing author of the United Nation's IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, is a voice which has garnered much clout both inside and outside the academic community.

A brief survey of Broome's work will first be given in order to familiarize the reader with his books and background, as well as to later provide a framework for his arguments and show where they may lack a unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies.¹¹⁴ I will present some of the arguments put forth in his last book on climate ethic, *Climate Matters*, along with some of his pragmatic prescriptions, in order to later make the argument that such potentially halfway measures would fall short of a viable solution toward sustainability and the welfare of humanity alike.

Section I: Situating Broome in the Discussion

Several of his books,¹¹⁵ *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (1992), *Ethics out of Economics* (1999), *Weighing Lives* (2004), and *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (2012), are tethered together, thematically and by a similar analytic style of the evaluation of ethical conundrums, both to each other and other, already discussed, works in the field. They deal with difficult questions pertaining to the structure of the good, the value of life, the value of

¹¹⁴ In the spirit of honesty and disclosure, there is an implicit argument in this chapter and dissertation that we should not equate qualitative and experiential value with quantitative evaluation. I myself do not agree that the hyper-categorization of concepts, numerical assignment, and economic equations (not solely confined to money) will allow us to solve the climate change—along with many of the problems surrounding it, such as population, pollution, ecological destruction and continuous expansion, etc.—and its deeply complex ethical conundrums. A tit-for-tat approach along with the painstaking effort it takes to “balance the equation” seems to me to be a fatuous endeavor and often appears to only make matters more difficult by losing focus on the main issue at hand: existing and existing well. It is not simply a matter of survival, but a battle between interpretations of what it means to live well.

¹¹⁵ This does not include his 2013 book title *Rationality through Reasoning*, or any work on normativity.

a person, wellbeing, betterment, etc.,¹¹⁶ all seem to be appropriate considerations to ask when confronted with the complex nature of climate change and which course of action to take—all topics tackled in his previous research. Broome writes,

Climate change raises important and difficult problems of value. For example, it raises problems about life and death and how to set a value on these things, since climate change is killing many people and will affect the world's population. Because of the scale of complexity of the problem, the methods of economics have to be used in making the valuations, but these methods need to be founded on an account of what is truly valuable. This can only come from the theory of value within moral philosophy. Moral philosophy is crucial to dealing with climate change.¹¹⁷

Broome's books on climate change offer arguments on matters such as justice and well-being, e.g. justice between generation and the distribution of well-being, and the aggregation of well-being under utility theory. These concerns were also addressed by Gardiner.

In *Climate Matters*, Broome revisits these topics with the addition of supplementary material from earlier works. For example, though he has chapters that focus on justice and fairness, goodness, the future versus the present, he supplements the work with subjects on population, weighing lives, uncertainty, and private versus public morality.¹¹⁸ Broome's work on

¹¹⁶ All topics discussed in the aforementioned books, some of which will be discussed more in-depth further in the chapter.

¹¹⁷ Weighing and Reasoning, 7.

¹¹⁸ Further details will provided in the chapter.

climate change is representative of a context where practical matters are in need of theoretical guidance.

According to Broome, moral philosophy “is crucial to dealing with climate change,”¹¹⁹ since it “raises important and difficult problems of value”¹²⁰ such as “the problems with life and death and how to set a value on these things.”¹²¹ Broome shares with his readers that “the most important thing [he] learnt about climate change is a matter of economics;”¹²² the problem of economics, not having adequately accounted for climate change, stems from externalities and inefficiency.¹²³ As a result, Broome, in *Climate Matters*, attempts to offer a pragmatic approach to close the gap of living inefficiently, along with suggestions about how to break current political intransigence by insisting that “Making sacrifices unnecessary is a way to break the logjam to get the process moving again.”¹²⁴ Therefore, as an economist doing philosophy, Broome supports and finalizes his moral arguments by way of cost-benefit analysis, discount rates, and offsetting.¹²⁵

Indicative of his metaphorical union card,¹²⁶ in 2014 Broome, along with Lukas Meyer, became the first philosophers to be lead authors of the IPCC’s AR-5, whose job was to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹²⁰ Ibid..

¹²¹ Ibid..

¹²² Ibid..

¹²³ Ibid..

¹²⁴ John Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (New York, Norton, 2012), 38.

¹²⁵ Terms to be assessed in the following sections.

¹²⁶ Or, more verbose, Broome is being recognized as being sufficiently up to snuff within the analytic climate ethicist community to be recognized as a representative of the field to outside interested parties.

investigate the options for mitigation response strategies in an integrated risk and uncertainty framework.¹²⁷

It is difficult to get a gauge on whether Broome is an economist injecting some morality into his process, or a moralist injecting a specific kind of quantitative analysis into his considerations. In theory, either option might end up being the same, but the fundamental difference in order of priority is staggering. In considering Broome's most recent position on these issues, through a close reading of *Climate Matters*, it is possible to get a sense of his intellectual drift from the former to the latter. The reason I will demonstrate this shift is to make the point that though economics has its place in the ongoing effort to combat the consequences of climate change, it falls short of generating a unifying ethical foundation as admitted by him. The solution to climate change cannot solely be a quantitative measure but must begin and end with a qualitative account.¹²⁸

It is important to keep in mind that the explicit arguments generated by Broome can give the impression that constituents of a worthwhile defense are primarily things capable of empirical evaluation, data collection and analysis deeply rooted in a transactional tradition. For example, the application of cost-benefit analysis is paramount, and, consequently that all things in life are/or should be based on exchange.¹²⁹ This reading of Broome would be incorrect since he ultimately attempts to ground all of these things in concepts such as goodness and justice.

¹²⁷ *Philosophy in the IPCC*, J. Broome, 2.:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfop0060/pdf/Philosophy%20in%20the%20IPCC.pdf>

¹²⁸ In later chapters, it will be argued why, from a Frommian perspective, much of Broome's recommendations fall short of the systemic shift necessary to achieve sustainability. For now, some footnotes will be added as subtext.

¹²⁹ I am not arguing that this is what Broome believes. On the contrary, as will be shown, he himself states otherwise. What I am attempting to say here is that he can at times give this impression upon an initial or confined reading of his work. It is either that, or, Broome has simply had a shift with respect to what ultimately should be the driving motive for change.

Thus, when reading Broome, it is important to remind oneself that despite being economics heavy, it is ultimately grounded on ethical principles. This can be easily overlooked given that Broome uses economics as an evaluative toolkit for generating answers to philosophical questions.

In *Climate Matters*, Broome defends cost-benefit analysis as the primary mode of assessment due to the often nebulous nature of scientific projections of outcomes given the degree of complexity. This is indicative of the appreciation of the intricate nature of the problem, as noted by other thinkers in the field. Due to such causal intricacy, he briefly sketches out the political reaction, describing it as essentially nugatory and explaining that the “emergency is great but the response has been feeble.”¹³⁰ The political process, for Broome, is composed within a milieu of indecisiveness.¹³¹ Broome adds that “even environmentalists are hesitant about some measures to reduce emissions,” since “alternative sources of energy are sometimes rejected for environmental reasons.”¹³² Hence, a lack of clarity of direction has taken hold of society. It is precisely for these reasons, Broome suggests, that it falls to economists to lend us that clarity.

To make matters bleaker, Broome maintains that, even if the effects of climate change could be predicted, the task of action and directionality is far from clear. The mission of economists and moral philosophers, says Broome, would be to set a value on them.¹³³ One extreme example he gives is setting a value on human lives since “lives will be lost through climate change...slowing climate change will have the effect of reducing this loss of life.” Thus, the “benefit of doing so needs to be taken into account along with other benefits.” We would

¹³⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹³¹ Cf. *Climate Matters*, sec. “The Political Reaction,” 5-7.

¹³² Ibid., 5-7.

¹³³ Ibid., 8.

essentially have to “consider how good it is to save lives.”¹³⁴ This judgment, according to Broome, is “not an easy [one] to make...” and “work is required to calculate the benefits of reducing emissions through alternative energy.”¹³⁵ So, the consideration of saving lives and alternative energy requires extremely difficult comparisons of costs and benefits.¹³⁶ To make these comparisons in practice requires data to be collected, methods of analysis to be developed, and complicated calculations to be done. Ergo, “much of the work has to be delegated to economists.”¹³⁷

Broome assigns moral philosophers—including himself—the task of valuation. Since values underlie all the calculations of costs and benefits that economists engage in, it is up to philosophers to imbue the calculations with morality, that often lie unearthed or absent from such systemized assessments.¹³⁸ Broome states that the purpose of the book is to lend the reader some guidance, yet he undermines that purpose by saying that he “does not claim to give [the reader] definitively correct views about the morality of climate change” but only hopes to provide “materials for thinking through issues of climate change for [themselves].”¹³⁹ Consequently, Broome discredits his own expertise on the subject of morality, refusing to incur that responsibility.

Broome has excluded the philosophical profession, for which he is an advocate, by extricating himself—and possibly them—from any final say. He opts to be a moral cartographer

¹³⁴ Ibid..

¹³⁵ Ibid..

¹³⁶ Ibid..

¹³⁷ Ibid.. Broome repeats this claim in 7 of the preface to *Weighing and Reasoning* published three years later in 2015.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Climate Matters*, sec. “Public Morality,” 9.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 9.

of sorts rather than someone who might direct us to a destination, and, implicitly, leave it up to economists to make the final evaluative decision. Thus, the book takes up four specific issues regarding values: how to take uncertainty into account, how to compare harms and benefits that are widely separated in time, how to set value on human lives, and the problem of population.¹⁴⁰ As previously mentioned cost-benefit analysis, offsetting, and discount rates are some practical methods he offers to tackle these difficult problems.

The difference between *Climate Matters*—his second and latest work on climate change—and *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* are twofold: scope and tone. The first shift is the obvious inclusion of additional problematic complexities to have arrived at our doorstep; where *Counting the Cost* focused primarily on the intergenerational challenge, as discussed previously with Gardiner, *Climate Matters* further includes the valuation of life and population.

The second and less obvious shift is Broome's tone and identity. As mentioned, Broome originally came from an economic tradition and transitioned into philosophy. Though he recognized the importance of philosophy, much of his analysis understandably relies heavily on his economic training, and accordingly tends to give economists and analytic thinkers the lion's share of legitimacy on such matters. Broome acknowledges:

This is an area where the work of philosophers and economists overlaps. Generally, each discipline has simply ignored the other, and when other has been communication there has also often been some misunderstanding. This report tries to bring together work in the

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *Climate Matters*, sec. "Public Morality," 10-11.

two disciplines. It is chiefly intended for economists, but I hope other social scientists and philosophers will also find it useful.¹⁴¹

By the time Broome wrote *Climate Matters*, philosophy had begun to take a more central role. Despite his claim that much of the work ought to be delegated to economists, Broome offers the important caveat that, “the decisions cannot be left to [economists], because their work does not encompass all that is needed.”¹⁴² Comparisons of costs and benefits ultimately entail the comparison of values, and values are based on what is perceived/known to be ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ For economists then “values underlie all the calculations of costs and benefits that economists engage in but values do not lie within the scope of their particular expertise.”¹⁴³ Hence, philosophy is an integral part of supplying the context wherein appropriate evaluation can take place. While the shift from a philosophizing economist to a philosopher utilizing economics is small, it is nevertheless prodigious.

In a publication entitled “Philosophy in the IPCC,” Broome blogged about what his role as a philosopher was—the IPCC having included philosophers for the first time, viz. Broome and Meyer. Here Broome discusses the shortcomings of economics in detail. Where in the past he repeatedly mentions that economists need philosophy for moral grounding, he is now forced to take a more hardline philosophical approach. Economics tends to measure aggregate well-being in terms of money, money itself has different valuations that are not considered by economists, and, most importantly, in his final paragraph, “it [fails] as a means of judging values.”¹⁴⁴ In other

¹⁴¹ John Broome, *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1992), vi.

¹⁴² Broome, *Climate Matters*, 9.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁴⁴ Broome, *Philosophy in the IPCC*, 3.

words, economics cannot bridge obvious gaps, including “non-human values such as the suffering of animals.”¹⁴⁵ While Broome tends to limit the topic of complexity to the form of outcomes, there are additional (definitional) complexities when taking into account systems interconnectivity i.e. the intricate union between fauna, flora, ecosystems, human wellbeing and overall planetary health. These are often not subject to quantitative (e)valuation within today’s economic tradition. In other words, experiential, existential, and qualitative value is not something that can be measured by nor adequately analyzed via data based on consumer preferences.¹⁴⁶ Broome apparently offers a final word on the matter in sec. 3.5 of the AR-5 titled *Economics, rights, and duties*: “Because of their limitations, economic valuations are often not on their own a good basis for decision making. They frequently need to be supplemented by other ethical considerations.”¹⁴⁷

Broome alternatively, in a 2019 work for *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Economics*, writes that,

Economics and the methods of economics offer several lessons that moral philosophers could beneficially learn ... So my conclusion is not merely that lessons from economics could be beneficial. They are actually essential for dealing properly with some topics

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ I would argue that although economists see economics as a hard science since there is data availability marking trends of buying and selling power, that these ‘preferences’ are necessarily ‘preferences’. We can divide this concept of ‘preference’ into a ‘soft’ preference and a ‘hard’ preference. ‘Soft’ preferences are contingent upon the context, situation, and location in which the consumer finds him/herself and its product/opportunity availability, whereas ‘hard’ preferences can be seen as choices that might have otherwise been made should different products/opportunities have been available and depend largely on one’s conception of who they are, what role they play in society, and their overall conception of the good-life. While soft preferences and hard preferences can often be in a 1:1 ratio, that is not necessarily the case. Hence the premise of the data is flawed from the beginning.

¹⁴⁷ IPCC AR-5, WGIII, sec. 3.5

within moral philosophy.¹⁴⁸

Thus, once again, we see Broome place greater emphasis on economics than on philosophy. Much like many of his works on climate ethics, after a brief lip service to the foundational nature of philosophy, Broome returns to his economist roots, ultimately relying on those tools to inform the philosophical discussion rather than the reverse.

Returning to the text and taking uncertainty into account, with regard to the reliability of scientific predictions, Broome says that “we need more from science than a good explanation of what is happening now; we need predictions for the future.”¹⁴⁹ However, he notes that we can safely predict that the world will continue to warm and the sea level will continue to rise—with the stipulation that this would occur even if we were to immediately bring greenhouse emissions to zero—we still “need more detailed, quantitative predictions.”¹⁵⁰ The future progress of climate change will be influenced by many external factors, many of which are not limited solely to things directly responsible for the shift in climate. For instance as populations grow and technology continues to develop, how we choose to respond to climate change will shift along with these tangential factors.¹⁵¹

Broome suggests that “the IPCC reports predictions for a wide range of different possibilities, which it calls ‘scenarios’” but even still “although the science of the greenhouse effect is not subject to much doubt, these quantitative predictions are very uncertain.”¹⁵² In sum,

¹⁴⁸ Broome. “Lessons for Economists,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Economics*. 2019.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *Climate Matters*, sec. “How reliable are predictions for the future,” 28-29.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 28-29.

for Broome, we need better and more numbers, illustrating the now common theme of needing to understand the comprehensive minutia before making any decisions.¹⁵³ The true problem is the intractable policies and “political log-jam.” Humanity is taking minimal action despite the potential catastrophe that awaits the planet. Hence, economists can assist. That being said, Broome jots down three options by which to best proceed:

- (1) *Business as usual*: Leave things as they stand.
- (2) *Efficiency without sacrifice*: Emitters reduce emissions enough to eliminate inefficiency, and are fully compensated.
- (3) *Efficiency with sacrifice*: Emitters reduce emissions enough to eliminate inefficiency, but are not compensated.¹⁵⁴

In the preface to *Weighing and Reasoning: Themes from the Philosophy of John Broome*, Broome discusses the most important thing he learned about climate change:

Still, the most important thing I learnt about climate change is a matter of economics...Foley wrote to remind me of something that should have been obvious to me: since greenhouse gas is an externality, it creates inefficiency. The externality could

¹⁵³ As stated earlier, Broome is not a climate skeptic, but there always appears to be a skeptical element to analytic thought—this will be further discussed in the last part of this dissertation. This can at times become problematic, in that if the answer is not demonstrable in a way that accounts for one hundred percent of the system, then further information is necessary in order to extrapolate a definitive assessment of a proper trajectory. The unintentional implication here is that a consistent request for more information, though undeniably invaluable and necessary at times, can be misconstrued as an apologia for the current way of doing things i.e. business as usual.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

therefore be corrected without any sacrifice on anyone's part. Yet the process of international negotiation seems to demand sacrifices from the current generation for the sake of future people. The process gets nowhere because governments will not accept sacrifices on behalf of their people. I think the negotiations should be restructured. Governments should see themselves as negotiating about the distribution of benefits rather than sacrifices. The realization that no sacrifice was required may be the way to unlock the process and move negotiations forward.¹⁵⁵

This no sacrifice idea carried over into *Climate Matters*, making it the central theme to combating global warming. Consequently, in addition to the problem of valuation and directionality, the foundational issue seems to be with the current economic system as a whole. According to Broome, it simply does not take into consideration "waste" and is therefore inefficient. To be sure, this is an issue, but remains superficial and does not get to the root of the issue. While he states that economics is in need of a guiding ethical theory, he continuously fails to offer an account of what that theory of valuation would be. For Broome, climate change became solely a problem of inefficiency in that "the problem with emissions of greenhouse gas is that the harm they cause is not paid for."¹⁵⁶ The obvious solution, for him then, is not necessarily to force people to make the necessary sacrifices—since this is ultimately the crux of the political inertia—but rather, to make them pay the full price of the waste produced in generating a product. Ergo, making the system more efficient.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ *Weighing and Reasoning*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ Broome, *Climate Matters*, 38.

¹⁵⁷ Fromm would also agree that the problem of climate change is linked to economics but for a different reason altogether. Currently, good economics is synonymous with profit margins, profit correlates with productivity,

Through cost-benefit analysis, Broome tells us that, of the three options above, efficiency with sacrifice is the best possible option.¹⁵⁸ Given Broome's definition of efficiency, emitters of greenhouse gas must pay the full cost of those emissions¹⁵⁹ and, in addition, preserve more and consume less resources for present and future receivers who suffer the harms of emissions. But, to benefit receivers, emitters must cut back on their emissions. Though this would stand to benefit receivers, it would require a sacrifice on the part of emitters. However, Broome suggests that "emitters can be compensated for their sacrifice by transferring resource to them from receivers"¹⁶⁰ and "after emitters have reduced their emissions and received a suitable transfer in

productivity with output, output with growth, and growth with the transformation of resources from its natural form to societal application. Destruction of the environment would inevitably lead to the destruction of the economy (as we know it). To save ourselves from economic and environmental disaster, since they seem to go hand in hand, we would need a large-scale "characterological change" whereby we shift from a "having" mode of existence, obsessed with ownership and possessions, to an "experiential" mode of being, concerned more with how one lives i.e. quality of life. This would require a massive cultural shift on both the society and the individual. By attempting to fix the problem by minimally shifting the price value of a product/transaction without changing the types of transactions available in the first place is to attempt to patch a hole in a sinking ship with a band-aid. A complete transformation is necessary, one which begins and ends with humanity's mindset. Cf. Erich Fromm, *To Have or To Be*, chap. viii "Conditions for Human Change and the Features of the New Man"; *The Sane Society*, chap. ii "The Human Situation", chap. viii "Roads to Sanity"; *Man for Himself*, chap. v "The Moral Problem of Today."

¹⁵⁸ There are times when I have read Broome's work and cringed. He discusses the same topic and I tend to worry since it seems to appear as though this is what he is genuinely advocating for i.e. to prevent/mitigate climate change without sacrifice. For example, in a selected chapter (6) titled "The Most Important Thing About Climate Change" found in *Arguments for a Better World: Essays in Honour of Amartya*, Broome writes "The very most important thing is this fact: that the problem of climate change can be solved without anyone making any sacrifice. At Copenhagen, many nations came together and failed to reach an agreement. They were asked to make sacrifices, and they declined to do so. But no sacrifice is necessary. The nations might have been more amenable if they had understood that point." (Broome, 2009, 103) I tend to be on the fence, in that, at times I believe that particular claims, such as the example just given, is representative of a naïve side of him where he believes that the economy, economists, economic theory, and the exchange of goods is the only thing necessary to stave off climate change. That should the error of efficiency be correct, this would no longer be an issue. Fortunately, he saves himself, sounding a bit more tempered as is shown in *Climate Matters* and a recent publication called "Against Denialism" (2019) where he argues that individual emissions do in fact cause harm. This implies that the individual has a greater moral responsibility to curb his/her own emissions. The example quote given in footnotes was written in 2009, thus by 2012 we begin to see a trend whereby Broome appears to be trading his economic thinking cap for his philosophical one.

¹⁵⁹ In *Climate Matters*, Broome states that "it is technically possible to eliminate the inefficiency in such a way that no one ends up any worse off. No sacrifice is required." (*Climate Matters*, 44) A point previously made in *Counting the Cost*. Here, Broome argues the particulars of how such a system might be achieved. A point of contention is made between Diamond, Mirrales, and Broome, in the structure and application of governmental tax codes and private production. For further details cf. Broome, *Counting the Cost*, sec. 3.3 "Diamond and Mirrales", 83-91

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

compensation, they will be no worse off, and receivers will end up better off.”¹⁶¹ This can also be applied intergenerationally.

Despite many of the receivers being largely non-existent and yet to be born, a transfer of compensation is still possible. Broome notes that, as things stand, the current generation will leave future generations many resources, both unused natural resources and artificial ones, e.g. economic capital, buildings, machinery, cultivated land, etc. If we were to sacrifice more by emitting less greenhouse gas, we “could fully compensate ourselves by using more of those artificial and natural resources for ourselves. We can consume more and invest less of these resources to future generations.”¹⁶² Those yet to be born will therefore be better off on balance since they will suffer less from the greenhouse gas we leave in the air.¹⁶³ Thus, resources in the *efficiency with sacrifice* model are invested in the future, which would in turn produce greater output and thus benefit a greater number of people.¹⁶⁴

Since economists have a habit of playing politics, their fixation on of generating a context where *efficiency with sacrifice* makes “the best the enemy of good”¹⁶⁵ and fails to generate necessary forward momentum. “Curing the externality is extremely urgent,”¹⁶⁶ Broome writes, “improving the distribution of resources between generations is not so urgent.”¹⁶⁷ Hence, despite *efficiency without sacrifice* containing a serious demerit, essentially an injustice where emitters

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., 44.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁶⁴ Note that much of the argument established by Broome is for the preservation of economic activity. There is an implication that good economics produces a good existence. While this may be true when it comes to the meeting of basic needs, anything additional does not necessarily improve the quality of life.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid..

¹⁶⁷ Ibid..

are bribed by receivers not to pollute and harm them, it is preferential to *business as usual*.¹⁶⁸

Therefore, since *efficiency without sacrifice* is technically possible, it is the big task for economists to make this possible and put it into effect.¹⁶⁹ Broome therefore, makes the argument that making efficiency without sacrifice is both pragmatic and moral, in that it serves to move the political process forward. This is how Broome resolves the Global Storm and the Intergenerational Storm explained by Gardiner.

Section II: Broome's Econo-Philosophy

The previous section largely focused on Broome's position in climate philosophy. This section will pivot to a consideration of the patterns of thought and the oft-used tools consistently demonstrated by Broome. To accomplish this, I will be following in tandem with Broome's thought processes. In doing so, and in serially following multiple strands of Broome's arguments, I intend to indicate the major features of the mindset and mental methodologies of Broome as a litmus case. This will conclude part I, which focused on the current climate ethics conversation and, more specifically, Broome's philosophical maneuvering, both of which motivate the need for an ontology of man; a thing which could act as a basis serving as unifying ethical, the project of part II.

Of all his books on climate change, only *Climate Matters* contains exposition on highly involved philosophical concepts. For example, the concept of goodness for Broome requires the assistance of cost-benefit analysis and quantitative judgments. When one emits greenhouse gases, the harm caused is spread throughout the earth and, similarly, through centuries over

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁹ Crazy, business as usual, remains but at least we live another day to combat it.

time—since some of that gas will remain in the air for a long time. One person causes a tiny amount of harm, at a very slow rate, to each of billions of people. In order to work out how much harm is caused, one must quantify and aggregate each of these harms over time and people.¹⁷⁰

For Broome, then, the process of making judgments of ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ is called valuation, where “the word ‘value’ is a synonym for ‘goodness.’”¹⁷¹ The particulars of valuation can assist in specific moral issues. Following his discussion of goodness and reaffirming the fact that quantitative measures are paramount, Broome makes and shares two theoretical arguments that arise concerning climate and justice: the compensation argument and the non-identity argument. Both arguments militate against the idea that the current generation actually causes an injustice to future people through its greenhouse gas emissions and are apparently difficult to defend against when applied to morals pertaining to public welfare.

Regarding the collective impact on future society, the “compensation argument” maintains that the current generation is benefitting future generations despite the onset of climate change. Collectively, it can be said that society, by and large, is decimating the planet in our

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 102. Additionally, when discussing the structure of goodness, Broome makes the distinction between *ultimate values*—questions such as, does nature have a value in its own right? What is good for people? Does a person’s good consist in getting her preferences satisfied or is it just good experiences that are valuable—and *aggregate* goodness—whatever different kinds of goodness there might be, together they add up to total goodness of the world. Some questions pertaining to aggregation are: is it better for well-being to be distributed equally among people rather than unequally? Is it better for a good to occur earlier in time rather than later? (Climate Matters, 112)

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 102. The particulars of what constitutes appropriate valuation are the main theme of *Counting the Cost*. For example, when discussing the specifics of a value function in a formula that calculates discount rates over time, Broome writes “[returning] to the question of whether the value function should be impartial, it is a common opinion that good must be agent neutral, just because the concept of good implies agent neutrality. In so far as agent neutrality implies impartiality, it would follow that good must be impartial. I insisted in the part 1 that the value function *g* is intended to represent goodness. So, it would follow that the value function must be impartial and the discount rate in formulae such as (3.1.3) and (3.1.4) must be naught. But I do not find this a conclusive argument. First, I am not convinced that good must be agent neutral. Second, I have just offered some possible grounds for doubting that ‘agent neutrality’ – specifically generation implies’ impartiality. Consequently, I do not believe that good is necessarily impartial. At least, I do not think that the concept of good implies impartiality.” (Counting the Cost, 94)

incessant use and pursuit of resources. Posterity therefore is likely to inherit a planet that possesses less fauna, more polluted seas and skies, erratic and unstable weather, potential health risks, as well as the potential for economic instability. The list of (possible) negative impacts is never ending.

That being said, given his presentation of the compensation argument, the current generation is actually doing a lot for future generations. It is adding to the world's stock of resources in several ways. It is developing and expanding its use of technology; this further allows us to grow more food at a cheaper rate, seek and extract natural resources that were once unobtainable, construct more efficient dwellings to house more people, adding to the overall stock of human knowledge. The list of potential positive impacts is also never ending. All of these assets come at a price and the payoff is that future people will be richer than us, materially speaking.

Posterity, Broome concludes, will be poorer environmentally but wealthier than the current generation in other respects. Broome optimistically reflects on this thought, saying,

We can hope that on the balance of these two factors they will be better off. If they are, although we as a generation are damaging their lives in one way, we are more than making up for it in other ways. We could therefore claim to be compensating future people for the environmental damage we are bequeathing to them.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Ibid., 60.

Ergo, we can forego any perceived injustice we might have about leaving the planet environmentally impoverished. Future generations will be better equipped to handle the problem of climate change, thanks to all the resources and amenities they stand to inherit.

The second argument, against injustice toward future people, which Broome calls the “nonidentity problem,”¹⁷³ takes into account the individual.¹⁷⁴ As an example he considers a person that lives 150 years from now and asks whether that person has a right to complain about his/her given situation due to the impact of climate change. Could s/he claim that they have been caused an injustice by the current generation, and that s/he had a right to a better life, which was denied by our excessive polluting? The answer often given, according to Broome, is no.¹⁷⁵

Suppose society took it upon itself to reduce carbon emissions so that we avoid reaching a critical watershed moment that results in severe negative climate impact. To do so, the affluent would have to find a way to travel less by car and plane, change diet, consume less, change habits, perhaps even move to areas that would allow humanity to be better stewards of nature. This abrupt shift would mean that everyone would have entirely different outcomes in their lives. Who they interact with, the places they would go, and even whom they might procreate with would be entirely different. Even those who might have the same partner as they actually do would have conceived their babies at different times.

¹⁷³ This is an internationally recognized problem that can be found in the IPCCs AR-5 WGIII, sec. 3.3.2 titled “Intergenerational justice and rights of future people.” For authors who discuss solutions to this problem cf. McMahan, 1998; Shiffrin, 1999; Kumar, 2003; Meyer, 2003; Harman, 2004; Reiman, 2007; Shue, 2010

¹⁷⁴ Broome discloses that this theory was brought into prominence by Derek Parfit, citing ch.16 of *Reasons and Persons* (1986).

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Broome, *Climate Matters*, 62.

Broome points out that the identity of a person depends on his/her origin.¹⁷⁶ While he does not give a complete definition, Broome seems to be utilizing a compendium version of identity, where each specific factoid related to a particular individual indicates a necessary part of their whole, with implications about other parts as well. So, to change the initial conditions for the genesis of any particular individual would necessarily result in the radical alteration of the resulting individual, at least as compared across suitably local possible worlds. Consequently, the slightest variation in how the future unfolds would change the lives of nearly everyone. Within a couple of generations, the entire population of the world would effectively be radically different from what it is now. This is what Broome calls the non-identity effect. Thus, any person who would have existed in the future, if we continued to act as we currently do, would not exist at all. Their ability to complain is possible only because things transpired the way they did. Should the current generation of people decide to behave differently, there would be no opportunity for anyone to make any claims about injustice in the future. Hence, for Broome, any individual born 150 years from now cannot plausibly claim that s/he has a right to a better life, and can safely conclude that our emissions do no injustice, because if we behaved in a way that is more just now then the complaining individual would not exist in 150 years.¹⁷⁷

Broome says that both arguments contain their flaws. For the compensation argument, Broome notes that, “although the present generation might compensate each future generation as a whole, we will not succeed in compensating each future individual.”¹⁷⁸ Hence, some future people will not be adequately compensated, despite the harms that they will incur. Broome,

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 62.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 61.

given the moral significance that he places on the individual, believes that this failure of individual compensation results in a violation of justice. In an attempt to circumvent oncoming problems, we may be compensating the future rich, but the future poor will most likely go uncompensated; “some, for instance, will be killed by climate change, and will not be compensated.”¹⁷⁹

Another gap in the argument noted by Broome is that an “injustice is not necessarily canceled by compensation.”¹⁸⁰ He suggests that people might simply have the right to specific goods and an unpolluted environment. If they do, and the current generation deprives posterity of those things, we violate their right by leaving greenhouse gases in the air. He proceeds, astutely recognizing that though “we may do them good in other ways, that does not necessarily cancel the injustice.” Hence, Broome himself notes that the compensation argument contains two major flaws: first, not everyone will be compensated and will unjustly incur damage or even death, and second, even if future generations are being compensated, the compensation provided is not necessarily equivalent to the goods and experiences that they will be deprived of.

In the case of the non-identity problem, Broome admits that there would in-fact be an impact but he finds it “less convincing when applied to the emissions of a single individual.”¹⁸¹ For example, while an individual can continue to emit greenhouse gas profligately, one could instead release less. To do so would mean that there would be a shift in choice and lifestyle. These effects in behavior would cause a ripple effect from the person changing his or her behavior to more remote people. Broome though surmises that “the identities of most people in

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 63.

the world would not have been affected by your reduction in emissions,” since the ripple effect would be so small. Broome concludes that we need not worry about such a shift spreading across the whole world in less than several generations, so much so that there would be no worry about the immediate course of these potential future identities.¹⁸²

Furthermore, Broome adds, that a reduction in greenhouse emission would surely bring about immediate, albeit small, benefits to people all around the world. Therefore, “all over the world, for several generations, many of the same people would have been born as they actually are, and those people would all have benefited to a small extent from your reduced emissions.”¹⁸³ By continuing to release greenhouse gases without any attempt at conscious restraint, harm would befall the unseen for one's own benefit and self-gratification. Broome reminds us that if one does not compensate those individuals for the benefits received, they have a case against you for the injustice perpetrated.¹⁸⁴

Broome concludes that emissions of greenhouse gas constitute injustice to those presently living and potentially living. Both compensation and non-identity arguments constitute an argument for doubting that injustice is done to future generations. In particular, Broome notes, that the non-identity problem is quite convincing when applied to a whole generation or a generation within a single nation but the arguments tend to fall apart once applied to individuals. Both the compensation argument and the non-identity argument are offered by Broome as a

¹⁸² Ibid. This topic is discussed in the IPCCs AR-5, WGIII, sec. 3.3.5. under the heading “Intra-generational justice: compensatory justice and historical responsibility,” which asks, “Do those who suffer disproportionately from the consequences of climate change have just claims to compensation against the main perpetrators or beneficiaries of climate change?” cf. Neumayer, 2000; Gosseries, 2004; Caney, 2006b

¹⁸³ Ibid., 63.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

justification for his prescriptive quantitative analysis within this troubling paradigm of climate change.

From this point forward in his *Climate Matters*, Broome makes the case for pragmatic solutions; mainly, that of a discount rate and offsetting. He begins by making a distinction between public morality and private morality, whereby the former involves moral responsibilities associated with governments and the latter are moral responsibilities allocated to individuals. With respect to climate ethics, duties of justice are associated with individuals. Thus, individuals have a responsibility to avoid emitting as much greenhouse gas as possible. Conversely, duties of governments, or public morality, are more complex since governments are in a position to promote stability and goodness. Therefore, “in choosing their policies they need to weigh against one another all the good things and bad things that will result from them”¹⁸⁵ and thus, those calculations of cost-benefit analysis are particularly complex.

