

IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGY ON CRITICAL THEORY:
ERICH FROMM, NARCISSISM AND SOLIDARITY

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ABSTRACT

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This work aims to contribute to emancipatory purpose of International Critical Theory by utilizing Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical theory. In International Relations literature, usage of theoretical tools of the discipline of psychology has not been invoked in parallel with the aims of Critical Theory. By the same token, theorists of Critical Theory have not benefited from psychological insights in their theoretical work. This thesis aims to show the potential contribution of psychology to International Relations Theory by utilizing Frommian psychoanalysis to Habermasian Critical Theory. In this context, Frommian conception of human nature and narcissism and socio-political outputs resulting from their interaction with social relations are taken as the focal point. As non-destructive opposite of malign narcissism, productive orientation is claimed to provide a rudimentary basis for humanist and constructive interaction among social groups. Such interaction can further and widen the agenda of emancipation, defined as diminishing the social constraints that produce human suffering and obstruct human autonomy. Efficacy of Frommian approach to the development of a humanist political interaction and solidarity is discussed by taking Frankfurt School inspired Critical Theory's critiques into account.

Keywords: Solidarity, Narcissism, Human Nature, Productive Orientation, Emancipation

ÖZ

PSİKOLOJİNİN ELEŞTİREL KURAM'A ETKİSİ: ERICH FROMM, NARSİSİZM VE DAYANIŞMA

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Bu çalışma, Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik kuramından faydalanarak Eleştirel Uluslararası İlişkiler kuramının özgürleşme amacına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Uluslararası İlişkiler literatüründe Psikoloji disiplinin kavramları, Eleştirel Kuram'ın gayeleriyle paralel olarak uygulanmamıştır. Aynı şekilde, Eleştirel Kuram teorisyenleri de teorik çalışmalarında psikolojik iç görülerden faydalanmamıştır. Bu tez, psikolojinin Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramlarına yapabileceği katkıları Fromm'cu psikanalizi Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'a uygulayarak göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Fromm'un insan doğası ve narsisizm kavramlarına ve bu unsurların sosyal ilişkilerle etkileşiminden ortaya çıkan sosyo-politik etkilere odaklanmaktadır. Narsisizmin yıkıcı olmayan karşıtı olan üretici yönelimin, sosyal gruplar arasında hümanist ve yapıcı bir etkileşim için bir temel oluşturabileceği iddia edilmektedir. Böyle bir etkileşimin, insan ızdırabını üreten ve insan özgürlüğünü engelleyen sosyal engelleri azaltmak olarak tanımlanan özgürleşme unsurunu destekleyebileceği ve genişletebileceği varsayılmaktadır. Fromm'un yaklaşımının hümanist bir siyasal etkileşimin gelişimine ve dayanışmaya katkısı, Frankfurt Okulu temelli Eleştirel Kuram'a getirilen eleştiriler dikkate alınarak incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dayanışma, Narsisizm, İnsan Doğası, Üretici Yönelim, Özgürleşme



For my parents,
to those whom I owe everything good in me

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of International Critical Theory by taking theoretical tools of Erich Fromm, a marginalized Frankfurt School intellectual specialized on Marxist sociology and humanist psychoanalysis, in respect to prospects for human and inter-societal solidarity. The thesis is based on the basic research question as to whether Erich Fromm's psychoanalysis may provide psychological sources for inter-societal solidarity and a political subjectivity, which can communalize multiple sources of human suffering into a general project of emancipation. Consequently, this thesis aims to analyze the psychological obstacles. Solidarity, in this context, is defined as reciprocal to multi-dimensional practices reducing "harm"¹, corresponding to the Frankfurt School inspired Andrew Linklater's usage of the term in IR scholarship; globally with a collective aspiration, zeal and sense of responsibility by the actors in world politics. In other words, it is based on contributing to the thesis of "the

¹ Oxford English Dictionary quoted in Andrew Linklater, "Citizenship, Humanity and Cosmopolitan Harm Conventions," *International Political Science Review /Revue internationale de science politique* 22, no. 3 (July, 2001): 262.

transformation of the political community” and existing set of international practices towards a more inclusive, constructive and difference sensitive manner by focusing on human affection, sentiments and human psyche in general. To put it differently, Erich Fromm’s theoretical framework is utilized with regard to potentials towards overcoming the “limited moral community” within world politics and inter-societal relations, through the agency of human sentiments such as compassion, empathy and responsibility.² For this purpose, it is claimed that such transformation of the political community requires an emotio-cultural transformation in the human psyche. As a necessity of development of solidarity, it is assumed that change in the objective structures of social relations must be supplemented with changes in the human character. In this regard, Frankfurt School inspired Critical Theory is deemed to be in much coherence with Fromm’s aspirations towards the goal of emancipation. Related to this, Erich Fromm’s potential contributions and remedies to the deficits and shortfalls of Habermasian IR, as the most salient approach of emancipation insofar, is discussed by taking Habermas’ critics into account.

1.1. Usage of Psychology in International Relations Literature

The theoretical apparatuses and insights of psychology have been assumed fruitful for the problematiques encountered in the study of International Relations. Although it is not commonly utilized and occasionally rendered unnecessary by the many theorists of International Relations, there exists important works, which claim the supplementary power of psychological tools to the theories of International Relations.³ Goldgeier and Tetlock assume that psychological micro-assumptions already exist in the conventional

² Richard Devetak, “Critical Theory,” in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 170.

³ J.M. Goldgeier and P.E. Tetlock, “Psychology and International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 67-68.

macro theories of International Relations, such as Realism, Neoliberalism and Constructivism. Moreover, they contend that their “explanatory shortcomings” may “at least be partially corrected” through the incorporation of psychological insights into the theory formation.⁴ Nearly a decade earlier, Ripley provided a brief research program for foreign policy decision making, which may “combine political psychology, foreign policy analysis and international relations theory”.⁵ More recently, Erişen provided an elaborated account of political psychology for International Relations scholars and articulated the potential power of psychological assumptions in explaining various international phenomena through an explicit focus at an individual level of analysis.⁶ Finally, a very recent article by Kertzer and Tingley elaborate on the nascence of plural and diverse uses of political psychology within the discipline of IR, which goes beyond “why decision-makers make mistakes.”⁷ Novel developments encompass a broader utilization of psychology in International Relations literature: A research agenda titled as “first image reversed”, examination of political behavior of masses and incorporation of neuro-biological insights into the analysis of political subjects.⁸

The common emphasis of all these scholars has been on the psychological processes and features in the appraisal of human agency in world politics.⁹ In other words, they claim

⁴ Goldgeier and Tetlock, “Psychology and International Relations,” 68.

⁵ Brian Ripley, “Psychology, Foreign Policy and International Relations Theory,” *Political Psychology* 14, no. 3 (Sep., 1993): 404.

⁶ Elif Erişen, “An Introduction to Political Psychology for International Relations Scholars,” *Perceptions* 17, no. 3 (2012): 9-28.

⁷ Joshua D. Kertzer and Dusting Tingley, “Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 15.

⁸ Kertzer and Tingley, “Political Psychology in International Relations,” 2.

⁹ Ripley, “Psychology,” 406; Erişen, “An Introduction to Political Psychology,” 18; Goldgeier and Tetlock, “Psychology and International Relations Theory,” 68-69.

that psychological features, as a part of human agency, always play a vital role in the unfolding of political events, through bias, miscognition, emotional and normative stances. It is also subtly embedded in the assumptions of macro theories of IR.¹⁰ However, they have not been translated into IR literature and not embedded in theoretical formulations as an important aspect when envisaging international politics.¹¹ At this point, psychological presumptions correspond to Ashley's emphasis on "uniquely human" aspect of political practice who may "miscommunicate, forget, misunderstand, falsely expect, and summon forth forgotten experiences in ways that lend novel layers of meaning to seemingly similar circumstances."¹² Usage of psychology, thereby, can provide important insights in understanding the patterns in world politics and occurring changes by considering cognitive, emotional and social mechanisms; by taking human factor into the center of political inquiry.¹³

Nevertheless, a second point of convergence is not only based on the insistence on the utility of psychology but also on the subject in which psychology is presumed to be fruitful regarding knowledge production process in International Relations. These subjects are foreign policy analysis and decision making processes. Erişen contends that although political phenomena such as public opinion, ethnic conflict, political upheavals as well as civil disobedience may also be interesting for IR scholars, much of the emphasis is on decision-making process by foreign policy elites.¹⁴ Despite illustration of

¹⁰ Kertzer and Tingley, "Political Psychology in International Relations," 2.

¹¹ Erişen, "An Introduction to Political Psychology," 19; Kertzer and Tingley, "Political Psychology in International Relations," 4.

¹² Richard K. Ashley, "Political Realism and Human Interests," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 2, Symposium in Honor of Hans J. Morgenthau (Jun., 1981): 210-211.

¹³ Erişen, "An Introduction to Political Psychology," 19; Ripley, "Psychology," 410-411.

¹⁴ Erişen, "An Introduction to Political Psychology," 22-23.

plural usages of psychology in different branches of International Relations Theory, Goldgeier and Tetlock overwhelmingly emphasize the decision-making processes at systemic level for the utilization of psychology. Ripley, aiming to differ from rational actor model held dear by Neorealists and Neoliberals, nonetheless aims to remain within the boundaries of foreign policy decision making.¹⁵ By the same token, Kertzer and Tingley emphasize the over-usage of psychology in the conventional fields of international security and foreign policy decision-making while pointing to paucity of usage of psychology in different aspects of the discipline.¹⁶ At this point, political psychology in IR is assumed to be effective mostly on the basis of linking the insights of political psychology at individual level of analysis with policy formation of political elites. To be sure, utilization of psychology in decision-making is not necessarily confined to realist paradigm focusing on security and power politics. It is also utilized by neoliberals and constructivists as well. Nevertheless, societal or inter-societal interaction has generally been deemed residual or secondary, though developing decisively since 2000s.

Despite these developments, use of political psychology by Critical Theory is rather as rare as political psychology's interest in Critical Theory. Although normative Critical Theory¹⁷, especially Linklater's writings, is full of human aspects of international life, on the morality and feelings entailing moral practice and solidarity, a definite reference to psychological conceptions and insights is rather rare. Equally, political psychology, far from being a mere descriptive enterprise, occasionally aims practical interventions

¹⁵ Ripley, "Psychology," 404.

¹⁶ Kertzer and Tingley, "Political Psychology in International Relations," 5-6.

¹⁷ Faruk Yalvaç, "Critical Theory: International Relations' Engagement With the Frankfurt School and Marxism," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (November 2017): 3.

and pursuits, but not necessarily aiming to be emancipatory.¹⁸ Nevertheless, presence of concepts such as enmity, sympathy, dignity, friendship, aversion towards suffering, vengeance, responsibility and enlargement of constructive feelings and actions inevitably point to the psychological aspect of human beings and their political life, both in practical and theoretical terms. Furthermore, theoretical usage of these concepts in the emancipatory driven outlook by Critical Theory provides a legitimate space for psychology to supplement. In this thesis, Frommian conceptions for political psychology is deemed useful to purport a tentative contribution to the emancipatory project of Critical IR via taking human solidarity and consequent psychological insights as the focal point.

However, specificity of Frommian political psychology must be emphasized in relation to its reliance on psychoanalytical method. Although psychoanalysis, especially Freudian psychoanalysis, has been understood as the initial harbor of political psychology, much of political psychology scholars have largely separated themselves from psychoanalysis.¹⁹ The ultimate distinction between psychoanalysis and other methods of political psychology seems to be based on exclusive focus on human nature and unconscious field of human mind as the basic determinant of human behavior, wants and perceptions.²⁰ In Erişen's terms, if political psychologists essentially "want to understand the black-box of the human mind, what goes on in between the stimulus and the response", psychoanalysis frames this black box through an understanding of human nature and unconscious. Hence, Fromm's theoretical framework and its political implications are established upon a particular understanding of human nature, different from other ontological assumptions of political psychology literature.

¹⁸ Ripley, "Psychology," 411. Vamik D. Volkan, "Large-group identity, international relations and psychoanalysis," *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 18, no. 4 (2009): 212

¹⁹ Erişen, "An Introduction to Political Psychology," 12.

²⁰ Volkan, "Large-group identity," 212.

In this context, it is important to associate Frommian ontological assumptions and their practical implications with Kenneth Waltz's criticisms on first-image theories. In the context of causes of war and furtherance of peace, Waltz contends that there have been three types of theories, which may be categorized by their focus on primary causes of war, despite differences in their argumentation regarding the cause.²¹ According to him, these causes can be found at three levels, which are human nature, domestic organization of states and states-system.²² First-image theories, according to Waltz, are those which assume that wars are *primarily* caused by a fixed human nature, instead of being one factor among others.²³ Socio-political context and social forces which humans interact with are presumed to be secondary, compared to the causative effect of human nature.²⁴ In this regard, these theories have "deduce[d] political ills from human defects" and its essentially evil or faulty nature.²⁵ Furthermore, this fixed human nature implies that it is almost impossible to transform human nature to provide a more substantial social framework for peaceful relations. One can only hope to mitigate its practical impacts without expecting too much from human beings.²⁶ In other words, even though the odds are against peaceful relations, if there is a possibility to establish peaceful relations between states, it can only be actualized by changing human beings; by either enlightening them or providing psychological adjustments.²⁷

²¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 12-13.

²² Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 12.

²³ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 27.

²⁴ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 25.

²⁵ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 24.

²⁶ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 26, 33.

²⁷ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 16, 25.

Waltz considers first-image theories insufficient to provide a satisfying account for the causes of war. He has three main criticisms on theories, which find roots of war in human nature. First, echoing Niebuhr, he claims that one can justify almost every hypothesis or assumption by posing human nature as evidence.²⁸ Thus, human nature cannot be considered as a valid independent variant in scientific terms. Second, Waltz contemplates that if human nature is a fixed variable and the primary cause of war, it cannot account for various social events in human history, such as why there was war in 1914 but not in 1910.²⁹ Finally, Waltz claims that even through first-image theories assert the primacy of human nature as the main determinant on the question of war and peace, these theories also imply that human beings behave considerably different in varying social contexts.³⁰ In this vein, Waltz argues that, theories claiming the primacy of human nature and rendering social context secondary, “mov[e] the ‘secondary’ causes to the center of the stage.”³¹ Moreover, in the context of diminishing the causes of war, focusing on human nature eventually shifts the focus to the socio-political structures, which can transform human nature or mitigate its effects.³² In this respect, Waltz concludes that first-image theories do not provide a sustainable explanation for human nature’s being the primary cause. Ultimately, he deduces, taking human nature “helps to shift attention *away* from human nature” and relocates the focus on social relations that account for different human behavior.³³

²⁸ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 30.

²⁹ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 27-28.

³⁰ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 32.

³¹ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 33.

³² Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 40.

³³ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 41, emphasis in original.

In the light of Waltz's criticism, it may be asked whether these critics are equally valid for Erich Fromm's understanding of human nature as well. Fromm has some parallels with first-image theories in the sense that he regards analysis on the causes of social events ultimately leads to a fixed human nature. His claim that historical antinomies and problems are essentially derived from the existential dichotomy rooted in human nature evinces to his similar position.³⁴ Similarly, Fromm assumes that changing human beings is a must in order to attain a socio-political change. Nonetheless, as articulated below, Fromm's conception of human nature distinguishes itself from the first-image theorists that Waltz examined in two respects. First, Erich Fromm's understanding of human nature and behavior is not only based on a fixed human nature but takes human beings in their social context. In other words, although Fromm claims that there is a universal human nature, its political implications and effects are analyzed in relation to the social framework they interact with. In this respect, Fromm does not conceive human beings in a static manner but in a dynamic manner, in which they constitute themselves and their socio-political life through the course of history. This dynamic understanding indicates the differences between human beings in their spatio-temporal position and thus, different political implications. Second, Frommian parameters to evaluate human nature is different from first-image theorists in Waltz's work. Fromm does not conceptualize human nature on the spectrum of good and evil, but in the form of human needs and psychic operations. Good behavior and evil behavior are not the content of these needs and operations. Instead, they result from how these needs are satisfied under varying circumstances, which shift the focus to the social structures that constitute human subjectivity and behavior. In this sense, Fromm does not attribute primacy to the human nature and render different factors secondary in analyzing social events. Rather, human nature is framed as one of the significant factors which effect the development of social events, and human nature shapes and is shaped in social relations. However, different from second-image theories which assume human beings as direct products of social

³⁴ Erich Fromm, *Man For Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 43-44.

relations, in Fromm's view, human nature and human agency cannot be understood as mere products of social relations but as an ontological variable retaining a substance and agentic power on its own, occasionally determining the political behavior and consequences. Human nature and human psyche cannot be understood as the primary cause of political events yet they operate in a considerable manner to be considered as significant as the other factors.

Through the articulation of Fromm's metatheoretical aspects, as stated in the next chapter, this thesis essentially focuses on his understanding of human nature, which is inseparable from social relations. In the following section, Fromm's psychoanalytical framework is briefly narrated in order to connect his approach to the subject of solidarity.

1.2. Concept of Solidarity in IR, Critical Theory and Erich Fromm's Potential Contribution

In order to understand the contribution of Erich Fromm on solidarity, it is necessary to have an insight into the concept as developed in International Relations literature. In this regard, insights from prominent English School members Hedley Bull and R.J. Vincent's and Andrew Linklater's critical outlook are selectively chosen due to their explicit emphasis on the concept of solidarity in their theory formation.

The basic assumption of English School is that an international society has developed in the course of human history. Adam Watson's famous book *The Evolution of International Society* provides a detailed historical analysis of the development of a

society of states in different epochs and geographical positions by evaluating them on the pendulum of “absolute independence” and “absolute empire”.³⁵ This concept of society aims to overcome the dualism of realism and idealism and to point that inter-state relations are not governed solely by pure power considerations or universal moral principles, by invoking the “via media”.³⁶ As Linklater claims, the presence of international society means that interests and norms coexisted in political practices of state while those two categories cannot be entirely subsumed under the title of other.³⁷

In spite of this general framework, Hedley Bull identifies two types of international societies in respect to the general tendencies of inter-state practices and the moral referent they prioritize: pluralist and solidarist international societies, initially represented by Grotius and Oppenheim.³⁸ Pluralism is essentially associated with the maintenance of the orderly relations within the society of states, deemed as a vital element for of security and freedom to enjoy respective cultural diversity.³⁹ In this regard, pluralism is based on the preservation of minimum requirements of ethics of coexistence based on limitation on use of force, respect for property and the fulfilling of the promises and commitments.⁴⁰ Pluralist conception of international society contends

³⁵ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), 13-16.

³⁶ Tim Dunne, “The English School,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 133; Andrew Linklater, “The English School,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 87.

³⁷ Andrew Linklater, “The Problem of Community in International Relations,” *Global, Local, Political* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 144.

³⁸ Hedley Bull, “The Grotian Conception of International Society,” in *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, edited by Herbert Butterfield et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 52.

³⁹ Nicholas J. Wheeler and Timothy Dunne, “Hedley Bull's Pluralism of the Intellect and Solidarism of the Will,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 72, no. 1 (Jan., 1996): 96.

⁴⁰ Linklater, “The English School,” 92.

that order and security among the states in the international realm is the most significant aspect of world politics. States are mainly the only entities which can provide and further the security of human beings. Thus, the well-being and security of human beings ultimately depend on the well-being of the state and the maintenance of orderly relations among them. Solidarity, on the other hand, is based on going beyond the minimum requirements of coexistence and prioritizes the furtherance of justice. Solidarity between the states, in this context, is dependant on explicit commitment to the upholding of the international law and guarding human rights across the globe, even if it occasionally thwarts the norms of non-intervention and sovereign equality.⁴¹ The discourses of state security and order, although they cannot be dismissed or neglected, often result in breach and non-compliance towards basic human rights. Such understanding has been the very assumption which has given birth to the field of critical security studies as well as “broadening and deepening” of the security.⁴² However, solidarity is essentially framed in the form of state practice, and solidarity between the states focused on the enforcement of law which upholds the law and human rights in international life. Although Bull claims that all international societies are to be judged upon their contribution to the individual well-being and do not regard those two form antithetical in essence, the differentiation is based on prioritization.⁴³ Initially considering the solidarist form as practically dangerous due to the lack of the conception of justice by different members of the society, Bull favors pluralism thanks to stability and the order it provides.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, witnessing that great powers as the main pillars of the international order acted totally opposite to the necessities of order in Cold War Era,

⁴¹ Dunne, “The English School,” 142.

⁴² David Mutimer, “Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History,” in *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71..

⁴³ Tim Dunne, *Inventing the International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 149.

⁴⁴ Bull, “The Grotian Tradition,” 70-71.

Bull focuses on the prospects of solidarity and justice.⁴⁵ Although order is prioritized insofar not to diminish the orderly relations, lack of justice proved to be a powerful political force undermining the inter-state order.⁴⁶ Hence, Bull constructs justice and order not in an oppositional manner but rather, interdependently.⁴⁷ In this regard, solidarity might be furthered by the statesmen in order to observe the collective good in the international realm via coming to terms with “demands... for a redistribution of wealth and power in the international system” and even cooperation in ecological problems.⁴⁸ In that, that solidarity refers not only to the collective will to uphold human rights at the political level but also to the alleviation of different forms of human suffering. It requires a broadened understanding of harm and human rights by rendering economic and cultural rights as important as political ones and determined consensus building through diplomatic interaction.⁴⁹

R.J. Vincent’s theorizing on solidarity within the international society may be understood as much more enthusiastic than Bull’s. Whilst Bull’s focus might be interpreted as an instrumental inquiry essentially prioritizing order, Vincent’s explicit focus on prospects increasing the moral concern for human rights is a sign of inquiry as baby steps for good international life.⁵⁰ Notwithstanding, this does not indicate that he neglects the systemic constraints or limitations of realpolitik in the process of

⁴⁵ Wheeler and Dunne, “Hedley Bull’s Pluralism,” 97.

⁴⁶ Linklater, “The Problem of Community,” 145.

⁴⁷ Wheeler and Dunne, “Hedley Bull’s Pluralism,” 105; Linklater, “The Problem of Community,” 143.

⁴⁸ Bull quoted in Dunne, *Inventing the International Society*, 151.

⁴⁹ Linklater, “The English School,” 102.

⁵⁰ Linklater, “The Problem of Community,” 145.

augmenting human rights concerns in foreign policy agendas.⁵¹ His main concern is principally, putting human rights as the central objective of foreign policy agendas without sacrificing the existing orderly relations, through, explicitly, envisaging justice as the main moral referent.⁵² In this vein, the aim to construct a bridge between pluralism and solidarism in favor of the latter made Vincent question whether non-interventionist and less culturally divisive forms of humanitarian conduct might be established.⁵³ Unlike Bull's skepticism on the universal understanding of human rights, he regards that there is a growing universal human rights culture.⁵⁴ Collective efforts on decreasing suffering from starvation and hunger can be considered as a point of convergence despite diverse cultural practices and such practice of solidarity not necessarily bears the potential for political abuses through interventionism.⁵⁵ By rendering civil and political human rights secondary to the basic right to subsistence, different from Bull, he directly points to the necessity of change in the existing world economy and economic practices.⁵⁶ Through increasing moral concern and practical endeavors to help the underdeveloped regions by the Northern affluent societies, human suffering could considerably diminish.⁵⁷ Gradual realization of good life in the international field could be endorsed by increasing solidarity-prone state practices and

⁵¹ Andrew Linklater, "Prudence and principle in international society: reflections on Vincent's approach to human rights," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 87, no. 5 (September, 2011): 1184.

⁵² Linklater, "Prudence and principle," 1185.

⁵³ Linklater, "Prudence and principle," 1185.

⁵⁴ Dunne, *Inventing the International Society*, 171.

⁵⁵ Linklater, "The English School," 97; Linklater, "Prudence and principle," 1185.

⁵⁶ R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13.

⁵⁷ Linklater, "Prudence and principle," 1187.

accumulation of norms on political and economic plane and could outgrow the existing level of international solidarity.⁵⁸

In both cases, however, despite not being explicitly excluded, the social power of citizens of states and social groups within them are not included either by Bull and Vincent, as a political force. In other words, human beings and social groups are assumed to have a very limited power and effect in the augmentation of solidarity. Solidarity is envisaged as a form of state practice where human sentiments and moral behavior had little to offer at theoretical level. Rather, human beings are assumed only to be subjects of state practices and norms of international society. Furthermore, Bull and Vincent's framework implies that achievement of solidarity essentially necessitates an inter-state solidarity to effect policy making and diffuse within national societies yet, the opposite has not been considered. In other words, it might be interpreted that inter-state solidarity is prioritized in order to achieve inter-societal solidarity. Although state practice may be comprehended as an expression of intersubjectively shared political culture of a community, the recent tension between societal reactions to the inflow of Syrian refugees to Germany and Merkel's open-door policy illustrates the assumption which state-practice itself does not necessarily suffice for inter-societal solidarity.⁵⁹ However, it is assumed that, in various forms of political struggle, such as public opinion or political protests, solidarity may manifest itself and may alter the course of respective state policies in a harm-averting manner. Therefore, it is assumed that sources of solidarity may also be searched and fostered in the societal everyday life of human communities, which could be furthered to increase solidarity among different

⁵⁸ Linklater, "Prudence and principle," 1183.

⁵⁹ See: Maia de la Baume, "Angela Merkel defends open border migration policy," *Politico*, 28 August, 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-defends-open-border-migration-refugee-policy-germany/>; Martin Gak, "Germany's dangerous 'new anti-Semitism'," *Politico*, 24 May, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-new-anti-semitism-against-muslim-migrants-danger/>

communities. These assumptions are similar to Shannon Brincat's understanding of emancipation, who claims that Critical International Relations Theory has inquired and should further inquire beyond the "state centric possibilities for emancipation."⁶⁰

It would be wrong to assume that Bull and Vincent are not interested in betterment of human life. Nevertheless, as Linklater articulates, hermeneutic insights of the English School approach cannot be equated with theorizing based on emancipatory politics.⁶¹ Such concern is explicit in Critical International Theory which revolves around the aim of emancipatory politics for improving of human life. Although different scholars of Critical Theory have focused on different aspects of political life, their point of convergence is the "orientation towards change and the possibilities of futures which do not reproduce the patterns of hegemonic power of the present."⁶² In this strata, it is Andrew Linklater who overtly marries the conception of solidarity with emancipatory politics. To be sure, the aim of his theoretical framework cannot be rendered afar from Bull and Vincent in terms of seeking the potentials of good life and harm reducing cooperation within states-system.⁶³ Yet his direct focus on forms of exclusion and limited moral community and philosophical commitment on a difference-sensitive universalism provides an elaborated source for harm in world politics. Overcoming the limited moral community or rigid demarcation of men and citizens through a universal human community is his basic theoretical enterprise.⁶⁴ In *Transformation of Political Community*, he addresses his explicit commitment on establishing of a global international order based on humane governance, which necessitates "triple

⁶⁰ Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 9.

⁶¹ Andrew Linklater, *Beyond Realism and Marxism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 9-10.

⁶² Hutchings quoted in Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 2.

⁶³ Linklater, "Citizenship, Humanity and Cosmopolitan Harm Conventions," 267.

⁶⁴ Devetak, "Critical Theory," 170.

transformation of political community”.⁶⁵ He articulates three necessary aspects of this transformation: The promotion of a global human community, which is “more universalistic, less unequal and more sensitive to cultural differences”.⁶⁶ This project is understood as the basic of emancipation from the social constraints and suffering embedded in existing social relations.⁶⁷ In this vein, praxeological account of emancipation are invested in Habermasian communicative action which depends on inclusionary, democratic and non-coercive reconstitution of international political life.⁶⁸ By including all who are affected from the political forces in international life, which is beyond their control, Linklater’s usage of communicative action and discourse ethics is based on establishing a mechanism of control and consensus building in the practice of global politics.⁶⁹ Emancipation, at this point, is assumed to be possible through a deliberative, non-coercive dialogue by all affected parties in order to overcome the socio-political constraints which inflict harm upon them. Furthermore, establishing a dialogue between diverse identities is based on promoting a “pluralist understanding of social reality” and consensus building between different lifeworlds without falling into the trap of assimilation.⁷⁰ Although outcomes of dialogical interaction cannot be foreseen or pre-determined from any political or moral point of

⁶⁵ Andrew Linklater, *Transformation of the Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998), 5.

⁶⁶ Linklater, *Transformation of the Political Community*, 7.

⁶⁷ Richard Shapcott, “Critical Theory,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 328.

⁶⁸ Linklater, *Transformation of the Political Community*, 10.

⁶⁹ Matthew Fluck, “The best there is? Communication, objectivity and the future of Critical International Relations Theory,” *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 1 (2014): 58-59.

⁷⁰ Yalvaç, “Critical Theory,” 8.

view, as Fluck contends, it is evident that dialogical process is dedicated to formulation of a “context-transcendent truth” instead of mere agreement on status quo.⁷¹

Linklater’s later sociological inquiry into the existence of cosmopolitan harm conventions is not independent from his vision of emancipation and dialogical politics. Although Brincat questions whether such focus is a retreat from positive understandings of emancipation based on dialogical politics, it would not be wrong to interpret that Linklater considers them supplementary.⁷² Linklater claims that in order to comprehend different accounts of harm for respective cultures and communities, dialogue and understanding is vital.⁷³ In this regard, for Linklater, presence of harm conventions based on avoiding and limiting harm to others in human history is deduced as an understanding of cosmopolitanism and solidarity and reflection of “a sense of common humanity.”⁷⁴ By drawing into sociological inquiry on how much different international societies act upon the conception of common humanity and obligations, he excavates the potentials of harm-reducing progress in contemporary international politics.⁷⁵ Borrowing from E.H. Carr, Linklater theoretical investigation may be summarized as an excavation of the historical forms and contemporary forms of “moral capital” which exists in the course of human history to understanding the possibilities of building an emancipatory

⁷¹ Robyn Eckersly, “The Ethics of Critical Theory,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, 348; Matthew Fluck, “Truth, Values and the Value of Truth in Critical International Relations Theory,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2010): 264.

⁷² Shannon Brincat, “The Harm Principle and Recognition Theory,” *Critical Horizons* 14, no. 2 (2013): 230-231.

⁷³ Linklater, “Citizenship, Humanity and Cosmopolitan Harm Conventions,” 266.

⁷⁴ Brincat, “The Harm Principle,” 230.

⁷⁵ Andrew Linklater, “The problem of harm in world politics: implication for the sociology of states-system,” *International Affairs* 78, no. 2 (2002): 326.

politics via discourse ethics.⁷⁶ Hence, Linklater assumes that emancipation and good life may be realized on global level by deepening the existing levels of solidarity through “human ability to extend compassion across national boundaries” in which history shows limited though important potentials.⁷⁷

For the problematique of this thesis, Linklater’s account of solidarity, emphases on common humanity and universalism are highly conforming with Fromm’s emancipatory outlook and ethics. However, it should be emphasized that despite Linklater’s emphasis on emotional identification with others, reactions to the sufferings of human beings, “damaging effects of ‘limited sympathies’”⁷⁸ in world politics, his emphasis on individual and social roots of solidarity is limited. His emphasis on the accumulation of moral capital in Western societies and potential role of individuals and social groups along with state practice surely exhibit a significant agency in the process of emancipation and solidarity.⁷⁹ In this vein, his theoretical framework encompasses a wider level of practice than that of Bull and Vincent. Yet, Linklater’s focus is their relative effect on state practice and accumulation of international norms yet not the social and psychological roots of the accumulation such norms, which are reflected in the practice of world politics. It is fundamental in this aspect that Fromm’s psychoanalysis is presumed to be fruitful and supplementary to emancipatory purpose of Critical Theory of International Relations.

⁷⁶ Linklater, “The problem of harm in world politics,” 325; Andrew Linklater, “The transformation of the political community: E. H. Carr, critical theory and international relations,” *Review of International Studies* 23 (1997): 323, 334.

⁷⁷ Linklater, “Citizenship, Humanity and Cosmopolitan Harm Conventions,” 264; Linklater, “The problem of harm in world politics,” 323.

⁷⁸ Warnock quoted in Linklater, “The problem of harm in world politics,” 326.

⁷⁹ Linklater, “Citizenship, Humanity and Cosmopolitan Harm Conventions,” 273; Linklater, “The transformation of the political community,” 323.

It should initially be admitted that the assumed contribution of Erich Fromm to Critical Theory and its emancipation agenda depends on the most skeptical and undesired way possible: Focusing on human nature and psyche. Understandable discontent and skepticism towards the foundational ontologies are evident in the writings of many post-positivist theorists of International Relations.⁸⁰ Linklater himself implies his reluctance to accept human nature as an ontological variable.⁸¹ Accordingly, Bell contends that a depiction of human nature through biological sciences or evolutionary psychology may legitimate prevalent social and political inequalities.⁸² In this regard, it is safe to assume that the term human nature is conceived as a social constraint or potential of hierarchic understanding of communities which Critical Theory itself tries to deconstruct and avert. Suspicions towards the term human nature is widely accepted and Frommian understanding of human nature in relation to those criticisms are elaborated in the next chapter. Suffice it now to state that, his comprehension of human nature is neither the idealist of “inherent goodness” of human beings or the “violent” and “uncivilized” nature of human beings, nor a depiction based on biology-reliant-“genetic determinism”.⁸³

Fromm’s psychoanalysis is assumed to fill an important and necessary element in the theoretical focus on emancipation. Similar to Linklater, he assumes that solidarity and alleviation of human suffering are deeply intertwined with one another. What Fromm

⁸⁰ See: Kimberly Hutchings, “Speaking and hearing: Habermasian discourse ethics, feminism and IR,” *Review of International Studies* 31 (2005): 156-157; Eckersly, “Ethics of Critical Theory,”; Fluck, “Truth, Values and Value of Truth,” 263-266.

⁸¹ Andrew Linklater, “Transforming political community: a response to the critics,” *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 168.

⁸² Duncan Bell, “Beware of False Prophets: Biology, Human Nature and the Future of International Relations Theory,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 82, no. 3 (May, 2006): 504-505.

⁸³ Bell, “Beware of False Prophets,” 499.

may essentially provide is psychological roots and potentialities of inter-societal solidarity by taking human nature as the main object. In this regard, it is assumed that there is a human factor which retains an ontological level of its own and highly effective on social and political life. Nonetheless, this does not mean that his analysis does not provide a societal outlook or neglects the effects of social relations on human psyche. In fact, Frommian psychoanalysis analyzes individual psyche within a social framework and considers them as inseparable. It is evident in his work that psychoanalysis is always social psychology and human psychology cannot be separated from social relations and other spheres of human life.⁸⁴ However, it is assumed that human psyche is not a pure social construction. In this aspect, Fromm's assumption of human nature resembles the outlook of evolutionary psychologists who claim that human mind cannot be understood as a pure "blank slate" which solely constituted by "environmental context and consequently as infinitely malleable."⁸⁵

In respect to this, the focus on human nature aims to provide the potentials of inter-societal solidarity by taking the concepts of "unconscious", "narcissism" along with human nature as the focal point. Although they are elaborated in the upcoming chapters, it is deemed useful to briefly define their content to provide a ground for familiarization.

Human nature is examined as a bio-social factor which is transformed in the course of history. Fromm's understanding of human nature connotes a particular state in which human beings find themselves by the development of subjective self-consciousness. In this regard, human nature refers to an existential state and to contradictory human needs deriving from this situation. Connected to understanding of his human nature,

⁸⁴ Anthony Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014): 48; Fromm, *Man For Himself*, ix.

⁸⁵ Bell, "Beware of False Prophets," 500.

“unconscious” and “narcissism” are components which determine human behavior and perception. Frommian unconscious refers to the truthful aspect of human psyche. This indicates that human behavior is closely tied to the unconscious aspect of psyche than the conscious ones and unconscious operations are ultimately derived from human nature. Truthfulness, in this context, refers to psychic impulses, needs and experiences which operates but unknown in conscious terms. In other words, truthfulness refers to manifestation and effects of what really exists in inner world even though it is not known or noticed at the level of consciousness. Unconsciousness is taken as a defense mechanism against the pathological social relations which further human alienation. In this respect, it is assumed both as the real indicator of human behavior and an anchor to evaluate social relations according to their correspondence to human needs. Social narcissism is the psychological operation in which an individual reflects its personal narcissism to the social relations and socially accepted symbols and norms. According to Fromm, social narcissism has developed as a necessity of communal life but its basis is fundamentally tied to human nature and needs. Although narcissism is understood as a personality disorder, which is not a natural aspect of human psyche but a pathological one, Frommian depiction indicates that narcissism is all-encompassing. Fromm categorizes the effects of social narcissism as malign and benign. In this context, psychological roots of malign forms of narcissism are to be articulated by referring to human needs, whereas it is claimed that benign forms of narcissism may be actualized by the development of what Fromm labeled as “productive orientation”. Productive orientation refers to a personality type in which human beings may practice their inherent productive powers in a context of freedom. Moreover, it entails an interest in the betterment of others’ life conditions along with non-distorted view of others. These concepts illustrate the prospects of destructive and parochial tendencies of human beings and human communities in their relations and how they may be outgrown. Moreover, this human factor is assumed to provide tentative insight into basic human needs, human flourishing and human pathologies reflected on societal and global level.

