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Bal, Prof. Dr. Matthijs

Workplace dignity in times of absurdity: Key insights from Fromm

In our contemporary world, the modern human being is faced continuously with the absurdities arising from the discrepancies between proclaimed ideals (e.g., the promise of civilization) and the reality of everyday life, as indicated by for instance climate breakdown, ever increasing inequalities, and perpetuating racism. Such absurdities are internalized by the individual, through both ideological investment and fantasy. Normalization of absurdities in society may lead to destructive impacts, as they are no longer contested, and integrated into the beliefs of individuals and groups in society about the 'normal state of being', or that what is considered to be socially accepted and what not. In light of such situations, the Frommian 'authoritarian character' may seize its moment and further perpetuate inequalities. The current paper addresses contemporary absurdities in society and workplaces and connects them to the work of Fromm. In so doing, we elucidate the ways through which character formation takes place vis-à-vis the hypernormalization of absurdity. It then discusses how dignity in the workplace may ensure a response to the effects of absurdity. Through the embracing and acceptance of absurdity as inherent to human life and existence, individuals and collectives can strive for more dignified responses to alleviate harm resulting from absurd social practice. The paper finishes with steps towards a more dignified workplace, with special attention to the character formation aligning with dignity principles.

Becker, Dr. Martina

Ego-orientation and challenges regarding a humanistic transformation

The Ego-oriented social character as a currently new form of the social character is characterized by the fact that people with this orientation want to live self-determined. They want to produce reality in a new and different way or want to participate in produced realities. Mediated and made possible by new digital techniques and media, they seek connection and contact with others. Encounters and contact are increasingly taking place in virtual space as well as via e-mail or messenger. Real relationships and encounters are supplemented by virtual relationships. Physical, haptic and sensory experiences are partly mediated digitally or neglected in everyday life. The lecture describes current social developments, especially with regard to human relationships and physical aspects. The lecture also outlines those parts that are repressed in the Ego-orientation and explores the question of how one's own mental and physical strength can be promoted in the sense of a productive orientation according to Fromm. With regard to a humanistic ethics according to Fromm, the question of how transformation can be based on the existential needs of people is also examined in this context, so that the needs and limits of people provide the framework and orientation for transformation and not technical or digital possibilities.

Bierhoff, Prof. Dr. Burkhard

Character transformation. A socioanalytical and ecological perspective

The present epoch of developed industrialism is associated with a civilizational self-destruction that negates human progress. The unleashed material productive forces lead in a capitalistically appropriated ecology to an irreversible destruction of nature when the limits of growth are exceeded.

In business and politics, decisive sustainability has been prevented for decades. Although sufficient information about the climate crisis is available in people's everyday lives, people continue to persist in their destructive lifestyles and slip into disaster. This state of affairs requires explanation and can be

answered on the basis of Fromm's analytical social psychology. With Fromm, one can ask about the inhibiting or regressive factors that contribute to environmental degradation. These factors lie not only in consumerist lifestyles, but in the orientations of social character and the social unconscious that discourage ecological and sustainable consumer behavior. In contrast, the conducive or progressive factors that contribute to sustainable growth dynamics lag behind.

The decisive factor is whether it is possible to develop the productive forces in human beings in such a way that they contribute to a sustainable way of life. This challenge can be called character transformation in Fromm's approach. Character transformation is to be understood not only as a real change in social character, but also as an enlightenment and educational effort. In this context, one has to ask about a newly emerging post-industrial social character.

Braune, Dr. Joan

The psychological is crucial: Why Erich Fromm's understanding of Human needs contributes to defeating fascism

This paper uses Erich Fromm's interdisciplinary synthesis of humanistic psychoanalysis with Marxist humanist philosophy to critically explore the role of psychological needs and desires in recruitment to current fascist and far-right movements, how these needs and desires operate within fascist movements (and why they are ultimately not fulfilled by them), and why understanding these needs and desires is a necessary part of antifascist struggle, broadly construed. I respond to numerous political theorists' hesitancy about engaging psychology, and especially the psychoanalytic, in relation to fascism. I challenge the view that psychological inquiry undermines structural critiques of society and that it diverts attention away from the role of capitalism and white supremacy in driving the growth of fascist movements. I also address a false dichotomy frequently deployed by conservative counter-terrorism and "counter-extremism" analysts, who make too sharp a distinction between the ideological and the psychological, seeing recent mass shooters in the United States, for example, as either being "ideologically" motivated (writing a manifesto, expressing overt hatred, etc.), or being "non-ideological" and motivated exclusively by the psychological—the reality is much more complex, not least because the psychological and ideological are always intertwined. Fromm's concept of social character enables us to challenge such flawed outlooks, and his theory of human needs is crucial for understanding and stopping the growth of contemporary fascist movements.

Braune, Prof. Dr. Nick

A needed defense of Fromm's Socialist Manifesto and Program

This paper defends Erich Fromm's *Let Man Prevail: A Socialist Manifesto and Program* (1960) as brilliant and effective. Two recent Fromm interpreters, including his biographer, Lawrence Friedman, have undervalued it and found it clumsy, greatly because they misunderstood a division inside the Socialist Party and its periphery during the 1957 to 1968 period. True, there were critics of Fromm's document, some very angry. Irving Howe, editor of *Dissent* magazine, in his autobiography, makes it clear he had an intense dislike for the "apostle of love as therapy," who "calls himself an ethical socialist." According to Howe, Fromm wanted to be a socialist guru, but was "incapable of grasping the difference between a humane sentiment and a political idea." But the *Manifesto and Program* circulated widely and had three printings and Fromm was no novice. He had signed onto a public endorsement of Norman Thomas for President in 1948. Starting in 1950 he was a contributing editor of the *Socialist Call*, the party organ and was on the National Committee of the SP when he wrote the *Manifesto and Program*, for a party committee reevaluating the party's work.

This paper will discuss the faction fight in the SP in the 1950s and 1960s. Fromm did not line up with Max Shachtman (who had influenced Irving Howe) and would join a different faction in 1968, the Debs Caucus, which was more hopeful and more firmly against the Vietnam War.

I will show that Fromm's Manifesto and Program was written in one of the most exciting periods of his life and a period when the McCarthyite-Billy Graham Cold War was cracking open and young people were emerging as leaders. During that same period, Fromm wrote an Introduction to Orwell's 1984 and an Afterward to Bellamy's classic utopia Looking Backward. These two books presented alternative ""programs"" and demonstrated for Fromm two conflicting kinds of Hope. I suggest that when Fromm wrote his Socialist Manifesto and Program, that distinction shaped his thinking about Shachtmanism and a future Debs Caucus.

Buechler, Dr. Sandra

Psychotherapy post truth

As a child, growing up in the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's in the United States, it went without question that the truth mattered. At school, at home, and in any social situation, lying was one of the worst offenses. When I entered graduate school in clinical psychology, I was heartened by seeing that the words, "The truth shall set ye free" were imprinted atop the library building. Throughout my psychoanalytic education, at the William Alanson White Institute from 1979-1983, it was taken for granted that in treatment the analyst and patient were engaging in a truthful exploration of the patient's life experience. In my first book, on Clinical Values (2004), I devoted a chapter to the importance of integrity. How is psychotherapy affected if society no longer holds these values? If a new "pathology of normalcy" elevates being a "winner" (financially, romantically, socially) over being truthful and trustworthy? In the New York Times, July 22, 2022, columnist David Brooks says, "...the gamer mentality pervades our culture right now...One of the features of the gaming mentality is that it turns life into a performance. If what you mostly want is status, why not create a fake persona that will win it for you?" Brooks contrasts our society today with one that cultivated a love of truth and learning, not cheap conspiracy theories. He goes on to say that in that earlier world people aimed for the pleasures intrinsic to craftsmanship and were willing to work hard to create a good and meaningful life.

How is therapeutic practice affected by this societal shift? I will explore the idea that a subtle change in the language of treatment and training is an important indication. I refer to the change from the concept of "character" to the concept of "personality." Very briefly, the concept of character generally denotes qualities that are permanently engraved. In contrast, "personality" comes from "persona" or mask. In a penetrating study of the history of the concept of character, Marjorie Garber (2020) points out some implications of the shift in public discourse from the language of character to the language of personality. My paper, based in Fromm's theoretical framework, will explore how society's adoption of the language of personality fits with the more general trend toward "gaming" values, and the impact of this change on the clinician's understanding of psychological health, diagnosis, and treatment's methods and goals. In a society that rewards creating a winning persona, what happens to therapeutic process?

Byrd, Prof. Dr. Dustin J.