To improve the world would require goodness, and that can only be established by undertaking appropriate political measures. Public morality needs to be established via governmental action. Action such as economic discount rates falls to that legislative body.¹⁸⁶ In the case of the individual, each person, according to Broome, has a duty to emit less—if at all, since it benefits one person while harming another—and can easily be done, despite being stringent, by offsetting. On the other hand, despite the individual reducing his/her emissions, this will not be sufficient to solve the problem. Therefore, the individual should modify his or her behavior on the grounds of justice, not of goodness.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Broome, *Climate Matters*, 64-72.

Broome uses discount rates to extend his cost-benefit analysis across time. Broad cost-benefit analysis and discount rate can assist governments in the decision making process since such “expected value theory [is a] well-established correct way of dealing with uncertainty.”¹⁸⁷ Analysis of this type can help zero-in on “choos[ing] the option that has the greatest expectation of goodness.”¹⁸⁸ Since the mitigation of climate change via governmental policies may take several decades to bear fruit,¹⁸⁹ the evaluation of such potential policies has to be weighed against each other.¹⁹⁰ Cost-benefit analysis applied to goods over time can also be applied to moral judgements, since “the morality of climate change is a quantitative matter”¹⁹¹ and thus “we need to know just what the size is of the response morality calls on us to make.”¹⁹² Discount rates can help accomplish such a task.

According to Broome, economists generally give less value to future commodities than to present ones since one would factor in revealed time preference¹⁹³ and opportunity costs¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 189.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 190.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 120.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Briefly, given that discount rates assist people in making choices with effects that are temporally contingent, most of the choices require that the decision-maker consider costs and benefits at those different points in time. This particular version of discount rate is also known as *Intertemporal choice*, as opposed to the discount rate that refers to the lending of monies from banks to institutions. For example, let us assume that someone offers you one hundred dollars today or one hundred dollars in ten years, economists assume that one is prone to choosing the hundred dollars today. The thought experiment then asks, what if the option was between fifty today or one hundred in ten? Your decision depends on one’s ‘revealed time preference.’ As the term obviously denotes, one’s decision is probably incumbent upon a reflection of your overall savings and investment portfolio. For example, you may want to hold off and wait the ten years because you may have the savings and one hundred dollars will not make much of a difference. Better to wait, just in case. Most people though, it is assumed, will want the money up front because of the risk tomorrow might bring. Therefore, it may be better to invest it or put it in a savings account where it can accrue interest—in ten years’ time, at five per cent compounding interest, you would have a total of \$162.89. Therefore, the equivalent future value of \$100.00 would be \$162.89, given current interest rates. These values are not taking inflation into account and is maintaining the “real value” at a constant.

¹⁹⁴ If one were to ask of you how much would you be willing to pay now in order to avoid \$100.00 worth of damage to your home in a year from now, one might answer ~\$95.24 since s/he could put that hundred in the bank

together; this is what leads them to discount the benefits of future commodities. For investors, returns lose a portion of their “net present value” for every year they calculate into the future.¹⁹⁵ The overall amount, as a percentage, that a benefit recedes into the future is the discount rate.¹⁹⁶

The moral question that is imposed on economists is connected to the specific discount rate they recommend since whatever percentage/interest-rate they base the discount rate on also suggests the level of risk and urgency for a potential problem. Broome claims that the discounting of commodities should not be based on well-being. Instead, he suggests, the sole consideration that should be prioritized is that the economy continue to grow, thereby leaving posterity with greater material resources than we have now. Future commodities should be discounted because they supply less to the well-being of the future person than that of the present.

Given that this is a cost-benefit analysis on a grand scale, Broome concludes that making sacrifices might be beneficial when it comes to the redistribution of resources between present and future people but that this should not be conflated with the externality of greenhouse gases. Thus, “asking for sacrifices is to burden the aim of controlling global warming with the further aim of improving the distribution of resources between generations.”¹⁹⁷ He concludes that it

that pays 5% interest and have \$105.00 a year from now. That would leave one with \$100.00 to pay off the damage and \$5.00 in profit. Thus, one could divide the interest rate from the \$100.00 to achieve its current worth of \$95.24. Ergo, one would pay \$95.24 now to avoid \$100.00 worth of damage to their home in the future. Keep in mind that depending on how much an investment pays, relative to other uses of the same resource, is known as its “opportunity cost” — for every investment made, you choose to forego other opportunities.

¹⁹⁵ “Most empirical models of climate change imply that the world’s economy will continue to grow, so that future people in general will be richer than present ones” (Broome, 190).

¹⁹⁶ In financial transactions, the discount rate is typically assessed around the current market interest rates.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 155.

would be politically more effective to keep externalities and sacrifices separate and that “nobody needs to make any sacrifices to eliminate the externality of climate change.”¹⁹⁸

In addition to discount rates, Broome recommends offsetting. Offsetting, for Broome, is one way we can help mitigate the oncoming problem. Offsetting is a way of bringing the carbon debt back to zero and possibly back into the green. Simply put, by utilizing offsetting, if you were to produce a unit of greenhouse gas, you would then simultaneously cause the unit to be subtracted. This is a practical solution to the duty of individual morality and the allotment of justice, i.e. respect for others who might lack the resources of another. A common example given when discussing offsetting is to plant a tree. Broome asserts though that to plant so many trees would only forestall the issue since one day, the tree planted will die and its death will release all that carbon into the atmosphere. In order for this to be a genuine offset, Broome notes that “somehow you will have to ensure your forest will be replanted and replanted again perpetually even after your death”¹⁹⁹ since one would need “to make sure that the trees’ carbon is permanently removed from the atmosphere, and that would be hard to achieve.”²⁰⁰ Therefore, do-it-yourself offsetting is extremely difficult. Broome goes on to recommend presently available alternative methods, which he calls preventative offsetting.²⁰¹

There are currently many companies and commercial organizations that offer to offset carbon emissions for individuals. They are paid a fee per ton of offsetting, and they “use your

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 86.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Another example Broome gives is taking carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in a place from which it cannot escape back into the atmosphere e.g. underground. But this is “too expensive to be a practical means of offsetting.” (Broome, 86)

²⁰¹ Cf., Broome, *Climate Matters*, 87.

money to finance projects that would diminish emissions somewhere in the world.”²⁰² These projects generally occur in developing countries and invest in renewable energies such as hydroelectric power stations and wind farms. Similarly, they can also promote the efficient use of energy such as the installation of efficient cooking stoves which helps to reduce carbon emissions. While this does not address your own emissions directly, this would reduce the emissions of others, effectively reducing the overall rate of emissions worldwide.

Broome argues that preventive offsetting “leads to a real reduction in global emissions of greenhouse gas...[while] making sure that your presence in the world causes no greenhouse gas to be added to the atmosphere.”²⁰³ One might not be able to effectively extract carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere but one can offset them by helping others to prevent further contributing and compounding deleterious emissions. Broome recommends to his reader that for a small price, one can offset their own emissions by preventing others in developing nations from further emitting. This would bring said individuals’ total greenhouse gas emissions to zero.²⁰⁴

In sum, Broome’s argument repeatedly and explicitly suggests that, in order to bring about change, we should look to practical measures that can be generated by economists and enacted by politicians. So long as we are discounting the future in a way that leaves future generation with more resources than the current generation and offsetting is introduced as a means to curtail externalities then active change can be brought about by the economic and

²⁰² Ibid., 87.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ There is a worry that by giving money to companies to help circumvent future emissions, Broome may inadvertently be siding with those who make the compensation argument in defense of the continuation of business expansion.

political framework we currently have in place. As mentioned earlier, the issue, on the whole, is considered to be a political problem. Economically speaking, so long as the economy continues to grow, the only genuine concern is to manage it effectively and, more importantly, efficiently. No matter where humanity finds itself in 150 years, the future generation will have essentially been left with a better world than now along with a greater availability of options so long as action is taken. This is the apparent position taken by Broome and many of the member in climate philosophy.

Section III: Fromm Left Field

Above is a brief presentation of Broome's palliative argument with respect to the potential oncoming problems of climate change. The central point of his argument is: the current generation does not need to sacrifice in order to curtail this potentially disastrous situation and that the issue, on the whole, is a political one—mainly, that governments need to pass the appropriate laws which will divert and allocate monies in the right direction. His recommendations are deeply rooted in his economic methodologies, which in-turn, are generated by his outmoded) mindset. All three of these will be subject to an expanding critique beginning with Broome's practical argument and becoming more theoretical in nature as we work through his methodologies and finally conclude with his mindset. The purpose is to make space for Erich Fromm by providing parallels to the first chapter i.e. that a complete system overhaul is necessary and in order to achieve it the mindset must also be subject to change. Broome's practical suggestions, his methodologies, and his mindset, serves as such example. The second half of the dissertation attempts to adopt a system better suited toward a green future by focusing on the mindset and thus setting a pre-actionability foundation for future discussion. Therefore, at

the end of this critique I will point to an alternative mindset, one that is more aligned with sustainable values, given by the extensive psychoanalytic work of Fromm, and how the Frankfurt School might serve as a template for moving forward in a substantial and progressive fashion. Prior to presenting this alternative, a negative argument must be made against Broome and his kind i.e. the externalists, in order to grant a suitable segue.

Beginning with Broome's given compensation argument, he claims that so long as we, the current generation, are providing future generations with something, then we commit no injustice. In an earlier example Broome states:

As things stand, people—'emitters'—emit greenhouse gas and benefit from doing so, while other people—'receivers'—suffer harm from those emissions...Emitters must reduce their emissions. This will benefit receivers but, other things being equal, it would be a sacrifice on the part of many emitters. However, the emitters can be compensated for their sacrifice by transferring resources to them from receivers. Just because emissions are inefficient, we know that a transfer is possible that is enough to compensate emitters fully and yet still leaves receivers better off than they were originally...After emitters have reduced their emissions and received a suitable transfer in compensation, they will be no worse off, and receivers will end up better off.²⁰⁵

Thus, according to Broome, the transferring of resources from the current generation to future generations is given in the form of "artificial resources"²⁰⁶ in the form of economic capital such as buildings, machinery, cultivated land, technology, etc. He says, "we will also leave

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 44.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

natural resources, since we shall not use up all the natural resources that are in the ground.”²⁰⁷

For Broome, “we can fully compensate ourselves by using more of those artificial and natural resources.”²⁰⁸ In other words, “we can consume more and invest less for the future.”²⁰⁹

Immediately, there seems to be something of a contradiction in Broome’s thinking. For one thing, it is the current generation that needs to sacrifice on behalf of the future generation. This sacrifice comes in the form of non-emissions. Since we somehow are to cease or curtail our emissions, we can compensate ourselves for this sacrifice by consuming more. More, in terms of both artificial and natural resources. How further consumption is to generate less emission is not something Broome specifies. Nevertheless, we are somehow intended to consume more, to emit less, yet also leave future generations with more resources.

His other justification argument, as discussed, is the non-identity argument. Broome uses the name “Sarah” when discussing the person of the future that “cannot plausibly claim that she has a right to a better life.”²¹⁰ There is an underlying question though: why that particular context? According to Broome, we “simply could not have given Sarah a better life by emitting less gas [and therefore] is not plausible that we violated a right of hers by continuing to emit profligately.”²¹¹ The reason for this is because Sarah has come into existence given a very specific series of events that include one of the scenarios in which we emit greenhouse gases. If we had not, the world would have worked out differently and she would not have existed, ergo,

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 62.

²¹¹ Ibid.

she has no right to complain and we have no obligation to concern ourselves with Sarah and the situation we have put her in.

The complaining, or thinking, that one is deserving of a better life is separate from the reality of the situation. One can always find something to complain about but the fact remains that the state of the world can be one that is more amenable to a healthy existence whether I find cause for complaint or not. Broome seems to be a bit dismissive of future individuals, essentially telling them that they should be grateful that they're even alive.

Furthermore, Sarah is also arbitrary. Why Sarah? Why not Tom, Dick, or Harriette? According to Broome, if we were to emit less carbon then Sarah would not have come into existence at all for “even the slightest variation in the timing of conception... a very slight change in people’s lives means that they conceive different people.”²¹² Broome points out, “had we significantly reduced our emissions of greenhouse gas, it would have changed the lives of nearly everyone in the world in ways that are more than slight.”²¹³ In an infinite amount of realities that can potentially come into fruition, why is Sarah so important? By choosing Sarah, Broome is making a comparative value and deciding that Sarah’s existence should be given a greater priority in the argument than that of Tom’s existence, who would have been born in her stead should we have decided to emit less greenhouse gases. Broome failed to explain to the reader how, in a manifold timeline, he comes up with the method of deciding which groups of soon-to-be people are more worthy of life than an alternative, should we currently decide to make different choices. Both the compensation and non-identity arguments take on a flavor of contrivance in service to maintaining the status quo, rather than addressing an overall cultural

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

shift which is necessary to address the root of the climate change problem. As a side note, Broome still uses these arguments despite noting that both are heavily flawed. A problem which, once again, can be seen to have international consequence as the Non-Identity argument was also used in the AR-5.²¹⁴

As solutions to the difficulties presented to his arguments, Broome offers discount rates and offsetting as methods which might assist us in combatting climate change. While he and many other analytic climate ethicists argue over the best discount rate, regardless of the discount rate chosen, their criterion for evaluation seems to be equally flawed in its arbitrary nature. Ironically, this leads them back to square one: how might they evaluate the evaluation? Broome admits that when taking a cost-benefit analysis of the loss of human life we should “measure the value of lives by one of the quantity measures, and not try to combine it with a monetary measure of other values.”²¹⁵ By doing so, though, it would “leave a large hole in the cost-benefit analysis of climate change; it will often lead to no definite conclusion.”²¹⁶ For Broome, “if some policy would save lives, but have a cost in terms of money, cost-benefit analysis will not determine whether or not this is a good policy on balance.”²¹⁷ The fact that Broome explicitly states that cost-benefit analysis can be rendered ineffective by introducing particular complexities, i.e. the commodification of human life, is beside the point—adequate cost-benefit seems to work when confined to quantifiable matters, mainly, that which can be monetized. Ethics aside, even if human life was made quantifiable by being monetized, assessment would

²¹⁴ Cf. IPCC AR-5, WGIII, sec. 3.3.2, 216.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 166.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

suffer from the same problem; the value of life to currency would be dependent on an arbitrary set of criteria once again.

The other actionable proposal offered by Broome is offsetting. One way a consumer can offset their behavior is by preventing others from emitting greenhouse gases. The checkbook can be balanced by creating a theoretical/imaginary potential and subtracting that from one's own damaging actions. While generating larger carbon sinks might not work, the version of offsetting offered by Broome fares little better. It is not a genuine, or at least complete, form of offsetting. While genuine offsetting removes any externalities generated by an individual/society, his version merely passes the buck and places a greater share of the responsibility on people of developing nations. Any proactive contribution made by members of already affluent and developed societies simply comes in the form of a monthly payment without the necessary shift in outlook and/or behavior. This means that polluting behavior can continue so long as somebody has the means the pay.

While Broome's recommendation might be an important one, it is not enough. Before any discussion of offsetting can be made, one must first answer the question of what the planetary equivalent of a balanced checkbook is. We should keep in mind what we are attempting to accomplish in the first place. To his credit, Broome does recommend bringing one's carbon footprint to zero, though for him, this should be done by paying companies to offset potential emissions in developing countries. We need not sacrifice on our own behalf. Broome's version of offsetting seems to be preventative in nature but not reparative. He confidently states that though it is

true, [that] once you have put a tonne of carbon dioxide molecules into the atmosphere, those molecules will wreak their damage. However, if at the same time you remove the

same number of other carbon dioxide molecules, you prevent those ones from wreaking damage. Your overall effect is zero.²¹⁸

How he manages to do the math on that latter part of the statement has yet to be seen. I, as a consumer, would still be pumping carbon into the atmosphere. Simply because I am preventing future carbon from being emitted by others does not take away from the fact that I am continuously emitting profligately. I am still a key contributor to the problem at hand. While this will succeed in keeping the rate of emissions constant, it fails to effectively reduce the rate of carbon emissions.

Discount rate and offsetting were Broome's actionable pragmatic suggestions to the potential problems of climate change. Both were his way of showing that current people do not have to sacrifice for their way of life for future generations. So long as we offset and keep a relatively low discount rate, we are free to conduct business as usual. This is undergirded and justified by his compensation and non-identity arguments.

As previously shown, according to Broome, the procedure that will help humanity determine a solution to the problem of value, thereby affording us the proper motivation to act, is that of cost-benefit analysis. However, should cost-benefit analysis be presented as a tool for generating decisive action to someone who does not believe in it as a legitimate means of behavioral justification, cost-benefit analysis would find itself with no leg to stand on of its own merit; it would be left simply begging the question. Externalists tend to fall prey to the famed Thor fallacy: when your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 89.

While I am confident that the above critique is justifiable based on my understanding and presentation of Broome and his fellow analytic climate ethicists, it falls prey to the same failing that they do: it does not address the underlying impetus that resulted in these attempts at solutions. The main thesis of this work can be described by a single word: health. It is important to situate the analysis and arguments of Broome, other climate ethicists, and Fromm within the context of health. To utilize a medical metaphor, the planet might be understood as a person dying from a chronic systemic disease, and it needs to be saved. Climate ethicists are acting as diagnosticians, recommending a battery of tests at semi-regular intervals in the hopes of discovering the perfect diagnosis and cure. This is an important but time consuming process that has run out the clock. The planet-patient is collapsing, and the EMT needs to be called. This is where Broome comes in. His suggestions, much like the other climate ethicist, will not actually solve the issue. Nonetheless Broome's solutions are necessary to marginally restabilize the planet until we can arrive at the hospital. Here is where Fromm steps in as a psycho-surgeon to actually address the underlying problem. He does not look to alleviate the obvious systems which Broome and the other analytic climate ethicists focus on. Instead, he recognizes these as indicative of an underlying issue, and in a deft movement replaces the corrupt with the progenitive resulting in the much sought after panacea. Less metaphorically: climate ethicists have generated and analysed the relevant climate data to give a clear understanding of the issues, Broome is offering actionable proscriptions to generate the time to better address them, and Fromm provides a unifying ethical foundation that promotes a conjoined principle of internal health for individuals and societies. Taking this metaphor seriously, I will now suggest some of what is missing in the climate ethicists discussed so far, and the consequences of the absences.

Constant and consistent growth is the *modus operandi* of every successful economy. As societies become more affluent, population and per capita consumption both continue to grow and contribute to generating a negative feedback loop. Hence, when considering Broome's philosophy, the largest issue is the fact that his "nobody needs to sacrifice" solutions merely require minor shifts in policy, but fail to consider the broader difficulties of a global system; one that legitimizes and reinforces outmoded and unsustainable behavior, habits, outlooks, and culture. Broome represents the portion of the analytic climate ethicist community that attempts to fix the problem without addressing why the problem has come about in the first place. Though he addresses the 'how' as a symptom of externalities, his prescriptions are devoid of an adequate exegesis of the underlying causes, and so fall short of a systemic overhaul. This is an attempt to correct superficial behavior, without understanding the genuine cause, in order to adequately address and extirpate it.

On the other hand, contra Broome, climate ethicists such as James Garvey, Stephen Gardiner, Peter Singer, Henry Shue, Paul Baer, Dale Jamieson, and Simon Caney—and others that encompassed the body of the aforementioned essential reader—recognize that there are fissures in our social framework and, limiting the discussion to climate and environmental ethics, repeatedly speak of expanding our 'ethical sphere' to include fauna, flora, and entire ecosystems. In the case of carbon emissions, the conversations become laden with discussions about justice, fairness, equality, and future oriented (e)valuations. Not that these are unimportant, but they are still part of a "diagnostics" conversation, in a time when we are in desperate need of mobilization. Like Broome, when discussing scientific or legislative uncertainty, comparative analysis, valuation, distribution, etc., climate ethicists often fail to take the additional step of providing theories with a comprehensive social revolution. Their work inevitably falters when it

is time to come up with a basis for a unified actionable plan, as was expressed by Gardiner in chapter 1 and was made further evident in the U.N. AR,-5, WGIII, chapter 3 “Social, Economic, and Ethical Concepts and Methods” when it managed to provide broad overviews of major ethical theories but failed to suggest that one/some might be more accurate/adequate than others, as well as why that is the case.

The core of the issue is reducible to the problem of the criterion. The question becomes, as was discussed in the last chapter as the Step Two dilemma, what is the cultural crimp that continues to promote maladaptive behavior? The problem of culture, more specifically, the problem of behavior, has been an issue for philosophers since ancient times. The missing ingredient in this conversation can be supplied by Fromm’s notion of humanism, which does two important things.

First, it makes the case for objective qualities to be found in mankind—a quiddity which can be universally referenced by some measure of empirical processes beyond a purely physicalist/materialist metaphysics. A contributing difficulty to the ongoing discussion is that humanity does not define itself and to do so would be to limit the descriptions of individuality that our current societal foundation prizes. Any attempt to express life as a set of qualities would inevitably fall short of an accurate model. Given this ontological problem in defining what it means to be human, existence can only be understood as a phenomenon of countless possible descriptions. While this outlook demands that the definition of a human being be unconstrained by a uselessly broad definition, thereby keeping a greater degree of accuracy, it axiomatically ensnares us into a truncated conversation unable to get beyond our inability to coherently discuss what constitutes human nature. This prevents any agreement, or disagreement, on what we are, along with how we might move forward and finally break past the ‘political logjam’ (or what the

idea of “forward” would mean in such an ontologically vague system). Fromm offers such an ontology, one that grounds our analysis and allows an appropriate justification for the set of solutions offered.

Second Fromm’s humanism is an answer to precisely the question of producing a future-oriented trajectory, in terms of actionability. Any decisions made with respect to what ought to be done are contingent upon implicit axioms that describe and color one’s interpretation of reality, the meaning derived therein, and how to navigate through the landscape of life. For Fromm, in order to give an answer to the ought question, we first need to consider any objectively defensible qualities man may possess which would in turn help set a standard of criteria from which to judge actions. Therefore, while philosophers and economists alike attempt to sift through the scientific projections and conjure a viable response to the issue at hand, the dialogue can be supported via consensus pertaining to ontological and ethical axioms; by doing so, it would grant academics and politicians a clearer normative trajectory. Conclusion

Chapter 3 has made the effort to express John Broome’s ideas as presented in his text *Climate Matters*. This allowed us to focus on a sole analytic thinker in more detail in order to be able to more precisely pinpoint the problem of the mindset. That which believes some adjustments can be made to adequately combat this oncoming leviathan. Even though Broome’s philosophy is pragmatic, there seems to be something missing and Broome himself seems to be aware of it as was revealed in Sections I, “Situating Broome in the Discussion, and II, “Broome’s Econo-Philosophy.” While on one hand, he tout’s economics as a panacea for the world’s problems, on the other, he acknowledges that although economics is a highly practical tool, it ultimately does not rest on “first principles.” He appears, at times, to be torn between what is and what needs to be—a completely new culture, mindset, and way of doing things. This is often

expressed in terms of the problem of valuation and the values that underlie cost-benefit analysis. It also becomes increasingly apparent when he writes about private morality. Though he might make the argument that the individual should shift his/her behavior because of a duty of justice toward others and also noting that moral arguments will not suffice to change life-long behaviors ensconced in a Western tradition of hyper-individualism and intra-social competition. This becomes an odd internal monologue that is written out over the course of three decades for the reader. Section I of Chapter 3 showed how Broome, a classical economist, looks to philosophy to help ground economics, but always falls back on economics to solve the problem of valuation.

Section II focused on Broome's practical solutions and methodologies, outlining the Compensation argument and the Non-Identity argument to help bolster his suggested solutions of using cost-benefit analysis, discounting, and offsetting as a short-term solution to move us forward. Section III, "From Left Field," makes small but compelling arguments as to why Broome's solutions, though a good start within our given system and our current political climate, are ultimately not enough to prevent or deal with the looming impact of climate change; it does not provide a long-term solution. Something that is missing within the climate philosophy as a whole. The problem argued (and will continue to be argued in the subsequent pages), stems from a mentality that harbors certain values as the primary existential filters. In other words, values employed by the individual of particular society that lend the necessary tools and faculties which in turn render a navigational compass within that society. It is these values that create the ideology of a culture, or mindset, that needs to be altered if there is to be genuine systemic change capable of achieving sustainability given our current technological knowhow. Economics itself needs to be altered radically in a way that can accommodate sustainable work and sustainable lifestyles. One that aligns itself with universal ethical principles that work at the

behest of all, not just a select few. To do this, the Zeitgeist of our current paradigm, i.e. incessant growth and profits, division, self-orientedness, and system that promotes a steady and consistent existential angst, must cease. A small shift, while maintaining our current way of life, is not adequate. Nevertheless, as Broome suggests, using economics as a means of transition is certainly a step in the right direction—that of “breaking up” the political “logjam” while simultaneously decreasing greenhouse emissions—but it falls short of describing the full scope of what is genuinely needed. Conversely, Fromm would implore us to consider such economic practicalities concomitantly with reassembling the underbelly of the human motive and experience.

Part II: Fromm and Humanism

This part will delve into Erich Fromm's body of work, in order to offer a supplementary contribution to the climate crisis conversation. It is the intention of this part to show that Fromm's humanism, influenced mainly by Freud and Marx, can lend us the requisite tools for achieving the appropriate attitude for what would bring about a sustainable future beyond the merely satisfactory. Considering the mindset of the current social paradigm, Fromm's conversational interjection offers us a 'Copernican turn' in the field of climate ethics, prioritizing the 'inner' world of human beings over the external. As discussed in part I of the dissertation, Climate ethicists largely use external/extrinsic circumstances as primary motivating factors, e.g. poverty, pollution, population, etc., as well as a means for solutions, e.g. science, economics, government. Fromm, on the other hand, begins from the internal, the psychic/psychological life of individuals, and works his way toward the external. Ergo, instead of empirical cause and effect he directs our gaze toward immaterial considerations, working from the inside out, from one's psyche and into its effect on our environment.

The importance of Freud and Marx is as plain as day, as they are a recurring theme in most of Fromm's work, which include works such as *Sigmund Freud's Mission: An Analysis of his Personality and Influence* (1959); *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961); *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (1962); and the *Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought* (1980). In addition to having entire books dedicated to them, Freud and Marx are often a major point of discussion from which Fromm continuously returns to draw water

from. It is important to briefly consider Fromm's intellectual influencers in order to demonstrate that he understood his project to be founded on what he believed to be objective laws of man's nature, not to be transgressed but to be respected and nurtured.

Through Freud one can see that Fromm's humanism is borne of and rooted in a scientific tradition. This is a crucial insight because it is easy to be dismissive of a humanistic philosophy as some may suggest that it is too fluid of a concept, leaving its lack of specificity vulnerable to a wide variety of interpretations. Any recommendations given by Fromm, pertaining to existential matters, are grounded on scientific observation and clinical investigation. Thus, while his humanistic theory would implore us to work from the immaterial to material i.e. from our inner world to the outer one, it nevertheless is backed by investigations into the necessary empirical implications—rooted in the scientific tradition—of his immaterial theory, having begun with Freud's influence and lending Fromm scientific legitimacy.

The tradition follows as such: Freud was the pupil of Franz Brentano, Carl Claus, and Ernst Wilhelm von Brücke, all innovative scientists at the University of Vienna, along with Josef Breuer, the doctor who opened the door for Freud, allowing for the merging of science and health. Freud conducted research on the eel life cycle alongside Claus, a Darwinist professor specializing in marine zoology who studied cell biology.²¹⁹ Despite his eel study results being inconclusive, Freud's experience with invertebrates did not end there. He spent many years studying the differences between human and vertebrate brains and that of frogs and invertebrates

²¹⁹ Sigmund Freud (1877). *Beobachtungen über Gestaltung und feineren Bau der als Hoden beschriebenen Lappenorgane des Aals* [Observations on the configuration and finer structure of the lobed organs in eels described as testes]. *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Classe*. Vol. 75, 419. Freud's study was in response to Szymon Syrski's book *Ueber die Reproductions-Organ der Aale* (1874); see Ursula Reidel-Schrewe "Freud's Début in the Sciences" in Sander L. Gilman, Jutta Birmele, Jay Geller, Valerie D. Greenberg eds., *Reading Freud's Reading* (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 1–22.

like lampreys.²²⁰ These years were spent studying under Brücke, a physiologist whose influence on Freud and his research was arguably the most significant. From him came the idea that living things are dynamic and ruled by the sciences of physics and chemistry.²²¹ Lastly, Breuer was the final piece of the puzzle in setting Freud in the direction of psychoanalysis in the famous case of Bertha Pappenheim known as Anna O. and the “talking cure” used to treat her diagnosed hysteria. Thus, his insights were ultimately based on empirical observation: that the psyche and empiricism were interconnected and co-influential.

Freud’s influence on Fromm—along with Fromm’s subsequent acceptance or rejection of particular aspects of Freudian theory—demanded that his critical theory account for the inherent underlying influences of ontology, physiology, neo-Darwinian evolution, and psychological structures involving energy pathways and momentum. Fromm is therefore continuing this inherited journey, which he joined, adopted, and adapted alongside Marxist sociological, economic, and collective parallels.

Fromm begins *Marx’s Concept of Man* (1961) by writing, “Marx’s philosophy, like much of the existentialist thinking, represents a protest against man’s alienation.”²²² It is made plain from the onset of the book that the basis for Fromm’s humanism is the relationship man has with himself. The relationship one has with himself is paramount, since it ultimately translates to activity; mindset generates perspective and it is perspective that is the direct causal conduit to

²²⁰ In this period, Freud published three papers: *Freud, Sigmund* (1877). *Über den Ursprung der hinteren Nervenwurzeln im Rückenmark von Ammocoetes (Petromyzon Planeri)* [*On the Origin of the Posterior Nerve Roots in the Spinal Cord of Ammocoetes (Petromyzon Planeri)*]; Sigmund Freud (1878). *Über Spinalganglien und Rückenmark des Petromyzon* [*On the Spinal Ganglia and Spinal Cord of Petromyzon*]; Sigmund Freud (1884). "A New Histological Method for the Study of Nerve-Tracts in the Brain and Spinal Cord". *Brain*. **7** (1): 86–88. For a more in-depth analysis cf. Lynn Gamwell and Mark Solms, Mark, *From Neurology to Psychoanalysis* (State University of New York: Binghamton University Art Museum, 2006), 29–33, 37–39.

²²¹ Cf. Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 34-36.

²²² Erich Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1961), v.

one's behavior. For Fromm, the individual's relation to the world is given by his particular mode of activity.²²³

Objectively speaking, man must have sustenance and shelter prior to the pursuit of politics, science, art, and religion. The production of material means—and consequently the degree of economic development—form the basis upon which the social and political institutions have evolved. Therefore, the prevailing practice determines man's mode of production and consequently his relationship with himself, the world around him, and his practice of life.²²⁴

Marx “analyzed in detail what these institutions are, or rather, that the institutions themselves were to be understood as part of the whole system of production which characterizes a given society,”²²⁵ thus “various economic conditions can produce different psychological motivations.”²²⁶ The broad argument made by Fromm is that a system that produces a culture that idolizes possessions as a means of creating a criterion for status and social hierarchy (especially within the context of climate change), will unwittingly create a group of maladapted individuals. This is because they are concentrated mostly on attaining, possessing, maintaining, using and discarding (external) goods rather than focusing on the (inner) self, along with the qualities that make life worth living. Such conduct likely makes for an alienated populace. It was this Marxist fear, that the type of society which *has* much, would stymie the free unfolding of man's human powers and potentiality, and would ultimately cripple the individuals that partook in it.

²²³ Cf. *Man for Himself*, chap. II, sec. 2b.2-ff.

²²⁴ Cf. Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Reinhart & Company Inc., 1955), 261.

²²⁵ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 40.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

The point for Marx, and later for Fromm, is to maximize the positive expression of the individual's potential. The means of production constitute the social arrangement of any given society and are a single expression of a given potential. But, in being expressed, it consequently detracts from the multifarious potential, by limiting man to the social constraints of such expression. Fromm writes that "[man] is not what he ought to be, and that he ought to be that which he could be."²²⁷ Hence, from a humanistic perspective, the duty of society is not to merely allow the individual to work to exist, but to exist in order to work so that its citizens might flourish, having found meaning in their productivity. Fromm quotes Marx from his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in what was to be later used by him as the descriptive basis for his characterology and the healthy existential attitude, i.e. Marx's alienated labor, became Fromm's humanistic alienation of self; the unhealthy way of life behaving as a framework from which to formulate a depiction of health by utilizing a method of dichotomizing.

The conjoined movement of both internal and external processes alike for Frommian thought, by way of Freud and Marx, is an ongoing social evolution with socialism as its telos. Socialism, in a Marxist sense, he tells us, "can only come, once man has cut off all primary bonds, when he has become completely alienated and thus able to reunite himself with men and nature without sacrificing his integrity and individuality."²²⁸ For Fromm then, the individual must therefore "...accept responsibility for himself and the fact that only by using his own powers can he give meaning to his life."²²⁹ These 'powers' are elements which, when focused

²²⁷ Ibid., 39.

²²⁸ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 57.

²²⁹ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 45.

on, become the productive social forces that foster, as a primary import, the pursuit of human development as a whole and the individual alike.

Given Marx's influence, Fromm was able to identify the importance of society and the impact that it has on individual development, allowing him to take a position of balance: that individuals and society are inextricable components of each other. If social institutions are failing, they will affect individuals. If individuals, in turn, are failing to adequately contend with the aforementioned existential strain, they will affect the purpose of institutions and the ideals they might espouse. Therefore, Freud's assessment of the individual's relation to the whole and Marx's analysis of the impact the whole had on the individual, are what synergistically came together to influence his humanism; a vision that strives to strike a balance between the two extremes with the hope that it will assist humanity by allowing it to take evolution into its own hands in a way that is beneficial to the species, and the planet as a whole.

Marx's contribution to Fromm was entirely different from Freud's. While Freud lent Fromm the consideration of objective qualities which could behave as the basis and criteria of psychological health, Marx's contribution gave Fromm specific qualities that would allow a society to make progress. In other words, Marx lent vision and trajectory to Fromm's humanism.