On the political sphere and problematique of solidarity, it is assumed that Fromm's understanding of human nature may clarify the reasons of particular exclusionary and inclusionary political practices. However, his basic assumption is presumed to be vital in the theorization and practice of emancipation: Human emancipation cannot be deemed only as a social change. Fromm propounds that a horizon of freedom, indifferent to human pathologies and human self-reflection is not possible. He is skeptical of the belief that change in the objective, exterior conditions of social life is both necessary and sufficient for the quest of solidarity.⁸⁶ Thus, human emancipation is not limited to the alteration of social structures which produce the human suffering and limitation of autonomy. It is inevitably linked with character change, psychological emancipation and from "internal authorities" and unconscious impulses which we are not mostly aware but shape our opinions and practices vitally. In this respect, Fromm's contribution is not only based on understanding these psychological roots which create mentioned human suffering and potentials of inter-societal solidarity but also on the necessity of individual's engagement with oneself as part of emancipatory practice at social level. These aspects of emancipation is assumed to provide a potential source of social power in order to alter the policies and conduct of states in a harm-averting manner and to consolidate the emotional identification with the universal human community.

However, it is assumed that Frommian analysis is problematic in respect to providing means for translating subjective emancipation into emancipatory practices at social level. Although Fromm provides certain suggestions at social level and formulates some policy suggestion⁸⁷, he does not elaborate how to connect these two levels of emancipation. This disconnection indicates that Erich Fromm's psychological insights, by themselves, do not provide a means for politics of emancipation at societal level. In

⁸⁶ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 18.

⁸⁷ See: Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge, 2002): 331-345.

this respect, Fromm's statements on human psyche and human nature can be rendered meaningful only if it is supplemented with a theory, which articulates social means of emancipation and deems psychological changes socializable.

In the context of the thesis, it is assumed that Frommian outlook cannot provide a political strategy on its own but vitally depends on Habermasian dialogical politics to be effective. Nonetheless, Habermasian Critical International Theory has its own pitfalls related to the emancipatory politics for which Fromm can provide little remedy. Although Habermas himself and Habermasian IR essentially aim to supplement Marxist social theory through a "paradigm of communication"⁸⁸ and thus, aim to widen the emancipatory agenda, the focus on inter-subjective dialogue renders International Critical Theory to neglect objective aspects of social domination and alienation. In this respect, as stated by Anievas, Habermasian dialogical politics conceptualize all social relations, including capitalist relations of production, as if they were essentially norm-governed and produced as a result of dialogical consensus building.⁸⁹ Although it is claimed that Frommian understanding of emancipation is compatible with and even supplementary to political struggle against constraining social structures which reproduce human suffering and disempowerment, neither Fromm, nor Habermasian IR in general provide a means of translating their insights into political struggle. Despite articulating the necessity of political struggle to supplement triple transformation based on communicative action, Linklater does not articulate a strategy on the means of doing so.⁹⁰ In this regard, although a genuine emancipation cannot be understood only in terms of class struggle against objective structures of domination and in orthodox Marxist

⁸⁸ Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 7.

⁸⁹ Alexander Anievas, "On Habermas, Marx and the critical theory tradition: Theoretical mastery or drift?," in *International Relations and Philosophy: Interpretive Dialogues*, ed. Cerwyn Moore et al. (London: Routledge, 2010), 154.

⁹⁰ Linklater, "Transforming political community," 166.

terms, an understanding of emancipation separated from this context and means of socialization is presumed to fall short of Critical International Theory's aspirations.

1.3. Methodology and Aim

The thesis aims to contribute to the field of international Critical Theory from a Frommian perspective in order to reappraise the relationship between self-definition, difference and consolidation of solidarity in our contemporary world politics by referring to Frommian human ontology and social psychology. For this purpose, primary works of Erich Fromm and relevant sources from International Critical Theory will be utilized to provide his critical insights into the question of inter-societal solidarity. Accordingly, Frommian understanding of human nature, as the unit of analysis will be reflected on a systemic level of analysis in order to provide critical insights for the problematique of the thesis.

Aim of the thesis is to contribute to International Relations Theory by utilizing theoretical tools of psychology. It is assumed that psychological assumptions can provide important insights to the shortfalls of IR Theory. In the context of thesis, psychological assumptions of Erich Fromm are assumed to provide a considerable ground for broadening and refining the emancipatory agenda of Critical International Theory. The significance of Fromm's work is derived from the fact that his analysis suggests a rudimentary lacuna necessary for the development of a solidarity-prone interaction among different social groups.⁹¹ This is the main reason why Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical framework is chosen in particular. Fromm provides a hitherto

⁹¹ Lawrence Wilde, *Erich Fromm and the Quest for Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 146.

neglected, or purposefully averted, nucleus for the problematique of solidarity; basis of human conduct by taking its objective nature, core of its aspirations and social narratives which mold them in a particular form. Such focus aims to provide a tentative suggestion to what Craig Calhoun as the problem of social roots of cosmopolitan sense of belonging; emotio-cultural foundations of human solidarity.⁹² Unfortunately, Erich Fromm's theoretical framework is neglected in relation to this problematique. Therefore, the thesis aims to contribute to the International Relations literature by utilizing the marginalized Frankfurt School intellectual Erich Fromm, in order to provide a tentative insight for inter-societal solidarity.

1.4. Outline of the Chapters

The thesis is comprised of six sections including the introduction and conclusion. The introduction aims to emphasize the rationality behind choosing Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical theory for the thesis. For this purpose, first, usage of political psychology in the discipline of International Relations and underrepresentation of inter-societal interaction is examined. Secondly, Fromm's contribution is analyzed by juxtaposing it through the emphasis on the concept of solidarity in IR literature by relying on Hedley Bull, R.J. Vincent and Andrew Linklater. By stating their theoretical insights, Fromm's importance and potential contributions are to be suggested. The second chapter aims to demonstrate the relevance of Fromm to IR field by focusing on his meta-theoretical outlook. It is aimed to illustrate the relationship between International Relations and psychoanalysis by focusing on Frommian framework. In this vein, his relevance will be illustrated by examining his work through three interrelated aspects. The chapter aims to provide an explanation to the question why Erich Fromm is

⁹² Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism," in *Nationalism and its Futures*, ed. Umut Özkırımlı (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 94.

relevant to the discipline of International Relations. Two subsequent sections aim to purvey a detailed account of the theoretical framework of Erich Fromm on human nature as the basis of human conduct and socially rooted pathologies, vital to comprehend existing political practices. The third chapter narrates Fromm's conception of human nature and aims to explain the basis of human subjectivity and behaviour. Human subjectivity and behavior are explained in threefold: First, as a state of "existential dichotomy" emanating from historical emergence of human beings and its basic need. In the second part, social constitution of human psyche and behavior through the concept "social character" is elaborated. Finally, Frommian conceptualization of human unconscious, as the vital aspect of human character, is explained by pointing to question of how to determine the operation of the unconscious. The fourth section consists of Fromm's comprehension of human pathology and health by referring to Fromm's theory of human nature. In this context, Fromm's understanding of good life is narrated by referring to his psychoanalytical approach. In this vein, "social narcissism", as the most prominent and powerful obstruction against inter-societal solidarity, is explicated by juxtaposing to its healthy and solidarity affine reflection; "productive character". The fifth and final section endeavors to provide the idea of the "international" in Fromm's thought. The section is divided into two as Fromm's comments on international relations and the encounter of Frommian concepts with critiques and pitfalls oriented to the idea of emancipation of Critical International Theory. In this regard, Fromm's insights into universality and difference, solutions for real life distorted communication and overcoming the limited moral referent of social narcissism are discussed by elaborating how social narcissism may be transformed into productive orientation and limitations on its possible achievement.

CHAPTER 2

FROMM, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

This chapter aims to clarify the relevance of Fromm to the IR discipline by focusing on meta-theoretical aspects of his theory. In this vein, the encounter between International Relations and psychoanalysis is aimed to be examined by focusing on Frommian psychoanalysis in particular. Due to his marginalized and neglected position in the Critical Theory and social theory in general, Erich Fromm's theoretical framework is to be introduced in order to assess the legitimacy and relevance of his social theory within the discipline of International Relations and in relation to inter-societal solidarity. For this purpose, this introduction chapter will outline three issues: the relevance of Erich Fromm to the discipline of International Relations. In this regard, the analysis of Erich Fromm's social theory is taken from three inter-connected contexts; as a Frankfurt School intellectual, as a humanist psychoanalyst and as an observer on international relations.

2.1. Erich Fromm as a Frankfurt School Intellectual

Erich Fromm has been largely neglected from the history of Frankfurt School and Critical Theory, both in International Relations and other disciplines, despite his considerable contributions to psychology, sociology, philosophy and even to politics. Although the reasons of this neglect is beyond the scope of the paper, suffice it is to say that his name is mentioned merely as an old associate of the Frankfurt School, who severed his ties with major figures of the school such as Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse. Even today, his name is rendered insignificant in the field whereas Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse are championed as the pioneers of the Critical Theory.⁹³ Unfortunately, the case is no different in the field of International Critical Theory or Critical Theory inspired IR scholars who take Jürgen Habermas, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin as the main representatives of the Critical Theory and utilize their concepts for their studies.

While Erich Fromm's estrangement from the Frankfurt School, deliberately distancing himself from the School's circle and declaration of his theoretical independence, or less-connectedness from others is a historical fact, in terms of the scope, background, method and aim of his theoretical framework, Fromm cannot be separated from and can legitimately be framed as an associate of Critical Theory.⁹⁴ The commonality between Fromm and other Critical Theorists can be seen in his works as taking "human

⁹³ For an elaborative description of the basis of such neglect and intra-Frankfurt School enmity see: Neil McLaughlin, "Origin Myths in the Social Sciences: Fromm, the Frankfurt School and the Emergence of Critical Theory," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 24, no. 1 (Winter, 1999):109-139; Alzo David-West, "Erich Fromm and North Korea: Social Psychology and the Political Regime," *Critical Sociology* 40, no.4 (2014): 576.

⁹⁴ Paul-Laurent Assoun, *Frankfurt Okulu* (Ankara: Dost Publishing, 2014), 24; McLaughlin, "Origin Myths in the Social Sciences," 133, 13th footnote.

emancipation” as leitmotif or ultimate purpose of social theory, though, elaborated below, from a different point of view. A second aspect of commonality can be seen in his synthesis of the works of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, a dialogue shared and utilized by Adorno himself in his *The Authoritarian Personality* and works of Herbert Marcuse. In spite of their differences, Fromm becoming a neo-Freudian revisionist and others remain loyal to orthodox Freudianism, both sides considers the use of psychoanalysis and Freudian concepts in their sociological inquiry; supplementing Marxist sociology with psychoanalysis.⁹⁵ The third and perhaps the most important proof of his relatedness to Critical Theory and henceforth Critical International Theory can be seen in his affirmation of premises of Horkheimer and also Robert Cox, on the juxtaposition between “critical theory” and “traditional theory” in terms of its substance and telos. He articulates the need for change with the purpose of human emancipation along with the rejection of possibility of value-neutral/detached inquiry, emphasis on social roots of reality, underlining of interest-informed process of knowledge production and granting it the status of legitimate source of scientific knowledge.⁹⁶ Still, he acknowledges the potential for certain objective criteria to evaluate the social phenomena.

This resemblance of Fromm to Horkheimer and Cox can be seen in his statement on the relationship between knowledge production and interest, which challenges the assertion of positivist social scientists who underscore the vitality of detached observation of the social reality:

Quite obviously, random and uninterested observation rarely leads to significant knowledge. *All questions posed by the intellect are determined by our interest. This interest, far from being opposed to knowledge, is its very condition, provided it is blended with reason, that is, with the capacity to see things as they*

⁹⁵ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 47.

⁹⁶ Steven C. Roach, “Critical Theory,” in *International Relations Theories*, 173.

are, 'to let them be' As Marx once wrote, one must not only interpret the world, but one must change it. Indeed, interpretation without intention of change is empty; change without interpretation is blind.⁹⁷

Despite differing from conceptions and understanding of emancipation from other Frankfurt School figures, including the means and forces of the change, it is evident that Fromm's social theory has irrefutably strong links with Critical Theory. From his point of view, such change requires and necessitates the consolidation of human solidarity and cooperation through accumulation and trans-nationalization of constructive, productive human sentiments to the whole planet, towards the totality of human family. This stance, taking human sentiments, inter-subjective human experience and belief in the power of common humanism/humanity in terms of an emancipatory force, is where he diverges from his Frankfurt School contemporaries, which is the root of criticism against him as a liberal individualist, a conformist, or a deviator. In fact, this very "deviated" approach is also the main reason why Erich Fromm is chosen for this thesis.⁹⁸

In this respect, Erich Fromm's theoretical debate with Herbert Marcuse is essential to comprehend the problems of Frommian concepts and their political implications. Although their theoretical frameworks share much in common and retain a considerably similar political outlook, both have assaulted each other in a vehement manner. The source of this divergence is essentially based on their different usage of Freud's psychoanalytical theory and potential political indications of these different usages.

⁹⁷ Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 118-119, my emphases.

⁹⁸ The rationality of these labels may be understood in David Ingelby's Introduction to Fromm's book, *The Sane Society*. He writes: "For psychoanalysts, he is too "sociological"; for sociologists, too 'essentialist'; for Marxists, too 'voluntaristic'; for theologians, too 'humanist'. Precisely because he mixes so many discourses and cuts across so many disciplines, he has tended to be marginalized by all of them." David Ingelby, "Introduction to Second Edition," in *The Sane Society*, (London: Routledge, 2002), ii.

Marcuse's basic criticism towards Fromm and other Neo-Freudians is based on abandonment of orthodox Freudian framework and libido theory. According Marcuse, such development deprives Freudian psychoanalysis of its critical and emancipatory potentials.⁹⁹ He contends that such movement purges "explosive connotations of Freud's theory of the unconscious and sexuality", rendering human psyche vulnerable and merely adaptive to existing relations of power.¹⁰⁰ The reason of such vindicate statements may be understood in Marcuse's utilization of orthodox Freudian framework which is based on the theory of instincts. Since Freud himself presumes an inevitable antagonism between social life and human instincts, individual's relation to society is ultimately conflictual. Although psychological effects of this conflict may be mitigated through sublimations and adaptation mechanisms, acceptance of Freudian instinct theory implies that a biological part of human existence is inherently resisting to existing social domination and beyond the capture of social control.¹⁰¹ Since Fromm and other Neo-Freudians have abandoned instinctual conception of human psyche and adopted a cultural and inter-personal account of psychic development, Marcuse presumes that such revision abandons a fundamental part of human psyche, which can be crucial for emancipatory politics.¹⁰²

In relation to this, for Marcuse, Frommian psychoanalysis is assumed to have conservative political implications, which ultimately endorse conformism and further human alienation in capitalist societies.¹⁰³ Marcuse's reading of Fromm's works

⁹⁹ Neil McLaughlin, "The Fromm-Marcuse Debate and the Future of Critical Theory," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Theory*, ed. Michael J. Thompson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 482; Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ Marcuse quoted in McLaughlin, "The Fromm-Marcuse Debate," 483.

¹⁰¹ John Rickert, "The Fromm-Marcuse Debate Revisited," *Theory and Society* 15, no. 3 (May, 1986): 366.

¹⁰² Rickert, "The Fromm-Marcuse Debate," 369.

¹⁰³ McLaughlin, "The Fromm-Marcuse Debate," 485.

emphasize that Frommian political outlook and humanist/idealistic ethics are essentially repressive and transform social problems of human beings into spiritual ones which can be solved individually.¹⁰⁴ In his own words, Marcuse contends that “Fromm revives all the time-honoured values of idealist ethics as if nobody had ever demonstrated their conformist and repressive features”, interpreting Fromm’s framework as ultimately conservative and against the critical implications of Freud and Marx.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, Frommian analysis of contemporary capitalist societies and human psychology are far from being integration-oriented and based on repression of resisting inventory of human existence. As mentioned below, occasionally, he states his criticisms towards therapy-oriented psychoanalytical practices and social relations, which further human alienation. Despite abandoning diagnoses established upon orthodox Freudian framework, his cultural outlook provides significant means to provide an immanent critique of human life and suffering in capitalist societies and socio-economic relations which reproduce them. In this sense, despite changes in the concepts, Frommian approach can be considered anything but a rehearsal of “conformist banalities”.¹⁰⁶

These being said, Marcuse’s criticism on repressive dispositions of Frommian concepts may be understood valid and suitable if taken as a warning instead of a degradation. As a psychoanalyst, Fromm himself is well-aware of the possibility that theoretical concepts and practical means of human emancipation and good life may be unconsciously utilized to conceal or rationalize destructive and crippling human

¹⁰⁴ Rickert, “The Fromm-Marcuse Debate,” 371; McLaughlin, “The Fromm-Marcuse Debate,” 483.

¹⁰⁵ Marcuse quoted in Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 52.

¹⁰⁶ McLaughlin, “The Fromm-Marcuse Debate,” 482.

impulses. Concept of narcissism might provide the best example of this psychic operation. As argued below, malign forms of narcissism can be blended in the form of progressive, humanist outlooks and even emancipatory politics. Marcuse's statement remains valid in the sense that rationality, love and responsibility, as Frommian concepts indicating the well-being of individual and social life, have been utilized and justified political practices and social arrangements which are essentially violent-prone, exclusionary and conformist. To be sure, Fromm himself warns against the usage of all "time-honored values" and progressive concepts to consciously justify or unconsciously rationalize socio-political practices that may serve contrary purposes.¹⁰⁷ Although he provides rudimentary means to detect the misuses of concepts and discourses at individual level and in inter-personal relations, he does not provide any means to trace and criticize them at socio-political level. He does not provide an outlook to distinguish between their genuine or deceptive usage in social practice. In this respect, Frommian concepts themselves, which indicate psychic well-being and human emancipation, retain the potential to be misused or distorted for political agendas contrary to the purposes of solidarity and freedom.

2.2. Erich Fromm as a Humanist Psychoanalyst

Secondly, appraisal of Erich Fromm as a humanist *psychoanalyst* initially necessitates the assessment of validity and relatedness of the concept of human psyche and human nature and concordantly, psychoanalysis itself since, as mentioned, those two concepts are the theoretical blocs which further assessments are established upon. This evaluation can crudely be made twofold: First, by referring to the relationship between psychoanalysis and International Relations to the present and secondly, by referring to different critiques towards the concept: Whether the term can be rendered as a

¹⁰⁷ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 119

legitimate ontological and epistemological concept for International Relations, in both methodological and ethical terms.

To begin with, psychoanalysis, as argued by Jacobsen and Schuett, is a field which International Relations persistently averts.¹⁰⁸ Schuett gives certain reasons why Freud is avoided and even unwanted in the discipline of IR. According to him, acceptance of Waltz's critique of first image theories, reduction of Freud's theoretical framework to the correspondence with Einstein on the kernel of war and later abandonment of Freud by Morgenthau himself, is deemed vitally important for such development.¹⁰⁹ Jacobsen, on the other hand, does not provide a similarly detailed account for such avoidance, but claims that the attacks on Freud and Freudians may have dissuaded the disposition towards Freudian theory in International Relations and politics in general.

Aside from critics responded below, methodological and ethical concerns and, additional reasons might be interpreted from different aspects related to psychoanalysis. One criticism is based on self-identity of IR, in Tim Dunne's words, "stories we have told ourselves about ourselves"¹¹⁰. Wight and Kurki's statement on the second debate in IR may shed light in this regard which takes relevance and identity of the discipline as the focal point. Though not designating directly psychoanalysis, they argue that the usage of theoretical tools of non-IR disciplines could be understood as an existential threat to IR, in which psychoanalysis may be included:

¹⁰⁸ Robert Schuett, "Freudian roots of political realism: the importance of Sigmund Freud to Hans J. Morgenthau's theory of international power politics," *History of the Human Sciences* 20, no. 4 (2007): 56; Kurt Jacobsen, "Why Freud matters: Psychoanalysis and international relations revisited," *International Relations* 27, no. 4 (2013): 393-394.

¹⁰⁹ Schuett, "Freudian roots of political realism," 55-57; For the basics of Einstein-Freud correspondence see: Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 41.

¹¹⁰ Dunne, *Inventing the International Society*, 1.

After all, if international politics was governed by ‘objective laws’ rooted in human nature, then the true causes of war were to be found in biology, and any nascent science of IR could provide only suggestions for dealing with a realm of human activity that was to a great extent predetermined.¹¹¹

In this regard, contemporary theoretical pluralism of the discipline made certain scholars question whether we can speak of IR at all, and there is anything peculiar to IR or the name is still relevant.¹¹² Thus, exclusion, at least reluctance, might also have its basis in retaining the “orthodoxy” of IR discipline similar to the position of Holsti.¹¹³

Another reason perhaps might be grounded upon the political conclusions one may derive from Freudian psychoanalysis. Here, an erroneous perception must be vehemently emphasized; the fact that Freudian psychoanalysis is formulated as *the* psychoanalysis, just like realism is formulated as International Relations *itself* or positivism’s equation with *the* science, rather than a theory of science. Such misunderstanding of psychoanalysis might have naturally lend one to mourn the desperation of human beings, without any hope to overcome inevitable suffering owing to our human nature, to the opposing biological drives inherent in our endowment.¹¹⁴ Hence, Freudian conception of international relations essentially corresponds to what E.H. Carr referred as the “sterility of realism”¹¹⁵, a plane where violence, war, that is

¹¹¹ Milja Kurki and Colin Wight “International Relations and Social Science,” in *International Relations Theories*, 17

¹¹² Tim Dunne, Lene Hansen and Colin Wight, “The end of International Relations theory?,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 406-407; Ole Wæver, “Still a Discipline After All These Debates?” in *International Relations Theories*, 307-308.

¹¹³ Holsti quoted in Steve Smith, “Introduction: Diversity and Disciplinarity in International Relations Theory” in *International Relations Theories*, 7.

¹¹⁴ Vanessa Pupavac, “Sigmund Freud,” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, ed. Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (New York: Routledge, 2009), 173; Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 22.

¹¹⁵ Linklater, “The English School,” 109.

suffering and harm in general, cannot be subsided, in fact unconsciously retriggered, even via prudent and expedient statesmanship by all agents. One could not override the insurmountable clash between what Freud called *Eros* and *Thanatos*, sexual instinct and death instinct, since they are our biological inventory. On prospects of peace and war, as it is conventionally presumed to be the primary subject of study of IR discipline, one may only expect certain limited pauses within a vicious cycle but not a metamorphosis or foundational change:

Whenever the inhibiting social forces are for a moment relaxed, we see 'men as savage beasts to whom the thought of sparing their kind is alien.' but whenever the inhibitions become too strong, or the suppressed aggressive impulses pile up against the blocks- as periodically they must - then the organized explosion known as war becomes inevitable. In mechanistic terms, 'a period of general unleashing of man's animal nature must appear, wear itself out, and peace is once more restored.'¹¹⁶

In this vein, such depiction of human beings and their essence might have understandably caused an unwillingness towards pre-occupation with psychoanalysis. To be sure, certain intellectuals, who are loosely labeled as Freudo-Marxists, among whom Fromm and other Frankfurt School intellectuals are included, merge Freudian concepts with Marxist framework in order to provide an emancipatory outlook. By the same token, Bell contends that despite conservative usages, biological and psychological explanations are also utilized by left-wing scholars to defend social justice.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, it may still be contended that Freudian emphasis on the immanent disposition to destruction, combined with the other concerns expressed below, might have produced such vacancy. Such ontological postulate may, without a doubt, produce undesired conclusions and could undermine the very enterprises of many theories of IR which unite at least in their focus on the minimization of violence. What

¹¹⁶ Floyd W. Matson, "Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory," *The Journal of Politics* 16, no. 4 (Nov., 1954): 711.

¹¹⁷ Bell, "Beware of False Prophets," 503.

Erich Fromm essentially differs in from Freudian psychoanalysis and from Freud himself, as elaborated in the following chapters, is the fact that his analysis essentially purveys a framework that aspires at emancipatory social change as well as reduction of violence.¹¹⁸

In respect to the evaluation of the concept of human nature, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the term human nature is close to being stigmatized and even tacitly prohibited from the discipline of International Relations and almost in all social sciences. Its metaphysical status and non-positive existence, also because of the totalitarian tendencies of the concept may be the sources of this discontent. In the first instance, bereft as a positively intelligible and perceivable phenomenon, it cannot be a subject of a scientific study. As a matter of fact, such clear cut renunciation of term along with other metaphysical concepts as an explanatory variable in international politics or International Relations has been the basis of what has been known as “Behaviorist Revolution” in which “anything that could not be rigorously measured and subject to testing was to be purged from the new ontology.”¹¹⁹ From this angle, immeasurability and impossibility of scientific testability in positivist terms puts the concept of human nature under a skeptical scrutiny if not completely irrelevant. This core premise is the prior reason why psychoanalysis, as a way of studying human psychology through human nature and unconscious, is incompatible with positivist social science.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 46.

¹¹⁹ Kurki and Wight, “International Relations and Social Science,” 18.

¹²⁰ David-West, “Erich Fromm and North Korea,” 575.

Even though one may not adhere to strict positivist methods of inquiry and adopt traditional or interpretivist stance, be it moderate or radical¹²¹, the validity of the term human nature as a legitimate explanatory factor in social theory faces with skepticism and reluctance due to the deterministic power. The concept, except a few different usages such as post-structuralist psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, encompasses a trans-historical ontology, which asserts its ubiquity and everlasting presence in all times and spaces, in spite of differences.¹²² In other words, no human being can escape from being entitled to the features attributed by the theorist and this is the ultimate stage where anyone can reach himself/herself. Thus, from an interpretivist or post-structuralist point of view, the notion of human nature has a great ontological domination in which it retains totalitarian tendencies which is either insensitive to peculiarities, otherness or produces no spaces for novelties, contingencies or difference. In ethical terms, such conception “threatens to devalue or exclude some acceptable individual desires, cultural characteristics, or ways of life”, marginalizing the different yet legitimate.¹²³ Although a synthetical approach could also argue that one can both be preoccupied with the term human nature and do not fall to the trap of ontological totalitarianism, a view point shared by Erich Fromm himself and few Marx-inspired scholars, interpretivists contemplate that such would be the inevitable consequence, although it was not intended or desired by the theorist.¹²⁴ Thus, the concept, if appropriate, is generally conceived as a threat and “the ugly duckling” from several theoretical perspectives; unwanted and marginalized both in methodological and ethical terms.

¹²¹ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 217-218. Such distinction can be made between conventional constructivism, critical theory and post-structuralism.

¹²² Lacanian *desire* as the basis human ontology and performance is deemed idiosyncratic, irreducible. See: Charlotte Epstein, “Who speaks? Discourse, the subject and the study of identity in international politics,” *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 10 (April 2010): 9.

¹²³ Young quoted in Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 52.

¹²⁴ Bell, “Beware of False Prophets,” 504.

Henceforth, it begs the question whether Fromm's human nature conception is different and legitimate when such objections to the term are present and prevalent. To put it differently, is there anything different in his approach that his theoretical and methodological formula can evade these fundamental and legitimate criticisms? By the same token, whether his conception has no differentiating aspect from those criticized from such point of view and he just plainly disregarded those concerns?

A response to these questions necessitates a brief introduction of Fromm's conception of human nature as well as his methodological position. To answer the methodological criticism, it must be stated that Frommian psychoanalysis essentially differs from the positivist methods of inquiry which is an indispensable element of behaviorist psychology. As a psychoanalyst, a clinical doctor, he used Freudian tools for both the analysis of the individual and for the cure of the patient in question such as free association analysis and dream interpretations by taking the unconscious as the locus of psychoanalysis, taking an interpretivist line.¹²⁵ In terms of his theory, he combined his findings and mixed them with philosophy, history, sociology and even theology, which posits him closer to what IR scholars defined as traditionalist/humanist method of inquiry.¹²⁶

In respect to the critics based on metaphysical quality of human nature, Fromm regards such rigid scientific understanding unfortunate and abrupt, to say the least. According to him, the concept of human nature cannot be rendered irrelevant to scientific inquiry. Furthermore, he claims that such scientific standards are to deviate psychology, from the very foundations of the psychology, and its essential object namely the psyche itself:

¹²⁵ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 73.

¹²⁶ Kurki and Wight, "International Relations and Social Science," 18.

Academic psychology, trying to imitate the natural sciences and laboratory methods of weighing and counting, dealt with everything except the soul. It tried to understand those aspects of man which can be examined in the laboratory and claimed that conscience, value judgments, the knowledge of good and evil are metaphysical concepts, outside the problems of psychology; it was more often concerned with insignificant problems which fitted an alleged scientific method than with devising new methods to study the significant problems of man. Psychology thus became a science lacking its main subject matter, the soul.¹²⁷

Hence, it can be inferred that Fromm not only rejects the criticism of metaphysics, but he also furthers the claims that such strict understanding cannot provide any fundamental progress in terms of increasing our horizon to the essential problems we have encountered.¹²⁸ It might be interpreted that such inquiry, Fromm would claim, could hardly have any substantial correspondence with the actual world and social reality human beings interact in and with. In terms of the methodological critics, therefore, Fromm's position in psychology resembles that of Hedley Bull in International Relations, who claims that rigid positivistic approaches cannot provide answer to problems that are crucial and present yet cannot be intelligible in pure positivistic terms and can only be responded in a tentative manner.¹²⁹

As a response to the second, ethical criticism requires a further elaboration and can be made twofold, in relation to the trans-historicism and the essence of psychoanalysis. Though trans-historical aspect does have important connection to the methodological

¹²⁷ Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 6.

¹²⁸ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 6.

¹²⁹ Hedley Bull, "International Theory: The Case For a Classical Approach," *World Politics* 18, no. 3 (April, 1966): 366-367.

aspect and implicitly connected to ethical critics, the appraisal of psychoanalysis in general takes politico-ethical consequences as the focal point.

It must be admitted beforehand that Fromm's usage of the term does have certain trans-historical and foundationalist tendencies explicit in all his works. Furthermore, he claims not only the objective presence of such human nature but also the necessity of such formulation in psychology:

The real problem is to infer the *core common to the whole human race from the innumerable manifestations of human nature, the normal as well as the pathological ones*, as we can observe them in different individuals and cultures. *The task* is furthermore to recognize *the laws* inherent in human nature and the inherent goals for its development and unfolding.¹³⁰

It can be interpreted from this quotation that Fromm, in a Platonic sense, excavates “a reality that is constant” inherent and beyond all transformations, changes and morphoses.¹³¹ The adjacent usage of qualities and titles such as “objective” or “law” with the term human nature, not rarely but in an occasional frequency, normally leads one to think that his designation of human nature has a totalitarian and absolutist trait, similar to that of Hans Morgenthau, Hobbes, Freud or Locke. In terms of trans-historicism, therefore, Fromm does not initially seem to constitute an exception towards criticism of trans-historicism.

Notwithstanding, the case seems to be more complicated than what looks at first sight and it becomes much more sophisticated and complex with other statements of Erich Fromm himself. First and foremost, Fromm himself, along with such

¹³⁰ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 24, my emphases.

¹³¹ Donald G. Tannenbaum, *Inventor of Ideas: Introduction to Western Political Philosophy* (Wadsworth Publishing, 2012), 24.

essentialist/foundationalist elements in his writings, claim absolutism is not the case for his understanding of human nature. In *Man For Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics*, he aims to make a distinction between the absolute and the objective, in the context of knowledge production, asserting this misunderstanding has been the product of conflation of those two terms in theological thought.¹³² In his thought, the term objective does not lead to hypostatized and axiomatic conceptions although it refers to an existence beyond relative thoughts and subjective experience, to “a world out there”. In terms of human nature, it refers to a dynamic which is actual in all human beings, emanating from what Fromm calls “existential dichotomy” which we all find ourselves in.¹³³ As a matter of fact, according to him, objective validity may be “established on limited evidence and ... subject to future refinement if facts or procedures warrant it.”¹³⁴ To put it differently, objective construction of the term human nature does not lead to a totally immutable abstraction, though a part of it is immutable, but rather, refers to a commonality shared by all human beings in different temporalities and spaces and differences within those spatio-temporality without neglecting the differentiations among human beings. He does not disregard cultural and historical diversification as ineffective, residual or having little importance on behavior and perception. This is apparent in his writings, explained below, when he speaks of historical and social construction of human psyche.

Fromm’s conception of the term objective is reflected in his belief that the picture of human nature we have been able to attain so far is so limited and requires further research.¹³⁵ Furthermore, his core belief narrated in the form “man's essence is

¹³² Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 16; Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 51.

¹³³ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 39.

¹³⁴ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 16.

¹³⁵ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 38.

ascertainable” is not to be interpreted as an over-confidence in his own theoretical conception; that later, a social scientist or a scholar will eventually reach his conclusions he had already found and carry on his arguments further. Instead, his statement is to be appraised as one of methodological and theoretical humility that paves the way for more elaborative excursion. Albeit, this sentence cannot be stretched to the extent that the conclusions anticipated are to be self-defeating, that one day it may be concluded that there is no common human nature or psychical base. Yet, it apparently evinces his non-totalitarian tendencies as well and awareness of the limitations of his thoughts; that it could be refuted, modified or developed in the indefinite future.

Secondly, and most importantly, the reason why his thought cannot be easily labeled as totalitarian and trans-historical is because he, as stated above, *historicizes* human nature and does not take it separate from the social structure they dwell on and interact with.¹³⁶ Fromm’s theoretical framework accepts Marx’s own distinction of human nature and accumulates upon this center: “human nature in general” and “human nature as modified in each historical epoch”.¹³⁷ It is evident and explicit as much as the clearance of former statements on human nature that Fromm’s theoretical work is highly affirmative of Marx’s understanding of human beings as producers and products of the human history, “acquiring new needs and aspirations” as well as changing the social totality in which the former engages in reciprocity.¹³⁸ In *Escape from Freedom*, where

¹³⁶ Fromm historicizes and differentiates the human nature of early modern and modern epoch by focusing on interaction between psyche and particular amalgams of capitalist relations of production. See: Fromm, “Man In Capitalistic Society,” in *The Sane Society*, 81-107.

¹³⁷ Erich Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 23.

¹³⁸ Andrew Linklater, “Marx and Marxism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 115.

he has the most salient description of such historical change and traces the development of human psyche and its pathology from Middle Ages to the 20th century, he articulates:

The most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man ... Man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product; as a matter of fact, man himself is the most important creation and achievement of the continuous human effort, the record of which we call history.¹³⁹

Fromm goes even further to claim that human psyche and character is a strictly mental process, which is entirely separate from the biological endowed drives and instincts. Therefore, one's character and psyche does not have any connection to one's biologically inherent drives and desires, as in the case of Freud himself and orthodox Freudianism. Far from being determined biologically, it is totally a social construct due to one's existence and actuality in a particular society, in a particular epoch. Matson articulated that crucial point of divergence among orthodox Freudians and neo-Freudians, among which Fromm is included, is "the radical shift of emphasis from a biological to a social (or "bio-social") orientation" in terms of production of human psyche.¹⁴⁰ Human psyche as well as the mass psyche is an output of particular interaction of economic, cultural and political spheres, which Fromm deems inseparable to understand human beings. The point is not to indicate a rigid structural determination of one's character or a generalized character orientation, though structuralism is clear in Fromm's works. In contrast, aim is to emphasize, as does Rainer Funk, the presence of constructionist ontology and inter-subjectivity of Fromm's thought in relation to human nature cohabiting with his essentialist framework.¹⁴¹ In this regard, Fromm, far from

¹³⁹ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 27; Fromm quoted in Matson, "Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory," 722.

¹⁴⁰ Matson, "Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory," 721.

¹⁴¹ Rainer Funk, "Erich Fromm and the intersubjective tradition," *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 22, no. 1 (2013): 7.

being a naturalist or biological determinist, or a theologian, in Neta Crawford's classification, has a social constructionist fervor, which corresponds to the belief that human sentiments and characteristics "may be shaped by learning" including "even beliefs and emotions that are tightly linked".¹⁴² Such assumption proved the basis for emancipatory change in his theoretical framework, both on individual, societal and even global level, of which otherwise could not put human agency as a social force of transformation.