Can religion be rescued in the 21st century? On Fromm's religious humanism in an age of authoritarian populism

Unlike many of those who influenced Erich Fromm, including Marx and Freud, Fromm developed a dialectical approach to world religions as opposed to his predecessors' abstract negation of religion. In his critical analysis, Fromm positively identified the humanistic core of various world religions and attempted to transform and integrate such material into a biophilic worldview. As such, he was not wholly antagonistic towards religion as a way of being in the world and as a component of one's social identity. However, Fromm was deeply aware of religions' potential for destructiveness, authoritarianism, necrophilia, and demands for automaton conformity, which often overshadowed religions' emancipatory humanistic core. In our current age, aggressive forms of religion are returning to the world stage, both in the Islamic world and the West, which, according to Jürgen Habermas, have shaken the West's confidence in the inevitability of global secular modernity. In much of Europe and North America, a feeling of "Überfremdung" (over-foreignization) and "Umvolkung" (deculturation or ethnic conversion) has driven many to citizens to retreat into forms of authoritarian populism as a way of "taking back" the nation from the "others." In this context, resurgent forms of Christianity, which are often mixed with ethno-nationalist (Völkisch) ideology, serve as psychological defensive mechanisms against social alienation and feeling of cultural loss that comes with the increased diversification of society. It is also a way of claiming nativity, which is culturally denied to the immigrant and/or the "non-identical," even when they are citizens of the democratic state.

In this paper, I will examine whether a Frommian humanistic "rescue" of religion is still possible in the face of growing right-wing populism, wherein religious identity is weaponized against other citizens, immigrants, and refugees. I will ask (1) whether Fromm's dialectical approach to religion still provides a viable alternative to these resurgent forms of authoritarian religion; (2) whether such a humanistic form of religion can still serve as an inter-subjective bridge between members of various faith traditions with the democratic societies, and (3) whether it can aid in the future reconciliation of the culture and identity wars currently raging in Western societies. In the end, I will argue conclusively that Fromm's model of humanistic religiosity is not only a possible alternative, but is an imperative to create, foster, and deploy, as a means to not only diminish the antagonisms between the religious and the secular, but also to diminish the social and cultural "otherness" that fuels authoritarian populism.

Chancer, Prof. Dr. Lynn

Fromm, feminist theory and positive politics: From authoritarianism to mutual recognition

This presentation will follow up on previous articles that I have written about the relevance of Erich Fromm's ideas to feminist ideas, and it will continue to analyze the compatibility of Fromm and feminism in regard to specific feminist political issues. In making this analysis, I tap the book *After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* which presents four major issues on which feminists across different persuasions have agreed. These are: issues concerning educational and economic equality; personal intimacies and freedoms; freedom from violence against women and in general; and objectifying cultural images. The presentation argues that, on each of these four issues of common concern to feminists, the ideas – and political implications of Fromm's ideas – should be taken seriously and explored for their contemporary relevance. In addition, the presentation raises the idea of intersectionality or how feminist movements in the US and around the world are increasingly sensitive both to feminist concerns and other overlapping social biases such as those of race, ethnicity, class and

sexualities. Here too, with regard to intersectionality, Fromm's multi-dimensional forms of theorizing fits well with recent feminist concerns. The presentation concludes by suggesting how to better connect Frommian and feminist ideas in theory and political social movement practice, and how this connection can be made better known.

Cortina, Dr. Mauricio

A reappraisal of Erich Fromm's approach to humanism and the human condition based on new evolutionary-developmental science

(Read by Jeremiah Morelock in absence of the author)

The humanistic tradition that Fromm represented and championed has two main premises. The first is that despite an enormous variety of cultural and individual differences, we are one species, and the second is that these multiple manifestations of the human are anchored in a universal set of core capacities and strivings. Reconciling the fact of our being a species that constantly undergoes transformations with the claim that we possess certain universal characteristics is no easy task. Fromm responded to this conundrum by defining human nature as a product of existential and historical contradictions. By "existential contradictions" Fromm meant conditions rooted in our evolutionary history, and by "historical contradictions" he meant conditions rooted in socioeconomic and cultural conditions. The existential contradictions hypothesis offered Fromm a view of human nature that is dynamic and dialectical yet anchored in our evolutionary history. The hypothesis is as follows: During the immensely long course of human evolution our species lost most of its behavior-determining instinctual equipment, and this change coincided with a significant neocortical expansion of the brain. This postulate served as an alternative to essentialist conceptions of human nature. I put forward a different explanation of what made us human, arguing that it was not the loss of instinctual equipment, but rather a general transformation of all our instinctual, emotional, and cognitive capacities, that made *Homo sapiens* a remarkably adaptive species. Yet this view retains an existential and dialectical dimension. It is based on new evolutionary and developmental science and is grounded in a gene-culture coevolution model that sees genes and culture as independent forms of inheritance that interact. Genetic inheritance is DNA based, while cultural inheritance operates through the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices accumulated over thousands of generations. This cumulative effect of cultural knowledge and practices is useful in explaining humans' capacity to adapt to diverse environments. In turn cultural adaptations create strong selective pressures favoring genetic mutations that manifest as new developmental phenotypes. The genetic code maintains the organism's stability and homeostasis, while the cultural transmission of knowledge accounts for the dynamic nature of our species. With this gene-culture framework in mind, I will demonstrate that our species' main mechanism of survival was to become ultra-cooperative and ultra-social.

Dietrich, Prof. Dr. Jan

Biophily and productive character orientation in ancient cultures

Next to ancient, medieval and modern philosophers like Aristotle, Meister Eckart and Spinoza, Erich Fromm often referred to the Hebrew Bible and used biblical material to illustrate and exemplify his views. How about the concept of biophily and productive character orientation? In recent anthropological research into the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near eastern material, the outer dimension of the human being is highlighted, as if, in these former times, there were no inner human depths to be unfolded. In this paper, I will ask the question whether and how the Hebrew Bible shows

an awareness of a „productive orientation“ in the Frommian sense, keen on unfolding one's own abilities and capabilities.

Durkin, Dr. Kieran

“There’s a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in”: Erich Fromm, John Holloway, and Marxist Humanism

Erich Fromm was one of the central and best-known members of 20th Century Marxist Humanist Tradition. Responsible for publishing the first full English-language translation of Marx’s 1844 Manuscripts, he was pivotal in the dissemination of a ‘humanist’ view of Marx in the English-speaking world. Despite this, his relationship to Marxist thought has not always been studied in rigorous fashion. From Kolakowski to Knapp, Hook to Bell, Wiggershaus to Musto, Fromm’s relationship to Marxism tends to be characterized as somewhat shallow and inconsistent. In this paper, I will demonstrate the fuller depth of Fromm’s engagement with and contribution to Marxist thought, exploring some apparent ambiguities in Fromm’s account that deserve more fulsome attention and demonstrating some familiarities with the thought of contemporary Open Marxist thinker John Holloway, who has reinvigorated Marxist thinking in recent years.

A particular focus of the paper will be a discussion of the ways in which Fromm and Holloway problematise certain aspects of traditional Marxism, while extending other aspects found in the traditional and critical Marxist traditions. In this connection, I will draw out the fuller significance of Fromm’s and Holloway’s broadened account of economic and social transformation relative to other traditional and critical Marxists, focusing specifically on some apparent tensions in their account of social transformation considered in terms of its Marxian aspect. In particular, I will focus on their shared focus on what Fromm calls Marx’s ‘anthropological interpretation’ of history and on the humanist focus on dignity and experience (on the universality of human needs, capacities, pleasures, and productive forces therein), as explosive of structuralist designations of social being. Related to this, their shared but distinct account of alienation and of the continuity in Marx will be drawn out to reveal complementary accounts of social self-determination and self-activity. Alongside this, there will be a discussion of the ways in which Fromm and Holloway speak of ‘character’/‘character masks’ and offer particularly clear accounts of the ways in which our humanity overflows our current form of social praxis.

Through the above comparative analysis of proximate relations in their articulated thought, I will suggest that Fromm and Holloway can be productively brought into relation to more fully develop the accounts of social life offered in each respective thinker. Considered in relation to each other, the related thought of both offers an important contribution to contemporary discussions of normative guidelines for humanistic alternatives for social relations."

Espinosa, Dr. Amparo

Violence, delinquency and the mexican penitentiary system under the lenses of Erich Fromm’s humanistic perspective

The past years violence and delinquency have been rising rapidly in Mexico and the Mexican penitentiary system is in a critical state. The Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis (impac) founded by Erich Fromm 60 years ago has a crucial role to play in our society today and it is taking the necessary measures to rise to the challenge.

