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THE LOVING SOCIETY: INTERPERSONAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE THOUGHT OF MARTIN BUBER AND ERICH FROMM

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of the requirements for Ordination

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Digest

"The Loving Society: Interpersonal and Social Relationships in the Thought of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm" explores the lives and interpersonal and social philosophies of two seminal thinkers of the 20th century, Martin Buber and Erich Fromm.

The first chapter presents biographies of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm. It examines the personal, educational, professional and Jewish background of the two thinkers. It highlights the major events and Jewish experiences in their lives that exerted an influence on their philosophies.

The second chapter explores their respective philosophies of interpersonal relations. Beginning with Buber, this chapter examines his theory of how human beings relate to the world in a two-fold way: I-It and I-Thou. It explores the development of Buber's philosophy of "dialogical" relations. This chapter then examines Fromm's philosophy of the human situation, the human need for relation, and his theory of productive love.

The third chapter explores their respective philosophies on society. It examines their analyses, critiques and proposed solutions to the problems of modern society. Beginning with Buber, this chapter looks at his analysis and critique of modern society, and examines his vision of *gemeinschaft* — genuine community — in a restructured society. This chapter then explores Fromm's analysis and critique of modern society, and examines his vision of a restructured "sane society."

The final chapter, chapter four, presents my analysis, critique, comparison and evaluation of the philosophies of Buber and Fromm. This chapter reveals the striking similarities between their two philosophies on

interpersonal relations and society, as well as showing where they diverge. It explores the Jewish elements of their respective philosophies. This chapter also includes a discussion about the value of their teachings, and it presents ways in which Buber's and Fromm's philosophies can be taught and practiced in the religious school and the synagogue.

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Preface

Three years ago, I came across a slim, little volume while I was browsing the HUC bookstore in Cincinnati. It was Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*. I had never heard of the book. I was vaguely familiar with the name of Erich Fromm. Yet the title intrigued me, so I purchased the book, unaware of what I was getting myself into. The book was a revelation to me. I read it again and again, fascinated by its brilliant ideas and observations.

Six years prior to this, I had come across another slim, little volume while browsing a Jewish bookstore in St. Louis. It was Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. I can't recall if I knew of the book or its author back then. Regardless, the title intrigued me, so I purchased the book, here too unaware of what I was getting myself into. I read *I and Thou* again and again, partly because I had difficulty understanding it. Yet the message of the book touched me deeply.

The teachings of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm continue to touch me deeply. In a sense, they both elaborate on that simple yet profound verse of *Genesis* in which God looks at Adam, the newly created human being, and remarks: "It is not good for Adam to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him."[1]

Both Buber and Fromm theorize about the nature of human beings. They each posit that we humans are aware of being existentially separate from one other, and that we have a fundamental need to overcome our separateness and relate to each other. Buber and Fromm each offer a highly developed paradigm of relating to others: Buber offers the "dialogical" relationship of "I-Thou" and Fromm offers the art of "productive" love.

As part of their focus on interpersonal relationships, both Buber and Fromm offer analyses, critiques, and proposed solutions to the problems of modern society. Their respective critiques aim at modern society's essential inability to foster dialogical and loving relationships; their respective solutions aim at restructuring society to engender dialogical and loving relationships.

The teachings of Buber and Fromm are as relevant today as they were when Buber first wrote *I and Thou* over 70 years ago and when Fromm wrote about *The Art of Loving* over 40 years ago. We still confront the interpersonal and societal issues that Buber and Fromm addressed earlier in this century. Moreover, I suggest, our interpersonal relations and societal problems have gotten considerably worse since the time of Buber's and Fromm's first writings. Therefore, now more than ever, I think their teachings are relevant to us.

This thesis thus explores interpersonal and social relationships in the philosophies of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm. As Buber and Fromm were each imbued with the Jewish tradition, this thesis also examines the personal, educational, professional and Jewish background of the two thinkers, highlighting the Jewish elements of their respective philosophies. Moreover, it reveals the striking similarity between their philosophies on interpersonal relations and society, as well as showing where they diverge. In addition, this thesis presents ways in which Buber's and Fromm's philosophies can be taught and practiced in the religious school and the synagogue.

This thesis utilizes the primary writings of Buber and Fromm. The research that went into it consists of their writings, as well as many secondary sources of books and articles about their philosophies and personal lives.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Michael A. Meyer, my teacher and thesis referee, for his guidance, patience, inspiration and generosity. I feel privileged to have studied and worked with Dr. Meyer, and I treasure the opportunity to

have delved into the thought and lives of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm, two of my favorite writers and thinkers.

Notes

[1] Gen. 2.18.

This is what the Holy One said to Israel:
My children, what do I seek from you?
I seek no more than that you love one another and honor one another.

Seder Eliyahu Rabbah

Chapter One

Prelude to Dialogue

"In the beginning is relation."[1] Reminiscent of the opening verse of the Hebrew Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"[2] this essential premise of relation informed the life and teaching of the man who penned it, Martin Buber.

Mordechai Martin Buber was born in Vienna in 1878. Some 80 years later, he remarked that he could still picture in his mind the Danube canal that flowed underneath his childhood home. He recalled the feeling of security that the Danube evoked in him as a small child — the "feeling of certainty that nothing could happen to me."[3] That sense of security that young Martin felt was soon broken. When he was three years of age, Buber's mother disappeared — left without leaving word as to why or where she was going. The man who would make authentic meeting between people central to his philosophy of dialogue — the man who would write "Love is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*"[4] — himself experienced as a child negation of the I-Thou in his most primary human relationship.

After young Martin's mother disappeared, he went to live with his paternal grandparents on their large estate near Lviv (Lemberg), Galicia. Martin Buber's grandfather Solomon Buber was a wealthy landowner, corn merchant and owner of phosphorite mines on the Austrian-Russian border. However, the business affairs of Solomon Buber were in the main managed by his wife Adele, allowing him time for scholarly Jewish pursuits.

Born into a rabbinical family, Solomon Buber devoted his time to writing and publishing scholarly editions of existing midrashim, providing introductions and annotations to the midrashic texts. In addition, he reconstructed midrashic texts that had been lost. In Martin Buber's own words, his grandfather was "a genuine philologist who is to be thanked for the first, and today still the authoritative, critical edition of . . . Midrashim."[5] A respected and beloved member of the Jewish community in Lviv, Solomon Buber was also admired and respected among the scholars and rabbis of his day.

Martin Buber credited his grandmother Adele with instilling within him a "love for the genuine word . . . love [that] was so direct and so devoted."[6]Buber himself did not formally go to school until age 10. Instead his grandmother had him tutored privately. Guided by his grandmother's vision of humanistic education, Buber studied philosophy and literature, receiving a thorough education in languages. He spoke German, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, English, French, and Italian. In addition to these languages, he could also read Spanish, Latin, Greek, Dutch, and other languages. His knowledge of languages turned out to be of considerable benefit to his grandfather. Young Martin helped his grandfather understand French phrases of Rashi for his scholarly manuscripts.

While his welfare and education were the direct responsibility of his grandparents from the time his mother left him at age three, Buber still maintained contact with his father, Carl, a successful mine operator and landowner. From the time he was nine years old, Buber spent each summer on his father's estate and at 14 he moved from his grandfather's estate to his father's townhouse. In his "Autobiographical Fragments," Buber described his father as a "wholly unsentimental and wholly unromantic man" who, nevertheless, "was concerned about genuine human contact with nature, an

active and responsible contact."[7] When it came to contact with people, Buber observed that his father was involved in the life of all the people who worked on his estate, and that he regularly practiced *tzedakah* face-to-face, abhorring impersonal forms of charity. Furthermore, Buber wrote of his father, "he was an elemental storyteller."[8] Storytelling was one of the many gifts for which Martin Buber would become famous.

During his childhood, there were at least two events in Buber's life which profoundly influenced his philosophy of dialogue. The first event occurred when he was four years old, one year after his mother had disappeared. In his "Autobiographical Fragments," Buber relates that his grandparents never spoke in his presence about what took place between his parents. As a young child, therefore, Buber expected that his mother would soon return. But he never dared ask his grandparents about the matter. One day when he was four years old, Buber was in the care of a neighboring girl several years older than he. While young Martin and the neighboring girl leaned against the balcony railing that overlooked his grandparents' courtyard, the girl made reference to Martin's mother, who he expected to soon return. The girl said to four-year-old Martin, "No she will never come back."

Buber would never forget the directness and honesty of that statement genuinely expressed by the neighboring girl. The encounter would inform his life's work: a philosophy of dialogue that consisted of genuine and direct meeting between two persons. In response to the girl's statement, Buber wrote:

> I know that I remained silent, but also that I cherished no doubt of the truth of the spoken words. It remained fixed in me; from year to year it cleaved even more to my heart, but after more than ten years I had begun to perceive it as something that concerned not only me, but all men. . . I suspect that all I have learned about genuine meeting in the course of my life had its first origin in that hour on the balcony.[9]

Commenting on the significance of this event for Buber, Maurice Friedman, the preeminent translator and scholar of Martin Buber's life and work, wrote: "This was the decisive experience in Martin Buber's life, the one without which neither his early seeking for unity nor his later focus on dialogue and on the meeting with the 'eternal Thou' is understandable."[10]

Buber learned much later that his mother had gone to Russia and remarried there. When Elise Buber, née Wurgast, reappeared in Martin's life some twenty years later to visit him, his wife and his children, Buber recalled, "I could not gaze into her still astonishingly beautiful eyes without hearing from somewhere the word "*Vergegnung*" as a word spoken to me."[11] Buber had earlier coined the word "*Vergegnung*" to describe the failure of real meeting between people.

Just as Buber had entered into a genuine meeting at age four between himself and the neighboring girl, an event which would typify the I-Thou relation in Buber's philosophy of dialogue, so too he had a similar encounter at age 11 between himself and an animal.

> When I was eleven years of age, spending the summer on my grandparents' estate, I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad dapple-gray horse. It was not a casual delight but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. . . The horse, even when I had not begun by pouring oats for him into the manger, very gently raised his massive head, ears flicking, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognizable only by his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved. But once — I do not know what came over the child, at any rate it was childlike enough — it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before, but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing.[12]

Retelling this event six years after the German publication of *I and Thou* in 1923, Buber understood the encounter between himself and the horse in terms of the relational principle of I-Thou. Buber wrote:

> If I am to explain it now, beginning from the still very fresh memory of my hand, I must say that what I experienced in touch with the animal was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other, which, however, did not remain strange like the otherness of the ox and the ram, but rather let me draw near and touch it. When I stroked the mighty mane, sometimes marvelously smooth-combed, at other times just as astonishingly wild, and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of *Thou* and *Thou* with me.[13]

From a religious standpoint, Buber's childhood was greatly influenced by living in his grandparents' home, which was steeped in midrashic tales and talmudic literature. His grandfather, as well as his father, also exposed young Martin to Hasidism.

Solomon Buber considered himself a *maskil*, an "enlightened Jew," yet he liked to pray with the Hasidim, he used a prayerbook full of mystical *kavanot*, and he would take his grandson Martin to a small Hasidic synagogue to pray. Martin's father Carl also exposed the young boy to Hasidism in the nearby village of Sadagora, site to a dynasty of Hasidic rabbis. In Sadagora, Buber was profoundly struck by the presence and role of the *zaddik* in the community. Here, among the Hasidim, Buber intuited at an early age what would later be for him the exemplar of true humanity, true leadership and true community. Buber wrote:

> Then I realized at that time, as a child, in the dirty village of Sadagora from the "dark" Hasidic crowd that I watched — as a child realizes such

> things, not as thought, but as image and feeling – that the world needs the perfected man and that the perfected man is none other than the true helper. . . Here was, debased yet uninjured, the living double kernel of humanity: genuine *community* and genuine *leadership*. The palace of the *rebbe*, in its showy splendor, repelled me. The prayer house of the Hasidim with its enraptured worshippers seemed strange to me. But when I saw the *rebbe* striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt, "leader," and when I saw the Hasidim dance with the Torah, I felt "community." At that time there rose in me a presentiment of the fact that common reverence and common joy of soul are the foundations of genuine human community.[14]

While living in his grandfather's home and influenced by the ways of the Hasidim, Buber was an observant, learned and dedicated Jew. When Buber was fourteen years old and lived with his father year round, however, he stopped wearing *tefillin*, and Western philosophy began to exercise a powerful grip on Buber's heart and mind – particularly the thought of Immanuel Kant and later, at age 17, the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche.

In 1896 Buber returned to the city of his birth and early childhood to study at the University of Vienna. There he studied philosophy, literature, and the history of art. After two semesters in Vienna, he went on to study at the universities of Leipzig and Zurich consecutively from 1897 to 1899. In Leipzig and Zurich, Buber furthered his studies in philosophy, literature and the history of art, and also studied psychiatry, Germanics and national economy. During these years at university, particularly at Vienna and Leipzig, Buber got caught up in the cultural and aesthetic milieu of Germany and Austria. As he later described it, he was seized by "the whirl of the age," living in a "world of confusion, a mythical habitation of roving souls with the fullness of spiritual agility, but without Judaism, and thus without humanity and without the presence of the divine."[15]

Buber found his way back to Judaism in 1898 in the Zionist movement of Theodor Herzl. Having read Herzl's journal *Die Welt* and Mathias Acher's (Nathan Birnbaum's) *Modern Judaism*, Buber became converted to Zionism. But Buber's Zionism was not the purely political Zionism of Herzl forged out of the antisemitism and nationalistic strivings of the time. Rather, Buber's Zionism was more akin to the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am. He was devoted to the idea of a Zionist movement that would ultimately lead to a Jewish Renaissance. Zionism to Buber meant the rebirth of a Jewish homeland in Eretz Yisrael *and* the renewal of Jewish culture, Jewish history, Jewish education, Jewish literature and Jewish art. For Buber, Zionism was a world view — a *Weltanschauung* — a Jewish Renaissance of the soul.

At Leipzig, Buber cofounded a local Zionist chapter and a union of Jewish students, and was elected its first president. He quickly became active in the World Zionist Organization led by Herzl, and rose through the ranks to become editor and major literary contributor of the Zionist journal *Die Welt* in 1901. Buber also became a central figure in the "Democratic Fraction" of the World Zionist Organization, a group which struggled for the official recognition of cultural Zionism. The Democratic Fraction founded a publishing house, Jüdischer Verlag, in 1902, with Buber as its co-editor and major contributor. In 1903, the Jüdischer Verlag published a pamphlet created by Buber, Chaim Weizmann and Berthold Feiwel calling for a Jewish university (later to be realized as Hebrew University). And the Democractic Fraction, under the leadership of Weizmann, Buber and Feiwel, came out in strong opposition to Herzl's plan to establish a Jewish homeland in East Kenya, rather than in Palestine. Originally a fervent devotee to the charismatic and visionary leadership of Theodor Herzl, Buber ultimately broke from Herzl and later the

official policies of the World Zionist Organization in 1904, after Herzl's death. In 1916, Buber became editor of *Der Jude*, which he founded.