The third and final point, which must be emphasized in Fromm's psychoanalytical theory, is derived from the very essence of psychoanalysis itself, at least all Freud related psychoanalyses, rather than confined to his own work. The emphasis must be on the purposes of psychoanalysis per se, as a particular branch of humanities, a field aims to render human action intelligible from a particular conjuncture. Yet this purpose, far from being unanimous and harmonious, is actually divergent and contrasting, and depends on the theoretical position that one cannot speak of a single uniting purpose but *purposes*.¹⁴³ In this regard, it will be auxiliary to utilize what Carl Schmitt termed as "ultimate distinctions" or "final distinctions" peculiar to that human field and all purports, are made in reference to.¹⁴⁴ Thereby we may comprehend the basic referents that all psychoanalytical approaches are crudely established upon, regardless of their specific attributions to the final distinctions in their own theoretical constellations. In psychoanalysis, it might be assumed that this ultimate distinction is the dichotomy of pathological/normal, which can be also put in different terms as sane and insane or

¹⁴² Neta Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (Spring, 2000): 133.

¹⁴³ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 73-74; Fromm quoted in Matson, "The Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory," 704.

¹⁴⁴ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. Georg Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26.

healthy and unhealthy. The reason of such elaboration is to provide a better understanding to reveal the important theoretical and political consequences of the former when related with the term human nature, by taking Bull's admonition into consideration along with pointing to what Odysseos referred as "dangerous ontologies".¹⁴⁵

Dividing human traits, characters as well as desires, drives and impulses on the spectrum of pathological/normal can understandably be perceived by many as a form of domination; as unjust, delinquent and frightening due to the ethical concerns elevated above; a criticism, which also exists in the literature of International Relations. As Yalvaç stated, "given the fact that universalistic discourses have been used as justifications for hegemonic projects, it is natural universalistic aspirations are treated cautiously" or totally dismissed.¹⁴⁶ Such understanding of objective reality connected to the human nature, may be deemed as a source of violence especially by post-structuralists.¹⁴⁷ In this case, the critiques may rightfully claim to prophesize where the argument is going or may unintendedly evolve towards: Some political practices, cultural elements, modes of existence/co-existence and social structures that produce and perpetuate them are healthy because our human nature commands so, thus legitimate and desirable (or illegitimate yet helpless).¹⁴⁸ Others, nevertheless, due to the very same warrants, are not in accordance with the human nature and unhealthy,

¹⁴⁵ Louiza Odysseos, "Dangerous ontologies: the ethos of survival and ethical theorizing in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002): 403-418; Dunne, *Inventing the International Society*, 141.

¹⁴⁶ Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 11.

¹⁴⁷ Matthew Fluck, "Truth, Values and the Value of Truth in Critical International Relations Theory," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2010): 263.

¹⁴⁸ Historicist critique of natural law and rationalist traditions adequately illustrates this concern, without, of course, referring to psychopathology. See: Andrew Linklater, "Men and Citizens in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 7, no. 1 (Jan., 1981): 29.

potentially dangerous, thus should be diminished and must be altered. Another aspect could be a demarcation of limits for change and conservation of the existing social reality through this dichotomy. Some practices and conducts as well as future prospects and trajectories, on this basis, may also be justified as “unchangeable”, “it just is”, “must”, “tragedy”, “inescapable” or “utopian”, “daydreaming” “futile”, “phantasy”, because our human nature commands so. It provides grounds for both certain limitations and preservation of status quo in question. It may render what is essentially temporal and social, or deriving from our own motives and perceptions as an objective, external force, a “force of circumstances”.¹⁴⁹ In other words, explanations on human nature through biological or psychological frameworks may be used to “naturalize a particular political objective” which are conservative in their usage.¹⁵⁰

This concomitant and connotation, generalized as the universal/particular struggle, may be seen in various branches of social sciences and humanities, along with International Political Theory or Normative International Theory in IR, on the basic issue of communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, for instance.¹⁵¹ This struggle might even be inferred as a foundation for the post-structuralist approach in International Relations, an endeavor to denaturalize and put those givens, which are claimed to derive from “order of things ”and “nature”, and diffused to every aspect of our lives and direct human action on both individual and collective level.¹⁵² The debates on cultural imperialism, modernization, Eurocentrism, as reflections of universal/particular problematique, have all been echoed in a wide range of theories of IR, from the English School, historical sociology to postcolonialism. The assumed ultimate distinction of psychoanalysis, thus,

¹⁴⁹ Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 396.

¹⁵⁰ Bell, “Beware of the False Prophets,” 495, 502.

¹⁵¹ Toni Erskine, “Normative International Relations Theory,” in *International Relations Theories*, 37.

¹⁵² David Campbell, “Poststructuralism,” in *International Relations Theories*, 232-233.

is relevant to the discipline of International Relations and problems of contemporary international relations as a level of political coexistence, especially to understand the psychic roots of certain political practices and problems on that level.

One possible argument could be the presence of psychoanalytical frameworks, which do not dispense or dismiss the particularities as illegitimate by constituting them as pathological or abnormal. There are certain postmodern/post-structural psychoanalytical approaches, for instance Lacanian and Deleuze/guattarian, which do not make this rigid pathological/normal distinction. Moreover, those perspectives are critical of those who utilize them by labeling their efforts as “normative discourses and ideologies of normalization and reintegration” and psychoanalysis as the apparatus for “normalizing the reproduction of the Oedipal drama”.¹⁵³ In other words, psychoanalytical theory has certain incentives, which do not reproduce the binary opposition pathological / normal as a discourse of social adjustment, subsidence or pseudo-relief. It may even be furthered that Deleuze and Guattari even carry the banner of the “pathological” as desired, as in the case of “schizoanalysis” and the term “schizo”.¹⁵⁴

The main question, then arises which should be answered on the ground of Erich Fromm’s psychoanalytical theory in respect to problems articulated, to his respective position on the relationship between pathological-normal. To reformulate in a different aspect, we could ask whether he claims that there is an objective definition of the pathological and of normal, corresponding to the legitimate and illegitimate.

¹⁵³Samo Tomšič and Andreja Zevnik, “Introduction,” in *Jacques Lacan: Between Politics and Psychoanalysis*, edited by Samo Tomšič et al. (London: Routledge, 2016): 3; Earl Gammon, “Oedipal authority and capitalist sovereignty: a Deleuzoguattarian reading of IR theory,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 13, no. 4 (2010): 364.

¹⁵⁴ Gammon, “Oedipal authority,” 364.

The answer to the question is affirmative; Erich Fromm does have clear-cut definitions of pathological as well as unhealthy instances and that of healthy. As can be seen on the quotation above, he mentions “the manifestations... of normal as well as the pathological ones” which seems quite in conformity with the former aspect, with the “psychoanalysis as reintegration”. However, this is not the case from his framework. Actually, the link between normal=healthy=legitimate (or helpless) equation is severely ruptured and opposed in Fromm’s envisage. Quite the opposite of the former and affine to the latter, what is “normal” has been understood as disempowering, merely adaptive and no less than consolation; in Fromm’s own terms, “crippling”. Rather than being the measure of health and welfare in general, “normal” is an expression of particular norms in a society, diffused to their generality, abstracted in reference to the norms. In practice, the normal deviates human beings from their psychological welfare. Moreover, Fromm further contends that therapy-oriented psychoanalysis, which is based on normalization, analyze their patients in isolation from all social, economic or political constrains in social structure which produce or augment their suffering. It designate their sickness and cure by taking their subjects independent from the social context they interact.¹⁵⁵ Such focus is, far from contributing to the welfare of the human beings or provide grounds for substantial changes within their character, essentially based on reduction of the “extra-suffering” to “a socially accepted level.”¹⁵⁶ Hence, it is auxiliary for rendering the unbearable social relations much bearable and facilitate adaptation to the existing mode of living.¹⁵⁷ Clear objection is evident in his own works that, similar to Deleuze-guattarian point, that regards the pathological better off, even hopeful, than those trapped under what he calls “automaton conformity”.¹⁵⁸ His critical attitude

¹⁵⁵ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Being* (New York: Continuum, 1992), 61.

¹⁵⁶ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 55.

¹⁵⁷ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 208.

towards “psychoanalysis as reintegration” or technologies of normalization is apparent in his attacks on practice and theories of psychiatry:

In the process of tabooing emotions modern psychiatry plays an ambiguous role.... [It] has made itself an instrument of the general trends in the manipulation of personality. Many psychiatrists, including psychoanalysts, have painted the picture of a ‘normal’ personality which is never too sad, too angry, or too excited. They use words like ‘infantile’ or ‘neurotic’ to denounce traits or types of personalities that do not conform with the conventional pattern of a ‘normal’ individual. This kind of influence is, in a way more dangerous than the older and franker forms of name-calling. Then the individual knew at least that there was some person or some doctrine which criticized him and he could fight back. But who can fight back at ‘science’?¹⁵⁹

Hence can be deduced that Fromm has conceptions of pathological and non-pathological derived from the human nature and human health yet, what is pathological for him is in fact what has been insofar normal. Nevertheless, it must be underscored that, unlike the postmodernist interpretation of psychoanalysis, Fromm attests the existence of an objective, universal human nature. Concordantly, psychoanalysis may discover what is healthy, contributive to the human flourishing, in Fromm’s view, and which practices and structural elements are hazardous; either individually retained or having a socially generalized existence, that avert human flourishing.¹⁶⁰ The normal, as it has been experienced, is therefore unhealthy, owing to its contradiction with human flourishing, especially within our capitalist system of production and consumption. Such ontological claim is also the basis for his “humanistic ethics”, where ethical principles and basis of ethical conduct can be derived from this human nature, which is elaborated in following chapters.

¹⁵⁹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 271-272.

¹⁶⁰ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 20.

It may be summarized that Erich Fromm, as a humanist *psychoanalyst*, as an intellectual preoccupied with human nature and establishing his articulations upon it, cannot be referred as totalitarian though firmly essentialist/foundationalist. Despite his acceptance of laws of human nature, a general condition that is ever pervasive beyond time and space, he focuses on its historical construction and affirms that what we call human nature also alters itself during the course of history, similar to Marx's understanding. To utilize Aristotle's concepts, his theoretical framework cohabits and looks at the interaction of "things capable of being otherwise", which is human character, and "things not capable of being otherwise", of human nature.¹⁶¹ Secondly, in spite of his desire for emancipation similar to Marxist and Critical Theory lines, which itself has a humanist core, invoking the discourse of health and pathology may be understood as insensitive to diverse modes of existence and negates their particularity and legitimacy. Yet, his books and articles are full of diverse examples from different cultures for his psychoanalytical theory and especially for the basis of his humanistic revival. He gives examples from religions of Islam, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism to non-theology immerse trends of Enlightenment, Greco-Roman tradition as well as modern era liberalism and Marxism to further his arguments. Thus, rather than difference insensitive, it may be interpreted in this cherished plurality of human identification, he finds the traces of our common human essence and basis of flourishing in all of them; yet diffused and split without being coherent in a single form. Although it may not suffice to refer Frommian understanding as postcolonial, it is doubtful whether his understanding of human nature and well-being is smoothly Western centric or totalitarian. It must not be skipped or concealed, nonetheless, that despite this diversity, he claims that certain notions and practices are unhealthy and undesirable in his formulation. If one asserts that this ineluctably leads to totalitarianism, this must also be asked: Is there any theory with ethical implications or ethical understanding, which regards *all* practices legitimate at all, one that does not

¹⁶¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), 93.

denounce *any*? If the answer is no, can one speak of any moral understanding without being so-called totalitarian or whether the term totalitarian would retain any distinguishable substance under this condition?

2.3. Erich Fromm as an Observer on International Relations

A final addition should be made for Fromm's evaluation as a *humanist* psychoanalyst, which is inextricably linked with his evaluation as an observer on international relations. Actually, Fromm himself has a particular criticism towards two perspectives which are tried to be adequately responded insofar. In *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (1962), written when rigid behaviorist tendencies were still prevalent yet, interpretivism and post-structuralism was also increasing its sphere of influence, he claimed:

Today the idea of a human nature or of an essence of man has fallen into disrepute, partly because one has become more skeptical about metaphysical and abstract terms like "the essence of man," *but partly also because one has lost the experience of humanity which underlay the Buddhist, Judaeo-Christian, Spinozist, and Enlightenment concepts.* Contemporary psychologists and sociologists are prone to think of man as a blank sheet of paper on which each culture writes its text. While they do not deny the oneness of the human race, they leave hardly any content and substance to this concept of humanity.¹⁶²

According to him, these development, of which two basic critics derived from, had another aspect that goes beyond the methodological and ethical rigor, which was the loss of faith in human beings as entities having the potentialities for virtuous acts and acting with compassion, generosity, reason and responsibility on the basis of their common humanity. Lack of the centrality of the terms such as "good life", "virtue" and "good", the central conceptions of political theory and even its foundations, in

¹⁶² Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 21, my emphasis.

psychology along with other domains of humanities, is the very evidence of such dismay towards the human potentialities and behavior. This could be interpreted as the result of persistent negative understanding of human nature both explicitly stated and ubiquitous in a subtle form. In this regard, Fromm claims that there is a line of thought, articulating the inherent badness of human beings from St. Augustine to Sigmund Freud and which actually sets the horizon for our future prospects and what we may anticipate from future developments and human beings.¹⁶³ In the 20th century, the discipline of International Relations constituted, no exception for dominance of this perception for we can see the reflection of this assumption explicitly in Hans Morgenthau, Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield and implicitly in contemporary writers.¹⁶⁴ In other words, such illustration of human nature is also the basis of our ethical principles along with the basis of our coexistence. On perception of his contemporaries, which is not much different for 21st century, Fromm writes:

Today, we are adherents both of Augustine and Pelagius, of Luther and Pico della Mirandola, of Hobbes and Jefferson. We consciously believe in man's power and dignity, but-often unconsciously-we also believe in man's -and particularly our own-powerlessness and badness and explain it by pointing to 'human nature.'¹⁶⁵

The reason why this dominant comprehension, almost an axiom, matters for Erich Fromm is not due to a belief, as political idealists have done, in the inherent goodness and righteousness of the human beings. Though Matson refers Rousseau as a pro-Frommian in respect to his belief in the distinction between “natural self” and “social self”, Fromm has been cautious not to imply that human beings are *naturally and*

¹⁶³ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 39.

¹⁶⁴ Jack Donnelly, “Realism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 32; Dunne, *Inventing the International Society*, 75.

¹⁶⁵ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 212.

essentially virtuous yet distorted through living in modern societies.¹⁶⁶ In fact, he has been very careful not to assimilate different and various impulses and practices as either good or bad in a reductionist manner. As Lawrence Wilde stated, Fromm's famous book *The Heart of Man* continues and extends as *Its Genius for Good and Evil* which demonstrates that both forces are of equal gravity.¹⁶⁷ In this regard, it is important because Fromm conceives the presence of evil and bad, as well as good, as the result of interaction between human psyche and social forces, with social totality. Thus, according to him, suspicion towards human nature, to its destructiveness, which is understandable, must be supplemented with productive potentials that they also harbor equally, unlike the dominant unconscious understanding, which might be formulated, "an evil is an evil is an evil"; an understanding that implies evilness is self-evident.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, Frommian point aims to emphasize that proclivities towards destruction and violence are to be found in the human nature, though social relations may kindle or subside them. In other words, Fromm is against two embedded ideas: First, evil behavior and violence are immanent to our biological nature but is essentially suppressed. Second, human pathologies and violence are mere results of cultural production which does not correspond to inherent human psyche or impulses.

Connectedly, preponderance of evilness and selfishness of human nature in the minds of many, and the belief that it is the essential truth, in his regard, leaves no room for human agency in terms of a genuine human solidarity as defined in the beginning. If the assumption is to be accepted, such would be asking no more than what general ethical

¹⁶⁶ Matson, "The Political Implications of Psychoanalytical Theory," 722; Tannenbaum, *Inventors of Ideas*, 189-190.

¹⁶⁷ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 51.

¹⁶⁸ Neta C. Crawford, "Institutionalizing passion in world politics: fear and empathy," *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (November, 2014): 536. With reference to Gertrude Stein quoted in Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2013), 61. It should be noted that in the book, usage of the tautology is in a quite different context than it is used in the paper.

conduct deems to create, which is a repression of inherent badness, not a substantial difference in human beings and it falls short of his aspirations. Such basis of human nature is not only intellectually biased according to Fromm, but cannot hope to promote any kind of inter-societal solidary development substantially.¹⁶⁹ For Erich Fromm, emancipatory transformation across the globe, establishment of social structures and forces that bolster human flourishing and productiveness requires a fundamental change in our cultural and ethical convictions, even everyday habits, on a large and global level which will be reflected in their perception, sentimentality and action.¹⁷⁰ Quite strikingly, he summarizes this view as such: “I believe that the One World which is emerging can come into existence only if a New Man comes into being... [and] I believe that reason cannot be effective unless man has hope and belief”.¹⁷¹

In order to assess the position of Fromm as *an observer on international relations*, it should be initially said that Erich Fromm was, obviously, by no means an IR theorist. He did not explicitly focus on questions of nature of international system, effective systemic forces, basis of statecraft, inter-state relations or international law, as conventionally done by his contemporaries in International Relations. Similarly, Devetak claimed that Frankfurt School and Critical Theory did not concern itself directly with international politics up until Jürgen Habermas.¹⁷² Hence, nothing may be more surprising to reveal the otherwise when Fromm is taken into consideration. Erich Fromm was pre-occupied with international politics, which is hardly a surprise since he lived and wrote his books in the era of all-thrilling Cold War, in a noteworthy manner, both theoretically and practically. In the years between 1950-60s, he was a member of

¹⁶⁹ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 21.

¹⁷⁰ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 141.

¹⁷¹ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 136-137.

¹⁷² Devetak, “Critical Theory,” 162.

the SANE Peace Action that aimed for nuclear disarmament, especially during the first détente and further campaigned against Vietnam War.¹⁷³ In several instances, terms “international relations”, “realists” and “utopians” were actually used in his books without mentioning any names and in a brief manner.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, what is more surprising to witness that he not only wrote an article on the Cold War politics, but also he actually wrote a book on Cold War politics titled *May Man Prevail: An Inquiry into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy*.¹⁷⁵ Notwithstanding, the book has a limited scope which analyses the recent historical developments of those years in respect to foreign policies of U.S. and U.S.S.R. in order to provide a substantial method to end, at least to diminish the nuclear arms race and ameliorate the political conjuncture towards less tension.¹⁷⁶

These events and instances are not the reason for the evaluation of Fromm as an observer. Such statements give his incorporation a certain amount of legitimacy in relation to IR discipline but does not amount to explain why his theoretical framework is chosen in particular. The reason why Fromm is important as an observer on the international relations is not owing to the techniques on foreign policy decision making, or his preoccupation. It is based on the fact that good life and emancipation is linked with the idea of human solidarity which can only be achieved on international sphere. Fromm assumed that only through solidarity which embedded in cultural and psychological life of human communities may emancipation be realized. Through

¹⁷³ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 135.

¹⁷⁴ See: Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 249; Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 77-78, 123-124; Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 120.

¹⁷⁵ See: Erich Fromm, “The Case for Unilateral Disarmament,” *Daedalus* 89, no. 4 (Fall, 1960): 1015-1028.

¹⁷⁶ It should also be noted that the threat of nuclear war and imminent nuclear catastrophe was directly taken into considerations in all his books, especially in his book written since mid-50's.

development of such psychological and cultural outlook in within particular social frameworks, solidarity based on alleviation of harm on other communities and individuals may be established. As stated above, for Fromm, human flourishing and human autonomy, essentially based on human solidarity, can and must be purported to be realized at the global level. In consensus with International Critical Theory, Frommian approach does not exclude or marginalize the basic problematique of “good life” from the international life, which used to be the axiomatic conception of the international field.¹⁷⁷

Frommian psychoanalytical approach shows that pathological as well as productive forces and character attributions of human beings, in general both unconscious and conscious forces, are essentially reflected in international realm for Fromm, in numerous practices, in different guises and for different passions. Political sphere in this regard, similar to Cox’s schema and Critical Theory in general, is comprehended in a porous and interactive at all levels. Exclusive to the Frommian framing, it is claimed that *international relations is abstracted as a particular sphere of human interaction and practice, with its peculiar parameters and jargon, yet where human psyche, especially individual and collective unconscious forces, shapes and is being shaped by its execution, either in a reproductive or revisionist manner; a site where psychic impulses, drives and passions are more or less projected and effected.*

Such definition beseeches further elaboration. Thus, it is deemed useful to elaborate the engagement of psychoanalytical concepts and parameters in the jargon of International Relations to comprehend Fromm’s position more clearly. This may be clear by

¹⁷⁷ Shapcott, “Critical Theory,” 327.

juxtaposing this definition with conventional understanding of international relations by political realists and Bull's concept of "domestic analogy".

It is a well-known fact that political realism theorized the international field on the basis of rigid dichotomization of domestic and international, on a non-porous manner. Conventional wisdom of political realism thus narrates to treat each other separately, since both correspond to different types of associations among relevant agents and ontologies, in Ashley's terms, sovereignty and anarchy,¹⁷⁸ thus necessitates different outlooks and expectations. Martin Wight reflects this stance in respect to good life and mere survival.¹⁷⁹ This understanding is manifested in the rigid separation of private morality from political/public morality of *raison d'état* where expedience, prudence, balancing, statecraft, pure "political" mechanisms, has become primary norms and rules and the naissance of modern international relations.¹⁸⁰ Ethicopolitical stance, which does not make the distinction of private/public morality, henceforth, has been rendered both irrelevant and even destructive to the prudent execution of international politics.¹⁸¹ Thus, political field, in this case international politics, has claimed its autonomy and difference as Machiavelli stated: "politics is politics".¹⁸² Furthermore, the practical wisdom of the international field necessitates what is also conventionally theorized as

¹⁷⁸ Richard K. Ashley, "Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique," *Millenium – Journal of International Studies* 17 (1988): 231.

¹⁷⁹ Martin Wight, "Why There is no International Theory?," in *Diplomatic Investigations*, 33.

¹⁸⁰ A. Nuri Yurdusev, "'Uluslararası İlişkiler' Öncesi," in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2016), 42; Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, 156-162.

¹⁸¹ Andrew Linklater, "Men and Citizens in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 7, no. 1 (Jan., 1981), 27; For critique of moralist outlook in international politics see: Herbert Butterfield, "The New Diplomacy and Historical Diplomacy," in *Diplomatic Investigations*, 184.

¹⁸² Machiavelli quoted in Oliver Maachart, *Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2007), 50.

“rational actor model” in the statesmanship, in realist context, which does not require a detailed explanation for IR scholars and students.

Thus, rational agency of political realism and the human agency in terms of psychic operations, unconscious drives, emotions and perceptions are in rigid contrast with one another. Rational actor model does not put human emotions, moral referents, psychic processes, exempting cognition and misperception which operate within definite realist framework, as a relevant force in the decision-making process or diplomatic negotiations. Rather, rational actor model is associated with calculations, expediency and prudent decision-making by taking the international system, relative position of the international actors into account and epitomizing the existing patterns of behavior, namely *realpolitik*, as default. In other words, what is defined above as human aspect of rationality is rendered irrelevant to the actors of the international relations. Ironically, though, Coicaud claims that neo-realists and its rational choice model indicate that focusing on emotions/passions and the agendas they produce in international politics is both “misled and misleading”.¹⁸³

Nonetheless, there are several important objections towards such an understanding, both from non-realists and from realists themselves, which are endorsive of the Frommian point of view. Neta Crawford rightfully claims that all theories of international politics actually put emotions into account that they are “implicit and ubiquitous, but undertheorized”.¹⁸⁴ In her account, international practice, which we are all familiar with, essentially depends on emotional relationships or the interaction of emotions and

¹⁸³ Jean-Marc Coicaud, “Emotions and Passions in the Discipline of International Relations,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 15, no. 3 (2014): 493. Mislead because it does not amount as a significant factor yet misleading because decisions and actions forged by these “irrelevant” factors may produce irrational and harmful results.

¹⁸⁴ Crawford, “The Passion of World Politics,” 116.

perceptions yet, nevertheless, takes them for granted. Secondly, she gives crucial examples of Kenneth Waltz and Hans Morgenthau, forefathers of political realism in IR, in which they claim one cannot testify the everlasting presence of rational decision making in international politics but, perhaps, equally irrational, non-expedient decisions taken by statesmen. This may be clearly seen in his articulation that his theory of international system must also be supplemented with a theory of foreign policy decision making, to explain why decision-makers do not act as formulated, as rational, but exactly in the opposite manner, not in mere rarity but frequently.¹⁸⁵ This irrationality, from a realist perspective, may be understood in terms of lack of prudence, inexpediency or miscalculation which generally reflects and emanates from the psychological, perhaps pathological, emotional and moral state of decision makers to a considerable extent. For Morgenthau, as a classical realist, argument may be furthered to claim that decision-making has a rational guise with an irrational or pathological essence; decision-making and operationalization of the international field may be connoted as a field where pathological conduct is not seldom, as it is generally presumed.¹⁸⁶ Statesmanship and all politics in this respect, is inseparable from the human instincts, desires and psychological state.¹⁸⁷ This assertion is furthered by Schuett in his claim to frame Morgenthau essentially pro-Freudian and his excavation of Freudian roots of Morgenthau and in fact, political realism in general.

It could be claimed that it is widely known for classical realism to find the cause of presence of power politics and violence within the "metaphysics" of human nature, similar to the critic responded above, thus could be conceived unreliable if not totally

¹⁸⁵ John Mearscheimer, "Structural Realism" in *International Relations Theories*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics", 118; For Morgenthau's association of psychopathology and psychology with international politics see; Jacobsen, "Why Freud matters," 394,409, 9th footnote.

¹⁸⁷ Schuett, "Freudian roots of political realism," 64.

illegitimate.¹⁸⁸ Although Schuett asks the question “whether 20th-century realism itself”, which subsumes structural realism, “might have its philosophical roots in Freud” and responds with a “cautious ‘Yes’”, he does not purport a persuasive reason.¹⁸⁹ His assertion, that assumption on human nature’s power and security seeking is also embedded in structural realism, does not seem corresponding with the claims of structural realists.¹⁹⁰ After all, abandonment of the term human nature as an explanatory force in international relations has been underscored as one point of divergence from classical realism and has provided a basis of their reification of the realist heritage.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, there are still contentions on the assumption that neo-realist framework is substantially based on subjectivity since the same disruption exists within the scientific neo-realist approach and cannot be responded with theoretical framework presented by them. It does not suffice to account for “deviations”, irrational decision-making that is, and, as Ashley refers, depends silently on human subjectivity without mentioning it.¹⁹² A similar claim is based on the fact that neorealism depends on the “*de facto*” mobilization of subjectivity, emotions and passions, yet “it tends to be in denial about it.”¹⁹³ “By the same token, Weber refers to the crucial role of fear in Waltz’s neorealism which is “always missing” in his theory building.¹⁹⁴ Notwithstanding, if “human beings

¹⁸⁸ Ashley, “Political Realism and Human Interests,” 217; Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2010), 16.

¹⁸⁹ Schuett, “Freudian roots of political realism,” 66.

¹⁹⁰ Schuett, “Freudian roots of political realism,” 55.

¹⁹¹ Richard K. Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism,” *International Organization* 38, no. 2. (Spring, 1984): 230.

¹⁹² Ashley, “Political Realism,” 217.

¹⁹³ Coicaud, “Emotions and Passions,” 496, emphasis in original.

¹⁹⁴ Weber, *International Relations Theory*, 34.

are ... subjectivities”¹⁹⁵, that human subjectivity is an agent in the making of international relations, it is plausible to assume that mentality and psychological state of statesmen, as well as their aspirations, desires, moral understanding, inevitably effect the conduct of international politics, albeit it may vary in different circumstances and depend a lot on contingent factors.¹⁹⁶ Turning a blind eye to such powerful and relevant forces eventually distorts the comprehension of international field in a deeper aspect and fail to account for the different social forces, as well as chances for emancipation in this regard, in the field for the sake of usefulness.¹⁹⁷ Such apprehension of the world not only neglects a vital aspect of the social reality but also provides insufficient to the reality desired to be explained.¹⁹⁸ In this regard, Finnemore and Sikkink’s statement is supportive of Frommian approach to the politics:

Like law and philosophy, affect and empathy have been swept under the carpet in recent decades The result is politics without passion or principles which is hardly the politics of the world in which we live.¹⁹⁹

Thus, despite different effects on events in question, it is assumed that human psyche, human aspirations, emotions and values, are indispensable aspects of international politics. It should be emphasized that what is conceived as irrational is twofold: Both in respect to pathological aspects of cognition and decision making along with non-calculative and non-expedient, or emotionally-morally effected decision-making. In this vein, it is assumed that psychoanalytical concepts find a viable place for their utilization. However, it should be emphasized that, as articulated by Jacobsen,

¹⁹⁵ Weber, *International Relations Theory*, 211.

¹⁹⁶ Crawford, “The Passion of World Politics,” 119.

¹⁹⁷ Waltz quoted in Ashley, “Political Realism,” 221.

¹⁹⁸ Coicaud, “Emotions and Passions,” 499-500.

¹⁹⁹ Finnemore and Sikkink quoted in Crawford, “The Passions in World Politics,” 122.

utilization of psychoanalysis is much more different from cognitivist framework and puts psyche in a very deep scrutiny by taking unconscious drives as main determinants of our behaviors and desires.²⁰⁰ In this vein, what is comprehended as a part of international relations is more than misperceptions, cognitive biases or limitations on information processing.

Similarly, it may be interpreted that Frommian outlook to international relations shares the assumptions of theorists who invoke what Hedley Bull refers as “domestic analogy”.²⁰¹ It essentially refers to an anthropomorphism, which renders state behavior and human behavior alike. In other words, utilization of “domestic analogy” indicates that state interaction in international system and individual interaction in domestic societies are identical; they are governed by similar logics, needs, parameters and aspirations.²⁰² In the context of formation of an international society by sovereign states, Bull considers such conception of state behavior misleading, asserting that states form an international society but the substance of their relations is not identical to interpersonal relations in domestic societies.²⁰³ Conducts of sovereign states in international society are to be understood in their peculiarity.²⁰⁴

In this context, Frommian assumptions may be understood as similar to theorists invoking “domestic analogy”. The assumption that human psyche is an ever-present factor in international relations might lead to such conclusion. To be sure, Frommian

²⁰⁰ Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 394-395.

²⁰¹ Hedley Bull, “Society and Anarchy in International Relations,” in *Diplomatic Investigations*, 35.

²⁰² Bull, “Society and Anarchy,” 35.

²⁰³ Bull, “Society and Anarchy,” 38.

²⁰⁴ Bull, “Society and Anarchy,” 45.

understanding does not consider state behavior and human conduct mutually exclusive and subject to totally different logics. Nevertheless, it does not render them very similar either. Although Fromm does not formulate a theory of state, or speculated on the nature of state behavior at international level, or distinguished politics as a peculiar sphere of human interaction operating under different considerations and parameters, it would be wrong to assume that he invokes anthropomorphism as stated. Although he is a psychoanalyst, he remains prudent not to analyze all social events and social relations by resorting to psychological reductionism; the idea that psychic operations are the primary causes in the unfolding of social events. Frommian framework is interpreted in such manner that all social relations and events mobilize and depend on operations of human psyche and eventually effect psyche in a particular manner. This does not indicate that political events are ultimately determined by psychological factors or state behavior and human behavior are identical. Instead, Frommian point may be interpreted that all spheres of human interaction, including international relations more or less reflect human emotions, passions, biases, cognitions and impulses occasionally. Logics of state behavior and inter-personal interaction cannot be rendered identical or very similar yet, they cannot be considered completely separate either. Bull is affirmative of this assumption in his statement that “international society is unique, and owes its character to qualities that are peculiar to the situation of sovereign states, *as well as to those it has in common with the lives of individuals in domestic society.*”²⁰⁵

In spite of such articulations, it should also be noted that the relationship between statesmanship and psychoanalysis is not within the scope of this thesis, nor in its aim. To put it differently, Fromm’s psychoanalytical theory is not purported to claim similar to “George W. Bush invade[d] Iraq due to unresolved Oedipal conflict” or wars may occur due to unconscious sadistic traits of leaders or decision makers, though they may

²⁰⁵ Bull, “Society and Anarchy,” 45, my emphasis.

be auxiliary to a particular extent.²⁰⁶ Neither is the aim to make the case psychological reductionism²⁰⁷ or to conceive the international politics purely on the basis inter-psyche relations which are unaffected by the existence of objective social forces exist and bearing important effects on human practice per se.²⁰⁸ What is aimed to be articulated is to take social relations and their psychological effects on individuals and social groups as the focal point without resorting to cultural determinism. To utilize the example of sadistic traits, the focus is the relationship between social structures and power relations and mass psyche which produces such sadistic effects on the individuals in question; to socially structured aspects of psyche, socially embedded neurosis, and their reciprocal engagement with actual human psyche in return.²⁰⁹ After all, Fromm always defends that psychoanalysis is always social psychology and “psychology cannot be divorced from philosophy and ethics nor from sociology and economics.”²¹⁰

Thus, the definition of international field, as mentioned above, essentially assumes that all practices which may be considered as an object of inquiry of International Relations discipline, are actualized through human beings who retain particular set of psychic endowment; with particular beliefs, mindsets, aspirations, impulses and character traits. Although initially formed in an opposing manner, the rational actor model is no exception for this, since it is assumed that particular passions “produced the calculations in the first place” and emotions are, in fact, immanent to cognition and rationality.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 409-410.

²⁰⁷ Psychological reductionism is closely related to what Cox calls radical idealism. See, Robert W. Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory,” *Millenium – Journal of International Studies* 126, no. 10 (1981): 132.

²⁰⁸ For Morgenthau’s psychological reductionism see: Schuett, “Freudian roots of political realism,” 64-65.

²⁰⁹ Tomšic and Zevnik, “Introduction,” in *Jacques Lacan*, 3

²¹⁰ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 47-48; Fromm, *Man For Himself*, ix.

²¹¹ Gay quoted in Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 404; Coicaud, “Emotions and Passions,” 500.

Therefore, the interaction between self and other, including the aspect of statesman dialogue, regardless of their calculation saturated engagement, is both morally and strategically constituted. Devetak concludes that political relations are morally reloaded in the sense that all political calculations and practices have their own moral referent.²¹² Similarly, Volkan concludes that any ontological definition of international relations includes interactions between large-groups who retain a particular identity and show explicit psychological reactions to the international events from this center.²¹³ By the same token, Donnelly asserts that when realists speak of obligations of the statesmen and their strategies on political conduct in foreign policy, we actually refer to an ethical argument for their moral referent, their desire that renders such conduct necessary, is the nation-state they are responsible from.²¹⁴ Likewise, Linklater claims in *realpolitik*, “what is at issue ... is the existence of particularistic social moralities which concentrate the individual's moral sensibilities upon the immediate, political group” or a “geographical morality” instead of an immutable, permanent political reality.²¹⁵ Thus, it may be concluded that there is always a moral referent aimed to be preserved or achieved, or moral referents supplementary or contradictory to one another, each holding the emotional attachment and fidelity of human beings in all political practices, resulting in various manifestations. Therefore, all political practices significantly effect and are effected by the projection of our inner world, our conscious or unconscious impulses and drives, to the social reality, to a significant extent. Similar to the assumptions of critical sociologists, it is presumed that examination of the modern world must explicate the interaction between “multiple logics”²¹⁶ and exclusive to this

²¹² Richard Devetak “Post-structuralism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 201.

²¹³ Volkan, “Large-group identity,” 206, 210.

²¹⁴ Donnelly, “Realism,” 52-53.

²¹⁵ Linklater, “Men and Citizens,” 26-27.

²¹⁶ Linklater, *Beyond Realism and Marxism*, 6.

thesis, human psyche is believed to be an inseparable yet forsaken part of understanding the potentials of solidarity and psychological basis of certain obstructions towards such form of coexistence.

Jacobsen rightfully asserts that one is tempted to call for the insights of the psychoanalysis only when we testify extremes and excesses.²¹⁷ In respect to international relations, one deems the psychoanalytical explanations useful or necessary only when one encounters, for instance, ethnic cleansing, genocidal practices or excess violation and breach of international norms of which conduct of Bosnian War, massacre of Pol Pot regime, Jewish genocide of Nazi Germany may correspond to. For this reason, it may be prompted to conclude that since these extremes are not often actualized in the political practice, then one may further that human psyche usually actualizes itself under the “normal” circumstances with a “normal” operationalization, on a rational ground. However, without referring to psychic operations, as Campbell’s borrowing of Jacques Derrida’s term “ontology” demonstrates, the political extremes arose are actually governed by the very same norms and aspirations that one conceives “normal”. In a different context, Agamben claims that “the camp” as the space of extreme political practices opposed to judicially governed ones, amounts to the “hidden matrix and *nomos* of the [judicio-]political space in which we live.”²¹⁸ In those examples, “extremes” are understood as “simply the continuation” of the default understandings, having the same harmful and violent prone potential.²¹⁹ In other words, extremes reveal what is constantly retained as a ready potential and govern what is deemed the “normal state of affairs” and in fact, harm potentials transpire from all

²¹⁷ Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 395.