Chapter 4: Fromm Here to There

Prior to discussing Fromm in relation to climate change and the benefits he might bring to the discussion, a solid understanding of Fromm is necessary. This needs to begin with his ontology of man as a frame for understanding the rest of his thought process which culminates in the application of his humanist ideals. To that end, this chapter aims to discuss the prevalence of dichotomized thought in Fromm's corpus, but more specifically taking from the *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1976)²³⁰ in order to show how he created a criterion and standardization for existential health. With respect to the general thesis statement of this dissertation—that the climate philosophy community might benefit from adopting and incorporating a humanistic perspective²³¹—this chapter will attempt to assist in that endeavor by supplying two things. The first is to finally provide a more concrete definition of humanism. The second is to provide a

²³⁰ From this point forward referred to as the AoHD.

²³¹ Regarding the general discussion of the climate philosophy community, it has been argued thus far that after having achieved some set of conversational parameters and preliminary agreements—in this case, some essential elements that assist us by considering the nature of human beings—can there be a more focused plan involving universal mobilization and adequate institutional restructuring. A single example of a current evaluative criterion is that which falls within the purview of economic theory and aids in the promotion of a “successful” economy. Essentially, the problem of valuation cannot be adequately accounted for by treating it as though the solution can be found solely within the realm of economic theory and current market-economy models. To do so would be to erroneously liken mankind to nothing more than random consumer preferences, each of which, in its relativistic flux is a) no better or worse than any other and b) only takes into consideration the external life of human beings—often in the form of busy work—which is further reduced to an arbitrary pros and cons list used to keep these economic modes of existence in a state of indefinite perpetuity. The downside is that, man serves the economic system instead of the system serving man. Hence the argument is that the lack of social mobilization and sufficiently focused goal-oriented trajectory is due to a lack of consensus with respect to the concept of human nature, i.e. what it is, and therefore means, to be human. Only then can we judge whether our current mode of existence is ultimately beneficial or detrimental and maladaptive. The great task ahead is to achieve a unanimity pertaining to the ‘core’ common to all human beings, regardless of culture, creed, or country. Humans, in their manifold manifestations and realizations, whether pathological or otherwise, are not devoid of intrinsic qualities and capacities, and furthermore, to see that society is amenable to these attributes.

conversational framework or structure in order to allow for a potential implementation of an underlying and unifying ethical foundation that establishes a principle of health for individuals and societies. Therefore, the structure of this section will proceed as follows: first, I will consider the conceptualization and utilization of hope in the first section, “Fromm’s Motivating Force: Getting Gas.” Next, in section two, “Fromm’s Ontology: Here,” a brief account of the *AoHD* will be given along with what I believe to be its intent and purpose in relation to the rest of his oeuvre. This will be followed by a further exposition of his *dichotomies* in the third section, “Frommian Dichotomies: Albuquerque, along with how they interrelate and how they provide a basis for a foundational theory for mankind’s universality. Last, in section four, “Manifest Destiny: There, I detail the architecture of man’s nature, along with how such a theory ultimately produced a psychological account and framework for a humanistic ethics and subsequently, healthy behavior. The intent is to finally synchronize this chapter with the ‘Green’ mindset given in the next chapter to converge with the over-arching goal of transitioning from mindset back to behavior—having analyzed behavior and mindset in the previous chapters and making our way from mindset to behavior again. The idea is to grant ourselves tools so that we might better analyze part I of the dissertation, having made the leap from outlook to action, theory to suggestive practical examples, and destructive tendencies to healthy ones, finally concluding on a potentially new criterion that can help to guide actionability.

Section I: Fromm’s Motivating Force: Getting Gas

I would like to begin this section not with an immediate exposition into Fromm’s theory of human nature but by instead discussing the importance of hope as necessary for an outlook bound to a healthy existential orientation. Having given very specific overview of Fromm’s

intellectual inheritance —deciding instead to give the reader more insight into his theoretical legacy as opposed to a biographical account—for the purpose of giving context to his theory of *being* and his art of living, this section, albeit stemming from and grounded on scientific and empirical observation, ought to begin with the flavor of spirit. There is an old Arabian proverb that says “He who has health, has hope; and he who has hope has everything.” For Fromm, apparently in full agreement with the proverb, the proper attunement for a healthy human begins and ends with *hope*.

For Fromm, having been influenced by Marx and Freud, and having accepted the humanistic call-to-arms from their work, remained more in line with the Marxist spirit than with the Freudian one.²³² The contrast between their philosophical interpretation of man’s place (as well as potential) in terms of evolutionary history was precisely that of faith. While Marx, on the one hand, was unwaveringly partial to the idea that mankind possessed the ability to transcend and progress, Freud, on the other hand, had a more skeptical outlook.²³³ Despite the fact that Freud worked as a healer, attempting to alleviate psychosomatic stress and pain of the individual and restore them to a place of health, in terms of his more macro conception of mankind i.e. human evolution. It could best be described as the great chagrin destined to be frustrated in perpetuity. In other words, there is no upward mobility or existential progress outside of technological advancement. Should man give up his drive for progress and return to a primitive

²³² Stewart Jeffries in *The Grand Hotel Abyss* discusses Fromm’s departure from the Freudian camp which would lead to friction with other leading members of the Frankfurt School, writing, “Later in his intellectual distancing from Freud, Fromm argued that this socialization of character began at infancy but was not so much rooted in instincts as in interpersonal relationships. By the time he came to write *Escape from Freedom* in 1941, he thought that instincts were shaped less by the sublimations Freud posited than by social conditions. Initially, Horkheimer took Fromm to be an intellectual ally in his shifting of Marxism from focusing on impersonal economic forces to a negative critique of the culture of modern monopoly capitalism. It was only later in the 1930s that Horkheimer and indeed Adorno would become queasy about Fromm’s anti-Freudianism.” (Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss*, 154)

²³³ Cf. Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 37.

state, he could have pleasure but at the expense of wisdom. Should he instead double down on civilization, he would attain a measure of wisdom but increased discontent was sure to follow. Fromm writes that “For Freud, evolution is an ambiguous blessing, and society does as much harm as it does good.”²³⁴ There is no genuine upshot then whether humanity develops, stagnates, or regresses. Each option has its benefits as well as its cost. Pathological tendencies abound and are inevitable in lieu of social decay and annihilation. Fromm then, while adopting Freudian theory to supplement and serve his own theory of human nature, ended up traveling down the path of the Marxist tradition, ever hopeful for a better future. Hope then is the essential ingredient toward genuine progress, as well as a key indicator of overall health.

Though scientific facts and data can lend us insight by describing the ‘lay of the land,’ intentionality, directionality and foresight, can only be conceptualized through man’s assessment of the empirical. For Fromm, “‘facts’ are interpretations of events, and the interpretation presupposes certain concerns which constitute the event’s relevance.”²³⁵ At the risk of sounding cliché, health, is the cornerstone of human flourishing and is an interactive composite of body and mind. Health is something that is both obvious and self-evident while at the same time being hidden and vague. Additionally, psychological health can often be shift and elusive. Much of the behavior expressed in an unhealthy mindset can be easily rationalized and justified in any number of ways, most insidiously of all, in the (often) unaware individual doing the expressing. When observing the behavior of an individual or a community, the outlook and mindset are far from an inconsequential matter and should not be overlooked. For Fromm, social constraints, pressures, and relationships, are major factors in producing and promoting personality types,

²³⁴ Ibid., 37.

²³⁵ Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope* (New York, Harper and Row, 1968,1970), 62.

along with the corresponding attitude. But equally important is the power an individual has to recognize and willfully shift from an unhealthy mindset to a healthy one. By doing so, the shift of mindset can produce a prodigious change in the individual, along with his behavior, and, when applied to a mass of people, this can cause a radical social change. The two dance the same tango. The looming problem then is not being able to see the forest for the trees. How is an individual, or a society for that matter, able to shift in mindset should everyone suffer from a pathological defect? How likely is it that the constant addition of more facts and data will be interpreted in ways that afford a maladaptive society to spontaneously shift in attitude and behavior?

Hope, for Fromm, is a sign of mature and healthy psyche since it denotes and colors a certain type of existential outlook. Interestingly, Fromm concludes the *AoHD* with an epilogue titled “On the Ambiguity of Hope.” Having just written a book which took a firm stance against the either/or option of the two predominating psychological camps at the time—*Instinctivism*, supported by the likes of Konrad Lorenz (1963),²³⁶ and *Behaviorism or Environmentalism* established by J.B. Watson (1914), reaching its theoretical zenith with the ‘neo-behaviorism’ of B.F. Skinner (1953, 1971, 1974)—opting instead for middle ground that was evinced in his argument and supported by case studies and clinical observations. He concludes the book with a unique perspective about hope. The *AoHD* is an extensive work which analyzes both of the aforementioned intellectual poles and where Fromm proposed an alternative theory to better

²³⁶ Concerning Instinctivism, Fromm writes, “This history began far back in philosophical thought, but as far as modern thought is concerned, it dates from the work of Charles Darwin. All post-Darwinian research on instincts has been based on Darwin’s theory of evolution” (*AoHD*, 34). Fromm additionally mentions William James (1890), William McDougall (1913, 1932) as well as Freud himself, though labelled as a ‘neo-instinctivist’ along with K. Lorenz, as contributors to a theory which describes the nature of human beings akin to a “hydraulic scheme.” For example, in the case of Freud, as the libido increases, s rise, and displeasure also increases. Sex helps to release this tension albeit only for a limited amount of time until the cycle starts back up again. Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, 34-35.

describe the nature of man and his psychological health. By the end of the book, one finds himself confusedly asking, why did Fromm end on such an obscure message of hope? After all, what does hope have to do with health? As far as I could tell it was because health and outlook share a symbiotic relationship. A healthy psyche and disposition work together to form its supporting existential orientation and behavioral comportment, respectively. Reciprocally, in Fromm's view, the same can also be applied in the reverse; proper existential orientation and behavioral comportment help to generate a healthy psyche and disposition. The message of normative humanism then is simple: If we can manage to pay proper homage to the existential needs that are inherent in all, however one might choose to (subjectively) pursue them, it would assist in promoting harmonious relationships amid the individual with himself, society, and on a grander scale, the planet's ecological boundaries.

On the topic of hope, "The attitude of the majority..." Fromm grimly writes in the epilogue of the *AoHD*, "...is neither that of faith nor that of despair, but, unfortunately, that of complete indifference to the future of man."²³⁷ Given the current temperamental climate, this may be a bit dated. Emotions are certainly bubbling, and one prays that they do not spill over. He describes the attitude of those who are not completely indifferent in our society—those who fall into the all-to-often assigned categories of "optimist" or "pessimist." For him, the distinction between the two is not a significant one. Given our society, the optimists are often those who "...are the believers in the dogma of the continuous march of 'progress.'"²³⁸ People who tend to confuse the difference between human achievements with technical achievement and consequently, often have a rather myopic comprehension of particular values. Whereby the

²³⁷ Fromm, *AoHD*, 484.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 484.

concept of freedom, to many, is the freedom *from* direct coercion or, the freedom *to* choose commodities of their liking in a consumerist society. Their confidence in the current institution is unshakable, so much so that "...even the threat to the future of their grandchildren does not genuinely affect them."²³⁹ Many of the philosophers discussed in prior sections of the dissertation adequately evince such classification and serve as prime examples of this type of thinking.

Continuing to describe the problem of society's outlook in the *AoHD*, equally effete and ineffective are those who look to the future pessimistically since they too are just as unengaged and deluded. For them, the fate of humanity is as little concern as that of the optimist. And, for Fromm, "they do not feel despair," for if they did, "they would not, and could not, live as contentedly as they do."²⁴⁰ The function of a pessimist then is to protect themselves from a call-to-action and the inner demand to do something. Both optimist and pessimist alike are alienated beings who simply wish to remain cocooned from the realities confronting them. Thus, their value schema remains circumscribed to cultural particulars: values such as cooperation, solidarity, kindness, compassion, and sacrifice take a back seat to the ones which uphold the delicate veil of the status quo.

Hope then is that which allows one "...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"²⁴¹ and must be undergirded by *faith*.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 485.

²⁴¹ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 22.

Today the lack of faith is the expression of profound confusion and despair. Once skepticism and rationalism were progressive forces for the development of thought; now they have become rationalizations for relativism and uncertainty. The belief that the gathering of more and more facts will inevitably result in knowing the truth has become a superstition. Truth itself is looked upon, in certain quarters, as a metaphysical concept, and science as restricted to the task of gather information. Behind a front of alleged rational certainty, there is a profound uncertainty which makes people ready to accept or to compromise with any philosophy impressed upon them.²⁴²

Where hope is an acknowledgment of the sober realities of current circumstances along with a projected aim for the better, faith is the foundation which hope rests upon. Faith is not an irrational act but an ability to recognize the elements which are at play and to visualize the ‘un-see-able,’ given one’s understanding of the potentiality of ongoing dynamic. Ergo, this interaction between hope and faith is paradoxical in nature; it is the certainty of the uncertain alongside the willingness to draw from that uncertainty a respective certainty. In other words, it is certainty of man’s vision and comprehension, not a certainty in terms of the final outcome of reality.²⁴³ Fromm maintains that no faith is needed in what is scientifically predictable, nor can there be faith in what is entirely impossible. Faith is not an irrational endeavor but a rational one. One which is based on our experience of living and self-transformation. An instance of faith he provides as an example is that my “Faith...” in the fact “...that others can change is the outcome

²⁴² Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 198.

²⁴³ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 26.

of the experience that I can [change].”²⁴⁴ Given this understanding of faith, Fromm asserts that any process of critical and creative thinking begins with a “rational vision” as a result of previous study, reflective thinking and observation.²⁴⁵ In fact, science itself is often replete with instances of faith. An active attribute necessary for its performance.

When the scientist succeeds in gathering enough data or in working out a mathematical formulation, or both, to make his original vision highly plausible he may be said to have arrived at a tentative hypothesis. A careful analysis of the hypothesis in order to discern its implications and the amassing of data which support it, lead to a more adequate hypothesis and eventually perhaps to its inclusion in a wide-ranging theory.²⁴⁶

Hence, according to Fromm, every theory is postulated by having faith in the governing axioms. In the case of a scientist, his ability to generate a hypothesis derives from an implicit (and often unconscious) acceptance of reason as being the most dependable tool for empirical study. Faith lends the scientist a motivation to pursue and engage in the activity/research of his choosing, that a hypothesis leading to a potential theory is plausible, and even that the acquisition of knowledge is possible. It is therefore “rooted in one’s own experience, in the confidence in one’s power of thought, observation and judgement”²⁴⁷ and absolutely vital if one is to “...dare, to think the unthinkable, yet to act within the limits of the realistically possible.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 205.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Fromm, *AoHD*, 485.

It is that which tethers one's existential disposition, and ultimately lends impetus to the potency of one's behavior. Thus, the objective psychological dynamic forces, discussed above, become manifest in a world whereby one's inherited phenomenological confidence is rooted in rational faith of his accepted axioms i.e. the "facts of life" seldom questioned.

Such a question (also posed by radical skepticism) cannot be answered by proof or demonstration of reason—because it is reason itself that is in doubt. An apt example of this problem is demonstrated by the 11th century Islamic philosopher Al Ghazali. In considering whether reason is reliable, he noted the problem succinctly: "the only way to put together a proof was to combine primary cognitions [i.e. first principles]. So if, as in my case, these were inadmissible, it was impossible to construct the proof."²⁴⁹ Therefore, the only way of answering such a question is through belief—through adopting the notion as an axiomatic assumption that serves as the foundation of all other thought, and the basis for answering all other questions. In a more limited way, physics rests on the axiomatic assumption that all phenomena can be described in terms of mathematical equations. There is no way of demonstrating the axiom, but until one accepts it as true, one cannot begin to do physics.

A further complexity, Fromm makes division between *rational* faith and *irrational* faith. Faith therefore works in two distinct ways. The first is what was stated up until this point. That faith is that which upholds one's axioms about the nature of existence and lends some basis for how one ought to conduct himself throughout its course. The acceptance of these core assumptions is based on faith and is the most fundamental and most basic step when interacting and engaging with empirical reality. This is responsible for generating our understanding of

²⁴⁹ Al Ghazali, Muhammad, "Munkidh min al-Dalal" (Deliverance from Error), in *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali* by Montgomery Watt. Tr. Montgomery Watt (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951), 24-26.

interactive relationship between the ‘dynamic forces’ of our internal life and its external counterpoint—both of which have their own set of pre-given assumptions. All axioms are therefore undergirded by a measure of faith.

Second, for Fromm, faith must be of a *rational* quality instead of an *irrational* one. An irrational faith, for him, is an alien source. In other words, it is not generated and accepted by oneself but is suffused and imbued into one’s character traits through culture or an authority figure. Speaking of irrational faith, Fromm says, “By irrational faith I understand the belief in a person, idea, or symbol which does not result from one’s own experience of thought or feeling, but which is based on one’s own emotional submission to irrational authority.”²⁵⁰ Conversely, rational faith is a “firm conviction based on productive intellectual and emotional activity.”²⁵¹ Such an example would be the activity of the scientist discussed above. Therefore, creative thinking/activity often beings with a “rational vision”²⁵² that is rooted in the qualities of a rational faith. Qualities such as previous study, reflective thinking, and observation. All of which ‘add up’ to something universal and produce a type of personally assessed and accepted objectivity, as opposed to “the acceptance that something is true only because an authority or the majority say so.”²⁵³ Since, the qualities rendered from personal conviction are universal in breadth and depth, rational faith becomes an indispensable quality for procuring/attaining significant engagements with the world such as friendships, love, or being able to see the ‘potential’ in others, etc. since all of these require a type of rational faith.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 201.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 205.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ At first glance it appears as though Fromm equivocates when using the term *faith*. For example, if rational faith is something that I must accept for myself, first off, how might this apply to the faith discussed earlier that is the

Faith then is the first ‘movement’ in interacting with the external. Rational faith is the recognition that we are endowed with the proper tools in order to adequately navigate it. It is one additional step further albeit minute in scope. It is, for all intents and purposes, an activity. One which chooses to engage with the world personally, instead of passively. Furthermore, it is this engagement with the world, which begins with ourselves, that ultimately manifests as particular activity. Returning to the beginning of the section, *hope* then, takes this concept even further by

foundation of all axioms, since I would likely be unaware of those axioms in the first place? Nor would I need to be aware of them in order to function well. Second, if everyone should look to their own judgement in order to possess a rational faith, would this not lead to a type of relativism? How is it possible that everyone who self-asserts and accepts their existential axioms does not inevitably lead to the problem of relativism? At best, this appears to be a problem of definition whereby the faith which undergirds the axiom is different from a rational and irrational faith. How do these two definitions work together? The problem (and solution) seem to stem from Fromm’s understanding of the faith altogether. In *The Pathology of Normalcy*, he discusses this problem in depth by using the example of the dichotomies and contradictions found in human existence—as discussed above, some of which are that we are both in and apart of nature while being independent of it, animalistic in nature but distinct from animals, possess both reason and imagination, etc.—and that we “confronted with these contradictions in our existence...have to make some sense of our life.” Therefore, an existential axiom would be that “we cannot stand living, merely eating and drinking and making sense. We have to give some answer to the problem of living and we have to give some answers theoretically and practically.” Due to this axiom, “we need a frame of reference in which we orient ourselves in life, which makes the process of living and our position in it somehow sensible and meaningful” and that “This is not only an intellectual frame of reference, but we need also an organizing principle of an object of devotion, of something to which we devote our energies beyond those which we need for producing and reproducing.” In the following paragraph, Fromm goes on to suggest that if he were to be pressed on this issue and asked “is this perfectly axiomatic?” and if so, “how can one prove it?” he would be forced to say that he would not be able to “prove it to anyone’s satisfaction” and that this is a consideration drawn from his own “observation.” (cf. Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 26-27). The paradoxical dichotomies of the psychology of man is the axiom itself and is taken on faith via observation and study. This process, though personally procured, would be equally recognized by someone else should he too decide to dismiss the capriciousness of irrational faith, and instead opt for the objectivity to be found in rational faith. The reason being is that these axioms or assumptions generate value judgements which are in fact “objectively valid and not a matter of taste.” Fromm goes on to explain that “just as the doctor or physiologist can make an objectively valid statement that we begin with one axiom, and that is: to live is better than to die, or life is better than death, then indeed this food is better than another one. This kind of air, or rest or amount of sleep is better than another one...” and that “...we can make an equally objective statement about what is good and what is bad for our soul, based on whatever knowledge we have about its nature the laws that govern it.” (cf. Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 18-19). Then it appears as though Fromm understands *rational* faith—the fundamental assumptions we make about the cosmos, who we are, and how to comport ourselves within it—is capable of being ‘matched-up’ with objective reality. That given these inherited tools of reason—which we take on faith—, can yield an understanding of an objectively ascertainable and understandable world, and along with it a more accurate worldview. The only difference between a rational faith and an irrational one is that I must seek these indelible truths for myself as opposed to having them foisted upon me by culture since, it appears, it is through a plethora of cultural truths where one ends up plagued by a relativistic outlook. I wish to say to my committee, that I recognize that this is all taken on a measure of ‘faith’ and it is Fromm’s use of such a word that saves him from some obvious pitfalls regarding metaphysics, epistemology, teleology, etc. Further research into this topic would be personally edifying and perhaps even shed light on his philosophy as a whole.

revealing an attitude oriented around health. Fromm then poignantly concludes the *AoHD* with an explication of a healthy disposition after having written a book describing the pathologies of particular characterologies.

When gauging socio-psychological phenomena in terms of the distribution of the manifest dynamic forces, what becomes relevant is not solely the explicit actions of the individual but also the underlying character structures, or semi-permanent sub-structure, which behaves as the primary motivating agent for the behavior. Fromm suggests that this type of theoretical classification allows for a type of characterological objectivity that further provides a type of scientific portent. Hence, it was surmised that a theory which takes into consideration the fundamental mechanics of the psyche could actively engage one's potential in ways that not only maximizes it but also affords the individual a greater probability at achieving eudaimonia through properly oriented activity given the inherent mentality.

The key correlate between this theory and Fromm's understanding of the important role of hope is the direct relationship hope has with activity. In other words, it is a relationship of mutual reciprocity and interdependence to be exercised from within to without. Hope then, "is a state of being."²⁵⁵ A particular composure which influences outward activity having understood the potential that lay dormant in mankind but that can be tapped into for health-bound activity and life-serving action as opposed to the alternative apathetic "optimism" and "pessimism" or, a more sinister and destructive mindset. Viktor Frankl summed it up nicely when he wrote "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose

²⁵⁵ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 24.

one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."²⁵⁶ Hope then is that which grants the individual the activity borne of a perception of a propitious future.

Section II: Fromm's Ontology: Here

The previous section discussed the relationship between Fromm's conception of hope, faith, and activity. The intention was to show the progressive steps that begin with faith, advance to hope and finally graduate to biophilic activity as the basis for orienting the individual and community toward a more progressive and sustainable iteration of itself. The assumption is that the odds of discovering the 'right values' by some obscure mathematized method, even if successful, will fall short of any long-term solution and ultimately fail the test of time if those values are not inculcated and reflected within the system.

An alternative solution, if not found in the analysis of the analytic camps and mathematical extrapolation, is to produce a branch of study whose main function would be to unearth and "recognize laws inherent in human nature and the inherent goals for its development and unfolding."²⁵⁷ To do this we must begin by first admitting and identifying that "just as man transforms the world around him, so he transforms himself in the process of history."²⁵⁸ For Fromm,

The approach of normative humanism is based on the assumption that, as in any other problem, there are right and wrong, satisfactory and unsatisfactory solutions to the problem of human existence. Mental health is achieved if man develops into full maturity according to the characteristics and laws of human nature. Mental illness consists in the

²⁵⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 66.

²⁵⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 13.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

failure of such development. From this premise the criterion of mental health is not one of individual adjustment to a given social order, but a universal one, value for all men, of giving a satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence.²⁵⁹

Hence, the main thesis of the *AoHD*, along with Fromm's overall development of a humanistic ontology, was that to take a purely biological stance with respect to how we confront and interpret the nature of mankind would be inane. Such was the intent of the Instinctivists²⁶⁰ of the late 19th and the Neo-Instinctivists of the early 20th century who, as described by R.A. Hinde, set forth biological models that "share the idea of a substance capable of energizing behaviors, held back in a container and subsequently released in action."²⁶¹ Conversely, a purely sociological/environmental biological model, such as the Behaviorist and Neo-Behaviorists' of later decades is equally flawed.²⁶² These two views were diametrically opposed. The behaviorists believed instead that "man's behavior is exclusively molded by the influence of the environment, i.e. by social and cultural, as opposed to 'innate' factors."²⁶³ This would only serve to give us a limited description of man since each theory is one side of the same coin. Limitations are bound to arise since both theories lack a full account in their assessment and moreover, have a tendency to take an absolutist position.

Fromm's *AoHD*, provides an argument—supported by clinical case studies—that act as an empirical foundation for his humanism (and the advent of any future research to be conducted

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 14.

²⁶⁰ Cf. footnote 78, 23.

²⁶¹ Robert A. Hinde, "Energy Models of Motivation," in *Readings in Animal Behavior*, ed. T.E. McGill (New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1960).

²⁶² Cf. p.23 and footnote 147.

²⁶³ Fromm, *AoHD*, 55.

on such matters). By focusing on the problem of human aggression, he attempts to readjust the focus of each of these extremes by merging and transcending the fallacious false dilemma of man, i.e. that he is a solely a product of biology or solely a construct and consequence of social Shibari.²⁶⁴ Fromm attempts to overcome this intellectual misgauge by making three particular assumptions:

First, that the main passions and drives in man result from the *total existence* of man. Second, that the passions and drives within man are definite and ascertainable and that we are not condemned to be governed by epistemological shortcomings. And third, that some of the passions and drives of man are conducive to health and happiness while others give way to sickness and unhappiness.²⁶⁵ This includes the complete composition of what man's nature and, ergo, biological capacities are; what his environment is; the potential/ability in working with, overcoming, and transforming either of these influential factors; and how either side of the duality is further interpreted and understood by the individual and society. Either of these descriptive poles of human nature work together to influence the belief in the overall capacity of personal empowerment.

By way of exposition for these assumptions, Fromm notes that "any given social order does not *create* fundamental strivings"²⁶⁶ but rather acts as a conduit from which very specific personal constructions emerge out of an already "limited number of potential passions [that] are to become manifest or dominant."²⁶⁷ With this totalizing approach, inquiry into existential affairs

²⁶⁴ This is a form of Japanese bondage in which the bondage is intended to be pleasurable to the bondee as well as the bonder, thus encouraging the bondee to stay bound, and to return to be rebound, as often as possible.

²⁶⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 14.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

becomes essential since an active investigation of both intrinsic biological and extrinsic environmental factors working together can shed light on any neuroses and pathologies that may be currently at play should we truly be in need of an immediate cultural and institutional overhaul. In other words, a science of man can search and clarify the basis for an objective standard of healthy versus unhealthy mindsets and can be a step in the direction of overcoming our maladaptive behavior and laying a foundation for more environmentally ameliorative and benign behavior. The more insidious issue with unhealthy mental states is that they can aggregate and accumulate to form a socially patterned defect that, if it were to become commonplace within a culture, can enable an individual—as well as entire societies—to live with psychical defects without being perceived as ill but instead appearing to be perfectly normal.²⁶⁸ In relation to climate change and the current global circumstance, as noted in the penultimate sentence, such investigation becomes imperative since it can lend important insight into the active resistance toward taking substantial adaptive measures. To give an example that helps to elucidate the point: we are consumers in a consumer society which encourages constant and ever growing consumption, i.e. social health is equivocated with economic growth, so we are left to constantly apply band-aids, and can never be in balance with nature since the system we have developed forces us to out-grow it (and discard it once used).

Fromm can provide us with a starting point with respect to the creation of an effective humanistic science of man since he spent a considerable amount of time investigating parts of the cognitive sub-strata which he called *characterologies*. Currently, these varying internal character structures work in conjunction with external forces to produce what might

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 15-16.

appropriately be regarded as a disenlightened society in pursuit of a maladaptive course of action despite an overwhelming amount of empirical data advising the contrary. This is an exposition beyond the tools available to the analytic climate ethicists discussed in part I. With their focus on the external, and the minutia of the issue, these thinkers lock themselves into a mental orientation that does not allow for the generation of a unifying ethical trajectory. Explicitly, Broome's use of various economic modelings and expositions relegates his recommendations to the same problematic realm that generated the problem he is attempting to fix. Fromm allows for an evaluation of these tools, providing the missing criteria for the criteria, the latter of which is the subject of concern for the analytic climate ethicists who have been dominating the conversation so far.

If political policy is currently undermining the scientific data—assuming there's some measure of accuracy behind it—a humanistic inquiry into the nature of man would ask such questions as: If the ethos of a society as a whole is pathological to the point of keeping the entirety of the international community hostage, stagnantly affixed to a historical cross-road, how and why have the citizens of such a nation come to be willfully ignorant of their maleficence and from where does the nature of such destructive behavior stem from? Fromm's *AoHD* attempts to supply an answer to the nature, problem, and manifestation of human aggression, along with its iteration into anti-biophilic behavior by drawing from his descriptive dichotomies. These dichotomies are the value natural labels ascribable to individual and social psychical motivations. They are parameters for measuring psychic eupepsia. Fromm himself uses a philosophy of dichotomies to enable him to overcome the problem of the intellectually antagonistic description of mankind. Understanding these dichotomies is essential to understanding his philosophical corpus, which will assist us in basing our evolutionary trajectory

on matters of health and the flourishing of life in every respect by cthonically undergirding a new principle of health for both individuals and societies alike.

In order to shed light on these relevant dichotomies, Fromm looks to Freud to provide the contrast, more particularly to the instinctivist/biological portion of his theory of human nature. Fromm reveals a discrepancy in Freud's work: the need for a theory of love. The shortcomings of Freud's theory of aggression and destructiveness are robustly explored in the appendix of the *AoHD* as perhaps a way of revealing the parallels in Fromm's humanistic psychoanalytic theory since they were not included in the body of the book. According to Fromm, in line with neo-instinctivist theory, Freud's theories of human motivation revolved around the axiom of "tension and reduction."²⁶⁹ This axiom, which undergirds Freud's theory of the libido and the pleasure principle as well as his later developed theory of the death instinct, "owes its existence to the thinking characteristic of German mechanistic materialism."²⁷⁰ The theories were formed in such a way as to fit the physiological and biological mold of his education without the evidence of clinical observation.²⁷¹

Prior to 1920, Freud hardly paid any attention to human aggression.²⁷² It was only afterward that he attempted to develop a theory of aggression. Thus, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Freud revises his libidinal instinctive theory—which, according to Fromm,

²⁶⁹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 521. Cf., footnote 78., 23.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 527.

²⁷¹ Fromm here points to the mechanistic-materialist influences of Helmholtz, Buchner, and particularly von Brücke. He quotes Freud speaking as early as 1888 speaking of a "stable amount of excitation." (Freud, 1888). This principle which becomes more fully formed by 1892 when he wrote, "The nervous system endeavors to keep constant something in its functional relations that we may describe as the 'sum of excitation.' It puts this precondition of health into effect by disposing associatively of every sensible accretion of excitation or by discharging it by an appropriate motor reaction." (Freud, 1892, quoted in Fromm, *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 521)

²⁷² Fromm, *AoHD*, 486.

prioritized hate as a more primary/primeval instinct rooted in the ego and instincts of self-preservation²⁷³—to a newly dichotomized theory involving Eros and the death instinct—discussed at length in the *The Ego and the Id* (1923). Initially, where aggression may have been manifest in feelings of self-preservation as a mechanistic form of chemically induced tension-discharge, the later theory of Eros and Thanatos take a more biological approach where each living cell embodies each of these existential poles i.e. life and death. Fromm notes that “the principle of tension reduction is preserved in a more radical form: the reduction of excitation to zero (Nirvana Principle).”²⁷⁴

In this reshuffling, the most glaring contradiction in Freud’s work is not the addition of an unconscious death-wish, so-to-speak, but the fact that it is concatenated alongside a theory of love. Sexuality had been divorced from aggression and love, despite retaining and maintaining his concept of the psyche being a type of energy reservoir with a pressure release valve. Fromm writes that “this vision of Eros, present in every cell of living substance, has as its aim the unification and integration of all cells, and beyond that, the service of civilization, the integration of smaller units into the unity of mankind.”²⁷⁵ Freud had stumbled upon nonsexual love, where love is identified with life and growth and a constant struggle against the death instinct in an epic battle for the determination and outcome of human existence. With this contrast, man is no longer subject to isolated and egotistical impulses but is in a state of relation to others, transfixed by life forces that make him recognize a bond and union with them. Fromm qualifies this shift as

²⁷³ Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, 488.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 491. Fromm illustrates that this shift was “radical,” despite it being unbeknownst to Freud. This leads to many inconsistencies in his theories. Fromm also suggests that one of the reasons for this shift was World War I, which forced him to consider and create a theory of “non-sexual aggression to burst forth in full strength.” cf., Fromm, *AoHD*, 493.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 493.