Frie, Prof. Dr.Dr. Roger

The relevance of Fromm's social psychoanalysis: Beyond the interpersonal dyad

Psychoanalysis today, particularly in North American, is undergoing a major shift known as the “social turn.” This shift seeks to emphasize the importance of understanding the role of social forces, such as racism and socioeconomic discrimination, both within and beyond the therapeutic relationship. Psychoanalysts increasingly recognize that it is not possible to isolate problems in living, or the therapeutic process, from the society in which they take place.

There is perhaps no psychoanalyst who is more closely connected with the social turn than Erich Fromm. He was the founder of many different psychoanalytic institutes and organizations and is perhaps best known for, and identified with, the Interpersonal School of Psychoanalysis. In 1943, Fromm helped to found this radical new approach and establish the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology in New York, with which it is connected. The founding of the Institute as an alternative to mainstream psychoanalysis took place during a time when Fromm was developing his key ideas on social character. Yet when we look back at the history of the Interpersonal School and the Institute, the question of society is often absent, even though Fromm’s name has remained prominently connected with both.

What happened to the place of society in the formation and development on the Interpersonal Psychoanalysis? Answering this question, I believe, can provide essential insights not just into the history of the William Alanson White Institute, but into the larger problem of why psychoanalysis has struggled for so long to understand and address the centrality of society and social forces. I will suggest that Fromm was many decades ahead of his time. In the 1930s and 1940s, Fromm had already introduced many of the key ideas we associate with today’s social turn. I will show how prescient Fromm’s thinking really was, and how relevant his ideas remain for understanding that the fields of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis are inherently social, cultural and political in nature. I believe we have much to learn from Fromm’s pioneering work and the ways in which he bridged psychoanalytic practice with social and political theorizing. As such, this presentation will address the challenges facing psychoanalytic practice today, examine the role of the social turn, and demonstrate the continued relevance of Fromm’s thinking.

Friedson, Dr. Meredith Lynn

Dying to be born: How defenses against love keep humanity shackled to a necrophilic orientation

Humanity is in crisis, and has been accelerating towards its own destruction. On a global scale, this is evident in: apathy towards climate change and the rapid extinction of many living species; the cycle of genocide and war being waged in the service of greed, domination, and destruction; and a continued path towards the even further polarization and solidification of nationalist, fascist, and xenophobic ideology and behaviors. Zooming in on the United States, one need only observe the plethora of issues plaguing that society to know that it is very sick indeed.

Locating myself as a citizen of the U. S., in this paper, I examine a multitude of crises through the lens of Fromm’s ideas, including: 1) the recent rise in explicit white supremacist propaganda and terroristic behaviors; 2) the systemic oppression of Black and Brown people; 3) the increasing visibility of blatant hatred and bigotry in the U.S., including recent legislation against women and LGBTQ+ people, and; 4)

the development of self-destructive subgroups like anti-maskers, science deniers, and “alternative facts” conspiracy theorists.

The work of Erich Fromm is essential – now more than ever – to urgently address the problems facing humankind. In this paper, I apply Fromm’s concepts of mature love, the productive character, alienation, the necrophilic orientation, and sane vs. insane societies to the problems we collectively face as a species. In the spirit of Fromm, I explore the ways in which all of these problems are a reflection of our collective failure to overcome our separateness through mature love and are a byproduct instead of our destructive, compensatory defenses that only further our alienation and deadness. Woven throughout this is of course a critique of the noxious effects of capitalism and the consumption mentality of the west.

If we take seriously Fromm’s description of humanity as being in the very beginning stages of its own birth, as well as his assertion that it takes a long time over the course of one’s life to be fully born into a complete, integrated, individual capable of self-love (and by extension the capacity to love all other living beings), then we must adapt his ideas in order to correct the course of our current trajectory. Fromm describes in depth what our society needs and what poses a danger. We need only pay close attention to what has already been written in an effort to not compulsively repeat our own history in a tumultuous struggle to be born.

Funk, Dr. Rainer

Humanistic transformation and the Ego-oriented social character

Fromm's decisive scientific contribution can be seen in the fact that he developed a theory and method to explain how society is represented in the individual with their own psychic structure formation—the social character. Hence in a first part an outline of this theory and method is presented. In the course of his life, Fromm described in detail a number of social character formations and examined their alienating and pathogenic impacts as “socially patterned defects”. Therefore, anyone exploring questions of *humanistic* transformation with Fromm in mind cannot avoid dealing with those alienating effects of social character orientations that dominate personal and public thought, feeling, and acting today.

Using the example of the authoritarian character conceived by Fromm, it is relatively easy to understand from a historical distance what the "socially patterned defects" consist of and how a *humanistic* transformation ought to look. This will be illustrated in a second part.

That *humanistic* transformation means something quite different for a social character that is currently becoming more and more dominant, will be showed in a third section regarding what I called the “Ego-oriented character” and which I have analyzed in the last decades with Fromm's method. Above all, Ego-oriented people want to be creative in their conscious experience and construct with tools of technical creativity reality in a new and different way, independent of and free from all natural handicaps or social restraints, but also increasingly independent from their own thinking, feeling and imagining – that is to say from their *human* creativity.

Hietalahti, Dr. Jarno

Humanism contested. Three Frommian answers to antihumanism, transhumanism and posthumanism

In this presentation I will introduce three contemporary philosophical challenges to humanism (antihumanism, transhumanism and posthumanism) and offer potential replies for these based on Erich Fromm's social psychoanalytical works. Briefly put, 1) antihumanism argues that humanism is too focused on the individual human beings and does not grasp the significance of networks. According to the famous claim by Michel Foucault in the *Order of Things* (1966), the concept of human being can be 'erased like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea.' 2) Transhumanism, in a slightly different way, argues that humanity can be left behind, and that the ideal of human perfection can be achieved through bio-technological enhancements (e.g., Yuval Noah Harari's *Homo Deus*, 2015). This tradition claims that the species of human being will be overcome by a new, advanced creature. Finally, 3) posthumanists (e.g., Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman*, 2013) problematize the very subject in humanism, and claim that we should step away from the anthropocentric ways of conceptualizing the world. According to many a posthumanist, humanism is the reason why the whole Earth is in such a horrible condition. I argue that Erich Fromm's works offer potential answers to the three challenges. 1) It has been evident since Fromm's writings from the 1930s that the human subject is constituted in reciprocal relationships; we are not human beings in any relevant sense if we are not related to others (see also *Escape from Freedom* [1941] and *The Sane Society* [1955]). Following Fromm's social thinking, humanism is always very aware of the significance of the human relations. Furthermore, 2) the idea of human perfection should be seen from an ethical and social psychological perspective, not as a process of making particular human beings stronger, faster or more intelligent (see especially *The Revolution of Hope* [1968], also *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* [1973]). While trying to build the so-called perfect world (that is never finished but always in process), we need more ethical caring than physical capabilities. Finally, 3) we can draw from Fromm's written works the idea that we are first and foremost human beings, and this is our greatness but implies also our limitedness (see *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* [1962]). This position cannot be escaped, and therefore, humanity is the foundation for ontological, epistemological, and ethical considerations. Our worldview is necessarily positioned on the human condition in the world (see *The Heart of Man* 1964). This does not mean that we could not care for nature; quite the contrary, Fromm is one of the rare mid-1900s social analytics who have been worried about the state of nature. To summarize, Fromm's socialist humanism besides promotes the well-being of the human species in general, also tries to find ways how the whole world could flourish. In this process, we must consider both the individual human beings as well as the whole society.

Hornung, Dr. Severin, Christine Unterrainer and Thomas Höge

Normative foundations of neoliberal economism and radical humanism in society, organizations, and individuals: A dialectic multi-level framework for social transformation.