²¹⁸ Agamben quoted in Nick Vaughan-Williams, “Giorgio Agamben,” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, 26, emphasis in original.

²¹⁹ Devetak, “Post-structuralism,” 201; Dan Bulley, “Negotiating ethics: Campbell, ontology and hospitality,” *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006): 646.

“normal state of affairs” in the political conduct. This is the very basis of the presumption for the ever-active manifestation of individual and mass psyche and according to Erich Fromm, these norms and particular mindsets are active agential variants in the general conduct of in all spheres of practice in which the field of politics is no exception. What is peculiar to Fromm is that, all practices including the political ones, extreme or “normal”, are in fact, ultimately having their impetus from a universal human nature, a basic existential state:

Man—of all ages and cultures—is confronted with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement ... The question is the same, for it springs from the same ground: the human situation, the conditions of human existence. The answer varies. *The question can be answered by animal worship, by human sacrifice or military conquest, by indulgence in luxury, by ascetic renunciation, by obsessional work, by artistic creation, by the love of God, and by the love of Man.*²²⁰

Despite the bleak and pathology-focused illustration narrated up until now, Fromm also sees a clear potential for productive manifestations of human psyche, which may result in co-operative and constructive ties among societies and people. Those forces have been genuinely active in the political life as well, albeit relatively small when compared to the destructive manifestations in the political practice. In this regard, Erich Fromm contends the developments at the global level are of crucial importance for the quest towards human solidarity due to globalization of the world and on the same line with Robert Cox, internationalization of production and consumption process, technological developments, which render domestic/international, cross and effect one another.²²¹ The accumulation of political events at all levels and their psychological effects, as well as their psychological roots, are crucially important for the development of human flourishing and inter-societal solidarity. In particular, human emancipation and genuine

²²⁰ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 9-10, my emphases.

²²¹ Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders,” 127; Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 131.

autonomy, almost synonymous to human flourishing in Fromm's works, may truly be realized under the conditions of solidarity and brotherliness.²²² As it may seem to many, far from being a luxurious and utopian desire, lack of solidarity which is the result of socio-politically divisive and crippling practices, Fromm observes this as a matter of life and death which still retains the possibility. In an almost apocalyptic tongue, the last sentences of his book *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962) unfold as such:

I believe that today there is only one main concern: the question of war and peace. Man is likely to destroy all life on earth, or to destroy all civilized life ... If we should all perish in the nuclear holocaust, it will not be because man was not capable of becoming human, or that he was inherently evil; it would be because the consensus of stupidity has prevented him from seeing reality and acting upon the truth. I believe in the perfectability of man, but I doubt whether he will achieve this goal, unless he awakens soon.²²³

If we accept the basic assumptions (i) that there is reciprocal relationship between human psyche and international relations, both as a projection of human nature into the social facticity and in response, shaping human nature and (ii) human flourishing / *eudemonia* may truly be realized via human solidarity on a global level, the question is what Fromm sees as obstructions towards the achievement of such goal. Both at societal and international level, Fromm contends, similar to the other scholars of Critical Theory, that the main sources perpetuating human divisiveness and estrangement are nationalism and capitalist world economy.²²⁴ Their domination in the political field and effective operation, for Fromm, are the primary reason for the reproduction of what Linklater conceptualizes as "modes of exclusion and inclusion" and envenoming societal relations from the realization of higher levels of solidarity.²²⁵ As another aspect

²²² Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 59-60.

²²³ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 138-139.

²²⁴ Lawrence Wilde, "In search of solidarity: the ethical politics of Erich Fromm (1900-1980)," *Contemporary Politics* 6, no. 1 (2000): 48.

²²⁵ Roach, "Critical Theory", 175-176.

of he being an observer on international relations, Fromm provides significant suggestions for the revision and transformation of political and economic sphere at both domestic and international level for the establishment of a more humane governance. Yet, deriving from his theory of human nature and human needs, his psychoanalysis is the main framework utilized in the thesis.²²⁶

In this regard, transformation of the political community and the establishment of deliberative, consent-oriented dialogical politics, as the basic occupation of Critical International Theory²²⁷, are considered to be harmonious with Fromm's psychoanalytical theory though meta-theoretical discrepancies among them are to be admitted. It is contended that Fromm's psychoanalytical approach has much to contribute to emancipatory aspirations of Critical Theory, especially through his emphasis on necessary cultural and ethical transformation in human psyche and inquiry of human psyche as well as sentimentality as a potential social force in the broadening and deepening of just, democratic and harm-reducing political sphere across the globe.²²⁸ Furthermore, it is claimed that Frommian analysis may provide significant insights and remedies to the critics and admonitions directed to the Habermasian discourse ethics and Critical Theory in general.

²²⁶ Erich Fromm, *On Disobedience: Why Freedom Means Saying "No" to Power* (Harper Collins, 2010), 75-78, EPUB.

²²⁷ Robyn Eckersley, "The Ethics of Critical Theory," in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smith and Duncan Snidal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 349.

²²⁸ Shapcott, "Critical Theory," 328; Devetak, "Critical Theory," 167.

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN NATURE, SOCIETY AND PSYCHE IN ERICH FROMM

This chapter aims to narrate the basis of human behavior and needs by articulating the theory of human nature depicted by Erich Fromm. The crucial importance of this chapter, as stated above, is the fact that all social and political relations as well as transformations are explained by referring to this foundation. In other words, human ontology is the building block and the anchor of Fromm's social theory, which is evident in the fact that he constantly and sharply underscores this theory in almost all his works, each focusing on different aspects of human practice, individual and social psychic health. The essentials of the human nature are defined in his first work, *Escape From Freedom*, which became the basis for his later works and essentially took social roots of human psyche as the essential point.²²⁹ Nevertheless, in his second book *Man For Himself*, he focuses on the subjective and existentialist aspect of human nature and this became the main point of emphasis in his subsequent works. In this chapter, two sub-titles will articulate the theory of human nature by focusing on these two, inseparable yet different dimensions. The first section aims to focus on human nature by taking its differentiation from the rest of the nature, especially from animals. The

²²⁹ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 31-32.

differentiation and gradual emanation of peculiar human attributions and traits, mutually retained by all human beings, along with the inheritance of nature-based instinctual based is the basis of formulation. The problematic state brought upon human beings, coexistence of human and animal features, is what Erich Fromm calls “human nature.” In this vein, human nature is defined as a default framework we have all found ourselves: Human nature refers to the contradiction based on the conditions of human existence rather than particular functions and qualities that derive from their molding within a particular social totality.²³⁰ Second section focuses on the social aspect of human nature by taking the interaction of human psyche and social relations as the focal point. In this respect, human nature is taken in its exclusive form, in its spatio-temporality. By referring to the concepts of “dynamic adaptation” and “social character”, social formation of human psychic state is narrated. After the general psyche-formation process, social character and mass psyche concept of unconscious to be elaborated in order to clarify the operationalization of human nature with existing social structure. Before commencing the articulation, however, it is deemed necessary to introduce the reason behind putting the term human nature under scrutiny by Fromm and his contemporaries and how come it may still maintain its importance for our contemporary political tensions.

Disposition towards understanding human nature, not only by Fromm but also by many others who practiced and theorized psychoanalysis in its nascence, takes its roots from the apparent demonstration of irrational human practices and rise of extremism, which resurge and ascend in nascence of the 21st century.²³¹ This set of irrational practices are in clear and perplexing contradiction with the Enlightenment and liberal

²³⁰ Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (Smashwords Edition, 2011), 116, EPUB; Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 7.

²³¹ See: Heinrich Geiselberger, “Preface,” in *The Great Regression*, ed. Heinrich Geiselberger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), xi-xii.

conceptualization of human beings, who are considered good, cooperative, progressive and rational in their essence but cannot actualize their inherent goodness in their respective, non-democratic societies.²³² In the first half of the 20th century, Wilhelm Reich pointed that no more was the case that rationality was prevalent in human beings and certain deviations were mere anomalies but whether our assumption of rationality was corresponding to the actual human nature and whether it was faulty in the first place.²³³ Diffusion of authoritarian tendencies throughout Europe, extreme violent practices, especially during the reign of Nazism, was the checkpoint in which many affirmed that change of heart. Witnessing collective practices totally different than the ones described by earlier social theorists, many questioned, including Frankfurt School, the rationality paradigm and aimed to contemplate on the basic questions of human happiness, human desires, potentialities and function of social relations in relation to basic human ontology.²³⁴ In the 21st century, similar to the deductions of the 20th century psychoanalysts like Freud, Reich and Frankfurt School, Pankaj Mishra claims that understanding of the violence and exclusion prone zeitgeist of our contemporary epoch and the rise of *ressentiment* necessitates returning to the forgotten and neglected inner world of human beings, “to the sphere of impulses and emotions”, if one is to provide a satisfactory analysis.²³⁵

²³² Atilla Eralp, “Uluslararası İlişkiler Disiplininin Oluşumu: İdealizm-Realizm Tartışması,” in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik*, 62; Fulya Akgül, “Uluslararası İlişkilerde Liberal Yaklaşımlar,” in *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri: Temel Kavramlar*, ed. Mehmet Şahin and Osman Şen (Ankara: Kripto Publishing House, 2014), 70.

²³³ Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 394.

²³⁴ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 45-46.

²³⁵ Pankaj Mishra, “Politics in the age of resentment: the dark legacy of the Enlightenment,” in *The Great Regression*, 106, 110.

Exclusively, Erich Fromm's famous work *Escape From Freedom* took its name essentially from the ubiquity of a so-called social "deviation" which one may still testify; the desire to overcome the *burden* of liberty, autonomy and yearning for authoritarianism. Reminiscent tendencies actually make their presence felt via the surge of rightist, authoritarian, populist and xenophobic movements in our contemporary epoch across the globe, rendering Frommian analysis still relevant and crucial for contemporary problems providing insights to overcome them.²³⁶ What made Fromm ask whether "there [is] ... besides an innate desire for freedom, an instinctive wish for submission"²³⁷ in human nature is based on him seeing the desire of people for totalitarianism and weariness from freedom by many.²³⁸ His observations, made in the 1940's, still retains striking similarities for 21st century as well:

At first many found comfort in the thought that the victory of the authoritarian system was due to the madness of a few individuals and that their madness would lead to their downfall in due time.... Another common illusion, perhaps the most dangerous of all, was that men like Hitler had gained power over the vast apparatus of the state through nothing but cunning and trickery... that the whole population was only the willless object of betrayal and terror. In the years that have elapsed since, the fallacy of these arguments has become apparent. We have been compelled to recognize that millions in Germany were as eager to surrender their freedom as their fathers were to fight for it; that instead of wanting freedom, they sought for ways of escape from it We also recognize that the crisis of democracy is not a peculiarly Italian or German problem, but one confronting every modern state.²³⁹

²³⁶ Although the populist surge of contemporary epoch vary within itself and has different constituents than the authoritarian regimes of 20th century, authoritarianism and rigid dichotomization of self/other are common constituents. For different amalgams of modern populism within themselves and authoritarian regimes of 20th century, see: Rogers Brubaker, "Between nationalism and civilizationalism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (2017): 1191-1226. For similarities of submission and authoritarianism see: Roberts quoted in Donatella della Porta, "Progressive and regressive politics in late neoliberalism," in *The Great Regression*, 35-36.

²³⁷ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 21.

²³⁸ Paul Mason, "Overcoming the fear of freedom," in *The Great Regression*, 98.

²³⁹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 19-20.

From this point of view, it is believed by Fromm that if one is to comprehend this torrent of irrational human practices and how human beings “are sinking into a new kind of barbarism”²⁴⁰ instead of achieving a humane social order, one should look not only at how social relations and assemblages constitute their subjects, but also at the human nature itself. There, Fromm finds certain roots of human pathology: Reasons of extreme political violence, hostility towards alterity embedded with rage, fury and horror as well as the complacent, alienated, conformist and hedonist lives of many in democratic-capitalist societies. Ironically, the same human nature Fromm narrates retains the potentials for the roots of inter-societal solidarity along with contrary practices.

3.1. Subjective-Self consciousness

“To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul.”²⁴¹

Erich Fromm contends, similar to Greco-Roman philosophers and in line with Enlightenment rationality, that foundations of human practice, existing social phenomena and betterment of human conditions may only be understood through understanding human beings and their nature. Similar to Liah Greenfeld’s point, his framework is affirmative of the core assumption that “both ideas and social structures are only operationalized in men.”²⁴² This assumption bears two vital points for the research question of the thesis.

²⁴⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), xiv.

²⁴¹ Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties towards Mankind*, trans. Arthur Willis (London and New York, Routledge, 2002), 40.

²⁴² Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads To Modernity* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1992), 19.

First, instead of internalized in full conformity and uniformity with, social forces, narratives and ideologies conflate and interact with peculiar characters and psychological frameworks and are operationalized in human practice accordingly. Otherwise would be comprehending human agency and subject formation in a top-down determinist pattern; as a process in which subjects are passive bearer of social structures lacking unique, creative modification, revision or partial refusal. Such approach cannot comprehend how and why human beings produce their emotional and moral investments towards existing narratives, particular practices and doctrines as well as their impulses and horizons for revision, complaint and refusal.²⁴³ In respect to solidarity, despite the prevalent, opposing socio-political current, such outlook might provide why human solidarity is hard to achieve and within such context, what are immanent potentials for providing basis for such humanism. Secondly, in a connected manner, it is believed that without taking psychological factors, human sentiments, aspirations, needs, suffering and reasons for fidelity into consideration, it is nearly impossible to inquire towards social transformation and the foundations which social transformation are established upon. Turning a blind eye to human factor is presumed to be turning a blind eye to the potentials and limits of practitioners of social transformation as Pankaj Mishra articulated.²⁴⁴

Fromm's conception of human nature begins with articulating an evolutionary process producing the differentiation of human history. This process refers to the differentiation of human beings from the rest of the nature, the basis of human/nature distinction which is the conventional wisdom of social sciences and humanities in general. Similar to Aristotle and Marx, Fromm answers the question "what makes us human" by narrating

²⁴³ Roger Foster, "Social Character: Erich Fromm and the Ideological Glue of Neoliberalism," *Critical Horizons* 18, no. 1 (2017): 2.

²⁴⁴ Mishra, "Politics in the age of resentment," 115.

our essential differentiation from animals in the evolutionary process, by what we are not.²⁴⁵ Despite a similar starting point, Fromm claims that human nature refers to a deeper, even existentialist, variant than what many social theorists have articulated until his time. In other words, human beings are distinguished not only via their human qualities, potentials and unique substance but *a particular experience and perception* human beings are subject to which emanates from their development, especially through self-consciousness.

3.1.1. Historical Emergence of Human Beings

In *Man For Himself*, Fromm's theory of human beings which articulates the condition of human existence tells that different from animals, human beings are not endowed with sound instinctual inventory and their instinctual apparatus is considerably weak compared to the rest of the nature.²⁴⁶ Human beings are depicted as biologically weak creatures and owing to this facticity, birth of humanity is defined as "a negative event".²⁴⁷ In terms of adaptation and survival, human beings remain feeble and powerless compared to others. Animals, on the other hand, by their very nature have retained an immanent strong instinctual apparatus which unfolds spontaneously and in a sufficient manner. This biological inventory, according to Fromm, automatically provides them an experience of harmony and unity with the rest of the nature.²⁴⁸ This does not indicate that non-human nature does not engage in a struggle to survive or can rest assured for a guaranteed survival until their time for a peaceful death comes; rather

²⁴⁵ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 11.

²⁴⁶ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 39.

²⁴⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 23.

²⁴⁸ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 23.

it means that their adaptation and well-being does not necessitate any transformation within their instinctual apparatus, which naturally develops in the course of their existence. To live in inner harmony and to have an indispensable and static place in nature and to survive, they do not need anything except what they already possess. Hence, non-human nature spontaneously actualizes itself and relatively guarantees its survival and well-being via the development of an inherent mechanism through a process of growth and their capacity to be able to adapt themselves efficiently to the changing external conditions, through a one-sided adaptation. In other words, spontaneous and contingent life of non-human nature automatically generates a harmonious coexistence with the rest of the world and within themselves. In this regard, their mode of being may be summarized as “an animal is an animal is an animal”.

As stated above, this is not the case for the human beings; their instinctive regulation were insufficient for adaptation to external conditions and changes.²⁴⁹ Fromm contends that human beings, in the evolutionary process, have compensated their deprivation through the development of peculiar human powers and capabilities.²⁵⁰ To put it differently, being different from the rest of the nature, human beings, “the freak of the universe”, have come to being when the weak biological apparatus has ceased to be the main determinant of human behavior and conduct.²⁵¹ Although they have not been vanquished entirely and remained effective to a considerable degree, their gravity in respect to being the *main* determinant of human behavior has diminished and has left its place to intellectual faculties: In general, the utilization of reason and intellect as the basis of human conduct. Henceforth, actualization of intellectual faculties in place of biological mechanisms marks the beginning of human history and its relatively

²⁴⁹ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 41.

²⁵⁰ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 48.

²⁵¹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 22; Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 47.

autonomous sphere, of the very division of human and nature as well as nature/social. Initiation of the particular human history, in this regard, marks the end of state of harmony for human beings. In other words, the emancipation from the commandment of instincts and development of human faculties and powers are the first acts of freedom which entailed termination of spontaneous harmony and unity human beings experienced in nature.²⁵² Similar to Marx and Engels' point, through the usage of developed human powers, human communities differentiate themselves from nature and construct their own peculiar framework, their own world, through deliberation, envisagement, abstraction, coordination, establishment of rules of conduct and rudimentary technology for self-subsistence.²⁵³ In this regard, culture as a product of intellectual faculties, if broadly defined as totality of material and ideational factors forged by human hands in a symbolic order, becomes the compensation for our biological powerlessness.²⁵⁴ Fromm describes the beginning of a human history as such:

Instead of a predetermined instinctive action, man has to weigh possible courses of action in his mind; he starts to think. He changes his role toward nature from that of purely passive adaptation to an active one: he produces. He invents tools and, while thus mastering nature, he separates himself from it more and more.²⁵⁵

In contrast to the pre-human state of harmony with nature, through its exclusive attributions and “rational self-determination”, humans have retained the power to alter and modify the mode of living and the course of history and fate.²⁵⁶ Unlike the rest of the nature that survives through passive adaption to the environment, human beings

²⁵² Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 50.

²⁵³ Karl Marx, “The German Ideology,” in *Karl Marx, Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 177; Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 75.

²⁵⁴ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 18.

²⁵⁵ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 49.

²⁵⁶ Linklater, “Men and Citizens,” 32; Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 14.

have been relieved of their role from passive adaptors to active sculptor and reproducer of their material conditions and dynamically outgrow and add to their temporal technical and intellectual development throughout historical development. In spite of its emancipation from its animal type of existence and development, biological inventory has not been erased entirely. Thus human history, as a dynamic and self-constituting process through human powers, is a proclamation of a *relative* autonomy. It leaves human beings in a state of disequilibrium. Nascence and augmentation of human faculties have produced the particular experience referred above and rendered itself ever-present; on the one hand, it transcends the nature, on the other hand, remains as a part of the nature simultaneously.²⁵⁷ Disequilibrium, in this context, does not merely refer to the dependence on nature and being effected by external conditions of nature. Rather, it underscores an existential agony, which rooted in retaining an animal part but not being able to satisfy it spontaneously and naturally as non-human nature does. It refers to the coexistence of two basic impulses of human beings which have been *practically* mutually exclusive insofar but equally crucial for human flourishing; desire for unity, relatedness, rootedness and desire for individuation, freedom and actualization of unique human potentialities derived from the emanation of “human”. This state of disequilibrium and finality of pre-human state of harmony with rest of the nature and within themselves has produced what Fromm defines as “the existential and historical dichotomy”.²⁵⁸ This existential splitness, simultaneous bearing of contradictory modes of existence and the specific form of suffering it embarks is what Fromm articulates as the human nature.

²⁵⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 22-23.

²⁵⁸ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 40.

3.1.2. Human Nature: Enter the Vagabond

As may be noted above, beginning of the human history is portrayed by the emergence of the “freak of the universe”. Though it may be interpreted in a manner which underlines the hubris and destructiveness of human beings bring upon the Earth itself, neglecting the bio-diversity and tarnishing spheres of life for non-human beings, the concept does not match with this degradation. Certainly, similar to this ecological and moral criticism, Fromm warns against such destructiveness towards the nature.²⁵⁹ However, the concept is used to define exactly what humans utterly *are*, in respect to their subjective sensation and perception of themselves in relation to the existence, to the generality of flow of life and time. Freakiness of human beings, as the consequence of development of human powers, bring forth the peculiar human suffering, our unique blessing and damnation, which does not exist in non-human nature.²⁶⁰

This sense of suffering is the result of experience of freakiness. Nevertheless, if human suffering is the evitable outcome of our human capabilities, broadly defined as intellectual faculties, it requires elaboration of those powers. According to Erich Fromm, those intellectual capabilities refer to very different types of traits and cause complex emotional states upon which it could be said that not all of them may be counted as a power or blessing. Perhaps, more accurately, one could contend that no power is purely a blessing but entails a burden or a price as well. Fromm summarizes those disruptive human powers as self-awareness, reason and imagination.²⁶¹ Of those mental apparatuses, bearing the power of comprehension and abstraction, which enable

²⁵⁹ Fromm quoted in Ryan Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism: The First Biophilia Hypothesis as Humanistic Social Theory,” *Humanity & Society* 38, no. 2 (2014): 183-184.

²⁶⁰ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 40.

²⁶¹ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 40; Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 22.

the self-constitution and dynamic development of human communities, accumulation of vast knowledge, *tekhnē* and *theoria*, for the betterment of life by increasing the material conditions and development of the human mind, self-awareness (subjective self-consciousness) is the most significant reason for the human suffering.

Subjective self-consciousness is the faculty, referring to the painful aspect of the power, which renders human beings to perceive their existence in the world as contingent, arbitrary, separate and all alone. Quite similar to Martin Heidegger's concept of *geworfenheit*²⁶², referring to the arbitrary existence and ascribed social conventions, duties and problems one finds itself in, "thrownness", of subjects in the social world and to life in general, Fromm claims that human beings are "creature[s] ... thrown into life as dice are thrown out of a cup."²⁶³ Frommian thesis is that perceiving oneself as dwelling arbitrarily and being subject to contingency, to forces and events, which bring fortunes and misfortunes upon human beings who have a very limited control upon them, is the source of psychic anguish. This sensation posits human beings in a way that they feel like the whole being hurls unto them. Defined as the "singular form of life which is aware of itself"²⁶⁴ on an abstract and even existential level, yet concretely encountering the effects of this perception, this form of life:

.... has awareness of himself, of his fellow man, of his past, and of the possibilities of his future. This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness

²⁶² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie et al. (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962), 174.

²⁶³ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 25.

²⁶⁴ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 11

before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison.²⁶⁵

This generalized view of human beings and history, in fact, in its peculiarity, corresponds to the process of neuro-biological growth of the individual. Articulating in the framework of psychological development of human beings, subjective self-consciousness emerges after the primary narcissism of the human beings ceases to be.²⁶⁶ Similar to the phase of *The Real* in the psychoanalytical theory of Jacques Lacan, this refers to the pre-Oedipal state of human beings in which infants do not perceive or experience the differentiation between self and beings outside the self. In other words, the world which exists outside the infant body is not experienced as exterior but rather, as a continuation of the infant itself, of its own corporeal existence, resulting in a sense of completeness, coherence and unity.²⁶⁷ As the natural development of the child called individuation proceeds, his physical, mental and emotional powers develop and start to become an integrated and organized whole.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Fromm states that this process of integration cannot be equated with “the growth of the self”, of *genuine* experience of being “I” at psychological, emotional and intellectual level.²⁶⁹ This refers to the expression and development of productive forces which retain their potential in human nature which are the ability to love, faculty of critical thinking and reasoning and to work productively. In other words, neuro-biological sensation of “I” and spiritual²⁷⁰.

²⁶⁵ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 8.

²⁶⁶ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 60.

²⁶⁷ Dino Felluga, “Modules on Lacan: On the Structure of the Psyche,” *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, Last Update: January 31th, 2011. Purdue U. Date of Access: 26.06.2018.

²⁶⁸ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 44.

²⁶⁹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 47.

²⁷⁰ Spiritual, in this context, does not imply any religious or sacred sensation or experience. It corresponds to, on emotional level, the experience of fullness, elevation and integrity within. For the distinguishment of religious and spiritual see: Liah Greenfeld “The modern religion?,” *Critical Review* 10 (1996): 173. For

psychological sensation of “I” designate two different processes. His claim is that the individuation and freedom, as outputs of this process, have a dialectical character.²⁷¹ Through the neuro-biological development of the infant, individuation, perception of the outside world as a set of separate entities begins. Through the process, boundaries of the self and other are established and subjective self-consciousness, along with other intellectual capabilities, is the prominent ability that constitutes such separation. Hence, the harmonious state of existence gives rise to the experience of disequilibrium, insecurity, solitude and powerlessness on emotional and psychological level.²⁷² This process, unless material conditions negate or distort its unfolding, is the natural course and can neither be averted nor reversed. Dialectical aspect of the biological individuation lies in the fact that this process has two facets crucial for the human psyche. On the one hand, individuation increases the level of self-strength and human powers, and potential experience of a genuine “I”, on the other hand, individuation imposes human beings on an increasing sense of separation, insecurity, loneliness and powerlessness before the world.²⁷³ Biological individuation, thus, gives birth to what Fromm conceptualizes as “negative freedom”, the state of not being bound, compelled by or belonging to any form of bond or relatedness which may provide grounds for the fear of freedom and hence, experience of insecurity emanated from individuation.²⁷⁴ Since human powers may develop only through this neuro-biological process of individuation, experience of negative freedom is necessarily adherent to the potential development of “positive freedom” as an active form of living based on “spontaneous

a similar usage of spirituality see: Charlos Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 5.

²⁷¹ Vicki Dagostino and Robert Lake, “Fromm’s Dialectical Freedom and the Praxis of Being,” in *Reclaiming the Sane Society: Essays on Erich Fromm’s Thought*, ed. Seyed Javad Miri et al. (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014), 17.

²⁷² Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 51.

²⁷³ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 44-45.

²⁷⁴ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 53.

relationship to man and nature, a relationship that connects the individual with the world without eliminating his individuality.”²⁷⁵ This dialectical psychical process and contradictory impulses it bears upon human beings are the sources of human suffering.

In this regard, Fromm poetically summarizes this peculiar human suffering due to the development of subjective self-consciousness as an interpellation directed to all human beings; a question and problematique that haunts us by the bare fact of being born as a human being.²⁷⁶ Since human beings are hurled into this world:

... life asks man a question, and this question he must answer. He must answer it at every moment; not his mind, not his body, but *he*, the person who thinks and dreams, who eats and sleeps and cries and laughs *-the whole man-* must answer it The question is: How can we overcome the suffering, the imprisonment, the shame which experience of separateness creates; how can we find union within ourselves, with our fellow man, with nature?²⁷⁷

Wilde rightfully interprets human nature in twofold; he contends that human nature does not merely designate our state of existential dichotomy and constant disequilibrium; the quest, the burden it entrusts to us, but also the inescapable endeavor to seek an answer, a remedy to this pain.²⁷⁸ Particular modes of living, idiosyncratic individual forms, collectively shared general mode of living, amalgam and synthesis of generalized and peculiar types by particular social groups and even accompanying pathological states are all regarded as an answer to this unavoidable question. Hence, Frommian framework depicts human beings as ever-struggling entities to find a solution to this question within their respective actual conditions and frameworks, in their unique spatio-

²⁷⁵ Fromm quoted in Dagostino and Lake, “Fromm’s Dialectical Freedom,” 17.

²⁷⁶ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*, 19.

²⁷⁷ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*, 19-20, emphases in original.

²⁷⁸ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 41.

temporal position and through means they retain insofar. According to him, human beings can neither evade nor remain indifferent to this ultimate concern.²⁷⁹ On the contrary, Fromm vehemently asserts that this particular desire to overcome the separateness and experience rootedness, unity and meaningfulness, along with the desire for the development of “positive freedom”²⁸⁰, freedom to realize productive human powers, and betterment of social conditions accordingly and rendering them effective are the basic impetuses of all human practices. Nevertheless, the need for rootedness is so much powerful than the desire to experience peculiar human powers. Although the need for “positive freedom” may never be entirely dismissed and be forgotten for any human being, the desire for rootedness has a much more coercive effect. As long as one experiences a form of solidarity and the entailing psychological security, regardless of the quality or pathological state of the bond, Fromm claims that:

Even the most irrational orientation if it is shared by a considerable body of men gives the individual the feeling of oneness with others, a certain amount of security and stability Once a doctrine, however irrational, has gained power in a society, millions of people will believe in it rather than feel ostracized and isolated.²⁸¹

Although Fromm differentiates between historical antinomies and existential antinomies and claims that all peculiar antinomies within bounded time and space are produced via the existing social conditions, he assumes that all historical antinomies are essentially a reflection of primary conditions of human existence, of human nature.²⁸² General human history and development, as well as our individual and peculiar development within our life span, is shaped by this very nucleus.²⁸³ Human beings aim to

²⁷⁹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 23.

²⁸⁰ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 297.

²⁸¹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 32-33.

²⁸² Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 43-44.

²⁸³ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 41.

comprehend the world, “make the unknown known” and strive to develop in different paths, collectively and individually, within their existing conditions in order to heal the pain of separation or, as Charles Taylor refers, to experience fullness and find “the place of power” while averting this subjective exile.²⁸⁴ In this vein, Fromm draws an analogy and associate human beings and their never-ending struggle with journeys of “eternal wanderers”. Frommian ontology of human beings metaphorically pictures them as vagabonds who are on an odyssey to find an answer to “the question” of human existence:

Having lost paradise, the unity with nature, he has become the eternal wanderer (Odysseus, Oedipus, Abraham, Faust); he is impelled to go forward and with everlasting effort He must give account to himself of himself, and of the meaning of his existence. He is driven to overcome this inner split, tormented by a craving for ‘absoluteness,’ for another kind of harmony which can lift the curse by which he was separated from nature, from his fellow men, and from himself.²⁸⁵

Hence, one of the basic human needs that derives from this strive for rooted and meaningful existence is the need for “relatedness” and “the need for a framework of orientation and devotion” which is conceptualized as rootedness in this thesis.²⁸⁶ Although this need is not totally identical with his functional understanding, in respect to different understanding of human anguish, it has a significant similarity to Benedict Anderson’s explanation for the question of nationalism’s emergence and encompassing power, a recipe to the anguishes of contingent human existence.²⁸⁷ Utilizing his sentence, this basic need to provide a sense of unity, relatedness and meaningfulness by

²⁸⁴ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 41; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 6.

²⁸⁵ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 41.

²⁸⁶ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 28-29, 61; Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 24.

²⁸⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 10.

turning “fatality into continuity and contingency into meaning.”²⁸⁸ All sources of human identification which provide an undeniable sense of belonging, security and purpose, in this regard, provide a home for the “freak of the universe”, to the “the vagabond”, who lost it with the development of human faculties; a meaningful and spiritually framed life which is otherwise, nothing more than a painful, disempowering, threatening facticity

3.2. Social Roots of “I”: Dynamic Adaptation and Social Character

3.2.1. Dynamic Adaptation

According to Erich Fromm, second variant which constitutes the basis of human conduct, its peculiar subjectivity, perception and ultimately its character is the process of dynamic adaptation to the social relations and discourses within a particular form of social totality.²⁸⁹ Thereby, human character and human subjectivity are products of conflation of the human nature narrated above, the root seeking vagabond, with objective socio-economic conditions and cultural frame of the community in question. He refers to dynamic adaptation as a process which fundamentally molds and structures human needs, impulses and forces and forms it into a peculiar character through the adaptation and internalization of the existing framework of the social relations. Giving the example of static adaptation, for instance a Chinese adapting to eat food with Western habits asserts that such adaptation does not substantially produce any psychological or emotional effect on inner world and psyche.²⁹⁰ Different from the

²⁸⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

²⁸⁹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 326.

²⁹⁰ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 30.

static adaptation, via adjusting to the external condition, dynamic adaptation shakes the very core of emotional matrix and causes a transformation within the subject in question.²⁹¹ It may be regarded as an encounter with series of novel event in which the perception and affectivity insofar started to be altered; in case of a trauma, it may even restructure one's perception and affectivity in a profound manner. Meaning, significance, attributions of the actors of the event, or perhaps a generalization derived from a dimension which frames the actors transform in a different manner than what it used to be. The same form of adaptation occurs when human beings learn the rules of conduct and norms in a community to arrange their behavior, way of thinking accordingly through social learning or education, resulting in a process of character formation. The outputs, the character type of this process of interaction and adaptation is the concept of "social character", determinant of human subjectivity and consciousness.²⁹²

It should initially be stated that the process of dynamic adaptation does not produce uniform and singular forms of subjects and characters in actuality. Although Fromm does not elaborate on the actual complexity and differentiations between individuals and social groups, he nonetheless explicates that "if we are concerned with minute differences, there are no two people whose character structure is identical."²⁹³ Fromm is well aware of the fact that different character traits, ways of thinking and perception of the world are derived from the peculiar experiences of the human beings in their personal experience and process of development. To put it differently, although a web of social relations may produce and orient towards a general character formation, human creativity and agency are deemed a significant actor. Human psyche and

²⁹¹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 30.

²⁹² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 76-77; Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 70.

²⁹³ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 61.

character are greatly effected by personal, contingent experiences in inter-personal interactions and what human beings deduce and make of from those interactions throughout their entire life span. That being said, Fromm focuses on the general features of subjects within a community in order to assess the common pathologies which human beings suffer. For such a purpose, rather than conceptualizing community as an entity comprised of numerous, irreducible forms of sub-groups and identities, he conceives community in relation to generalized pathologies it produces. Hence, dynamic adaptation and social character it produces take the general character traits, forms of behavior, affectivity and impulses one may observe in the generality of the human beings within a given framework as the focal point.

3.2.2. Social Character

Fromm envisages the concept of social character in twofold: First, it designates the general character traits, impulses and drives that shape their behavior which members of a community possess despite their peculiar and individual sources of differentiation.²⁹⁴ Second, in a functionalist manner, it refers to a particular shaping of human psyche in conformity with the existing social relations and external necessities.²⁹⁵ Social character is essentially conceived as a bridge and an intermediary between the economic base and ideational superstructure of society, one that reflects the internalization of socio-cultural structure in conformity with relations of production and reflection of new ideas and norms upon the socio-economic base.²⁹⁶ It operates in both ways and transmits the accumulated social power in one sphere to the other. Hence, it may function as a source

²⁹⁴ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 76.

²⁹⁵ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 20.

²⁹⁶ David-West, "Erich Fromm and North Korea," 576.

of coherence and disruption. In respect to the former function, social character provides a source of societal reproduction, for the maintenance of social relations as they are by regulating subjects accordingly. Social character performs to ensure that:

.... Members of the society and/or the various classes or status groups within it have to behave in such a way as to be able to function in the sense required by the social system. It is the function of the social character to shape the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behavior is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of *wanting to act as they have to act* and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture. In other words, it is the social character's function *to mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society.*²⁹⁷

It may be comprehended that quite similar to Foucault's understanding of disciplinary power and subjectification²⁹⁸, social character refers to the totality of socially dispersed and embedded narratives which human beings internalize and embrace as a part of their own. Thus, they perceive the output of this process, as well as their individual conduct and contemplations as an act of their own, of their free will. In fact, human conduct is essentially designated as a response to what Slavoj Žižek formulates as "Che Vuoi", to do what is expected and desired by me; in Fromm's words, "I am 'as your desire me'".²⁹⁹ Through the effect of the "suggestion-apparatus of society"³⁰⁰, such as education, family relations, religious rituals, inter-personal interaction, social rituals and symbolic interactions with prevalent ideologies, human psyche is shaped as "socially necessary character types."³⁰¹

²⁹⁷ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 77, emphases in original.

²⁹⁸ Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 11,17.

²⁹⁹ Diane Rubenstein, "Slavoj Žižek," in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, 344; Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 280.

³⁰⁰ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 7.

³⁰¹ Fromm quoted in Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 48.

