

Anthropological dialogue of E. Fromm with Z. Freud and other Western philosophers (modern methodological conceptualization)

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Abstract

Along with reading the works of philosophers of the past and reflecting on their logic and content, it is important for modern humanities to identify the difference in their standpoints on the fundamental issues of human existence. The given article addresses these issues exemplified by the dialogue in letters between E. Fromm and Z. Freud. It investigates the difference between the two philosophers' views on the problems of rationalism and irrationalism, free will, good and evil in human nature, the specificity of human aggressiveness, and the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. The article also examines the similarities and differences in the ways the thinkers approach the problem of human fear, the role of childhood in a person's adult life, manifestations of narcissism, the correlation of biological and social factors in the process of character formation, the nature of dreams in their works. In most cases, Fromm's position, focused on "libidinal charm", is recognized by Fromm as limited and supplemented by spirituality and sociality. At the same time, in a number of cases, Fromm's criticism is mild, and sometimes it shows strong, justified disagreement with Freud. It is noted that the dialogue of thinkers is interesting as highly intellectual communication on universal human issues, clearly reflecting the personal and scientific portraits of the authors for a modern researcher in the field of psychology, philosophy, sociology, and theoretical and practical education. There is a stated methodological value of the dialogue in question: through the opportunity offered to a reader to identify the correctness of the methods used: a) meaningful comparison of scientific positions; b) interpretation of quotes of the criticized opponent; c) defining the opponent's consideration as incomplete, unreasonably narrow, not reflecting the magnitude of the object under consideration; d) exposing the narrowed analysis perspective of the criticized author in a new integrity; e) analysis of the possibilities of applying the law of the excluded middle to particular cases; f) the possibility, based on a logical-meaningful synthesis, to identify those problems that have escaped the notice of the criticizing author.

Key words: dialogue of philosophers, human existence, free will, human aggressiveness, biological and social principles, methodological, dialogue

Introduction

Dialogues evolving on the pages of monographs, articles and essays are an integral part of the scientific communication of philosophers, one of the forms of multi-aspect reflection inherent in philosophy. Such dialogues, present in many sources, have the imprints of time, the contingency and "conflict" of philosophical views on a variety of topics, the clash of ideas and views on the world around us as well as the methods of its cognition (Malakhova and Bokova, 2020). One example of such dialogues is the creative legacy of E. Fromm, which contains analysis and evaluation in the logic of agreement and criticism of many predecessors and contemporaries. These assessments represent a palette of inferences, "soft" and "hard" rebuttals of the predecessors' conclusions characterized by varying degrees of substantive and logical accuracy. Reading such texts, the modern philosopher of science joins a mental dialogue with the participants depicted in the literature (Krikunov, 2020).

In some cases, the modern reader either takes the viewpoint of one of the participants or generally agrees with the proposed criticism, adding a softening or toughening accent. Sometimes the reader does not agree with the criticism and mentally substantiates its illegitimacy, superficiality, and insufficient thoughtfulness. It is especially true for the human education sciences, building moral guidelines, discussing the problems of spiritual formation and a man's place in the world around him.

In this regard, a scientific problem arises related to the correctness of the analysis by the modern reader of the critical dialogues of predecessor researchers. It falls into many sub-problems: a) how can the reader of the dialogue in letters identify the correctness of the opponents' reference to published works? b) To what extent are logically justified the critical positions put forward by one author addressing the other? Whether any discussants used dishonest methods and dialogue "traps" c) How could the results of the reader's reflection on the dialogue in letters found in the literature be registered? How constructive such reflection could be. The purpose of this article is a reasonable disclosure of the designated problem field and findings statement.