Extending theorizing on current challenges facing work and organizational psychology, this conceptual contribution draws on the critique of neoliberal ideology in conjunction with radical humanism and psychoanalytic social psychology according to Erich Fromm to deconstruct oppositional normative foundations in contemporary societies, organizations, and individuals. Developed is a dialectic and dynamic multi-level framework model of the ideological undercurrents shaping political-economic, organizational-institutional, and individual-psychodynamic structures and processes. Integrating

dialectic antipodes of genuine ideas versus interest-guided ideology with basic tenets of social character theory, neoliberal economic doctrines and antithetical humanist philosophical concepts are contrasted as antagonistic political, social, and psychological or “fantasmatic” logics. With regard to abstract political logics pervading legal and socio-cultural institutions at the societal (macro-) level, this refers to the antipodes of individualism vs. individuation, competition vs. solidarity, and instrumentality vs. emancipation. On the applied (meso-) level of social logics shaping organizational and employment practices in the neoliberal workplace vs. humanistic management, discussed antipodes resemble self-reliance vs. self-actualization, contests vs. community, and rationalization vs. transformation. On the individual (micro-) level of fantasmatic logics, based on psychoanalytic theory, corresponding exemplary neoliberal fantasies are derived and positioned against antithetical aspects of humanist consciousness, specifically, success vs. evolution, superiority vs. equality, and submission vs. empowerment. The resulting matrix of the normative fabric of advanced capitalist societies is interpreted with reference to social character theory. Specifically, foci of social relatedness (person/self/identity, people/others/interactions, and power/authorities/institutions) are suggested as criteria for structuring content dimensions and as conceptual bridges to core components of relevant social character tendencies (ego-oriented, marketing, and authoritarian). Additional parallels and communalities between analytical social psychology and psychological theorizing on ideologies are developed, resulting in an interactive dialectic and dynamic framework for organizing contemporary research and applications on neoliberal ideology and its countertendencies. Among others, stressing the fundamental unity of insights regarding external and internal realities, complementarity of denaturalization and critique of societal ideologies with critical self-reflection and personal development is emphasized. Applications of the presented dialectical matrix as a model for social transformation from neoliberal economic ideologies towards ideals of radical humanism on different levels are discussed.

Hunt, Prof. Dr. Shamim

Frommian tripartite self and societal transformation

In search for identity in the multicultural societies, humans tend to become nostalgic and look to their societal history to become authentic. This is obvious from the latest U.S supreme court ruling of overturning reproductive rights in which the court claimed that it was returning to the tradition. There was no argument in the decision that this was for the betterment of the society. This blind turn to tradition uses religion and morality to justify itself even though it has the opposite effect, of creating misery, especially amongst the poor people. Since the politicians are not thinking about the common good, instead of trying to seek solutions from the top-down approach in the politicians; we need to bring societal transformation from the bottom-up, from the individual; which he calls productive orientation. In other words, humans are creative beings, and if each of us develop ourselves, that is achieve positive freedom social character can change. To develop oneself one needs to realize our tripartite self. Fromm emphasizes the importance of emotions as Fromm discusses in his chapter 7 of his work, *Escape from Freedom*. It is only thorough getting in touch with our emotions humans can individuate themselves. This individuation makes one to think for themselves and creates empathy for others. We can see this notion develop in Fromm’s later work *The Sane Society* in which he proposes that we should develop the emotional feminine aspect of our humanity. He explicates that by developing our feminine aspect we will become like a loving mother who cares for all her children. Unlike traditional philosophers’ division of emotion versus reason, Fromm considers Reason to be the experience of feeling, and judging. For Fromm Thought is not the rational soul, but merely intelligence to operate the machine of the soul. Desires is of having things in the world, not id like in Freud and not appetite like in Plato. In this tripartite self: Emotion, Thought, and Desires, one needs to develop the

emotional part of the soul. This new Humanism of Fromm will truly transform our society for the better.

Jimenez, Prof. Dr. Dr. Luis

The existential relevance of Fromm's fear of freedom, social character, habitus and structures of feeling beyond normative neoliberalism

In this paper, I reflect on the psychosocial significance of current forms of gendered socialisation, some leading to emerging forms of social character as reflected in current academic and wider social interest in the complex relationships between contemporary gendered subjectivities, wellbeing and collective and individual identity development as dimensions of difference and diversity. I also then elaborate on how such efforts can also benefit from a consideration of Fromm's ethical theory of negative and positive freedom, central relatedness, mature love, autonomy and social character development as part of efforts to understand socio-psychoanalytically some emerging social character orientations and its uses in contemporary psychosocial research.

Keir, Dr. Jonathan

Erich Fromm's "Radical Humanism" and Tu Weiming's "Spiritual Humanism": A common economics

From Jewish and Confucian perspectives respectively, Erich Fromm and Tu Weiming emphasise individual self-cultivation as the cornerstone of humanism: 'From the emperor to the common man,' as Tu cites Mencius, 'all must take self-cultivation as the root.' Fromm argues in his 1922 doctoral dissertation that the Jewish ideal likewise 'rejects the idea that one class should work in order to enable another class to devote itself to culture. All are called to knowledge.' What are the economic implications of such egalitarian individualism? Both Fromm and Tu stress the socially embedded nature of individual identity, such that no spiritual life without instruction from the elders is possible. And yet the costs of such education are not infinite; a modicum of wealth, fairly distributed, would seem to cover it. This paper explores the economics of Tu's 'Spiritual Humanism' in the light of Fromm's early work on the Jewish Law. A common global path for 21st-century humanistic economics is charted with reference to contemporary voices from other traditions.

Kołoszyc, Dr. Dawid

Identity politics and the politics of difference: critical transformations in contemporary thought

The problem of identity dominates many of today's public debates and conflicts, revealing all kinds of confusing or outright contradictory assumptions concerning human nature, the nature of the self, and the nature of community. Yet the problem is not new, and the conflicts it reveals figure at the heart of some of the most significant debates in critical theory, psychoanalytic theory, gender theory, and other disciplines. Modern European intellectuals have tended to associate the discourse of identity with nationalist, ethnic, and racist concerns, and, by the 1960s, prominent progressive theorists were busy deconstructing the very notion of a fixed, stable identity in an attempt to make room for otherness, difference, and diversity. In the U.S. and Canada, such deconstructive strategies came into an uneasy

relationship with progressive identity politics, which, to a large extent, have relied on essentialist notions of identity for the sake of political effectiveness and self-empowerment, while regarding post-structuralist interrogations of identity as politically dubious or incapable of affirming the rights of oppressed groups in a consistent manner. The aim of this presentation is twofold: first, to argue that critical and psychoanalytic theories contain crucial resources for moving beyond the divisive character of such debates and developing more productive discourses on the question of identity; and, second, to draw attention to aspects of Erich Fromm's work which remain particularly relevant in this respect, in so far as they address the necessity of both identity and difference in the human experience.

Kubsda, Dr. Dr. Michael

Young peoples identity problems and the importance of Fromm's humanistic psychology for education science

In the last years teachers, socialworkers and educators report about a growing number of young people and adolescent with serious emotional problems like borderlne syndrom, depression, anxiety disorders and destructive behaviour. All these problems are not new phenomenons in the life stage of the adolescent, but alarming is the fact, that there is a constant growing number of young people, who are suffering by these serious emotional problems. A serious crises of identity can be admitted for a lot of young people. In this paper the role of school and the education system for this problem will be focused. Two questions are important. The first question is: What role plays the education system, does it help prevent these problems or does it make the problems worse? And the second is: How should the education system be arranged to prevent these problems? Fromms humanistic psychology with its theory of the social character can help to give some useful answers for the work of education. Connecting psychological, sociological and philosophical knowledge in his theory, Fromms methode can throw light on these problems and so is helpful for educational science. It gives the opportunity to look at the social-economic structures of society, the character orientation of individuals and the essential needs of human beings. It shows the interdependence of these spheres, but also the inconsistency of economic pressure and the essential human needs of human beings. The important point is the growing pressure of the globalised capitalism and its huge influence on the education system and on education methods. This influence is due to the fact that a new kind of social character orientation is needed for a fast changing new economy. But this new character orientation needs to neglect some basic human needs like a relatedness to others, a creativness in the own acting, a rootedness in a social surrounding, a sense of identity and a frame of orientation. The lack of these basic needs cause emotional illness. Fromm's theory makes it possible to look first at the changes in the social economic system, than second figure out the new wanted character orientation and thirt become aware of the changes in the education system and sozialisation, which are producing some of the emotional problems.

Kühn, Prof. Dr. Thomas

The importance of humanistic transformation from a psychological perspective

Social transformation processes are multi-layered and complex. They are particularly visible and thus also tangible in the advances of AI. It is precisely these advances that are exerting pressure on psychology to refocus on one of its initial and most essential questions: the question of the human soul and its significance in socially shaped interaction.

The work of Erich Fromm not only offers important starting points, but is of groundbreaking importance for future research and theory building. Fromm published the extremely far-sighted work "The Revolution of Hope - For a Humanization of Technology" as early as 1968. His examination of technological progress is at least as relevant today as it was more than 50 years ago, since risks, opportunities, and crossroads he foresaw can be seen even more clearly than they were to him in the mid-20th century. Fromm himself calls for a revolution of hope. In the face of a war raging in the middle of Europe, global threat scenarios between growing inequalities, divisions within societies and between different blocs, as well as a growing pessimism in the face of an imagined approaching climate catastrophe, the question is how appropriate hope for a humanistic transformation can be, what it is based on and what it can be directed towards.