In his famous book *The Sane Society*, Fromm gives an operation of social character in capitalist mode of production as an example. He asserts that the unprecedented levels of mass production and technical development within modern societies have been achieved as a result of internalization of working hard, self-discipline and punctuality as an intrinsic motivation. As stated above, it cannot be rendered as a matter of deliberate, thorough decision, for such process might reveal contradictory forces and surely incite the propensity of contrary conduct and threatening the survival of social relations as they are.³⁰² Yet, such character traits are to be perceived and implemented as one's act and free choice by human beings for the successful reproduction of status quo.³⁰³ Process of internalization requires much more than means of coercion, lack of social force or reluctant implementation of what has been denoted as learned helplessness. In this regard, this process does not depend merely on the idea that objective conditions of society exert a pressure upon individuals and their accommodation is based on unwilling endurance to the conditions. Fromm claims, in Gramscian manner, that unequal power relations within the social structure requires much more than apparatuses of coercion in order to reproduce itself. Docility and compliance must be effectively internalized, wanted by many and must be profoundly "rooted in man's heart".³⁰⁴ Hence, such inequality is preserved and rationalized through the social discourses and ideologies which produce the consent.

Nevertheless, rationalization may provide being helpful for the constitution and development of social character within individual's character and social reproduction but it does not suffice to explicate the internal motivations of human beings on this process of internalization. Assuredly, fraud, deception or acts of manipulation by the

³⁰² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 78

³⁰³ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 78.

³⁰⁴ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 12-13.

elites and narrators are highly significant in these processes of reconciliation and Fromm would not have denied this argument. However, he might have added that they are internalized and hold dear owing to the fact that individuals and human groups find important elements that appeal to their conscious impulses, desires or fondness.³⁰⁵ Wilde appropriately states that doctrines and ideals appeal to the “emotional matrix” rooted in the character structures of human beings, which is an indispensable reason why particular ideologies and discourses are tempting for particular people, even if they are self-harming or disempowering.³⁰⁶ Frommian idea is that conformity with the existing narratives and their orientation is rendered powerful because it corresponds to peculiar desires of human psyche, need for rootedness and fear of isolation being primary. His assumption is that particular form of conduct, reasoning and impulses are all in a direct reciprocal interaction with the emotions and passions rooted in human character and nature. Referring to the traits mentioned above, people can act in this manner *both* due to external constraints but also for psychological or moral gratification or self-affirmation. One may establish a high level of self-discipline *both* because one must, and also because it may designate a part of what it means to be a responsible, mature individual. Perhaps, acting otherwise might lead to think that one cannot acquire his/her parents’ love and recognition who revere such merits. By the same token, Fromm brings forward that opposition to the communism in capitalist societies and repulsion towards the idea of abolition of private property is not merely based on a rational calculation. For him, repulsion is not based on the fact “that they have hurt him economically, or that they even threaten his economic interests realistically” but because “they threaten a vital ideal” which is revered in their emotional-moral basis.³⁰⁷ Like many observers, Foster contemplates on the question of why, despite the financial crisis of 2008, neoliberalism have been able to reproduce and even increase its

³⁰⁵ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 61.

³⁰⁶ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 306.

³⁰⁷ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 67.

ideological legitimacy, despite its pathologies and harms.³⁰⁸ Foster contends that neoliberalism has been able to preserve its legitimacy via the “entrepreneur character”, which are associated with virtues of “personal choice, autonomy and self-fulfillment.”³⁰⁹ Hence, it may be claimed that, without taking the subjectivity and internal motivations into account, top-down subject formation process:

... does not tell us anything about the mechanisms through which ideas originating in the brains of elites become powerful motivating forces for ordinary citizens. The latter are not simply empty vessels waiting to be filled up with whatever messages elites would like them to endorse.³¹⁰

However, the function of social character is not limited to adaptation and sustaining conformity. It may also become the source of dissolution, rupture and social transformation.³¹¹ Fromm states that although human beings have the ability to accommodate and internalize almost all circumstances to survive, nevertheless, there are limits of adaptation and accommodation. In other words, Fromm claims that human beings have not acted in full conformity with the social relations in the human history. According to him, social character may pervey a source of coherence to the extent that objective conditions of social relations remain relatively stable. If the objective conditions and actual experience within a society does not correspond to the framed social character, it carries the potential to become a dissociative social force for transformation and change.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Foster, “Social Character,” 1; César Rendueles, “From global regression to post-capitalist counter-movements,” in *The Great Regression*, 144.

³⁰⁹ Foster, “Social Character,” 9.

³¹⁰ Foster, “Social Character,” 2.

³¹¹ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 64.

³¹² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 79.

Objective conditions which change may be conceived in twofold. One is the material factors such as technological, economic or environmental conditions which determine the social relations to a significant extent. However, Fromm does not regard that those conditions are merely material. Ideational factors and developments which are also operationalized in human beings become an indispensable factor for such turn of tides and may become powerful enough to be deemed objective. Fromm contends that social character itself also provides grounds for the development of novel ideas and desires.³¹³ Human beings constituted in a particular manner may also perceive that existing social relations do not correspond their desires and needs and such is the basis of development of new ideas and practices contrasting with the given framework. Furthermore, just like they may have an emotional fidelity to the existing narratives, their emotional matrix within a given social framework may find counter-narratives that are not actualized in the existing framework tempting. In other words, by constituting human psyche in a particular manner, social character produces the potential of dissidence if the existing social relations cannot provide gratification to the psychic needs derived from human nature. If social relations neglect human psychic needs beyond an endurable limit and the ideational forces accumulate to the extent to purvey an objective social power and it cannot be subsided via the existing social mechanisms and means, new ideals provide the basis for social transformation.³¹⁴ Hence, the social character turns into “an element of disintegration instead of stabilization, into dynamite instead of a social mortar, as it were”, leading to a fundamental change in social relations.³¹⁵

³¹³ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 67.

³¹⁴ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 69.

³¹⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 79.

3.3. Unconscious: Our Truthful Apparition

The conscious dimension of human psyche and subjectivity has been endeavored to be articulated so far. To put it another way, what has been narrated is the part of cognition, affectivity and behavior human beings retain an awareness and are conscious of. Nevertheless, Fromm, in line with all psychoanalytical theories, rigorously emphasizes the gravity of unconscious as the *prior* determinant of human conduct. The question, why human beings behave as they are, cannot be responded truthfully unless unconscious aspect of human psyche is shed light upon.

Fromm states that until Freud developed his groundbreaking psychoanalytical theory, it had been assumed that one's character traits and one's behaviors had been identical. This means that human behavior were assumed as a product of ideas and beliefs held consciously by individuals, which reflected itself as a character trait. For instance, having witnessed a human being act in a benevolent manner, one might naturally deduce that the person in question had a generous and giving character, provided that one was assured of intention of the person and it was a habit. With the development of Freudian psychoanalysis, the concept of "unconscious" entered to the equation of human conduct.³¹⁶ The concept of unconscious was to provide a deeper understanding to the human conduct by problematizing and modifying the axiom he formulated as "because they thought they did."³¹⁷ In this regard, unconscious was essentially the deeper aspect of human psyche which was deeply rooted in individuals' character and a powerful force in individual and social life, becoming a vital determinant in the shape of thoughts, beliefs and perception. Likewise, Fromm contends that character structure

³¹⁶ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 70.

³¹⁷ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 55.

designated more than reflection and practice of certain behaviors and indispensably, includes unconscious activity of the psyche.³¹⁸

In order to concretize, giving the example of an officer in a battlefield acting courageously, Fromm argues that focusing on behavior and conscious explanation regarding it “covers numerous and entirely different character traits” one is oblivious.³¹⁹ If one asks what stimulates the act of courage unconsciously, one could find varying answers such as “craving for being admired”, desire “destroy himself” via suicidal tendencies, to “genuine devotion to the idea or the aim”.³²⁰

In this regard, unconsciousness designates the concealed aspect of human character which has not reached to the level of consciousness and awareness.³²¹ Affirmative of Freudian assumption that “we are not ‘masters in our own house’”³²², both as a social theorist and as a clinical doctor, Fromm takes unconscious aspect of human psyche in order to comprehend the truth behind conscious character behaviors to pinpoint pathologies humans suffer. Furthermore, Fromm, similar Freud, asserts that unconscious impulses, drives are the prior determinants of human character and behavior much more than one’s conscious psychic operations and in fact, substantially govern one’s mode of living. As a matter of fact, Frommian point of view attributes a colossal determining power upon unconscious aspect of human psyche which he takes unconscious serious rather than consciousness. He boldly asserts that existing

³¹⁸ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 55.

³¹⁹ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 55.

³²⁰ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 55.

³²¹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 34.

³²² Jacobsen, “Why Freud matters,” 399.

consciousness of human beings is “mostly fictional and delusional”, thus “nothing desirable”.³²³ Moreover, truthful aspect of one’s desires, living and decision-making has largely been rendered invisible to the consciousness.³²⁴ The gap is abysmal as it may be understood in his own words:

In our Western culture almost everybody *thinks* that [to the question of life] he gives the answer of the Christian or Jewish religions, or the answer of an enlightened atheism, and yet if we could take a mental X-ray of everyone, we would find so many adherents of cannibalism, so many of totem worship, so many worshipers of idols of different kinds and a few Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Taoists.³²⁵

If the actual structure of human beings and truth behind their acts, thoughts and affectivity lie in their unconscious part of human psyche, it may naturally be asked what unconscious may consist of. Here, Fromm essentially diverges from Freudian understanding of unconscious due to two reasons. As mentioned in the introduction, Freud envisages a biological human nature in a dualist manner, which is comprised of contradictory impulses of good and evil.³²⁶ In fact, in the field of unconscious, the Id, one would find essentially non-civilized, evil impulses, which may never be outgrown, but merely balanced.³²⁷ Fromm, on the hand, denies the biological immanence of psychic impulses and considers them as a product of social relations and cultural interaction. Hence, the urge for destruction and death, is not a normal biological factor which one must come to terms with and may only sublimate in socially acceptable ways but rather, a symptom of pathological state of mind one must deal with.³²⁸ Although he

³²³ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 35.

³²⁴ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 10.

³²⁵ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 24, emphasis in original.

³²⁶ Pupavac, “Sigmund Freud,” 171.

³²⁷ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 72; Pupavac, “Sigmund Freud,” 173.

³²⁸ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 45.

claims that all impulses of human beings are rooted from the basic condition of human existence, he denies the imminence of certain impulses in a trans-historical human. Furthermore, he rejects the topographic understanding of unconscious put forward by Freud and labels it as a mystification. His idea is that one cannot speak “*the unconscious*” as a space or basement where dark forces of human being await to be set loose, but only state of being “not aware, that is, *of which we are unconscious.*”³²⁹ In this vein, repression of unconscious aspect is not essentially the repression of practice of an impulse in question. Instead, it refers to the repression of one’s *awareness* on the practice of impulse through repression mechanisms such as resistance or rationalization.³³⁰ Thereby, the composition of unconscious in Frommian framework may be defined as a totality of constructive and destructive human potentials one may actualize and truthful representation of how we actually feel and what we desire in our inner worlds within one’s mode of living, of what one really experiences in the course of living.

There exists another vital aspect of unconscious part of human beings which is fundamental for potentials of inter-societal solidarity. Cruciality of unconscious aspect of human behavior does not only derive from its truthfulness but also from its subtle and apparent reactions to the pathological living. Unconsciousness is not only the lack of awareness of our real desires and urges but it also manifests itself in reactions to the forms of existence which is not harmonious with our psychic health. In Fromm’s thought, regardless of the political culture and norms of everyday life in a community, social and individual experiences, which are opposed to psychic well-being eventually show themselves in different forms. Even though certain particular social practices may not be unacceptable or not rendered non-pathological, they nevertheless manifest

³²⁹ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 76-77; Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 32.

³³⁰ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 72.

themselves in human conduct via different symptoms. In other words, unconscious may also be understood as the expression of human alienation in psychological terms.³³¹ However, he also contends that if particular social practices are elevated as a virtue, due to the sense of rootedness and gratification it provides, they are not detected so easily or constituted as a pathology.³³² The price of constituting such behavior as a pathology which a social framework holds so dear, if not shared by a considerable section of community, is the coming to the actual experience of neurosis or on the socio-political level, being subject to collective fury, degradation, cultural exile or physical violence.³³³

In order to show the manifestation of unconscious and hardship of rendering it conscious, Fromm gives an example from a tribe of warriors. He states that in a tribe of warriors killing and pillaging may be an ordinary affair and a necessity for social reproduction, yet there may be individuals who may be disturbed by such acts.³³⁴ Since revulsion towards such acts is a taboo and threatens one's belonging to community and basic need for rootedness, such impulses and thoughts are blocked from reaching to the level of consciousness. However, Fromm claims that psychic operations of the warrior may hardly leave the issue there. If revulsion exists yet cannot be stated explicitly, unconscious of the warrior may manifest itself through psychosomatic reaction through vomiting.³³⁵ Another example is given from a member of an agricultural community which is based on peaceful domestic relations. Similarly, even if the cultural foundations of the community emphasizes peaceful ethos, there may be individuals who

³³¹ Erich Fromm, "Dealing with the Unconscious in Psychotherapeutic Practice: 3 Lectures," *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 9 (2000): 170.

³³² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 15.

³³³ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 15.

³³⁴ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 41.

³³⁵ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 41.

consciously retain a disposition for aggression and violence. In this case, in order to show itself, unconscious may manifest itself by a symptom of intense frightening or generalize itself as a faint-hearted living.³³⁶

These being said, Fromm does not elaborate on the analysis of psychosomatic reactions. He does not specify under which circumstances the unconsciousness of human beings manifest themselves; or why, for instance, reactions reveal themselves through vomiting or frightening but not something else; or under which social conditions do personality traits or different reactions show themselves. Nevertheless, he asserts, in a different context, unconscious operates in a manner, which reacts to practices, and events not compatible with human needs. Regarding physical violence and war, for instance, Fromm contends that in human history, war has usually been framed or justified as a war of self-defense but not as a pure, willing aggression.³³⁷ Hence, he deduces that practice of violence, which is beyond self-defense, cannot be rendered as an aspect of human nature which is normal, tolerable or desirable, although it may be conceived consciously or practiced differently.

As explicated above, even though it is pretty hard for human beings to sacrifice the source of psychological security, this does not mean that the non-conformity with psychological well-being may be silenced or deferred. Fromm propounds that one cannot maintain the respective life style which is pathological and remains psychologically untroubled about it.³³⁸ Hence, unconscious, similar to Marcuse's conceptualization, may be understood as an inherent mechanism of resistance to the

³³⁶ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 41.

³³⁷ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 19.

³³⁸ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 28.

existing socially patterned defects, conditions and practices. Regarding human solidarity, this indicates that in the contemporary epoch, awareness on the harm exported on other human beings and communities profoundly effect human psyche. Although it may be rationalized, refuted or neglected through socially provided mechanisms or individual mechanisms of escape, their apparition and effect remain. Admittedly, however, they may not become effective sources of resistance or political struggle unless channeled to the public sphere. To put it differently, although they may be comprehended as a guide to the well-being, flourishing and solidarity, they are nevertheless potentials which may not be actualized if not given a space in social life.

There are dozens of means which unconscious motivations of the human beings may manifest themselves. According to Fromm, dreams, psychosomatic symptoms, neuroses, crippled behavior, gestures and mimics in everyday life, from one's hand shaking to watching a scene, may provide insights for one's unconscious psychic truth.³³⁹ Since unconscious motivations are permitted to be released to the extent that societal or individual constraints let them be, a long and detailed analysis may provide access to the truth of human psyche. Although this may seem to many as a means of privileging or prioritizing psychoanalysis as the general authority to solve human problems, he puts forward that human beings are able to grasp their truthful aspect by themselves, through engaging themselves in a introspective and sincere manner. Moreover, he even warns of dangers of resorting to psychoanalysis in the first instance for the relevant problem.³⁴⁰ He thinks that establishment of such authority could deprive human beings of their potentials to engage with painful aspects of their lives themselves and render them dependent on psychoanalysis as the savior.³⁴¹ Since human beings have

³³⁹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 41; Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 63; For examples of dreams which have important inclinations of unconsciousness see: Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 164-165; Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 74-75.

³⁴⁰ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 57.

³⁴¹ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 57.

been socially constituted in a hardship and pain averting manner psychologically, it could further their detachment from their inner world. Thus, instead of providing a route for freedom and emancipation from internalized authorities, unconscious impulses and constructed images which govern the conduct, this would merely change the authority figure and not the relation of dependence itself.³⁴²

There are two crucial points about unconsciousness of human beings related to the problematique of inter-societal solidarity. It reveals our inner contradictions and our real outlook towards our mode of living which we are mostly unaware and which includes political horizon along with what human beings are capable. Depending on character endowment of the individuals, unconscious may hold both our potential for constructive and productive human powers and sentiments, ability to feel responsible for a stranger yet distorted and crippled. Similarly one may conceal the destructive tendencies while we consciously assume ourselves to be morally or politically humanitarian or universalist. From his point of view:

The majority of men have not yet acquired the maturity to be independent, to be rational, to be objective Man represses the irrational passions of destructiveness, hate, envy, revenge; he worships power, money, the sovereign state, the nation; while he pays lip service to the teachings of ... great spiritual leaders of the human race, those of Buddha, the prophets, Socrates, Jesus, Mohammed-he has transformed these teachings into a jungle of superstition and idol-worship.³⁴³

Frommian framework of human psyche provides significant answers related to our political fidelity to the nation at extreme levels, xenophobia, urge for destruction which contemporary world faces. His pessimistic tone above demonstrates the negative aspect that our unconsciousness holds within us. Additionally, it also reveals our prospects for

³⁴² Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 59-60.

³⁴³ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, xiv-xv.

what Linklater referred as “cosmophil”, being friendly to the world.³⁴⁴ Frommian assumption is that unconsciously, we retain this impulse to be open and altruist in a genuine manner and we sincerely sense the pain of others. However, social relations constitute human psyche in a manner that these aspects must be suppressed in order to preserve the sense of rootedness. Furthermore, such possibilities may diminish in societal life with the occasional employment of what Volkan conceptualizes as “chosen traumas” and “chosen glories”.³⁴⁵ Discourses of political elites, news, various social media platforms, education processes, aesthetic works and even mundane conversations are filled with the traces of such demarcation, which reproduce relations of enmity psychologically. Paralelly, such practices and power relations reproduce the social narcissism and potentials of violence and harm it may bring. As stated above, since allegiance towards internalized discourses is a source of rootedness, defiance or critical insights may disturb the narcissism and consequently, result in one’s excommunication from the group in question. For Fromm, this is the worst experience one may suffer and thus, defiance is the hardest to do. He contemplates that through retaining fidelity to existing social relations; human beings “may suffer from hunger or suppression, but ... does not suffer from the worst of all pains-complete aloneness and doubt”.³⁴⁶

Fromm labels certain forms of solidarity as crippling and claims that they are not genuine solidarity since human beings sacrifice their individuality in order to retain rootedness. In this context, individuality does not refer to the exercise of freedom in public and private spaces as in the liberal discourse. Rather, sacrifice of individuality refers to silencing or negating the unique individual thoughts, critical thinking, and ability to practice compassion towards other human beings. However, he does not claim

³⁴⁴ Linklater, “The problem of harm in world politics,” 324

³⁴⁵ Volkan, “Large-group identity,” 211.

³⁴⁶ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 51.

that actual practices of reciprocity, social responsibility, altruism, generosity and understanding within a particular framework do not exist or they are merely deceptive. Such traits have actually developed and practiced, however in a limited or crippled form they may be. Nevertheless, Frommian idea is that such pro-social attitude coexists with exclusive and violent prone practices towards to those outside the boundaries of the community. In other words, productive and constructive human sentiments are reflected upon and limited to a particular group whereas outsiders are subject to the opposite and destructive aspect of human powers. Such enmity may be preserved through the maintenance of psychological borders with others through different psychological mechanisms of defense, which have concrete practical implications in political life.³⁴⁷ For instance, psychological externalization, which refers to attributing negative traits of self to others and rendering oneself different through such transposition, may be utilized collectively reproduce the social narcissism.³⁴⁸

Related to the question of inter-societal solidarity, unconsciousness of human beings may provide help on two important points. First, unconsciousness shows itself as a force, which claims that such pro-social and constructive practices, may be reflected on others. In this case, unconscious indicates that we have the potential to act in a similarly harm averting manner towards others, even though we consciously construct them in an opposite manner. Second, unconscious may manifest itself by bringing the ideas of sameness with those who we render as the others and thus, different. What this refers is that we may unconsciously be aware of retaining the idea that we also have the potential to act and be as those we negated and attributed to others. By the same token, this implies that whatever positive attribution we find in ourselves exists or may potentially exist in outsiders if we defy to psychological borders embedded within social and

³⁴⁷ Volkan, "Large-group identity," 210.

³⁴⁸ Volkan, "Large-group identity," 209.

individual psyche. Truthfulness of unconscious lies in its position as being the arbiter of what we really psychologically and what we may become:

Our own awareness is usually confined to what society of which we are members permits us to be aware. Those human experiences which do not fit into this picture are repressed. Hence our consciousness represents mainly our own society and culture, while our unconscious represents the universal man in each of us ... he is a sinner and a saint, a child and an adult, a sane and an insane person, a man of the past and one of the future ... he carries within himself that which mankind has been and that which it will be.³⁴⁹

Even though such understanding can be actually experienced and psychologically accepted, what is held in the unconscious must be endorsed through social relations. Since it is presumed that inner worlds of human beings are substantially shaped by the social framework they dwell in, their impulses are to be socially oriented in an emotion-culturally “cosmophilian” manner if a genuine inter-societal solidarity is to be established. Fromm’s basic premise is that ideals can only be powerful and concretized effectively in social life if they are rooted in the emotional matrix of one character of many.³⁵⁰ Frommian understanding of emancipation is strongly based on both reciprocal endorsement of internal emancipation from pathologies and constructed social self and emancipation from disempowering social constraints.³⁵¹ This implies that such attitude must not only be developed as a social force but also human beings themselves should also render their inner world as a part of this political struggle. In other words, realization of freedom necessitates Kant’s “Sapere Aude”³⁵² and Marx’s emancipation to be practiced and developed simultaneously. Dagostino and Lake’s statement clarifies this point in clarity: “If we want to reclaim a sane society, we must not only create the

³⁴⁹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 86-87.

³⁵⁰ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 61; Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 15-16.

³⁵¹ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 7-8.

³⁵² Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment*, trans. Ted Humphery (Hackett Publishing, 1992), 1-2.

external conditions for sanity, but we must help develop the internal conditions which will reinforce the sane society.”³⁵³ To rephrase it in the language of critical international theory, if human emancipation and good life and decrease of multiple sources of suffering, is to be achieved on international scale³⁵⁴, which Fromm regards possible only via a genuine human solidarity, human character may also be genuinely transformed in the same line.

Unfortunately, despite the considerable amount of universalist and humanist identification among human population in the 20th century, Fromm witnessed the harsh fact that we were not generally who we assumed to be and that had important effects in political life. He saw collective reflections of that fact in the rise of Nazi regime³⁵⁵ and in the outbreak of World War I.³⁵⁶ Such tendencies still haunt human beings in the 21st century on a collective level as well, rendering such development with utmost urge.

Notwithstanding, if one is to comprehend roots of such practices and entailing “built-in pathologies”³⁵⁷, Fromm contends that one must look at the social roots of human pathologies. His idea is that only in a sane society may constructive attributions and human flourishing thrive. In contrast to Freud’s reluctance and skepticism, Fromm is enthusiastic and determined to outline parameters of individual psychic health along

³⁵³ Dagostino and Lake, “Fromm’s Dialectic of Freedom,” 18.

³⁵⁴ Shapcott, “Critical Theory”, 327.

³⁵⁵ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 21.

³⁵⁶ Fromm illustrates this fact on international level, with the outbreak of World War I. “Reason and decency seemed suddenly to have left Europe. The same socialist leaders who only months before had pledged themselves to international solidarity now hurled at each other the vilest nationalistic epithets. The nations that had known and admired each other suddenly broke out in a mad paroxysm of hate.” Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 124.

³⁵⁷ Devetak, “Critical Theory,” 160.

with collective one and consider them inseparable.³⁵⁸ As elaborated below, in the last instance, Fromm considers all forms of evil as a pathology, resulting from self-denial and self-crippling modes of existence which obstruct the building-up of human potentialities and powers.³⁵⁹



³⁵⁸ Pupavac, "Sigmund Freud," 173.

³⁵⁹ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 20.

CHAPTER 4

NARCISSISM AND PRODUCTIVE ORIENTATION IN FROMM'S THOUGHT

Fromm contends that need for spiritual-moral rootedness takes its roots from the existential dichotomy of human nature. This dichotomy is based on a contradiction within human beings and the source of this contradiction is based on desire and need for both rootedness and individuation; our desire to be rooted and free. Although Fromm claims that freedom is an indispensable passion of human nature and has been an active impulse in the course of human history³⁶⁰, Frommian point seems to privilege the desire of rootedness and indicates its vitality for human beings. The concept of “moral aloneness” aims to emphasize such point, which is regarded as inflexible and produces a drastic level of anguish after a particular period of suspension.³⁶¹ Fromm equates the power of such lack to the physical starvation leading to death and claims such deprivation of relatedness may produce a mental disintegration, a psychic death.³⁶² Nevertheless, as indicated below, this does not mean that human beings may suppress or

³⁶⁰ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 67.

³⁶¹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 34.

³⁶² Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 34.

silence the craving for freedom psychologically. There may be many practices to defer the impulses rooted in unconscious but they may never be overrid.

Within this ontological postulate, every human being and collectivity, through practicing their existence in a peculiar form, actually purports an answer to existential dichotomy, practicing a certain level and type of rootedness and individuation. Frommian idea is that one's practice of living corresponds to a level of well-being or crippled state. Nonetheless, answers to the question of existence, of reclaiming unity and rootedness, are, at their heart, categorized as "progressive" and "regressive" in Fromm's diagnosis.³⁶³

As a psychoanalyst, he evaluates all forms of devotions, modes of existence, ideals and doctrines of human conduct from the perspective of pathology and health, considering these two basic appetites. In other words, what he focuses on is whether the mode of existence in question contributes to human flourishing, Aristotelian *eudemonia*, or deepens human alienation; the former being progressive and the latter being regressive. Initially, his understanding of human flourishing and pathology is to be narrated.

4.1. Parameters of Psychic Health

If one asks the parameters of psychic healthiness and unhealthiness in Fromm's framework, it may be responded as such: Well-being refers to the state where one lives in accordance with its nature and needs whereas human pathologies are a result of non-conformity and denial with this endowment.³⁶⁴ In relation to the existential divide of

³⁶³ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 20.

³⁶⁴ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism*, 19.

human beings, this refers to the ability to exercise and experience the two types of existence and enjoy them simultaneously. In other words, for Fromm, good life depends on whether humans are able to practise and enjoy both rootedness and freedom; retaining a strong sense of belonging and freedom to actualize human powers in a productive and spontaneous manner. Practice of good life and referred mode of existence are articulated through different concepts by Fromm, by emphasizing connected yet different aspects of such livings. They may be listed as “spontaneity”³⁶⁵, as an active and authentic living where human beings actualize human potentials in a context of freedom and free will, “productive character”³⁶⁶, as a particular set of psyche which experiences all human powers and necessities in a constructive manner and “biophilia”³⁶⁷ which represents the affection, care and responsibility towards the generality of life. Nevertheless, the common traits of all different conceptions is based on individuals’ affirmation of one’s existence and peculiarity through expressing inherent potentials in a free manner. At the same time, their exercise is based not on sacrificing the sense of belonging hence, on retaining emotional and psychological security. In this regard, he contends that ethics and ethical conduct must essentially take such mode of existence as the principle aim. Echoing Greco-Roman philosophers, he contends that “good” refers to what is good for human beings whereas “evil” refers to the mode of existence that denies human flourishing in mentioned context.³⁶⁸

In this vein, Fromm considers two levels of change are necessary in order to achieve such form of living. He assumes that human flourishing requires transformation at both

³⁶⁵ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 284-285.

³⁶⁶ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 113.

³⁶⁷ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 40.

³⁶⁸ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 13.

subjective level, at perception and sensation along with objective conditions of social existence.

The former, subjective aspect refers to the increasing awareness on one's psychic operations and comprehending one's unconscious impulses, desires and experiences stationed deeply in personality through self-reflection.³⁶⁹ This dimension, as stated, does not indicate pointing to desires which are essentially uncivilized and almost impossible to gain access, as in the case of Sigmund Freud. Instead, this refers to understanding and facing our inner self which occasionally reaches to our consciousness for a short period of time yet, gets dismissed through rationalizations or silenced via different preoccupations of our minds. In order to reach the truth about oneself one must aim to come to terms with the unconsciousness so, one may be able to enhance awareness of his/her psychic operations and change his/her mode of being in a more productive and inclusive manner. Fromm believes that although such introspection could initially provide trigger a sense of fear and trauma-like experience due to dissolution of sense of self, it may also trigger a significant amount of courage, self-confidence and motivation. To put it differently, he contemplates that initial sensation of psychological insecurity may gradually become a source of interest in the outside world, to the suffering explicit all over the world and become a motivation for agency at societal level.³⁷⁰ He is explicitly clear that human beings can be interested with the outside world in a genuine and non-instrumental manner only if can they retain a genuine sense of I, strip off of the pseudo-sense of self constructed through social narratives or other sources of self-identification:

How can I see the other if I am filled with myself? To be filled with oneself means to be filled with one's own image, with one's greed, or with one's anxiety. But it does not mean "being oneself." Indeed, *I need to be myself in order to see the other*. How could I understand his fear, his sadness, his aloneness, his hope, his love - unless I felt my own fear, sadness, aloneness, hope, or love? If I

³⁶⁹ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 51.

³⁷⁰ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 119-120.

cannot mobilize my own human experience, mobilize it and engage myself with my fellow man, I might come to know a great deal about him, but I shall never know him.³⁷¹

The objective aspect refers to a fundamental transformation in the social relations human beings interact, especially the economic structure, as a vital determinant of one's mode of social existence. Fromm is so clear that human flourishing cannot be achieved within a social framework which is incompatible with basic human needs and dispositioned to reproduce human pathologies.³⁷² Furthermore, he claims that his theoretical framework is compatible with the assumption that there exists objective criteria for human well-being and a sane society which may uphold such form of living.³⁷³ Since he believes that human psyche cannot be considered as a pure product of social interaction, or in his own words "a blank piece of paper, on which society and culture write their text", he considers that an immanent quality of human nature may guide to the social diagnosis and change.³⁷⁴ His articulations firmly rejects the equation of truth and normalcy with the general propensities of human beings within a social framework. He insists on the idea that just because a type of living is embedded in generality, it does not indicate that it may be considered legitimate or normal:

Just as there is a 'folie a deux' there is a 'folie a millions.' 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.³⁷⁵

³⁷¹ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 115-116, my emphases.

³⁷² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 15.

³⁷³ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 12.

³⁷⁴ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 13.

³⁷⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 15.

Therefore, obviously, Fromm assumes that human well-being may be achieved only in a social framework in which the general interest of society corresponds to the needs of human nature. Unlike Elliott's criticism, who claims that Fromm essentially provides an illusory happiness by endorsing escapism and social disengagement, Fromm never considers human well-being apart from the quality of social relations one is saturated in.³⁷⁶ Human flourishing cannot be separated from social existence and pathologies it embarks upon the subjects. Rainer Funk propounds that Fromm's concern for similar misunderstandings dissuaded him from publishing the last chapter of his last book, *To Be or To Have* (1976), where his insights were prominently devoted on suggestions about individual conduct on achieving freedom and well-being.³⁷⁷ Those chapters were published as a different book named *The Art of Being* by Funk himself, after the decease of Fromm. By the same token, assumption of Dagostino and Lake to refer "being mode of existence" as a form of praxis supplementary for social transformation was based on the fact that human beings need to overcome the social forms of domination on individual level to further social change.³⁷⁸

Erich Fromm envisages necessary social conditions for such development in respect to the simultaneous existence of three notions: security, justice and freedom.³⁷⁹ Security corresponds to the existence of sufficient material resources and absence of life threatening powers, such as war, to exercise a dignified living. Justice refers to the conception of all human beings and their development as an end in itself and not as a means to be employed for interests of others. In other words, justice refers to the absence of exploitation and disempowerment of majority of people by a privileged few,

³⁷⁶ Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory*, 53.

³⁷⁷ Rainer Funk, "Editor's Foreword," in *The Art of Being*, vii.

³⁷⁸ Dagostino and Lake, "Fromm's Dialectic of Freedom", 28.

³⁷⁹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 47.

as Marxists claim. Freedom connotes not only the abolishment of material constraints mentioned above but also the ability to exercise what Fromm conceptualizes as “positive freedom”³⁸⁰. This means retaining freedom to realize individual powers and uniqueness, to live authentically and be included as an active and responsible subject in the social framework and governance.³⁸¹ He underscores this dimension particularly, since he firmly believes that even though social relations provide material security and well-being, deprivation of freedom will essentially reproduce discontent and human pathologies and fall short for the aim of establishing a good life.³⁸² His criticism on Soviet Union since Stalin may be understood as case point.³⁸³ Throughout Stalin’s rule, Fromm did not consider the Soviet development as genuine socialism which would liberate human beings from external constraints but rather, a form of “state capitalism” which was in essence “an industrial monopoly of the state led by a new managerial bureaucracy.”³⁸⁴

In order to comprehend the vehement importance Fromm attributes to the concept of freedom, elaboration on his notion of freedom should be necessary. Such elaboration is crucial in order to grasp the problem of “social narcissism” and “symbiosis” and significance of transformation at the subjective level.

As narrated above, Fromm distinguishes between different experiences of freedom as positive and negative freedom. However, it should also be emphasized that

³⁸⁰ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 53.

³⁸¹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 47.

³⁸² Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 47.

³⁸³ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 83.

³⁸⁴ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 111.

emancipation and liberation of human beings at the subjective level require much more than the transformation of the social conditions. In other words, Fromm thought that freedom of individual beings were not limited *only* by objective and external social conditions. This assumption was one of his basic premise when he claimed that until the 20th century “*abolition of external domination* seemed to be not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition to attain ... freedom of the individual.”³⁸⁵ From a psychoanalytical point of view, he presumes that human beings live in a manner which essentially reproduces the authorities, which are not concrete and external but rather, internalized within. Although the forms of authorities which are internalized may have an objective basis and existence due to the social character and ideologies, nationalism being the most evident example, different form of authorities may govern the human conduct and one’s reasons of action. Furthermore, different authorities may shape human conduct in a different manner and there may be not only a single authority but also overlapping forms of authorities. Referring such compliance with power and authority as a form of religion, he explicates that:

As a collective and potent form of modern idolatry we find the worship of power, of success and of the authority of the market ; but aside from these collective forms we find something else. If we scratch the surface of modern man we discover any number of individualized primitive forms of religion. Many of these are called neuroses, but one might just as well call them by their respective religious names ancestor worship, totemism, fetishism, ritualism, the cult of cleanliness, and so on.³⁸⁶

According to Fromm, other than the quality of relationship formulated as “rational” and “irrational”, which is stated below, differences between authorities are only superficial but not of essence. They essentially form the object of narcissism and reproduce the psychic and moral dependence of the subject, constitute the symbiotic relationship. An important point which must be emphasized is that they may be rendered as the object of

³⁸⁵ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 18, emphases in original.

³⁸⁶ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 29.

narcissism by the human beings *even if this is not the aim of the authority or source of human conduct*. In other words, a subject may idolize a person, a doctrine or a source of identification and form a symbiotic relationship with it, even the sources of this relationship is actually constituted in opposition to such relationship. Another alternative may be the exploitation of such sources by others in order to constitute such form of authoritarian relationship even if this relationship is not based on physical coercion and direct such sources for conduct for purposes totally different by “political priests”.³⁸⁷ Such instances are the main reason why he considers words and political ideologies may be meaningful only in the context of deed and character.³⁸⁸ Similarly, he contends that acts in themselves may be deceptive or missing in analysis and must be interpreted in the context of character of the performer, which is his basis of defending character ethics. Since those impulses derived from these authorities are rooted in the unconscious aspect of human psyche and character, importance of introspection is based on comprehending such psychic operation and outgrowing them. Thus, just like alleviation of human suffering and pathology is based on social emancipation, societal change is equally dependent on alleviation of human pathology and in this case, liberation from unconscious impulses and authorities which mold human conduct.

In respect to freedom, transformation at the subjective level essentially depends on psychological and emotional liberation from those objects of authority which dwell in one’s inner world. Referring to Spinoza, Fromm claims that freedom and being active essentially means to know and master the passions which stimulate human behavior. Otherwise, human beings could be no more than passive carriers of the embedded passions who thinks that s/he is acting in free will.³⁸⁹ Fromm sees two dangers in the

³⁸⁷ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 18-19.

³⁸⁸ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 122.