“radical,” since “Life, love, and growth are one and the same, more deeply rooted and fundamental than sexuality and ‘pleasure.’”²⁷⁶

In Freud’s death instinct, Fromm explains, the concept was produced as a means to accommodate his new theory on aggression but was also instrumental in preserving his dualistic concept of instincts where Eros and Thanatos supplanted the ego instinct and libido as a primary codependent generating force. Fromm discusses the *ad hoc* nature of this revised theory and its aftermath:

The death instinct became a “catchall” concept, by the use of which one tried without success to resolve incompatible contradictions. Freud, perhaps due to his age and illness, did not approach the problem frontally and thus patched up the contradictions. Most of the other psychoanalysts who did not accept his concept of Eros and death instinct found an easy solution; they transformed the death instinct into a ‘destructive instinct’ opposed to the old sexual instinct.²⁷⁷

Theories of aggression and destruction evolved out of a need to salvage the theory from the inconsistencies produced in a “catchall” theory divorced from any particular bodily zones—lacking the same “rhythmic character of tension, de-tension, tension.”²⁷⁸ Instead, Freud shifted to a biological and vitalistic description of energetic transmutation created by the interplay between

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 494.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 502-3.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 407.

the polar forces of Eros and Thanatos; a gap which, according to Fromm, Freud never attempted to “bridge” but preserved their unity by a semantic equation of: life = eros = sexuality (libido).²⁷⁹

Fromm’s departure from Freud was an attempt to restructure psychoanalysis into a viable theory about characterological differences. The hope was that such a theory, empirically confirmed, would serve to better understand and predict behavior by allocating it to particular mental states. Adopting Freud’s theory of personality and psychosexual development then, Fromm maintained the structure of polarity in his revised theory; elements which are originally divorced from each other, come together and become classified in the dualistic archetypes of *masculine* versus *feminine*; behavior influenced by mindset becomes described in terms of *having* versus *being*; or psychological predispositions give way to particular thoughts and actions in the form of health and pathology classified as *biophilia* versus *necrophilia*. The once broad “catch-all” Freudian theory of the death instinct now becomes more refined, recast as a type of

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Fromm states that the one of the major hypotheses proposed in the *AoHD* is a linking of Freud’s older and newer psychoanalytic phases by retaining some of his major theoretical elements pertaining to individual development. As discussed earlier in the section, and as is already well-known, the process by which all individuals develop orientated through the genitalia, i.e. oral, anal, phallic, etc. Fromm attempts to bridge the gap between Eros and Thanatos by showing that Freud’s theory reflected a similar understanding, despite the fact that it was not made explicit. Thus, for Fromm, *necrophilia*—tendencies that advocate for actions which either represent or generate death—is ascribed to a “malignant” form of Freud’s anal character, while *biophilia*—tendencies which aspire to preserve and further engender life and the living—is represented as the fully developed form of the genital character. For Fromm, the anal and genital character are likened to an existential application. Whereby the anal character exhibits tendencies to “hoard,” the genital character, i.e. a fully mature and developed being, exhibits a healthy *productiveness*. Fromm writes, “I have kept Freud’s clinical description, but have given up the notion of the physiological roots of these passions.” Cf., Fromm, *AoHD*, 407, footnote 36. He also briefly discusses Freud’s direct influence and impact on his anatomy of human destructiveness, as well as his notion of humanism, writing, “...as much as my clinical research influenced me [in the analysis of the necrophilic character], I believe the decisive impulse came from Freud’s theory of the life and the death instincts. I had been deeply impressed by his concept that the striving for life and the striving for destruction were the two most fundamental forces within man; but I could not reconcile myself to Freud’s theoretical explanation. Yet Freud’s idea guided me to see clinical data in a new light and to reformulate—and thus to preserve—Freud’s concept on a different theoretical basis...” (Fromm, *AoHD*, 369)

psychologically *necrophilic*²⁸⁰ disposition. Biophilic behavior in turn or, more broadly speaking, biophilia, is defined by Fromm, as “a passionate love of life and all that is alive”²⁸¹ and is the basis for his humanism. A person who exhibits biophilic tendencies often:

prefer[s] to construct rather than to retain. He wants to be more rather than to have more. He is capable of wondering, and he prefers to see something new rather than to find confirmation of the old. He loves the adventure of living more than he does certainty. He sees the whole rather than only the parts, structures rather than summations. He wants to mold and to influence by love, reason, and example; not by force, by cutting things apart, by the bureaucratic manner of administering people as if they were things. Because he enjoys life and all of its manifestations, he is not a passionate consumer of newly packaged “excitement.”²⁸²

Such are the tendencies of a mature and healthy adult. Virtue cannot be divorced from the context of one’s psychological orientation.²⁸³ Ergo, ethics, from a biophilic vantage, is all that serves to advance life. The “good” is the promotion and welfare of life and the flourishing thereof, whereas the “evil” harms it and contributes to its decay. Destruction is therefore understood as necrophilic—the love of death. When comparing the difference between the two terms in Fromm’s humanism, the immediate and most glaring distinction is that biophilia and

²⁸⁰ The word *necrophilic* will denote, for this dissertation, any type of neurotic symptoms which manifest in destructive behavior. From the slight to the extreme, and solely with regard to malignant aggression, as opposed to that of benign or defensive aggression.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 406. Fromm notes that there are obvious parallels between his conception of biophilia and Albert Schweitzer’s, who was “one of the great representatives of the love of life—both in his writings and in person.” (Fromm, *AoHD*, 406).

²⁸² Ibid., 406.

²⁸³ See, section I: *Freudian Influencers*, 5, and 22, footnote 78.

necrophilia are not on equal footing with each other. In other words, although they are a distinguished and dichotomized descriptive pair, it is not a balance and eternal struggle between good and evil, like the yin-yang of Chinese cosmology. There is an obvious hierarchy between the two poles as opposed to Freud's theory. Freud's concept of the two differs by the fact that both were of an equal rank since both derived from an inherent biological up-swell.

The main argument in the *AoHD*, then, in keeping with the Eros-Thanatos dichotomized format, instead substituted it for a the biophilic-necrophilic duality. More importantly, it described biophilia as a state of "normalcy" in terms of human nature and its biological imperative, leaving malignant behavior and its necrophilous extreme as a state of abnormality; an aberration of conduct, or a sickness in need of correction and mending like that of a broken bone. Depending on the degree with which the bone is offset, more drastic corrective measures would be needed in order to bring it back into alignment. Necrophilic tendencies are a product of psychopathology, emergent "as a result of stunted growth" and of "psychical crippledness."²⁸⁴ The factors responsible for producing a psychological state of immaturity include the failure to arrive at a certain stage beyond that of narcissism and indifference, mainly due to an 'interference' of one type or another.

The destructive tendencies of a necrophilic disposition are not parallel and equal to biophilic characteristics as they are in Freudian theory. For Fromm, these tendencies are instead a direct substitution and replacement of biophilia. Should biophilic expression and education be confined, suppressed, or maimed, an alternative outlet is available. Fromm contends that the basis for psychic health is man's ability to enact and fulfill an existential need for self-assertion.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 406.

Impact and effect behaving as a causal chain helps to shape our identity. This results in an existential feedback loop since identity and the world become an interrelated mode of action and perception. Should an individual believe himself to be vitally impotent in a situation where he cannot create anything, move anybody, or mark anything, any natural biophilic predispositions will be displaced and succeeded with a penchant for necrophilic activity. Such behavioral reorientation is a reaction to biophilically stagnant circumstances and an instinctive need to relieve himself of this existential powerlessness. Hence, a person would “affirm himself in the act of destruction of the life that he is unable to create”²⁸⁵ since biophilic behavior often requires “great effort, patience, and care,”²⁸⁶ as opposed to “destruction [where] all that is necessary is strong arms, a knife, or a gun.”²⁸⁷ In doing so, one sacrifices core elements needed to secure long term flourishing for the sake of the instantaneous gratification that comes with momentary self-assertion.²⁸⁸

Tying this concept to the previous section, the correlation between the self, despondency, and necrophilic maladaptation often stems from the shattering of hope—a “hardening of the heart” whereby there is a loss of compassion and empathy—which in turn lends an individual to either conform to mass expectation or, much more drastically, results in violence and destructiveness. Destructiveness is the alternative to hope, just as attraction to death is the alternative to the love of life. And, as concluded in the previous section, health and outlook go hand-in-hand and cannot be divorced from one another.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 407.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Fromm, *A Revolution of Hope*, sec. 7, “A shattering of hope.”

With the distinction between life affirming versus death espousing predilections, then aggressive and destructive behavior, according to Fromm, is the result of shirking objective existential needs and responsibilities required for flourishing. This consists of both an adequate ideological orientation as well as an actionable orientation, i.e. healthy attitude and healthy action. Just as physical health can only be objective since it is bounded and constrained by compulsory parameters of biophysics, equally so is man's psyche tied to the demands of our existential ordonnance. It is this aspect which Fromm attempts to draw upon in order to unearth a universal understanding of human nature along with its demands. And, as mentioned before, to ignore such specific requirements would be to potentially induce inevitable neuroses within an individual or a community alike.

Human nature, then—if we are to draw a functional argument from which to engineer an actionable framework—described from a biological and evolutionary perspective, has arrived at a point in history where the emergence of man from a primitive state is based on two fundamental conditions: The first condition is a biological trend found in animal evolution, namely “the growth of the brain, and particularly the neocortex;”²⁸⁹ the second trend, Fromm states, was the “ever-decreasing determination of behavior on instincts.”²⁹⁰ In the former, it is possible to plot a trend where on one end features the simplest of animals with the most primitive nervous structure, while on the other, is man, with the larger and more complex brain structure, “especially a neocortex three times as large as that of even his hominid ancestors, and a truly fantastic number of interneuronal connections.”²⁹¹ The latter trend is a process of ever-

²⁸⁹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 252.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 252.

decreasing determination of behavior controlled by instinctual impulses. Once again, according to Fromm, if plotted as a continuum, the lowest forms of animal evolution contain the highest degree of instinctive behavior, which decreases as the trend proceeds toward more complex creatures such as mammals, and further into primates, and finally mankind.²⁹² In analyzing biological trends, he summarizes his conclusion, saying

Considering these data, man can be defined as the primate that emerged at the point of evolution where instinctive determination had reached a minimum and the development of the brain a maximum. This combination of minimal instinctive determination and maximal brain development had never occurred before in animal evolution and constitutes, biologically speaking, a completely new phenomenon.²⁹³

Regardless of whether *Homo sapiens* were the first to evolve as such, or to this extent, is rather beside the point. The salient idea is simply that human beings are different. They are neither completely controlled by instinct nor in complete control of it. Therefore, we cannot fall prey to an associative fallacy by making a hasty generalization. Furthermore, this bounded in-between state—yet another dichotomy—as discussed earlier, is a theoretical state allowing our existential framework to be woven into our psychological expression. Man’s cognitive progress—that of self-awareness, reason, and imagination—has disrupted the harmony with which instincts continue to preserve and corral animal existence, keeping them intact and sufficient,²⁹⁴ and has therefore served to manifest the dichotomies responsible for an awkward coloring of our phenomenological experience. Hence, we cannot stand to exist in a state where

²⁹² Ibid., 251.

²⁹³ Ibid., 252.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 253.

we live in order to merely sustain biological needs or to live a life of infinite repetition without giving meaning to it.²⁹⁵

Additionally, when attempting to construct an accurate description of man, along with some of the unique elements confined to and comprising his essence, Fromm believes that one must refrain from doing so by ascribing specific qualities to paint our qualitative experience. This is because they would always fall short, and thereby fail, to provide a satisfactory characterization. He writes, “man’s nature cannot be defined in terms of a certain quality such as love, hate, reason, good or evil” but only in terms of the “fundamental contradictions that characterize human existence and have their root in [the] biological dichotomy between missing instincts and self-awareness.”²⁹⁶ This then becomes the objective groundwork on which biophilic and its necrophilic substitutive counterpart can be viewed as a theoretical basis for human psycho-existential needs—it is the foundation of one’s character.

To talk about humans as creatures that can love, conceive beauty, think, etc., would certainly fall shy of a holistic and accurate description—always being in jeopardy of missing some additional essential quality. Furthermore, these are traits that might also be shared, and therefore no longer be unique to humans, with other animals. For they too can love, fear, think, use tools, etc. Thus, qualities make for a sloppy and often ill-ascribed characterization of mankind. Instead, Fromm limits the complex manifestation of our situatedness to a description of means used to help us integrate and overcome the problem of the existential dichotomies.

²⁹⁵ cf. Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 26-27.

²⁹⁶ Fromm, *AoHD*, 255.

Section III: Fromm's Dichotomies: Albuquerque

As briefly mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the importance of using the dichotomized description in Fromm's work is key to understanding his philosophy as a whole. As a quick note to the reader, Fromm uses dichotomies to refer to the *existential dichotomies*. Fundamental and foundational components of the psychic architecture that are responsible for spawning traits and attributes unique to humans. Second, though the term 'dichotomies' is often reserved by Fromm for the specific term "existential dichotomies," dualistic language appears throughout his philosophical framework. In fact, dichotomized vernacular is the core composition of his humanistic philosophy and extends beyond that of the technical use of the term as will be shown in the following paragraphs. These dichotomies serve not only to describe the nature of man and his happenstance, but also to ascribe, proscribe, and prescribe behavior—the topic of the final chapter.

As stated previous paragraph (and loosely mentioned throughout the second part of the dissertation), the term "existential dichotomies" is a technical term referring to the experience that appears to be unique to humans on the whole and is a product of having become divorced from our "prehuman state of harmony with nature."²⁹⁷ This detachment has thrown us into a cognitive disequilibrium, which, along with reason, imagination, self-awareness and the minimization of instincts, created the qualities that make him distinct from the rest of the animal kingdom. That is, granting man an apperception to differentiate and see himself as distinct from others, to reminisce, recall, and rewrite the narrative of the past along with the trajectory of his future, to affix symbolism and meaning to objects and experiences, to conceive and understand

²⁹⁷ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 40.

the nature of his reality along with the world he resides in, all while being “the most helpless of animals.”²⁹⁸ According to Fromm, it is this very biological weakness that is the basis for man’s strength, enabled by the existential dichotomies, and prime cause for the development of his specific human qualities.

Thus, the existential dichotomies are the lifeblood by which the “dynamic energetic forces” are circumscribed and are forced to express themselves in a more systematic way. Hence, the foundation of our makeup is one of discomfort, pain, angst, and suffering, since—as mentioned several times thus far—we are dispossessed among two all too apparent existential extremes of these inherent psychical contradictions. These contradictions manifesting in us are turning us into an anomaly which is a part of nature and subject to her laws, while simultaneously allowing us to lord over it and manipulate it (and himself) along with its creatures; we are born without one’s consent and at a random place and point in time, making us feel homeless and alone, yet we are provided with a historical context with its own unique ability to help us relate to others and be interrelated.

That man is mortal and between life and death—the most profound existential dichotomy for Fromm²⁹⁹--breeds an awareness that profoundly influences our lives. Yet death remains extraneous to and incompatible with the experience of living. Thus, we are individually (and even communally) infinitesimal amidst a backdrop of an infinite creative potential that is bound by a biological dichotomy between missing instincts and self-awareness—a demand forced to be expressed and navigated alongside social demands. It is these fundamental contradictions that most characterizes human existence and produces psychic needs common to all men. The most

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 42.

powerful forces motivating man's behavior stem from these conditions of existence, forcing him to perpetually seek a new equilibrium.

In the *AoHD* this broad consideration of existential dichotomies—an endless list to be sure—ends up being boiled down to three main “horrors” of man: that of separateness, powerlessness, and lostness—to be elaborated below.³⁰⁰ Juxtaposed with their opposites of unity, effectiveness, and rootedness, it is from these three main dichotomies that we attempt to overcome our existential angst. Each of these needs “can be satisfied in different ways, which vary in different ways according to the social condition”³⁰¹ and manifest themselves in different passions such as love, a striving for truth, a striving for justice, care, liberty, a striving for happiness, or conversely, more pathological traits such as hate, suppression, order by subjugation, masochism, narcissism, sadism, etc. For Fromm, these strivings are the passions, which he aptly refers to as *character rooted passions* since “they are integrated in man's character”³⁰² and ingrained in the existence of man. Given the fundamental nature of these dichotomies in man's experience with the internal (and therefore external) realms, they can also provide the structure for a society that promotes and produces a healthy or unhealthy psyche, both on a social as well as individual level. The latter of the aforementioned traits being a consequence of powerlessness, separateness, and lostness, while the former result from prioritizing unity, effectiveness, and rootedness. The climactic leap here is the underlying assumption of this dissertation that a healthy society is more likely to be partial toward

³⁰⁰ Cf. Fromm's *AoHD*, 247-282.

³⁰¹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 255.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 255.

maintaining a biophilic relationship with nature and works to foster a similar mindset within its populace.

The existential dichotomies, reason, and character rooted passions or, human passions, are all in a type of everlasting dynamic dance. Having lost paradise, and “having become an eternal wanderer,” man is forced to cope with the irreconcilable and insoluble problem of his dichotomies by trying to solve them with reason and interacting with them through his passions. Thus, character is “the relatively permanent system of all noninstinctual strivings through which man relates himself to the human and natural world.”³⁰³ It is a substitute for missing animal instincts that may be aptly considered as man’s second nature since it helps to organize the world and orient him in it. In sum, then,

What all men have in common are their organic drives (even though highly modifiable by experience) and their existential needs. What they do not have in common are the kinds of passions that are dominant in their respective characters—character rooted passions.³⁰⁴

To be clear, what is not common to all of man is the attention that is given to particular existential difficulties by placing communal emphasis on particular passions. Even more subjective is how the individual decides to conform to or reject the *Zeitgeist* of his community. Ergo, another implicit dichotomy is created. Where on the one hand, there is a ‘natural’ category composed of existential dichotomies and physical instincts, on the other, you have a historical category of the character-rooted passions.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the need to overcome the internal

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ More about the historical category to be discussed below.

contradictions is not to be ignored but is instead compulsory. All passions and their subsequent manifestations are “attempts to find an answer to his existence or, as we may also say, they are an attempt to avoid insanity.”³⁰⁶ Both the mentally healthy as well as the neurotic are necessarily predisposed to search for answers to life’s great mysteries and to cope with problems of existence. The difference between them is that the former corresponds more with the total needs of man, the unfolding of his powers, and happiness, than the latter.³⁰⁷

Though it is impossible to ever find a solution to these existential contradictions, to ignore them would be to risk insanity.³⁰⁸ The need for a frame of reference or an existential orientation is paramount to the individual. This makes it impossible to be ‘disoriented’—for lack of a better word—since to exist is to be forced to engage in one way or another. To exist is to be condemned to engagement. Whether one is an idealist, in the colloquial use of the word, or a nihilist, a perception of life, its meaning, and one’s active role within it cannot be escaped. Hence one’s character informs and dictates one’s orientation. The need for a frame of orientation is so intense that it often creates bewilderment in many students of man who have observed the ease with which people can fall under the spell of irrational doctrines, whether they be political, religious, or any other type.³⁰⁹ Unconscious psychical directionality attempts to overcome the internal divide, indicated by an incessant craving for absoluteness.³¹⁰ This craving is mitigated only by achieving a cohesive orientation or ideological map to direct behavior, not unlike a compass.³¹¹ For Fromm, this is made evident in our inexorable push for progress.

³⁰⁶ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 29.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 260.

³¹⁰ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 41.

³¹¹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 260.

The needs and passions that give life to this orientation are, in a traditional Frommian classification, dichotomized. The *existential dichotomies*, more specifically the “horrors” of lostness, powerlessness, and separateness, result in a need to be rooted, to be effective, and to have unity, as discussed above. Each of these further divides into an additional dichotomy. Fromm, following in Freud’s footsteps,³¹² explains our need for ‘rootedness’ as a symptom of severance, saying,

When the infant is born he leaves the security of the womb, the situation in which he was still part of nature—where he lived through his mother’s body. At the moment of birth he is still symbiotically attached to mother, and even after birth he remains so longer than most other animals. But even when the umbilical cord is cut there remains a deep craving to undo the separation, to return to the womb or to find a new situation of absolute protection and security.³¹³

Man, being aware of his separateness, needs to create new bonds to stave off psychological degeneration. This is the reason why solitary confinement is considered torturous even though no physical pain is being inflicted upon the individual. Our need to be amongst, to feel related, is imperative to our psychical and psychological wellbeing. Rootedness is further subdivided by Fromm. On the one end of the spectrum resides the biophilic manifestation of *brotherliness*, while its more inimical counterpoint on the opposite end is *incest*.

Since the way to paradise—a return to nature along with the cessation of apperception—is no longer possible due to man’s biological and neurophysiological constitution, man appears

³¹² Cf., *AoHD*, footnote 10, p.261.

³¹³ Ibid.

to have two options. The first is to allow the craving of regression to persist and to look for a mother-like alternative which can offer the semblance of a ‘womb-like’ security. Incestuous behavior is not only restricted to a fixation for mother, or any other elementary ties of blood, such as to family and clan, but can later extend to that of the state, nation, church, etc.—all of which “assume the function which the individual mother had originally for the child.”³¹⁴ The individual now, instead of developing his power of independence, relies on people or institutions to feel rooted, provide identity (as being a part of them as opposed to being apart from them and taking part in them), and be sheltered and existentially fed by them. Alternatively, there is another way to overcome intense feelings of utter isolation and lostness.

The second option is to learn to relate himself to the world in “ascertainable ways.”³¹⁵ That is through love, since to effectively do so would require independence and existential productiveness (to be discussed below), thus approaching the problem of non-belonging in a biophilic fashion. A society which attempts to move from the incestuous to a loving method of addressing lostness would concomitantly be inclined towards a more biophilic constellation of character rooted passions, beginning a psychic reunion between man and nature.

Moreover, the need to feel a unity and to be effective, takes on a similar spectrum of dichotomized boundaries which in turn develops into a spectrum of dichotomized behaviors (ranging from healthy to pathological extremes). With respect to the existential problem of powerlessness, our need to have effect and impact on the world around us is evident from childhood. Contextual conditioning is responsible for a child’s behavior and can (and often does) influence behavioral patterns in their adulthood. For example, if every time a child cries, it elicits

³¹⁴ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 41.

³¹⁵ Fromm, *AoHD*, 262.

a wanted reaction from adults, this behavior can be used as an ‘effective’ tool in acquiring something they want or particular attention. This type of behavior can continue into adulthood in the form of entitled tantrums, aggressions, emotional abuse through guilt, tears, or self-victimization, etc. Regardless of this example, the point is that the need to interact with the world whether it be with objects or people is necessary in developing a sense of identity.

The identity idea of “who I am” is partly constructed on the idea of what one is capable or incapable of doing along with their perception of each of those factors. Nevertheless, Fromm states that if an individual were to experience themselves as an entirely passive being, as a mere object, he would “lack a sense of his own will, of his identity.”³¹⁶ Thus to help mitigate this and prevent himself from being “washed over” by the infinite, he must “acquire a sense of being able to do something, to move somebody, to ‘make a dent,’ or...to be ‘effective.’”³¹⁷ Ergo, when assessing one’s relationship with others, one can generate a feeling of potency, causing particular effects. Given their character, a person may be inclined to cause either love or fear and suffering. Similarly, in objects, one can have a predilection to either construct or destroy. Both of the interactive dichotomies—biophilic activity as well as destructive tendencies—stem from an inherent need to overcome vital impotence and the vulnerability felt against the backdrop of a sublime universe.

The unbearable existential split in man’s psyche can be subdued by establishing a sense of unity within himself, and with the external world comprised of humans and nature. The conscious can be “anaesthetize[d]” by inducing states of trance and ecstasy mediated by drugs,

³¹⁶ Ibid., 264.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

sexual orgies, fasting, dancing, ritual, etc.³¹⁸ The attempt to reestablish unity can also be achieved through the process of identification. In more primitive societies, one can observe the attempt to restore psychic harmony by identifying with certain totem animals, whether through prayer or mimicry. There are numerous ways that the mind can reinsert itself in a state of holism.

Unity can be established by subordinating all energies to one all-consuming passion. This can be a passion for destruction, power, wealth, fame, hoarding, dominating, etc. All of these passions can act as an anesthetic by assisting the individual to “forget oneself.”³¹⁹ For Fromm, “it is the tragic attempt, in the sense that either it succeeds only momentarily (as in a trance or in drunkenness) or, even if it is permanent (as in the passion for hate or power), it cripples man, estranges him from others, twists his judgement, and makes him as dependent on this particular passion as another is on hard drugs.”³²⁰ Man is again presented with a bifurcated option: that of relatedness, on the one, or narcissism, on the other. To achieve a state of psychological health, then, man can only overcome his fear of aloneness through the development of reason and love. Unable to achieve a state of cognitive maturity—one which includes the mutual and concomitant growth of the intellect *and* emotion—man is condemned to be psychologically crippled. The inability to establish a ‘oneness’ with the self and the world inevitably manifests as psychological trauma and becomes expressed in varying degrees of pathological behavior(s).

Therefore, man’s character structure is necessarily formed as a product of his phenomenological situatedness, i.e. his existential dichotomies arising from a decrease in the instinctive equipment in man. Effective behavior is the ability to act immediately in an integrated

³¹⁸ Ibid., 262.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 263.

³²⁰ Ibid.

manner without being hindered or delayed by too much doubt or excess thought. A viable substitute for instinctive behavior then is a function which would enable man to “act as *if* he were motivated by instincts,”³²¹ namely character.

Character then, according to Fromm, is “the specific structure in which human energy is organized in the pursuit of man’s goals; a person acts ‘instinctively;...in accordance with his character.’”³²² The character-conditioned drives are so strong that the person merely feels as though they are ‘natural’ without having to question their motivation. Fromm gives us the example of a miser who does not ponder whether he should spend or save, or the exploitative-sadistic character that is driven by the ‘instinctive drive’ to dominate and exploit others. The concept of the character is crucial to understanding psychic health, more especially destructive tendencies that are malignantly aggressive. The destructive and sadistic passions in a person “are usually organized in his character system.”³²³ Character is the system of psychic expression attempting to thwart the madness evoked by our existential condition.

To summarize in the spirit of the dichotomy, Fromm’s technical use of *existential dichotomies* refers to the objective needs found in every human having evolved in such a way that has placed us in a psychologically precarious position—always working to stave off insanity beset by intense existential confusion. The classical journalistic questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how, all apply to the individual over the course of a lifetime, and are further hyperbolized by fear of aloneness, displacement, and powerlessness. Regardless, the pacification of the psyche can be achieved in a variety of ways, all of which are further broken down in an

³²¹ Ibid., 282.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid., 284.

either/or categorized fashion. In the case of our need for rootedness, one's character can tackle the demand by either achieving a sense of solidarity, brotherly love, and/or mystical experiences that render a worldview comprised of a totalizing network of interdependent interactions between individuals and nature, or, contrariwise, through addiction, depersonalization, and dependency. The need for effectiveness can be answered either by love and productive work or by sadism and destructiveness. Unity, relatedness, and the need for an object of devotion can be expressed by an abstract figure like God or concepts such as love, truth, justice, reason, etc., and by being kind, compassionate, loving, etc. Conversely, the same can be achieved through idolatry of destructive idols, and through dependency, masochism, sadism, and malignant aggression. Either method would be sufficient to resolve the tension in an individual's psyche, however Fromm clearly places them in a moral hierarchy: the biophilic over the necrophilic and the maladaptive.

Section IV: Fromm's Character: There

Though the passions are represented by Fromm as dichotomies, seldom are they expressed in such a cut-and-dry way since they "do not appear as single units but as *syndromes*."³²⁴ Behavior such as constructiveness, love, justice, reason, and interrelatedness are all various aspects and manifestations of a single "life-furthering" productive orientation. Expressions of destructiveness, sadomasochism, greed, narcissism, and incestuousness, all similarly stem from a "life-thwarting" syndrome. Moreover, Fromm notes that where "one element of the syndrome is to be found, the others also exist in various degree."³²⁵ Thus, what we

³²⁴ Ibid., 285.

³²⁵ Ibid., 285.

see are multitudinous forms of expressive behavior that all stem from either a biophilic orientation or a necrophilic one. But that is not to say that a person is ruled by either one syndrome or another. Rather, it is almost always a blend of both syndromes. He suggests that “what matters for the behavior of the person and the possibility of change is precisely the respective strength of each syndrome.”³²⁶ What matters is the intensity with which the qualities of either one of the syndrome become manifest. We can now draw a link between mindset and behavior: namely, that of one’s character rooted passions and the way one engages with the world.³²⁷ Engagement is, more often than not, a mixture of the dichotomies expressed in varying degrees of intensity along its spectrum.

With respect to varying intensities, first, one might observe the action itself. For example, to satisfy the inherent craving of belonging, an individual must find alternative means by which to generate ties. In this particular instance, in an attempt to fend off the feeling of isolation or lostness, one can relate himself to other people in the world in a variety of ways. One might love others. To do so adequately, one must achieve a “presence of independence and productiveness.” Therefore, a level of freedom is necessary in order to acquire a relatedness through love.³²⁸

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, “Conditions for the Development of Character-Rooted Structure,” 284-299.

³²⁸ Essentially what we see here is a type of virtue “stacking” where to achieve one virtue, a series of others might be necessary. This is what Fromm means by “syndrome.” For example, to love someone might mean that you have to see yourself as independent from them and yet possess the willingness to walk alongside them. Thus, one needs independence along with the ability to execute a sense of self while making space for the other, to achieve productiveness. To do this, one must also be fearless. To achieve a measure of fearlessness one must also achieve a measure of bravery. To achieve a measure of bravery, one must acquire tenacity. To acquire tenacity, one must first possess honesty and the acceptance of responsibility, and so on and so forth. Therefore, the simple act of giving love, to express a genuine care for the flourishing of another being, is an expression of a multitude of “life-furthering” virtues. They do not stand apart from one another but are inherently part of the same vitalistic source. All such virtues can be followed in a causal contingency chain, i.e. x is necessary to achieve y, y for z, etc., but in time, the chain seems to loop back around in an odd type of circular reasoning. Fromm therefore simply compiles all such virtues under the heading of biophilia.

Supposing though that one's sense of freedom is not adequately developed, one can achieve a state of relatedness through *symbiosis*. In other words, instead of an interdependence, relatedness can be had through dependence where a person becomes a part of someone or something, or by making someone or something part of themselves. For instance, in the symbiotic relationship of sadism, one strives to direct or control others. Conversely, in masochism, one chooses to relate themselves by being directed or controlled by another. More drastically, if one cannot find a way to relate themselves through love or symbiosis, the problem of relatedness can be solved through narcissism. In such an instance, the individual "becomes the world, and loves the world by 'loving' himself."³²⁹ These are all different ways with which relatedness can be achieved, keeping in mind the potency and blended overlap.

Furthermore, suppose, as is often the case, that narcissism is blended with sadism in a more extreme version of each of the expressions. This, given the level of intensity, can lead to unadaptable pathology, e.g. madness. The most extreme behavior results in a malignant form of attempting to solve the problem through the craving to destroy all others. Fromm suggests that "if one exists outside of me, I need not fear others, nor need I relate myself to them. By destroying the world I am saved from being crushed by it."³³⁰ Alternatively, if an individual is related to the world, there is no need for the malignant forms of expression; rather than seeking to destroy the world, one's feelings of self-preservation are not activated and one becomes able to love and preserve the environment they find themselves in. This is one of the necessary concepts missing from the climate ethics discussion that could allow for the conceptualization of a sustainable solution.

³²⁹ Ibid., 262.

³³⁰ Ibid.

Assuming that Fromm is correct in his various descriptions of man's inner life, his project would still be incomplete. A map is not enough as a guide for action, humanity also needs a goal to aim for and that gives it direction. The animal has no such problems. Its instincts provide it with a map as well as with goals. But mankind, lacking instinctive determination and possessing a brain that permits him to think in a multitude of potential directions, needs an object of total devotion; it needs an object of devotion to be the focal point of all its strivings and the basis for all its effective –and not only proclaimed—values. Such an object of devotion is necessary for several reasons. The object integrates one's energies in singular direction. It helps to elevate a person beyond his isolated existence with all its doubts and insecurity and gives meaning to life. In being devoted to a goal beyond one's isolated ego, one transcends himself and leaves the prison of absolute egocentricity.

These 'objects' of devotion can be expressed in any number of translations from the mental state of character rooted passion to expressive behavior. To reiterate, our need to overcome our fear of separateness by being rooted, our powerlessness by being effective, our lostness by being unified, all manifest themselves as a manifold means of relating ourselves to the world. Fromm calls these needs *character rooted passions*. In other words, one's character often draws upon such existential motivators as energies from which to disperse and create oneself. One's character is "the relatively permanent system of all non-instinctual strivings through which man relates himself to the human and natural world" and therefore lends us our framework for ideological mapping. It is through rooted passions, born of man's dichotomies, where the potential of man lies dormant and awaits social extraction in order to harden into activity; the devotion to the chosen object. Regardless, Fromm still sees social extraction as

ultimately being subsumed under the rooted passions since he contends that any type of social influence “can only work through the biologically given conditions of human existence.”³³¹

Character rooted passions, then, are responsible for the development of *character*. Man’s character becomes the “relatively permanent form in which human energy is canalized in the process of assimilation and socialization.”³³² Character rooted passions are therefore the primary and fundamental cause of behavior, since they underlie character, and are directly responsible for a person’s relatedness to the world—energies that are displaced, if one recalls, by the precious nature of our existential dichotomies. Only upon understanding man’s character can a discussion be had pertaining to ethical theory since it “is both the subject matter of ethical judgment and the other object of man’s ethical development.”³³³ While we often generate ethical theories to account for man’s behavior, behavior needs to also be understood in terms of ethical production. In other words, theory and practice cannot be divorced from each other and need to correspond in such a way that there is sufficient explanation as to why behavior falls short of moral rectitude.

The study of personality then is essential to understanding behavior since it is the “totality of inherited and acquired psychic qualities which are characteristic of one individual and which make the individual unique.”³³⁴ The personality can be further divided into a dichotomy of inherited qualities versus acquired qualities. While inherited qualities are

³³¹ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 59.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., 54.

³³⁴ Ibid., 50.

composed of “temperament,³³⁵ gifts, and all constitutionally given psychic qualities,”³³⁶ acquired qualities are generated through their interaction and the way the world is impressed upon the individual—as a response, it is a conformity and response to dealing with environmental factors, e.g. one’s family, state, country, personal experiences, etc. The prominence of the role of character is discussed by Fromm as the factor of human nature, which is expressly responsible for ethical behavior and its continued development. This is likely due to us having some measure of control with respect to how we respond to external factors. He writes, “While differences in temperament have no ethical significance, differences in character constitute the real problem of ethics; they are expressive of the degree to which an individual has succeeded in the art of living.”³³⁷ The art of living is precisely the existential responsibility each and every being has toward himself and the other. This will be included in the discussion in the upcoming chapter, after which the transition from mindset to behavior will have been bridged.