During his early years in the Zionist movement, while a university student in Zurich, Buber met Paula Winkler in the Germanics seminar in 1899. Winkler was described by one of her teachers as a "wild elfin being, tough, gifted, unhesitating, uncannily intelligent, and of a commanding will."[16] Paula Winkler was Catholic when she met the 21-year-old Buber, and almost one year his senior, yet she became the genuine human *Thou* of Buber's life. "It is impossible," writes scholar Grete Schaeder, "to overestimate the significance of the fact that in his youthful years Buber met a woman who was equal to, indeed superior to, him in poetic gifts and power of expression and understood and spurred on his productivity to the highest degree."[17] According to Maurice Friedman, Buber's relationship to Paula exercised the single most important influence on his development of the I-Thou philosophy.

> Buber's relationship to his wife Paula was probably more decisive for the development of his I-Thou philosophy as a whole than [anything else]. Buber's dialogical thinking could have grown only out of his marriage to this strong and really "other" woman, this modern Ruth who left her family, home, and religion, and finally even her country and people, for him. The fundamental reality of the life of dialogue — that it is a confirmation and inclusion of otherness — was understood and authenticated in the love and marriage, the tension and the companionship, of his relationship to Paula.
>
> The existential trust that underlies *I and Thou* and all of Buber's mature works would have been unthinkable without his relationship to Paula. This is perhaps the unique case of a philosopher whose thinking did not emerge from his individual being but from the "between," which he knew first and foremost in his marriage.[18]

After several years of living together (since Austria had no civil marriages) and producing their two children, Rafael and Eva, Paula Winkler

formally converted to Judaism, and she and Buber married. Not only his marriage partner and mother of his children, Paula Buber was Martin Buber's life-long coworker in Zionist and Jewish causes. A writer for the Zionist movement, she was, according to Theodor Herzl, "a great talent."[19] She also contributed to Buber's creative development and vast literary output, as well as writing her own stories and books under the pen-name of Georg Munk. Her profound impact on Buber's life and work was articulated in a poem he wrote on his 50th birthday: "You influenced me to look/ Influenced? You just lived/ You element and woman/ Soul and nature!"[20]

During the same year that Buber first met Paula, he became an active member and lecturer in a social and mystical movement that sought to create a "New Community" – a *Neue Gemeinschaft*. Founded in or near Berlin by two brothers, Heinrich and Julius Hart, the New Community was led and taught by a Jewish socialist named Gustav Landauer. Landauer was 29 when he and Buber first met in 1899, and they became very close friends. Maurice Friedman posits that the relationship between Landauer and Buber was "probably the decisive relationship"[21] of Buber's adult life. How much influence Landauer's interest in Christian mysticism had on Buber's interest in the subject is difficult to say. (Buber switched his university studies from science and art to Christian mysticism. German Christian mysticism was the subject of Buber's doctoral dissertation, completed in 1904.) According to Friedman, however, Landauer's theories on the individual and society and his teachings on communal socialism had a marked influence on Buber's ideas about community.

> Without question, the single most important influence on Buber's teaching of community was his friend Gustav Landauer's socialism. The chapter that Buber devoted to Landauer in *Paths in Utopia* (1949) clearly coincides with Buber's own views and is, indeed, a memorial to

his friend, whose own writing was tragically cut off along with his life [in 1919, at the hands of the German army].[22]

Community and mysticism would be recurring subjects in Buber's writings after 1904. However, Buber's interest in Christian mysticism gave way to another form of mysticism closer to his own life experience. In 1904, Buber encountered a little book entitled *The Testament of Rabbi Israel Baal-Shem*, a collection of sayings attributed to the Baal-Shem Tov. The words of the Baal-Shem were nothing less than a revelation to Buber, transforming his understanding of Judaism and humanity, summoning him to proclaim the message that he encountered.

> It was then that, overpowered in an instant, I experienced the Hasidic soul. The primally Jewish opened to me, flowering to newly conscious expression in the darkness of exile: man's being created in the image of God I grasped as deed, as becoming, as task. And this primally Jewish reality was a primal human reality, the content of human religiousness . . . The image out of my childhood, the memory of the zaddik and his community, rose upward and illuminated me: I recognized the idea of the perfected man. At the same time I became aware of the summons to proclaim it to the world.[23]

At 26 years of age, Buber withdrew from his Zionist activities. For five years he immersed himself in the literature and lore of the Hasidim, studying their inner way of life and translating the stories of the zaddikim. Buber's first two books on the subject, *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman* (1906) and *The Legend of the Baal-Shem* (1908), brought him his first period of fame. In these books, Buber did more than merely translate Hasidic stories into German. He infused the Hasidic stories with his own artistic genius and highly developed German literary style. More than that, in his introduction to both books, Buber

articulated religious and philosophical ideas that would become a central part of his philosophy of dialogue.

In his essay which opened *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman*, "Jewish Mysticism," Buber talked about the possibility of apprehending God (later called "eternal Thou") in all things. In his introduction to *The Legend of the Baal-Shem*, Buber refers to the relationship of "I and Thou," one being "over against" another, and the relationship between the finite and the infinite (eternal Thou) — ideas central to his philosophy of dialogue, which would be fully developed in 1923 in *I and Thou*. In his introduction in 1908, Buber contrasted "legend," which involves an I and Thou relationship, with "pure myth," which lacks a Thou over against an I.

> The legend is the myth of the calling. In it the original personality of myth is divided. In myth there is no division of essential being. It knows multiplicity but not duality. Even the hero only stands on another run than that of the god, not over against him: they are not the I and Thou. The hero has a mission but not a call. He ascends but he does not become transformed. The god of pure myth does not call, he begets; he sends forth the one whom he begets, the hero. The god of the legend calls forth the son of man — the prophet, the holy man.
>
> The legend is the myth of I and Thou, of the caller and the called, the finite which enters into the infinite and the infinite which has need of the finite.[24]

As Maurice Friedman observes, the above passage "contains in seed the dialogue between the 'I' and 'the eternal Thou'" that occurs in the third part of *I and Thou*.[25]

In 1909, after his five-year immersion in Hasidim, Buber resumed his public lecturing and Zionist activities. From 1909-1911, he delivered "Three Speeches" on Judaism to the Prague Bar Kochbans, an organization dedicated to cultural Zionism. The speeches achieved widespread acclaim and influence,

lending credence to Gustav Landauer's claim in 1913 that Martin Buber was "the ambassador of Judaism to the nations."[26] In that same year, Buber published his first philosophical essay, *Daniel: Dialogues on Realization*.

With the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, Buber reached a breakthrough in his philosophy of dialogue. In addition to the war itself, with its wholesale violence, mismeeting, and absence of genuine dialogue, one particular event of this period stands out as a turning point in Buber's life and work — an event Buber later referred to as a "conversion." This is how Buber described it:

> What happened was no more than that one forenoon, after a morning of "religious" enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly, I did not treat him any more remissly than all his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him — only I omitted to guess the questions he did not put. Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends — he himself was no longer alive — the essential content of those questions; I learned that he had come to me not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but a decision.[27]

The young man named Mehé died at the front in World War I. His death, Buber later wrote Maurice Friedman, was born "out of that kind of despair that may be defined partially as 'no longer opposing one's own death.'"[28] For Buber's own part, he perceived that he did not respond to the young man with the fullness of his being. He was indeed cordial and friendly, but he was not *present* to the young man. Using Buber's own philosophy of dialogue, which this event profoundly influenced, Buber addressed the young man with the attitude of I-It — without the presence, fullness of being and mutual confirmation that characterize the I-Thou relationship. "What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man?" Buber asked rhetorically regarding this decisive

event in his life. "Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning."[29]

For Buber, this event helped him to break through the seeming dichotomy between religious experience and the experience of the ordinary and everyday, the presumed distinction between relation with God and relation with others.

> Since then I have given up the "religious" which is nothing but the exception, extraction, exaltation, ecstasy; or it has given me up. I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken . . . I know no fulness but each mortal hour's fulness of claim and responsibility.[30]

In 1916, during the height of the First World War, Buber wrote his first draft of *I and Thou*. After the war, in 1919, Buber wrote a second draft. But it was not until Buber gave a series of lectures in 1922 at the Freies Juedisches Lehrhaus that he was able to begin the final writing of *I and Thou*. The Freies Juedisches Lehrhaus — Free Jewish House of Study — was an institute of adult Jewish learning in Frankfurt, founded in 1920 by Buber's colleague and friend Franz Rosenzweig. Buber's lectures at the Lehrhaus, entitled "Religion as Presence," contained ideas and passages that make up the first and third parts of the published version of *I and Thou* — almost word for word.[31]

In 1923, *I and Thou* was published. Buber went on to develop and clarify the principles of relation articulated in *I and Thou* in his later essays "Education" (1925), "Dialogue" (1929), "Distance and Relation" (1951), and "Elements of the Interhuman" (1957).

Two years after the publication of *I and Thou*, he and Franz Rosenzweig began work on a German translation of the Bible. Together they got as far as the Book of Isaiah before Rosenzweig's death in 1929, whereupon Buber alone continued to translate the remaining books, completing the project in 1961.

In 1925, Buber began to teach Jewish religion and ethics at the University of Frankfurt. From 1930 to 1933, he was professor of religion at the university, until the Nazis forced him to leave. In 1933, Buber was appointed director of the Central Office for Jewish Adult Education, a bureau created to see to the education of Jews now prevented from attending German educational institutions. In that same year, Buber became director of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus, a position that he retained until 1938. In 1938, Buber settled in Palestine and became professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University, where he taught until his retirement in 1951. Following his retirement, he lectured extensively throughout the world. On June 13, 1965, at the age of 87, Martin Buber died.

At his funeral at Hebrew University, hundreds of people were in attendance: family, friends, students, kibbutzniks, Christian monks, Arab Moslems and Christians, and representatives of foreign embassies. Levi Eshkol, prime minister of Israel, was the first to eulogize him. In that eulogy, we find a fitting tribute to the life and work of Martin Buber — a life and work, that as Eshkol points out, was permeated by his Judaism.

> The passing of Mordecai Martin Buber marks the end of an era in the annals of the spiritual and territorial resurgence of the Jewish people in modern times. The Jewish people today mourn a luminary and a teacher, a man of thought and achievement, who revealed the soul of Judaism with a new philosophical daring. All mankind mourns with us one of the spiritual giants of this century. I do not know whether there is anyone else in our midst in the sphere of spiritual life, who was so much a part of the heritage of the entire world; but he was deeply anchored — to a depth that few could reach — in his Jewishness, in the Jewish people, in the resurgence of Israel and the love of Jewry.[32]

Jewish Roots That Never Died

In April 1980, an editorial on Erich Fromm appeared in *Reconstructionist* magazine, eulogizing the influential thinker who had recently died of a heart attack on March 18, 1980 (just two days shy of his 80th birthday), and who had penned, among other books, *Escape From Freedom*, *The Sane Society*, *The Art of Loving* and *You Shall Be As Gods*. The editorial acknowledged Fromm's "powerful influence" on many Reconstructionists and mentioned his rich Jewish education – which almost led him into the rabbinate except that his interest in psychoanalysis led him elsewhere. The editorial then remarked of Fromm: "He seemed never to have written a line which was not in some way a reflection of his Jewish heritage."[33] This may be so.

Erich Pinchas Fromm was born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1900. Fromm was the only child born into the Orthodox Jewish home of Naphtali and Rosa Fromm. Naphtali Fromm, a small wine merchant, was the son of a rabbi and the grandson of two rabbis. Though he did not pursue a career in the rabbinate, Naphtali was active in the Jewish community. Among other things, he was cofounder and president of the Hermann Cohen lodge in his community.[34] Evidently, both Naphtali and Rosa Fromm, née Krause, descended from a long line of rabbis.[35]

Fromm characterized his parents as "very neurotic"[36] – his father was "anxious and moody"[37] and his mother was "depression-prone."[38] Fromm also described himself as "probably a rather unbearably neurotic child."[39]

As a child, Fromm received an intensive Jewish education, taught by noted scholars and friends and members of the family. Apparently, he may have been on track to becoming a talmudic scholar.[40]

More than the Talmud, however, it was the Hebrew Bible that affected him most deeply when he was an adolescent. "The writings of the Old

Testament touched me and exhilarated me more than anything else I was exposed to."[41] Fromm was deeply impressed by the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham pleading with God on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra, Jonah's mission to Nineveh, and many other biblical passages. But within all of the Hebrew Bible, nothing moved him more than the prophetic writings of Isaiah, Amos and Hosea.

> Not so much by their warnings and their announcement of disaster, but by their promise of the "end of days," when nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;" when all nations will be friends, and when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[42]

This prophetic vision of universal peace and harmony among all nations had a profound impact on Fromm when he was 12 and 13 years old, and that was because, he surmised, it addressed issues relevant to his own life.

> I found myself: a Jewish boy in a Christian environment, experiencing small episodes of anti-Semitism but, more importantly, a feeling of strangeness and of clannishness on both sides. I dislike clannishness, maybe all the more so because I had an overwhelming wish to transcend the emotional isolation of a lonely, pampered boy; what could be more exciting and beautiful to me than the prophetic vision of universal brotherhood and peace?[43]

Later in his youth, Fromm studied Talmud with his great uncle Ludwig Krause, whom Fromm described as a "traditionalist, little touched by modern thought."[44] Krause was one of Fromm's earliest role models.

Fromm also studied with Rabbi Nehemia Nobel, a mystic and Goethe enthusiast "deeply steeped in Jewish mysticism as well as in the thought of Western humanism."[45] According to another of Nobel's students, Leo Lowenthal, a childhood friend of Fromm's, Nobel combined conventional

Talmud instruction with mysticism, philosophy, socialism, and psychoanalysis, all within a framework of Conservative Judaism.[46] Nobel had been a student and friend of Hermann Cohen, the famous neo-Kantian philosopher and biblical scholar. Perhaps it was through Nobel that Fromm became greatly influenced by the thought of Hermann Cohen.

Fromm later studied with Rabbi Salman Baruch Rabinkow in Heidelberg. Rabinkow was a Socialist and mystic, rooted in the Habad Hasidic tradition.

The influence on Fromm of these three teachers, whom he described as "well known to be among the most eminent Talmudic scholars living in Germany before the Nazi holocaust,"[47] was significant. Much of Fromm's life and work was informed by a socialistic, mystic and humanistic orientation. One can imagine, therefore, the impact that Nobel's humanism and mysticism and Rabinkow's socialism and mysticism had on a young Fromm.

Two major incidents occurring in Fromm's adolescence further influenced his development, and, in no small measure, helped steer the course of his life and work away from talmudic scholarship and the professional rabbinate instead into the areas of sociology and psychoanalysis.

The first event occured when he was 12 years old. At that time, Fromm knew a young woman in her early to mid-twenties who was a friend of his family. He remembered the woman as being beautiful, attractive and the first painter he had ever known. Evidently, the woman had been engaged, had later broken off the engagement, and was seen regularly in the company of her widowed father. The 12-year-old Fromm was one day shocked to hear the news that the young woman had committed suicide immediately after the death of her father, and had stipulated in her will that she wanted to be buried together with her father. The young Fromm, having never known anyone to commit suicide, and then unfamiliar with the Electra complex, was perplexed by how

this young woman could be so attached to her father that she chose to end her life with his instead of choosing to remain alive herself. The incident was a "puzzling and frightening experience"[48] for the adolescent Fromm, and the question "How is it possible?" stuck with him for some time, later to be answered when he discovered Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis.