Fromm's Anthropology in Comparison with Other Western Philosophers (Preliminary Analysis)

Today, the educational sciences have not yet sufficiently elaborated on the theoretical heritage of E. Fromm, who tried to combine the well-studied theory of K. Marx and Z. Freud's version of psychoanalysis (Fromm, 1966). E. Fromm speaks actively of Western researchers' works. It is evidenced by numerous works by E. Fromm (1961a; 1961b; 1973; 1976; 1994). Our research focuses on the works of the utilitarian philosophy scholars – J. Dewey, E. Kelly, A. Combs – which were analyzed by E. Fromm (Lukatsky, Makarov & Krikunova, 2020). Here Fromm shows the greatest degree of agreement: the moral qualities of a person are rooted in his nature, and life realigns the degree of their development, slows down or accelerates the manifestations of spirituality and morality. The philosopher agrees with the utilitarians that the task of educators is to create a favorable living environment for an individual in which moral qualities would be fully manifested.

In Fromm's works, we can also find a dialogue with representatives of the scientist-technocratic approach of B. Skinner, M. Black and several other thinkers (Fromm, 1998; Fromm, 2000; Fromm, 1986; Lukatsky, Makarov & Krikunova, 2020). The authors put at the forefront a technologically designed educational process with programmed impacts on the pupil, methods for achieving the behavior desired by the educator, and a logically built sequence of rewards and punishments. Fromm, who agrees with the scientists, simultaneously points out the limitations of their proposed approach and its insufficient philosophical support. In contrast to the scientists, rationalists P. Hirst and P. Woolley (1982), S. Harris (2012) and several other

researchers emphasize the development of moral thinking in the individual and the fact that the core of human development is the intellect. Rationalists tend to argue that intellectual development is the way to achieve moral perfection. Finally, the analysis of Fromm's works clearly reveals his interest in the irrationalist domain of philosophy (Kneller, 1971; Barrett, 1958, 1972). Its adherents argue that a technological (mass) approach to education is unproductive – therefore, it is proposed to focus on providing individual assistance to a person who is learning and striving for moral perfection.

The conclusion that clearly follows the analysis of mentioned above Fromm's works, for a modern researcher reading them, is that the author criticizes all four areas of his predecessors' works for incompleteness. According to the modern view, this incompleteness is manifested in the set of specific to psychology forms of the individual's mental reflection of the surrounding reality: intellect, emotions, will and physical activity. At the same time, the limitations of the rationalistic approach, which focuses on the dominance of the intellect, become obvious, as well as the lack of a constructive beginning in the approaches of utilitarians and irrationalists. In this regard, in his works, Fromm tries to build a panoramic approach to the problem of mentoring a person in modern conditions, combining the familiarization of people with moral values, the problem of free will, the connection of the intellectual and spiritual elements, the challenge of overcoming pernicious instincts by a person.

The Problem of Free Will and the Dialogue between E. Fromm and Z. Freud

Fromm discusses the topic of an individual's freedom of expression in *absentia*, comparing his conclusions with the ideas of Z. Freud. According to Freud, every individual has biologically given prejudices that should be satisfied (Fromm, 1992). The other individual (with whom there appears a connection) is then a means to achieve such satisfaction. Fromm argues that it is impossible to reduce the entire range of relationships in the surrounding world only to biological motivation and satisfaction. The thinker is firmly convinced that human freedom is by no means limited only to the possibility of a chaotic search for physiological partners. It is not just the ability of the individual to recklessly indulge his own biological instincts. Fromm supplements freedom with intellectual insight, positive emotional manifestations, strong-willed efforts aimed at achieving spiritually marked goals. Fromm criticizes Freud for the fact that in the psychoanalytic concepts put forward by him, all intellectual, emotional and volitional stimuli of human behavior are reduced to psychosexual experiences, the degree of manifestation of physiological instincts. Fromm insists in every possible way that an individual lives life in a value-based and morally designed world, and his behavior is influenced by a lot of factors, and the biological nature of a person is only a part of that whole, which can be called human essence (Fromm, 1955a; Fromm, 1956). Here we consider it possible to fully agree with the criticism proposed by Fromm and attribute it to the status of statements exposing certain incompleteness, essential unfinishedness of the criticized concept.