In order to discuss possibilities and limits of humanistic transformation from a psychological perspective, an interlocked reflection of contemporary framework conditions of human existence and their social anchoring is required. For this purpose, I will deal with ambiguities and ambivalences of human existence and what meaning they have for lifelong identity work. Following the work of Fromm and Rainer Funk, this will be connected with a reflection on different social characters. Possible points of contact in formative currents of the scientific discourse will be named, especially in the socio-psychological discussion of social identities and the sociological distinction of different habitus.

Langer, Prof. Dr. Dr. Phil

The hope of a revolution of hope

Erich Fromm's programmatic book *The Revolution of Hope* met with very different responses at and after its publication in 1968. Reactions ranged from enthusiastic celebration of the author's "radical humanism" (Schultz 1974) and the "eloquent and judicious humanist [book] which is to move toward a personal appeal to action" (Montagu 1968) to more strident ones of Fromm as a "philosopher of late capitalism" (Oertel 1973) whose books had "become shallow products of an entrenched ideological system" (Dantlgraber 1974). It seems reasonable to assume that this polarization has not least to do with a surplus of meaning - often also ideological - of the two concepts of revolution and hope that give the book its title, which Fromm makes strong in his book, but at the same time does not develop much theoretically, thus opening up a - quite productive - space for interpretations (but also misunderstandings). In my contribution, I would like to follow the discursive traces that Fromm laid with the two terms and condense them by recourse to two influential thinkers who wrote central works almost at the same time as Fromm: Hannah Arendt's (1963) *On Revolution* and Ernst Bloch's (1954) *The Principle of Hope*. (With the conflation of the three authors I am - as I have just been realizing a little startled, a little amused, a lot excited while doing background research at the moment of writing these lines - not alone. In a recent contribution to a sociology of hope, this is also staged by Gili and Mangone (2022).) Despite paradigmatic differences, exciting similarities can nevertheless be identified, ranging from the socio-critical foundation to the struggle for (in detail sometimes different) humanistic conceptions of society. In a condensed and unifying reading of the three authors, I hope to be able to overcome the ideological positions that have been displayed in the reception and thus contribute to a differentiated actualization of Fromm's book, which could be more important than ever in view of the pressing problems of the present.

Langman, Prof. Dr. Lauren

Humanistic socialism: The political economy of a “Sane Society”

For Marx, the critique of wage labor was not simply critical scholarship, but a vision of overcoming alienation qua estrangement, dehumanization, and objectification. Fromm integrated the Marxist critique with an interactional psychoanalysis of “social character”. Today, between authoritarian, reactionary populisms, deadly wars, conflicts, and climate change, it becomes easy to be pessimistic and cynical about the possibilities of social transformation. Fromm was one of the first scholars to read the then newly discovered 1844 Manuscripts. Notwithstanding WWII and the Holocaust, Fromm envisioned a “sane society” in which all could find genuine fulfillment of essential needs for relatedness/biophilia (solidarity/community) identity, transcendence, rootedness, and a framework and object of devotion, where people might find creative self-fulfillment, value being over having, and live in harmony with each other, while technology would serve human needs rather than fill corporate coffers, and people live in harmony with Nature, instead of its domination and exploitation. Capitalism, based on class domination, inequality and exploitation could never become a basis for a humanistic society. Rather, Fromm embraced a vision of a “sane society”, a postcapitalist, humanistic society in which “productive” social characters might find fulfillment, meaning and harmony/solidarity. Joining Manheim’s notion of “cohort flow” with “dynamic character” change has rekindled critical perspectives and contentious mobilizations that have fostered multitudes of antiauthoritarian, progressive social movements opposing racism, sexism, homophobia, ethnocentrism, a reactionary nationalisms and global warming that would transform capitalism from a system of domination and exploitation to a postcapitalist society of freedom, creative self-fulfillment, empathy with others, sharing, caring and dignity for all. Thus, Fromm’s humanistic vision is based on actors who join progressive social movements with the humanistic goals, values and leadership to seek a post capitalist society where the freedom and belonging of each depends on the freedom and belonging of all.

Lorenzen, Prof. Dr. Sünje

Is home office the modern Boimondau? - An economic psychology discussion on the compatibility of work, life and family in the home office

Industrialization has meant that work and life today take place in different places. In his study "The Sane Society" (1955a), Erich Fromm presents the self-managed watch case factory "Boimondau". The working community "Boimondau" is an attempt to take back something of this separation of work and life. The watch case factory gives convincing insights "of the possibilities of the transformation of our industrial organization" (p. 307) writes Erich Fromm. All who lived and worked in "Boimondau" were co-owners and organized their lives together. In addition to the work in the watch case factory, there were kindergartens, communal kitchens, farming, and opportunities for further education. The participants were concerned with a new way of living together on a jointly developed ethical basis that had the full development of the human being as its goal. Clemens Fuest, the president of the Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (Ifo), writes in his book "Wie wir unsere Wirtschaft retten. Der Weg aus der Corona- Krise" (2020), how important it is to think in this time of crisis about how we want to organize our work today and also in the future in order to be able to meet future challenges, such as climate change, digitalization and pandemics as a society. He writes: "Impulses for innovation are (currently) emerging and creativity is in demand. Those who use the time of crisis to develop new ideas and skills are better prepared for the challenges ahead." (S. 97) We are currently seeing a trend toward home office work. In my presentation, I would like to look at what connections can be made between

Boimondau and home office work. Boimondau was a countermovement to industrialized working and living conditions. Working in the home office can set "impulses for innovation" that we gain from the current crises. I would like to discuss whether home office also has a humanizing effect. In this perspective, I discuss empirical and theoretical contributions from economic psychology research.

Maciel, Prof. Dr. Fabricio

Capitalism and authoritarianism in Erich Fromm: insights on the Brazilian case

In this paper, I would like to mobilize the work of Erich Fromm in order to discuss the specificity of authoritarianism that emerges today on a global scale, as well as its relation to the foundations of contemporary capitalist culture. For this, I will start from empirical observations based on the Brazilian case, in which we witness the unprecedented strengthening in our recent history of the extreme right, personified in the figure of Jair Bolsonaro. In a society of profound inequality like the Brazilian one, this phenomenon is evidently related to the perverse effects that capitalism has caused on a global scale since the 1970s, and especially since the 2008 crisis. In this sense, I propose to think of Bolsonarism and other similar movements in the world, such as Trumpism, as a social identity, providing its supporters with a cognitive and affective identification, in the face of their sense of revolt and social non-belonging, with a charismatic nationalist leader. This identification can be understood with Fromm's analysis of the "escape from freedom" that he performs in the face of the phenomenon of fascism, with which he understands that, in modernity, our difficulty in being free can lead us to the attachment to this kind of affective force of a higher order. This analysis also intends to mobilize Fromm's idea of social character, in the sense of thematizing the median profile of individuals that will be built in contemporary authoritarian cultural contexts. This is fundamental to understand, for example, how the phenomena of Trumpism and Bolsonarism, among others, can survive the election or not of their candidates, causing the germ of personality, habitus, and authoritarian character to remain alive even in societies considered traditionally democratic.

McLaughlin, Prof. Dr. Neil

Why Fromm matters for understanding left, right and liberal authoritarianism today

Fromm is increasingly important today because he offers a sociologically and historically sophisticated psycho-social theory of authoritarianism that addresses the threats to democracy we face from a range of different political movements. Right-wing populism and Fascism are the major threats to democracy and freedom today as they were when Fromm wrote *Escape from Freedom* (1941). At the same time, the Left-Wing authoritarianism of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, and now Chinese Communist Party rule, also bring brutality, murder and the crushing of the human spirit to the center of world politics. Moreover, we are seeing the rise of new forms of authoritarianism spread by the organizational and cultural power of modern corporate institutions and new class cultural elites promoting what some people, rather misleadingly, call political correctness or wokeism. This presentation will make the case that Fromm's theories must be updated and used to theorize the politically diverse forms of threats to democracy that interact and feed each other. The example of the famous "grievance studies" or "Sokal squared" case will be discussed as an example that illustrates the problem.

Mella-Alcazar, Prof. Dr. Amihan April

Autism and social media from a Frommian perspective

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm focuses on the pitfalls of alienation due to the need for conformity to societal culture against the needs of the individual, to which he proposes the alternative of normative humanism as its antidote.