The second incident, according to Fromm, "determined more than anything else [his] development."[49] It was the First World War. Fromm was 14 years old when the war broke out, and the excitement and adventure of war were the first things to capture his adolescent attention. Soon, however, the glories of war were replaced by its irrationalities and destructive force. Fromm observed one of his teachers, an alleged exponent of peace, now "jubilant" about the war. "How was it possible," Fromm wondered, "that a man who always seemed to have been so concerned with the preservation of peace should now be so jubilant about the war?"[50] Fromm also witnessed and was struck by "the hysteria of hate against the British which swept through Germany in those years."[51] Quickly the British were demonized in the minds of the German people. Young Fromm himself was starting to get caught up in the hatred for England and the German self-glorification until a teacher calmly and rationally challenged Fromm and his classmates: "Don't kid yourselves; so far England has never lost a war!" The remark was a breakthrough for Fromm.

> Here was the voice of sanity and realism in the midst of insane hatred — and it was the voice of a respected and admired teacher! This one sentence and the calm, rational way in which it was said, was an enlightenment. It broke through the crazy pattern of hate and national self-glorification and made me wonder and think, "How is it possible?"[52]

As the war continued and Fromm grew older, his own relatives and older schoolmates were being killed in the fighting and he began to doubt the

propaganda about the war itself and its alleged causes. As the death toll mounted and the bleak realities of war and the soldiers' existence became more and more apparent, the question "How is it possible?" had taken on an urgency in Fromm's mind. When the war was over, its effect on him had become decisive.

> When the war ended in 1918, I was a deeply troubled young man who was obsessed by the question of how war was possible, by the wish to understand the irrationality of human mass behavior, by a passionate desire for peace and international understanding. More, I had become deeply suspicious of all official ideologies and declarations, and filled with the conviction "of all one must doubt."[53]

As Freud's theories would answer Fromm's questions about individual human behavior, so too, Karl Marx's theories would answer his questions about human behavior in society.[54] It was not until he was in his twenties, however, that Fromm would come into contact with Freud's and Marx's ideas. In the meantime, his compelling questions would lead the 18-year-old Fromm to study psychology, sociology and philosophy at the University of Frankfurt for two semesters, and then at the University of Heidelberg in 1919, to study under Alfred Weber, Karl Jaspers and Heinrich Rickert.

Fromm obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Heidelberg in 1922, with a dissertation on the sociopsychological structure of three Jewish Diaspora communities: the Karaites, the Hasidim, and Reform Jewry.[55] Fromm, therefore, had continued his interest in Judaism while pursuing his scientific interests in psychology and sociology. In fact, during his years at university, Fromm remained a practicing Orthodox Jew and furthered his Jewish studies.

While he was at the University of Frankfurt, Fromm studied with Rabbi Nehemia Nobel and Ludwig Krause, and while at the University of Heidelberg,

he studied with Rabbi Salman Baruch Rabinkow. Evidently Fromm was an ardent Zionist under Nobel's influence, yet he repudiated Zionism in 1927.[56] While a university student, Fromm also cofounded the Gesellschaft für jüdische Volksbildung in Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt Association for Jewish Studies) in February 1920. Cofounded by Fromm and a liberal rabbi from Frankfurt named Georg Salzberger, The Gesellschaft's purpose was to foster Jewish awareness through education. The Gesellschaft was short-lived, however. With the arrival of the noted Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig in Frankfurt that summer and the influx of Rosenzweig's friends and students, Rosenzweig's newly created Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus quickly became *the* institute of Jewish learning in Frankfurt. Because of Fromm's youth, he was 20, and the influx of more experienced faculty, including Martin Buber, Fromm's teaching opportunities at the Lehrhaus were minimal.

At 23 years of age, with his university education complete, Fromm returned to Frankfurt to become editor of a small Jewish newspaper.

One year later, he met psychoanalyst Frieda Reichmann, who had established a small sanitarium in Frankfurt. Reichmann, 10 years his senior, became Fromm's first analyst, and later, his wife.

At 25, Fromm started a new analysis in Munich with Wilhelm Wittenberg, a zealous Freudian. After one year with Wittenberg, Fromm returned to Frankfurt under Karl Landauer's supervision, a period which had a major impact on his clinical and scientific outlook.

In 1926, Fromm and Frieda Reichmann married, but their marriage did not last long. After four years, they decided to separate amicably. They formally divorced in 1940, although they maintained close personal and professional contact. Reichman became famous in her own right through her research with schizophrenics.

At the age of 26, Fromm abandoned his religious observances. In his writings, he does not provide a specific reason why he discontinued his religious practices at this time. One may speculate that his acceptance of Freud's and Marx's theories, with their strong humanistic and anti-religious stances, exerted some influence. Around this time, Fromm also had become acquainted with Buddhism, an interest that would deepen during his lifetime.[57] His exposure to Buddhism may have had an effect on his beliefs. It seems clear, however, that by age 26, Fromm no longer believed in a personal, creator God, who issued laws that were binding on human beings. Later in his life and his writings, Fromm referred to his religious position as "nontheistic mysticism,"[58] believing that the concept of God was "a historically conditioned expression of an inner experience"[59] and "not a reality in itself."[60] Fromm also referred to his religious position as that of "radical humanism."

> By radical humanism I refer to a global philosophy which emphasizes the oneness of the human race, the capacity of man to develop his own powers [of love and reason] and to arrive at inner harmony and at the establishment of a peaceful world. Radical humanism considers the goal of man to be that of complete independence, and this implies penetrating through fictions and illusions to a full awareness of reality.[61]

In 1927, Fromm started his psychoanalytic training with Hans Sachs and Theordor Reik at the psychoanalytic institute in Berlin. Like Sachs and Reich, Fromm had no medical background, which would later become an obstacle for him and all of the German lay analysts who emigrated to America in the 1930s and found their credentials — and the medical lack thereof — challenged by the medically-educated psychoanalytic establishment.

Fromm completed his psychoanalytic training by 1929, and thereafter divided his time between a private practice, lecturing and writing in Berlin, and

teaching at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt University, where he soon became head of the section on social psychology.

After spending a year in Switzerland recovering from a bout of tuberculosis, and having separated from Frieda Reichmann, Fromm came to the United States in 1933. Fromm first went to Chicago, at the invitation of neo-Freudian analyst Karen Horney, to work at the recently organized Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute. Fromm soon moved to New York, however, to begin a private practice and to continue his role as director of social psychology at the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research in 1934, which had recently relocated at Columbia University, having been forced out of German by National Socialism. He left the Institute for Social Research in 1938.

Fromm taught extensively through the 1940s. From 1941 to 1949, he was a member of the faculty of Bennington College in Vermont. From 1945 to 1947, he was professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and in 1948-49, he was a visiting professor at Yale. Also in 1948, he became adjunct professor for psychoanalysis at New York University. In 1945, he and others founded the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology, and from 1946 to 1950, he was chairman of the faculty and chairman of the institute's training committee.

Fromm also became a successful author during the 1940s. The publication of his first book *Escape From Freedom* in 1941, garnered considerable attention and recognition from a variety of quarters. In it, Fromm argues that people in the modern age, instead of embracing their freedom, choose to escape from it by placing themselves in authoritarian relations of dependency, which leads to a conformist mentally that can eventually become destructive, evinced by Nazi Germany. Fromm included a chapter analyzing the psychology of Nazism, which made a considerable impression on the

American public. He followed up *Escape From Freedom* with *Man For Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics* in 1947, wherein he developed the theme of ethical norms based on a rational, scientific and empirical knowledge of humanity, rather than on authority and revelation.

In 1944, Fromm married Henny Gurland, née Schonstadt, a Jewish woman from Mannheim who had fled the Nazis to Paris. She and Fromm moved to Mexico in 1949 from Bennington on the advice of a physician that her deteriorating health from rheumatoid arthritis would benefit from a more favorable climate. In Mexico, Fromm soon founded the Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis under the auspices of the National Autonomous University in Mexico City. Although Henny died in 1952, Fromm continued to teach at the university until 1965. He maintained a residence in Mexico until 1974, when he moved to Locarno, Switzerland, with his third wife Anis Freeman, whom he married in 1953.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Fromm also held a position as professor of psychology at Michigan State University from 1957 to 1961, and he was adjunct professor of psychology at New York University after 1962. Fromm had also lectured at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Cincinnati in January, 1953.[62] Despite his extensive teaching activities, Fromm kept up his private practice, remained active as a supervisor and teacher of analysis, participated in sociopsychological fieldwork in Mexico, participated in the peace movement, joined the American Socialist Party in 1960 and penned their party platform for that election year,[63] as well as penned *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (1950), *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales, and Myths* (1951), *The Sane Society* (1955), *The Art of Loving* (1956), *Sigmund Freud's Mission* (1959), *May Man Prevail* (1961), *Marx's Concept of Man* (1962), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter*

with Marx and Freud (1962), *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (1964), and *You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions* (1966).

After forty-five years of clinical practice, Fromm stopped all clinical activities in 1974, devoting his time to writing. In 1976, his book *To Have or to Be?* was published, becoming a big best-seller in Germany. Fromm died of a heart attack on March 18, 1980.

Although Fromm had abandoned Jewish religious practices and belief in God in his mid-twenties, Fromm's profound appreciation for the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, Jewish mysticism and Jewish thinkers like Moses Maimonides and Hermann Cohen remained with him, informing and inspiring his thought and his style. His roots and links to Judaism are evident in most, if not all, of his books. Not only does he quote extensively from the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud in his writings, but one also discerns in his writings – at times obvious, at times more subtle – the prophetic emphasis on universal peace, love, justice, compassion and moral behavior. As the psychoanalyst Rollo May once wrote in *Pastoral Psychology*: "The first time I heard Fromm, I felt that here was a man who spoke with the accents of the Hebrew prophets."[64]

In 1966, Fromm pays homage to the Hebrew prophets, the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, the rabbis, Moses Maimonides, Hermann Cohen and more, devoting an entire book to his knowledge and understanding of the Hebrew Bible and its traditions. In the introduction to *You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Traditions*, Fromm expressly states his unwavering high regard for the Hebrew Bible and its prophetic teachings.

> To me, [the Hebrew Bible] is an extraordinary book, expressing many norms and principles that have maintained their validity throughout thousands of years. It is a book which has proclaimed a vision for men that is still valid and awaiting realization.[65]

In his 1956 best-selling book on *The Art of Loving*, in which he analyzes the various aspects of love, Fromm's knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, the prophetic tradition, and the Jewish philosophies of Moses Maimonides of Hermann Cohen is palpably felt as they are applied to his theory of love.

In *The Art of Loving*, Fromm quotes extensively from the Hebrew Bible, using the stories of Adam and Eve, of the Creation of the world, of Jonah's mission to Nineveh, of Noah and the Flood, of Abraham's election, of the Akeidah, of Abraham's pleading to God on behalf of Sodom and Gomorra, the teaching of Lev. 19:18, the repeated admonition to care for the poor, the widow and the orphan, and the biblical metaphor of the promised land being a land flowing with milk and honey. Fromm uses all of these biblical references to support, illustrate and inform his theory of love.

Furthermore, Fromm applies Moses Maimonides' "negative theology," in which positive attribute are denied to God, to his section on the love of God[66] to support, illustrate and inform his theory that the logical conclusion of ethical monotheism is the negation of all "theology" — knowledge about God — so that God, at most, becomes a symbol for the highest human values of truth, love and justice.

Fromm also refers to Hermann Cohen's teaching about the love of the stranger[67] in his section on brotherly love. That is, by having love for poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger — by loving those who do not serve a purpose in society — one begins to develop love for one's fellow human being. Compassion involves knowledge and identification thus the Hebrew Bible says: "You know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; therefore love the stranger!"

For many reasons, therefore, one can affirm the words of the late Rabbi Jakob J. Petuchowski, professor of rabbinics, research professor of Jewish

theology and liturgy, and professor of Judaeo-Christian studies at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, when he wrote of *The Art of Loving* in *Commentary*:

> We have called this book a midrash, not only because formally it contains all the elements which traditionally go into the structure of a complete midrash. It is a midrash also in the sense that what it has to say, by way of content, fits so perfectly into the traditional Jewish scale of values. *The Art of Loving* is a profoundly Jewish book.[68]

To this, one can only add: So too, the author of *The Art of Loving* was a profoundly Jewish writer and thinker.

Notes

[1] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (2nd ed., New York, 1958), p. 18.
[2] *The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, 1955), p. 3.
[3] Matin Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," trans. Maurice Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle, Il., 1967), p. 3.
[4] *I and Thou*, p. 15.
[5] "Autobiographical Fragments," p. 4.
[6] Ibid., p. 5.
[7] Ibid., p. 7.
[8] Ibid., p. 7.
[9] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[10] Maurice Friedman, *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber* (New York, 1991), p. 4.
[11] "Autobiographical Fragments," p. 4.
[12] Ibid., p. 10.
[13] Ibid., p. 10.
[14] Ibid., p. 20.
[15] Martin Buber, *Werke* I: "Mein Weg zum Hassidismus," p. 966, quoted in Alexander S. Kohanski's *An Analytical Interpretation of Martin Buber's I and Thou* (Woodbury, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1975), p. 7.
[16] quoted in *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, p. 26.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[18] *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, pp. 132-133.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[20] Hans Kohn, *Martin Buber: Sein Werk und seine Zeit*, pp. 25, 291-292, quoted in Kohanski's *An Analytical Interpretation of Martin Buber's I and Thou*, p. 8.
[21] *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, p. 46.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[23] quoted, *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[26] quoted, *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[27] "Autobiographical Fragments," pp. 25-26.
[28] *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, p. 80.
[29] "Autobiographical Fragments," p. 26.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[31] see Rivka Horwitz, *Buber's Way to "I and Thou": The Development of Martin Buber's Thought and His "Religion as Presence" Lectures* (Philadelphia, New York and Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988).
[32] quoted in *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, p. 458.
[33] "Erich Fromm," *Reconstructionist* (April, 1980), p. 6.
[34] reported in Daniel Burston's *The Legacy of Erich Fromm* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 10. Burston cites Rainer Funk's *Erich Fromm* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), p. 21.
[35] reported in *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*,, p. 10. Burston does not reference this information. The specific information about Naphtali Fromm's father and two grandfathers being rabbis comes from Don Hausdorff's *Erich Fromm*, p. 11 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972). Hausdorff notes in reference 1 on p. 161 that he obtained biographical information directly from Erich Fromm in correspondence written to him by Fromm in 1966 and 1967.
[36] Evans, Richard I. *Dialogue with Erich Fromm*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966; Praeger Publishers, 1981, p. 56.
[37] Fromm, Erich. *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962, p. 3.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[39] *Dialogue with Erich Fromm*, p. 56.
[40] reported in *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*, p. 12, citing Funk's *Erich Fromm*, chap. 2.
[41] *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962, p. 5.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[44] Fromm, Erich. *You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966, pp. 12-13.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[46] reported in *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*,, p. 12, citing Leo Lowenthal's *An Unmastered Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 19-21.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[48] *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*, p. 4.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[55] Fromm, Erich. "Das jüdische Gesetz. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des Diasporajudentums." Heidelberg: 1922.
[56] reported in *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*,, p. 12.
[57] Fromm wrote an article entitled "Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism," which appeared in the 1960 book *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper, 1960), which Fromm coedited with D.T. Suzuki and R. De Martino.
[58] *You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966, p. 19.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 19. Also see *The Art of Loving*, p. 65.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[62] An audio recording of Fromm's lectures at HUC in January, 1953, is housed in the Klau Library.
[63] Fromm, Erich. *Let Man Prevail—A Socialist Manifesto and Program*. New York: Call Association, 1960.
[64] quoted in Hausdorff's *Erich Fromm*, p. 12.
[65] *You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions*, p. 7.
[66] *The Art of Loving*, pp. 57-74.
[67] found in Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*, noted in Fromm's footnote in *The Art of Loving*, p. 44.
[68] Petuchowski, Jakob J. "Erich Fromm's Midrash on Love," *Commentary* (December, 1956), p. 546.