³⁸⁹ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 22.

lack of this development: First, without such transformation, Fromm does not see any potential for socio-political agency for social change and development of a more humane social framework. Without such development, he believes that human beings can live in the similar manner as they have been in a hedonist and complacent manner. Second, lack of such transformation can deprive human beings from the emotional and moral fidelity to uphold the principles they establish the societal change. Hence, he fears that by escaping from a form of domination, they can establish a new form of domination with a different image but same in the nucleus, as exemplified above in the case of psychoanalysis and his interpretation of Soviet practice.

4.2. Two Answers: Progressive and Regressive

Fromm's basic assumption is that despite the plurality in the mode of existence in the social world, in their essence there have been only two types of answer one could direct to the problem of existence: progressive and regressive. He claims that "as soon as one ignores smaller differences", of particular inter-subjective symbolisms, attachments, rituals and practices peculiar to a group, "one discovers that there is only a limited number of answers" which are categorized in this binary opposition due to the role and place they posit unto the subjects.³⁹⁰

Just as mentioned in the previous section, his understanding of health is the freedom to enjoy positive freedom and rootedness simultaneously. He contends that psychic well-being may only be achieved when human beings interact in a social organization, a genuine humanist solidarity which provides material and cultural grounds for the

³⁹⁰ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 10.

affirmation and thrive of productive human potentialities of critical thinking, productive work and love.³⁹¹ In this regard, human flourishing necessitates a type of rootedness which affirms and endorses the actualization of human potentials in which human beings may practice positive freedom in a context which overcomes the existential separation through rootedness and solidarity with fellow human beings.³⁹² This mode of existence is the progressive type since affirmation of both individuality and solidarity may be acquired simultaneously, instead of being mutually exclusive.

Regressive forms of existence, frameworks of orientation and devotion, on the other hand, negate and deny individual potentialities of productive work, love and critical thinking through relations of submission and self-renunciation to an authority. In this regard, this type of framework provides a sense of solidarity and rootedness, a pseudo-antidote for human suffering via the denial of positive freedom, individuality and *genuine* individual conduct, which Fromm refers as “symbiosis” or “symbiotic union”.³⁹³ They are regressive in the sense that they aim to provide solution to the human suffering via trying to return to pre-human form of harmony, by silencing self-consciousness, reason and denying human faculties and freedom, although it is both claimed and assumed to be empowering.³⁹⁴ Thus, despite the fact that they provide a particular form of rootedness, they cannot provide a remedy to the disequilibrium and suffering entirely. Not only have they provided non-useful for human beings but also their fruits have been harmful and destructive towards others.

³⁹¹ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 11.

³⁹² Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 297.

³⁹³ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 180; Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 18-19.

³⁹⁴ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 133.

Differences between sources of human conduct are evaluated upon the role they impose upon their subjects by the parameters mentioned above. They may be interpreted as sub-categories of progressive and regressive modes of existence by exclusively taking relationship between authority and subjects as the focal point.

In this regard, authoritarian answers frame the conduct of their subject in a docile and submissive basis since the basis of authoritarianism is the reproduction of existing unequal power relations. Authoritarianism forms a symbiotic relationship between the authority figure, the sacred and the subject in an inverse proportion. This means that the more profoundly the authority is elevated and sanctified, the less powerful, less self-affirmative and crippled the subject becomes.³⁹⁵ Giving the example of Calvinism, secular ideologies of Nazism and Stalinism, Fromm claims that in such conducts, the subject is asked to project and transpose his/her constructive human powers, to reason, to love, to produce, to the authority while experiencing oneself as deprived, powerless and feeble.³⁹⁶ Experiencing oneself as deprived, subject sees itself ultimately dependent on the affirmation of the authority in order to feel powerful and meaningful again, by asking a favor of authority and demanding what s/he projected to it in the first place. This reproductive cycle, according to Fromm, this process of projection and poverty is a basic form of alienation and idolatry where one's "own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him".³⁹⁷ Hence, while providing a ground for rootedness and quasi-solidarity, individual attributions which are indispensable for human flourishing and health are to be relinquished and distorted. Fromm claims that although subject desires such act and believes which such conduct is

³⁹⁵ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 36.

³⁹⁶ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 36.

³⁹⁷ Marx quoted in Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 118.

self-serving and affirmative, he is deluded by the fact that “he actually serves everything else but the interests of his real self” and “is for everything except for himself.”³⁹⁸

In contrast, humanistic forms of conduct take the development and well-being of their subjects as the primary purpose. The basis of rules of conducts are to provide rudimentary grounds for the subject’s self-actualization and realization of productive powers.³⁹⁹ It is rudimentary owing to the fact that it takes peculiar, self-reliant experience, trial and error and questioning of the subject as the basis of development instead of unquestioned acceptance, even if it means to disagree and quit.⁴⁰⁰ This does not refer that there is no authority in such experience. Rather, it develops in a process to terminate itself, developing the subjects to the same status with itself.⁴⁰¹ In this vein, this type of authority, what Fromm calls “rational authority”, is similar to a relationship between a craftsman master and an apprentice, a self-terminating relationship based on competence and development, instead of fear of exclusion or punishment or coerced conformity prevalent in the former.⁴⁰² It may be interpreted that Fromm’s rational authority is affirmative of Nietzsche’s aphorism: “One repays a teacher badly if one always remains a pupil only.”⁴⁰³

Within this framework, he places nationalism, as the dominant political ideology which is gradually becoming more extreme in 21st century, into the authoritarian framework

³⁹⁸ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 19.

³⁹⁹ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 37.

⁴⁰⁰ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 40.

⁴⁰¹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 94.

⁴⁰² Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 49.

⁴⁰³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Adrian Del Caro et al., trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 59.

and one of the regressive answers to the quest of rootedness. He conceptualizes nationalism as a form of “incestuous tie” in the sense that basic ties of kinship and belonging are projected from biological mother and kinship to community, to the nation and to its political apparatus. They “become ‘the mothers’, the guarantors of protection and love.”⁴⁰⁴ Apparently, Fromm is highly critical of the nationalism in contemporary social world due its rigid demarcation of self and other and self-glorification which is in odds with the idea of oneness of humanity and inter-societal solidarity. It can be understood that once retaining a potential for the higher unity of human beings and emancipatory force against oppression, it has become an incestuous fixation where one sacrifices and cripples his/her own productive, life-affirmative powers for the sake of emotional security and sense of pseudo-solidarity.⁴⁰⁵ Here, what Fromm opposes is not the sense of proudness and rootedness one derives from belonging to a particular culture, or having an emotional fidelity to the local bonds and values. After all, for him, if we do not retain any affection and reverence to them, we can not experience and develop a sense of solidarity as well as love.⁴⁰⁶ It is the sense of superiority and collective frenzy, *folié a millions* as Fromm calls, it brings upon the human collectivities. Peculiar to 21st century, one reflection of such understanding is the perception of “normative threat”⁴⁰⁷ in European societies which have given birth to political violence and exclusionary, indirectly harm-producing practices, reluctance for humanitarian aid and accommodation of Syrian refugees.⁴⁰⁸ Summarized by Rousseau, the problem lies in the

⁴⁰⁴ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 154.

⁴⁰⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 56.

⁴⁰⁶ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 132-133.

⁴⁰⁷ Ivan Krastev, “Majoritarian futures,” in *The Great Regression*, 71-72.

⁴⁰⁸ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 15.

fact that “by becoming citizens of separate states, individuals became enemies of the rest of humankind.”⁴⁰⁹

As noted, development of inter-societal solidarity is assumed to be based on having a profound moral concern and sentimental connectedness to the other societies. This refers to comprehending the peculiar anguish human beings are subject to, retaining a sincere and deep emotional concern for their pain and desire to act to diminish their suffering. Fromm contends that this form of solidarity may only be realized if human beings could conceive each other by transcending their particular divisions at the inter-subjective level and shift their emotional and political fidelity to the generality of human beings.⁴¹⁰ However, if it is assumed that inter-societal solidarity may accumulate in a form of social power to change the direction of politics in a harm-alleviating manner, in contemporary epoch, one may see a series of political practices and psychological climate telling a story of a contrary trend. Furthermore, psychic states which are reproductive of antagonistic and exclusionary practices and desires are intensified by the objective sources of social insecurity through the neoliberal social forces. Fear of unemployment by many, existing rates of unemployment and absence of mechanisms which provide social security are connectedly galvanizing the exclusionary social practices which are adding up upon the cultural demarcations of self and other.

Within such framework, in a Marxist fervor, one may understandably prioritize the problem in socio-economic terms and in the context of class struggle; claiming that economic transformation in the capitalist relations of production is a pre-requisite for changing such behavior towards the exclusionary practices. As Geras poses to Linklater,

⁴⁰⁹ Rousseau quoted in Andrew Linklater, “Citizenship, Humanity, and Cosmopolitan Harm Convention,” 262.

⁴¹⁰ Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, 60.

one may ask whether the quest for solidarity and emancipation ultimately points “straight back into the social theory inaugurated by Marx.”⁴¹¹ In a similar line, Anievas’ critics towards Habermas and Linklater puts forward the assumption that capitalist relations of production have been the most prominent source of human inequality and suffering which is far from being consensual.⁴¹² His ideas point to the fact that without altering the objective conditions of capitalism, an inter-subjective dialogue based on mutual understanding would have little to offer for emancipation.⁴¹³ Even though, transformation of the political community thesis purports a just redistribution of global wealth, it is not specified how it may be achieved within the context of capitalist relations of production. Furthermore, Anievas contends that “material conditions necessary for any functioning dialogic community within and between political communities would necessitate some form of social struggle forcibly transforming the existing social order.”⁴¹⁴ To sum up, these critics refer to the prioritization of the power relations of capitalism if one is to achieve inter-societal solidarity and emancipation.

Although the gravity of socio-economic change and diminishing the roots of socio-economic insecurity and disempowerment is accepted, it is assumed that such focus and practice cannot provide the means of solidarity by itself. This does not imply to render this antagonism secondary; rather it is to supplement it through a different political subjectivity which merges different agendas for emancipation. Linklater’s response to Geras may be fruitful to illuminate the concern. His idea is that persistence of multiple forms of exclusion and suffering such as racism, nationalism and patriarchy, cannot be swept away only by abolishing capitalist relations of production and entailing economic

⁴¹¹ Norman Geras, “The view from everywhere,” *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 163

⁴¹² Anievas, “On Habermas,” 154.

⁴¹³ Anievas, “On Habermas,” 154.

⁴¹⁴ Anievas, “On Habermas,” 154.

exploitation.⁴¹⁵ One may assert that such practices have been intensified or invoked through the contradictions of capitalist economy yet; it is assumed that their roots are not to be found at the level of political economy but rather, a psychological level. Certain examples may be given to support the assumption that multiple forms of human suffering cannot be finished by class struggle itself or class struggle cannot subsume various roots of human problems by itself. Paul Mason, by analyzing the rise of populism in United Kingdom, emphasizes that political culture based on resistance to capital has somehow entailed resistance to migration, foreigners and human rights culture in contemporary age.⁴¹⁶ However, he also mentions the presence of xenophobic and racist tendencies within conservative British working class in post-World War II period, although they could not be effective and dominant.⁴¹⁷ By the same token, Robert Misik warns us regarding the false assumption that working class has generally retained an universalist and progressive political culture, highlighting their prominent conservative lifeworld. He states that working class and middle class of yesterday, as well as today, have shared a different political culture from the progressive middle classes and universalists.⁴¹⁸ Finally Bauman, by reflecting the relations of self and other, assumes that although political narratives may increase the exclusive and intolerant practices and perceptions, these cannot be deemed as the initial cause of such practices.⁴¹⁹

By drawing on the insights of these writings, it is assumed that struggles towards establishment of a more just socio-economic conditions may not necessarily entail a more solidarity-prone political culture. Diminishing one but vital aspect of human

⁴¹⁵ Linklater, "Transforming political community," 175.

⁴¹⁶ Paul Mason, "Overcoming the fear of freedom," in *The Great Regression*, 89.

⁴¹⁷ Mason, "Overcoming the fear of freedom", 94-95.

⁴¹⁸ Robert Misik, "The courage to be audacious," in *The Great Regression*, 121-122.

⁴¹⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, "Symptoms in search of an object and a name," in *The Great Regression*, 17-18.

suffering does not necessarily diminish other sources which are equally valid, persistent and perhaps, reinforcing. It may require the supplementary force of another form of agency and another logic in which Fromm's theoretical tools are presumed useful. In fact, it is assumed that accumulation of social power on such solidarist basis and development of humanist political culture may be an effective agent in the process of socio-economic alteration, by providing a common ground for different identities and social groups. In this regard, Frommian analysis provides a source of political subjectivity for emancipatory struggles which cannot be separated from resisting to capitalist exploitation. Different identities and lifeworlds, along with peculiar suffering they experience, must intersect on particular objectives and agendas if a political power is to be accumulated at a societal and global level. Such political subjectivity must promote both mutual understanding towards the suffering of other social groups, inclusion of various suffering as a part of political agenda and translate them into a political power with multiple yet common purposes. However, such convergence necessitates a development of a conversation and communization of different sufferings, perhaps minimization of enmities among themselves. It is contended that Frommian humanist ontology may provide a ground for unification of these different banners of emancipation. In this respect, mutual understanding and solidarity are not rendered as a consequence which can be genuinely attained after a particular political struggle; instead both they are to be joint as inseparable and mutually supportive to provide an encompassing horizon of emancipation. Summarized by Porta, "addressing these challenges doubtless requires patience, but it also requires the creation of spaces for encounters and learning in action, through the practice of struggle, as was also the case with progressive movements in the past."⁴²⁰

⁴²⁰ Porta, "Progressive and regressive politics," 38.

Therefore, in this vein, major obstacles in the development of such solidarist sentiments are collectively to be found in what Fromm calls “social narcissism” and symbiosis it forms, which operate in all social groups and identities.

4.3. Social Narcissism

It would not be wrong to presume that colloquial and everyday usage of the terms of “narcissism” and “narcissistic person” generally indicates a type of personality which is self-infested, arrogant and full of oneself. As a psychological concept emanating from the Greek mythical story of Narcissus, this definition is not false. The ubiquity of the usage of social media platforms and unprecedented forms of practices which have come into our lives such as taking selfie and updating status have been put under scrutiny as a form of narcissism.⁴²¹ Notwithstanding, narcissism is diagnosed as a severe personality disorder which is far from being natural, normal or understandable from different psychological perspectives. However, Frommian usage indicates not all forms of narcissism are pathological and narcissism is practices universally. Frommian conceptualization of narcissism poses a framework which posits individual psyche and social narratives in an interaction. As the title indicates, narcissism is not merely an individual phenomenon of social life but it may be experienced collectively as well.

Narcissism may be described as a form of perception in which individuals as well as social groups have a distorted understanding of the outside world. It indicates that individuals comprehend and perceive the world through their respective desires, fears,

⁴²¹ See: P. Sorowski et al, “Selfie posting behaviors are associated with narcissism among men,” *Personality and Individual Differences* 85 (2015): 123-127; Taylor M. Wickel, “Narcissism and Social Networking Sites: The Act of Taking Selfies,” *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* 6, no. 1 (2015): 2-2.

emotional states and traumas. In this regard, social relations, human beings and objects are categorized in an instrumental manner, by taking one's central perspective as the focal point.⁴²² In this regard, he claims that narcissism is dichotomized as the opposite trait of objectivity and consequently, of affection, sympathy and sensitivity towards the respective status of others human beings and living beings.⁴²³ Instead, all that exists is one's "own terms, conditions and needs."⁴²⁴ Although such definition may initially seem to illustrate an extreme and distinguished type of personality one may easily recognize, Frommian idea is that narcissism, through different means, transpositions and levels, exists in all human beings. Narcissism, in his understanding, both at individual and at collective level, has operated in all human beings, groups and communities. Yet, certain forms of narcissistic perception may be so naturalized and socially accepted that one may regard such labeling as an extreme or an assault to one's sense of identity. Furthermore, as elaborated below, in spite of the negative connotations of the term, not all forms of narcissism are to be considered as an inescapably bad or pathological trait.

Fromm categorizes the operation of narcissism on both individual and collective level. According to him, narcissism has a biological nucleus and facilitates prioritization of one's interests such as self-subsistence over the others'.⁴²⁵ This biological function has been utilized in the biological structure of all living beings in order to maximize the conditions of survival. In some crude sense, a human being's struggling with a wild animal with his/her life on the line, performs narcissism. At this point, such practice may understandably be considered as so natural that no one might frame this as a moral defect or a form of pathology. In fact, as Coicaud claims by referring to Hobbes,

⁴²² Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 34.

⁴²³ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 117.

⁴²⁴ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 34.

⁴²⁵ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 69.

naturalness of such desire may be understood as a basis of fellow-feeling and nobody may be blamed for such desire.⁴²⁶ Nevertheless, operation of narcissism does not stop at the desire to preserve bodily integrity and physical harm. Fromm articulates that in certain instances, this biological mechanism may create vital problems for the survival of the collectivity or the human group in question.⁴²⁷ Moreover, physical survival of the human beings has and is maximized by cooperating within a collectivity and transferring human energy to the aims of the collectivity. Hence, Fromm contends that this biological narcissistic impetus is morally and psychologically transferred and embedded to a wider platform. Those wider platforms are the collective sources of identifications throughout the human social life in history. For this reason, human beings, both in physical and psychological sense, find a source of survival and well-being by transmitting their narcissistic impulse to social framework. Hence, boundaries of self are entrenched to encompass exterior objects beyond one's body. What considers as "me" and "mine" become much more generalized. If this enlargement of self boundaries are established through the narcissistic perception, symbiosis is the resulting form of dependency in the pathological form. Such enlargements of boundaries of self have been transferred to different social constructions such the clan, the ethnicity, the religious community, nation even the idea of world citizenship.⁴²⁸ Although such transference have biological roots based on survival, one may not comprehend the fidelity towards human collectivities and cultural bonds by taking merely the biological aspect. Fromm focuses on narcissism not as a mere social reflection of biological needs but a psychological need for relatedness and rootedness. In this vein, social narcissism provides grounds for satisfying the existential need for relatedness and affirmation of the socially related individual narcissisms of many people.⁴²⁹ The fact that this psychological need is so

⁴²⁶ Coicaud, "Emotions and Passions," 497.

⁴²⁷ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 70.

⁴²⁸ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 70.

⁴²⁹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 77.

crucial for self-subsistence may be observed through the ability of social narcissism to absorb material welfare related problems to a significant extent. In a political context, Fromm states that social narcissism may be utilized as a useful tool in order to compensate for economic and cultural deprivations.⁴³⁰ Similar to Appadurai's claim that ethno-cultural sources are the only remaining aspect of reproducing sovereignty and fidelity in the absence of economic control⁴³¹, he contends material lack may be effectively redressed via bolstering collective narcissism:

A society that lacks the means to provide adequately for the majority of its members, or a large proportion of them, must provide these members with a narcissistic satisfaction For those who are economically and culturally poor, narcissistic pride in belonging to the group is the only – and often a very effective- source of satisfaction.⁴³²

Notwithstanding, Fromm does not explicate why certain features of human beings are elevated as objects of social narcissism in the course of history. In other words, he does not explain why kinship, a particular territory, animal totem or a notion and not other objects or relations were subject to such attribution. Hence, he does not comment on whether certain forms of attachments are natural like primordialists.⁴³³ Although certain common notions are elevated to this level, such as ethnic ties or nations, he claims that objects of narcissism may also have also differentiate and have a particular focus. In other words, the sense of belonging, meaning and security may be based on diverse objects of a within a culture of personal attribution. At an individual level, one may form narcissistic ties with many aspects of oneself; from intellectual capacities, sense of

⁴³⁰ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 76.

⁴³¹ Arjun Appadurai, "Democracy fatigue," in *The Great Regression*, 2-3.

⁴³² Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 76.

⁴³³ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1986), 12.

morality or sexual performance to wealth.⁴³⁴ On social level, this individual in question may form this identification from various identities. Similarly, societies or communities may take different dimensions of their historical, cultural or political properties and blend them with collectivized narcissism. Hence, Fromm contends that one might be able to trace the objects of both individual and social narcissism by taking severe, violent reactions as the main indicator, separating them from the less binding objects of identifications. Although reactions may vary at individual level, the common ground at individual level may perhaps be equated with the feeling when someone is on the verge of losing the meaning of his/her life or the ground that provide stability starts to collapse.⁴³⁵ While other sources of identity or properties may not give birth to such traumatic and severely painful experience, violation of narcissistic object is surely to provoke powerful reaction. At social level, the action and reaction has the similar quality. Fromm consistently equates a societal reaction to the threat against narcissism with collective fury and violence, which are much more extreme than the individual one:

Let us picture a man who takes the flag of his country to a street of one of the cities of the Western world, and tramples on it in view of other people. He would be lucky not to be lynched [But] if a man got up and said, 'I am in favor of killing all Negroes, or all Jews; I am in favor of starting a war in order to conquer new territory.' ... most people would feel that this was an unethical, inhuman opinion. But the crucial point is that the particular feeling of an uncontrollable deep-seated indignation and rage would not occur. Such an opinion is just 'bad,' but it is not a sacrilege, it is not an attack against 'the sacred.'⁴³⁶

So far, conceptualization of narcissism, perhaps aside from biological necessity, might be interpreted as a universal source of selfishness and which may provide no or very limited constructive effect on the social world or political field. Although narcissism has

⁴³⁴ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 68.

⁴³⁵ Funk, "Editor's Foreword," 10.

⁴³⁶ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 57-58.

been overwhelmingly associated with its negative and destructive aspects, as one may interpret from above, it has and may also become a source of cohesion, consensus and cooperation. In order not to indicate that ubiquity and persistence of narcissism as an everlasting obstacle, he distinguishes between malign and benign forms of narcissism.⁴³⁷ Benign forms of narcissism refer to the outgrowing of the existing psychological boundaries of the members of a group in order to achieve an aim and or acquire an accomplishment beyond the immediate interests. In other words, members of the group relinquish their relatively comfortable and limited position and transfer their energy for a greater accomplishment. Malign forms of narcissism, on the other hand, rehearse the achievements and existing qualities and boast the uniqueness of a group in question in order to reproduce the existing social narratives and power relations.⁴³⁸ One may rightfully ask whether, for instance, Lebensraum policy of Nazi Germany may be correspond to the benign form of narcissism. Within stated parameters and definition, there is no reason to assume that Frommian outlook may dismiss the former as a malign form. Nevertheless, the general framework of Frommian pathological focus implies that benign form of narcissism is an exercise where existent demarcations of self and other are mitigated and prone to be inclusive and not in a form of assimilation or symbiosis.⁴³⁹ Benign forms of narcissism are understood not only as an achievement going beyond existing boundaries regardless of their substance, but also in their essence to value the achievement itself and consider as an entity different than itself. There are basic factors which may be auxiliary for differentiating them: Malign and pathological forms of narcissism are essentially based on furthering the self/other distinction and in the case of violation of the elements of narcissism, a colossal amount of revanchist attitudes may thrive. Christian Jarrett contends that such form of narcissism essentially aims to suppress inner doubts about one's identity, socially existing anxieties and acquire self-

⁴³⁷ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 76.

⁴³⁸ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 76.

⁴³⁹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 89.

gratification by the outsider recognition.⁴⁴⁰ This collectivized form of subjective crisis is easily prone to evolve into such revanchist and exclusionary attitudes. In this form, the object of narcissism is not essentially valued or framed as a separate entity but as an instrument, a resource feeding the pathological narcissism, regardless of one's unconsciousness about it.⁴⁴¹ In other words, even though elevated and sanctified at a collective level, in reality, they matter, held dear and retain fidelity to the extent that they reproduce the psychological gratification and sense of superiority. Otherwise is prone to provide grounds for acts and practices which may even contrast with the sources of narcissism itself, as Nachtwey illustrates through his paraphrase of Norbert Elias on decivilization process.⁴⁴² Benign forms of narcissism, according to Fromm, essentially value and frame the object of narcissism at a productive level and have the capacity to comprehend it in a more objective manner. Although the damage on the object may give birth to certain amount of frustration and painful experience, in Fromm's regard, it is not expressed in a form of aggression, intolerance to criticism. That is because, he deduces, objects are not conceived in an instrument manner but as a value in themselves as well, even if they are not in conformity with one's desires and interests. Although certain amount of self-relating and instrumental understanding exist in benign forms of narcissism, since it also matters because of its benefits on self, presence of self-benefit does not mean the absence of non-interested aspects of an action or attitude.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Christian Jarrett, "How 'collective narcissism' is directing world politics," *BBC*, 3 March, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170303-how-collective-narcissism-is-directing-world-politics>

⁴⁴¹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 69.

⁴⁴² Elias quoted in Oliver Nachtwey, "Decivilization: on regressive tendencies in Western societies," in *The Great Regression*, 138-139.

⁴⁴³ Coicaud, "Emotions and Passions," 501.

Regarding the contemporary state of world politics, Frommian understanding of social narcissism may provide to be beneficial. Although social narcissism has been a prominent element of social and individual life, it would not be wrong to assume that the 21st century witnesses a kindled and intensified form of malign social narcissism. From a Frommian point of view several sources may be suggested: Increasing amounts of social insecurity due to neoliberal economic policies, fear of unemployment coupled with the influx of immigrants and compensation of this senses of insecurity by resorting to the symbiotic unification with the nation-state. However, at an inter-personal level, one might assume that development of this malign form may be a result of arrogance and degradation of traditionalist locals by the people with progressivist or universalist outlook. Fraser claims that rise of populism in U.S. and Trump voters are a product of social insecurity by the liberal globalization and “insult of progressive moralism, which routinely portrays them as culturally backward.”⁴⁴⁴ By the same token, Misik puts forward the idea that traditional working class, as a fundamental supporter contemporary right-wing populism, is scorned by cosmopolitans and their economic insecurity is coupled with a social humiliation.⁴⁴⁵ Brubaker contends that particular form of populism in Europe is an output of the direct confrontation with Muslim world and this populism has constructed identities in civilizational terms and against “civilizational threat from Islam.”⁴⁴⁶ In this regard, the threat perception does not derive from the economic conditions per se, but fear of coexisting with strangers, in fact, infamously labeled strangers. This may be interpreted from the resort to anti-immigration protests and invoking national discourses by social groups instead of incorporating the suffering of immigrants to their political struggle against globalization, in a benign form. Narcissism,

⁴⁴⁴ Nancy Fraser, “Progressive neoliberalism versus reactionary populism: a Hobson’s choice,” in *The Great Regression*, 44.

⁴⁴⁵ Misik, “The courage to be audacious,” 192-193.

⁴⁴⁶ Brubaker, “Between nationalism and civilizationism,” 1193.

at this point, operates as a harbor of security and rootedness against the perceived social threats towards dissolution of desired mode of living.

Considering those insights, intensification of malign social narcissism in contemporary epoch might be interpreted as a search for psychological security at societal level. In this regard, desire for recognition, aversion from social humiliation coupled with existing problematique of unemployment has been the roots for the rise of exclusionary and violent-prone collective narcissism. However, one should not get the impression that malign narcissism operates only within those who bear the regressivist tendencies. Fromm warns against the subtle forms of narcissism which may be blended with progressivist and constructivist behavior and discourses.⁴⁴⁷ In this dimension, operation of narcissism may eventually be based on self-affirmation of individuals and social groups related their identity. In other words, Fromm states that even though one may struggle against oppression and acts in universalist terms, one may unconsciously aim to satisfy narcissism which is based on re-affirming one's goodness and progressive identity or various unconscious impulses.⁴⁴⁸ The problem with such form of malign narcissism is that it is not genuinely directed against the well-being of others and the universalist tendencies are not rooted substantially in the emotional matrix of personality. The problem of such tendencies could show themselves in different political conjunctures, Fromm assumes, as furthering divisions between human beings. From a Frommian point of view, social groups and individuals who easily label other identities in negative terms without aiming to understand the source of their ideas, discontent or suffering cannot be genuinely regarded as cosmopolitan or humanist. He would contend their psychic operations are affected by the same malign narcissism which has a different object for self-gratification. At social level, differing unconscious impulses

⁴⁴⁷ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 118-119.

⁴⁴⁸ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 118.

may overlap and be projected to the same object of narcissism. This has been the reason why Fromm attaches a great significance to inward reflection and coming to terms with unconsciousness. It might be speculated that Frommian position is an admotion phrased by Nietzsche: “He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster.”⁴⁴⁹

In this regard, a critically important issue may be raised. How may one, more or less, able to detect and distinguish between different forms of narcissism? How may one observe and conclude that one is acting in a non-interested manner? If we accept the unconscious operations of human psyche and accept the ability of narcissism to embody even in the form of altruism, modesty or emancipatory struggle, how may one be so sure? Moreover, is there any specific line where one may determine the amount of interested and non-interested dimensions? Although there are apparent examples which one may be able to distinguish between those two, it may not be so smooth and easy when it comes to observe non-apparent practices. It should be admitted that unfortunately, Fromm does not provide precise answers to those questions. Although he claims that general context of practices and agents may reveal the truthful aspect of particular psychic operations, there is no guarantee that those aspects will be inevitably revealed in a short time. Hence, aside from long-term analysis with careful observation, one may not be able to grasp the tendencies accurately. That being said, in order to comprehend the benign forms of narcissism and genuine relatedness, which are blended with reason, objectivity and care, he provides a particular character image, which is “productive orientation”.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann et al., trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69.

⁴⁵⁰ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 82.

4.4. Productive Orientation

Fromm rigorously believes that inclusive and solidarity affine forms of interaction as well as real freedom and human flourishing for all may be achieved only through a productive relatedness to existence. In this sense, human flourishing and solidarity are rendered as both cause and effect of productive orientation and not a subject of rigid cause and effect.

Fromm's concept of productive orientation is directly linked to his previous conceptualization of spontaneity and positive freedom. He considers the latter as the elaborated version of the spontaneous existence.⁴⁵¹ In this respect, productive orientation is a form of existence and personality expressing his productive human potentials of work, love and critical reasoning the outside world and oneself.⁴⁵² Within this experience, human powers are expressed in the form that subject perceives oneself "as the embodiment of his powers and as the 'actor'; that he feels himself one with his powers" instead of becoming a force beyond the capacity of the subject.⁴⁵³ In other words, unlike alienated expressions of human potentialities, where one becomes the object of their products, it is essentially a productive form of self-affirmation and acts according to the needs of authentic self. Productivity also refers to an application of self-affirming powers in a constructive manner which is affirmative of the other forms of life and based on contribution of their development. It is based on supporting diversity, development and acting according to the needs of others and this is the only form where one can truly reach self-affirmation. Unlike Emmanuel Levinas, who assumes that only

⁴⁵¹ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 84, 14th footnote.

⁴⁵² Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 11.

⁴⁵³ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 84.

in an asymmetrical sense of responsibility towards “the Other” one may contribute their well-being, Fromm regards them as different sides of the same coin.⁴⁵⁴ Frommian idea is that one cannot be productive, responsible and compassionate towards other beings if s/he does not possess the same orientation towards oneself. For him, “not only others, but we ourselves are the ‘object’ of our feelings and attitudes; the attitudes toward others and toward ourselves, far from being contradictory, are basically *conjunctive*.”⁴⁵⁵ To state it differently, productive orientation may be assumed to exist only when one does not differentiate between the self and the other.

According to Fromm, the productiveness of this orientation is derived from the active exercise of reason and love. In spite of axiomatic opposition of emotions and reason in the Western philosophical tradition which is still valid, Fromm considers them inseparable and mutually supportive.⁴⁵⁶ However, to assess their supportive connection, the content of these concepts must be clarified.

Frommian comprehension of the concept of reason is not instrumental as many critical theorists with different agendas assume.⁴⁵⁷ This does not mean that Fromm do not have an understanding of instrumental reason. Rather, he conceptualizes this form of approach as “intelligence”.⁴⁵⁸ His understanding of intelligence is based on perception of

⁴⁵⁴ Elizabeth Dauphinee, “Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, 238; Vassilios Paipais, “Self and other in critical international theory: assimilation, incommensurability and the paradox of critique,” *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011): 129.

⁴⁵⁵ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 59, emphasis in original.

⁴⁵⁶ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 97.

⁴⁵⁷ Roach, “Critical Theory,” 173; Robyn Eckersley, “Green Theory” in *International Relations Theories*, 270.

⁴⁵⁸ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 165.

the objects in a superficial form, which takes the framework of interaction as it is and aims to exploit and manipulate them for a particular goal.⁴⁵⁹ Reason, as the opposite of the intelligence, refers to the endeavor to comprehend the essence and nature of things by going beyond the superficial and given understandings.⁴⁶⁰ Another saying is that similar to Adorno, it is a “departure from immediate appearances and engagement with deeper levels of reality.”⁴⁶¹ Reason, in this understanding, is tied to compassion and sympathy towards the object where one does not reduce its existence to the dimension that serve one’s interest. He further contends that utilization of reason may provide a basis for desire to help and remedy human suffering.⁴⁶² Thus, reason is understood as an objective perception which produces the concern to alleviate suffering and contribute well-being.

Perhaps the concept of love is the one which is to raise the most possible misunderstanding on Fromm’s theoretical framework in the first glance. His understanding of love has no resemblance with the banal forms of love relationships as they have been exercised and criticized. In fact, his famous book *The Art of Loving* is dedicated to analyze such fetishized and pathological forms of love. Fromm observes that what has been considered as love today is no more than subtle forms of pathological narcissism and symbiotic union.⁴⁶³ His conceptualization of love is actually based on a productive and genuine interest to conditions of others blended with traits respect, responsibility, knowledge and care.⁴⁶⁴ Far from being confined to particular close

⁴⁵⁹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 165.

⁴⁶⁰ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 165.

⁴⁶¹ Fluck, “Truth, Values and the Value of Truth in Critical International Relations Theory,” 272.

⁴⁶² Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 116.

⁴⁶³ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 65-66; Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 18.

⁴⁶⁴ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 26; Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism,” 191.

people, it refers to a form of what Habermas refers as “generalized compassion” to the others, to the other human beings and forms of life.⁴⁶⁵ It is not a disposition one has for a limited number of people. Rather, it is diffused to outside world. In his own words:

Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one ‘object’ of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Yet, most people believe that love is constituted by the object, not by the faculty.⁴⁶⁶

Fromm particularly underlines that love towards a particular person or entity cannot be separated from the love towards the humanity. His concept of “brotherly love” is especially emphasized almost in all his books since he presumes that it is the kernel of all experience of compassion as well as the basis of human solidarity.⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, he does not consider such perception and experience as a mystical, transcendental or divine one.⁴⁶⁸ According to him, all human beings concretely retain this potential and actually practice it to a particular extent. One’s affection towards nation, country, fellow human beings, suffering of others, children in fact derive their impetus from the same force with different levels. Hence, he does not assume such relatedness as a duty imposed upon mind’s of human beings or “a higher power which descends upon man” but a natural potentiality which may be actualized.⁴⁶⁹ Affirmative of Frommian point, Crawford states that empathy, as a part of compassion, is a natural ability which develops in a very early

⁴⁶⁵ Habermas quoted in Neta C. Crawford, “Jürgen Habermas,” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, 193.

⁴⁶⁶ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 46.

⁴⁶⁷ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 47.

⁴⁶⁸ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 14.

⁴⁶⁹ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 14.

phase of human development. However, she adds the ability to actualize this capacity depends on the social experience.⁴⁷⁰ Correspondingly, Fromm is well aware of the fact that the level of such actualization is dependent upon the particular social relations which human beings are embedded in. This capacity and related form of perception, as a form of generalized social power, cannot be separated from objective conditions and structures.⁴⁷¹

The final importance of productive orientation may be understood in connection with different orientation types diffused via the social character. Fromm explicates different types of human orientations within historically different social amalgams such as “hoarding orientation”, “exploitative orientation”, “receptive orientation” and “marketing orientation”. They are essentially categorized as non-productive orientations. The reason he does not state them as a character type is owing to the fact that human character or social character is a combination and mixture of those different orientations.⁴⁷² In empirical reality, human beings are blended with different levels of classified orientation not only within a particular time and space but also diverge between themselves. All orientations have particular merits which do not exist or relatively absent within the others. He assumes that all forms of orientation retain a positive and negative aspect, in respect to their contribution to well-being and destructiveness.⁴⁷³ Yet, productive orientation itself is not associated with specific merits and disadvantages; it is not a different type of orientation among others. It is a particular matrix which decides on *how productive those respective merits are exercised*.⁴⁷⁴ In other words, productive orientation designates the extent of positive contributions of

⁴⁷⁰ Crawford, “Institutionalizing passion in world politics,” 541.

⁴⁷¹ Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 83.

⁴⁷² Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 112.

⁴⁷³ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 114-116.