The next important point of our consideration will be Fromm's criticism of Freud's understanding of the relationship between good and evil in human nature. In many of Freud's works, a human is referred to as a being initially aggressive and highly competitive (Fromm, 1969; Fromm, 1992, Freud, 2003a). Fromm's objections at this point are quite fervent: he confidently declares that a person is an individual that simultaneously has both negative and positive aspirations. He displays the duality of human nature as the concurrent presence of animal instincts in the individual as well as the conation for spiritual perfection. This duality is supplemented by Fromm with a person's awareness of the conflict situation associated with his daily life. On the one hand, life is in the format of possession. On the other hand, life is according to the "to be" principle. The first aspect is confirmed by the idea that could be phrased as 'I want everything for myself' and justifies the desire to have as many amenities and benefits

as possible and the unwillingness to share them with others. The second one is a life aimed at self-realization, comprehension of the world around us, aimed at living with integrity and peace with others, and opposition to negative aspirations. In his books, the philosopher illustrates a serious difference between the behavior of those who are focused on possession and consumerism and those who are focused on serving people and their own full spiritual growth. Life in the "have" format is called dead-end life by Fromm; the philosopher considers the choice of an individual to live a life in the "to be" format as the only possible way for a person to survive, and Fromm sends the corresponding message to the education system (Fromm, 1998; Fromm, 1962; Fromm, 1992; Fromm, 1959).

Returning to the problem of human aggressiveness, Fromm again carefully delves into the work of Freud (Freud, 2003b). In these works, Freud confidently determines that the nature of human aggressiveness is biological. Freud interprets aggressive behavior as a natural manifestation of its biological origin (Freud, 1933; Freud, 1989). It is assumed that Freud and Lorenz agree on one basic fact: it is bad if aggression cannot be translated into action. Every representative of modern civilization suffers because he does not have the opportunity to display aggressive actions (Fromm, 1951: p.234). Here, in his mental dialogue, Fromm includes representatives of the environmental determinism theory, which insists that a person's aggressive behavior is determined not by biological factors but by the environment, the social environment. The latter is added through Fromm's mental dialogue with B. Skinner, who believed that a person "is formed under the influence of a society, and there is nothing in his nature that could interfere with the formation of a just and humane social order" (Fromm, 1955b: p. 236). Fromm's final conclusion in this part is this: the dispute about what influences human behavior (instinct or environment) has no constructive way out and cannot be resolved in the logic of the law of the excluded middle (Fromm, 1981b; Fromm, 1959).

Fromm reveals this idea by asserting that human existence is dual and combines the natural (biological) and cultural principles, while the latter is unnatural. The biological component is not subject to the influence of the individual, while the cultural component is a matter of the human mind. At the same time, culture can call for negative manifestations (destruction, aggression) and for virtuous ones, signified by positive spiritual values. According to Fromm, for example, culture puts a person in a context of necessity to think about himself and the meaning of life, to develop a system of cultural coordinates. This contributes to creating conditions for the individual's self-realization by introducing himself to the culture and embedding himself in the cultural code of the era. Humanistic education combines the mastery of knowledge accumulated by the culture of civilization, the transformation of knowledge into a tool for self-cognition (cognition of oneself and the world around), accompanied by the expression of emotions and volitional efforts (overcoming what prevents one from achieving results) – in our view, this is the Fromm's vision of how mankind may preserve its future.

The mentioned above analysis of Fromm's mental dialogue with Freud and other philosophers allows us to assume that, unlike the previous case, there is a harsher version of criticism here – it evolves around profound disagreement with opponents, an indication of the incompleteness, superficiality, narrowness of the revised concepts, their essential complementation.