Character then is the unique fashion with which the individual relates himself to the world, or rather, is the part of the personality that most heavily influences outlook and comportment.³³⁸ This is achieved through the acquisition and assimilation of objects as well as

³³⁵ Temperament is a biological predisposition and is often confused with character. According to Fromm, it refers to the mode of reaction that is not changeable. He notes varying degrees with which people can react. Using the ancient Hippocratic model, they are *choleric*, *sanguine*, *phlegmatic*, and *melancholic*. These are not how one relates oneself to the world but rather how one goes about interacting with it, e.g. in the case of someone who is choleric, he would be high in energy, excitable, and is generally likely to have an alteration of interest. Nevertheless, how that excitability is related and expressed behaviorally to the world is not dependent on temperament but rather character. For more, cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, sec. “A. Temperament,” 51-54.

³³⁶ Ibid., 50.

³³⁷ Ibid., 50-51.

³³⁸ Fromm discusses Behaviorism, saying that the theory has a degree of accuracy since man learns to react in a “semi-automatic fashion by developing habits of action and thought which can be understood in terms of conditioned reflexes.” (Fromm, *Man for himself*, 59). This is due to the need to attain an adequate replacement for the loss of instinctive behavior. Hence, most of our activity, is often reflexive and unconsciously governed by the character portion of our personality. The problem with Behaviorist theory though is that it ignores the fact that the most deeply rooted habits and worldview sprout from the character structure—the thing most resistant to change

his relation to himself and people.³³⁹ Finally, we arrive at a point where we can begin to bridge the gap between what gives way to mindsets and begins to transform into behavior. This, like all else in Frommian philosophy, is also subject to a dichotomized configuration. Character rooted passions give way to *character orientations*. In other words, existential impetus stemming from our cognitive ambivalence—*existential dichotomies*—give way to the *character rooted passions*. The engagement of the passions with the world³⁴⁰ yield *character*. Character further lends the individual his own particular existential axioms i.e. ways with which life is perceived according to the organized value schema (unconsciously) internalized. This in turn gives way to an *existential orientation*: expressed behavior following from the given characterological mindset.

The given *existential orientations*, to be discussed below, are concepts of ‘ideal’ personality types and not an accurate description of a single individual’s personality. Similar to the character rooted passions discussed above, they too manifest as a syndrome—a “blend of all or some of these orientations in which one, however, is dominant.”³⁴¹ Additionally, they are also divided into two major groups. The *productive orientation* and *non-productive orientation*. Where the non-productive orientation lacks self-sufficiency and fails to reach an appropriate level of development, the productive orientation is an achieved state of existential maturity that allows for the execution of a self-created ethical ethos founded upon a biophilic objectivity.

since it responsible for maintaining one’s identity and the way he maneuvers through existence. For greater depth on Fromm’s take on Behaviorist psychology, cf. the *AoHD*, sec. “Environmentalists and Behaviorists”, pp. 55-93.

³³⁹ Cf., Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 58.

³⁴⁰ In terms of solidifying the individual’s *character*, Fromm suggests that it is the basis for a child’s adjustment to society and that it is largely molded by the parents, or whomever is directly responsible for the child during its first couple of years. He writes that “the parents and their methods of child training in turn are determined by the social structure of their culture. The average family is the ‘psychic agency’ of society, and by adjusting himself to his family the child acquires the character which later makes him adjusted to the tasks he has to perform in social life.” (Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 60).

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

Regarding the non-productive orientation, Fromm lists four major character types: The *Receptive*, *Exploitative*, *Hoarding*, and *Marketing* characters. Furthermore, these four orientations, albeit having failed to achieve a state of maturity, are far from being deemed pathological. Though pathologies develop strictly in non-productive orientations, this only results in venturing into relationships consisting in either symbiotic severity or, conversely, extreme withdrawal. In the former, a person cannot achieve a state of independence and remains reliant on institutions, e.g. religious, occupational, nationalistic, etc., or other people to provide them with existential structure, motivation, and direction. Extreme withdrawal yields narcissistic personalities that fail to overcome the ‘self’ and remain emotionally detached and empathetically crippled. Additionally, the non-productive orientation can also possess passive qualities that allow for well-adjusted behavior conducive to life-affirming activities. Irrespectively, though non-productive behavior might reflect healthy behavior, the root of that behavior is subject to dependency and fear. Hence, it is prevented from achieving a state of autonomy. The most extreme cases in non-productive orientations result in malignant aggression and necrophilic pathologies.

These orientations also become subject to further dichotomized division, generating a spectrum of relatively stable to extremely unhealthy. Each possesses qualities that result in more biophilic forms of expression as opposed to necrophilic, thus generating a hierarchical criterion of value. In the case of the *receptive* and *exploitative* orientations, both are considered to possess symbiotic qualities. For example, someone who possesses and expresses aspects of the receptive orientation as the primary mode of his personality deploys distinct modes of accepting and receiving, often using others as a means to sustain their sense of self. With respect to the quality of love, the receptive personality would consider love to be congruent with “being loved.” The

borrowing of emotional support from others acts as a prop for supporting, sustaining, and validating their own existence. Fromm elaborates,

[The receptive orientation is] dependent not only on authorities for knowledge and help but on people in general for any kind of support. They feel lost when alone because they feel that they cannot do anything without help. This helplessness is especially important with regard to those acts which by their very nature can only be done alone—making decisions and taking responsibility. In personal relationships, for instance, they ask advice from the very person with regard to whom they have to make a decision.³⁴²

Moreover,

By and large, the outlook of people of this receptive orientation is optimistic and friendly; they have a certain confidence in life and its gifts, but they become anxious and distraught when their ‘source of supply’ is threatened. They often have a genuine warmth and a wish to help others, but doing things for others also assumes the function of securing their favor.³⁴³

Behavior from the receptive orientation is based mainly on personal insecurity and fear of aloneness. But, as shown in the second block quote above, this behavior also possesses ‘positive’ qualities. The positive and negative aspects of any of the non-productive orientations depend on the degree of productiveness in the total character structure and can be understood as either a passive or active expression, respectively.³⁴⁴ In the case of the receptive orientation, a person with an emphasis on productivity would exhibit traits such as acceptance, responsiveness,

³⁴² Ibid., 63.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 112-117.

devotion, modesty, charm, adaptability, idealism, sensitivity, politeness, optimism, trust, tenderness, etc. Conversely, the more prone they are to relying on others, these traits can transform into a passivity without initiation: opinionlessness, submissiveness, a lack of pride, a lack of principle, a lack of realism, cowardice, spinelessness, wishful thinking, gullibility, sentimentality, etc.³⁴⁵

In a more extreme instance of this particular symbiotic relationship, a person can develop tendencies that “attempt to get rid of one’s individual self, to escape from freedom, and to look for security by attaching oneself to another person”³⁴⁶—in other words, *masochism*. In such instances, the masochistic individual suffers from the inability to initiate excitation for himself and of reacting readily to normal stimuli but becoming reactive when overpowered, “as it were, when they can give themselves up to the excitement forced upon them.”³⁴⁷ A similar pattern of behavior can be seen for the remainder of the orientations with each of them, in its extreme form resulting in pathology and neurosis.

The *exploitative* orientation—another symbiotic relationship—manifests as sadism since it too is rooted in a dependency on others. Contrary to the receptive orientation that is contingent on others ‘feeding’ their existential drive, the exploitative orientation exhibits a characteristic of taking whether “by force or cunning.” They “grab and steal” what they need, whether in love or ideas.³⁴⁸ Where masochistic tendencies are an attempt to get rid of one’s self by being “swallowed”, the sadist strives to “swallow” others.³⁴⁹ Thus, while the receptive personality can

³⁴⁵ For complete lists of traits cf., Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 114-117.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

³⁴⁷ Fromm, *AoHD*, 272.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 108.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

fall into masochistic tendencies, the exploitative is more often prone to sadistic behavior that can express itself aggressively, egocentrically, conceitedly, rashly arrogantly, seductively, etc. The passive aspects of the exploitative personality manifest as someone who exudes activity as opposed to being genuinely exploitative; able to take initiative, make claims, has pride, is whimsical, self-confident, and captivating.³⁵⁰ The “active” form of the exploitative orientation, i.e. the most functional, appears “in all kinds of rationalizations, as love, overprotectiveness, ‘justified’ domination, ‘justified’ vengeance,”³⁵¹ etc. In its extreme form it can be expressive of destructive tendencies, treating others as things to be used, as a means to their end as opposed to an end in itself.³⁵²

The next two orientations—*hoarding* and *marketing*—are distinct from the receptive and exploitative in that instead of forming symbiotic attachments that form close and intimate bonds with objects or people at the expense of one’s freedom and integrity, these two orientations exhibit withdrawal and destructiveness. Describing withdrawn orientations, Fromm writes:

The feeling of individual powerlessness can be overcome by withdrawal from others who are experienced as threats. To a certain extent withdrawal is part of the normal rhythm in any person’s relatedness to the world, a necessity for contemplation, for study, for the reworking of materials, thoughts, attitudes. In the phenomenon here described, withdrawal becomes the main form of relatedness to others, a negative relatedness as it

³⁵⁰ Cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 115.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

³⁵² For more extensive information on the symbiotic orientation of sadomasochism cf. *AoHD*, chap. 11, “Malignant Aggression: *Cruelty and Destructiveness*,” 300-361. This also includes clinical case studies of Ernst von Salomon, Joseph Stalin, and Heinrich Himmler.

were. Its emotional equivalent is the feeling of indifference toward others, often accompanied by compensatory feeling of self-inflation. Withdrawal and indifference can, but need not, be conscious; as a matter of fact, in our culture they are mostly covered up by a superficial kind of interest and sociability.³⁵³

Hence, the hoarding personality is an orientation that looks inward and is concerned with preservation. Hoarders protect what they have and seek to bring more in while minimizing what they give out, often defining themselves by their possessions. They are the miserly ‘savers’ who tend to savor and idealize the past. Intimacy can be viewed as threatening and they attempt to achieve a measure of security by possessing their beloved. The hoarding orientation can exhibit qualities that are either practical or unimaginative, economical or stingy, loyal or possessive, methodical or obsessional, cautious or anxious, reserved or cold.³⁵⁴

The marketing personality is mainly concerned with exchange, often treating “oneself as a commodity and of one’s value as exchange value.”³⁵⁵ A market place where one’s labor or skill is not given a value or payment but one actively commodifies one’s personality in competition with others—can be purposeful and exchanging or opportunistic, able to shift and change or to be inconsistent, youthful versus childish, tolerant versus indifferent, adaptable versus indiscriminating, generous versus wasteful.³⁵⁶ Fromm explains the (economic) conditions and the problem generated by a citizenry that has adopted such an orientation. He writes that,

³⁵³ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 110.

³⁵⁴ For full detail on the *hoarding* orientation, cf. *Man for Himself*, 65-67.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁵⁶ For more insight on the *marketing* orientation, cf. *Man for Himself*, 67-82. Today’s society has taken it a step further from what Fromm seemed to think was possible. He claimed that one needed skilled labor *and* a pleasant

Since modern man experiences himself both as the seller and as the commodity to be sold on the market, his self-esteem depends on conditions beyond his control. If he is “successful,” he is valuable; if he is not, he is worthless. The degree of insecurity which results from this orientation can hardly be overestimated.³⁵⁷

The real issue with possessing such an orientation is that one ends up experiencing one’s self as independent of self. The identity one has is moldable and can give way to any and all circumstance so long as it pays in likeability allowing the individual to experience himself as one with his action. In the productive personality, Fromm writes, for example, someone’s agency is in accordance with his abilities, i.e. “I am what I do;”³⁵⁸ in the marketing orientation one’s powers of creation become estranged, “different from himself”—something for others to judge and use.³⁵⁹ Thus there is a loss of authentic identity and a type of inculcated alienation. A person simply becomes “the sum total of roles one can play: ‘I am as you desire me.’”³⁶⁰

The pathological extreme of the withdrawn orientations, the hoarder or alienated being, is destructiveness. This is because the impulse to destroy others stems from the fear of being destroyed themselves and often results in an inability to trust—either people or a fear of the chaotic aspect of life. Instead of accepting and learning to embrace the parts of life that makes them uncomfortable, they actively strive to continuously block and resist it. Fromm notes that “the passive and active forms of the same kind of relatedness” are often “blended in varying

personality. The advent and popularity of the Instagram influencer might just be enough to have Fromm rolling over in his grave. The market orientation has been fully integrated into our economic framework and rewarded.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 72.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 73.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

proportions,” resulting in a “more intense and more complete blocking of productiveness.”

Destructiveness becomes much more extreme than withdrawal and is the “perversion of the drive to live.”³⁶¹ The energy of the unlive life becomes transferred into destructive behavior and the decimation thereof.³⁶²

Recall that both positive and negative aspects are part of the same syndrome of character expression. It is best to imagine this on a spectrum in which the productive orientation might prevail over the non-productive. High productiveness yields passive non-productive traits, while low productiveness yields active non-productive traits. Furthermore, the more a particular orientation prevails, in other words, a productive versus a non-productive orientation, the more the individual is likely to exhibit biophilic as opposed to necrophilic behavior. Of course, as noted earlier, orientations are almost always blended with one another while moving along several spectrums in an increasing or degenerative manner. Therefore, in considering these basic orientations, Fromm concludes that there exists a “staggering amount of variability in each person.”³⁶³ This is brought about by the fact that

1) the nonproductive orientations are blended in different ways regarding the respective weight of each of them.

2) Each syndrome changes in quality according to the amount of productiveness present.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² For a practical example of the hoarding orientation blending with sadism, cf. Fromm’s clinical case of Heinrich Himmler in the *AoHD*, pp. 333-61.

³⁶³ Ibid., 116.

3) The different orientations may operate in different strength in the material, emotional, or intellectual spheres of activity, respectively.³⁶⁴

Thus, if one adds to these other factors of the personality such as temperament, innate gifts/natural tendencies, and unique precociousness, Fromm notes that there is an infinite variety of personalities to be had. Understanding this is crucial if one is to attempt to undertake a social ordinance and collective effort toward maximizing healthy mindsets and productive orientations as opposed to generating an endless stream of alienated and sick psychic states. I am of the opinion that any society that generates and fosters pathological mindsets and orientations could never have a functional and sustainable relationship with the environment.

Conclusion

A discussion involving the science or philosophy of humanism within the broader discussions in climate philosophy is essential to the appropriate harnessing, fostering, and development of long-term sustainability. Character rooted passions with a biophilic comportment along with the active striving to minimize its necrophilic counterpoint can serve as basis in providing direction having used ontology to provide foundational first principles. One that inherently promotes a conjoined dogma that focuses on the psychic health for individuals and societies alike. In this light, our options appear to be plain as day. Our need for an object of devotion can be satisfied by having devotion to love, truth, reason, justice, etc., or by idolatry of destructive idols and malignant principles. Our need for relatedness can be answered by love, kindness, individual interdependence or instead, by dependence, sadism, masochism, or destructiveness. Our need for unity and rootedness can be addressed through solidarity,

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 116-117.

brotherliness, mystical experiences that promote wellness and stability of mind or, by inebriation, addictions, and depersonalization. The need for effectiveness can be answered by love and productive work or by sadism and destructiveness; stimulation and excitation can be answered by a productive interest in man, nature, art, ideas, and participation, or by a greedy pursuit of the fulfillment of pleasures and narcissism.

Given these objective existentially rooted passions, Fromm reasons that a) human beings are required by the laws of nature to fulfill bodily needs in order to survive, b) these needs are motivated by instincts c) despite instincts being a major motivating factor, they are not primary motivators since if they were, man would not have major qualms with life should he be allotted ample food, rest, etc., ergo, he concludes, that d) the major motivations of man are his dichotomized (rational and irrational) passions: the strivings for love, tenderness, solidarity, freedom, and truth but also, conversely, the need to control, submit, and destroy—narcissism, greed, envy, and ambition are all passions which produce meaning, existential excitation, an identity, and fulfillment as a byproduct. Such needs make organic drives secondary in that they alone do not suffice to make man happy, nor do they guarantee his sanity.³⁶⁵ Additionally, passions are not some luxury to be pursued only once physical needs are met, as though they were optional; they *are* the reasons for living.³⁶⁶

Society, by and large, provides people with a set of conditions that offer ‘ready-made’ values directing, promoting, and suppressing particular rooted passions and is composed of pre-set

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 298.

³⁶⁶ Fromm goes on to argue that passions are the excitation forces responsible for creating “...dreams, religions, myths, drama, art—all the things that make life meaningful and worth living” (Fromm, *AoHD*, 298). People would risk their lives for and are often willing to commit suicide for their passions, but the same cannot be said with such certainty for a lack of sexual satisfaction or even starvation.

criteria that generate communal meaning and extend motivation. Thus, according to normative humanism, it is possible—when taking physical and psychic qualities and needs into account—to generate a criteria whereby the state of health of a society can be evaluated, judged, and ultimately used as a mark for national objectives, international accord, and planetary homeostasis. This would be the set values used in economic tools such as cost-benefit analysis or any other evaluative method used for decision making.

Chapter 5: Humane Humanism

The purpose of the last chapter, though mostly expositional, is to consider tools necessary to assist the climate conversation by supplementing it in a few ways. First and foremost, it provides a radical shift in approach. For example, as previously mentioned as it is the general thesis of this dissertation, climate ethicists tend to limit their analysis to externalities. This, of course, makes sense. After all, consequences matter. Since the impact on the climate is often observed in terms of the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, monetary loss due to disasters, amount of biodiversity loss, hectares of forest burned, etc., the analysis generated and solutions suggested are mirrored in response as the focus is often on external and empirical explanations.³⁶⁷ Quite naturally, the most visceral and instinctive response to a fire is to pour water onto it. This type of problem solving is immediate and serves well for short-term problem solving.

Should there be a fire that would rage for the next few centuries, pouring water over it, though perhaps momentarily effective, would surely prove to be insufficient. It is argued that Fromm's humanism can beneficially augment the conversation by adding a much-needed alternative perspective that focuses on the internal life of man. Solutions offered that account for that inner dimension, along with its intrinsic demands and properties, can more radically procure and provide long-term planning—one that offers ethicists and policy makers the advantage of

³⁶⁷ Cf, Jamieson, D., "Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming"; Shue, H. "Substance emissions versus luxury emissions."

stereoscopic vision. Such a supplement to current theories can aid in the creation of a culture that values both internal and external factors, rather than one which promotes the latter at the expense of the former.

Second, the previous chapter provided a necessary grounding to the conversation in two specific ways. The first is by introducing an objective standard in the form of existential dichotomies and character rooted passions. It is believed that without one, no substantial progress can truly be made since all parties involved can pull in any and every direction, failing to act simultaneously and with unified purpose like varying archers aiming at random targets. Second, setting aside the unfocused infighting or the ineffective ‘talking in circles’ that would inevitably occur, there is also the threat that without a standard, the momentum to push for a better future can fall to the wayside due to an increase in an ideology of social Darwinism—the idea is that progress and betterment become eclipsed by the nihilistic despair of opportunism and short-term gains. Therefore, asking fundamental questions such as “what does it mean to be a human?” or “what features about our nature are universal?” gives us a starting point that enables us to create a unifying ethical foundation with which to build up from and produce long-term actionability alongside short-term action. Asking seemingly banal questions such as “is life important?” can lend us a point of agreement, despite the question being broad and borderline platitudinous. Nevertheless, these broad and often quite difficult questions can create a culture of consensus as opposed to scathing disagreement and a bottomless skepticism.

Third and last, I recommended Fromm’s character rooted passions as the center-stage of future social engineering since they can be viewed as core criteria for generating a set standard for existential health. Health means being of sound body *and* mind. I gave emphasis to the mind since it tends to lose priority when made to compete against the tactile and tangible. Seeing how

the passions meld with society to form a major part of the personality, how we decide to (re)structure social mechanisms becomes an essential task since they work to fashion our mindset and influence our behavior. If our minds are non-productive or pathological, despite being well-adjusted to current society, then it would make sense that our daily activities, without being cognizant of them, are symptomatically harmful and destructive to ourselves and the planet as a whole. Therefore, considering a humanistic approach as a viable response to climate change not only provides the climate conversation with solid grounding but also with a tenable trajectory—a new paradigm of values to aim for. It is the intention of this chapter to discuss this trajectory—to assist in transitioning to a new culture, one that puts life and health first.

The focus of this chapter will aim to transition from an account of mindset to behavior, attempting to extrapolate some notion of health in the form of a *productive* orientation. Having discussed the unhealthy mindset in the previous chapter and having concluded with the plausibility of adopting a humanist culture that derives from our inherent needs and attributes, this chapter will begin the first section, “Humanistic Productiveness,” by briefly discussing the relevance of man’s social context with respect to his development. This is necessary if we are to ask Fromm’s famous 1955 question, “*Are we sane?*” and apply it to our current circumstance. Furthermore, to adequately flesh out the correlation between sanity and behavior in the second section, “Diagnostics on the Way to the Productive Orientation,” I aim to cement the connection between mindset and behavior by concluding with a definition of the *productive* orientation at the end of the section. These first section gives us the requisite background necessary to deploy the discussion in the second i.e. Fromm’s conception of activity as enmeshed qualities of our current, *having*, mode of living. Qualities that prevent healthy behavior such as narcissism, alienation, and abstractification—composites of the *having* mode of living— when juxtaposed

with the *being* mode, lend us a behavioral (and external) assessment of health—yet another dichotomy, except this time, applied at the macro level.

Section I: Humanistic Productiveness

Recall that according to Fromm, the emergence of reason overruled our instinctive behavior and put mankind in an existentially awkward position—that of having to produce for oneself answers to the problem of existence. Given the inextinguishable and ever-looming torment of the *existential dichotomies*, man is forced to everlastingly strive for satisfactory solutions that will help him cope and become better assimilated to living. For Fromm, man's development is inextricably tied to the dynamism of history and his situatedness. The context that he finds himself in causes him to react and create a world in which he can apply his creativity and “feel at home with himself and his fellow men.”³⁶⁸

In *Man for Himself* (1964), Fromm writes, “every stage [man] reaches leaves him discontented and perplexed, and this very perplexity urges him to move toward new solutions.”³⁶⁹ So what we see here are two distinct factors that play a role in the development of mankind. The first is produced by his innate and pre-given existential dichotomies, the second is the environmental factors. How he chooses to confront the passions, along with the external conditions he is forced to contend with, gives way to the identity he creates for himself and the meaning he extracts from the given experience. Though being “discontented” and “perplexed” seem to be an inalienable part of being human, each new “stage,” according to Fromm, reveals

³⁶⁸ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 42.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 42. This conception of the vital role that history plays regarding man's development is naturally appropriated from Hegelian philosophy. This is evident as Fromm is seen to see history as a stage-like developmental process for mankind's progress.

new conditions that force man to overcome once more—thereby successfully negating the issue—or to perish.

To further elaborate this concept of historical procession, Fromm directs us to Hegel where he attempts to shed light on his famous quote, “what is real is rational.”³⁷⁰ Fromm’s reading of Hegel was not as a reactionary. In other words, that this quote is misunderstood, erroneously depicting Hegel as someone who accepted everything that existed as “rational” provided that they/it existed.³⁷¹ “What Hegel meant,” Fromm goes on to clarify, was that anything which was “real” was “real inasmuch as it was necessary.”³⁷² What “is necessary in the evolutionary process is never pathological.”³⁷³ Action only becomes pathological if it exists beyond its evolutionary necessity.³⁷⁴ In such a reading of Hegel, what we see is an intersection where health and evolution either converge biophilically or diverge necrophilically.

Given this interpretation, Fromm’s notion of ethics pertains to the psyche’s adaptation to social evolution—one that accords with the dichotomy above. Let us take an example given by Fromm where he discusses Marx’s evolutionary thinking. He writes that

Slavery...is not in itself morally evil as long as the development of society makes slavery a necessity. Or, that would hold true for property, which would hold true for alienation, and so on. If, however, slavery exists in a situation in which it is not necessary because

³⁷⁰ See, Fromm, *Pathology of Normalcy*, 85. Citation given, G. W. F. Hegel, 1821, 24.

³⁷¹ Cf., Fromm, *Pathology of Normalcy*, 85.

³⁷² Ibid., 85.

³⁷³ Ibid., 85.

³⁷⁴ Fromm points out that this idea of stage like progress can be found not only in the philosophy of Hegel, but in the psychology of Freud, the biology of Darwin, as well as the historical materialism of Marx. For additional information on evolutionary thinking, cf., Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, sec., “Mental Health and Evolutionary Thinking,” 83-85.

the general conditions of society would permit the overcoming of slavery, then it becomes a pathological phenomenon.³⁷⁵

Fromm's explication of a Marxist ethical theory sheds light on his own notion of psychic adaptation and evolution, since it stems from the Hegelian tradition of a humanity imbued with an intrinsic potentiality. For Fromm, what we have is a distinction between *socially immanent* versus a *universal* ethics, each of which is in a state of constant conflict, and that, over time, "has decreased in the process of human evolution."³⁷⁶

From the point of view of a universal ethics—"norms of conduct the aim of which is the growth and unfolding of man"³⁷⁷—divesting a human being of free will in order to objectify it and use it for the bidding of another is an unethical practice. But there is a difference between a society whose socially immanent ethics or, "the norms in any culture which contain prohibitions and commands that are necessary only for the functioning and survival of that particular society,"³⁷⁸ existing due to a culmination of its natural and unaware evolution, and a society that has long outgrown the need for it but still maintains its perpetuation. In the latter case, the society has dipped from unethical to pathological. The difference is that in such a scenario, society doubles down on the authoritarian cultural norms as opposed to attempting to overcome narcissism and alienation via replacement with love and objectivity. For Fromm, this is mental illness on a social level. We could similarly discuss the morality of anti-ecological policies in society, those societies which require it are not sick, those which do not, yet pursue them anyway, are.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 84.

³⁷⁶ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 243.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 240.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

Thus, the approach of normative humanism is not confined to that of the individual and his mental and psychic health but extends to the overall welfare of the group, the state, the national and international communities, etc. Since mental health coincides with the maturation of a single person, having grown through varying psychological states,³⁷⁹ it just can just as readily be applied to group dynamics. In the case of the individual, should a person fail to achieve a level of spontaneity, freedom, and a genuine expression of self—provided that these are objective goals to be achieved by the individual for the sake of maturation—he will suffer from a *defect* of a non-productive orientation. Similarly, should such a goal not be attained by the majority of members in a community, this in turn becomes a *socially patterned defect*. Since it is shared among the majority of the members of the populace, this permits the individual to remain unconscious of his defect and retain a measure of personal security unthreatened by the experience of being different.³⁸⁰ Quite accurately, Fromm points out, “the fact that millions of people share the same vices does not make these vices virtues, the fact that they share so many errors does not make the errors to be truths, and the fact that millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane.”³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ When Fromm attempts to shed light on the evolutionary theories of Freud and Marx, since they often make the distinction between ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ stages—thereby implying a value hierarchy—he asks the reader to imagine an infant that is completely narcissistic or enjoys playing with its feces, and ask themselves whether the infant is sick? In other words, whether it is suffering from mental illness. The answer is obviously no since narcissism is an inherent part of its early stage development and a necessary part of its evolution. Along with that narcissism, it lacks the tools, faculties, knowledge, etc., to possess the appropriate attitude toward such behavior. Should an adult exhibit similar tendencies, in the case of narcissism, “he is psychotic” while in the case of coprophilia, it is “an ominous symptom of a mental illness.” (Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 84).

³⁸⁰ Cf., Fromm, *The Sane Society*, chap. 2, “Can a society be sick?—The pathology of normalcy”, 12-21. Fromm additionally notes that the distinction between a *defect* and a *neurosis* is its overall severity in having failed to achieve an adequate response to the existential passions, but also, that one cannot blend but rather stands as a contrast to the group.

³⁸¹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 14.

Regarding the problem of human existence with respect to the individual, normative humanism posits a right and wrong/a satisfactory and unsatisfactory solution to such a problem, and that from this premise “the criterion of mental health is not one of individual adjustment to a given social order, but a universal one, valid for all men.”³⁸²

Regarding the immanent ethics regarding a given society, it often behoove the individual to submit to the rules essential to its particular mode of production and arrangement of hierarchical values, if only to avoid neurosis. In any society that harbors such an ethics, the group is often responsible for tending to the character structure of its members and molding them in such a way that “they want to do what they have to do”³⁸³ under the existing circumstances of the status quo. Therefore, socially subjective virtues take precedence. For instance, in warrior societies, the foremost virtues might be strength, bravery, and a love of honor; in a farming society, those of community, patience, and interdependence; in a capitalistic society, virtues such as a strong work ethic, buying power, and the freedom to be impulsive may be prioritized, thus becoming a part of its ethical system.

Furthermore, ethically immanent societies use the “dignity” of universal ethics to inveigle its members into compliance and agreeable behavior. Fromm writes that “norms which are necessary only in the interest of the survival of a special kind of society” are invested and proclaimed to be part of the “universal norms inherent in human existence and therefore universally applicable.”³⁸⁴ Thus, for example, in a society that values private property, the

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 241.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 243.

prohibition of theft is made to appear as though it had derived from the same human necessity as the prohibition of murder.³⁸⁵

Aside from the existential dichotomies then, individuals are also invested with historical contradictions spawning from the cultural *Zeitgeist* of their environment. Immanent demands of social life and universal demands of the individual passions are fueled by a synthetic tension that is man-made and hence soluble, meaning, capable of being resolved. Fromm writes that the “contemporary contradiction between an abundance of technical means for material satisfaction and the incapacity to use them exclusively for peace and welfare of the people is soluble.”³⁸⁶ Given this example, the failure to achieve world peace or end world hunger is not a problem of resources but rather that of human behavior and institutional non-compliance. Again, note that a problem is only soluble if the means to negate the contradiction are readily available, as opposed to an insoluble historical contradiction like the type of slavery discussed earlier. The slavery of the ancient world could not be solved until a later point in history once a sufficient material basis was acquired to allow for the equality of men. Thus, the contradiction generated by the imminent social ethics was capable of finally collapsing into a universal ethics.

Interestingly, it is at the point where dialectical contradiction is stubbornly upheld wherever its resolution becomes most pressing, for “it is one of the peculiar qualities of the human mind that, when confronted with a contradiction, it cannot remain passive.”³⁸⁷ Progress, in such an instance, is the ability to overcome this apparent inconsistency through action despite it being stymied by those most representative of the values produced by the given society. Any

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 43.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 44.

individual who refuses to collapse current soluble contradictions often confuses the historical dichotomy with existential dichotomies. Fromm explains that such an individual is “eager to prove that they were existential dichotomies and thus unalterable,”³⁸⁸ attempting to appease the need to negate the contradiction through rationalizations. This is a peculiarity of man, to accept the thoughts shared by most of the members of his culture or postulated by people looked to as powerful authority figures.³⁸⁹

Nevertheless, with the attempt to harmonize the historical paradox by doubling down on non-productive orientations and outmoded cultural norms, man’s mind may be momentarily appeased, “although he himself is not totally at rest.”³⁹⁰ So long as a certain type of social organization is historically indispensable, members of that culture and community will continue to accept its ethical norms as binding, despite not being ‘at total rest.’

Should a society proceed to uphold customs that no longer benefit the majority of its members, despite having a basis for change, it is left up to the “awareness of the socially conditioned character” to mobilize and dispense from themselves tendencies that will bring about “change to the social order.”³⁹¹ Such attempts will be castigated as unethical since they would be attempting to achieve the demise of a social order that is no longer historically necessary, or paradigmatically sustainable. Conversely, submission to the current social values is heralded as ‘devotion,’ ‘selflessness,’ and ‘patriotic.’³⁹²

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 43.

³⁸⁹ Cf., Fromm, *Man for Himself*, sec. B. “The existential and historical dichotomies in man,” 40-50.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 44.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 243.

³⁹² Cf., A prime example of such an individual is the current Lt. Governor of Texas, Dan Patrick who, in re-opening his state to save the economy touted that “There are more important things than living.” Stieb, Matt. “Dan Patrick of Texas on State Reopening: ‘There Are More Important Things Than Living,’” *The Intelligencer*, Last modified April

In the *Pathology of Normalcy* (2010), Fromm discusses the stagnant values of 1950s America, many of which we can currently observe have transitioned from a 1953 ‘stagnancy’ to a 2020 festering, long overdue for a critical re-analysis—in the then contemporary America. Values that currently still stand, such as “individual freedom, individual enterprise, the scientific approach, political democracy, [and] the domination of nature.”³⁹³ The ideas though have not been revisited in order to establish a ‘better fit.’ Instead, we are operating on values incurred as a reaction to and rebuking of an outmoded social and economic system and working instead to make our own stagnate and slowly putrefy. Normative humanism would require us to occasionally reassess on a regular basis and adjust as needed. Climate ethicists, many of which are calling for such a reassessment regarding the environment, fail to understand that the reassessment needs to be socially ubiquitous.

A quick example of such an outmoded concept is that of equality. Without an appropriate negation to our negation, if you will, what we see is mass confusion. Equality during the French Revolution might have meant something along the lines of one human not being existentially superior to another, i.e. a type of solidarity/brotherly love, injected with an admixture of skepticism. However, what we see in the current political climate is the prevailing idea that everyone’s subjective opinion is on par with everyone else’s. Thus, a student is equal to a professor, a patient equal to a doctor, a politician equal to a scientist, and an intellectual buffoon equal to an erudite. The virtue of equality has taken on a different meaning, one that ultimately

21, 2020, Accessed April 24, 2020. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/04/dan-patrick-there-are-more-important-things-than-living.html>.

³⁹³ Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 25. A current example of obstinacy from social adherents is the reception and reaction of Greta Thunberg’s U.N. speech advocating for a fundamental institutional change. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/climate/greta-thunberg-un.html>

led to the demise of authoritative bodies initially put in place as an invaluable guide for the benefit of humanity. Ruth Nanda Anshen manages to encapsulate the idea quite accurately in the introduction to Fromm's *To Have or to Be* (1976), writing, "For when equality is equated with interchangeability, individuality is negated and the human person transmuted into a faceless mask."³⁹⁴ Hence, a similar revisiting needs to be had with concepts such as freedom, enterprise, and our relationship with nature.