⁴⁷⁴ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 22.

these respective orientations. This level of productiveness may be useful for the problem of distinguishing referred in the discussion of social narcissism because it may provide us to delineate between different actions. For example, to the extent that one is retaining a productive orientation, one's act of confidence is performed as a genuine self-confidence. However, if the non-productive orientations are prevalent within a particular psychic set, this will be exercised in the form of arrogance.⁴⁷⁵ By looking at the general context of practices and proportions of different orientations, one might be able to distinguish whether one acts in a pathological narcissistic manner or is motivated by a genuine devotion or affection:

.... Nonproductive orientations as they have been described may be considered as distortions of orientations which in themselves are a normal and necessary part of living. Every human being, in order to survive, must be able to accept things from others, to take things, to save, and to exchange. He must also be able to follow authority, to guide others, to be alone, and to assert himself. Only if his way of acquiring things and relating himself to others is essentially nonproductive does the ability to accept, to take, to save, or to exchange turn into the craving to receive, to exploit, to hoard, or to market as the dominant ways of acquisition.⁴⁷⁶

Hence, Fromm puts forward that through productive orientation and its associating traits of reason and compassion, may malign forms of narcissism may be diminished and replaced with benign forms purported for the development of human solidarity and subsiding human suffering through collective efforts.

⁴⁷⁵ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 22.

⁴⁷⁶ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 113-114.

CHAPTER 5

FROM PSYCHE TO THE POLITICAL: FROMM, SOLIDARITY AND POLITICAL FIELD

Fromm's works and theoretical framework might be simplified and summarized as the diagnosis of human pathologies from various aspects in order to overcome them to establish human solidarity. He is so clear that only within the context of human solidarity may the productive potentials of human beings be achieved.⁴⁷⁷ Hence, the good life may only be actualized in a social reality which is in conformity with human needs and able to provide those resources to generality of humans. However, human solidarity and development of human potentials are envisaged as mutually reinforcing instead of being subject to linear cause and effect. The more human powers grow, the more it will be possible to direct these productive forces towards human solidarity and emancipation and vice versa. This is the reason why Frommian understanding of pathology and flourishing is firmly dependent essentially considered as a political affair.⁴⁷⁸ Hence, this political affair must be based on the historically specific

⁴⁷⁷ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 101.

⁴⁷⁸ David Ingleby, "Introduction to Second Edition," in *The Sane Society*, li.

antinomies and pathologies of social world, which are ultimately derived from the existential divisiveness of human nature.

Frommian understanding of the problem of modern world have similarities with Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck whom Andrew Linklater occasionally refers. Frommian idea is similar to the Habermas's point in respect to the presence of technical development but subordination of emancipation, solidarity and democracy to the former goal.⁴⁷⁹ Similarity with Ulrich Beck is in respect to Beck's understanding of the gap between "cosmopolitan plight" and "cosmopolitan awareness".⁴⁸⁰ In the 20th century, Fromm considered the essential problem of human world as the asymmetry between psychic development of human beings and the technical power they possessed. He claimed that although human beings retained a technical development and mastery of natural world, which could provide the material well-being for the good life, it was supplemented not with the development of human character resulting in an "emotional backwardness."⁴⁸¹ This emotional backwardness corresponds to the development of moral faculties which essentially shape the relationship with themselves and outside world. Hence, technical development of human world has not corresponded to the development of generalized compassion, moral sentiments, responsibility and a social life that enable their augmentation and generalized form of good life in moral terms. This assumption was initially formulated in his first book, *Escape From Freedom* (1941) and repeated in his subsequent works. In 1965, he evaluated this first work in his foreword and asked whether the assumptions and associated obstacles towards human flourishing and socio-political constraints were still valid. Deplorably, he contended that despite important achievements, certain symptoms not only remain and but also exert influence in an increased manner. Presence of nuclear weapons, alienating effects of capitalist relations

⁴⁷⁹ E. Fuat Keyman, "Eleştirel Düşünce: İletişim, Hegemonya, Kimlik/Fark," in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik*, 233; Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 7.

⁴⁸⁰ Bauman, "Symptoms in search," 46.

⁴⁸¹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, xv.

of production, unequal distribution of wealth among developed and underdeveloped countries, increasing pandemics and inability to afford the medication by underdeveloped ones still remain.⁴⁸²

Due to his death in 1980, he could not testify to the contemporary developments in the social life, both international and domestic scale. Wilde claims that the recent historical developments until the 21st century can be interpreted as an increase of regressive and pathological tendencies along with possibilities of hope. Frommian diagnosis remained relevant while tendencies towards solidarity and harm-aversion were glimpsing.⁴⁸³ Also, as shown by referring to Habermas and Ulrich Beck above and many other observers on previous chapters, it would not be wrong to assume that his diagnosis remains relevant. Krastev, echoing Jowitt, illustrates that contemporary social developments show that we live “in a world that is more connected but also less integrated”.⁴⁸⁴ A recent publication titled *The Great Regression*, comprised of 15 well-known scholars’ articles, evinces to the affirmation of Frommian diagnosis from different aspects. The hazardous effects associate neoliberal governmentality, continuing environmental degradation, Syrian refugee crisis and entailing fear of “white genocide”⁴⁸⁵ and rising xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe and U.S. along with very recent commencement of trade wars between U.S. and Europe and U.S. and China⁴⁸⁶, show a historical unfolding which

⁴⁸² Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, xiv.

⁴⁸³ Wilde, “In search of solidarity,” 49.

⁴⁸⁴ Krastev, “Majoritarian futures,” 117.

⁴⁸⁵ “White Supremacist Propoganda Spreads Like Wildfire on US College Campuses,” *Sputnik News*, February 3, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/us/201802031061318229-white-supremacist-propaganda-wildfire-college/>.

⁴⁸⁶ Yasmeen Serhan, “How Do You When It’s Officially a Trade War?,” *The Atlantic*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/06/trade-war-us-europe/563504/>; Jenny Leonard, Andrew Mayeda and Reade Pickert, “Here’s How a Trade War between the U.S. and China Could Play

illustrates increased pathologies along with reluctance for greater cooperation by states and societies against increasing human suffering. It would not be hard to deduce that in respect to inter-societal solidarity, contemporary international life and domestic social lives show a severely contrary trend.

However, this does not mean that solidarity and emotionally integrationist tendencies are lost within political cultures of communities. It might be more accurate to claim that socio-political obstacles towards inter-societal solidarity coexist and co-habit with solidarity-prone, universalist, humanist tendencies. Hence, harm increasing mindsets and political practices cohabit with the opposite dispositions in our contemporary world. Moreover, certain observers focus on the presence and urge to entrench the transnational sense of solidarity and establishment of dialogical processes to face the contemporary political problems.⁴⁸⁷ Despite the rise and persistence of harm producing practices and desires, as Linklater claimed at the end of the 20th century, “sense of moral anxiety when duties to fellow citizens clash with the duties to the rest of humankind” still remains as a relatively powerful force in contemporary political culture.⁴⁸⁸ Certain recent developments of everyday life, which both affect and are affected by political events demonstrate the clash of both tendencies.⁴⁸⁹

Out,” *Bloomberg*, June 18, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-06-17/here-s-how-a-trade-war-between-the-u-s-and-china-could-play-out>.

⁴⁸⁷ Bauman, “Symptoms in search,” 54-55; Porta, “Progressive and regressive politics,” 37-38; Misik, “The courage to be audacious,” 199-203.

⁴⁸⁸ Linklater, *Transformation of the Political Community*, 150-151; See: “‘Jesus Was a Refugee’: Church of Norway Calls for Open Borders,” *Sputnik News*, 17 April, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201804171063641902-norway-church-immigration/>

⁴⁸⁹ See: Martin Belam, “UK communities take action against ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ Letter,” *The Guardian*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/03/uk-communities-take-action-against-punish-a-muslim-day-letter>

Within such framework, Frommian diagnosis will be elaborated by referring to criticisms of Critical Theory and post-structuralism in IR. Frommian comprehension of human psyche, flourishing and pathology are to be examined by juxtaposing with the works of these traditions. In this vein, this chapter aims to demonstrate Fromm's relevance and contributions in four inter-connected aspects: (i) by referring to Frommian understanding of commonality and difference, (ii) his potential insights to overcome the real-life distorted communication and pathological self understandings through sentimental perception, (iii) Fromm's insights on possibilities "decentration" and increasing emotional-moral connectedness with other communities and finally, (iv) limitations of realpolitik.

5.1. Humanism, Commonality and Difference

It should initially be underscored that Fromm's understanding of human solidarity is not a teleological understanding of universal oneness. In other words, Fromm's understanding is not based on the linear historical understanding of the world eventually becoming politically one as was the idea in the 19th century or articulated by Wendt and Kauffman in the 20th century.⁴⁹⁰ His emphasis on the human solidarity is essentially based on the necessities based on concrete, practical realities of world politics. Human solidarity and inter-societal solidarity has become an indispensable exigency owing to the technical connectedness and globalization of contemporary era. Similar to E.H. Carr's comprehension, Frommian basic assumption is that technical capacity of human communities carry both life affirming practices equally the most destructive potentials ever established.⁴⁹¹ Thereby, the level of solidarity determines "whether this world will

⁴⁹⁰ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 32-33; Bell, "Beware of False Prophets," 498.

⁴⁹¹ Linklater, "The transformation of the political community," 322.

be a place we can live in harmoniously or whether it will end as one great battlefield.”⁴⁹² The revival of humanism in socio-political practice, according to him, is the most important source for the development of inter-societal solidarity and peaceful coexistence.⁴⁹³

Fromm’s emphasis on humanism is, similar to the idea of human nature, prone to attract skepticism owing to the negative connotations it retains. Two main problematique may be stated on this point: First, the anthropocentric worldview it fosters and second, ethnocentric comprehension of human subjectivities constituted on the basis of Enlightenment-liberal heritage which leads to the prioritization of Western way of living and perception.⁴⁹⁴

On the first instance, it is possible to claim that Fromm is against the idea of anthropocentrism and he explicitly maintains that his focus on humanistic ethics and humanism does not imply anthropocentric ideology.⁴⁹⁵ His focus on humanism and humanistic ethics is based on laying the possible foundations for harmonious coexistence among human beings and communities. However, humankind’s relationship with nature has never been neglected in Fromm’s thought. As Gunderson claims, Fromm’s conception of “biophilia” refers to the compassion and care towards the generality of life and reduction of harm for all living beings, including nature itself.⁴⁹⁶ The basic idea he retains is human beings should solve their fundamental problems and

⁴⁹² Fromm quoted in Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 131.

⁴⁹³ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 132.

⁴⁹⁴ Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism,” 185; Hutchings, “Speaking and hearing,” 156.

⁴⁹⁵ Fromm, *Man For Himself*, 13.

⁴⁹⁶ Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism,” 188.

establish a non-hazardous coexistence in order to establish a non-instrumental relationality with nature itself.⁴⁹⁷ In other words, social world and human beings must overcome their contemporary antagonisms if a non-instrumental outlook is to be achieved. Furthermore, Frommian understanding of “freak of the universe” and need for rootedness through solidarity is to be comprehended as a quest peculiar for human beings in order to establish a non-destructive relationship with other human beings along with nature.⁴⁹⁸ To be sure, Fromm cannot be envisaged as a political ecologist and environmental problems do not occupy a large space in his writings compared to human pathologies. Nevertheless, depending on his reasoning, it is doubtful whether he may be considered as alleged to the hubris of anthropocentrism, either.

Second aspect of humanism may be conceived as a form of ethnocentrism, which prioritizes human beings by framing them at the basis of Western political culture. Different subjectivities and modes of existence are articulated in a hierarchical form which renders Western lifeworld supreme towards others. At this point, two questions arise. First, whether Frommian understanding of human ontology and capacities are essentially derived from Western understanding of human experience. Subsequently, similar to critics towards Habermas, Linklater and Shapcott, his comprehension of human autonomy and solidarity eventually carry assimilationist tendencies and implicit Western superiority.⁴⁹⁹

The fact that Frommian idea of humanism is not fundamentally based on Western subjectivity may be evident in his utilization of particular cultural practices and values in

⁴⁹⁷ Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism,” 195.

⁴⁹⁸ Gunderson, “Erich Fromm’s Ecological Messianism,” 195; Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 53.

⁴⁹⁹ Hutchings, “Speaking and hearing,” 162; Paipais, “Self and other in critical international theory,” 131; Andrew Linklater, “Dialogical politics and the civilizing process,” *Review of International Studies* 31 (2005): 145.

his theorization of human nature. In principle, one of his criticisms, which he shares with other neo-Freudians, of Freudian psychoanalysis is based on its limited geo-cultural focus which lack cultural comparativeness and relativity.⁵⁰⁰ His psychoanalytical theory and sociological criticism include different forms of cultural practices and put different political cultures under scrutiny. The impact of various different ethno-cultural traditions are evident in all his books. Within this context, his humanism may not be regarded as privileging Westernist ontology and epistemology. His idea of humanism derives from the assumption that almost all human communities retain cultural and moral foundations for progressive mode of existence, expressed in different forms, concepts and events. He claims that most important and praiseworthy figures of human history, Jesus, Mohammed, Confucius, Lao-Tse, Buddha, Kant, Socrates, Marx, Aristotle, Spinoza and countless others have in fact preached on the same humanist and flourishing based strata.⁵⁰¹ Despite certain obvious discrepancies and particular focuses within themselves, it may be interpreted that in this cherished plurality of human identification, he finds the traces of our common human essence and basis of flourishing in all of them, yet diffused and split without being coherent in a single form. Hence, the idea of humanism in Erich Fromm is not substantially based on assimilationism or concealed Western supremacy. It is understood as a point of commonality and a basis of coexistence in which Western tradition also reflects in its own manner, along with its historical pathologies. Thanks to the same reason, the revival of humanist political culture, far from being assimilationist, is the only possible way in which diversity could be genuinely celebrated.⁵⁰² Fromm assumes that only through a humanist perception of different human beings and communities, may relations of superiority and inferiority truly diminish.⁵⁰³ From this point of view, genuine experience

⁵⁰⁰ Matson, "Political Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory," 721.

⁵⁰¹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 67.

⁵⁰² Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 4.

⁵⁰³ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 4.

of humanism and its diffusion in social relations might provide a suggestion for Sabaratnam's basic question, "how is it that humans can be the same and yet different?"⁵⁰⁴

5.2. Sentimental Perception, Solidarity and Communication

For Fromm, revival of humanist culture essentially refers to a particular subjectivity in which human beings can perceive themselves and others in undistorted, non-instrumental and compassionate manner.⁵⁰⁵ It is constitutively a subjective and sentimental form of perception where it may be comprehended that there is more which united human beings than separated them.⁵⁰⁶ This is not mainly based on reasoning or empirical experience but rather, a subjective experience which is based on sentimental perception of others.⁵⁰⁷ Such comprehension is basically subjective, in fact, mystical experience of oneness where one comprehends the other, the stranger, and perhaps the generality of life, sentimentally and intuitively as a part of oneself and not separate.⁵⁰⁸ Such experience might be compared to Benedict Anderson's point when he narrates that religious figures of Christianity are represented in different local dresses, customs and traditions and this is not perceived as a difference. It is interpreted to be similar to the idea that different local practices, cultures, customs and even historically associated moral and cultural judgements, evils and goods are perceived as "replications of

⁵⁰⁴ Meera Sabaratnam, "IR in Dialogue ... but Can We Change the Subjects? A Typology of Decolonising Strategies for the Study of World Politics," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 792.

⁵⁰⁵ Gunderson, "Erich Fromm's Ecological Messianism," 188.

⁵⁰⁶ Erich Fromm, *Psikanaliz ve Din* (İstanbul, Say Yayınları, 2015), 10.

⁵⁰⁷ Gunderson, "Erich Fromm's Ecological Messianism," 196.

⁵⁰⁸ Gunderson, "Erich Fromm's Ecological Messianism," 196.

themselves” by other human beings.⁵⁰⁹ To be able to comprehend the others as a part of our own, neither superior, nor inferior to us, to grasp the other with humility, responsibility, compassion and evaluate objectively, Fromm clearly illustrates the form of perception by giving historical examples:

I believe that only exceptionally is a man born as a saint or as a criminal. Most of us have dispositions for good and for evil, although the respective weight of these dispositions varies with individuals I believe that every man represents humanity. We are different as to intelligence, health, talents. Yet we are all one. We are all saints and sinners, adults and children, and no one is anybody's superior or judge. *We have all been awakened with the Buddha, we have all been crucified with Christ, and we have all killed and robbed with Genghis Khan, Stalin, and Hitler.*⁵¹⁰

What such perception ultimately refers is to understand that one retains all possibilities of humanity, constructive and destructive ones, in oneself and also to see in others, without falling to abstracting one another in a homogenous and limited manner. It might be compared with the responsibility through inheritance conceptualized by Jacques Derrida.⁵¹¹ On this topic, human beings and communities not only inherit local histories and suffering they have embarked on others and inflicted unto themselves but also embrace the whole historical development as a part of their own history. The inheritance of human history as a part of community's history may raise the question whether one must feel responsible or guilty even though one has not acted personally or socially undertaken within local history. This does not indicate one should actually guilt, shame or glory. Frommian idea of common humanity might be utilized as seeing the potentials of what human beings personally and socially may become even if they practically have

⁵⁰⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 23.

⁵¹⁰ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 136, my emphases.

⁵¹¹ Rodolphe Gasche, “European Memories: Jan Patočka and Jacques Derrida on Responsibility,” *Critical Inquiry* 33 (Winter, 2007): 293.

not.⁵¹² This may be comprehended as a sense of responsibility without guilt yet with awareness of what one may individually and socially become. To state it in post-structuralist terms, negative attributions hurled unto the other in order to reproduce a self-affirming, teleological, coherent identity⁵¹³ may be dismantled by not only overcoming the constructed otherness through sentimental perception but also *seeing potential of negated other in self due to the common humanity*. In this vein, it is both understood as a necessity of self to see itself in the negative “truths” diffused and it requires the collaboration of the other to realize negative “truth” formations occurring in their localities and harm delivered to others in their local histories. Thus, rather than being constituted in asymmetry and incommensurability, similar to Levinas’s formulation, Frommian idea of genuine rootedness in others and solidarity is based on reciprocity without overlooking concrete injustices, harms and unevenness.⁵¹⁴ This indicates to realize others both in their concreteness and in their abstract generality simultaneously. Resorting to the peculiar form of conception what might be used as “multipolarity”, it is an intersection of both perceiving others in their general humanity and within their concrete, peculiar temporality.⁵¹⁵ What this refers is to comprehend and see the common human potentials among different communities, common frailities and needs along with respective position of communities in a specific spatio-temporality and different suffering deriving from concrete existence.⁵¹⁶ Regarding emancipation and alleviation of suffering, it is based on comprehending the historically developed socio-political unevenness, oppression and power relations and to comprehend it from their point of view. At the same time, this indicates seeing the common humanity and

⁵¹² Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 91.

⁵¹³ Paipais, “Self and other in critical international theory,” 124.

⁵¹⁴ Paipais, “Self and other in critical international theory,” 129; Yalvaç, “Critical Theory,” 11.

⁵¹⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 111.

⁵¹⁶ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 110.

potentials within each other and collaborating to diminish different sources of suffering. Through such perception, it is assumed possible that different social groups might synthesize their respective concerns with others', develop mutual understanding and merge diverse problems in united a political agenda.

Such might be the basis of emotional and cultural roots of inter-societal solidarity which is open to alterity and sensitive to the discourses of others and dedicated to harm reduction. In Fromm's point of view, development of productive orientation and endorsing benign forms of narcissism may provide the expression of such potential. He firmly believes that development of productive relatedness can increase a desire to contribute to the well-being of others and lay the foundations of rootedness by human solidarity.

For such purpose, Habermas' ideal-speech situation is assumed to be in conformity with Fromm's sense of development of understanding, empathy, compassion and responsibility. Similar to Habermas, Fromm contends that establishment of a humane governance necessitates political processes to be under the effective control of those who are effected by their consequence.⁵¹⁷ Although he does not explicitly mention the enlargement of such principle on the international field, he nonetheless defends the strengthening of United Nations in order to minimize international disputes and purport redistribution of wealth among different communities.⁵¹⁸ Bearing these insights in mind, it would not be wrong to assume that he could wish for reflection of democratic control of political decisions at an international level, as well.

⁵¹⁷ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 65.

⁵¹⁸ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 76.

Habermasian idea of communicative action and discourse ethics might be an efficient source of development of humanist and inclusive potentials which Fromm points. Habermas' idea which underscores the inter-subjective constitution of universalizable moral principles is deemed suitable with Frommian conception of solidarity.⁵¹⁹ However, Habermas does not provide any foundation for decreasing the real-life distorted communication which could give birth to communicative action and solidarity in actual political life. As Shapcott articulates, unequal power relations and pathological self-understandings deriving from them have been understood as a source of real-life distorted communication and an obstacle towards human autonomy.⁵²⁰ Fluck assumes that Habermasian Critical Theory focuses on the inter-subjective dialogue too much and neglects the objective constraints upon human emancipation, which can betray the emancipatory aim of Critical Theory.⁵²¹ In this vein, Habermas does provide insights towards dismantling pathological self-understandings and unequal power relations which reinforce them. It does not conceptualize subjects under the effect of "objective structures that impose limit upon human action" and detach intersubjectivity from objective facts.⁵²²

Translating such concerns into Fromm's psychological framework may bring this deduction: Human beings who aim to establish a mutual compassion, reciprocal responsibility and a common ground for emancipatory politics cannot be isolated from pathologies and distorted understandings they more or less internalized as a result of interacting in an objective world which reproduce them. Just like genuine solidarity and emancipation cannot be developed without taking historically developed, corporeal

⁵¹⁹ Crawford, "Jürgen Habermas," 191.

⁵²⁰ Shapcott, "Critical Theory," 331.

⁵²¹ Fluck, "The best there is?," 57-63.

⁵²² Yalvaç, "Critical Theory," 17.

injustices and harms into account, human beings who engage in dialogue cannot be separated from pathological self-understanding they have. All parties are assumed to reflect their narcissism, unconscious impulses and entailing exclusionary psychic barriers more or less. In this regard, in Frommian terms, communicative action cannot be understood as a non-instrumental interaction which can only occur after the development of ideal circumstances. Communicative action must be incorporated and wedded into the generality of political struggle towards human emancipation. In other words, the resistance to objective structures that underpin human inequalities requires an engagement with the multiple parties who are against those structures from a different point of view. In order to provide a better understanding within the political multiplicity itself and an elaborated account of emancipation, human solidarity must gradually develop in the context of communicative action. Detachment from narcissism and self-reflective introspection may provide psychological source for diminishing real-life distorted communication and may support a generalized culture of solidarity.

Frommian framework puts an equal weight to increasing awareness on the peculiar horizons and lifeworlds of others on the process of dialogic engagement.⁵²³ Similar to Shapcott's idea of "thin cosmopolitanism", it is based on understanding the harm on others and their desires via dialogical encounter.⁵²⁴ In this respect, real life distorted communication, estrangement may gradually be decreased by sentimental perception, and social learning processes in the inter-subjective dialogical politics.

⁵²³ Paipais, "Self and other in critical international theory," 133-134; Devetak, "Critical Theory," 178.

⁵²⁴ Linklater, "Dialogic politics and the civilising process," 144.

5.3. Detachment from Narcissism, Psychological Insecurity and New Rootedness

The establishment of a constructive relatedness with other human beings, ability to perceive them in a novel way and channelize this perception as harm alleviating political outlook surely require a considerable amount of detachment from prevalent form of narcissism. In this regard, detachment is utilized as Norman Geras's usage of the term, indicating a separation from previously assumed socio-political position, meanings produced by them and evaluate our practices through the perspective of others.⁵²⁵ The term's similarities with narcissism in terms of its psychological and biological function provides a coherent ground for usage. However, the ability of detachment is not detailed in Geras's account. Frommian insights are assumed to provide certain insights on this process and its possibilities and hardships in the aim of establishing foundations for humanist political culture through sentimental perception.

If the basic human impetus, which defines human nature, is the need for rootedness and deriving a meaningful life; and if the social character essentially diffuses the character types which produce fidelity towards existing social relations and narratives, how may the individual and social sources of detachment be found? Fromm articulates particular individual methods to overcome narcissism and constituted social self.⁵²⁶ It should be mentioned that for him, unconsciousness of human beings and particular neuroses it shows in everyday life might guide individuals if human beings direct their attention to their psychic symptoms and socially shared reflections of them.⁵²⁷ Notwithstanding, Fromm is well-aware of the fact that individual endeavors towards overcoming

⁵²⁵ Brincat, "The Harm Principle," 235.

⁵²⁶ See: Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 107-133; Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 31-49.

⁵²⁷ Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, 12.

narcissism and overlapping authorities which support narcissism's power would be meaningless if they could not be translated into a socio-political force.⁵²⁸ If sources of narcissism and connected sources of human pathologies could not be resisted in a political struggle on social domain which includes social learning processes, it could not exert a significant force. However, Frommian idea is that micro practices of resistance in work conditions, consumption, everyday life and family relations to overcome narcissism may operate and spread throughout the societal networks.⁵²⁹ It can both support personal struggles on narcissism and direct them into a social collective force which can further humanistic political culture. However, resistance and emancipation, which are not practiced and remained unattended at the psychic level, would be ineffective or corrosive of the goal of emancipation.⁵³⁰ This aspect is one of the criticisms he forwards to Marx and Engels, the powerful irrational impulses within human psyche blended in a rational and emancipatory guise.⁵³¹

An important point on the evaluation of the possibilities of social and individual detachment also necessitates mentioning the hardships. In this respect, psychological detachment might be equated with a position which Ashley and Walker refer as "exile".⁵³² In their context, exile refers to a subject who is largely distant from existing social narratives which are practically exclusionary and have a particular moral referent but not a plural one. Their focus on lack of certainty and prevalence of constant process of fluidity as the source of exiles are an indispensable part of dissident, anti-

⁵²⁸ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 20.

⁵²⁹ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 75, 97, 113.

⁵³⁰ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 257.

⁵³¹ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 255-256.

⁵³² Richard K. Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, "Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (1990): 260-263.

foundationalist thought. Furthermore, they claim that sources of exile are not considered as the sources of anxiety, which must be subsided.⁵³³ However, although the idea that “identity is always in process and ... limits authored from one sovereign standpoint to another can be questioned and [can be] *other-wise*” may be in conformity with Frommian understanding of open relatedness and interaction, it is hard to sustain psychologically.⁵³⁴ To put it differently, the practice of such processive and fluid understanding of interaction and the exile it brings ultimately refers to the sacrifice of the need for rootedness and psychological security until another source is established in a relatively stable term. In Frommian terms, once human beings detach from the source of narcissism, psychologically they must establish a new form. They cannot render their sense of self and others in suspension and uncertainty for a long period of time or as a constant. Ultimately, they cannot remain groundless or fluid as a constant part of living. Since the overcoming of social and individual narcissism cannot be attained in a short-period of time but it requires a relatively long duration, does sentimental perception ask people to sacrifice their source of security and gratification of basic need? Ultimately, this is one of the necessary hardships human beings should endure in the process of emancipation. In Fromm’s own words, emancipation and genuine relatedness to others necessitate a task, which “*is not to feel secure, but to be able to tolerate insecurity, without panic and undue fear.*”⁵³⁵ Other than the belief towards human powers and courage, Fromm has no other source guaranteeing the possibility of such task. Nevertheless, his belief in the possibility of such development derives from the hope that human beings have developed “qualities of dignity, courage, decency, and kindness as we find them throughout history and in countless individuals today.”⁵³⁶ Moreover, the

⁵³³ Ashley and Walker, “Speaking the Language of Exile,” 263.

⁵³⁴ Ashley and Walker, “Speaking the Language of Exile,” 263.

⁵³⁵ Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 190, emphasis in original.

⁵³⁶ Fromm quoted in Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 13.

emergence of social groups and their support to other human beings in their struggle to overcome narcissism might provide rudimentary grounds for rootedness. Gradually, these practices may be augmented to a larger number of people and societies and may be deepened substantially.

5.4. World Politics, International Cooperation and Global Quest

Fromm suggests that practices of intersocietal solidarity may be accumulated in the international politics, as well. Although he does not put a large space on international politics and state practice in his diagnosis of modern human societies, he does not separate the glimpse of emancipation and autonomy from a fundamental revision in the global economic relations and foreign policy decisions.⁵³⁷ Even though he is very skeptical of state practice, since he considers modern states as an instrument of giant corporations of global capitalist economy, he expresses the necessity of internationally coordinated distribution of wealth in favour of Third World economies.⁵³⁸ In this respect, Fromm's ideas are in parallel with those of E.H. Carr.⁵³⁹ Aware of the mixture of harm transnational harm spreading the world, he warns the Western world in 1950s to point to the interconnectedness of world's political fate:

Peace and liberty in the Western World cannot, in the long run, coexist with hunger and sickness in Africa and China. Reduction of unnecessary consumption is a must if they want to help the less developed countries, and they must want to help them, if they want peace.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 75-76.

⁵³⁸ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 76. Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 136.

⁵³⁹ Linklater, "Transformation of the political community," 332.

⁵⁴⁰ Fromm quoted in Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 104.

At the policy level, Fromm declares that the development of constructive sentiments and mentioned character traits may be diffused within human societies through emphasizing common achievements of humanity and emanations of universal symbols, festivals and holidays through supranational institutions.⁵⁴¹ Frommian idea is similar to Barry Posen's who articulates the idea of diminishing "competing visions of history" in order to uproot the reproduction of rigid distinctions of self and other and entailing exclusion-prone emotions of hate, scorn and fear.⁵⁴²

Fromm does not contend such exigencies as an arbitrary choice and he believes that lack of this solidarity-prone developments is likely to reproduce a violent and exploitative world in which harm will never cease to be. Furthermore, he does not consider that developed capitalist states could maintain their way of life unharmed and unaffected. In this regard, it might not be wrong to argue that he, in advance, foresees the events starting with the post-Cold War era:

What will happen if nothing crucial is done to close the gap? Either epidemics will spread into the fortress of the white society or famines will drive the population of the poor nations into such despair that they, perhaps with the help of sympathizers from the industrialized world, will commit acts of destruction, even use small nuclear or biological weapons, that will bring chaos within the white fortress.⁵⁴³

Fromm assumes that if we truly wish to coexist peacefully, the formulation of policies must take the needs and problems of other states into consideration. In his view, socio-economic conditions and estranging political narratives, which kindle political violence must be diminished substantially; if peace and well-being are what human communities

⁵⁴¹ Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, 89.

⁵⁴² Posen quoted in Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics," 150.

⁵⁴³ Fromm quoted in Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 136.

wish. He subsumes all these efforts under the title of “sane foreign policy.” and attributes a great role to U.S. due to its position as a political and economic superpower.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Fromm’s distrust in the state practice and its irrationality leads him to focus on societal and emotional roots of solidarity and development of a humanist political culture within the state. His position might be inferred similar again to Carr’s on the fact that lack of such developments has less to do with inabilities and more with reluctance and small boundaries of politico-moral association with the suffering of the others.⁵⁴⁵ It may be interpreted that even though “sane foreign policy” is not devised at the state level, public opinion and citizens could obstruct the intensification of harm around the globe by their states’ hands. Such could be possible through the development of sense of solidarity and mutual understanding in a reciprocal manner by different societies and social groups towards each other. Ultimately, he believes that human solidarity could be achieved at a global level if all human beings, particularly those belonging to the developed states, feel responsible towards the humanity as a whole.⁵⁴⁶ This transnational sensation is assumed to be possible by understanding the objective harms human beings face and do to each other along with detaching from social narcissism, which limits human sympathy and compassion.

If moral and psychological development of human beings is crucial and can supplement the general social transformation towards inter-societal solidarity, it may also necessitate an objective political reason and this reason must be esteemed psychologically worthwhile. In other words, colloquially, it must provide an answer to the basic question “why should human beings care and go for such trouble, risk themselves, deliberately try to sympathize with others, accept their wrongs, sacrifice

⁵⁴⁴ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 75.

⁵⁴⁵ Linklater, “Transformation of the political community,” 328.

⁵⁴⁶ Fromm, *On Disobedience*, 80.

their relatively comfortable position for those who are not directly related to them?” Although belonging to the family of humanity seems to provide a much more powerful sense of rootedness compared to the horizon of other identities, it is overwhelmed by the power of local solidarities and entailing social narcissism. Considering the reproductive and socially structured narratives on the demarcation of self and other and their partial correspondence to the actually experienced antagonisms and tragedies of past render such re-constitution as very difficult. In spite of the fact that envisaging, sensing and acting in the name of common humanity and via humanist sentiments are not extraordinary, it is not the dominant perception, either. Therefore, it should be admitted that, compared to the local identities to which hardships are added to overcome narcissism, social and psychological basis to such legitimate worth and provide an equivalent gratification is less powerful and effective.

Nevertheless, there is a particular problem which we all encounter today, a problem peculiar to our epoch which may prove to be worthwhile. A certain objective and all-encompassing global problem, which all communities must face and must prepare for the consequences: The problem of environmental degradation and the fact it will have severe consequences for all, without any exception. The fact of possible erasure of “geo” of geopolitics and possible erasure of human history and life.⁵⁴⁷ This pragmatic issue of collective security has yet to be provided useful, not only for deepening human solidarity but even for the pragmatic, political cooperation among the states for the problem itself.⁵⁴⁸ Although it seems the rational course of action to cooperate, even at the level of interests, existing practices tell a story of a contrary trend. Furthermore, it could be asked whether such pragmatic agenda could evolve into a substantial and deeper form of solidarity among communities. Historical contingency, creativity of human mind -not necessarily in a positive sense-, expose the limits of our prediction and

⁵⁴⁷ Bruno Latour, “Europe as refuge,” in *The Great Regression*, 78-87.

⁵⁴⁸ Bruno Latour, “Europe as refuge, 78.

prospects. However, in the case of a genuine initiation of collective endeavor, such cooperation can provide a basis for genuine proximity by bringing communities together and augmentation of channels of social learning among humans belonging to different identification. It can provide a spillover effect from pragmatic desire to coexist to substantially and emotionally rooted desire to coexist and sensitivity towards the needs of others. Human history, individual and collective histories of humankind, along with a history “leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb”⁵⁴⁹, have examples of morally-emotionally loaded bonds which commence with pragmatic reasons and antinomies. Wilde’s definition of quest may provide hope for finding such ground worthy and deepen what is worthy for us, the vagabonds:

In most quests, the object of the search is elusive, and ultimately its supreme importance is transcended by the lessons learned in the process of seeking. The journey becomes more important than the destination, and finding the thing "out there" becomes less important than finding oneself.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁹ Adorno quoted in Columbas Peoples, “Theodor Adorno,” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, 14.

⁵⁵⁰ Wilde, *Erich Fromm*, 5.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Erich Fromm's understanding of "good life" and emancipation surely corresponds to the prescriptions and warnings of some International Relations scholars. At the level of policy prescriptions, his articulations have similarities with some English School and Critical Theory scholars such as E.H. Carr, Hedley Bull and Andrew Linklater. However, at this level, Frommian framework does not seem to incorporate a novel outlook besides agreeing on the necessities formulated by these theorists.

His genuine contribution to Critical International Theory may be found in his psychological insights for the politics of emancipation. If Critical Theory essentially aims for emancipation and diminishing hegemonic and confining social relations, Frommian point assumes that it is only possible through the development of inter-societal solidarity around the globe. His vision of emancipation might be interpreted as a broadened form of emancipation which is sensitive and open to multiple sources of human suffering and human disempowerment. Instead of focusing on a particular aspect of human disempowerment and suffering, his vision envisages the development of a political agenda, which incorporates various roots of suffering and focuses on them equally. In this vein, despite multiple sources of human identification and harms

perceived from multiple perspectives, he believes that a global humanist spirit could bring about a point of convergence at both emotional and cultural level. His focus on human nature and psychic forces provides a significant factor on human needs and wants, not only as a guide towards the path of emancipation, but as a potential which can be collectivized at the social level. Narcissism and unconscious not only act as a constraining effect on emancipation and solidarity but they may be translated into constructive psychic forces on the quest of emancipation and political fellowship.

Fromm's emphasis on psychological foundations of solidarity and emancipation may provide an important point for Critical Theory in respect to human nature. Even though the term "human nature" is generally understood as a negative and fixed ontological factor, Frommian outlook and resembling psychological outlooks may provide important insights on the politics of emancipation. They may both provide a guideline on the philosophical and normative content of "good life" and psychic obstruction towards this goal. The claim that human beings retain a particular psychological or biological endowment does not necessarily entail a desperate portrayal of world politics or a theoretical reductionism. As Crawford claims, our nature and social environment is entwined with one another and co-constitutive.⁵⁵¹ The human psyche is not only a fixed entity which cannot be changed but also, a dynamic force which can be molded in a particular manner, depending on social relations and contexts, yet not infinitely malleable. In this vein, the term human nature is assumed to provide both a comprehension of human potentials which can be actualized for emancipatory politics and the human constraints which may limit this practical aim. Rendering human nature as a part of socio-political force for further inquires can be re-constituted as a basic logic to inform our horizons and feed our political imagination and this does not need to be a confining one. On the contrary, it may open our horizons to the novel aspects of

⁵⁵¹ Neta C. Crawford, "Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking 'Man'," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 276.

human potentials which may be auxiliary for theoretical self-reflection and modification. Fromm's psychoanalytical perspective reminds us two inter-connected points. First, human beings may be constituted with particular psychic set, needs and nature but this does not render social interaction secondary or as a mere reflection of these psychic forces. Second, although social forces have an enormous impact on human perception, reasoning and sentimentality, human beings have a necessary amount of distance to shape their social framework.