Chapter Two

Entering Into Relation: The Dialogue Between I and Thou

In his classic work, *I and Thou*, Martin Buber posits that human beings construct and interact with the world in two fundamental ways: through an experience of I-It and through a relation of I-Thou.

According to Buber, the I-It approach to the world is characterized by experiencing things at a distance, that is, by experiencing other human beings and things in nature as *objects* separate from oneself that can be described, analyzed, measured and compared. Thus, the I-It experience is one of objectivity. In a sense, the paradigm of the I-It experience is scientific thought. For example, one looks at a tree[1] during an I-It experience, and using rational, logical categories one can break down the tree into its component parts and qualities. One can focus on the color of the tree, or its size, or its species, or its age, or its interaction with the environment, or any number of structural and biological categories of the tree that one chooses. By so doing, the tree becomes an object of analysis and experience comparable to other objects in the world. The tree is experienced as an It among other Its in the world. In the I-It experience, therefore, the tree's uniqueness is eclipsed — as is its wholeness. By objectifying the tree and relating to only a particular aspect of it, the fullness of the tree is reduced. At the same time, the subject of the I-It experience —the I — holds back a part of oneself. "The primary word *I-It* can never be spoken with the whole being."[2] This is so because when one relates through objectivity, one stands back and views the object from some vantage point as an observer or spectator. Therefore, the I of the I-It experience is not

fully participating in the relationship. Furthermore, the I-It experience takes place within the I and not between I and the world — that is, the I is analyzing and the I is observing, and the external world does not participate in the I's experience nor does the I of the I-It experience participate in the external world.

> The man who experiences has not part in the world. For it is "in him" and not between him and the world that the experience arises.
> The world has no part in the experience.[3]

In addition to objectivity, the I-It experience is also characterized by instrumentality. One views the object of one's I-It experience as a means to some end. Whether it be a human being, an animal, a plant, a god, It is seen as an object to be used and manipulated for one's own purposes. A tree that can be classified into categories can also be used for kindling wood, or for shade, or for a child's swing. A human being can be objectified and exploited for an endless variety of purposes. Even "God" can be turned into a thing that one wants to use and possess.[4] Therefore, the I-It attitude of experiencing and using, objectifying and manipulating, measuring and possessing, is brought to all aspects of existence.

But there is another way of relating to nature, human beings and God, argues Buber. When one relates to another being by encountering the other's wholeness and uniqueness, exclusiveness and unity, then one enters the relation of I-Thou. In the I-Thou relationship, there is no analysis or measurement, use or manipulation of the other. There is one being "standing over against" another being. I meets Thou in the fullness of being, and the relationship is characterized by directness, exclusiveness, presentness and mutuality.

The I-Thou relationship is direct in that no prior knowledge, ideas, comparisons, categories and other things are brought to bear on the meeting between I and Thou.[5] In fact, Buber argues, when an I confronts a Thou, whether it be another human being, an animal, a plant, etc., the memory of the I is "transformed, as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between *I* and *Thou*. Desire itself is transformed as it plunges out of its dream into the appearance."[6] Whereas one enters the I-It experience with only part of one's being, "the primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being. He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself."[7]

In addition to being direct, the I-Thou relationship is exclusive. "Every real relation with a being or life in the world is exclusive. Its *Thou* is freed, steps forth, is single, and confronts you."[8] When one confronts a Thou, this Thou ceases to be one thing among other things in the world. Rather, everything else in the world becomes background to the exclusive, whole and singular Thou. The Thou is no longer bounded by other objects in the world, but is seen as boundless, filling up the world with its light.

> If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things.
>
> Thus human being is not *He* or *She*, bounded from every other *He* or *She*, a specific point in space and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature of named qualities. But with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens. This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in *his* light.[9]

The I-Thou relationship is also characterized by presentness — "the real, filled present exists only in so far as actual presentness, meeting, and relation exist."[10] Here Buber's concept of the present is rather vague, yet it becomes clearer when contrasted with his concept of the past, which is characteristic of

the I-It experience. Buber posits that when one uses and experiences things, one is living in the past. The object of the I-It experience "subsists in time that has been."[11] This may be so because objective knowledge is knowledge that is based on what something has been or done, rather than what it is. In the meeting between I and Thou, there is no objectivity or analysis, there is no past. The Thou is encountered as exclusive, whole and unique, thus possibilities and potentialities are opened and undetermined. The world of causality inherent in objects that one has knowledge about is overshadowed by a present moment of address and response between I and Thou. "True beings are lived in the present, the life of objects in the past."[12]

The I-Thou relationship is also mutual or reciprocal in that each being acts upon the other: "My *Thou* affects me, as I affect it. We are moulded by our pupils and built up by our works."[13] Thus, mutual action occurs between I and Thou, as does mutual giving. "Between you and it there is mutual giving: you say *Thou* to it and give yourself to it, it says *Thou* to you and gives itself to you."[14]

According to Buber, human beings have a fundamental desire for relation, for the I-Thou relationship. This desire exists from the time we are born and continues throughout our lives. "The development of the soul in the child is inextricably bound up with that of the longing for the *Thou*."[15] Moreover, the I-Thou relationship is primary, Buber posits. "In the beginning is relation."[16] For Buber, the I-Thou relationship represents "natural combination,"[17] in contrast to the I-It experience which represents "natural separation."[18] The intrauterine life of the fetus displays the natural combination of I-Thou in the "bodily interaction and flowing"[19] between mother and child. Whereas some might argue that once the child is born the object world of the I-It experience becomes primary and precedes the I-Thou relationship, Buber argues that "the

effort to establish relation comes first."[20] The child reaches out her hand to grasp not an object but the Thou that is over against her. "In the beginning is relation — as category of being, readiness, grasping form, mould for the soul; it is the *a priori* of relation, the *inborn Thou*."[21] The inborn *Thou* fuels the child's instinct to touch another and establish contact. Through development of the child's instinct, the inborn *Thou* is realized and grows into the child's ability to establish the full, mutual relation between I and Thou.

> The inborn *Thou* is realised in the lived relations with that which meets it. The fact that this *Thou* can be known as what is over against the child, can be taken up in exclusiveness, and finally can be addressed with the primary word, is based on the *a priori* of relation.
>
> In the instinct to make contact (first by touch and then by visual "touch" of another being) the inborn *Thou* is very soon brought to its full powers, so that the instinct even more clearly turns out to mean mutual relation, "tenderness."[22]

Just as the I-It experience follows the I-Thou relationship, so too, one's sense of personhood occurs after the meeting between I and Thou. In fact, Buber argues, the I-Thou relationship creates one's sense of personhood. "A person makes his appearance by entering into relation with other persons."[23] One becomes a person through the natural solidarity of connection between I and Thou. This is so because as one enters relations again and again, one increasingly becomes aware of one's permanence in the interactions between others. That is, I am confronting various Thous in the world — the Thous come and go, while I remain.

> Through the *Thou* a man becomes *I*. That which confronts him comes and disappears, relational events condense, then are scattered, and in the change consciousness of the unchanging partner, of the *I*, grows clear, and each time stronger.[24]

Thus, the more fully one enters into relationships, the more fully one becomes a person, according to Buber. This is not to say that one creates I-Thou relationships at will. In fact, Buber posits that I-Thou relationships cannot be planned in advance or sought out. Rather, the I-Thou relationship depends on "grace." The Thou confronts one; one cannot coerce a relationship that takes place *between* an I and a Thou. The mutuality of the I-Thou relationship precludes one "making it happen." However, one does act when confronted by a Thou, and one does choose to enter into relationship. The Thou addresses one, and one can choose to respond.

> The *Thou* meets me through grace — it is not found by seeking. But my speaking of the primary word to it is an act of my being, is indeed *the* act of my being.
>
> The *Thou* meets me. But I step into direct relation with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one.[25]

For those looking for instruction in how to respond to the Thou that confronts one, Buber disclaims any rules or principles that can be layed down, save one: approaching the Thou in its wholeness to the exclusion of all else.

> Going out to the relation cannot be taught in the sense of precepts being given. It can only be indicated by the drawing of a circle which excludes everything that is not this going out. Then the one thing that matters is visible, full acceptance of the present.[26]

Full acceptance of the present, however, cannot be sustained indefinitely, Buber points out. Inevitably the Thou that is met in relation reverts to an It. "It is not possible to live in the bare present,"[27] Buber explains. In time, one must stand back from the present moment of relation to experience and to use things in the world as objects.

> This is the exalted melancholy of our fate, that every *Thou* in our world must become an *It*. It does not matter how exclusively present the *Thou*

> was in the direct relation. As soon as the relation has been worked out or has been permeated with a means, the *Thou* becomes an object among objects — perhaps the chief, but still one of them, fixed in its size and its limits ... Every *Thou* in the world is by its nature fated to become a thing, or continually to re-enter into the condition of things ... The particular *Thou*, after the relational event has run its course, *is bound* to become an *It*.[28]

Although the transformation of Thou to It may be a source of sadness, it is also the very source of human greatness, according to Buber. For in the transformation of Thou to It, all human knowledge, art and creation becomes possible.[29] This is so because all knowledge, art, science and technology requires objectivity and analysis — the very characteristics of the I-It experience. The paradox, however, is that before one obtains knowledge of any thing, one stands over against it — it is a Thou, fully present and wholly other.

> Being is disclosed to the man who is engaged in knowing, as he looks at what is over against him. He will, indeed, have to grasp as an object that which he has seen with the force of presence, he will have to compare it with objects, establish it in its order among classes of objects, describe and analyse it objectively. Only as *It* can it enter the structure of knowledge. But when he saw it, it was no thing among things, no event among events, but exclusively present.[30]

Just as Thou is transformed into It, so too, It can again become Thou, according to Buber. "That which has been so changed into *It*, hardened into a thing among things, has had the nature and disposition put into it to change back again and again."[31]

It is thus the case, according to Buber, that humanity naturally operates between the two poles of I-It and I-Thou relationships. A healthy person and society moves freely between them. However, Buber points out, a person who elevates the pole of I-It experiences, so as to neglect the pole of I-Thou

relationships, is sick. "And in all the seriousness of truth, hear this: without *It* man cannot live. But he who lives with *It* alone is not a man."[32]

In the history of the individual and humanity, Buber observed a progressive increase in the I-It experience.[33] In most every age, cultures become more technologically advanced than prior ones, absorbing information and technology from other cultures and times, building upon it, discovering and creating new information and technology. This progressive increase in the world of It leads to a reduction in the world of Thou, according to Buber. "For the development of the ability to experience and use comes about mostly through the decrease of man's power to enter into relation."[34] When the two poles of I-It and I-Thou are thus thrown out of harmony, Buber warns, sickness is the result, "an oppressive, stifling fate" becomes the product of an age dominated by the world of It.

> But in times of sickness it comes about that the world of *It*, no longer penetrated and fructified by the inflowing world of *Thou* as by living streams but separated and stagnant, a gigantic ghost of the fens, overpowers man. In coming to terms with a world of objects that no longer assume present being for him he succumbs to this world. Then smooth causality rises up till it is an oppressive, stifling fate.[35]

The only way to stem the tide of such a fate caused by the overrunning world of It, according to Buber, is a return to the living waters of pure relation between I and Thou. A world dominated by It, wherein people feel separated and alienated, is cleansed and transformed through moments of I-Thou relationships, wherein solidarity is realized.

> In the great privilege of pure relation the privileges of the world of *It* are abolished. By virtue of this privilege there exists the unbroken world of *Thou*: the isolated moments of relations are bound up in a life of worldly solidarity. By virtue of this privilege formative power belongs to the world of *Thou*: spirit can penetrate and transform the world of *It*.

> By virtue of this privilege we are not given up to alienation from the world and the loss of reality by the *I* — to domination by the ghostly. Turning is the recognition of the Centre and the act of turning again to it.[36]

The "Centre" to which Buber here refers is the center, with a capital C, of all I-Thou relationships: God. According to Buber, when one relates to people, animals, nature, etc., in an I-Thou relationship, one is also relating to God, the "eternal Thou" present in all I-Thou relationships.

> In every sphere in its own way, through each process of becoming that is present to us we look out toward the fringe of the eternal *Thou*; in each we are aware of a breath from the eternal *Thou*; in each *Thou* we address the eternal *Thou*.[37]

In Buber's thinking, God is not the object of philosophical or theological speculation — God is not a principle or an idea.[38] Furthermore, one cannot infer that God is the author of nature or the master of history.[39] In fact, one cannot say very much about God, according to Buber, for to do so would mean that one would have to objectify God, treating God as just another It that can be analyzed, categorized and measured. But God is without bounds and measures, argues Buber. God is, therefore, the only Thou that by nature cannot become an It.[40] Although people may want to experience God as an It, and talk about God as an It (or a He or a She, which has the same sense as It), God defies such objectification. God cannot be expressed or described, only addressed, in the meeting between I and Thou. "God is the Being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly, over against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."[41]

This having been said, Buber feels the need to make a few expressions about God or about one's relation to God in order to clarify how God can be involved in the I-Thou relationships that a person enters into with other people,

animals, nature, etc. To begin with, Buber states: "in the relation with God unconditional exclusiveness and unconditional inclusiveness are one."[42] A relationship with God is unconditionally exclusive because God by nature cannot become an It, therefore, God will always remains absolutely exclusive of other things in the world. Another way of saying this is that God is absolutely Other. At the same time, a relationship with God is unconditionally inclusive because every Thou in the world is in God, the eternal Thou: "In each [Thou] we are aware of a breath from the eternal *Thou*."[43] This paradoxical concept that the world is in God (unconditional inclusiveness), yet God is also "outside" the world (unconditional exclusiveness) is called *panentheism*. And in a panentheistic world-view, it follows that when one being relates to another being in the world (the I-Thou relationship), one is also relating to God (the eternal Thou), considering everything in the world is in God *and* God is absolutely Other. Thus, Buber writes:

> To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a man to reach God; but he who sees the world in Him stands in His presence. "Here world, there God" is the language of *It*; "God in the world" is another language of *It*; but to eliminate or leave behind nothing at all, to include the whole world in the *Thou*, to give the world its due and its truth, to include nothing beside God but everything in him — this is full and complete relation.[44]

Buber also posits that God is a "Person" in the sense that God enters into direct relation with human beings and, in turn, allows human beings to enter into direct relation with God. Such a mutuality of action can only happen between persons, Buber argues. Therefore, Buber conceives of God as a Person, while at the same time acknowledging that God's essence cannot be known. Furthermore, Buber acknowledges that no proof can be offered for his

belief that God enters into direct relation with human beings. He compares this fact to the human inability to prove God's existence.