Fromm's Deep Revision of Other Provisions of Psychoanalysis

As you know, Freud's psychoanalysis was subjected to deep reasoning by Fromm, which made it possible to make many intelligible and specific additions and refutations. It is logical to begin our analysis with those provisions of psychoanalysis with which Fromm agreed. It is a statement about the controllability of the individual's behavior by irrational drives that conflict with the mind, and the person is

unconscious of them. At the same time, transferring these drives to the area of consciousness provokes a conflict and opposition. It is Freud's conclusion that subconscious motivations can be deciphered and interpreted by analyzing vivid dreams that a person remembers, as well as his spontaneous actions. And of course, the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious can lead to mental disorders; however, if the unconscious is still recognized, then all mental negativity subsides, and this gives the individual the opportunity for further constructive development (Freud, 1961; Freud, 1917, Freud, 1949).

However, admitting all the above, Fromm noted Freud's rather limited, clearly insufficient consideration of the social conditions' influence on the individual's behavior. In his works, Fromm approached many mental phenomena (instincts and sexual behavior of a person, the Oedipus complex, the role of childhood in a person's adult life, and many other phenomena) in a fundamentally different way than Freud stated in his writings. Fromm emphasized that Freud was the first to determine that people's souls are full of such thoughts and aspirations that they are unaware of on a conscious level. Undoubtedly Fromm considered Freud's works on the unconscious as the most fundamental discovery of the scholar (Fromm, 1981a; Fromm, 1968). However, the conflict is caused by the mismatch between the conscious and the unconscious, which provokes a lot of mental experiences, depression, and phobias, Freud explained by the suppression of morality and other factors of the sexual drives of an individual. Fromm admits this conclusion is only partially true and argues that many other repressed structures exist. These include suppressed conscience (a person experiences an unreasonable feeling of guilt), repressed independence in various areas, repressed activity, and a repressed desire to see the real world around (immersion in illusions). In his works, Fromm emphasized Freud's fascination with sex and its suppression (Fromm, 1968: 173).

According to Freud, fear prevents a person from deliberate awareness of the experience a person goes through, which reflects their true relationship to the events of the real world. In most cases, people resist recognizing drives that do not correspond to their images of themselves, which are formed and rooted in consciousness. Information about such drives is actively blocked and repressed by consciousness. This mechanism is called fencing off the truth it comes down to a person enthralled in illusions. Developing and modernizing Freud's psychoanalysis (Freud, 1917; Freud, 1922a; Freud, 1922b; Freud, 1963), Fromm introduces significant refinements to the mechanism of transferring the conscious into the unconscious. He points out that consciousness, thanks to the forces of resistance and repression it generates, tries to protect the individual from his experiences (becoming a collection of a person's false ideas about himself), cannot be attributed to a high value (Fromm, 2010). Valuable, according to Fromm is the process of a person *becoming aware of* his true self, in a sense, breaking open the resisting consciousness. Expanding this thesis, Fromm proposes many conditions under which an experience initially unconscious by an individual can become conscious. As the first such condition, the philosopher indicates the necessity for a person to linguistically shape his experience, to put it into words. The second thing Fromm considers important is that the language used to reflect the experience a person gained should match the logic of the society's culture in which the individual lives. For example, if the culture of a society uses the logic of Aristotle, then it is difficult for a representative of such a society to understand Freud's ambivalence (Freud, 1922b; Freud, 1914; Freud, 1966). If one person feels affection towards someone else, then ambivalence does not forbid him to simultaneously experience any restrained negative feelings (the logic of Aristotle forbids this). And finally, Fromm denotes the third condition, the compliance of the individual's social experience with the moment under discussion. Further, Fromm notes that on the way to awareness, human experiences must

overcome three barriers: linguistic, logical, and the barrier of compliance with the social structure rules and regulations.

Fromm also reconceptualizes Freud's understanding of childhood's role in a person's adult life. Fromm gives an upbeat assessment of Freud's conclusions that in early childhood events, experiences, and mental traumas, a person should look for the mediation of a person's entire future life. However, Fromm notices the limitations of Freud's approach – in terms of underestimating the genetic factors that influence the young person's character formation. Therefore, it is wrong to believe that only the family and early life experience are entirely responsible for the course of adult life. Fromm gives such a fatalistic scenario a negative assessment and proves that the society around him also has a significant impact on a person's fate. Fromm also considers the causal reduction of all childhood experiences to sexual instincts as a fundamental mistake of Freud. Fromm considers Freud's mistake to conclude that a boy and an adult man's affection for his mother is exclusively sexual. However, Fromm recognizes as significant Freud's discovery of the fact that a person's ability to build relationships with others depends on the nature of relationships with parents during early childhood (Freud, 1922a; Freud, 1922b; Fromm, 2010).