At the practical level, Frommian understanding of human solidarity is not a smooth process which can be acquired easily. Articulated concerns on the hardships of development of solidarity and emancipation are rough enough. At a subjective level, development of a political agenda and transnationalized compassion bear the problems of understanding, self-reflection and possibilities of miscommunication along with occasional interference of pre-judices. Overcoming these constraints necessitate the suspending the relatively stable psychological and cognitive position one retains and beliefs which unconsciously operat. Emancipation from subjective sources and subjectively held pathologies are a crucial part of general quest of emancipation. At the inter-subjective level, development of a common political agenda, which desires to appeal to various roots of human suffering, might require certain amounts of elasticity and compromise by various parties. Searching for points of mutuality and consensus can hardly be regarded as a task with a particular and pre-determined end. Far from being an end-point, such genuine relatedness necessitates a constant dialogue and openness to new understandings in order to comprehend human suffering from multiple points of view. Such relatedness and dialogue do not deny that political agenda of emancipation incorporates antagonistic encounters which necessitate a political struggle towards unequal power relations. Genuine relatedness and openness may inform us on different worldviews and conditions which may be included in the process of struggle. Moreover, subtle and unrealized power relations which parties may invoke unconsciously can be

explicated. In this regard, struggle and dialogue are not to be rendered as different stages of emancipation but as reinforcing ones for the general aim. Humanist political culture may provide a tentative nucleus for such complex quest to be maintained and furthered.

Most importantly, it is assumed that Frommian analysis reminds us that political field is never divorced of human emotions, impulses and pathologies. Social constraints and social struggles set against them always incorporate powerful psychic drives which are derived from human existence. All social relations and political events connote and feed from human psyche at both individual and collective levels. It is believed that promotion of good life and transnationalization of human welfare must take of peculiarly human aspects embedded in political interaction into account. Challenging the objective foundations of human disempowerment brings out the question of political subjects who are assumed to challenge them. It is not presumed that political subjectivity can be conceived as a ready and present force which can operate once social conditions permit their actualization. Taking political agency into account cannot be separated from the inner worlds of these agents, which are infested with traumas, fears, desires, fidelities and needs. Frommian analysis reminds us the vital role of referred factors both in reproducing existing social conditions and changing them.

Despite these important contributions, the utilization of Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical approach analysis entails its peculiar problems related to the question of solidarity and emancipation. In this regard, Frommian analysis may be a subject to criticism and critical scrutiny on three grounds: His understanding of good life, detection of narcissism and conveyance of psychic transformation to socio-political practices of emancipation.

First, it is underscored that Fromm's understanding of good life and well-being is based on living in a social context which can provide means of satisfying the need for rootedness and individuation simultaneously. It is further claimed in the thesis that his depiction of good life and psychic health is not established upon Eurocentric understanding of good life and well-being on the grounds that Fromm presumes the presence of both needs and articulations in cultures and ethics of various communities. However, conceptualization of individuality and belonging might be problematic to his diagnoses and prescriptions. Although the importance of individuality and belonging have been articulated throughout the human history in different times and spaces, Fromm does not emphasize whether there have been different understandings of individuality in different social frameworks. To put it different, Frommian conception of individuality and rootedness does not seem to differentiate how individuality and rootedness are experienced and formulated in different cultures and lifeworlds and how they are structured in relation to one another. Absence of such phenomenological insight in Frommian conception of good life is assumed to carry the danger of labeling different yet legitimate mode of livings as pathological. Even though parallel norms have been rehearsed in different modes of living and provide a common ground for humanist interaction, a careful elaboration of different formulations is essential not to reproduce existing Western bias. In respect to solidarity, mutual understanding and dialogue, lack of deeper understanding of varying but legitimate conceptualization of subjectivity and belonging may generate a political context, which may ultimately prioritize Western lifeworld and assimilate plural modes of existence. Within this context, it is important to recall Marcuse's criticism towards Frommian analysis, which points to the repressive potentials of humanist concepts in political practice.

Second, Frommian conception of narcissism clarifies an important obstructive factor in the development of solidarity and humanism-based interaction based on constructive affections. Ubiquity of narcissism and its ability to operate on multiple forms provides

an important admonition in the process of establishing dialogical politics. Notwithstanding, lack of means of detection of social narcissism at social level provides the limitation on Frommian analysis. If productive orientation, as the opposite of narcissistic practices, is defined as non-pathological practice of human powers, it becomes difficult to distinguish narcissistic practices from productive modes of existence. Hence, Frommian analysis remains relatively meagre in respect to detailed analysis of social narcissism and its distinction from solidarity-prone orientations at social level.

Third, Frommian insights regarding social practice of emancipation are limited in the sense that they lack the means to translate subjective emancipation into emancipatory practices at social level. Although Fromm provides certain suggestions at social level and formulated some policy suggestion, he does not elaborate how to connect between these two levels of emancipation. This disconnection indicates that Erich Fromm's psychological insights, by themselves, do not provide a means for politics of emancipation and solidarity at social and inter-societal level. In this respect, Fromm's statements on human psyche and human nature can be rendered meaningful only if it is supplemented with a theory, or a praxeological account, which articulates collective means of emancipation and deems psychological changes socializable. In the context of this thesis, it is assumed that Frommian outlook cannot provide a political strategy on its own but vitally depends on Habermasian dialogical politics to be effective.

Finally, Habermasian Critical International Theory has its own pitfalls related to the emancipatory politics which Fromm can provide little remedy. Although Habermas himself and Habermasian IR essentially aims to supplement Marxist social theory through a dialogical praxis and thus, aim to widen the emancipatory agenda, focus on inter-subjective dialogue rendered International Critical Theory to neglect objective

aspects of social domination and alienation. Habermasian dialogical politics conceptualize all social relations, including capitalist relations of production, in an inter-subjective context. However, Fluck contends that an inter-subjectivity, which does not put impact of objective structures on political subjects, cannot provide a detailed account of emancipation and sources of social constraints.⁵⁵² By focusing on social narcissism and social roots of human pathologies, Frommian understanding of emancipation takes objective structures into account and is compatible with and even supplementary to political struggle against constraining social structures which reproduce human suffering and disempowerment. Nevertheless, whereas Fromm does not focus on socialization of psychological powers into political struggle for emancipation, Habermasian IR often neglects the effects of objective structures on human subjectivity and agency. In this respect, neither Fromm, nor Habermasian IR in general provide a means of translating their insights into political struggle. Despite articulating the necessity of political struggle to supplement triple transformation based on communicative action, Linklater does not articulate a strategy on the means of doing so.⁵⁵³ In this regard, although a genuine emancipation cannot be understood only in terms of class struggle against objective structures of domination and in orthodox Marxist terms, an understanding of emancipation separated from this context and means of socialization is presumed to fall short of Critical International Theory's aspirations. Although a genuine emancipation based on diminishing multiple forms of suffering requires an inter-subjective engagement and means which supplement "social theory inaugurated by Marx", going beyond "the paradigm of production" does not necessitate its neglect.

⁵⁵² Fluck, "The best there is?," 74.

⁵⁵³ Linklater, "Transforming political community," 166.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplinine Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik kuramından faydalanarak kuramsal bir katkı yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Her ne kadar Psikoloji disiplininin kavramları, zaman zaman uluslararası alanda yaşanan olayların yorumlanması ve çözümlenmesinde kullanılmış olsa da, genel olarak bakıldığı zaman sınırlı bir yer tutmaktadır. Aynı şekilde, Uluslararası İlişkiler'de Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram da, özgürleşme ve karşılıklı anlayışı pratikte mümkün kılma amacı güden teorik çalışmalarında psikolojik içgörülerden faydalanmamıştır. Bu tez ise, Uluslararası İlişkiler kuramlarına Psikoloji'nin katkılarını, Fromm'un kuramsal çerçevesini Eleştirel Kuram'a uygulayarak göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Fromm'un insan doğası ve narsisizm kavramlarına ve bu unsurların sosyal ilişkilerle etkileşiminden ortaya çıkan sosyo-politik etkilere odaklanmaktadır. Narsisizmin yıkıcı olmayan karşıtı olan üretici yönelimin, sosyal gruplar arasında hümanist ve yapıcı bir etkileşim için bir temel oluşturabileceği iddia edilmektedir. Böyle bir etkileşimin, insan ızdırabını üreten ve insan özgürlüğünü engelleyen sosyal engelleri azaltmak olarak tanımlanan özgürleşme unsurunu destekleyebileceği ve genişletebileceği varsayılmaktadır. Fromm'un yaklaşımının hümanist bir siyasal etkileşimin gelişimine ve dayanışmaya

katkısı, Frankfurt Okulu temelli Eleştirel Kuram'a getirilen eleştiriler dikkate alınarak incelenmiştir.

Dayanışma kavramı, Uluslararası İlişkiler kuramlarında güvenlik, barış ve savaş gibi alışlageldik kavramların aksine, oldukça sınırlı bir vurguya sahip olmuştur. Teorik çerçeveleri açıkça bu kavramı kullanan İngiliz Okulu ve Eleştirel Kuram olmak üzere yalnızca iki teorik yaklaşım mevcuttur. İngiliz Okulu'nun dayanışma kavramını kullandığı bağlam, ulusüstü seviyede mevcut olan ve yalnızca devletlerin üyesi olabildiği uluslararası toplumun ilişkilerinin niteliğini vurgulamaktır. Bu vurguyu açıkça yapan iki temel kuramcu ise Hedley Bull ve R.J. Vincent olmuştur. Çoğulculuk ve dayanışmayı ilk çalışmalarında karşıt olarak ele alan Bull, devletlerarası düzenin sürebilmesi için ve tehlikeye düşmemesi adına dayanışmayı ve onun beraberinde gelen adalet odaklı etkileşimin sınırlı olması gerektiğini savunmuştur. Soğuk Savaş döneminde A.B.D. ve S.S.C.B.'nin saldırgan ve çatışmaya meyilli dış politika pratiklerine şahit olan ve bunun bütün sistemi tehdit ettiğine şahit olan Bull, sonrasında dayanışma kavramı ile düzen kavramının birbirlerini desteklediğini varsaymış, dayanışmanın uluslararası toplumun etkileşimin de daha da önemli bir yer tutması gerektiğini savunmuştur. R.J. Vincent ise, daha normatif bir yaklaşım sergilemiştir ve dayanışma temelli etkileşimin uluslararası düzeni sarsmadan ve mevcut kültürel çeşitliliğe de uygun olarak hangi normlar üzerine inşa edilebileceğini araştırmıştır. Bu bağlamda, beslenme ihtiyacının temel bir insan hakkı olduğunu, dünya üzerindeki hiçbir kültürün bunu yadsımadığını ve dayanışmanın düzeni sarsma potansiyeli olabilecek müdahaleci politikalarının bu norm çerçevesinde dayanışmayı sağlayarak daha iyi bir siyasal yaşamın mümkün olabileceğini ortaya atmıştır. Ancak Bull ve Vincent'ın dayanışma kavramını ele alışları temelde sistemsel düzeyde ve devlet pratikleri bazında olmuştur. Başka bir deyişle, dayanışmanın kaynakları ve temeli, devletlerin oluşturduğu uluslararası toplumun etkileşimde yatmaktadır ve devletdışı siyasal unsurların etkisi önemli ölçüde göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu tezin varsayımına göre, uluslararası toplumda mümkün kılınabilecek bir dayanışma, ancak toplumlararası etkileşim ve yaklaşımın da değişmesi ile mümkün olabilir. Başka bir deyişle, devletlerin içerdiği toplumların karşılıklı etkileşimlerin

dayanışma temelinde olması devletlerarası etkileşimin dayanışma temelli olmasını mümkün kılabilir. Ancak bu faktör, İngiliz Okulu kuramcıları tarafından ele alınmamış, dayanışmanın hayata geçirilme ihtimali devletlerin dış politikalarındaki tutumları ile sınırlı bırakılmıştır.

Her ne kadar İngiliz Okulu kuramcıları uluslararası ilişkilerde daha düzenli ve daha adil bir siyasal etkileşimin mümkün olup olmadığını üzerine araştırmalarını yapmış olsa da, Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram, “iyi yaşam”ın uluslararası arenada da oluşturulmasına açıkça vurgu yapmış, bu unsuru teorik çalışmalarının merkezine almıştır. Bu teorik çerçevede en önemli katkılardan birini Andrew Linklater yapmıştır. Andrew Linklater’ın temel kuramsal yaklaşımı, Vestfalya sonrası bir uluslararası düzenin nasıl kurulabileceği sorunsalı temelinde oluşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Linklater, uluslararası siyasal yaşamın “üçlü dönüşüm” sayesinde daha adil ve daha özgürleştirici bir forma bürüneceğini varsaymıştır. Ekonomik eşitsizliklerin giderilmesi, kültürel farklılıklara daha duyarlı olan ama evrensel ve kapsayıcı içeriğini de sürdüren bir uluslararası yapılanmanın özgürleşmeyi mümkün kılabileceğini düşünmüştür. Linklater’a göre, bu siyasal projenin mümkün kılabilen temel teknik unsur, tarafların uluslararası seviyede de Habermas’ın “iletişimsel eylem” kavramı temelinde birbirleriyle etkileşim halinde olmasıdır. Habermas gibi Linklater da, iletişimsel eylem aracılığıyla söylemsel etik prensiplerinin inşa edilebileceğini ve tarafların bu sayede kendilerine etki eden siyasal unsurları ve bunları ortaya çıkan kararları demokratik ve şiddet içermeyen, diyalojik bir etkileşim sayesinde mümkün kılabileceğini varsaymıştır. Daha sonraki çalışmalarında kozmopolit zarar konvansiyonlarının tarihsel olarak gelişimini ele alan Linklater, bu konvansiyonların tarih boyunca tüm toplumlarda, farklı derece ve içerikte de olsa, mevcut olduğunu gözlemlemiş ve bunun temel sebebinin “ortak insanlık” düşüncesi olduğunu varsaymıştır. Linklater’a göre, insanların ve insan topluluklarının tarih boyunca ortak sıkıntılar, acılar ve problemler sahip olmuştur ve siyasal ilişkilerinde de bu ortak temel aracılığı ile birbirlerine yaklaştıkları dönemler ve durumlar olmuştur.

Kozmopolitan zarar konvansiyonları ise, bu durumu en iyi yansıtan düzenlemelerden biridir ve ortak insanlığın paylaştığı ortak duygular, düşünceler ve isteklerden türemektedir. Çağdaş siyasal yaşamda ise, iletişimsel eylem, bu ortak insanlığın daha yapıcı ve özgürleştirici bir forma bürünebilmesini ve karşılıklı zararı azaltma temelinde oluşturulan normların daha çok yer kaplamasını sağlayabilir. Bu açıdan bakıldığı zaman, Linklater'ın dayanışma kavramı, özgürleşme kavramıyla iç içe geçmiştir ve demokratik bir düzlemde, karşılıklı anlayışın ve bu anlayıştan ortaya çıkan ortak normların hayata geçirilişi olarak ele alınmıştır.

Her ne kadar çalışmalarında insan duygularının ve düşüncelerinin, karşılıklı olarak zararı azaltma ve daha yapıcı ilişkiler kurulmasındaki önemini vurgulasa da, Linklater'ın kuramsal yaklaşımı bunları daha detaylı analiz edebilecek ve detaylandırabilecek psikolojik içgörülerden faydalanmamıştır. Arkadaşlık, düşmanlık, intikam, hınç gibi insansal duyguların sosyal düzlemde de varolmuş olmaları ve bunların az ya da çok dış politikada ve siyasal etkileşimde yer edinmiş olmaları, psikolojik faktörlerin siyasal alanda her daim varolduğu varsayımını beraberinde getirir. Bu bağlamda, Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik yaklaşımının, Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'ın özgürleşme ve dayanışmayı birleştiren gayesini psikolojik içgörüler aracılığıyla destekleyebileceği, Habermasçı yaklaşımın zayıflıklarını kısmen de olsa onarabileceği varsayılmıştır. Fromm'un insan doğası tasviri, insan doğasının sosyal ilişkiler içerisinde şekildiği formunda olan insan karakteri ve narsisizm tasvirinin Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'a getirilen eleştirilere bir hem yanıt sağlamakta hem de aşırı rasyonel bir bağlamda tanımlanan iletişimsel eylemin siyasal pratikte nasıl mümkün olabileceğine dair psikoloji temelinde iç görüler sağlamaktadır. Fromm'un psikanalitik kuramını özgürleşme pratikleri için sağladığı en büyük unsur ise özgürleşme kavramını genişleterek, sosyal ve siyasal dönüşümün psikolojik ve karakterel bir dönüşümle desteklenmesi gerektiğini, bunun olmaması durumunda özgürleşme ve dayanışma pratiklerinin daima eksik kalacağını vurgulamasıdır. Bu bağlamda, bu tezin amacı özgürlük ve dayanışmanın

önündeki psikolojik engelleri ve bunların Fromm'cu bir bağlamda nasıl azaltılabileceğine odaklanmak ve bunu Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram çerçevesine yerleştirerek gerçekleştirmektir.

Birçok düşünürün ve siyaset bilimcinin kullandığı biçimin aksine, Erich Fromm'un insan doğası kavramı insanın özünde bulunan iyiliği ya da kötülüğü üzerinden kurgulanmamaktadır. Ona göre insan doğası, evrimsel süreçte doğanın geri kalanından ayrılarak, insan denilen canlının ortaya çıkmasıyla meydana gelmiştir. Fromm'a göre, doğadaki diğer canlılarla kıyaslandığında, insanların biyolojik güçleri, kabiliyetleri ve yapıları oldukça zayıf kalmıştır. Bu yüzden, evrimsel süreç içerisinde insan ve insan doğası, kendi türüne has özgüçlerin ortaya çıkmasıyla, bu güçlerin kullanılarak hayatta kalma mücadelesinin sürdürülmesi ve bu süreçte doğanın geri kalanından kendini koparmasıyla ortaya çıkmıştır. İnsan doğası, akıl, imgelem ve öznel farkındalık olarak özetlenen bu insana has güçlerin ortaya çıkardığı bir dengesizlik ve yalnızlık hissi ile tanımlanabilir. Fromm'a göre insan, kendine has güçleri ortaya çıkardıkça ve bunları geliştirdikçe, doğanın kalanının aksine, doğduğu andan itibaren bir huzursuzluk, güçsüzlük ve yalnızlık hissiyle kendini başbaşa bulur. Doğanın geri kalanı, hayatta kalmak ve yaşamını memnun sürdürebilmek için mevcut donanımından fazlasına ihtiyaç duymazken insan için durum böyle değildir. Bu bağlamda insan doğası, insanın hem doğadan ayrı bir varlık olarak kendi özgüçleriyle hayatını sürdürmesi hem de doğanın bir parçası olarak insan öncesi durumundan getirdiği bir takım itkilerin faal olmasıdır. Bu durumda, insan kendi öznel bilincinin ve ayrı bir varlık olduğunu duyumsarken ve buna ihtiyaç duyarken bir o kadar da aidiyete, birleşmeye ve köklülüğe ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Pratikte birbirine tezat düşen ve insan doğasını tanımlayan bu temel iki itki, Fromm'a göre, insan tüm eylemlerini belirleyen unsur olduğu gibi bu itkilerden birinin tatmin edilememesi durumu insanın psikolojik rahatsızlıklarının da temelini oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda insan doğası, insan davranışlarını her alanda belirleyen temel üç unsurdan biri olarak kabul edilmektedir.

İnsanın davranışlarını, isteklerini ve algısı belirleyen ikinci bir unsur ise Fromm'un sosyal karakter olarak tanımladığı unsurdur. İnsan psikolojisinin daima sosyal ilişkilerle bağlantılı olarak incelenmesi gerektiğini, belirli bir zaman ve uzamda ortaya çıkan insan özneliği ve karakterinin ancak toplumsal bağlamda anlaşılabileceğini savunan Fromm, sosyal karakterin, belirli bir toplumun karakterini şekillendiren en temel unsur olduğunu iddia eder. Fromm'a göre insanlar, hem fiziksel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilmek hem de tabiatlarından getirdikleri köklülük ihtiyacını karşılayabilmek için sosyal bağlama ve ilişkilere dinamik olarak adapte olmak zorundadır. Bu adaptasyon, temelde mevcut üretim ilişkilerine ve o üretim ilişkilerini yeniden üreten sosyo-kültürel yapıya uyum sağlanarak belirli karakter biçimlerinin ortaya çıkmasını mümkün kılar. Fromm'a göre belirli toplumlarda ve belirli dönemlerde bir takım insan davranışlarının ve karakter özelliklerinin mevcudiyeti, dinamik adaptasyon süreci ile ortaya çıkan sosyal karakter ile açıklanabilir.

İnsan davranışlarını ve özneliğini belirleyen ve Fromm'a göre en önemli olan unsur ise bilinçdışıdır. Fromm'a göre bilinçdışı, insan sağlığını ve asıl ihtiyaçlarını anlatan en önemli unsur olduğu gibi bastırıldığı ve usa vurduğu güdümlerini tutan ve hatırlatan psikolojik etkidir. Fromm'a göre bilinçdışı iki bağlamda anlaşılabilir. Birincisi, bilince ulaşmamış olan ve farkında olunmayan ancak insanın tercihlerini, davranışlarını ve algısını hayati derecede etkileyen psikolojik unsur. Bu tanımlamaya göre bilinçdışı, insanın gerçekten nasıl hissettiğini, nasıl yaşadığını ve neleri içselleştirdiğini vurgular. İkincisi ise bilinçdışının, insanın nevroitik ve patolojik boyutlarını envai biçimde yansıtan ve doğasından getirdiği iki itkinin doyumsuzluğunu ifade eden psikolojik güç olmasıdır. Fromm'a göre normal ve sağlıklı insan hiçbir zaman mevcut normlara, kültürel öğelere ve sosyal ilişkilere adapte olabilmek değildir. Dolayısıyla bilinçdışı, insanı sağlıktan ve esenlikten uzaklaştıran sosyal olarak kabul edilen ancak onu kendine ve doğasına yabancılaştıran bütün pratiklere karşı bir direnç mekanizmasıdır. Fromm'a göre bu direnç mekanizması belirli bir seviyeden sonra sosyal düzende ve ilişkilerde

dönüşümlere sevk eden psikolojik itkidir ve Fromm'a göre toplumsal dönüşüm ve farklı bir sosyal karakterin gelişimi bu sayede mümkün olabilir. Dayanışma ve özgürleşme bağlamında bilinçdışının önemi ise, köklülük ve aidiyet ihtiyacını karşılamak adına içselleştirilen sosyal söylemlerin, pratiklerin ve algıların kötürümleştiren boyutlarını reddeden ve onlara direnen unsur oluşudur. Fromm'a göre bilinçdışındaki bu tepkilerin insanın bilincine çıkarılarak ve bu yeni bilinçliliğin yeni bir siyasal öznellik ve faillik oluşturması ile dayanışma ve özgürleşme mümkün olabilir. Bu bağlamda Fromm, öznel ve nesnel olmak üzere, birbirini desteklemesi gereken iki özgürleşme pratiğinin bir arada ilerlemesi gerektiği ve birinin bir diğerinin yalnızca sebebi ya da sonucu olamayacağını öne sürer. Başka bir deyişle gerçek anlamda özgürleşmek ve dayanışmayı mümkün kılmak için, insanın içselleştirdiği ön yargılar, karakter özellikleri ve otoritelerden bireysel çabalar ile özgürleşmesi ve bilinçdışındaki bu unsurları bilinçdışına çıkarması ile bu yenilenmiş özneliğin toplumsal ve siyasal alana aktarılması gerekmektedir. Fromm'a göre insanın özgürleşmesi ve bunu onaylayan ve sürdürebilecek olan yeni bir sosyal düzenin kurulması insanın tam anlamıyla özgürleşebilmesi ve esenliğe kavuşabilmesi için elzemdir.

İnsanın özgürlüğünü ve esenliğinin hiçbir zaman toplumsal yaşamdan ve toplumsal ilişkilerden koparılamayacağını iddia eden Fromm'a göre, sağlıklı bir toplumun sağlaması gereken üç temel unsur, özgürlük, adalet ve güvenlidir. Güvenlik, insanın fiziksel olarak düşmanlar tarafından tehdit edilmemesi ve fiziksel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilmesi olarak tanımlanır. Adalet ise, Kantçı bir bakış açısıyla, hiçbir insanın başka bir insanın emelleri ve çıkarları için araç olmaması, insanın ve insan sağlığının örgütlenmenin temel gayesi olması olarak açıklanır. Özgürlük ise, insanın spontane, yenilikçi pratiklerinin ve düşüncelerinin bastırılmaması ve dolayısıyla herhangi bir sosyal baskının köklülük ihtiyacını karşılamak için bir zorunluluk ve koşul olmadığı yaşayış biçimi olarak tanımlanır. Fromm'a göre, bu üç temel unsuru sosyal yaşamda mümkün kılacak ve toplumların bu yeni temeller üzerinde yeniden inşa edilmesini

mümkün kılabilen tek şey insan dayanışmasıdır. Fromm'a göre, sağlıklı bir toplumun inşa edilmesi ve "iyi yaşam"ın mümkün olabilmesi ancak insan dayanışması fikrinin ve ortak insanlık yaşantısının psikolojik olarak içselleştirilmesi ve bunun özellikle siyasal ve kamusal alana yansıtılmasıyla mümkün olabilir. Psikolojik özgürleşme ile gelişen ve bu sayede hümanist temellere oturabilen siyasal etkileşim aracılığı ile farklı sosyal gruplar arasında yapıcı ilişkiler güçlenerek insan dayanışması sağlanabilir ve ortak olarak tüm insanların tabi olduğu insan acıları karşılıklı dayanışma ile azaltılabilir. Bu bağlamda, Fromm'a göre insanın akıl sağlığı ve mutluluğu, siyasal ve toplumsal alandaki özgürleşme pratiklerinden ayrılamaz ve toplumlar arasındaki bağımlılığın ve etkileşimin yoğunluğundan ötürü uluslararası alanda da vuku bulmalıdır.

Fromm'a göre bu hümanist temellerdeki siyasal etkileşim bütün farklılıklara rağmen farklı toplumlar için ortak bir temel oluşturabilir. Ona göre ancak hümanist kültürün ve değerlerin insanın yaşam alanlarının tümüne nüfuz etmesi ve toplumlararası düzeyde içselleştirilmesi ile farklılıklar hiyerarşiye dönüşmekten kurtarılabilir ve öteki toplulukların yaşadıkları sıkıntılara karşı hassasiyet ve yardım pratikleri gelişebilir. Fromm'a göre bunun bu yeni öznelğin önündeki en büyük sosyo-psikolojik engel narsisizmdir. Çünkü Fromm'a göre, bireyin psikolojik olarak sosyal unsurlara bağlanmasını sağlayan ve kendisi ile sosyal düzen arasında duygusal bağı ve sadakati kurarak ona köklülük ihtiyacını karşılayan unsur narsisizmdir. Narsisizm kötücül formlarında daimi olarak biz/öteki ayrımını faal olmasını ve bunun sosyal ilişkiler içerisinde yeniden üretilmesini sağlar. Bu bağlamda narsisizm, insanların bireysel ve sosyal yaşamlarındaki güçsüzlük, eksiklik ve sıkıntılarını unutmak, susturmak ve yoksaymak için başvurduğu sosyalleşmiş bir telafi mekanizmasıdır. Bilinçdışı itkilerin bilince aktarılacak kurgulayabilecek olan yapıcı narsisizm biçimlerinde ise grup üyeleri kendi bireysel isteklerini ve ihtiyaçlarını, daha büyük bir amaç uğruna ikincil plana alır ve daha kapsayıcı ve farklılıklar arası ayrımları azaltarak bunu yaparlar. Ancak bu iki çeşit narsisizm arasındaki çizgiyi çekmek kolay değildir ve kötücül narsisizm kötücül

görünmeyen birçok karakter özelliği ve toplumsal unsur olarak kendini gösterebilir ve usa vurulabilir. Her ne kadar Fromm bu ayrımın yapılması için gerekebilecek temel teknikleri sağlamasa da, yapıcı narsisizmin gelişmesinin, insanın hayatta kalmak için zorunlu olarak pratiğe dökmesi gerektiği özgüçlerinin kötürümleşmemiş olarak yaşamasını ifade eden üretici yönelme ile mümkün olabileceğini söyler. Fromm'a göre üretici yönelim, temelde nesnellik ve sevginin insan karakterine kök saldığı yönelim biçimidir ve narsisizmin aşılmasını sağlamakla birlikte toplumlararası dayanışmanın güçlenmesini ancak bu sağlayabilir. Bu bağlamda, psikolojik özgürlük ile birlikte güçlenebilecek olan üretici yönelim toplumsal alana aktarılarak özgürleşme ve dayanışmayı mümkün kılabilir. Bunu mümkün kılabilecek siyasal bağlamın Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'ın vurguladığı iletişimsel eylem bağlamı olabileceği varsayılmaktadır.

Fromm, insan özgürlüğünün ve dayanışmanın mümkün kılınabilmesi için yalnızca toplumsal dinamiklerin değil, aynı zamanda uluslararası ilişkilerde de farklı bir siyasal etkileşimin gerekli olduğunu düşünmüştür. Dünyanın artık teknik olarak birbirine bağlandığı ancak bu yoğun bağlılığa rağmen dayanışma ve barış içerisinde yaşanmadığını vurgulayan Fromm, bu bağlamda, ülkeler arasındaki gelir eşitsizliğinin giderilmesinin, gelişmekteki ülkelere insani yardımların artırılmasının ve silahlanma yarışının azaltılmasının hayati olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Her ne kadar bu pratiklerin gelişmiş kapitalist devletler, özellikle A.B.D. tarafından uygulanması için bir takım dış politika önerilerinde bulunsada, devletlerin sermayenin akışına bağımlılığından ötürü, ne kadar arzulanabilir olsa da, bunların pratiğe döküleceğine ihtimal vermemiştir. Dolayısıyla Fromm, dayanışma ve özgürleşmenin mümkün olabilmesinin ancak tüm toplumlarda gerçekleşecek toplumsal dinamiklerdeki dönüşümün siyasal alanı etkilemesi gerektiğini düşünmüştür. Bu açıdan, Fromm'un psikanalitik yaklaşımının iletişimsel eylem ve söylem etiği bağlamına yerleştirildiğinde karşılıklı diyalog ve etkileşim sayesinde tarafların hem insan olmalarından ötürü ortak olarak barınırıldıkları ihtiyaçlar, arzular ve korkuları ile görebilmelerini, hem de mevcut somut koşullar içerisinde, maruz

kaldıkları somut adaletsizlikler, eşitsizlikler ve dışlayıcılıkları içerisinde görmeleri anlamına gelir. Başka bir deyişle, iletişimsel eylem bağlamında taraflar eşzamanlı olarak hem soyut düzeyde ortak insanlık paydasında hem de somut olarak deneyimledikleri problemler ve acılar bağlamında algılayarak yapıcı duygusal bağlar kurarak hümanist temelli bir siyasal kültür inşa edebilir ve aralarındaki dayanışma bağına güçlendirebilir. Fromm'a göre taraflar bu etkileşim aracılığıyla birbirlerini yapıcı bir biçimde görerek ve duyumsayarak, yapıcı bir narsisizm inşa edebilirler. Her ne kadar bunu mümkün kılmak için insanların mevcut narsisizmlerini yenmeleri gerekse ve Fromm'a göre bu oldukça zor olsa da, taraflar arası etkileşimin ve psikolojik özgürleşmenin karşılıklı olarak birbirini destekleyeceğine inanmıştır ve bu etkileşim sayesinde hümanizm temelli bir siyasal etkileşimi mümkün görmüştür.

Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik yaklaşımının en önemli vurgusu, hepimizde ortak olan bir insan doğasının ve bunun psikolojik yansımalarının bütün insan pratiklerinde önemli bir yeri olduğudur. Tıpkı diğer alanlar gibi, tüm siyasal etkileşimler insana has duyguları, endişeleri, nevrozları ve bilinçdışı güdülenmelerin, farklı dereceler ve biçimlerde de olsa, yansımalarından ayrı tutulamaz. Bu bağlamda, Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik içgörülerini bize bu insansal alanın mevcudiyetini dikkate almamızı hatırlatırken bu alanın yalnızca şiddet, savaş ve çatışma gibi yıkıcı etkileşimlere sebep olmak zorunda olmadığını, belirli siyasal ve sosyal koşullarla desteklendiğinde dayanışmanın ve özgürleşmeye giden yolda oldukça önemli bir rolü olduğunun altını çizmektedir. Sosyal bilimlerde insan doğası kavramının olumsuz karşılandığını ve insan doğasının ya bilimsel olmamasından ötürü ya da özünde yalnızca yıkıcı etkileri barındırdığından ötürü olduğunu vurgulayan Fromm, insan doğasını araştırmanın ve uluslararası ilişkiler dahil olmak üzere tüm sosyal ilişkilerde bunun etkilerini incelemenin özgürleşme ve dayanışma gayesi için hayati olduğunu düşünmektedir.

Ancak Erich Fromm'un psikanalitik yaklaşımı ve Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram, dayanışma ve özgürlüğün siyasal alana taşınması ve sosyal ilişkileri etkilemesi açısından bazı sınırları da beraberlerinde getirmektedir. Her ne kadar Fromm, bu ülkelerin gerçekleşebilmesi için toplumsal ilişkilerde de bir takım dönüşümlerin gerekli olduğunu öngörmüş ve bir takım öneriler bulunmuş olsa da, psikolojik dönüşümün ve bilinçdışından bilince çıkarılabilecek yapıcı unsurların sosyal alana nasıl taşınabileceği konusunda bir fikir vermemektedir. Başka bir deyişle, Fromm'un psikanalitik kuramı, psikolojik dönüşüm ve sosyal dönüşümün birbirini beslemesi ve birbirinden ayrılamayacağını savunsa da, bu iki unsur arasındaki köprünün nasıl kurulacağına dair bir yaklaşım getirmemektedir. Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram ise iletişimsel eylem aracılığıyla sosyal ilişkilerin ve bunların temeli olacak normların öznelarası bir iletişimle aracılığıyla inşasının ve bunun için dayanışma ve özgürleşmenin gerçekleşebilmesi için iletişim paradigmasının önemini vurgulasa da, insanları mevcut sosyal ilişkilerin etkilerinden soyutlayarak ele almaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Fromm, insanları sosyal ilişkilerinin etkileriyle ele alıp psikolojik dönüşümün sosyal alana aktarımı hakkında belirli bir takım içgörüler sağlamazken Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram ise, insanları sosyal ilişkilerinden yalıtılmış bir biçimde ele alır ve bu etkilerin iletişimsel eylem bağlamında nasıl giderilebileceğine ya da azaltılabileceğine değinmemektir. Bu bağlamda, Fromm'un psikanalitik yaklaşımının Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'daki bir takım eksiklikleri giderdiği söylenebilirken, psikolojik dönüşümün siyasal ve sosyal ilişkilere yansıtılması açısından insan öznelliğinin belirli bir siyasal pratiğe aktarımını mümkün kılan kuramsal bir çerçeveye ihtiyacı olduğu söylenebilir. Bu açıdan, Erich Fromm'un psikolojik içgörülerinin Habermasçı Eleştirel Kuram'a etkin bir katkı yapabilmesi ve iletişimsel eylem bağlamında inşa edilecek olan dayanışma ve özgürleşme pratiklerini mümkün kılabilmesi için psikolojik unsurların siyasal alana nasıl aktarılabileceğini ve bunun hangi araçlarla ve pratiklerle mümkün olabileceğini detaylandıran bir kuramsal çerçeve ile desteklenmesi gerekmektedir. Aksi takdirde, Fromm'un öngördüğü psikolojik dönüşümün siyasal dönüşüme ve

dayanışmaya katkısı oldukça sınırlı kalacağı gibi, Eleştirel Kuram'ın özgürleşme ve dayanışmaya pratiklerine olan katkıları umduğu seviyeye ulaşamayacaktır.



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