Fromm writes almost prophetically,

Suppose that in our Western culture movies, radios, television, sports events and newspapers ceased to function for only four weeks. With these main avenues of escape closed, what would be the consequences for people thrown back upon their own resources? I have no doubt that even in this short time thousands of nervous breakdowns would occur, and many more thousands of people would be thrown into a state of acute anxiety, no different from the picture which is diagnosed clinically as "neurosis." If the opiate against the socially patterned defect were withdrawn, the manifest illness would make its appearance.³⁹⁵

Mental health then is a type of interactive result maintained both by the individual and society; a responsibility that involves the practice of life as it manifests and results from the conditions of human existence.

As noted earlier, this all depends on an interdependent responsibility to see the fruition of psychic health by fostering an environment that aids in the overcoming of narcissism and

³⁹⁴ Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1976), xvii.

³⁹⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 17.

alienation,³⁹⁶ since mental sickness is a fixation or regression that belongs to a former evolutionary state. This, of course, becomes a key responsibility when considered from the point of view of our cultural, economic, and political trajectory—whether conscious or otherwise. He notes that evolution, for human beings, “is the result of cultural development, and not of an organic change.”³⁹⁷ In such an interaction, society can actively assist in generating healthy mental states or alternatively, work to hinder their development. For Fromm, societies, by and large, actively do both. The question simply becomes “to what degree and in what directions their positive and negative influence is exercised.”³⁹⁸ The idea being, to foster its members to achieve a sense of identity and independence and to overcome any hostile tendencies, allowing for a capacity of thriving and a peaceful coexistence individually, communally, and environmentally.

Such a situation may be dismissed as too idealistic, for it does not adequately factor in the ‘true’ nature of humanity. A survey of human aggression, whether it be of the *benign* or *malignant* sort, is out of the range of this dissertation. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that Fromm attributes malignant aggression—aggressive action taken that is not defensive, accidental, playful, or self-assertive but that is peculiar to human beings in that it does not serve the survival of man but is instead an unhealthy substitute for the continuation of mental functioning³⁹⁹—to a more severe manifestation of the non-productive character. Neuroses and pathological psyches are expressions of hopelessness (or the loss thereof) and is met with man’s need for

³⁹⁶ Cf., Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, sec. 3 “My own concept of mental health,” 85-99.

³⁹⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 71.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁹⁹ Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, chap. 10, “Malignant Aggression: Premise,” sec. “Preliminary Remarks”, 246-258.

stimulation.⁴⁰⁰ Wherein destructiveness is the alternative to hope, just as attraction to death is the alternative to the love of life, and just as joy is the alternative to boredom.⁴⁰¹ Fromm further illustrates the point saying,

Not only does the individual live by hope. Nations and social classes live through hope, faith, and fortitude, and if they lose this potential they disappear—either by their lack of vitality or by the irrational destructiveness which they develop.⁴⁰²

So long as a society supplies an outlet for the character rooted passions of its members that is conducive to and aids in the fostering of *narcissism*, *alienation* and *abstractification*, a society is unlikely to achieve individuals who encompass a productive orientation and willfully participate as a unified collective; this will be the subject of the next section.

Section II: Diagnostics on the Way to the Productive Orientation

While it is possible to stabilize a society that exhibits traits of a socially patterned defect, introducing new dilemmas external to it will invariably shake its foundations and potentially yield system collapse. The issue of sustainability is not only limited to hard planetary and ecological boundaries but more importantly pertains to a mental state capable of maximal resilience; this involves and depends on a dynamic flexibility contingent upon interdependent cooperation. Such fluidity can be achieved only if the comportment of individuals within differing societies is expressive and reflective of a mindset that is rooted in broad values such as

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, sec. “The shattering of hope”, 33-34, and *AoHD*, sec. “Excitation and stimulation”, 266-272.

⁴⁰¹ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 34.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

objectivity and solidarity. Objective reasoning and solidarity of which need to be governed by a patience based on achieving an ‘optimal’ truth instead of an authoritarian absolute truth; such a disposition is aligned with the productive orientation. However, before this orientation can be positively realized, there are many (likely) obstacles for a society to overcome during its evolution.

Values give way to, though no less significant, specific traits, such as solidarity and brotherly love, which are brought about by an education and political system that actively fosters care, compassion, emotional awareness of the self, and patience. Thus, environmental factors such as practical behavior influences and gives rise to a mindset that in turn manifests itself in reflective behavior. Speaking to ancient consanguinity between man’s inherent traits, a system onto itself, and its interconnectedness to external systems—society and its relationship to nature—Fromm writes,

While it is true that man can adapt himself to almost any conditions, he is not a blank sheet of paper on which culture writes its text. Needs like the striving for happiness, harmony, love and freedom are inherent in his nature. They are also dynamic factors in the historical process which, if frustrated, tend to arouse psychic reactions, ultimately creating the very conditions suited to the original strivings [i.e. regressed stages]. As long as the objective conditions of the society and the culture remain stable, the social character has a predominantly stabilizing function. If the external conditions change in such a way that they do not fit any more with the traditional social character, a *lag* arises

which often changes the function of character into an element of disintegration instead of stabilization, into dynamite instead of social mortar, as it were.⁴⁰³

Let us quickly examine an example to better illustrate the point—solely focusing on the negative attributes of a capitalistic society for the sake of argument—the example being the radical shift that eighteenth century capitalism had to undergo in order to facilitate fluid participation and fully transition from the feudal enclosures. Economic behavior had to become “separate from ethics and human values.”⁴⁰⁴ The appropriate axiomatic assumptions had to be put in place that what was good for growth of the system was also good for the people. Hence, an auxiliary construction was also necessary to enable this mindset that in turn enabled the qualities required for the smooth function of the system—those being, egotism, selfishness, and greed, which were to be understood as innate in human nature, hence “not only the system but human nature itself fostered”⁴⁰⁵ such qualities and behavior.⁴⁰⁶ Not only had these traits come to be considered as the cornerstone of human essence, but by 1964 they were heralded as a form of righteousness in Ayn Rand’s *The Virtue of Selfishness*.⁴⁰⁷

Traits such as those just mentioned are, according to Fromm’s humanism, symptomatic of regressed non-productive personalities that should be actively engaged and transitioned into productive qualities. He warns that, with respect to narcissism, there “is probably no entity that is more significant and more basic in the production of mental illness.”⁴⁰⁸ Narcissism is a type of

⁴⁰³ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 81.

⁴⁰⁴ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* 7.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, sec. “Why Did the Great Promise Fail?,” 3-7.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. The Fable of the Bees by Bernard Mandeville.

⁴⁰⁸ Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 86.

solipsistic attitude where one's subjective understanding i.e. one's personal feelings, physical needs, psychical needs, etc., are interpreted as though they are objective and are, in addition, given greater consideration and prioritization than the needs of others. Narcissism precludes the individual from conceiving of and emotionally extending toward anything external to himself; one's conception of what is external to him is solely perceived via intellectual affectation and devoid of a genuine emotional connection. This especially becomes problematic when it changes from individual narcissism to group narcissism. Such a transfer in mindset is conducive and directly responsible for "religious hatred and nationalism," akin to tribal identity. This invites individuals devoid of income, education, security, etc., to attach themselves to a group since maintaining their own individual narcissism would be particularly difficult. Maintaining one's individual narcissism in such instances would more likely reveal a defect but attaching oneself to a group where one can maintain his narcissism while having it normalized by group leaders, group members, or any other contributing factors to the ideological echo chamber, would prevent him from showing any immediate psychological defect and assume a life of relative normalcy—so long as the system is not disturbed.

When we speak of overcoming such a tendency, it is important, once again, to recall the spectrum from which it operates. Thus, narcissism can be expressed in a *malignant* fashion such as the traits described above. In other words, the person whose narcissism is directed toward himself, one's body, one's mind, one's attitude, feelings, interests, etc. The immediate attributes of the individual are what matter most and are the only "real" or genuine factors when assessing how the world works and functions. Such a person is separated from reason, love, and his fellow man, and hence, as a consequence of not being able to function with a measure of objectivity and consideration of others, is considered to be severely sick according to the clinical

psychologist.⁴⁰⁹ Conversely, *benign* narcissism is “not directed toward a particular area”⁴¹⁰ but is rather focused on accomplishment or achievement. Hence, it takes on secondary characteristics where, though a person must point to something in order to sustain his identity, he nevertheless must create a part of himself first. Though not ideal, this form of narcissism is a step removed from malignancy and a step toward overcoming the pathology.

A further (and greater) impediment to the productive orientation is *alienation*.⁴¹¹ In a nutshell, Fromm describes alienation as a “central problem” of mental health and defines it as an “alienation from ourselves, from our feelings, from people and from nature; or...the alienation between ourselves and the world inside and outside ourselves.”⁴¹² Keep in mind that, similar to narcissism, alienation also leads to a processing problem; one that prevents the individual from adequately forming healthy ties with others and strips him of the ability to take into consideration people he does not know or that relate to him directly. Thus, what we consistently see in Fromm’s humanism is a philosophy that it is centered on bonding and interaction.

People who bond because of insecurity tend to form a dependency that can become unhealthy, others, due to fear, withdraw and can only connect with those they feel they have a measure of situational control over. Narcissism is a great example of a defect that can convert

⁴⁰⁹ For general insight into Fromm’s theory of *narcissism*, cf. *The Pathology of Normalcy*, sec. II.3, “Overcoming Narcissism,” pp. 86-92. Also, for greater detail, cf. *AoHD*, Narcissism 498; aggression and, 226-231; defeat and, 436; group, 230-231, 245; of Hitler, 414-417, 434, 436, 452, 461; monocerebral man and, 391; negative, 228n; of political leaders, 229; primary and secondary, 227; sexual drive and, 97-98; Narcissistic-exploitative character, 44-45.

⁴¹⁰ Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 92.

⁴¹¹ Though I mentioned *abstractification* earlier, I will not be further discussing it in detail here. Alienation and abstractification are similar enough topics as they both deal with a type of personal detachment. Abstractification tends to conflate the quantitative with the qualitative experience, and in turn minimizes it or interprets it in an alienated fashion. Edmund Husserl lends great insight pertaining to the problem of abstractification and its shortcomings in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* (1936).

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 46.

from an individualistic solipsism to group think thereby shedding light on socially patterned defects.

Alienation is quite different. Though it too affects the individual and garners similar outcomes with respect to psychologically patterned ailments, the process of alienation appears to be more insidious in that it seems to only be possible should a person be bereft of self-awareness. Not that a narcissist does possess awareness, but a narcissist in many ways can manage to stave off the loss of identity due to social pressures. While the problem of the narcissist is perhaps too much identity, one that prevents him from factoring in others accordingly, the alienated being not only suffers from a loss of genuine freedom and identity, but is additionally removed from his motives and how they became his to begin with. The danger of the past was that man would become a slave; the danger of the future is that he will become a robot.

The problem of social relatedness becomes compounded when you take a group of people comprised of non-productive orientations, who all think the same; they can easily become conformed to totalitarian social structures while believing themselves to be independent thinkers, free, and happy. An ignorance can become so deeply rooted that “even the threat to the future of their grandchildren does not genuinely affect them...The fate of humanity is...little their concern.”⁴¹³ You end up with a major conundrum: man does not *need* to be free; he need only *believe* that he is. What you get in turn is a slave who will kill in order to remain on the plantation in what he believes to be a willful state of happiness.⁴¹⁴ With alienation, the death of

⁴¹³ Fromm, *AoHD*, 484.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Matt Stieb. "Dan Patrick of Texas on State Reopening: 'There Are More Important Things Than Living,'" *The Intelligencer*, Last modified April 21, 2020, Accessed April 24, 2020. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/04/dan-patrick-there-are-more-important-things-than-living.html>.

an authentic identity, the very kernel of human potentiality and self-empowerment, are increasingly snuffed out.⁴¹⁵

Furthermore, the worry discussed above is brought about by an increase of thinking in terms of abstractification, or, to think of something in an abstract way as opposed to concretely—in economic terms, one sees objects or experiences in terms of their worth in exchange value as opposed to experiential or use value. One's identity, at its worst, instead of being easily indoctrinated, can instead become the amorphous personality of the marketing character orientation where people do not only sell their physical power, their skillset, their intellect but often sell their personalities based on the reaction of others. One's sense of personal value is relegated to the consumer, the employer, the authoritarian figure that dispenses with approval or disapproval.

The whole sense of value of an individual—if one will call it an individual—depends on whether he is salable or not, whether there is a demand for him or not. For this reason this sense of self, his sense of inner confidence never depends on the appreciation of his real

⁴¹⁵ There is a distinction in Fromm's conception of freedom between the 'freedom from' and the 'freedom to.' The former encompasses a more traditional understanding such as the emancipation from social restrictions e.g. authoritarian governments. Often though, when man is free, he becomes hopeless and despondent. A 'freedom to,' man's qualities that allows lends him authenticity and the ability to overcome authoritative oversight, is required if man is going to truly inherit independence. According to Fromm, this latter step is very difficult for man, often forcing him to unite with other ideologies and groups that will eliminate the demand for critical thinking and will simply give him such a way to be. Pertaining to the individual, Fromm writes: We can use the concept 'freedom' in two different senses: In one, freedom [to] is an attitude, an orientation, part of the character structure of the mature, fully developed, productive person. ... Freedom in this sense has a reference to...to the character structure of the person involved; and in this sense the person who 'is not free to choose evil' is the completely free person. — The second meaning of freedom [from] (has to do with) the capacity to make a choice between opposite alternatives; alternatives which, however, always imply the choice between the rational and the irrational interest in life and its growth versus stagnation and death; when used in this second sense the best and the worst man are not free to choose, while it is precisely the average man with contradictory inclinations, for whom the problem of freedom of choice exists." (Fromm, *The Heart of Man. Its Genius for Good and Evil* (New York, Harper and Row, 1964) 132.

concrete qualities, intelligence, honesty, integrity, his humor, anything he is, but on whether or not he succeeds in selling himself. Therefore, of course he is always insecure, always dependent on success, and gets frantically insecure if this success is not forthcoming.⁴¹⁶

Given such severance between one's intellect and emotive capacities, the psychic 'health' of the individual remains tethered to the confines of the 'flavor of the day' and his creative power is actively exercised in such a way so as to generate approval; a further symptom of alienated feelings and sentiments. The alienated being yields a lack of introspective capabilities, which further yields three primary problems that prevent the attainment of a socially productive orientation: the problems of vitalism, boredom, and relatedness.

With respect to vitalism, Fromm asks, "what is the source of energy from which we live?"⁴¹⁷ Though a bit of an awkward and irregular question, it is nevertheless poignant and quite apropos to living a fruitful life. Rewording for clarity, we might ask where do humans draw energy from? The immediate and instinctive response defaults to physical means. For example, we retrieve our energy from food, from sleep, from exercise, etc. Fromm notes that, regardless of our dependency on the physical to physiological transmutation as a necessary source of energy, our energy levels begin to drop after the age of twenty-five or so. We must therefore find an alternative source from which to draw our energy from and that source is often found in our interactions. Joy, energy, and happiness, all depend on the degree with which we are related to others.

⁴¹⁶ Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 52.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 58.

Our ability to be concerned, involved, and actively engaged, often produces a surge of energy and excitement. To do so also requires that we be in touch with “our feelings, with the reality of other people” and “not experience them as abstractions which we can look at as commodities at the market.” In this case people would serve no purpose other than to be objectified, whether it would be for our own gratuitous amusement, the vapid and vacuous hoarding of ‘experiences,’ the ascension of a social hierarchy of one type or another, etc. Genuine interactions that manage to replenish the spirit and fill us with motivation and excitement can only be fostered in unalienated relatedness. Where “I am I and I am the other person.” And where “I become one with the object of my concern, but in this process, I experience myself also as a subject.”⁴¹⁸ Existential vitality therefore requires a type of invested playfulness.

Moreover, the members of alienated societies where people experience all things in life as an abstraction instead of something concrete, often find themselves at the mercy of boredom. Boredom, according to Fromm, is “one of the great evils that can befall man” since there are only a “few things which are as terrifying and unbearable as being bored,”⁴¹⁹ adding that, “the disease from which modern man suffers is *alienation*.”⁴²⁰ In fact, this pervades society so deeply that it pathologically adheres to the verisimilar maxim, one of the many axioms considered indispensable to the functioning of contemporary socioeconomic culture, that man is lazy by nature. To combat his innate boredom, the commonly accepted maxim gives way to concepts such as the need for hedonistically positive incentives like money, status, fame, etc. Equally

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Erich Fromm, *On Being Human* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 23.

important, if not more-so, are disincentives such as hunger, homelessness, and a loss of options, each of which plays the part of the silent threat on the reverse side of the incentivization coin. With this view, work is not something one naturally does but is instead something one is socially compelled or coerced into doing.⁴²¹

This assumes that without incentives or disincentives, society's incessant march toward greater heights and more 'progress' would grind to a halt from an innate predilection to lie on a couch, sleep all day, and forever take the path of least resistance. From this axiom, the subsequent ontological inference is made that man as a being is intrinsically indolent and passive and hence, his motivations derive primarily from extrinsic stimuli.⁴²² The contemporary description of man's unwillingness or inability to generate action motivated from an internal energetic force—a force of self and from self—unless obligated to, bound by, or forced by external factors and the fulfillment of basic biological needs, is juxtaposed with society's conception of work. That work is *ipso facto* disagreeable and unpleasant, and consequently leads to *boredom*. Thus, the feedback loop of incentives and disincentives comes full circle. Fromm succinctly illustrates the point writing,

Whether it is physical discomfort or the psychological discomfort of boredom, both sides, workers and employers, agreed that work was by necessity unpleasant, and that in order

⁴²¹ Cf. Barry Schwartz's *Practical Wisdom*, sec., "The War on the Will" for a more in-depth take on the pros and cons of an incentive prone society.

⁴²² Cf. Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, sec. IV. In discussing society's lean toward external stimuli, Fromm mentions the system of rewards and punishments in education, the psychology of B.F. Skinner and neo-behaviorist psychology, saying that he "has made the principle of the exclusive efficacy of extrinsic compensation the cornerstone of his whole system." with the sole exception being that "Only the insight that well-timed rewarding is more effective than punishment constitutes the advance over the older views." (Fromm, *Pathology of Normalcy*, 110). Furthermore, a more in-depth analysis can be found in the comparison between *Instinctivist* psychology versus that of *Behavioral/Environmental* psychology in part I of *AoHD*.

to motivate the worker to function at all he needed to be threatened with starvation; and in order to make him work better and more productively one needed to reward him by higher wages and A? shorter working day.⁴²³

Boredom,⁴²⁴ a sure sign of inadequate or unfitting stimulation, frequently presents a person with a potentially insidious set of options—having the need to occupy that existential lacunae by filling it with deleterious substitutes in order to achieve a state of fulfillment. This need for appropriate stimulation can be analyzed as a matter of a healthy oriented motivator. For example, boredom can be divided into three categories: (1) people who are capable of responding productively to activating stimuli, or the non-bored person; (2) people who are in constant need of a shift and change in stimuli—what Fromm calls “flat” stimuli—but manage to compensate for the boredom in such a way that they are unaware of it, otherwise understood as those who are chronically bored; and (3) people who fail in any attempt to obtain excitation via normal means of stimulation, or are sick or pathologically disturbed.

⁴²³ Ibid., 111. According to Fromm, “the great phenomenon” of Marx was that he recognized that the problem at hand was not necessarily work but “the nature of work.” Capitalism as a socioeconomic system produces a relationship between employer and employee that symptomatically engenders alienated work. The worker “sells his energy to the one who hires him, does what he is told to do, as if he were part of a machine; the commodity ‘manufactured’ stands over and against him; he does not experience himself as a creator. Alienated work is necessarily boring and hence painful and uncomfortable. As a consequence, the worker can be motivated to accept the pain of work because he is rewarded by material compensation, consisting essentially in increased consumption.” Additionally, Fromm pushes back on the reductionist axiom whereby man seeks to acquire a state of minimal excitation. He describes the incongruity between Freud’s notion of pleasure, which consists of the very absence of excitation, and boredom. In that case, Fromm asks, “wouldn’t boredom and inertia be ideal states?” (Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 113).

⁴²⁴ Fromm lists several types of boredom, which I will not touch upon since it would fall outside the intention of this dissertation. For a more detailed look, cf. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, sec. “Boredom-Chronic Depression,” 272-282. Boredom has the additive problem of becoming indifference, an admixture of alienation and boredom. This form of desensitization thwarts empathic emotions and serves to put a distance between ‘I and thou.’ cf., Fromm, *On Being Human*, sec. “Alienation as a Disease of Modern Man,” 23-27.

The last type is described by Fromm as being in a state of chronic depression, whether conscious or unconscious. This pathology can ultimately become a catalyst for malignant, cruel, and destructive action. Accordingly, the second type of boredom can be compensated by sufficient external stimulation; the last is incapable of being compensated at all. While we can ascribe three types of (in)activity to some measure of spectral health, whereby the first would be healthiest and the third pathological, the vast majority of people often fall into the second category. Fromm notes that the “majority [of persons], while not suffering from a grave illness, can be nevertheless considered suffering from a milder form of pathology: insufficient inner productivity.”⁴²⁵ Boredom is often prevented by substituting an unearthed “activating” stimulus from one’s inner and natural creative nature, in exchange for more ephemeral short burst excitation or “simple stimulus,” with potentially detrimental, long lasting consequences.⁴²⁶

The alienated being, then, ceases to see himself as the center of his activity and the creative source of his existential impetus. Where narcissism is the opposite of relatedness such that an inability to consider the ‘other,’ alienation begins with the inability to relate to oneself. This has larger consequences, as one’s relationship with just about anything can become skewed and a certain ‘numbness’ can set in it. Fromm discusses an extreme instance of alienation using

⁴²⁵ Fromm, *AoHD*, 269-273.

⁴²⁶ Speaking of chronic boredom in modern society and its lack of being designated as a pathology among psychologists, Fromm writes, “There are several probable reasons that chronic, compensated boredom is generally not considered pathological. Perhaps the main reason is that in contemporary industrial society most people are bored, and a shared pathology—the ‘pathology of normalcy’—is not experienced as a pathology. Furthermore, ‘normal’ boredom is usually not conscious. Most people succeed in compensating for it by participating in a great number of ‘activities’ that prevent them from consciously feeling bored. Eight hours of the day they are busy making a living; when the boredom would threaten to become conscious, after business hours, they avoid this danger by the numerous means that prevent manifest boredom: drinking, watching television, taking a ride, going to parties, engaging in sexual activities, and...taking drugs. Eventually their natural need for sleep takes over, and the day is ended successfully if boredom has not been experienced consciously at any point. One may state that one of the main goals of man today is ‘escape from boredom.’” (Fromm, *AoHD*, 273-274).

A. Eichmann as a prime example in order to show how boredom can escalate to indifference by becoming melancholic—a pathological state of boredom.⁴²⁷ He writes that Eichmann

did not give the impression of being particularly evil; rather, he is entirely alienated. He is a bureaucrat to whom it makes no particular difference whether he kills, or whether he takes care of, small children. For him, life has completely stopped being something alive. He “organizes.” Organization becomes an end in itself, whether it has to do with the gold teeth or the hair of murdered humans or whether it is railroad trains or tons of coal. When Eichmann defends himself and states that he is only a bureaucrat and has, in reality, only regulated trains and worked out schedules, then he is not altogether off the mark. I believe that there is a bit of Eichmann in us all today.⁴²⁸

As with Eichmann, alienation is modernity’s great salubrious obstacle requiring urgent attention. What makes alienation such a social detriment is that it actively constricts and obstructs access to the universal and emotional objectivity. For instance, just as a lack of information impedes one’s procurement of knowledge—since half the battle is awareness and insight into critical thinking—alienation behaves in a similar fashion, preventing emotional awareness and the ability to empathize. While reason is bound by objective laws, humanism holds the same for emotion, and what expressly allows for the grounding of emotion objectively is love. Without loving productively, a person fails to be objective and remains emotionally cloistered and socially beholden to culturally subjective authoritarian values. Hence, to overcome

⁴²⁷ Cf., Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 60, for more on the boredom-melancholic distinction.

⁴²⁸ Fromm, *AoHD*, 310.

the social problem of alienation is to be able to engage the world in an impartial fashion by achieving a productive orientation, for “in the experience of love lies sanity”⁴²⁹ and “the overcoming of human separateness.”⁴³⁰

The *productive orientation* is a particular outlook that gives way to the *being* mode of living; a biophilic mindset that yields biophilic behavior. In short though, they are one and the same. Essentially, all human needs listed by Fromm—the need to be rooted and related, the need for creativity, an identity and a frame of orientation—are addressed with a specific mindset that ‘produces’ specific *activity* (to be discussed in detail in the following section). There is a difficulty in its description. Fromm himself often discussed this orientation by pointing to other philosophical texts to make his point;⁴³¹ his language, additionally, was vague and generalized, allowing Noam Chomsky to critique his work as “superficial.”⁴³² Regardless, Fromm was in fact attempting to describe something missing in the 20th century. While previous centuries had always placed a great deal of effort at describing a utopian vision, or what precisely a good society should be, the 20th (and even current) century was and “is conspicuous for the absence of such visions.”⁴³³ There is, for Fromm, an emphasis, if not a down right fixation, on critical analysis of concepts, man, society—all of which are necessary—but are similarly devoid of an explicit account of mankind’s transformative and evolutionary aspirations.⁴³⁴ As a result, Fromm attempts to lend the reader this necessary description of a productive character to assist by filling in the hyper-analytic blind-spot with a humanistic account.

⁴²⁹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*,

⁴³⁰ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1956), 30.

⁴³¹ Cf., Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 91-96, where he mentions Aristotle’s “system of ethics;” Spinoza; Goethe; Ibsen.

⁴³² Robert Barsky, *Noam Chomsky: A Life of Dissent* (Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press, 1997), 134.

⁴³³ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 82-83.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

The most salient feature about the productive orientation can be best described as a realization of an individual, i.e. a fully mature being. This means a few things: Maturity, first, is the manner with which a person is related to the world; second, the manner with which a person is related to themselves; and third, the synchronization of the two that results in the *being* mode of living. The difficulty here is the separation of each of these three motions. While we can discuss them separately for the purpose of a more practical consideration, Fromm would likely concede that this would be quite an impossible feat to accomplish in actuality, where there is likely to be cognitive dissonance in a non-productive personality since often what they think, feel, understand, and are aware of, are different from what they outwardly express; the productive orientation is best described as an honest orientation. One cannot treat the internal and external in such a being as though they are separate. Colloquially speaking, ‘what you see is what you get.’ While other orientations can often “mask” themselves, a person who is of a productive character becomes “unmasked.”⁴³⁵

Fromm, at the start of the chapter “What is the Being Mode?” in *To Have or to Be?*, describes the concept of persona like a mask we wear—our ego. A persona, therefore, is describable where, in contrast, an actual living being is not describable. It is not a “thing” as the persona is. Each living person is as unique as “fingerprints,” since the ability to produce—and simultaneously reveal—an identity stems from one’s ability to be creative and freely express oneself.⁴³⁶ The *being* mode is one where the persona is stripped and is replaced by a being that simultaneously encompasses unique traits while being fluid in his honest expression, hence lithe

⁴³⁵ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 87.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

in character. The synchronicity between mindset and an activity as a univocal expression is what makes this orientation difficult to ‘pin down.’

Regardless of such difficulties, what *is* more easily explained is its quality of relatedness. As discussed throughout the course of this dissertation—along with why humanism is an essential addition to climate philosophy—is the importance of how humanity manages to relate to itself and the natural world around it. The ancient Hermetic principle of correspondence, “As above, so below; as below, so above. As within, so without; as without, so within,” is a concise and accurate way of understanding the importance of relatedness and its impact. If the internal life is neglected, external life will suffer for it. If external life is suffrage, then internal life will be neglected.⁴³⁷ At least, that is the humanistic premise. The productive orientation then possesses biophilic attributes that allow for biophilic behavior since they are correspondingly relational. This is why Fromm talks about love as “the only path to sanity.”⁴³⁸

Using love to better illustrate the relationship between mindset and activity, and to further explicate the synchronous yet creatively manifold relationship between the two, one would make a mistake in thinking that it is separate from an activity or that it is a ‘feeling.’ That by attaining love, you can therefore acquire whatever it is that love promises through some type of instantaneous magic. This would be akin to a person willing to learn how to play music if they first come to possess an amazing instrument that will indefinitely imbue them with the inspiration to do so. Furthermore, the attainment of love is spontaneous in nature. For Fromm, love is “not natural” but rather a culmination of “discipline, concentration, patience, faith, and

⁴³⁷ In applying this to our discussion on climate change, an application of *modus tollens* followed by a subsequent application of *modus ponens* will yield the conclusion that if we want to survive this evolutionary bottleneck, we must give attention to our internal lives.

⁴³⁸ Fromm, Erich, *The Sane Society*, 25.

the overcoming of narcissism.”⁴³⁹ To be able to love means that one must already possess particular prerequisite characteristics that would enable a person to perform the act. Hence, love is something that requires both mindset and activity in order to be able to adequately bridge the gap between I and thou.

Moreover, love is paradoxical in nature. In order to graduate to a productive orientation one must overcome the problems of existence by solving the problem of his separateness, lostness, and powerlessness. It is by understanding and living this concept that we can begin to overcome the problem of existence. In non-productive orientations one attempts to shed his fear of these horrors of man by becoming one with the world and by submitting to a person, an institution, a nation, an idol, etc., essentially, by becoming part of something that is bigger than himself and potentially ‘losing’ himself in the process. Conversely, a person can also attempt to unite himself with the world by having power over it and making others a part of himself, thereby transcending his individual existence by lording it over others.⁴⁴⁰ Attempting to solve the problem of the passions in the symbiotic sadomasochistic fashion will ultimately fail the test of long-term sustainability since it is at the expense of the integrity and independence of all parties involved in the dynamic.

The non-productive persons involved “live on each other and from each other, satisfying their craving for closeness, yet suffering from the lack of inner strength and self-reliance.”⁴⁴¹ A genuine mastery over the character rooted passions can only be achieved through love and the recognition of its universal and objective qualities. That if “I truly love one person I love all

⁴³⁹ Fromm, Erich, *The Art of Loving*, 53.

⁴⁴⁰ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 30-31.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

persons, I love the world, I love life” and if a person believes that they love someone, then they “must be able to say, ‘I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself.’”⁴⁴² The paradox is that the condition for the ability to love is the ability to be alone.⁴⁴³

One can only truly love if he has managed to overcome and transcend the problem of his existence. In such an instance, love itself is not a relationship one person has with a specific other person but it “is an *attitude*, an *orientation of character*.”⁴⁴⁴ In other words, it *is* the productive orientation. It is precisely this type of paradoxical Gordian knot that makes this orientation hard to describe. If I were to say that in order for me to relate to others, I must first be able to relate to myself, and in order for me to love others, I must first love myself, there appears to be some (specious) order or precise account for attaining productive virtue. Likewise, the conditional statements can be compounded in complexity by further adding to it the problem of sequential definitions in that I can further suggest that in order to relate to myself and love myself, I would first need to know what it means to relate, to love, and, more problematically, to know what I am—as a being, as an individual, as a member of a group. This quickly becomes an epistemological nightmare since in such an example, knowledge, outlook, and practice all go hand-in-hand. They cannot be separated. If one shifts, they all shift. This is both a bug and a feature of humanism, making it simultaneously necessary and yet difficult to attain.

⁴⁴² Fromm, *The Art of Loving*., 43.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 43. This quote is originally derived from Meister Eckhart, who said “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.” *Meister Eckhart*, trans. by R. B. Lakney (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 204.

Moreover, to say that there is a specific sequence regarding what knowledge an individual must first possess in order to execute virtuous action is also impossible since mindset behaves as a syndrome. Thus, in order for me to relate, I must be able to relate to others as well as myself, simultaneously. Through this dualistic interaction, what is being learned is relatedness; one does not come ‘before’ any other; all components come together in flux. As the previous chapter discussed, non-productive orientations blend together to form a syndrome comprised of varying orientations (including the productive) intertwined together; the manifestation of the productive orientation is similar in nature. In love for example, “beyond the element of giving,”⁴⁴⁵ the active character in the *being* mode of living, “implies certain basic elements, common to all forms of love.”⁴⁴⁶ The implicit elements one must possess are care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge. While they are the fundamental building blocks to being able to love, they are also some of the key ways by which love can come to be expressed. The productive orientation then is expressly different from the non-productive orientations, as it is a syndrome of biophilic activity—a concept that, if extrapolated, applies to all of nature.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to transition the discussion of Fromm’s Humanism from a healthy mindset to healthy behavior. In the fourth chapter, there was an exposition of Fromm’s philosophy, a description of his ontology of man—necessary for an ethical foundation and direction—and a detailed account of varying non-productive orientations. The aim of this chapter was to finally arrive at a description of the more elusive productive orientation. Additionally,

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

while attempting to finally flesh out a definition of a healthy mindset, the first section, “Humanistic Productiveness,” examined ethics through a historical significance in an overarching endeavor to ground the behavior and activity of contemporary society; a society rooted in the *having* mode of living. Thus, there was also a shift in focus that transitioned from the individual mindset of the fourth chapter to a more collective mindset. The second section, “Diagnostics on the Way to the Productive Orientation,” in an attempt to answer the question posed in the preliminary section to this chapter i.e. Are we sane?, discussed the collective psychic pitfalls of contemporary society in the form of narcissism, alienation, and abstractification along with their derivational issues of vitalism, boredom, and relatedness. The result was that any society that fosters this sort of emotional shunting readily qualifies as insane since it bars itself from being able to adequately relate to others or to effectively motivate one’s self. Finally, productive and non-productive orientations were discussed side by side in order to make each of their distinct qualities more salient, therefore shedding more light on the mindset of healthy behavior.