Autism spectrum disorder is a range of conditions exhibiting challenges in social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and non-verbal communications. The condition is usually accompanied by either physiological challenges such as seizure disorder or sensory sensitivities as well as mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression or attention issues. The autistic person often exists in her “own world”, not in compliance with societal standards and therefore, suffers from “alienation”.

Autism will be related to the rise of social media as a virtual culture that propels individuals to societal adherence. The study will draw parallels between how autism prioritizes the individual’s worldview as differentiated from social media as a purveyor of cultural norms at par with societal culture in the physical world.

Minchev, Prof. Dr. Plamen

Am I normal or how society shapes our understanding of normalcy

The question of who is normal or who is not is so crucial that it has been asked for many centuries. In ‘*The Sane Society*’ Erich Fromm (Fromm, 1955a) tries to define what a sane society would look like. This is undoubtedly a huge and a very difficult task which he undertakes. Rainer Funk also tries to define how we understand what is sane and what is not (Funk, 2006c). More importantly, the concept of social character can give us a good idea how the different societies understand sanity. In this respect we can find that the notion of sanity is not entirely the same in every society and at the same time there are many common characteristics. The psychologist must have in mind what is the social character of the society or the different groups in it in order to work properly with their clients. Their task is to create a situation that is not the same as the everyday life in the society, a situation that promotes sanity, that promotes that all feelings can be expressed, that nothing human is alien to me or to you. In order to do this, they must be aware of what is allowed and what is not allowed (i.e. repressed) by the society in terms of feelings, thoughts, etc.

Miri, Prof. Dr. Seyed Javad

The art of being: Reflections upon anxiety as a means towards growth

How does a human being grow? Is there any difference between development of a personality and growth of human person? It seems Erich Fromm distinguishes between development and growth and the latter cannot occur if there is no consciousness of pain. In other words, the art of being in the Frommian frame of reference is deeply intertwined with the willingness to experience pain. But the question is what the nature of this pain which could emancipate human being from the necrophilic state of being is? Could reason redeem us? Our reason, argues Fromm, could function to the degree to which is not fooled by greed. This is to argue that reason alone is not emancipatory. In order to overcome the necrophilic state of the human condition we need to understand the nature of both outer and inner chains. This is to reemphasize that without effort "and willingness to experience pain and anxiety, nobody grows, in fact nobody achieves anything worth achieving". In this paper, we

attempt to reflect upon the nature of anxiety which Fromm deems essential in the growth of human being which is conceptualized as the art of being.

Morelock, Jeremiah

Toward living a better future: Political vision and the productive orientation

Much leftist thought today is devoted to critiquing all that exists, apparently at the expense of seriously thinking about and imagining a different future. Ignoring the problem of alienation, it dwells on a different – albeit undoubtedly a pressing - issue: the identification and elimination of various social inequalities. Whether the focus of critique is racial injustice, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc., the chief arguments concerning social change on the contemporary academic left revolve around the problem of group oppression. As vitally important as eliminating domination is, an ethical vision restricted to the commitment to ending social inequality and ending domination cannot be of help in illuminating the interpersonal and experiential dimensions of life under contemporary capitalist society and consequently cannot inspire hope. This critique of the status quo is therefore not only incomplete but is incapable of establishing a link in the leftist imaginary between the rejection of the status quo and social eroticism and life-affirmation, both of which are crucial for inspiring social change and speak to the fundamental experiential difference between a repressive and oppressive capitalist order and a radically different, emancipated, more human social order. Fromm fills this gap, and his work is therefore indispensable for efforts to invigorate the left today. In his work on the productive orientation and the 'being' mode, Fromm provided a psychoanalytically inflected vision of a better and qualitatively different way of life, connecting it to the need for wider sociopolitical change.

Pafe, Rachel Elizabeth

Unethical dogmas and an ethics of hope: Erich Fromm and Hans Jonas on Gnosticism's place in societal transformation and revolt

In the intellectual space of Weimar Germany, multiple factors converged to create a fascination with early Christian movements called Gnosticism that came to represent a metaphor for an evil demiurge that ruled the immanent world, a transcendent god beyond, and human's resulting alienation from the world. In the context of this metaphor's usage in the polemics between liberal Protestantism and Judaism in Germany from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, "dogma" was a notoriously undefined term often used in reference to the fixed, unchanging nature of the other religion. In my lecture, I will examine the intersection of how Eric Fromm and Hans Jonas use the terms Gnosticism and dogma as situated within the conversation on the formation of social identities connected to religion. I will compare Fromm and Jonas along two major points, unethical dogmas and an ethics of hope, to argue that both thinkers reject strict adherence to any particular belief system and propose a heterodox ethics based on faith in human ethical and political engagement in the immanent world.

I specifically examine Erich Fromm's 1931 "The Dogma of Christ," an investigation of dogma as a means of societal study. Fromm uses psychoanalytic terms to analyze the situated social classes of early Christian believers from Christ to the major dogmatic alterations by the Nicene Council (4 AD). He focuses on the changes to an early Christian movement once focused on apocalyptic class revolution and eventually subdued and appropriated by the Roman Empire. The idea of Gnosticism appears towards the end of the essay; it is dismissed as the Roman Empire and eventual Catholic Church's

consolidation of power and smothering of messianic hope. Hans Jonas' 1952 "Gnosticism and Modern Nihilism" posits a similarity between societal upheaval in the late antique period (3 AD) and modern times in order to parallel ancient Gnostic movements and modern Nihilism. He argues that analyzing both from a philosophical angle allows them both to update each other and can provide answers to the existential turmoil roiling post-WWII Western consciousness. Jonas warns against both Gnosticism and Nihilism as fixed, dualistic, and dangerous systems that deny human hope and action in the immanent world. I posit that Fromm and Jonas mix Jewish ethical values with their respective disciplinary backgrounds to connect to tropes from the earlier German liberal Jewish-Protestant debate on dogma. Both thinkers outline ethical influences from Judaism in order to analyze their current situations and imagine them in terms of eventual political action in the immanent world.

Patania, Prof. Dr. Stefano Luca

The humanistic transformation in health coaching: a new pragmatic role for ethics

In a recent discussion within the Italian Health Coaching Association (AIHC), the importance of re-establishing the foundations of the identity of the Health Coach emerged, with the aim of an approach that sees as a priority the interest of the well-being of the person. It was like the Health Coaches were followers of a shift given by some progressive applied facilitation techniques and lacking a humanistic concept that could clearly guide a natural human transformation. In fact, according to the discussion in the Coaching Labs, the methodological setting of coaching techniques appeared to be mainly based on Performance. There seemed to be a lack of a rational basis of the profession that would inspire the Coach in interpreting ethical dilemmas in the Client-Society relationship. They felt incomplete as Health Coaches because they lack a core identity in their methodological approach. This methodological deficiency in the past often caused a superficial and harmful management of the value system of the individual and of the communities and companies in coaching support, negatively affecting personal and organizational wellbeing. The philological research carried out by the AIHC scientific committee confirmed with its own observation the scheme proposed by Iordanou et al. related to the ethical shift of coaching techniques in healthcare systems. To the vision of the ethical shift our observation added elements of merit not addressed before and a more ontological and humanistic interpretation. A further observation revealed how the general foundations of the method were compatible in general with the thinking of the exponents of the "third force" of psychology, and in particular Erich Fromm, the only one to rigorously and completely address the ethical analysis of the personal development dynamics. From our point of view, what makes Fromm the reference for Health Coaching is that through the objective humanistic ethics, he demonstrates his full faith in human nature and links it to the development of potential and well-being. On one hand he supports the natural trend of humankind to be productive and healthy. On the other hand, he exactly describes the polarity between individual and society as a dynamic tension between two forces: the performance required of the individual by the social system, and the person's tendency to one's wellbeing, from an ethical point of view. The past attempt of coaching techniques in the ethical shift has been to resolve this tension, mostly by promoting performance. We noticed different kind of approaches dealing with ethics dilemmas. Thanks to Fromm's approach, today the Health Coach will be able to balance this tension in a more harmonious way, facilitating productivity or positive displacement of the social character.