> The description of God as a Person is indispensable for everyone who like myself . . . means by "God", as I do, him who — whatever else he may be — enters into a direct relation with us men in creative, revealing and redeeming acts, and thus makes it possible for us to enter into a direct relation with him. This ground of meaning of our existence constitutes a mutuality, arising again and again, such as can subsist only between persons. The concept of personal being is indeed completely incapable of declaring what God's essential being is, but it is both permitted and necessary to say that God is *also* a person ... The existence of mutuality between God and man cannot be proved, just as God's existence cannot be proved. Yet he who dares to speak of it, bears witness, and calls to witness him to whom he speaks — whether that witness is now or in the future.[45]

In a number of essays which followed the publication if *I and Thou*, Buber clarified and expanded upon the principles of relations first articulated in *I and Thou*. In his essays "Education" (1925), "Dialogue" (1929), "Distance and Relation" (1951), and "Elements of the Interhuman" (1957), Buber now refers to the I-Thou relationship as "dialogue" and the "dialogical relation," he articulates the characteristics of the dialogical relation, and he introduces ideas and concepts not explicitly stated in *I and Thou*.

In his essay "Education," Buber describes the dialogical relationship and introduces the concept of "inclusion." The dialogical relation, Buber states, is a relation in which two persons experience a common event, of which at least one person actively participates, and "without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same time lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other."[46] Inclusion, therefore, is a person's ability to experience the other side of a relationship — to meet and know the uniqueness

and reality of the other person in the relationship without surrendering one's own uniqueness and reality. This element of inclusion is the defining characteristic of the dialogical relation, according to Buber.

> A relation between persons that is characterized in more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation.[47]

Furthermore, in "Education," Buber identifies a human instinct for communion, which, according to Buber, exerts a greater influence on human behavior than the Freudians with their libido theory seem to realize. The drive for communion teaches humanity to enter into relations — to enter into dialogue and relate to another as I to Thou. According to Buber, this instinct for communion is:

> the longing for the world to become present to us as a person, which goes out to us as we to it, which chooses and recognizes us as we do it, which is confirmed in us as we in it. The child lying with half-closed eyes, waiting with tense soul for its mother to speak to it — the mystery of its will is not directed towards enjoying (or dominating) a person, or towards doing something of its own accord; but towards experiencing communion in face of the lonely night, which spreads beyond the window and threatens to invade.[48]

In his essay "Dialogue," Buber now places greater emphasis on the action and movement involved in entering the dialogue of the I-Thou relationship than he did in *I and Thou*. Buber did make reference in *I and Thou* to one's activity in "going out"[49] to the I-Thou relation and "turning"[50] (*teshuva*) to God. However, in "Dialogue," the movement and activity of "turning" takes on much greater significance. Thus Buber writes: "The basic movement of the life of dialogue is the turning toward the other."[51] That is, a person moves towards others through dialogue, or away from others and back towards oneself in monologue.

In both dialogue and monologue, therefore, one exercises action, responsibility and choice.

Furthermore, dialogue is a process of address and response that doesn't require spoken language between two persons — nonverbal gestures can constitute the activity of dialogue. Buber gives the mundane example of strangers exchanging glances in a busy street as they pass each other without breaking their strides. "Some of these glances, though not charged with destiny, nevertheless reveal to one another two dialogical natures."[52] On the other hand, one's failure to turn to another, one's failure to recognize that one is being addressed and thus one's failure to respond to the other, Buber sees as a monological type of existence, the failure to actualize the fundamental human drive to commune.

In his later essays, Buber clarified the concept of dialogue even further by introducing such terms as "accept" and "confirm." Whereas earlier Buber spoke of the fundamental drive to commune, in his 1951 essay "Distance and Relation" and in his 1957 essay "Elements of the Interhuman," Buber instead emphasizes the human need to confirm one another, and he further develops the idea of movement in human life and the dialogical relation.

In "Distance and Relation," Buber posits that human life is built upon a two-fold movement of "setting at a distance" and "entering into relation." Buber argues that the movement of entering into relation (that is, the I-Thou relation) presupposes the primal setting at a distance.[53] Such a presupposition is clear, Buber points out, from the fact that one can enter into a relation only with that which has been set at a distance. A human being has the capacity to recognize that other beings are set at a distance, that is, that other beings exist as "independent opposites" to one's own being. It is the recognition of "the primal setting at a distance" that leads one to enter into relation. So when

Buber spoke in *I and Thou* about the child reaching out her hand to touch a Thou, such movement can only come after the child's awareness that others are set at a distance. In entering into relation, the child overcomes the distance. This movement of entering into relation is identified with the I-Thou relationship (the dialogical relationship), however, the movement of "the primal setting at a distance" is not to be identified with the I-It experience. Rather, the "primal setting at a distance" precedes both the I-Thou relationship and the I-It experience. Furthermore, as Buber stated in *I and Thou*, the I-Thou relationship precedes the I-It experience. So then where does the I-It experience fit into this two-fold movement of "Distance and Relation" that Buber now speaks about? As Maurice Friedman, the preeminent scholar of Martin Buber's life and work, points out, the I-It experience can be understood as "the enlarging and thickening" of the distance or an objectification of the I-Thou relationship.[54]

The two-fold movement of setting at a distance and entering into relation forms the basis of "man's life with man," according to Buber. Whereas in his earlier essays, Buber spoke of the drive to commune, now Buber refers to the human desire to be confirmed and the human capacity to provide confirmation to another. When such a capacity to confirm another is exercised, humanity becomes realized.

> The basis of man's life with man is twofold, and it is one — the wish of every man to be confirmed as what he is, even as what he can become, by men; and the innate capacity in man to confirm his fellow man in this way. . . actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds.[55]

This fundamental need to confirm and be confirmed is what differentiates human beings from other animals, Buber maintains. Only human beings are

aware of being set at a distance from each other, and, therefore, only human beings desire confirmation, which can only come from another human being.

> Man wishes to be confirmed in his being by man, and wishes to have a presence in the being of the other. The human person needs confirmation because man as man needs it. An animal does not need to be confirmed, for it is what it is unquestionably. It is different with man: Sent forth from the natural domain of species into the hazard of the solitary category, surrounded by the air of chaos which came into being with him, secretly and bashfully he watches for a Yes which allows him to be and which can come to him only from one human person to another. It is from one man to another that the heavenly bread of self-being is passed.[56]

Buber's use of the word confirmation has a very precise meaning. He defined it most clearly in 1957 during a Midwest conference on his thought sponsored by the University of Michigan. On April 18, 1957, Buber engaged in a dialogue with the eminent psychotherapist Carl R. Rogers. Rogers was known for his concept of "unconditional positive regard" toward psychotherapy clients. For Rogers, a therapist who relates to his clients with unconditional positive regard, first and foremost, fully accepts the client as she or he is. In speaking with Rogers, Buber makes it clear that although such acceptance is indeed a necessary element of the dialogical relationship, confirmation goes deeper. For in Buber's concept of confirmation, one accepts not only who another person actually is, one also accepts and recognizes who the other person potentially can become. In confirming another, one looks beyond the visible surface of the actual and penetrates into the hidden depths of the other's potential. Furthermore, one acts directly on the other person's potentiality, helping the other draw out his or her unique potential. Buber explains to Rogers:

> I would say every true existential relationship between two persons begins with acceptance. By acceptance I mean being able to tell, or rather not to tell, but only to make it felt to the other person, that I accept him just as he is. I take you just as you are. Well, so, but it is not yet what I mean by confirming the other. Because accepting, this just accepting how he ever is in this moment, in this actuality of his. Confirming means first of all, accepting the whole potentiality of the other and making even a decisive difference in his potentiality, and of course we can be mistaken again and again in this, but it's just a chance between human beings. I can recognize in him, know in him, more or less, the person he has been (I can say it only in this word) *created* to become. In the simple factual language, we do not find the term for it because we don't find in it the term, the concept *being meant to become*. This is what we must, as far as we can, grasp, if not in the first moment, then after this. And now I not only accept the other as he is, but I confirm him, in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that is meant by him and it can now be developed, it can evolve, it can answer the reality of life. He can do more or less to this scope but I can, too, do something.[57]

Buber's concept of confirmation further clarified his understanding of love, as Laurence J. Silberstein points out in his book *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning*.[58] In *I and Thou*, Buber had written that "love is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*."[59] In his conversation with Rogers, Buber states that love involves the confirmation of the other — going beyond acceptance of who a loved one is, to recognizing the loved one's whole potentiality and actively having an effect upon it. To illustrate his concept of confirmation, Buber tells Rogers:

> Let's take, for example, man and a woman, man and wife. He says, not expressly, but just by his whole relation to her, "I accept you as you are." But this does *not* mean, "I don't want you to change." Rather it says, "Just by my accepting love, I discover in you what you are meant to become."

> This is, of course, not anything to be expressed in massive terms. But it may be that it grows and grows with the years of common life.[60]

In "Distance and Relation," Buber also sheds some more light on his concept of inclusion, when he speaks of the element of "making present"[61] in a dialogical relation. For Buber, "making present" in a dialogical relation involves at least two elements. First, making present involves "imagining the real," which Buber defines in terms similar to his prior definition of inclusion.

> Applied to intercourse between men, "imagining" the real means that I imagine to myself what another man is at this very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking, and not as a detached content but in his very reality, that is, as a living process in this man.[62]

In addition to the element of imagining the real, making present also involves one actually experiencing that which the other is experiencing at a given moment — not just imagining it.

> Relation is fulfilled in a full making present when I think of the other not merely as this very one, but experience, in the particular approximation of the given moment, the experience belonging to him as this very one.[63]

As an example of making present, Buber offers a relational event in which one actually experiences the physical pain of another. Through such an experience, Buber asserts, something new comes into being. The other's self is made present "with" the one who experiences the reality of the other. The dialogical relation becomes complete only when the experience is mutually shared. For this to happen, the other must know that she is made present by one, thereby experiencing "inmost self-becoming,"[64] and the other must, in turn, make present the one with the same process. In the mutuality of making present, combined with affirmation of who another is and confirmation of who

the other can become, the inmost growth of the self is accomplished, according to Buber.

> For the inmost growth of the self is not accomplished, as people like to suppose today, in man's relation to himself, but in the relation between the one and the other, between men, that is, pre-eminently in the mutuality of the making present — in the making present of another self and in the knowledge that one is made present in his own self by the other — together with the mutuality of acceptance, of affirmation and confirmation.[65]

In his essay "Elements of the Interhuman," Buber further clarifies the elements of the dialogical relation and introduces one more necessary element for genuine dialogue, that is, that one must enter the relation in truth, without seeming to be what one is not.

In "Elements of the Interhuman," Buber states that the essential problem in personal relations is the duality of being and seeming.[66] According to Buber, being and seeming represent two different types of human existence. Being "proceeds from what one really is," whereas seeming proceeds from "what one wishes to be."[67] Although both attitudes are mixed together to a certain extent in each person, one aspect predominates. Thus, one can distinguish between a person who relates from his being and one who is chiefly concerned with the image of himself that he presents to others. The one who relates from his being acts spontaneously, authentically, without reserve and without being influenced by how he can or should appear to the other. On the other hand, the seeming one is producing actions that are intended to make a desired impression of himself on the other. His actions may appear spontaneous, but they are in fact calculated, inauthentic, and expressed with reserve. This seeming attitude prevents real meeting and "a true happening between I and Thou."[68] Truth in the dialogical relation, therefore, means that

people communicate themselves to one another as what they are. This does not mean that one has to communicate to another everything that occurs to him, but that no seeming should come between himself and the other, thereby "granting to the [person] to whom he communicates himself a share in his being."[69]

Furthermore, in "Elements of the Interhuman," Buber sheds some more light on what confirmation is — and more specifically, what it is not — in a dialogical relation. It was stated previously that when one confirms another, one acts upon the potentiality of the other, helping to draw it out. But how is such action to be done, one might ask? Can I simply impose my attitudes and beliefs on another in order to draw out their potentiality? No is the answer inferred from Buber's discussion of imposition and unfolding in "Elements of the Interhuman." Here Buber distinguishes between two basic ways of affecting people's views and attitudes to life. In the first way, one imposes his opinions and attitudes on another "in such a way that the latter feels the psychical result of the action to be his own insight, which has only been freed by the influence."[70] In the second way, according to Buber, one desires to further in the soul of the other "the disposition toward what he has recognized in himself as the right."[71] Because it is the right, Buber argues, it must also exist in the potentiality of the other. Therefore, "the other need only be opened out in this potentiality of his."[72] This opening takes place not through teaching, Buber asserts, but by meeting, that is, "by existential communication between someone that is in actual being and someone that is in a process of becoming."[73] Therefore, when one confirms another in the dialogical relation, one refrains from imposing one's own views and attitudes onto the other, and instead one helps the other unfold his potentiality through the relational meeting between one's actual being and the other's potential being.

We now have a clear and full picture of what the dialogical relation consists of. In genuine dialogue, one turns to another in truth with one's full being, communicating to the other what one really is, without semblance and without reserve. One makes the other person present by perceiving the other person as she really is, whole and unique, without reduction, abstraction or objectification. In making the other person present, one combines one's "experiencing senses"[74] with imagining the real, that is, imagining to oneself what the other person is at that very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking, and then actually experiencing the other person's reality. One confirms the other person, not only affirming and accepting who the other person actually is at that given moment, but confirming who the other person potentially can become and is meant to become. Such a confirmation is free of imposing one's own beliefs and attitudes on the other, yet one helps the other unfold her potentiality by the meeting between one's actual being and the other's potential being. Furthermore, for genuine dialogue to take place between people, each person must bring all these elements of relation to the other — for the activity of genuine dialogue is mutual.

Love: The Answer to the Problem of Human Existence

According to Erich Fromm, human beings are confronted with an existential problem arising from the human condition — a problem that demands a solution. The problem is that human beings are a part of nature yet also transcend nature — we are part animal, part divine. Our physical body belongs to the animal kingdom. We have a physical need to eat, drink, procreate, etc., similar to the rest of the animal world. These physiological needs are rooted in our biology and they are part of the evolutionary process. However, somewhere along that evolutionary path, humankind emerged

unique from the rest of the animal world. Where most animal behavior is determined by specific patterns of action programmed into the neurological structure of the living organism (i.e. instinctive adaptation), which the organism has little or no control over, human life emerges free. The large-sized human brain, possessing reason and imagination, allows for choice of action. Human beings have transcended the animal world of preprogrammed patterns of action and, therefore, must *choose* how to live life.

Moreover, because human beings possess reason, which Fromm defines as "the ability to penetrate the surface grasped by the senses and to understand the essence behind that surface,"[75] human existence is marked by the unique phenomenon of self-awareness. In contrast to other members of the animal kingdom, the life of the human is "life being aware of itself."[76] We are aware of ourselves and others, we are conscious of our past and the possibilities of our future, and we are painfully aware that just as we were born sometime in the past, so too, we will eventually die sometime in the future. Our imagination allows us to visualize that end to our existence.

Thus, Fromm points out, the blessings bestowed on humanity — our self-awareness, reason and imagination — are also our very curses. For we are aware of our limitations and our separateness from the rest of the world. We are aware that we cannot rely on instinctual adaptation to determine how we live in the world. We must exercise our freedom and our reason, choosing how to live our lives and learning how to function in the world. And as "life being aware of itself," we know that our intellectual and physical capacities are limited, thus placing restrictions on how our existence can unfold. We come to realize that the course of lives is indefinite, insecure, and unknown.