The next chapter will begin where this one leaves off, dealing with a continued transition from mindset to behavior and working its way toward Fromm’s opposing dichotomies from the *having* mode to the *being* mode of existence. This mode of living will be described and expressed through the presentation of several practical examples. These examples will not only illustrate the *being* mode but also serve as examples of how humanistic values can serve to solve the fundamental issues of our relationships as individuals nestled within the context of society and societies nestled within the context of a planet. In other words, humanism implores us to observe and readjust our grasp of relational dynamics.

Chapter 6: A Giant Leaf for Mankind

This chapter aims to discuss Fromm's dichotomized modes of living: the *having* versus the *being* modes. I will begin this section with a brief account of excitation and stimulation—having already touched upon the concept of our need to perpetually feed off of and draw energy from external circumstances and conditions—in the second section of the last chapter. The intention is to segue into how such energy is used, dispersed, and expended in thought and action of both the *having* and *being* mode of life. After a detailed exposition of the *having* mode of experience, there will be a brief consideration of solutions indicative of an alternative mindset from the one exemplified by the analytic climate ethicists surveyed in part I of the dissertation e.g. a sketch of where Broome and his methodology best fit into the application of the given moral schemas. The goal is to show how the climate philosophers previously discussed fail to live up to the Herculean task of the type of revolution required to achieve genuine sustainability despite what they say being of genuine benefit. Finally, I will conclude by presenting Fromm's *being* mode of experience, advocating for a cultural and socioeconomic aim guided by health and normative humanism.

Section I: (Anti)Humanistic Behavior

The last chapter transitioned from the four specific (necrophilic) non-productive orientations of the fourth chapter by weaving individual personae with aggregate dynamics and outcomes; calling for an overcoming of narcissism and alienation and the adoption of more biophilic qualities. The idea was to delineate and further establish the relevance, effect, and

relation between our internal life to the external world. The last section ended with an account of the last orientation: the (biophilic) *productive* orientation. The intention was to begin the transition from individual to group dynamics and from mindset to behavior.

The need for stimulation was briefly touched upon in the last chapter in the form of “simple” versus “active” stimulation and its relationship to boredom. The idea is that if an individual is not appropriately stimulated, his expulsion of energy will espouse unhealthy tendencies—boredom being a leading factor in depression and psychic pathology. Apposite energy retrieval and expulsion is paramount to the well-functioning of the individual and society alike. Where and how we give our due attention becomes responsible for where we draw our existential vitality since, as previously mentioned, it cannot be solely sustained through physical means, especially with the increase of age. Therefore, it is important to delve a little deeper into the distinction between the simple and active forms of stimulation and to discuss their impact on and implementation of character orientations, world views, and cultural outlook in order to complete our transition from (internal) mental states to (external) behavioral patterns. Continuing our discussion between the *having* and *being* modes of living, while chapter 4 discussed these in terms of an individual’s mental state and activity,⁴⁴⁷ this final chapter will focus more on these behaviors on a societal level. The idea is to conclude with some concrete examples of the efficacy of productive models in the following last section.

Plainly put, just as Fromm deals with all matters of his ideas as a spectrum bound between and regulated by dichotomized extremes, the basic outline remains the same for excitation/stimulation. Frommian humanism maintains that life and stimulation go hand-in-hand.

⁴⁴⁷ Chapter 4 concludes with an exposition on the *being* mode at the end of the section II.

He cites examples of research conducted by a neurologist Ivan Sechenov, a Russian scientist whose *Reflexes of the Brain* (1863) was one of the first to document sources suggesting that the “brain is not merely *reactive* to outside stimuli” but “is itself spontaneously active.”⁴⁴⁸ He goes on to further cite that “the brain consumes oxygen at a rate comparable to that of active muscle,” essentially saying that a high rate of oxygen consumption is short lived in active muscles while the nervous system has a high demand for it, whether physically active or asleep.⁴⁴⁹ Moreover, he shows that certain metrics such as dreaming, brain size and weight, an infant’s need for stimulation, and simple “observations of daily life,” are evident in organisms, both human as well as animal, that “are in need of a certain minimum of excitation and stimulation, as they are of a certain minimum of rest.”⁴⁵⁰ Given the evidence Fromm presents, the axiom that ‘man is in need of stimulation’ seems fairly well-secured, which, if true, permits one to ask: what type of stimulation?

Considering the stimulative spectrum, stimulation in general is required for man to a) function while or a particular type of excitation is necessary for man to b) flourish before ‘opting out.’ Thus, we have *simple* stimulation on one end and *active* stimulation on the other. There is the additional type of ‘stimulation’ that is achieved by the productive personality but one might hesitate to call it stimulation since “the person who is fully alive does not necessarily need any

⁴⁴⁸ Sechenov, I. M. 1863. *Reflexes of the Brain*. (Cambridge: MIT Press.) quoted in Fromm, *AoHD*.

⁴⁴⁹ Fromm, *AoHD*, 267.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 268. The examples I have given are presented in that order in the *AoHD* along with the supplementation of primary sources as evidence. For oxygen intake of the brain, he cites R.B. Livingston, 1967; for dreams W.Dement, 1960; for infant stimulation, R. Spitz, D. E. Schechter, 1973, E. Tauber and f. Koffler, 1966. Among other secondary sources. Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, 266-268, for more detail, and 269-270 for more examples. Additionally, cf. Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, sec. IV.2 “The Evidence against the Axiom [Is Man Lazy by Nature],” 118-146. Evidence provided in full comprised of but not limited to the neurophysiological, animal experimentation, experiments in social psychology, dreaming, child development, and psychology.

particular outside stimulus to be activated; in fact, he creates his own stimuli.”⁴⁵¹ The “alive person” is a type of self-propelling wheel who can take interest in all manner of things and is not dependent on external stimulus to achieve satisfaction.

Keep in mind that both types are extrinsic in nature and apply to the non-productive individual that has yet to achieve self-dependency, always in need of others to provide it for them. This is important because, as previously mentioned, being able to be actively engaged instead of passively dependent is an autonomy achieved in maturation and the final stage in biophilic development. Self-endowed curiosity is something that needs to be re-learned, as it is observed in children but “after the age of six...become[s] docile, unsponaneous, and passive” where they prefer to be “stimulated in such a way that they can remain passive and only ‘re-act’.”⁴⁵²

The relevance of appropriate excitation follows the same pattern: Internal life affects the individual; the individual affects his surroundings and, reciprocally, surroundings affect the individual, in turn affecting his inner life. What makes this excitation particularly significant is that it is responsible for generating *drives*:⁴⁵³ the motivating forces that provoke, inspire, call to act, etc. How an individual becomes accustomed to being stimulated can in time condition him to seek particular pleasures and abstain from particular perceived pains. On a macro level, how a society stimulates its members will affect their overall development, the habits they develop, and the ends they seek.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 271.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 269.

Simple excitation is solely based on a basic and immediate stimulus rooted in neurophysiological organization. Excitation is therefore “reflex-like” and short-lived.⁴⁵⁴ Simple/flat stimuli are responsible for the classic ‘fight or flight’ response (stemming from an immediate threat or danger), but are also produced by other biological needs such as hunger or even sex. In such instances, the person is said to be *reactive* in that he is responding to a bodily stimulus but he is not *acting*—by which is meant that “he does not actively integrate any response beyond the minimum activity necessary to run away, attack, or become sexually excited.”⁴⁵⁵ Thus, the brain and the physiological apparatus acts *for* man.

Conversely, an *active* stimulus causes a person to *be* active as opposed to being acted upon. This involves a measure of creativity and self-control. Supposing, for example, that a person might be faced with a situation that involves an immediate threat or danger, one can forgo the biologically inclined, fight, flight, or freeze reaction, substituting it instead with other types of defense mechanisms such as a joke to diffuse a given situation. Laughter, embarrassment, shame, active-passivity, a menacing calm, or a reaction that involves an amalgam of multiple reactions that may assist in not only diffusing a situation but perhaps even gaining one the upper hand, are all examples of alternative and creative reactions. Danger aside, active stimuli can be anything that inspires personal engagement—it “invites you to respond by actively and sympathetically relating yourself.” It inspires an interest and a type of spontaneity that is seen in play.

Active stimulation is responsible for creating a relationship between you and the object or person you are engaging with. This does a couple of things: first, the object or person is no

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

longer merely something external to you that is ‘flat’ or ‘mute’ but rather is something that has a direct access to your inner self. There is a relationship of mutual affectedness often producing a heightened level of enthusiasm, awareness, and awakeness.⁴⁵⁶ As a result, the barrier between subject and object is a bit more diaphanous and therefore permeable. Second, such interactions often involve a greater degree of vulnerability—this means that as one impacts a someone or something, they are mutually allowing for them to be impacted upon. This allows for further insight into oneself since in such a behavioral freestyle you might creatively speak or behave in ways one might not have not previously orchestrated; importantly, in doing so, one is partaking in momentary self-creation. As I act, so I become. As the internal is the creative force, the external is the representing manifestation. The essential difference is that while *simple* stimulus produces a biological *drive*, an *active* stimulus results in a *striving* where a goal can be considered and incorporated into an authentic development of one’s character.

Broadly speaking, assuming that excitement and stimulation matters, then we can more aptly take note of the type of stimulation society we are confronted with in contemporary society. Speaking of life in industrial societies in 1973, Fromm writes that they “operate almost entirely on simple stimuli.”⁴⁵⁷ Given a society that promotes and fosters an environment based on simple stimuli, the motivating drives produced are mainly “sexual desire, greed, sadism, destructiveness, [and] narcissism,” which are mediated through “movies, television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the commodity market.”⁴⁵⁸ With the propagation of maladaptive behaviors, short term gains are idolized and the power to procure instantaneous passive satisfaction of one’s

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 270.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

impulsive wants and cravings is glorified as an end in itself. Such matters of short lived excitement actively prevent long-term existential satisfaction since simple stimuli, when repeated beyond a certain threshold, “lose their stimulating effect...due to a neurophysiological principle of economy that eliminates the awareness of stimuli that indicate by their repetitiveness that they are not important.”⁴⁵⁹ This leaves the individual to either increase the stimulus in order to achieve the original level of excitation or to change the source (and type) of stimulus. A certain level of “novelty” is required.⁴⁶⁰

Ultimately, this can create a populace that is alienated—who cannot know themselves since they are perpetually acted upon and are always in search of new sources of stimulation as though they are mere objects whose sole purpose is to provide optimal stimulation in a socially idolized form. Furthermore, people who are dependent on simple stimuli can also become stunted in ways of learning and receiving new forms of information, in what they find to be useful, advantageous, and worthwhile. In addition, they would also suffer from a lack of follow through, patience, perseverance, often demanding quick results along with a quick release of emotions. Such a society as chronically bored yet inured and unaware of their pathology of normalcy—not being experienced as a pathology since it is shared as a socially patterned defect.⁴⁶¹ Stimulation and excitation therefore become two of the essential factors for generating conditions that are conducive to mental states prone to destructiveness and cruelty since “it is much easier to get excited by anger, rage, cruelty, or the passion to destroy than by love and productive and active interest.”⁴⁶² The former does not require the individual to make any kind of

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 269, 271.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. Fromm, *AoHD*, 273-274.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 273.

effort of excitation while the latter requires one to have a certain level of “patience and discipline, a willingness to learn, the ability to concentrate, to endure frustration, to practice critical thinking, as well as to overcome one’s narcissism and greed.”⁴⁶³ People dependent on simple stimuli are even likely to remain in ‘worst case scenario’ situations simply because these provide a constant flow of novelty and further simple stimulation, despite being antithetical to personal growth and flourishing.

Industrial societies today seem to have two distinct value systems designated as conscious and ineffective versus unconscious and effective. The conscious values are those of a humanistic and religious tradition such as individuality, love, care, faith, etc. These values, Fromm contends, “have become ideologies for most people and are not effective in motivating human behavior.”⁴⁶⁴ It is, instead, the unconscious values that have become responsible for directing and motivating the social system of “the bureaucratic, industrial, property, consumption, social position, fun, excitement, and so on.”⁴⁶⁵ Fromm categorizes this set of values, and their adherents, in what he calls the *having* mode of living, or the *having* orientation. This mode of existing is an outlook—a characterological comportment that serves to generate a unconscious understanding of the world. This understanding, generated from the value schemas of one’s psychic orientation, functions as a practical guide to daily life and helps to aid in the construction and reinforcement of personal identity along with an explanation of the world they reside in. Specific to the *having* mode, the orientation is often used as a retrograde phenomenon where behavior reinforces existential theory and is often found to be divorced from conscious

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 94.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

values. Action in this case is used as evidence to support axioms that aren't necessarily true but that can justify one's emotions, behavior, and situatedness: face-value axioms such as man is lazy by nature; a good relationship is akin to good teamwork; technological advancement equals social progress; everyone is entitled to their own opinion because everyone's truth is different, are some examples of underlying social principles dispersed and parroted through the individual.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, in the *having* mode of living, the self is created and sustained through a materialistically tethered feedback loop where meaning is placed in objects and objects in turn lend meaning and purpose to the individual. Meaning and purpose that serves to construct being, in other words, it becomes integrated in a person's personality and character serving as means for identity creation.

The key distinction between the *having* versus the *being* mode of existence is the manner with which a person relates to and experiences the world. While having, possessing, and attaining things is not in direct conflict with an individual of a productive orientation, Fromm indicates that the characterological *having* mode necessarily is.⁴⁶⁷ In other words, "Even the 'just' and the 'saintly,' inasmuch as they are human, must want to have in the existential sense—while the average person wants to have in the existential *and* the characterological sense."⁴⁶⁸ Existential having, i.e. things we need to live, is a necessity. Having a body means humans have minimum requirements in order to maintain life. This requires that we have, keep, take care of, and use certain things for survival.

⁴⁶⁶ For further information on axioms influencing behavior, cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, sec. "The Science of Man," 20-25.

⁴⁶⁷ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 85.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

In contrast, *having* in a characterological sense is a drive to “retain and keep that [which] is not innate [to man]”⁴⁶⁹ but rather is a result of human conditions and environmental factors that work to shape and reinforce one’s outlook. The ownership of property or possessions is not problematic in and of itself but becomes “characterologically” problematic once man depends on it to provide him with (a non-productive) identity and existential significance. The existential dichotomies are problematized against a backdrop of meaninglessness and our need to derive meaning for direction: criteria for how one ought existentially and ethically to navigate themselves. Uncertainty “is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers. If he faces the truth without panic he will recognize that there is *no meaning* to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively.”⁴⁷⁰ In the *having* mode of living, a person does not create his own identity but rather conforms his identity to cultural demands and restrictions mediated by internal fears, insecurities, or whatever are the reasons that preclude one from standing up and peering over the wall for oneself, so to speak. Over time, a person can become potentially engulfed by the external entity leading one to become pathologically consumed, and in direct risk of losing their own self. On a social level, this can lead an individual to authoritarianism, destructiveness, or automaton-like conformity.

The nature of the *having* orientation runs parallel to the nature of private property⁴⁷¹ since it is a mentality primarily concerned with acquisition and definition. Consider the statement ‘I have something.’ Where the ‘I’ is the subject and the ‘something’ is the object, the ‘have’ expresses the relation between the two where the meaning of the object, whether it’s a house, a

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁷⁰ Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 45.

⁴⁷¹ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 76.

car, an accomplishment, an interaction, a relationship, etc., lends definition to the subject. Ergo, “the subject is not *myself* but I *am what I have*.”⁴⁷² Moreover, the construction of the self revolves around power as this mindset fixates on the level of control one has over objects and one’s ability to attain, maintain, contain, and manipulate them according to one’s will. The ability to impart force, measured by external development, becomes the primary mode of acquiring existential validation. The predictability of causality and its rendered effects are a necessary component of sanity—hence our inexorable search for objective grounding. Maintaining and controlling a state of causal permanence—one that perhaps alters and shifts according to one’s volition—is what imparts an individual living in a *having* mode with a meaning laden pattern. That meaning, of course, depends solely on social recognition and perception of that causal pattern.

To aid in the understanding of this involved theoretical concept, consider the following example. Let us imagine a person who has a need (for whatever reason) to be acknowledged by being the center of attention. Now, in time, this individual chooses show business as a profession; more specifically, let us say that he becomes a comedian. A comedian, after all, is not only center stage, night after night, but is also the only person on the stage. Additionally, making the crowd laugh assists in any feelings of powerlessness he may harbor and helps to feed his sense of self-worth—not only because he has the ability to make someone laugh, but also because he can now compete against others with the same talent, placing him in a particular hierarchy where he can further acquire higher status. By forging a stable environment for himself, he can say he does the same comedy club circuits as his peers and is well respected by

⁴⁷² Ibid., 77.

them, consistently kills, can draw in money for club owners, etc., feedback drawn from the external environment becomes cause for ushering in an identity: He is a man that is funny, can generate draw-power with his particularly refined personality, is a good friend—since he socializes consistently with the same people—, earns a good income and therefore is a contributing member of society, allows himself to be ‘open’ and ‘vulnerable’ by subjecting himself to the crowd and is therefore fearless, etc. In sum, this man has come to ‘know’ himself.

To drive the point home a little further, let us also assume that the comedian was born with the talent of making others laugh. This was not something he truly had to work for in order to establish. Even in situations where the crowd might not have been particularly responsive, the comedian always managed to somehow turn it around and have it work in his favor. One may conclude, based on extrinsic factors, that the comedian is successful because he is funny, and funny because he is successful. Given the hypothetical situation, one can produce a panoply of meaning with which to derive a measure of existential significance, having achieved a framework for his identity.

In continuing to describe the *having* mode and its relationship to itself, there are two major takeaways here: First, the laughing crowd (and all that comes with it), acts as a measure of permanence used to construct a meaningful worldview. Second, whatever meaning is derived from that worldview is based solely on extrinsic factors. The *having* mode behaves as a type of possessive fixation where the possession (and its perceived properties) provides the possessor with meaning-laden use-value, only to be discarded should it cease to fulfill its existential function of supplying and supporting an identity. This argument coincides with and mitigates the unique difficulties that manifest from the comedian’s character rooted passions. Instead of dealing with the problems head on e.g. his particular fear of separateness, powerlessness, and

lostness, this particular hypothetical comedian masks them by creating a cocoon of personal ignorance entrenched by empirical evidence; the sustenance of one's ego. In terms of his mode of relatedness, Fromm explains that,

In the having mode, there is no alive relationship between me and what I have. It and I have become things, and I have *it*, because I have the force to make it mine. But there is also a reverse relationship: it *has* me, because my sense of identity, i.e., of sanity, rests upon my having *it* (and as many things as possible). The having mode of existence is not established by an alive, productive process between subject and object; it makes *things* of both object and subject. The relationship of deadness, not aliveness.⁴⁷³

Interestingly, Fromm uses the term “deadness” as the choice word to describe the psyche of having. While at first this may seem to be a gross exaggeration, recognizing that relationships procured with a having orientation are, at the core, symptomatic of emotional withholding and stuntedness; splinter sized emotional defects that proceed to deprive the individual of the healthy existential foundation needed for creative beings, and which can further evolve and develop into full blown pathologies given the right circumstance. One where the ability to remain objective is sacrificed for the retention of subjective safety.

In the case of the non-productive comedian that has assumed a *having* mode of living, the way the crowd shows up is as an “object.” The crowd is an object that earns his affection because it actively supports, promotes, and perpetuates his psychological dependencies and

⁴⁷³ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 78.

psychic needs—whether they be for simple stimulation, narcissism, finding acceptance given a low self-esteem, helping him cope with depression or anxiety by providing a momentary distraction, the need to control things (sadism), gaining him a particular reputation, or conversely, the need to feel the loss of control (masochism) by allowing the crowd to control him by ‘washing over him’ and affecting the comedy he creates, etc. Realistically, because the reasons often come in syndromes, it is probably the case that given the lot just described, the genuine underlying reason for doing comedy is a complex combination of the non-productive traits described above intermixed with productive traits as well. In the case of the non-productively prone hypothetical comedian, should the crowd cease to be sufficient in providing him with what he needs to sustain him, he would cease to feel fulfilled and no longer have a use for them since they no longer are effective at keeping the “mask” on and insanity at bay.

Finally, let us raise the stakes by imagining that the causal link between his brand of humor and what the crowd finds funny was abruptly broken. Suppose he was teleported to an alternate universe where everything was the same except for what people found funny. He was a man who always managed to make people laugh. Suddenly, nobody seems to get his jokes anymore or simply finds no humor in them. Nobody even so much as cracks a smile in his direction—the causal chain is abruptly and permanently severed. The termination of a perceived external permanence is likely to send the person of the *having* orientation (in this case, the comedian) into an existential crisis, looking instead to quickly patch things up with a sufficient replacement capable of reflecting back to him the perceptive qualities he structured his identity around. If no suitable replacement can be found or brought about, he runs the risk of psychological implosion, given that his sense of self is not derived or generated from a *being* mode of experience—an orientation whose behavior derives from intrinsic qualities unique to

him. Hence, relationships and experiences are not alive and active but are instead muted and one-sided; put in a Frommian description, it resembles a static “deadness,” instead of a dynamic aliveness where identity is not built on an unconscious need to suppress phobias and ‘secure’ one’s well-being.

In sum, the relatedness of the *having* mode of experience pertains to the maintenance of the identity forged by the accumulation and interaction with property and the on-going object-oriented/objectified relationship one has to the world and all life contained within it. His relatedness is subject to character passions rooted in psychological self-preservation, victimhood, fear, and the inability to be rid of or let go of emotional pain or trauma. Therefore, “the particular form of relatedness is expressive of his character,”⁴⁷⁴ which (once again) generates and reveals meaning in a dichotomous way: behavior born of love or fear, competition or cooperation, equality or authority, liberty or oppression, trust or mistrust, hope or depression, compassion or apathy, care or neglect, etc. Of course, when considering this at scale, the tribalistic-generating nature of these dichotomies (or the actions they precipitate) would result, at a sufficient threshold, in these same *having* mode features being reflected back from the collective society of a *having* mode populace. Case in point, the failure of the “Great Promise” of unlimited progress, and the ensuing arrival of climate change.

For Fromm, the Great Promise of unlimited progress was a Zeitgeist that promoted “the domination of nature, of material abundance, of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and of unimpeded personal freedom.”⁴⁷⁵ This promise, which sustained us since the industrial age, is currently in its twilight, if not already completely shattered. It was built around two

⁴⁷⁴ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 58.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

psychological premises: first, that the aim of life is happiness, i.e. maximum pleasure defined as the satisfaction of any desire or subjective need a person may feel, which Fromm calls *radical hedonism*; and second, that egotism, selfishness, and greed, insofar as the system needs to generate them in order to function lead to harmony and peace. The failure of this promise, according to Fromm, stems from “the distinction between purely subjectively felt needs and objectively valid needs.”⁴⁷⁶ The former is being detrimental to human growth while the latter is in accordance with human nature.

According to Fromm, economic behavior was separated from ethics in the eighteenth century. The development of an autonomous economic system was supposed to be divorced from human needs and human will and no longer determined by the question “What is good for Man?” but by “What is good for the growth of the system?”⁴⁷⁷ Putting our creation out of our hands and having to adapt to it, he notes that the two premises of the Great Promise proved to be incorrect, time and time again.

For the first premise, radical hedonism cannot lead to happiness since it is often antagonistic to human nature in that. “the ‘pursuit of happiness’ does not produce well-being.”⁴⁷⁸ A major reason is that we live in a state of perpetual contradiction with respect to the theory versus the actual practice of radical hedonism. When juxtaposed with the ideal of disciplined

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 5. To briefly touch upon the topic of happiness, happiness for Erich Fromm, when based on one’s subjective notions and wants, and is dependent on external forces spontaneously arrange themselves in such a way that their significance is aligned with one’s subjectively laden meaning, is illusory. He refers to conscious happiness, where one’s “head” is involved, as a “pseudo-pleasure” or “pseudo-happiness.” Happiness, for Fromm, is best described as a sustainable by-product that reflects the quality of the state of well-being of the whole person. In other words, distinct from joy (which tends to be ephemeral), the nature of happiness is an achievement that is generated through the culmination of productive forces in thought, feeling, and activity. It is, simply put, the outcome of flourishing. For more info on happiness, cf. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, 181f. 189.

work, the contradiction results in the acceptance of an obsessional work ethic and an ideal of complete laziness during vacations and times of rest.⁴⁷⁹ “We,” he writes, “are a society of unhappy people: lonely, anxious, depressed, destructive, dependent—people who are glad when we have killed the time we are trying so hard to save.”⁴⁸⁰

For the second premise, egoism as described above is not solely a type of behavior but takes root in one’s personality. Egotistic behavior, Fromm explains, is self-serving in a way that one wants to possess all things for oneself and stand tall above the rest. Qualities such as possessiveness become primary instead of sharing; what generates a feeling of pleasure is possessions, one’s control over them, and the status that they bring. Since the aim of egotism is rooted in the *having* mode of experience, naturally one becomes greedy and protective of what one has since “*I am more the more I have.*”⁴⁸¹

The underlying governing attitude in a society composed of members predominantly in a having mode of existence is that of antagonism and antipathy containing superficial characteristics that take on the attributes of a relatively innocuous and affable persona. Repressing true motivations, such members have to ‘cordially’ deceive and take advantage of their customers, actively compete with their competitors in such a way that might bring them complete ruin, actively exploit their workers, all while never being truly satisfied since there is no end in sight to one’s wishes. Profits, for example, should always grow, no matter the repercussions—at the expense of life itself. If this is the law of the land, how can its members

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

truly ever come to live in a state of honesty, solidarity, care, etc., especially when they are in a perpetual state of struggle and warfare amongst themselves?

Speaking of consumer culture, we can more fully articulate how one's mind and actions or, total comportment, proceed in a *having* mode of being, and point to the contradiction between someone's property and one's ephemeral interest in it. The *having* mode results in the process of depersonalization, acquisition, experience, exchange, and character development. In the first, the relationship between the owner and his property is an element of depersonalization. The object is not concrete; it is first and foremost a status symbol and extension of power—what Fromm calls, “an ego builder.”⁴⁸² In acquiring a particular object, whether it be a house, a car, or a new kitchen, the owner has actually “acquired a new piece of ego”⁴⁸³—a new piece of himself. Next comes acquisition, experience and exchange. Often, when acquiring a new object, the thrill is short-lived.

Thus, in a consumer society, one does not purchase things for long-term functional use, which also limits the amount one needs to buy (as one would given a productively oriented mindset) but instead, the ‘throw-away culture’ allows one to gain momentary pleasure in the new acquisition and to repeat the number of ‘endorphin bumps’ by increasing the number of micro-doses, i.e. reasons for why one ‘needs’ a new thingamabob. Again, this works to increase one's sense of control while increasing the need to experience new simple stimuli. One has the power to ‘find a good deal’, ‘make a deal’ with someone, add a missing piece to a collection, all concluding with the feeling of possession and a false sense of empowerment. The object itself is of no genuine relation but again, it is the process, along with what the object represents, that

⁴⁸² Ibid., 73.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

behaves in a symbolic fashion. Such activity and the acquisition of new materials objects act as an additional piece of evidence, adding another line to the caricature of one's 'identity,' and making it the last and most important factor in the process: the development of a hoarding and marketing non-productive orientation.⁴⁸⁴

Section II: *Being* Mode

The previous section gave an exposition the relationship between (biophilic) *activity* and the *having* mode of living with the greater emphasis on the latter of the two. As just mentioned, the idea is to show how a mindset plays out in behavior and partakes in society. Now, while the last section gave specific examples of certain instances, this section will not attempt to mirror the last. So, while I decided to give emphasis to the *having* mode of living by talking about energetic forces and via analogies to a hypothetical comedian, this section will attempt to make spaces for *being* mode/productive orientation in a different way. For one, I do not believe to be out of bounds when I say that we are living in a non-productive society that fosters a *having* mode of existence for its citizenry. This, after all, is the crux of the thesis of this dissertation: that society, by and large, finds itself amidst catastrophe with no readily available solutions as a result of our lifestyles, way of thinking, and general attitude toward each other and the planet we reside on. It would not be out of line to say that we are society is out of harmony with the environment, its institutions out of harmony with its members, individuals out of harmony with each other, and the individual out of harmony with himself. Causal order follows suit from macro to micro and vice versa. Thus, I felt as though the examples used to elucidate and clarify non-productive mindsets/necrophilically disposed behavior was sufficient. The reader could readily extrapolate

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 72-76.

and apply the outcome on a social level; specifics were not necessary as they would simply be obvious.

This section will attempt to give further inside into the *being* mode of living but in a different format from the last. The examples provided below will be more suggestive in nature, meaning that, given the description of the *productive* orientation in §4.4 and §5.2, this section hopes to provide examples that more readily encompass the spirit of forward thinking biophilic activity. Instead of a description, I will offer three particular instances that possessed the values of Fromm's humanism and managed to successfully realize the necessary changes for the better. Each of the three examples—a behavioral study on narcotics involving rats, the opioid crisis in Portugal, and the newly adopted economic 'donut model' embraced by Amsterdam—will be presented in the same light and consistency as per the theme of this work: With a call for a) the adoption of a systems approach to existential problems, b) the importance of considering the internal factors influenced by and affecting the external factors, and finally c) application—the final jump from the individual to the social, and theory to biophilic practice.

Essential to the *being* mode of existence is its consideration of systems dynamics in its effort to integrate all parts into the whole.⁴⁸⁵ Coming full circle and continuing the discussion on systems theory, the subject of the first chapter, the nature of systems and the interaction of its parts can be understood as a dynamic and interactive dance since “the proper function of each part is necessary for the proper functioning of all other parts.”⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, there are six essential features of system dynamics and their fluid function to take into consideration should

⁴⁸⁵ Review pp. 190f., on the syndromes of the productive orientation.

⁴⁸⁶ Fromm, *On Being Human*, 42.

there by a need of systemic and totalized change. This is necessary since systems are not merely a static summation of all their components but rather dynamically influenced by its sub-systems.

First, regardless of whether it is an organism or an inorganic system, a system has a life of its own. The system always comes to dominate its parts, forcing the parts to operate within the given system and its motivating forces. It has an ‘inner coherence’ that makes it naturally resilient to change. In other words, systemic change is very difficult to achieve and thus infrequent. Second, this being the case, attempting to change an isolated part of the system “will not lead to a change of the system as a whole.”⁴⁸⁷ In such an instance, the system will proceed as usual only to return the attempt at change back into the fold of the system norms. A genuine shift in the dynamics of the system can only be changed if, instead of attempting to reform only a part, the entire system undergoes a reintegration of all parts. Third, to understand which changes are necessary to a system, a proper analysis of the functioning of the system juxtaposed with a study of the direct and indirect causes of the dysfunction—along with resource availability to bring about such changes—is required. Fourth, the optimal functioning as well as the dissolution of the system are both contingent upon its overall efficient function and integration of all the parts. An efficient system functions with minimal energy or consumptive friction between themselves, the system as a whole, as well as neighboring systems. System disintegration therefore is a consequence of when its parts are no longer able to adapt themselves in a regenerative fashion to the demands of new conditions. Having lost its capacity to adapt itself, the parts become “ossified” so that the friction within the system and the contradictions between the system and

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

neighboring systems becomes so intense that eventually the system falls apart and disintegrates.⁴⁸⁸ Fromm acutely describes these dynamic saying,

Between the two extremes, the optimal functioning of the system and its disintegration, are many shades of partial dysfunction. Whether a system can recover its balance or will disintegrate depends on the ability to introduce adequate changes based on the analysis of the system. ...there are systems like that of the human organism or of a society which can be changed by human interference, provided this interference is based on the proper knowledge of the functioning of the system and the availability and of measures that permit systemic changes and have the willingness to do so.⁴⁸⁹

Fifth, until now, systemic change was limited. Socially speaking, this is was due to lacking material resources capable for such changes. Thus, ‘social ossification’ was due to a pragmatic stiling. And lastly, sixth, system changes often fail to occur “not because they are objectively impossible but for a number *subjective* reasons.”⁴⁹⁰ Reasons being, a lack of comprehension of the function of the system—along with the reasons of its dysfunction—, special interest groups that actively fight against any change that would be disadvantages to them, and most importantly, the mindset to be found within the system that refuses to make adequate concessions that will ensure necessary adaptation. Most people, including scientists, tend to think linearly and in terms of momentary and obvious cause and effect, finding it difficult

⁴⁸⁸ Cf., Fromm, *On Being Human*, p. 43.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 43-44.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 43.

to think in terms of processes within the greater context of the system as a whole. When attempting to subdue any inflammatory ills that present themselves, whether it'd be homelessness, suicide, drug-abuse, or whatever else, it is done with a frontal assault to the problem-at-hand, as opposed to the less obvious but more pervasive underlying social dynamic.

Taking seriously Fromm's connection between the individual and society, this societal process can be understood as the analogue to the individual's productive orientation. Though the expression of the *being* mode, along with its biophilic mindset, is hard-pressed to fully realize in the form of a concrete expression and explanation; a fully mature person is impossible to fully describe.⁴⁹¹ It is, as Fromm might say, "indescribable in words" and is instead expressed by sharing experience. Rather than describing what the *being* mode is, Fromm discusses the prerequisites for it: "independence, freedom, and the presence of critical reason."⁴⁹² Similarly, one must have unity, rootedness, and effectiveness, as discussed in chapter 4. He also states that "Its fundamental characteristic is that of being active, not in the sense of outward activity, of busyness, but of inner activity, the productive use of our human powers,"⁴⁹³ so it is the opposite of the passive activity that defines the having mode. Productive activity is activity that engages, interests, and creates: "Man—man and woman—can create by planting seeds, by producing material objects, by creating art, by creating ideas, by loving one another. In the act of creation man transcends himself as a creature, raises himself beyond the passivity and accidentalness of existence into the realm of purposefulness and freedom."⁴⁹⁴ There is a common theme in Fromm's work that suggests how one ought to become of the *being* mode by overcoming

⁴⁹¹ Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 88.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 88.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 37.

syndromes of the *having* mode. In fact, one can simply look at much of Fromm's description of the *having* mode to illustrate what the *being* mode is not and thus develop an understanding of it in contrast to the having mode. *Being* is not clinging to what one has or using it as a crutch, as one would with a *having* mode. *Being* is the opposite of appearing. One does not appear as kind, one simply is. It lacks the persona of the *having* mode.⁴⁹⁵

At this point in this dissertation, I have fully addressed Fromm's *having* mode. The *being* mode is, at its core, the active expressions of the productive orientation, as discussed previously. This can best be explained by way of examples of behaviors resulting from this mode of living. Understanding the *being* mode is essential for understanding the illustrative examples and ideas of solutions indicative of an alternative mindset from the one exemplified by the analytic climate ethicists surveyed in part I of this dissertation. Having more thoroughly discusses systems theory, we can now return to our initial example of the Cape Town water crisis since we are now in a better position to appreciate the internal psychological side of the external behaviors observed in the systemic solution that ultimately saw them through their crisis.