Philipson, Dr. Dr. Ilene

From the lonely crowd to the lonely mob: Fromm on the social consequences of loneliness

In 1950, Erich Fromm's patient and student, David Riesman, published a best-selling book entitled *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*. Drawing on Fromm's books *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself*, Reisman described the ascendent "other directed" person who creates him or herself by "paying close attention to the signals from others." Haunted by an inner loneliness, such people "no more assuage their loneliness in a crowd of peers than one can assuage one's thirst by drinking sea water" (307). This paper seeks to explain the current phenomenon of the cyber mob which uses tactics of ridicule, denunciation, and often threats of violence to silence, exclude, intimidate, and "cancel" others online. It will be argued that at root, this form of group behavior is founded in a profound form of aloneness and alienation brought about by neoliberal society controlled by an indifferent market. As traditional institutions of solidarity and community such as the family and religion have withered, the lone individual faces the cruel fates of an unjust and unequal social order alone. As Erich Fromm explained in his description of the underlying causes of fascism, "what man most dreads is isolation. [...] Unless he belonged somewhere, unless his life had some meaning and direction, he would feel like a particle of dust and be overcome by individual insignificance" (1941:18, 20).

Romanetto, Matheus Capovilla

Life is but a joke: phantasy and reality in the Brazilian political process

Bolsonarism promoted an anthropological counter-revolution. It wanted to change the way people are. With that, political forms were transposed onto all major institutions in the country. Families, friendships, religious communities, all had their component relationships reinscribed in the language of political dispute and its forms of sociability. The conflicts inhering in such relationships were pressed into condensing and finding expression in increasingly homogeneous terms. Loyalty to political values went at odds with the preservation of the social tissue. To this corresponded an imaginization of Brazilian social relations. The weight of phantasy in relating to others grew. This formal change was one of the vehicles allowing Bolsonarism to modify the contents of our sociability. It brought political relations to a contradictory position. They acted at the same time as an instrument for disrupting the previous status quo, and as a compensatory force, guaranteeing a certain degree of rootedness and conservation amidst the generalized social conflict.

Rosa, Prof. Dr. Hartmut

From affirmation and responsibility to transformation and responsibility: Resonance as a relational mode of being

The lecture will explore the difference between two different modes of social encounter: 'Echo' is a form of relationship based on autonomy and identity; it seeks the affirmation of the latter through distinction from, or nostrification of, the 'other'. By contrast, resonance is a mode of relation that seeks transformation of identity through open encounter with the 'other'. It defines a 'medio-passive' form of activity which implies vulnerability as well as self-efficacy on the side of the subjects involved. The lecture will go on to discuss the social implications of such a mode of existence and explore its potential for an alternative conception of society.

Silver, Prof. Dr. Catherine B.

The functions of negativity and benign aggression as tools in the transformation of the self: Toward humanistic values in and out of treatment

Fromm's socio-psychoanalytic analysis of relatedness combined with a focus on negativity and benign aggression are at the center of his analysis of social change. In my work as a therapist, I explore how benign aggression can become a source of emotional energy, together with an illusory sense of power, self-criticism and paranoid fears. Individuals faced with severe lack of economic resources, social recognition and emotional connectedness show the strongest self-accusatory attacks and negative forms of attachment toward self and others. What sets Fromm's approach apart from other psychoanalytic traditions—especially neo-Freudian and Object Relations theorists—is the critical understanding of the unconscious work of the negative due to societal demands rather than only inner ones. Fromm's socio-psychoanalytic approach emphasizes the importance of humanistic values that can emerge from a critical understanding of the conflicts and tensions due to the diverge relationships between individual needs, social responsibilities and structural societal constraints. The interaction between positive attachments and benign aggression in treatment can create a transitional emotional space where it is possible to share critical insights regarding the nature of co-dependency, the dangerous appeal of narcissism, as well as an awareness of the impact of an internalized societal character structure, that is linked to expectations of conformity. My clinical work provided me with shared experiences of how negativity and benign aggression can be a self-protective device against powerlessness, providing the ability to say "No" to power, to resist arbitrary authority and social control. Critical awareness and sharing can open-up an area of freedom around humanistic values. My use of a Frommian approach in therapy showed me that what started as attacks and attempts to conform to power and authority could be gradually transformed into a relatedness based on empathy and a sense of hope between equals.

Smith, Prof. Dr. David N.

Social character, political psychology, and radical nativism

Like the protagonist in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who discovers, to his surprise, that "For more than forty years I have been speaking prose without knowing it," many of the best political psychologists, and others who study nativism and the radical right, have recently been echoing Erich Fromm without knowing it. This is plain, in particular, with respect to Fromm's typology of character orientations. In this paper, I show that two of Fromm's main character types – the marketing and exploitive orientations – reappear, under other names, with significant implications, in what Bob Altemeyer calls "Right-Wing Authoritarianism" (RWA) and what Felicia Sidanius & Jim Pratto call "Social Dominance Orientation" (SDO). Since RWA and SDO have been the subjects of a burgeoning "dual process" literature which, over the course of the past quarter century, has identified many empirically significant but under-theorized trends, I offer a Frommian perspective on the selling of radical nativism and exploitive authoritarianism in today's United States. As marketing professionals have been especially quick to realize, there is a deep connection between Donald Trump's ongoing effort to market the culture war and the punitive, domineering orientations of his radically nativist base. Exploring that connection is my aim in this paper.

Sullivan, Prof. Dr. Gavin Brent

Fromm's study of workers and employees on the eve of the Third Reich: Exploring reanalysis

Fromm's (1984) book on "The working class in Weimar Germany" which was edited and introduced by Wolfgang Bonss remains an underappreciated classic study in psychosocial and, indeed, interdisciplinary research. The findings are also still highly relevant to contemporary political psychology for reasons that become clearer in the original German manuscript title: "Arbeiter und Angestellte am Vorabend des Dritten Reiches". Following two archive visits, respectively, to the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (IfS) and the Fromm Archive in Tübingen, this paper explores the potential for a re- or further analysis of the remaining corpus of 584 completed and analysed hand-written surveys. Using a combination of interpretations from the book and original responses conceptualized as condensed and "small narratives", a reanalysis explores the "relationship between the individual's emotional make-up and his political opinions" (Bonss, 1984, p. 42). The characterization of a third type of ultimately "unreliable" adherents of left-wing parties who "were filled with hate and anger against everyone who had money and who appeared to enjoy life" (p. 43) and eventually "transformed from unreliable leftists into convinced National Socialists" (p. 43). Evidence from the available corpus is explored along with contemporary theoretical and empirical research on right and left-wing populists as well as supporters of reactionary politics. The possibility of using new but comparable versions of some of the original questions in contemporary qualitative research is discussed.

Šumiga, Dr. Dražen

Erich Fromm and existential relatedness, alienation and humanistic ethics – Socially oriented psychotherapeutic praxis

Erich Fromm was an important psychoanalyst, humanist and social critic. In his works he critically explored different social pathologies (alienation, war, aggression, and socially patterned narcissism) and oriented psychoanalytic practice towards the dialogue between the society and the individual subject. One of the important historical Events which changed the whole World was the pandemic. It made us think in what way psychotherapy was still possible. If we apply Fromm's social insights we can see the emergence of the unprecedented paradoxical human situation: isolation and alienation, aggression, a decrease of the basic human needs for relatedness and authentic human contact, high levels of depression, suicidal ideations, loneliness and existential anxieties. We will explore how the above mentioned social conditions unconsciously pre-structured the relational matrix of the psychotherapeutic dyad. This unconsciously pre-structured social-relational field influences the psychotherapeutic dyad. The conscious awareness of these unconscious social processes is crucial for the understanding how psychotherapy is situated in the larger social reality. Following Fromm, we will emphasize that psychotherapists are part of the society and that health and well-being represents a common concern of the whole of society and of different scientific disciplines. To counteract the postmodern 'condition' of the alienation and fragmentation of the relational (attachment) bonds between the subjects and obsession with the success, an economic growth and unlimited enjoyment, we will explore Fromm's humanistic and existential concepts which can help us to conceptualize socially oriented psychotherapeutic practice. Fromm developed the following concepts which are important for the understanding of psychotherapeutic practice and therapeutic relationship: a) core-to-core relatedness; b) notion of the social filter (unconscious social barrier which prevents the eruption of the unconscious desires in the social body); and c) being as a process which creates itself

in the history - transformative psychotherapeutic time-place matrix. In the last part we will examine the ethical and philosophical notion of the 'Face of the Other' which was developed by French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. We think that Fromm's idea of the core-to-core relatedness and notion of the human Face, which demands acceptance, empathy and authenticity from the therapist, offers much needed humanistic perspective in the postmodern Society.