Moreover, we come to realize that, as human beings, each of us is alone in the world. The fetus and the newborn child has no knowledge of this. Without

self-awareness and a sense of "I," the fetus and the newborn feel themselves in "harmony" with the world. The fetus is physically connected to its mother, it is a part of its mother's body, receiving nourishment and life-support directly from her. Mother and fetus are united, their lives are in harmony. The newborn, too, does not perceive itself much differently than the fetus. The world is not different or indifferent to his or her needs. When the newborn is hungry, mother feeds her. When the newborn is cold, mother warms her. When the newborn cries, mother responds to her. Thus, as the fetus is in harmony with the world inside the uterus, so too, the newborn child is in harmony with the extrauterine world. The fetus and the newborn have yet to realize that they are separate and distinct from other people and things in the world. Slowly the growing child forms an identity and a concept of self, becoming aware that she is separate from mother and all people and things in the world. Thus the state of harmony experienced by the fetus and newborn is lost in the process of human self-awareness and development. In short, separateness replaces harmony in the course of human development. Fromm writes:

> When man is born, the human race as well as the individual, he is thrown out of a situation which was definite, as definite as the instincts, into a situation which is indefinite, uncertain and open. There is certainty only about the past — and about the future only as far as that it is death.
>
> Man is gifted with reason; he is *life being aware of itself*; he has awareness of himself, of his fellow man, of his past, and of the possibilities of his future. This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison. He would become insane could he not liberate himself from this

> prison and reach out, unite himself in some form or other with men, with the world outside.[77]

According to Fromm, the "unbearable prison" of awareness of our separation from others and the world fills us with anxiety and feelings of shame and guilt.

> It is, indeed, the source of all anxiety. Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use my human powers. Hence to be separate means to be helpless, unable to grasp the world — things and people — actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react. Thus, separateness is the source of intense anxiety. Beyond that, it arouses shame and the feeling of guilt.[78]

For Fromm, the biblical story of Adam and Eve dramatizes and embodies the existential problem of humanity. As portrayed in the biblical story, Adam and Eve begin their lives in harmony — at one with each other, nature and God. Yet they have not yet eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. In other words, Adam and Eve have yet to develop discernment — i.e. they do not possess reason. Thus, in the beginning, Adam and Eve are unaware — unaware that they are naked, and thus feel no shame[79], and unaware that they are separate from one another. This paradise, this harmony, this bliss of ignorance is akin to the paradise and harmony of the fetus or the newborn child. But then, Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. Human self-awareness is thus born, and separateness, anxiety, shame and guilt are the inevitably result. "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths."[80] Adam and Eve then hid from God in fear and shame of their nakedness,[81] and Adam proceeds to blame Eve for his eating of the forbidden fruit[82] and Eve in turn blames the serpent,[83] both utilizing their newfound awareness of separateness to distance oneself from

the other. According to Fromm, the main point of the story of Adam and Eve is thus:

> After man and woman have become aware of themselves and of each other, they are aware of their separateness, and of their difference, inasmuch as they belong to different sexes. But while recognizing their separateness they remain strangers, because they have not yet learned to love each other (as is also made very clear by the fact that Adam defends himself by blaming Eve, rather than by trying to defend her). *The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love—is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety.*[84]

In consequence of Adam and Eve's eating of the fruit, God declares a new relationship between humanity and the rest of nature, and between man and woman — relationships involving enmity and a new element of creation mentioned for the first time: suffering. In Gen. 3:15, God pronounces enmity between the snake and humanity; in verse 16, God declares to Eve that child birth will be accompanied by physical pain and that a husband will "rule over"[85] his wife; and in verse 17, God announces to Adam that the ground will now yield sustenance for humanity only through complexity and effort on the part of humanity. For Fromm, these consequences address the human awareness of existential separation from nature and our fellow human beings, and the human suffering that such awareness brings in its wake.

> The original harmony between man and nature is broken. God proclaims war between man and woman, and war between man and nature. Man has become separate from nature, he has taken the first step toward becoming human by becoming an "individual." He has committed the first act of freedom. The myth emphasizes the suffering resulting from this act. To transcend nature, to be alienated from nature and from another human being, finds man naked, ashamed. He is alone and free, yet powerless and afraid. The newly won freedom appears as a

curse; he is free *from* the sweet bondage of paradise, but he is not free to govern himself, to realize his individuality.[86]

The ultimate consequence of Adam and Eve's birth of self-awareness and reason (i.e. "knowledge of good and bad") is that they are banished from paradise, and cherubim and fiery sword guard against their return to Gan Eden's tree of life.[87] For Fromm, this symbolizes that Adam and Eve and their descendants cannot return to that blissful state of harmony with nature once they have attained reason and self-awareness.

> What is essential in the existence of man is the fact that he has emerged from the animal kingdom, from the instinctive adaptation, that he has transcended nature – although he never leaves it; he is a part of it – and yet once torn away from nature, he cannot return to it; once thrown out of paradise – a state of original oneness with nature – cherubim with flaming swords block his way, if he should try to return. Man can only go forward by developing his reason, by finding a new harmony, a human one, instead of the prehuman harmony which is irretrievably lost.[88]

Therefore, for Fromm, the biblical story of Adam and Eve lays out the existential problem of humanity, which Fromm encapsulates in one sentence: "The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness."[89]

In our deepest desire to leave this prison of aloneness and separateness, human beings fashion a key to unlock the door. According to Fromm, the real key is one of union and relatedness to fellow human beings, to nature, to God and to ourselves. But some of our keys, Fromm points out, are ill-fashioned and thus unable to really open the prison door. Such ill-fashioned keys come in a variety of forms, according to Fromm. Thus, Fromm speaks of "orgiastic states," "conformity" with the group, "creative activity," and "symbiotic

unions" as ultimately unfulfilling or failed attempts to achieve union and relatedness.

Orgiastic states refer to trance-like states of the individual in which the world outside the individual seems to disappear, and, along with it, the existential pain of separation and aloneness also seem to disappear. Orgiastic states include auto-induced trances, drug or alcohol-induced trances, and trances produced by sexual activity and orgasm. But the seeming disappearance of the world outside the individual in orgiastic states is only temporary. Sooner or later, self-awareness and reality again set in, and the pain of separation and aloneness returns.

Another way individuals escape separateness, according to Fromm, is by conforming to the thoughts, feelings, ideas and customs of a larger group — be it a family, a city, a state, a nation, a society. For Fromm, group conformity is the most prevalent form of union chosen by people in society.[90] By conforming to the "herd,"[91] the individual's pain of separateness diminishes as the individual's unique self is reduced by identifying with the larger group.

> If I am like everybody else, if I have no feelings or thoughts which make me different, if I conform in custom, dress, ideas, to the pattern of the group, I am saved; saved from the frightening experience of aloneness.[92]

Unlike the union created by orgiastic states, which is intense and spasmodic in nature, the pseudo-union created by conformity is placid and permanent in nature, which helps to explain conformity's prevalence in society. "The individual is introduced into the conformity pattern at the age of three or four," writes Fromm, "and subsequently never loses contact with the herd."[93]

Creative activity is yet another way that human beings attempt to achieve union. In the process of creativity activity — whether it involves painting, sculpting, building, crafting, writing, composing, farming, etc. — the

creating person (artist or artisan) unites himself or herself with the material, which represents the world outside the individual.

> In all types of creative work the worker and his object become one, man unites himself with the world in the process of creation. This, however, holds true only for productive work, for work in which *I* plan, produce, see the results of my work.[94]

Although creative activity that is the product of the creating individual allows for union with the outside world, it possesses one fundamental drawback, according to Fromm. It is not interpersonal – the union does not take place with another person. Therefore, like conformity and orgiastic states, creative activity is, for Fromm, an inadequate solution to the ultimate problem of human existence: overcoming separateness. Overcoming separateness can only be achieved, says Fromm, through interpersonal union – through love of another person. In love then lies the answer to the problem of human existence:

> This desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in man. It is the most fundamental passion, it is the force which keeps the human race together, the clan, the family, society. The failure to achieve it means insanity or destruction – self-destruction or destruction of others. Without love, humanity could not exist for a day.[95]

Before advancing his most detailed description and theory of love[96] in *The Art of Loving*, Fromm first describes what love is not – for love is not the only form of interpersonal union, according to Fromm. Interpersonal fusion also often takes place under the guise of symbiotic unions. For Fromm, a symbiotic union is one in which two people become one, yet lose their integrity and power in the process. The symbiotic union is psychological sado-masochism. The sadistic member of the union dominates, exploits, commands and controls the other member of the union, thereby inflating his or her own sense of self. The

masochistic member of the union submits, remains passive, is exploited, is commanded, is controlled by the sadist of the union, thereby deflating his or her own sense of self. To avoid risk, responsibility, independence, and the active use of his or her own power, the masochist sacrifices his or her integrity on the altar of the symbiotic union. In religious terms, the sadist becomes an idol who has the power to control and command the life of the masochist, the idolater. In the symbiotic union, the sadist is everything, the idolater is nothing in and of himself or herself — he or she only has power and worth in so far as being attached to, a part of, the sadist. Both the sadist and masochist enter the symbiotic union in their desire to escape the prison of human aloneness and separation.[97]

In contrast to the sacrifice of integrity, individuality and power that takes place in symbiotic unions, Fromm writes that love is a way of relating that overcomes separateness *and* maintains one's individuality, personal power and integrity, while, paradoxically, one unites with another.

> *Love* is *union under the condition of preserving one's integrity*, one's individuality. *Love is an active power in man;* a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two.[98]

When Fromm speaks of love's "active power in man," he is deliberately emphasizing what he considers to be a main characteristic of love — its active quality — in sharp contrast to the notion prevalent in Western society that love involves a more passive state. "Falling in love" is the common expression used in Western society to describe the beginning stage of erotic love (love that has a sexual component to it). For Fromm, love is far from any passive state

which one "falls into." Rather, love involves the active use of powers inherent in the human being, based on one's inner freedom and independence.

> Love is an activity, not a passive affect; it is a "standing in," not a "falling for." In the most general way, the active character of love can be described by stating that love is primarily *giving*, not receiving.[99]

In giving, Fromm discerns the pinnacle of human character development and maturation. In giving, human beings can realize their inherent talents and abilities and experience their innate power and vitality, generating happiness from within. Fromm writes:

> Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy. I experience myself as overflowing, spending, alive, hence as joyous. Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness.[100]

For Fromm, the highest form of giving takes place in the "human realm"[101] of intellect, emotion and spirit. Here when one gives, one gives of that which exists within — literally giving of one's self to another. In such a process of relating, Fromm advances, both the giver and the receiver are enriched by a sense of aliveness that is generated by the act of giving of one's very life.

> What does one person give to another? He gives of himself, of the most precious he has, he gives of his life. This does not necessarily mean that he sacrifices his life for the other — but that he gives him of that which is alive in him; he gives him of his joy, of his interest, of his understanding, of his knowledge, of his humor, of his sadness — of all expressions and manifestations of that which is alive in him. In thus giving of his life, he enriches the other person, he enhances the other's sense of aliveness by enhancing his own sense of aliveness.[102]

In addition to this element of giving, Fromm argues, love is comprised of four characteristic "attitudes" that are mutually interdependent.[103] These attitudes are care, responsibility, respect and knowledge.

That love involves care is evinced in the relationship between a mother and her child, Fromm argues. A mother's love for her child is expressed in her care of the child: when the child is young its mother feeds it, bathes it, keeps it warm, protects it from harm, etc. Although care is by no means the sole factor in love, the mere absence of care indicates the absence of love, Fromm points out. He supports this point by way of a simple, everyday illustration. Say, for example, that someone professes to love flowers, yet neglects to water them. We would not put much faith in that person's "love" for flowers.[24] Better to say that such a person likes to look at flowers, or likes their smell, or derives pleasure from owning flowers and having them in the home. But the word "love" does not properly describe the relationship of a person to flowers which he or she neglects to water and care for. To the contrary, Fromm states:

> *Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love.* Where this active concern is lacking, there is no love.[104]

As Fromm observes, this point is "beautifully"[105] articulated in the biblical story of Jonah. The Book of Jonah relates that God commands the prophet Jonah to travel to Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrians, the enemies of Israel. Jonah's mission is to publicly pronounce God's punishment against the inhabitants of Nineveh — presumably in order to give the Ninevehites an opportunity to repent their wickedness and set aside God's severe decree. Jonah flees from God's service and his assigned task via a boat en route to Tarshish. His reason for fleeing, as he later explains it to God, is that he knows that God is compassionate, kind and forgiving, and willing to renounce punishment.[106] In other words, Jonah knows that God is willing to

forgive the Ninevehites, but Jonah does not want the enemies of Israel to be forgiven — Jonah wants God to punish them! Jonah, as Fromm observes, "is a man with a strong sense of order and law, but without love."[107] God, of course, foils Jonah's attempted escape, whereupon Jonah winds up in the belly of a large fish.[108] As Fromm observes, this symbolizes "the state of isolation and imprisonment which [Jonah's] lack of love and solidarity has brought upon him."[109] The narrative continues with God rescuing Jonah from the large fish and commanding Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh to proclaim God's judgment on the inhabitants. This time Jonah goes begrudgingly and proclaims God's message to the Ninevehites. The Ninevehites, from the king on down, immediately respond with humble repentance, fasting, sackcloth and ashes. God accepts their repentance, forgives them, and renounces punishment against them. Jonah's suppositions about the outcome of his mission now proven correct, he feels angry and dejected. "Please, Lord, take my life, for I would rather die than live,"[110] Jonah prays. Meanwhile, Jonah had left Nineveh and built a *sukkah* just outside the city in order to find shelter and to see what would befall Nineveh. And God had provided a plant or gourd to shade Jonah and protect him from the hot sun. "Jonah was very happy about the plant,"[111] the narrative relates. But the next day, the narrative continues, God sent a worm that consumed the plant, and an east wind that caused Jonah to feel the intensity of the sun on his head.[112] Faint from the sun, Jonah begs for death, whereupon God speaks to Jonah and makes an analogy between Jonah's concern for the gourd and God's concern for the inhabitants of Nineveh, thereby imparting the moral of the Jonah story.

> Then God said to Jonah, "Are you so deeply grieved about the plant?"
> "Yes," he replied, "so deeply that I want to die."
> Then the Lord said: "You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished

> overnight. And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!"[113]

As Fromm observes, God is teaching Jonah (and the reader) a lesson in what it means to care for something or somebody. If Jonah "cared" for a gourd that he did not tend or help to grow — a plant that existed for only one day — how much greater is God's care for a multitude of people and animals which God creates, actively cares for, and helps to grow (regardless of whether such people are the enemies of Israel). From the exquisitely-crafted and profoundly meaningful short story of Jonah, Fromm finds support for his theory that love means active care — "active concern for the life and growth of that which we love."

> God explains to Jonah that the essence of love is to "labor" for something and "to make something grow," that love and labor are inseparable. One loves for which one labors, and one labors for that which one loves.[114]

In addition to care, a second component of love, according to Fromm, is responsibility. Distinct from the concept of duty, wherein demands are placed on a person from an external source, Fromm perceives responsibility as originating from a person's own free will. Responsibility entails the willingness and ability to respond to the needs, expressed or unexpressed, of another person. "To be 'responsible' means to be able and ready to "respond,'"[115] Fromm states. Thus, Fromm observes, Jonah did not feel responsible to the Ninevehites, similar to how the biblical character Cain did not feel responsible for his brother Abel, evinced by Cain's rhetorical question to God: "Am I my brother's keeper?"[116] Such a lack of responsibility toward others displayed in

the attitudes of Jonah and Cain is in sharp contrast to the loving person, according to Fromm.