The example of Cape Town shows the power of shifting to a unifying mindset. As discussed in chapter 1, such all-encompassing change must include events, patterns, structures, and mental models, in order to invoke and establish the breadth of any new vision. Despite all the necessary changes adopted by Cape Town's government, overcoming such a doomsday scenario would have floundered should there have been a lack of mutual cooperation among "residents, businesses, and stakeholders." Hence, having seen an acknowledgement of events and patterns, namely the lack of fresh water and its causes, in conjunction with a structural change

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 97.

enforced by governmental institutions, would not have been enough without a shift in the mindset of the citizenry and its culture. Ameliorative action must be introduced and injected into society so that any changes undertaken are made simultaneously from the top-down and the bottom-up. In discussing a humanized bureaucracy, Fromm explains:

While in alienated bureaucracy all power flows from above downward, in humanistic management there is a two-way street; “the subjects” of the decision made above respond to their own will and concerns; their response not only reaches the top decision makers but forces them to respond in turn. The “subjects” of decision making have a right to challenge the decision makers. Such a challenge would first of all require a rule that if a sufficient number of “subjects” demanded that the corresponding bureaucracy (on whatever level) answer questions, explain its procedures, the decision makers would respond to the demand.⁴⁹⁶

Adaptation must be systemic and totalizing in nature. It is an entire way of non-productive existence that instigates such existential crises as the Cape Town water shortage and only a productive one that fix it. An example of what the effects of such a Copernican turn might look like are encompassed in “Rat Park” and the shift away from previous methods of rat experimentation related to addiction. An experiment that shifted our understanding of dependency by observing the behavior of rodents when offered the option between narcotics and flourishing.

⁴⁹⁶ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 107.

The salient feature of this experiment was its radical shift from the gauging the rodents from conditions unnatural to its nature, and instead providing them an environment ideal to their needs. One which allows them to a state of ‘internal’ mousey ‘fulfillment.’ Prior to Bruce K. Alexander’s Rat Park—the acclaimed experiment published in *Psychopharmacology* in the late 1970s and early 1980s—, addiction psychology research focused exclusively on the external factor of the drug. Experiments where a lone rat in an isolated box drugged itself to death were the foundation of addiction theory. Mainly, that drugs like opioids were so irresistible that anyone or anything who took them would succumb. Alexander looked at these experiments and noted that the rat was not really living a full life i.e. a life most natural to its nature. Given what the rats were subjected to there was nothing else for it to do but take drugs which ultimately skewed data. Alexander and his team decided instead to build a Rat Park—as close as he could get it to a rodent utopia that included alternative forms of entertainment and interactions within a rodent community.

The result was an almost complete abandonment of drug use by the rats.⁴⁹⁷ In an article titled “What Does ‘Rat Park’ Teach Us About Addiction,” Lloyd Sederer considers the results of Rat Park and proclaims that “a social community beat the power of drugs.”⁴⁹⁸ To make an analogy to human psychology, the environment these rats were put into inclined them to eventually fall into necrophilic behavior. As noted by Alexander, “the drug only becomes irresistible when the opportunity for normal social existence is destroyed.”⁴⁹⁹ It was only when

⁴⁹⁷ Bruce K. Alexander, “Addiction: The View From Rat Park,” *brucealexander.com*, 2020.

<https://www.brucealexander.com/articles-speeches/rat-park/148-addiction-the-view-from-rat-park>.

⁴⁹⁸ Lloyd I. Sederer, “What Does “Rat Park” Teach Us About Addiction,” *Psychiatric Times*, June 10, 2019.

<https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/what-does-rat-park-teach-us-about-addiction>.

⁴⁹⁹ Alexander, “Addiction: The View from Rat Park.”

connected with a community, given alternatives for expressions of activity, and a chance at ‘rat productiveness,’ that the rats could exhibit a biophilic mode. Very much in line with Frommian humanism, Sederer says, “Humans, not just rats, need to be part of a community, encouraged to relate and experience the support of others. This is about as basic a psychological truth as exists”⁵⁰⁰

Commenting on the results of his experiment, Alexander explained, “Our rats consumed much more morphine when they were isolated. This fact definitely undermined the supposed proof that certain drugs irresistibly cause addiction.”⁵⁰¹ He then extrapolated into speculation about potential application to humanity saying, “People do not have to be put into cages to become addicted—but is there a sense in which people who become addicted actually feel “caged”? ... Maybe our fragmented, mobile, ever-changing modern society has produced social and cultural isolation in very large numbers of people, even though their cages are invisible!”⁵⁰² This analysis parallels some of Fromm’s realizations that gave way to recommending the adoption of a humanistic philosophy into the fabric of our social system. Alexander continued, “This means that the knowledge of man, his nature, and the real possibilities of its manifestations must become one of the basic data for any social planning.”⁵⁰³ The implementation of such data was critical to the approach to addiction pursued by Portugal.

In an article titled “How Portugal is Solving its Opioid Problem,” Rebecca Clay begins by noting that “Portugal now has the lowest drug-related death rate in Western Europe, with a mortality rate a tenth of Britain's and a fiftieth of the United States'. The number of HIV

⁵⁰⁰ Sederer, “What Does “Rat Park” Teach Us About Addiction.”

⁵⁰¹ Alexander, “Addiction: The View from Rat Park.”

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 104.

diagnoses caused by injection drug use has plummeted by more than 90 percent.”⁵⁰⁴ Prior to this, in the 1990s, Portugal was in the grip of an opioid crisis that was so well established that 1% of its population—across all classes—were addicts and had “the highest rate of HIV infection” in the EU.⁵⁰⁵ This radical improvement in the health of the society was brought about by an equally radically different approach to drug addiction by the society than previous attempts to solve the issue. Specifically, Clay notes that the vital difference was that “The Portuguese model is based in humanism—seeing people with drug problems as people with an illness.”⁵⁰⁶ Instead of attempting to address the externalities of drug use, infection rates, overdoses, etc., the Portuguese government began with the assumption that these individuals were motivated to behave in this way for specific reasons, not simply out of capricious passions.

The solution to this miserable psychological state by the addicted population was understandable, given Fromm’s connection between the need for activity and expression, recalling the discussion from chapter 4,

To create presupposes activity and care. It presupposes love for that which one creates. How then does man solve the problem of transcending himself, if he is not capable of creating, if he cannot love? *There is another answer to this need for transcendence: if I cannot create life, I can destroy it. To destroy life makes me also transcend it.*⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ Rebecca A. Clay, “How Portugal is Solving its Opioid Problem,” *American Psychological Association: Monitor on Psychology*, vol. 49, no. 9, October 2018. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/10/portugal-opioid>.

⁵⁰⁵ Clay, “How Portugal is Solving its Opioid Problem.”

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 37.

Effective solutions addressing the external factors alone would not be enough. The new approach recognizes this. According to Clay,

The goal is to empower individuals and help them attain autonomy, whether that means helping someone get an identification card to help reintegrate them into society or getting them to the hospital for treatment of HIV. The organization also offers participants access to regular medical and psychosocial assessment, greater awareness of their health status and access to community health and social services.⁵⁰⁸

The lessons of Rat Park, being applied to humans in psychologically similar situations, yield the same result: a healthier people and society. However, to consider this approach truly effective as a potential solution to the issues presented by climate change, a further shift, from an individual focus to a societal focus is needed. Such an instance can be found in Amsterdam having become an exemplar for all future economic strategies.

As a city, Amsterdam has adopted a new economic model. The so-called ‘doughnut model’ represents a significant shift in economics similar to the shift in addiction research of Rat Park and the Portuguese solutions to the opioid crisis. As explained by Daniel Boffey in an article in *The Guardian*, “The central premise is simple: the goal of economic activity should be about meeting the core needs of all but within the means of the planet. The ‘doughnut’ is a device to show what this means in practice.”⁵⁰⁹ Spoken in the language of broad-brush-strokes,

⁵⁰⁸ Clay, “How Portugal is Solving its Opioid Problem.”

⁵⁰⁹ Daniel Boffey, “Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy,” *The Guardian*, April 8, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/amsterdam-doughnut-model-mend-post-coronavirus-economy>.

the essential focus of the internal as related to the external (and vice versa) is apparent. It should be noted that such a concept is scalable—equally applicable to the planet as it is to a city, if not as equally easy to implement. Boffey explains that the creator, “Raworth scaled down the model to provide Amsterdam with a ‘city portrait’ showing where basic needs are not being met and ‘planetary boundaries’ overshoot. It displays how the issues are interlinked.”⁵¹⁰ The donut model then is an economic model that does not gauge itself solely on GDP but tethers a social foundation comprised of twelve social aims—health, food, water, energy, networks, housing, gender equality, social equity, political voice, peace & justice, income & work, education—of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN to an ecological ceiling that considers nine key planetary boundaries—ocean acidification, climate change, ozone layer depletion, air pollution, biodiversity loss, land conversion, freshwater withdrawals, nitrogen & phosphorus loading, and chemical pollution. The idea is to balance the two against each other in order to minimize the risk of social shortfalls versus a ecological overshoot. In an article for the World Economic Forum, the creator of the doughnut model, Kate Raworth, explains her motivations as attempting a shift in economic focus,

In the 20th century, policies promoting redistribution were largely focused on redistributing income—by raising taxes, increasing transfers, and implementing minimum wages—along with investing in key public services such as health and

⁵¹⁰ Boffey, “Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy.”

education. All are essential, but they still don't get to the root of economic inequalities because they focus on income, not the sources of wealth that generate it.⁵¹¹

This conception of the underlying issue associating the various, apparently disconnected, problems Amsterdam was facing, harkens back to the systems theory and the mode of living shift that Fromm advocates for saying “that the full humanization of man requires the breakthrough, from the possession-centered to the activity-centered orientation, from selfishness and egotism to solidarity and altruism.”⁵¹² To that end, Raworth, in the humanistic spirit, notes that,

Instead of focusing foremost on income, 21st-century economists will seek to redistribute the sources of wealth too—especially the wealth that lies in controlling land and resources, in controlling money creation, and in owning enterprise, technology and knowledge. And instead of turning solely to the market and state for solutions, they will harness the power of the commons to make it happen.⁵¹³

With such an outlook from those designers and implementors at the top, members affected within such a system will, due to its inclusive nature, partake in a relatedness that disperses energies toward necessary objectives: the welfare of humanity and the health of the planet. Pointing out the heretofore unique opportunity, Boffey notes that, “the world is experiencing a series of shocks and surprise impacts which are enabling us to shift away from the idea of growth to ‘thriving’ ... Thriving means our wellbeing lies in balance. We know it so well in the level of

⁵¹¹ Kate Raworth, “Meet the doughnut: the new economic model that could help end inequality,” *World Economic Forum*, April 28, 2017. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/04/the-new-economic-model-that-could-end-inequality-doughnut/>.

⁵¹² Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 1.

⁵¹³ Raworth, “Meet the doughnut: the new economic model that could help end inequality.”

our body. This is the moment we are going to connect bodily health to planetary health.”⁵¹⁴

Addressing the current bottleneck moment, Raworth expounds on the necessary measures saying that, “By taking on such questions of distributive design, we’ll give ourselves a far greater chance of tackling inequality and of thriving in the Doughnut’s safe and just space this century. And that is nothing less than our generational challenge.”⁵¹⁵ With the previous successful demonstration of the power of a more humanistic approach, the success of this social creation experiment may seem a forgone conclusion. Whether or not it does, this represents an attempt at the restructuring of the elements of society that Fromm makes use of to explain that maladies in societies that need to be addressed on an equal level, i.e. at the societal level.

In *The Revolution of Hope*, Fromm makes note of the problems trickling down from social maladies to individual maladaptive behavior. He explains that, in an ill society, “Our Bureaucratic method is irresponsible, in the sense that it does not “respond” to the needs, views, requirements of an individual. This responsibility is closely related to the case character of the person who becomes ‘an object’ of the bureaucracy.”⁵¹⁶ In such a circumstance, the connection between the individual members of society and the direction of the society itself is broken. The result is a negative feedback loop replacing the positive one; what was once a society of healthy and productive individuals, becomes a sick society, comprised of individuals exemplifying and even defending the having mode of life they have adopted in response to their external situation. To avoid this, a society on the edge needs a clear understanding of the undergirding properties

⁵¹⁴ Boffey, “Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy.”

⁵¹⁵ Raworth, “Meet the doughnut: the new economic model that could help end inequality.”

⁵¹⁶ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 106.

affecting it. This is where a practical tool like the doughnut model might come into play.

Parallelling Fromm's theoretical approach, Boffey quotes Raworth stating that "The doughnut does not bring us the answers but a way of looking at it, so that we don't keep on going on in the same structures as we used to."⁵¹⁷ The potential outcome looks impossibly different from the non-productive society Fromm describes above. By way of positive description, Fromm clarifies:

Whatever the merits of the source of the validity of humanist norms, the general aim of a humanized industrial society can be thus defined: the change of the social, economic, and cultural life of our society in such a way that it stimulates and furthers the growth and aliveness of man rather than cripples it; that it activates the individual rather than making him passive and receptive; that our technological capacities serve man's growth. If this is to be, we must regain control over the economic and social system; man's will, guided by his reason, and by his wish for optimal aliveness, must make the decisions.⁵¹⁸

It is hoped that, through the above analysis, the connection to helping our current climate relationship and avoiding environmental catastrophe is clearer. Fromm's Humanism does not provide a step by step set of instructions for climate change specifically but instead points society in a direction of societal and individual health that would improve our relationship with the world around us. It is the unifying ethical foundation pointing us inward to the psychic health and betterment of ourselves and, through a more productive human orientation, of our planet. Humanism functions much like Raworth's donut model: It is not a solution but a new way of

⁵¹⁷ Boffey, "Amsterdam to embrace 'doughnut' model to mend post-coronavirus economy."

⁵¹⁸ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 27.

looking at our situation to help change society on a fundamental level and avoid the status quo that has enabled and allowed for our current dilemma.

Conclusion: Summing up Biophilic Activity

Section I, “(Anti)Humanistic Behavior,” and Section II, “Being Mode,” of chapter 6 were discussions that, in exploring the distinct nature of a societal *having* mode of existence, in the first section, and the *being* mode of existence, in the second, were done in the hope and advocacy for such a transition. As mentioned at the beginning of §6.2, societal change geared toward *productivity* was best illustrated in the form of three prodigious examples: a study that served to question our understanding of narcotics addiction, the handling and success of Portugal’s opioid crisis, and the introduction of a new economic model in Amsterdam. The hope is to take such ideas and scale them to the international and planetary level. The reason examples were given in lieu of concrete categorization and classification—as was done for the non-productive orientation in §4.4—was because the *having* mode “refers to *things* and things are fixed and *describable*,” while *being* “refers to experience, and human experience is in principle not describable,”⁵¹⁹ albeit doing my best to do in §4.4, 5.2, and 6.1. Summing up “The Greatness and Limitations of Psychology” (1959), As previously mentioned toward the end §4.4, Fromm writes about the difficulty that arises when attempting to articulate and describe the full range of a productive human, saying,

What is fully describable is our *persona*—the mask we each wear, the ego we present—for this persona is in itself a thing. In contrast, the living human being is not a dead image

⁵¹⁹ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 87.

and cannot be described like a thing. In fact, the living human being cannot be described at all. Indeed, much can be said about me, about my character, about my total orientation to life. This insightful knowledge can go very far in understanding and describing my own or another's psychical structure. But the total me, my whole individuality, my suchness that is as unique as my fingerprints are, can never be fully understood, not even by empathy, for no two human beings are entirely alike.⁵²⁰

For Fromm, the way to bridge the gap between individuals and overcome the barrier of the separateness is only through the process of "mutual alive relatedness."⁵²¹ Thus, our relatability to each other stems from our mutual experiences and is what ultimately lends us meaning in the form of a greater 'describability of context.' A productive orientation therefore *becomes* through context; through a consistent interpretation, revisiting, reinterpretation, and perpetual clarification of perspectives and experiences. Its primary means of expression is the (inner) activity which is upheld and conditioned by qualities such as autonomy, critical thought, and the ability to empathize and consider the world around him.⁵²²

Revisiting the conversation on active stimulation (versus simple/flat) in §6.1, the activity of a person in the mode of being is produced by him and can only be a direct expression and manifestation of the unalienated self. The activity in the having mode is mainly alienated behavior generated and directed by an influence that is separate from the being; it is often extrinsic, parasitic, and manipulative in nature; forces which drive means-to-end behavior

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid., 88.

instead of end-in-itself behavior. Therefore, in non-alienated or productive activity, the “I” experiences “myself” as the subject of my activity.⁵²³

To further elucidate this thought, the concept of activity is something that in the modern vernacular is congruent with the expenditure of energy in the form of physical activity. Often, contemporary definitions of activity include labor or a body in motion. It is socially recognized purposeful behavior that results in corresponding socially useful changes. Furthermore, it fails at nuance in the same way that the specialized field of behavioral psychology does, i.e. it refers merely to the external behavior but precludes any description or reasoning for the impetus or motivation of the action. Simply doing the thing, whether it is having sex, doing homework, drinking alcohol, petting kittens, etc., is viewed (in a positive light) as a form of engaging activity despite having been potentially carried out due to internal compulsion, anxiety, external coercion, etc. Activity in this case is synonymous with and can quite easily be replaced with *passivity* and *busyness*. Conversely, *productive activity* is unalienated in essence and not an outcome of something that acts upon me in a pseudo-incentivized or coercive manner. It is invoked and perpetuated of one’s own will and personal volition.

Furthermore, the being mode is in direct contrast to having mode and is an expression of aliveness and authenticity in its interactions. Complications arise with the having mode since in lieu of genuine expression there is mere *appearance* or likeness. One’s actions are motivated by underlying forces such as fear, anger, insecurity, that are not organic drives natural to the person but are instead interferences that alter the course of honest behavior, deceptive and artificial in rendering. For example, if a society is prone toward aggression as a show of strength, substitutes

⁵²³ Ibid., 91.

licensure in lieu of freedom, promotes politeness without the underlying substantive care and compassion, produces a populace that is well-behaved but lacking in moral fiber, or has a habit of acting in a foolhardy fashion in order to elicit the word bravery, such a society, is prone to masking its discrepancy between its behavior and its motivations.⁵²⁴ Thus, behavior is not a clear indication of accurate reflection.

Because of this, Fromm continuously stressed the importance of a humanistic science of man to better understand mental health and evolutionary thinking. Mental health being understood as a *negative* notion i.e. devoid of. He discusses mental health as being something that is often considered as lacking ailment since it is understood or defined as someone who has no neurosis, no psychosis, no alcoholism, no depression, etc.⁵²⁵ Ergo, mental health is defined *negatively* by the absence of illness, instead of “by the presence of well-being.”⁵²⁶ Part of the pathway to such a definition of mental health tries to invoke the spirit of architecture and the planning of future models. It suggests new ways to learn, to express anger, to form bonds and relationships, amidst a new hierarchy of value judgements, away from a *having* mode of thinking.

The inextricable interaction between individual and society is such that neither can be isolated from its interrelated context and justly assessed and understood as though it were an independent and isolated source. For Fromm, a healthy mind—of course with exceptions—are more likely to be developed in healthy societies; the problems of individual mental health and

⁵²⁴ Listen to Talib Kweli and Mos Def, “Thieves in the Night,” Black Star, as a contemporary musical take on the distinction between the having versus the being mode of activity. “Blackstar - Thieves in the Night,” audio, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjxtRehIz2Y>.

⁵²⁵ Fromm, *The Pathology of Normalcy*, 83.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

social mental health simply cannot be separated.⁵²⁷ The productive orientation is therefore a symptom of mental health, free of particular conditions, constraints, and hindrances. As Fromm explains,

Mental health would be a syndrome of unalienated, relatively not narcissistic, not anxious, and not destructive, but productive individuals. ...people who are interested in life...The capacity to be interested in life depends not only on individual factors, but on very significant social factors. The main form of coping with mental illness and trying to achieve mental health, is not primarily individual therapy, but is primarily the change of those social conditions that produce mental illness or lack mental health.⁵²⁸

Social health, by measure of a humanistic standard, is the result of possessing an identity and achieving independence by the overcoming of isolation, alienation and a narcissistic worldview. Such a society is built upon a culture of interrelatedness possessing a cooperative ethos as a result of a productive and existentially healthy psychology. The first step to the overcoming of a necrophilic culture with destructive predispositions and predilections, as discussed in §4.1, begins with hope; hope in transcendence and in the unlikely possibility that progress is possible. That same hope behaves as a social guardrail that structures life conditions, enabling man to unfold individually with faith in himself and a reasonable dependence on another person(s) “but without feeding from him, not eating him up.”⁵²⁹ Thus, humanism lends

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 98.

us a productive orientation whose core values—objectivity, solidarity, love—generate a psychological predilection for the flourishing of all of mankind.

A society that fosters a productive orientation among its members and adopts a being mode of living as part of its structural framework would more likely be able to achieve planetary sustainability since its definition of what is useful and what constitutes activity would differ, putting in place a system that would allow us to overcome ourselves in order to be what we are. Fromm describes such activity within such society, saying that

Its fundamental characteristic is that of being active, not in the sense of outward activity, of busyness, but of inner activity, the productive use of our human powers. To be active means to give expression to one's faculties, talents, to the wealth of human gifts with which—though in varying degrees—every human being is endowed. It means to renew oneself, to grow, to flow out, to love, to transcend the prison of one's isolated ego, to be interested, to 'list,' to give.⁵³⁰

Biophilic activity then is based on an individual's psychic health, beginning with the capacity to generate stimulation without the need of a constant external stimulus; a person's existential vitality is derived from their own sense of being, their sense of self, along with a familiarity and comfort with one's internal life. In effect, the opposite of an alienated existence where such things seep and facet themselves from the outside in. This further means that an individual is exactly that; he is given everything necessary to mold and set himself into an

⁵³⁰ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 88.

individual, one that is not dependent on external entities to define him but instead defines himself according to his own peculiarities. Social engagement among productive personalities is the participation of independent individuals that establish voluntary inter-dependence within a community. A community comprised of such members further produces individuals that engage in like activity creating a virtuous feedback loop at its biophilic core.

Conclusion

Speaking at the international level, any political and economic systems centered around, motivated by, and propagating a *having* culture will forever remain at odds. At odds within their own nation states, at odds with each other, and at odds with environmental boundaries and forces. Fromm warns that so “long as everybody wants to have more, there must be formations of classes, there must be class war, and in global terms, there must be international war.”⁵³¹ Greed and peace, like oil and water, preclude each other. Therefore, I find it fitting that a comparison between Fromm’s philosophy and the ideas explored in earlier parts of this dissertation i.e. chapters 1-3, is offered as a neatly tied concluding bow to this work.

It is not that I believe that the analyses or arguments offered by externalist ethicists such as Broome, Gardiner, Garvey, Singer, Shue, etc. are incorrect or that they, in any way, are actively advocating for a *having* mode of life. On the contrary, I believe that most of their arguments and recommendations ring true when read from their given context. But, I also believe that any argument made that actively calls for the preservation of the current mode of life or recommends that by focusing only on small scale institutional changes as a course of action for entering into an ecological relationship with our planet is inevitably going to fall short of what the data suggests is required.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 6.

My aim for this project was to add to the philosophical conversation by making two sweeping claims in solidarity with the rest of my revolutionary brothers and sisters. The first of the main arguments made throughout the course of this dissertation, *ad nauseum*, is that for any change to be effective, given the current circumstances, it must be total in scope.⁵³² We cannot merely install a carbon tax and hope that the problem resolves itself. This crisis requires the effort of every nation and every individual to aid however possible, however small. Small shifts in habits and the proper education of our youth will yield greater results in the long run. Those who can do more, should do more. This means that richer nations in the West, as well nations with new-found international wealth in the East, should work together to assist smaller and more impoverished nations that are less abled. Any nation that attempts to “pass-the-buck” in order to escape responsibility is sure to be condemned by future generations as those nations, and individuals alike, failed to be on the right side of history in a time when it was most pressing. Speaking as an American, the bulk of that responsibility unfortunately falls to us. Not only because of our over consumptive habits over the course of decades (if not centuries) but because we are also responsible (whether intended or otherwise, whether it yielded a net positive for humanity or otherwise) for the spread of consumer culture and necessitating an international market based on our ‘first world’ habits. Regardless of responsibility, *all* institutions are in need of a radical reshaping since they all are part of an interactive whole. We should all do our part to see that we reshape it for the better.

The second major argument is that greater attention, and even a prioritization, needs to be given to mankind’s inner life in order to produce a healthier populace with sustainable lifestyles.

⁵³² You can see what occurs when every nation, state, city, and district have different rules and regulations during the Covid-19 pandemic. It only manages to smear it and make matters worse.

The reengineering of the future should be centered around our psychological needs, not only economic gains and technological advancements. I believe that Erich Fromm is one of many examples that gives us a comprehensive way of organizing the slippery qualities of our inner world in an objective way. His humanism focuses on the individual's inner health and connects it with values that promote health on a societal scale. This is what I believe to be the missing piece of the climate puzzle. That perhaps instead of working with the 'objectively' external first and leaving it to the random individual and general populace to subjectively 'figure-it-out' for themselves. We can instead apply a Copernican turn and base the empirical, the material, and the physical needs as requisites to our existential health and special nature.

The *problem of existence* seemed like a good place to start. It affords us the opportunity to think in terms of circles. Where the point begins in the center of one's psyche, and like a vine, creeps and grows into activity, which then overlaps and affects other circles in a harmonious entanglement unlike the phagocytic collision of worlds the *having* mode of living compels. A conjoining of worlds forming a web-like 'warp and 'woof' of enmeshed realities that are interlinked by the common humanistic thread. This is not a new concept but has now become a necessary one. That said, to reiterate, my two major overarching arguments are that systemic change is necessary in order to achieve sustainability and that you cannot accomplish this task unless you consider and change the root of the problem: the ideology born of mindset and culture.

From these two arguments, four minor arguments splintered off to present more robust explanations of the two. Again, keep in mind that the idea was not to act as an antagonist. All scholars assisting in the fight for survival, the maintenance of our planet, and the opportunity to

give future generations a good life, are superlative in kind and intent. Thus, my arguments are more in line with observations than they are with actual disagreement.

(a) The arguments provided by climate ethicists focus purely to the external. Since the impact on climate change is often observed in terms of the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, monetary loss due to disasters, the amount of biodiversity loss, hectares of forest burned, loss of revenue, etc., the analysis generated and solutions suggested by any thinker who solely considers empirical data as the only useable data available, mirror these external statistics in their response; as the focus is often on external and empirical explanations or, at best, virtues that inculcates particular action. While this type of evaluation is absolutely necessary since the problem at hand needs to be combatted externally, what becomes noticeable is the lack of consensus. What exactly becomes the rallying point for recommended activity? Yes, the planetary landscape is radically changing, but this is not sufficient to deploy concentrated counter measures with concerted pressure. If survival is the main focus of research, this becomes too broad, since it can mean different things to different people. If it becomes the preservation of life as we know it, whose life are we talking about? The lives in affluent nations, poor nations, nations currently amidst industrial revolutions? The argument was made that there is the need for a unified prescriptive climate ethic and it was suggested that normative humanism can serve as that univocal voice that ties all prescriptive/Step Two suggestions together by providing an ontology to ground the ethics. Thus, the argument was to reorient our external focus to internal one believing that this will create a longer lasting effect and more sustainable society.

(b) Suggesting that we need not ‘throw the baby out with the bath water’ and that we should work within the framework that we currently have, much like Garvey and Gardiner suggest in the onset of the first chapter, leads to contradictory behavior. Conservatism is the root of the problem in its unwillingness to shift to a more effective system. Given current climate projections, by supporting the system or even parts of it, without advocating for a complete overhaul in every institution, one is essentially advocating for a complete collapse of humanity and all planetary species alike. This seems like an extreme notion *prima facie*, but it is this very system, the one advocates wish to maintain, that, in its ingrained spirit of *having*, is unsustainable on every level.⁵³³

At the risk of being overly repetitive,

The revolutionary changes necessary to humanize technological society—and this means no less than to save it from physical destruction, de-humanization and madness—must occur in all spheres of life: the economic, social, political and cultural. They must occur simultaneously, since a change in only one part of the system will not lead to the change of the system as such, but will only reproduce its pathological symptoms in other forms. These changes are: (a) A change of the pattern of production and consumption in such a way that economic activity will become a means for the unfolding and growth of man...(b) The transformation of man, the citizen and participant in the social process, from a passive, bureaucratically manipulated object, into an active, responsible and critical person...(c) A cultural revolution that attempts to transform the spirit of

⁵³³ Cf. World Watch Institute State of the World Report from 2010-2016.

alienation and passivity...the aim of this transformation is a new man whose goal in life is *being*, not *having* and *using*.⁵³⁴

(c) and (d) As mentioned just now the analysis of external consequences is vital to combatting the climate crisis, but there is a difference between them e.g. in the case of Broome or other kinds of externalists. There is a significant difference between the ethicists of chapters 1 and 2 and the economic-philosopher John Broome in chapter 3. I initially chose Broome to be the poster child for the current climate ethics field. Many of which are of a utilitarian ilk, often utilizing a type of hyper cost-benefit analysis of just about everything. Many of the papers used earlier in this dissertation were rife with pie charts, line graphs, and mathematical equations, all used to unearth and better explain their conclusions. Ethics papers often sounded like scientific ones, except that, in addition to presenting a collection of data, they included an argument. Thus, if one [myself] was going to make an argument against these ‘externalists,’ Broome would be the person one should ‘lean in’ on given his economic background. After all, economists are analytic exemplars and the debate over climate ethics has been dominated by analytic climate ethicists as discussed in part I.

The climate ethicist is responsible for extrapolating and articulating ethical conundrums. Gardiner, Garvey, Jamieson, Parfit, Caney, Shue, Singer, et al., all do a phenomenal job at this. After all, they are professional ethicists. They are great at finding highly specific places where the mind becomes ‘stuck’ and precludes action. In my opinion, the major debates in climate ethics are all anthropocentric and are roughly four in number. They are: 1) the intergenerational

⁵³⁴ Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 155.

problem, i.e. what do generations owe to each other?, 2) climate justice i.e. allocation of emissions and national and international responsibilities, including economics, migration, etc. 3) population, and 4) poverty.

Broome is not like the rest. He is different. He is necessary, much like the other ethicists, but in a much different way. While these are all topics that Broome discusses, his way of dealing with the issue was not primarily through argumentation—not genuinely—but through economic resolution. His kind of cost-benefit⁵³⁵ analysis attempts to take into consideration all known variables, as many known-unknowns as possible, factor in probabilities, and weigh consequences against each other—this includes the value of life. Once this has been sufficiently understood, in order to set some boundary conditions of our own, economic tools can help to articulate a narrower course of action or help to weigh the best possible choice should difficulty arise between several tough choices. More importantly, Broome’s current actionable plan gives a strict criterion for specific guidelines to be followed. Any preferable course of action recommended should be heeded because it is more beneficial than any of the alternative options. Whatever the benefit is, it is explicit. Thus, given the particulars of the political world we currently inhabit, in the case of political gridlock, for Broome, the best thing one can do is come up with a plan where nobody has to sacrifice thereby building some political momentum.

By crunching numbers to generate a very accurate and effective cost-benefit analysis, Broome is offering the closest thing to a solution among the externalists despite how incredulous it may sound at first glance. Many ethicists attempt to balance values of the world we currently find ourselves in against each other and apply it to a theory of justice. Broome, conversely,

⁵³⁵ Cf. footnote 107, 58 on the ineluctability of cost-benefit analysis, and how its most functional when given specific boundaries.

simply applies a calculative justice to the world as he finds it. The result is, in theory, an actionable plan.

Ethical economists occupy a position necessary for the enactment of humanistic ethics by way of an ethical induction. We need people like Broome, people who can understand ethical language, and translate it into solid economic policy that is more likely to result in the world that embodies humanistic values. But we must first begin with understanding what these values are before implementing them. While all ethicists are taking part in both descriptive and prescriptive analysis, Broome's use comes later, after the embedding of appropriate value schemas—and not a moment before.

This is where the other externalists come in to play, as necessary investigators into the actual application of the values discovered and espoused by humanist ideals. This is a difference in kind from what Broome is undertaking. Nonetheless, their qualifications, assessment of qualities and values—including the creation of new ethical criteria—are a necessary part of the conversation. In essence, they are currently engaged in precisely what they are doing, but they lack a uniformity of unanimous objectives. They are like detectives fishing for information, without having a case at hand to distinguish evidence from irrelevance when time is in short supply and Hannibal Lecter is on the loose.

In sum, there are four critiques I have with the climate ethicists discussed:

- a) The arguments provided by climate ethicists pertain solely to the external, ignoring the internal.
- b) Arguing for solutions within our current framework falls prey to contradictory behavior.

c) Externalists are working without an ontological framework and thus minimizing actionable traction.

d) Broome is missing necessary boundary conditions for an ontologically harmonious state, hence his economic cost-benefit methodologies have no True North.

The aspiring ideal is to assist humanity to begin transitioning into the next epoch of its evolution and to design a sustainable future that considers all avenues of psychic health. This is not an area that is explored or fully understood. May researchers of every field leave no stone unturned and let us work together for a better tomorrow. I submit to you that the top most hierarchy of values is not life itself, nor its length, as most would have you believe, but the experiential quality thereof.

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