Thompson, Prof. Dr. Michael

The ontological dimensions of Fromm's humanism

The concept of humanism has been under attack in intellectual and academic circles in recent years. This intellectual climate has led to caricatures of Fromm's work and engendered the notion that it is naïve and unrealistic. In this paper I defend the radicalism and deep intellectual sophistication of Fromm's concept of humanism and its relevance for a renewed critical theory of society and analysis of the self. Fromm's ideas are rooted in what I refer to as a "criticalontological structure of thought," which begins with Aristotle and runs through Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, and Freud. Human beings, from this vantage point, are defined by the development of capacities via relations that shape the creative, active and social dimensions of their being. With respect to Fromm's work, this approach has served as a foundation for diagnostic as well as critical judgment, both in the clinical and the political contexts. The intellectual framework underlying Fromm's humanism provides us with a context for judgment and for diagnosing the pathologies of self and society today, and is potentially helpful for constructing a defense of humanism in an age slouching toward nihilism.

Topolska, Dr. Ewelina

Towards a biophilic society: Erich Fromm in a Spanish literature class

The aim of this presentation is to demonstrate how Erich Fromm's ideas can be applied and propagated in the context of a literature class. As I work both as a Spanish literature professor and a psychotherapist, the psychoeducational aspect of literature inevitably tends to come to the forefront in my classroom discussions with the students, as well as in my research.

The presentation will focus on the work with the texts by Rosa Montero, a psychology graduate herself, whose novels and non-fictional writings overflow, quite exceptionally when compared to most of the contemporary literary production, with a love of life in all its unpredictability and complexity. Despite dealing often with very disturbing topics, e.g. the death of her husband (in *La ridícula idea de no volver a verte* /*The Ridiculous Thought of Not Seeing You Again*), or the suffering that a delinquent child can cause his/her parents (in *La buena suerte* / *Good Luck*), Montero knows how to inspire hope in the reader, turning the harsh, sometimes extreme experiences she describes into opportunities for the development and growth of her characters (or herself, in the autobiographical texts). The author emphasises the crucial role of joy in human life, as well as the importance of love, understood above all as a generalised attitude to the world, not only as an emotional bond with a chosen person. Although Montero does not make direct references to Erich Fromm, it may be concluded that through her creative work (and through her activity on social media) she promotes the principles of the biophilic ethics, being herself an embodiment of the productive type as defined by Fromm.

In view of the fact that applying this thinker's concepts to literary analysis is a novel approach, the methodology of this project will be explained, along with the presentation of examples of particular tasks designed for the students, as well as their evaluation of the course.

Varela, Prof. Dr. Pablo

Violence, destructiveness and social character in Mexico

Psychoanalysis since Freud has tried to give an explanation to human aggressiveness and destructiveness, and Erich Fromm from a humanist psychoanalysis perspective has tried to understand and explain this phenomenon as well. Mexico is a country that since 2006, through and as a consequence of the so-called "War on Drugs" initiated by then-President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, has been involved in a wave of violence not seen since the Mexican Revolution that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, and that has been confronted with different strategies by the different governments that have existed since that date, but based on an armed response through the army, which far from diminishing the problem has increased and criminal groups are no longer only limited to drug trafficking, but also to many other illicit and violent acts. The current government has tried a new strategy, which, without renouncing an armed response against criminal groups, also seeks to go deeper, trying to find ways out and answers to the social problems that are behind these behaviors such as poverty, lack of opportunities, poor education, marginalization, classism and discrimination, gender bias, etc. I believe that, from Fromm's perspective, considering the social character as an element that influences unconscious social motivations, this phenomenon of violence and aggressiveness in Mexico can be understood and explained in part, in addition to the fact that it can also offer some alternatives.

Villet, Dr. Charles

Fromm's existential wager: Screen existence and the transformation of the human situation

Fromm imagines with a kind of wager what it would be like to take away the cultural and technological devices that provide escape and addiction in our lives. His bet is that it would lead to neurosis on a mass scale, uncovering the reasons why we hold onto these devices with such fervor. Our cultural lifeworld keeps from view the freedom lost in the pursuit of being a normal human being. In a nutshell, culture normalizes individuals, but individuals also strive to be normal in line with culture. Fromm problematizes the idea of normalcy with an existential description of the human situation that appears in several of his works.

This description in *Man for Himself* introduces Fromm's idea that humans exhibit religious needs and strivings in their cultural and political life even when they do not ascribe to any religion. *The Sane Society* takes this description further in outlining these needs both in a positive and negative sense. In the latter work, Fromm describes the individual striving to be normal as a kind of socially patterned defect that is kept in place and camouflaged by culture. The processes and patterns of normalisation is what leads many people to become automatons, i.e., people who live inauthentically because their purpose in life is to simply fit in, which characterizes the personality engendered by this defect.

This paper seeks to explore Fromm's wager and update it by looking at the way that computerised technology and social media embodies the socially patterned defect. Our devices and their screens provide a highly effective tool that feeds the individual with a constant stream of the cultural opiate and its socially patterned defect. Thus, following Fromm, the aim of the paper will be to investigate how our daily use of computerised devices and social media embodies the Frommian description of the human situation in terms of the striving for religiosity and normalcy, and how it impacts the transformation of this situation in both a positive and negative sense.

The running hypothesis guiding these aims is that the nature of the human situation is radically altered by a so-called screen existence, i.e., a way of being in the world dominated by a multiplicity of screens, to such an extent that we need to rethink socialized subjectivity and the very notion of humanism. The paper will conclude with a sketch, pace Fromm, of the social character formed by this lifeworld of screens and social media.

Voigt, Katrin

Nationalism as collective narcissism: The pathology of an everyday practice

Since Micheal Billigs conception of a banal nationalism (1995), we understand nationalism not only as a passionate practice, as hot nationalism, nor uniquely as the extreme practice of so-called nationalists, hence singled out individuals. Rather, banal nationalism describes the omnipresent and still not harmless practice of producing and reproducing the construct of a nation in established democratic nationstates. This understanding was further developed by the approach of everyday nationhood (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008; Skey & Antonsich, 2017); yet with a new focus on the importance of ordinary people. Often missing in those approaches is a perspective of social inequality that differentiates not only ordinary people from elites but also renders visible the connection between the everyday nationalism of ordinary people and their specific material and social positionality. With the help of Erich Fromm, this vacancy can be closed. This paper focuses on Fromm's dialectic-materialistic approach (1992e) as well as his conception of nationalism as collective narcissism (1964a). With Fromm, a structural rather than an individualistic understanding of nationalism will be conducted, perceiving nationalism as an often unreflected pathology as well as an everyday practice, that is influenced by the society we live in and the specific way of production and way of life it provides.

Weber, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang G.

A democratic alternative to social alienation in the economy

The first part of this contribution will present an attempt to use Erich Fromm's conceptualization of social alienation for the empirical analysis of mindsets that impede a humanistic and sustainable eco-social transformation in business and in the consumer sphere. Related reflections on alienation theory from other scholars of Critical Theory are also included. Social alienation can result from socialization processes in such companies and market institutions in which "neoliberal" principles of the capitalist market economy are unconsiderately implemented. Five facets of social alienation were derived from the adopted critical-theoretical works: 1. marketing-oriented social character, 2. commodity fetishism, 3. economistic way of thinking and reification of people, 4. reification of societal relations, 5. impairment of a community-oriented, universal perspective-taking. Findings of a first validation study of questionnaire scales basing on these facets will be discussed.

In the second part, Erich Fromm's ideas about alternative economic and work principles will be taken up. The concrete utopia of an economic democracy sketched by Fromm in his works on communitarian socialism stands in marked contrast to the negative-dialectical "ban on alternatives" by other Critical Theorists. Based on two international research reviews, it will be discussed: 1. Can these humanistic alternatives hoped for by Fromm survive in capitalist societies? 2. to what extent do democratic enterprises exhibit characteristics that can counteract social alienation and promote the productive orientation of workers?

Yadav, Komal

Transforming our life-worlds: A theoretical reflection from the writings of Erich Fromm and Jiddu Krishnamurti

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, not only shed light on the subtle crisis & indifference which was going on our lives namely living as individualistic individual without much connection with others in our own cocoons, the madness in which we all running in our speed- oriented societies, the glitz of market and human beings tendency of hyper-consumerism. But the current pandemic also gave us a moment to reflect & think on question- where, as a society, as a human being we are leading. This contemplation compels us to rethink on our years of living and look for an alternative which is life-affirming, which helps us reconnect to our own selves but also to reconstruct our life- world constructively. While going through reflection & contemplation on these issues, author seek possibilities of transformation in the work of Indian thinkers like Jiddu Krishnamurti, M.K Gandhi & others sociological writing of like Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Zygmunt Bauman etc. This paper presentation will be based on the theoretical understanding of writing of these thinkers and looking at possibilities of transforming our life- world in their writings.