The analysis of narcissism occupies a special place in the works of Fromm. He again turns to the representation of this phenomenon in Freud's studies and focuses on its childhood "roots". In the works of the psychoanalysis founder, two forms of narcissism are differentiated: love for one's own body and love for one's own <Self> or ego. At the same time, Freud considered narcissism as an addition to human egoism. Criticizing his opponent, Fromm points to his excessive fascination with the libidinal aspect of narcissism and again emphasizes the influence of social factors. Fromm believed the first condition for the growing development of narcissism in industrial society is the disunity and antagonism of individuals concerning each other. When mutual aid and sharing are absent, narcissism inevitably thrives. According to Fromm, man turned himself into God, began to feel pride in his achievements in revealing the secrets of nature and in conquering it (Fromm, 1969: p. 118). According to Fromm, it is the social aspect of human narcissism.

Fromm, in his mental dialogues with Freud also addresses the topic of character, recognizing his opponent's significant contribution to the development of this issue. Fromm reasonably shares Freud's conclusions, linking the inclination of the individual's character and the form of his "being". However, he again lodges claims to Freud for an excessive tendency to promote sexual life as the most important factor influencing the formation of a person's character. Fromm notes that Freud failed to fully understand the phenomenon of "social character". In the perception of Fromm if a person does not consider obliged to presume all human passions as having sexual roots, he cannot be forced to accept Freud's version. A person can distinguish between biologically given needs (hunger satisfaction, sex) and socially and historically determined passions. Whether people experience predominantly love or hate, submission or fight for freedom, turn out to be tight-fisted or generous depends on the *social structure*. There are cultures in which, owing to the national character, the drive for peace and harmony prevails. There are also warlike, aggressive cultures (Fromm, 1955b: p. 78). Therefore, "social character" is a much broader and more voluminous concept, not reducible to what is determined only by the individual's libidinal emotions, aspirations and messages to the world around him. The introduction of this concept into scientific use is another landmark contribution of Fromm developed by him on the basis of Freud's theory analysis.

The dialogue between Fromm and Freud addressing the nature of dreams is also quite engaging. Freud's theory reveals the art of dreams interpretation through irrational human desires for libidinal status. Fromm criticized the latter. Although Fromm's definitions of dreams and mental activity during sleep are based on Freud's theory, they still have substantial divergence from it. Fromm believed that dreams can express

both the lowest and most irrational and the highest, most valuable functions of our mind (Fromm, 1955b: p. 134). Notably, in Fromm's works, we can find many examples of dreams reflecting a person's aspirations for moral and spiritual goals. At the same time, Fromm agrees with Freud that human drives generate many dreams to satisfy their physiological needs. However, many examples indicate that a person's dreams also reflect supreme aspirations and goals unrelated to physiology.

Discussion

The dialogues of philosophers of the distant and relatively recent past are very valuable material for modern humanitarian researchers. However, in addition to the possibility of becoming solid historical evidence that reflects the scientific code of early times, they have many other meanings relevant for a modern reader. Among them is the opportunity for the modern reader to develop a methodological vision of the dialogues under discussion. It appears through the article's authors' mental "immersion" or "inclusion" into the critical material they read. This allows the readers to join the dialogue between fundamental thinkers: analyzing Fromm's critical thoughts on the conclusions of the psychoanalysis founder, modern researchers turn to the works of Freud and Fromm for the first time, or repeatedly, they apply the criticism they read onto their own vision of the philosophers' works. Thus, there evolves reader's evaluative viewpoint, complex in its structure, in which Fromm's criticism of Freud is reflected upon from multi-sectional perspective. Its primary result (for example, consent with Fromm) is transformed over time: some conclusions by Fromm obtain additional reader support, other critical messages smooth over in the reader's mind (criticized Freud wins delayed support on a few statements). Having done this, we come up with a number of our own conclusions.