> The loving person responds. The life of his brother is not his brother's business alone, but his own. He feels responsible for his fellow men, as he feels responsible for himself.[117]

As a mother's responsibility to her infant mainly involves caring for the infant's physical needs, Fromm points out, the love between adults mainly involves responding to the psychological needs of the other.[118]

Fromm observes that responsibility runs the risk of turning into possessiveness or domination were it not for a third feature of love: respect. For Fromm, the concept of respect has a very specific and profound meaning based on the Latin root of the word, *respicere*, which he translates as "to look at."[119] Thus, to respect someone means to see a person as he or she actually is, "to be aware of his unique individuality."[120] Such perception requires that we look at someone not in terms of their usefulness to us or as an object of exploitation (what Buber would call an "I-It" relationship), but that we instead have "the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is."[121]

> I want the loved person to grow and unfold for his own sake, and in his own ways, and not for the purpose of serving me. If I love the other person, I feel one with him or her, but with him *as he is*, not as I need him to be as an object for my use.[122]

Such respect, Fromm points out, can only be achieved if one has attained a level of independence in which one has no need of exploiting or dominating another person.[123]

The fourth component of love, according to Fromm, is knowledge. Without knowledge, Fromm argues, respect is not possible. Moreover, without the guiding force of knowledge, care and respect "would be blind."[124] Furthermore,

as all four aspects of love are mutually interdependent, knowledge itself "would be empty if it were not motivated by concern [i.e. care]."[125]

Similar to his concept of respect, when Fromm speaks of knowledge, he has something very specific and highly developed in mind. For Fromm, knowledge in love means a depth of understanding that penetrates to the essence of something or someone. "The knowledge which is an aspect of love," he writes, "is one which does not stay at the periphery, but penetrates to the core."[126] Moreover, knowledge requires the type of psychological development that is needed for respect — one has to be able to perceive someone as she is, without the distortions of one's own needs or concerns. Thus Fromm writes of knowledge: "It is possible only when I can transcend the concern for myself and see the other person in his own terms."[127] Such knowledge means, for example, that one knows when another person is angry, whether or not the anger is expressed. Moreover, when the depth of knowledge is deeper, one may also know that the anger itself covers deeper feelings of anxiety, worry, loneliness or guilt.[128] The knowledge in love that Fromm describes, therefore, penetrates the surface of someone to reveal deeper and deeper layers of existence.

According to Fromm, the knowledge in love fulfills another fundamental human desire that is closely related to the need to unite with another in order to overcome human separateness. This desire is "to know the secret of things and of life,"[129] according to Fromm. Human beings thus have a fundamental desire to know themselves — to penetrate the mystery of human existence. Such a desire is not easily realized.

> We know ourselves, and yet even with all the efforts we make, we do not know ourselves. We know our fellow man, and yet we do not know him, because we are not a thing, and our fellow man is not a thing. The further we reach into the depth of our being, or someone else's being, the more the goal of knowledge eludes us. Yet we cannot help desiring

to penetrate into the secret of man's soul, into the innermost nucleus which is "he."[130]

It is only through love, argues Fromm , that this desire — to penetrate into the secret of the human soul — is realized. Knowledge arrived at only by thought has its limitations, particularly when it comes to knowledge of dynamic, living beings. Thus, in the realm of human life, union through love picks up where thought leaves off.

> In the act of fusion I know you, I know myself, I know everybody — and I "know" nothing. I know in the only way knowledge of that which is alive is possible for man — by experience of union — not by any knowledge our thought can give. . . Love is the only way of knowledge, which in the act of union answers my quest. In the act of loving, of giving myself, in the act of penetrating the other person, I find myself, I discover myself, I discover us both, I discover man.[131]

Fromm reiterates the point that knowledge only through thought has its limitations. Actions can provide a knowledge that transcends thoughts, and the act of love provides such a fuller knowledge. Fromm is by no means an anti-rationalist. He argues that reason, objectivity, and thought are necessary elements of any knowledge, including the knowledge that takes place in the act of love. However, Fromm argues, rationalism and thought have their limitations, and are meant to be transcended by union in the act of love.

> Even if we knew a thousand times more of ourselves, we would never reach bottom. We would still remain an enigma to ourselves, as our fellow man would remain an enigma to us. The only way of full knowledge lies in the *act* of love; this act transcends thought, it transcends words. It is the daring plunge into the experience of union. However, knowledge in thought, that is psychological knowledge, is a necessary condition for full knowledge in the act of love. I have to know the other person and myself objectively, in order to be able to see his reality, or rather, to overcome the illusions, the irrationally distorted

> picture I have of him. Only if I know a human being objectively, can I know him in his ultimate essence, in the act of love.[132]

When Fromm speaks of the act of love, he is referring to an activity that is "a power of the soul."[133] By this he means that love is essentially a way of being that permeates the life and activity of the loving person. Love is a permanent style of relatedness that the loving person brings to all her relationships.

> Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an *attitude*, an *orientation* of *character* which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one "object" of love.[134]

Love is, therefore, inclusive. Love is not something reserved for only one person — even though "romantic" novels, movies and popular music might lead us to believe otherwise. As Fromm points out, "If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism."[135] Fromm further explains:

> If I truly love one person I love all persons, I love the world, I love life. If I can say to somebody else, "I love you," I must be able to say, "I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself."[136]

While love has this quality of inclusiveness, there are indeed different types of love, according to Fromm, which are based upon the object of one's love. Fromm distinguishes five kinds of love: brotherly love, motherly love, erotic love, self love, and love of God.

Brotherly love is the most fundamental type of love, according to Fromm, serving as the foundation for all other types. Brotherly love refers to the care, responsibility, respect and knowledge that one has for and gives to another human being. Fromm sees this type of love stated in the teaching from

Leviticus: "Love your fellow as yourself."[137] Such love is inclusive; it is generated from within an individual who has the desire to further another's life and growth, who has developed the ability to love, and who perceives and experiences the unity of all people.

> Brotherly love is love for all human beings; it is characterized by its very lack of exclusiveness. If I have developed the capacity for love, then I cannot help loving my brothers. In brotherly love, there is the experience of union with all men, of human solidarity, of human atonement. Brotherly love is based on the experience that we are all one.[138]

Such an experience of oneness comes, in part, from the knowledge that penetrates the surface of people's differences (e.g. talents, intelligence, etc.) to reach the core of a person, and therein find his or her humanity with which one can identify and relate to as an equal.

Another defining characteristic of brotherly love, then, is that it is love between equals — equals who nevertheless need help from each other, Fromm points out.[139] Such helplessness, however, is "a transitory condition, the ability to stand and walk on one's own feet is the permanent and common one."[140]

This having been said, Fromm asserts that the "love of the helpless one, love of the poor and the stranger, are the beginning of brotherly love."[141] For, Fromm argues, in the care, responsibility, respect and knowledge of those who one is not dependent upon, love flourishes. "Only in the love of those who do not serve a purpose, love begins to unfold."[142] Fromm derives this idea from the Hebrew Bible, with its focus on the care of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger — those members of society who people are not dependent upon, yet who nevertheless can be identified with as human beings, equal, and in need of help.

> By having compassion for the helpless one, man begins to develop love for his brother; and in his love for himself he also loves the one who is in need of help, the frail, insecure human being. Compassion implies the element of knowledge and of identification. "You know the heart of the stranger," says the Old Testament, "for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; . . . *therefore love the stranger!*"[143]

The second type of love, motherly love, refers to the unconditional love that a mother has for her child. Such love is unconditional in the sense that the child does not have to do anything, fulfill any specific condition or expectation, in order for the mother to love it. A mother loves her child simply because the child "is."[144,145] Fromm thus describes motherly love as the "unconditional affirmation of the child's life and needs."[146] Affirming a child's life requires two components, Fromm points out. This first, and most obvious, component is preservation. To preserve the life and growth of her child, a mother provides care and responsibility. Going beyond mere preservation of the child's life, however, a mother affirms her child's life by affirming life itself – by "[instilling] in the child a love for living, which gives him the feeling: it is good to be alive, it is good to be a little boy or girl, it is good to be on this earth!"[147]

Fromm perceives these two components of motherly love articulated in the biblical story of Creation. God's creation of the world and human beings (related in the first chapter of *Genesis*) corresponds to the care and affirmation with which a mother preserves her child. Beyond that, the Bible relates that after God created each thing in the universe during the six days of creation, "God saw that it was good."[148] God's repeated affirmation of life during the process of Creation in *Genesis* thus corresponds to the affirmation of life – "the love for life"[149] – that a mother instills in her child through her motherly love.

Fromm also sees these two aspects of motherly love expressed in another biblical symbol: the land of Israel being described as a "land flowing with milk

and honey."[150] Seeing "land" as a mother symbol, Fromm interprets "milk" to be a symbol of care and affirmation at the preservation level of motherly love. "Honey" represents the level of motherly love that affirms life and instills a love for life. "Honey," Fromm says, "symbolizes the sweetness of life, the love for it and the happiness in being alive."[151] As Fromm points out, most mothers are able to provide their children with "milk," but few give "honey" also.

> In order to be able to give honey, a mother must not only be a "good mother," but a happy person – and this aim is not achieved by many. The effect on the child can hardly be exaggerated. Mother's love for life is as infectious as her anxiety is. Both attitudes have a deep effect on the child's whole personality; once can distinguish indeed, among children – and adults – those who got only "milk" and those who got "milk and honey."[152]

Whereas brotherly love takes place between equals, the relationship between a mother and its child is inherently unequal. The child is dependent upon the mother to fulfill its needs and sustain its life. Thus, the mother gives, the child receives. Fromm observes: "It is for this altruistic, unselfish character that motherly love has been considered the highest kind of love, and the most sacred of all emotional bonds."[153]

And with the highest kind of love, also comes the highest type of demand. For one of the main requirements of motherly love is that the mother allow and encourage her growing child to break its ties to her. The mother and child who were once one (physically during pregnancy and psychologically during infancy) must separate in order for the child to grow and achieve physical and psychological independence. Herein lies "the real achievement"[154] of motherly love, according to Fromm.

> It is only at this stage that motherly love becomes such a difficult task, that it requires unselfishness, the ability to give everything and to want

> nothing but the happiness of the loved one . . . Only the really loving woman, the woman who is happier in giving than in taking, who is firmly rooted in her own existence, can be a loving mother when the child is in the process of separation.[155]

With such high demands placed upon motherly love, it is easy to see why Fromm calls it "perhaps the most difficult form of love to be achieved."[156]

In contrast to brotherly love and motherly love, which are inclusive in nature (a person loves more than one "brother" or one "child"), erotic love is exclusive, as Fromm defines it. Erotic love is "the craving for complete fusion, for union with one other person. It is by its very nature exclusive and not universal."[157]

When Fromm speaks of erotic love, he is not talking about "falling in love," the temporary collapse of ego boundaries, or the feelings of "love" that two people have when they experience sexual intimacy or the psychological intimacy that comes from sharing thoughts, feelings and life experiences. For Fromm, erotic love must include brotherly love.[158] That is, erotic love is complete union with one other person exclusively and includes in the relationship the attitudes of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge that constitute brotherly love. Moreover, Fromm seems to imply that the character of brotherly love is even stronger in erotic love. In mystical tones, Fromm writes:

> Erotic love, if it is love, has one premise. That I love from the essence of my being – and experience the other person in the essence of his or her being. In essence, all human beings are identical. We are all part of One; we are One.[159]

Even though all human beings are identical and One, each of us is individual and unique. This is a paradox of human nature that Fromm sees effecting erotic love. Fromm states, therefore, that erotic love is not merely an

act of will that one can aim at any person one happens to meet. Erotic love certainly includes an act of will, Fromm argues. "To love somebody is not just a strong feeling — it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise."[160] Yet erotic love also includes the human qualities of individuality and uniqueness that make it so that two specific people are attracted to each other, regardless of will. Thus Fromm points to the paradox of erotic love: it is an act of will and it is an attraction between two unique individuals.[161]

As in the cases of erotic love between two people, a mother's love for her child, and one's brotherly love for other people, love is also directed toward oneself, Fromm argues. Just as it is a virtue to love our fellow human beings, so too, it is a virtue to love ourselves, considering we are likewise human beings.[162]

Fromm developed this idea in his essay "Selfishness and Self-Love,"[163] published in 1939 in the journal *Psychiatry*. There Fromm argued that love is "a passionate affirmation of its 'object,'"[164] and one's "own self, in principle, is as much an object of [one's] love as another person,"[165] in that just as one has attitudes and feelings about another person, so too, one has attitudes and feelings about one's self.[166]

In *The Art of Loving*, Fromm again turns to the verse from Leviticus, "Love your fellow as yourself,"[167] this time in support of self-love. Here Fromm perceives an implication in the verse to be that love of one's self and love of another person cannot be separated from each other.

> The idea expressed in the Biblical "Love thy neighbor as thyself!" implies that respect for one's own integrity and uniqueness, love for and understanding of one's own self, cannot be separated from respect and love and understanding for another individual. The love for my own self is inseparably connected with the love for any other being."[168]

Given that one's love is indivisible between other beings and one's own self, Fromm draws the bold conclusion (which first appeared in "Selfishness and Self-Love") that "if [one] can love *only* others, [one] cannot love at all."[169]

For Fromm, the love of God is not too far removed from the love of fellow human beings and self-love. The same motivation for human beings to unite with each other in love also informs the human love of God — the awareness of separateness and the need to overcome it by the achievement of union.[170] Moreover, one's love of God cannot be separated from one's relationship to parents[171] and to the level of psychological maturation one has achieved,[172] Fromm asserts. To support this, Fromm makes a connection from the evolution of God concepts throughout human history to the evolution of the human race and the psychological development of the individual.[173]

Surveying the evolution of God concepts, Fromm explores the transition from totemism, in which human beings identified with the natural world of animals and vegetation in an attempt to remain one with nature, to idolatry, in which human beings transformed the products of their own hands into gods, thereby revealing less of a reliance upon nature and more upon their own human powers.[174] At a later stage of development, human beings gave their gods the form of human beings, thus demonstrating an even greater awareness of human power , discovering "man as the highest and most dignified 'thing' in the world."[175] At this stage of religious development, the worship evolved into that which parallels human development: a mother-centered worship grew to a father-centered worship.[176] In mother-centered worship, the qualities of the human mother were projected onto the deity. Thus the mother goddess was unconditionally loving, all-protecting and non-hierarchical — all of her worshippers (children) were equal. Parallel to the growing child's separation from mother, increasing independence, and shift to a relationship with its

father, religious worship shifted from being mother-centered to father-centered. In father-centered worship, the qualities of the human father were projected onto the deity. Thus, the father god places demands and obligations upon the worshipper, is punitive when the worshipper disobeys, is hierarchical and has favorites, instilling competition among the worshippers.

Given the description of father-centered worship, one cannot fail to see this very God concept depicted in the Bible. In the Bible, God places demands upon Adam and Eve (not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), upon Abraham (to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac) and upon the children of Israel (to obey the commandments). God is hierarchical and his favorites are Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the children of Israel, the Jewish people. And God is punitive in the Bible on several occasions: banishing Adam and Eve from *Gan Eden* for eating the fruit, destroying the world by flood in Noah's day.