Firstly, the entire text of the article allows us to confidently assume that Fromm that lived and worked much later than his "opponent", could not receive an answer from Freud for recognition of his merits and criticism. At the same time, the investigation into Fromm's numerous works shows his profound and in-depth analysis of Freud's works, careful reading and quite logical conclusions. Every conclusion discussed in the article is "elaborated" by Fromm from several sources, the conclusions are accumulated and comprehensively evaluated, and it is certainly a positive thing.

Secondly, there are almost no critical works by Fromm in which he completely dissents from (or shows complete denial of) Freud's conclusions – Fromm almost everywhere shows their incompleteness, limitation, in some cases, narrowness. Of course, there is an attempt to present a panoramic approach to topics related to human existence, which includes a rich palette of meanings, many perspectives and angles at which these problems are addressed. At the same time, it is obvious that the degree of dissent between Fromm and Freud on various aspects varies significantly. Suppose on the problem of free will, this disagreement is very insignificant. In that case, it is of a complementary character (sometimes having corrective intent), then it is much more vivid on the problem of human aggressiveness. Fromm criticizes Freud's "fascination" with the biological component of human aggressiveness. It is profoundly supplemented with the social component. Fromm shows a rather serious discord with his opponent regarding the problems of fear, the influence of childhood on the further existence of a person in the world, and narcissism. From a methodological point of view, Fromm's statement about the inapplicability of the law of the excluded middle is also interesting. It is exemplified by the dyad *like-dislike* of one person to another. At the same time, it is obvious that a significant part of Fromm's criticism in all aspects addresses Freud's exaggeration of the physiological factors' role in a person's life, his "libidinal charm". The idea of supplementing *libido* with social factors, the role of the environment in personal development, and spiritual and moral components permeates all Fromm's works. He firmly insists on the irreducibility of human behavior's causes

to sexual experiences and dissatisfaction only. He fosters the idea of the ascent to spirituality, the realization of person's destiny in the coordinates of goodness and altruism.

Thirdly, observing the principle of "not criticizing for what has not been done, but only for what has been done", we will properly outline the perspectives of the dialogue described above. Sharing Fromm's view regarding the incompleteness and limitations of Freud's "libidinal fascination", we note that the question of how the individual can overcome that part of his biological self that contradicts the spiritual and social principle, the moral imperative remained outside the scope of the discussion. It is not clearly shown both in Fromm's fundamental works and in his critical books and articles on Freud's theory: how biological and social factors "interact", in which case which factor dominates.

Conclusions

For the modern reader, the dialogue discussed in the article is purely substantive and methodological. In terms of content, it is interesting as a way of deep cross-evaluation of the ideas expressed by thinkers of the past, which have not lost their relevance in the modern world. It is also interesting as a highly intelligent humanitarian communication on universal problems, vividly reflecting the scientific and personal portraits of the authors from the perspective of a modern researcher. Such a dialogue is also interesting as an example of the textual presentation of scientific criticism.

From a methodological point of view, the dialogue under discussion shows the specificities of such scientific methods as comparison of views on human problems (1); proper identification of the dissent among the participants, ranking the degree of its presentation to the reader (soft, corrective, hard) (Fromm, 1961a); revealing the logical correctness of the presented criticism, the semantic accuracy of quoting the opponent (3); finding an opportunity for the criticizing author to present the opponent's ideas as one-sided, incompletely describing reality, and to substantiate their content expansion by correctly including the part declared by the opponent in his own whole, defining its specific field (area) in this integrity (4); discussion of the possibility of applying the law of the excluded middle to the described social phenomena (5). In a merged logical and meaningful perspective, the proposed dialogue allows a reader to find such components of the topic that, for one reason or another, escaped the participants' focus and attention.

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