Yet at the same time, Fromm observes, the God concept evolves in the Bible. God evolves from a "despotic, jealous God" and a "despotic tribal chieftain" into a "loving father."[177] Where at one point, God fears Adam and Eve's independence, destroys the entire human race except for Noah and his family, and demands ultimate obedience from his servant Abraham by the sacrifice of his beloved son, Isaac, at the same time, God makes covenants by which he is bound: he makes a covenant with Noah to never again destroy the human race, he makes a covenant with Abraham, and Abraham can challenge God to act with justice in his treatment of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra. Fromm sees the evolution of God in the Bible taken once step further. According to Fromm, God evolves from a loving father into a symbol of the father's principles — justice, love and truth.

> God *is* truth, God *is* justice. In this development God ceases to be a person, a man, a father; he becomes the symbol of the principle of unity behind the manifoldness of phenomena.[178]

Fromm finds evidence for this evolution in God's revelation to Moses at the burning bush. Here God reveals to Moses the divine name, *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*,[179] which Fromm translates as "I am becoming that which I am becoming."[180] Fromm interprets this revelation to mean that "God is not finite, not a person, not a 'being.'"[181]

Fromm posits that his interpretation of the burning bush combined with the prohibition to make any image of God, the prohibition to pronounce God's name in vain, and the eventual prohibition to pronounce God's name, all point toward the same goal: "that of freeing man from the idea that God is a father, that he is a person."[182] Fromm sees further proof in the negative theology of Maimonides, which denies any positive attributes to God, and from the Cabalistic notion of God as the *En Sof*, "the Endless One."[183]

Following monotheistic thought to its logical conclusion, for Fromm, leads to the negation of all human projections of God and to the negation of all theology, all knowledge about God. The attributes ascribed to God are to be realized in oneself, and the love of God would mean to realize one's full capacity to love. Fromm thus writes:

> The truly religious person, if he follows the essence of the monotheistic idea, does not pray for anything, does not expect anything from God; he does not love God as a child loves his father or his mother; he has acquired the humility of sensing his limitations, to the degree of knowing that he knows nothing about God. God becomes to him a symbol in which man, at an earlier stage of his evolution, has expressed the totality of that which man is striving for, the realm of the spiritual world, of love, truth and justice. He has faith in the principles which "God represents; he thinks truth, lives love and justice, and considers all of his

> life only valuable inasmuch as it gives him the chance to arrive at an even fuller unfolding of his human powers — as the only reality that matters, as the only object of "ultimate concern"; and, eventually, he does not speak about God — nor even mention his name. To love God, if he were going to use this word, would mean, then, to long for the attainment of the full capacity to love, for the realization of that which "God" stands for in oneself.[184]

Such an evolution of religiosity, of course, parallels the psychological development of the maturing individual. One's love of God, therefore, parallels one's relationship with one's parents and one's growth as an individual, according to Fromm. The infant's attachment to mother is parallel to the worshipper of the mother goddess, the growing child's relationship to father is parallel to the worshipper of god the father, and the maturing individual's independence is parallel to the person who realizes the principles and powers of "God" within herself.

> The child starts out by being attached to his mother as "the ground of all being." He feels helpless and needs the all-enveloping love of mother. He then turns to his father as the new center of his affections, father being a guiding principle for thought and action; in this stage he is motivated by the need to acquire father's praise, and to avoid displeasure. In the stage of full maturity he has freed himself from the person of mother and of father as protecting and commanding powers; he has established the motherly and fatherly principles in himself. He has become his own father and mother; he *is* father and mother. In the history of the human race we see — and can anticipate — the same development: from the beginning of the love for God as the helpless attachment to a mother Goddess, through the obedient attachment to a fatherly God, to a mature stage where God ceases to be an outside power, where man has incorporated the principles of love and justice into himself, where he has become one with God, and eventually, to a point where he speaks of God only in a poetic, symbolic sense.[185]

Notes

[1] Buber uses the example of a tree in *I and Thou* (Smith ed.), p. 7, to distinguish between the I-It experience and the I-Thou relation. All references to *I and Thou*, unless otherwise noted, refer to the Smith ed.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[19] *Ibid* , p. 25.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, p. 33.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 135, p. 137.
[46] Buber, Martin. *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. London: Kegan Paul, 1947; new edition with an Introduction by Maurice Friedman and an Afterword by the Author ('The History of the Dialogical Principle'), trans. Maurice Friedman. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965, p. 97.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[49] *I and Thou*, p. 77, 79.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 105, 120.
[51] *Between Man and Man*, p. 22
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[53] Buber, Martin. *The Knowledge of Man*, trans. Maurice Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith, ed. Maurice Friedman. Altantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1965; 1988, p. 50.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172.
[58] Silberstein, *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning*, p. 150.
[59] *I and Thou*, p. 15.
[60] *The Knowledge of Man*, p. 172.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 60f.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 65f.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[75] Fromm, Erich. *The Sane Society*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955, p. 22.
[76] Fromm, Erich. *The Art of Loving*. New York: Harper & Row, 1956, p. 8.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[79] Gen. 2:25.
[80] Ibid. 3:7, trans. from *Tanakh: A New Translation of The Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, p. 6.
[81] Ibid. 3:8-10.
[82] Ibid. 3:12.
[83] Ibid. 3:13.
[84] *The Art of Loving*, p. 9.
[85] trans. from *Tanakh: A New Translation of The Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, p. 7.
[86] Fromm, Erich. *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1941, pp. 33-34.
[87] Gen 3:23-24.
[88] *The Art of Loving*, pp. 7-8.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[91] Fromm's term for the collective to which one conforms, *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[96] Fromm also explores the subject of love in his earlier works: in his essay "Selfishness and Self-Love" (1939), in his books *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 114-116 (basically a reprinting from the above essay) and pp. 259-260, *Man for Himself*, pp. 96-101, and *The Sane Society*, pp. 30-36. In a similar vein, Fromm explores the subject of human evolution, self-awareness, separateness and its consequent existential anxiety in his earlier works: *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 23-38, *Man for Himself*, pp. 38-50, and *The Sane Society*, pp. 22-27.
[97] *The Art of Loving*, pp. 17-19.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[106] Jonah 4:2.
[107] *The Art of Loving*, p. 24.
[108] Jonah, chapters 1 and 2.
[109] *The Art of Loving*, p. 25.
[110] Jonah 4:3.
[111] Ibid. 4:6.
[112] Ibid. 4:7-8.
[113] Ibid. 4:9-11.
[114] *The Art of Loving*, p. 25.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[116] Gen. 4:9.
[117] *The Art of Loving*, p. 25.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[121] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[122] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[123] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[126] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[127] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[130] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[134] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[135] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[137] Leviticus 19:18.
[138] *The Art of Loving*, p. 43.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[142] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[143] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[144] *Ibid.*, p. 36, 38.
[145] Fromm's definition of motherly love is the ideal, referring to a "motherly principle represented in the motherly person," and he realizes that not all mothers subscribe to it in theory or in practice. See p. 38 of *The Art of Loving*.
[146] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[147] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[148] Gen. 1:4; 1:10; 1:12; 1:18; 1:21; 1:25; 1:31. Incidentally, when God creates the sky on the second day (Gen. 1:6-8), the recurring phrase "God saw that it was good" is absent.
[149] *The Art of Loving*, p. 45.
[150] Ex. 3:8, 17; Ex. 13:5; Lev. 20:24; Num. 16:14; Deut. 6:3; to cite just a few.
[151] *The Art of Loving*, p. 45.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[153] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[155] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[157] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[158] *Ibid.*, p. 49, p. 50.
[159] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[160] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[163] "Selfishness and Self-Love," *Psychiatry*, II (1939), 507-523. Fromm's section on "Self-Love" in *The Art of Loving* (pp. 52-57) is basically an excerpt of that article with some revisions.
[164] Ibid., p. 519.
[165] Ibid., p. 520.
[166] Ibid., p. 513.
[167] Leviticus 19:18.
[168] *The Art of Loving*, p. 53.
[169] "Selfishness and Self-Love," p. 520; reprinted in *The Art of Loving*, p. 54.
[170] *The Art of Loving*, p. 57.
[171] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[172] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[173] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-74.
[174] *Ibid.*, p. 58
[175] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[176] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
[177] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[179] Ex. 3:14.
[180] *The Art of Loving*, p. 63.
[181] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[182] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[183] *Ibid.*, p. 63, p. 70.
[184] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
[185] *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

Chapter Three

Towards a Genuine Community

As we saw in the previous chapter, Buber observed that human beings naturally operate between two poles of relating: I-It and I-Thou. The I-It mode of relating to the world, characterized by objectification and instrumentality, far from being evil in itself, is prerequisite for scientific knowledge, technological progress and material production. Buber also observed in the history of the individual and humankind a progressive increase in the I-It mode of relating in the world. According to Buber, such an increase in the I-It mode of relating in the world leads to a corresponding decrease in the dialogical relationships between I and Thou.

In modern society, however, Buber sees not only the progressive increase of the I-It mode of relating, but he perceives its proliferation to the very point that the I-It mode of relating has come to dominate the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of human life.

> In our age the I-It relation, gigantically swollen, has usurped, practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The I of this relation, an I that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all, this I that is unable to say Thou, unable to meet a being essentially, is the lord of the hour.[1]

This assumption underlies *I and Thou* and Buber's later works. It is the main critique that Buber consistently levels against modern society in his attempt to alert people to the dangers of an all-pervasive I-It mode of relating, to educate people about the benefits and the need for the alternative mode of the dialogical relation between I and Thou, and to reestablish harmony

between the two poles of I-It and I-Thou relations through the establishment of genuine dialogue and genuine community.

In the introduction to his English translation of *I and Thou*, Walter Kaufmann notes that the "aim of the book is not to disseminate knowledge about God, but, at least, in large measure, to diagnose certain tendencies in modern society ... and to indicate how the quality of life might be changed radically by the development of a new sense of community."[2] What Kaufmann perceives as a primary objective of *I and Thou* can be discerned in all of Buber's writings on human relations, community and society.

Modern society is sick, Buber asserts, and the "sickness of our age is like that of no other age, and it belongs together with them all."[3] The nature of our sickness is "vital dissociation"[4] or *Verfremdung* — feeling alienated from the world and others, as well as feeling alienated from oneself.[5] Such sickness, Buber argues, stems from the proliferation and domination of the I-It mode of relating in the world.

According to Buber, in capitalistic and technological endeavors and in bureaucratic states, the individual is regarded primarily as an object to be used in the pursuit of profit and power. Economic and political institutions define people in terms of instrumentality and functionality. And, one might argue, success in these institutions depends upon this I-It mode of relating.

> Can the two compartments of this life, economics and State, with their present extent and completeness of structure, be conceived to rest on any other basis ... And if it is the experiencing and using *I* that rules here, the *I* that makes use of assets and work done in economics, and strivings and opinions in politics, must we not thank this unlimited mastery for the extensive and solid structure of the great "objective" products in these two circles? Is not, indeed, the productive greatness of the leading statesman and the leading economist bound up with the fact that he looks on the men with whom he has to deal not as bearers of the

> *Thou* that cannot be experienced but as centres of work and effort, whose particular capabilities it is his concern to estimate and utilise?[6]

However, the dominant I-It attitude in the economic and political arenas has proliferated to such an extent, according to Buber, that the political and economic institutions themselves have achieved a power of their own, controlling the people who create them. "The leaders have now only the semblance of control over the madly racing machines."[7] Within the madly racing machines, the human being is reduced to a functional cog — a usable, manipulatable object.

Caught up in such a controlling, dominating system, where one is defined in terms of one's use and function, the individual becomes alienated and cut off from his or her own personhood and ability to enter into direct relations with others. The human need for communion and the fundamental need to be confirmed as a person and the capacity to confirm others as persons are thwarted and go unrealized in a sick society dominated by the relational mode of instrumentality and functionality.

> But in times of sickness it comes about that the world of *It*, no longer penetrated and fructified by the inflowing world of *Thou* as by living streams but separated and stagnant, a gigantic ghost of the fens, overpowers man. In coming to terms with a world of objects that no longer assume present being for him he succumbs to this world. Then smooth causality rises up till it is an oppressive, stifling fate.[8]

For Buber, nothing less than a restructuring of society is necessary to quell the destructive forces of the world of It which dominate the modern age and alienate people from each other and themselves. Such restructuring begins, according to Buber, with the renewal of *gemeinschaft* — genuine community.

Genuine community requires two fundamental elements, according to Buber. *Gemeinschaft* requires that people stand in dialogical relation to a common center and that people stand in dialogical relation to one another.

> The true community does not arise through peoples having feelings for one another (though indeed not without it), but through, first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and, second, their being in living mutual relation with one another.[9]

For genuine community to take place, according to Buber, it is not enough that people enter into dialogical relations with one another. They must also stand in relation to a common center. As we saw in the previous chapter, the center to which Buber ultimately refers is God — the Eternal Thou. In other words, every genuine community is a religious community.

> The real essence of community is to be found in the fact — manifest or otherwise — that it has a centre. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the centre overriding all other relations: the circle is described by the radii, not by the points along its circumference. And the originality of the centre cannot be discerned unless it is discerned as being transpicuous to the light of something divine.[10]

Even though a people's common relationship to a center is essential to *Gemeinschaft*, genuine community is not realized unless the people also enter into dialogical relations with one another.

> But community, growing community (which is all we have known so far) is the being no longer side by side but *with* one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it also moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the other, a flowing from *I* to *Thou*. Community is where community happens. Collectivity is based on an organized atrophy of personal existence, community on its increase and confirmation of life lived towards one other. The modern zeal for collectivity is a flight from community's

testing and consecration of the person, a flight from the vital dialogic, demanding the staking of the self, which is in the heart of the world.[11]

For Buber, genuine community is not characterized by the amount of time that people spend together, or the feelings that people have for each another, but in the openness with which people approach one another.

> It is not a matter of intimacy at all; this appears when it must, and if it is lacking, that's all there is to it. The question is rather one of openness. A real community need not consist of people who are perpetually together; but it must consist of people who, precisely because they are comrades, have mutual access to one another and are ready for one another.[12]

Furthermore, for genuine community to take place, openness and mutual access must also be reflected in the physical environment, according to Buber. Architecture and buildings need to be designed and formed so that they encourage people to meet one another and to enter into dialogical relations with one another.

> If the world of man is to become a human world, then immediacy must rule between men, and thus also between human house and human house. And as in everything else, so also here the institutional and the educational influence must supplement each other. The secret longing of man for a life in reciprocal mutual confirmation must be developed through education, but the external conditions it needs in order to find its fulfillment must also be created. The architects must be set the task of also building for human contact, building surroundings that invite meetings and centers that shape meeting.[13]

To fulfill the task of creating and renewing genuine community in modern society, Buber realized that not only would the physical environment have to be reshaped to foster dialogical relations, economic and political life would also have to be radically changed.

In *Paths in Utopia*, Buber's most comprehensive presentation of his social philosophy, he argues for a socialist restructuring of society, wherein the centralizing power of the state is transformed by the decentralizing force of communities, and wherein the economy is transformed by putting the means of production into the hands of the communities.

According to Buber, society continually moves between two poles, corresponding to the relational poles of I-It and I-Thou, which he calls the "social principle" and the "political principle."[14] The political principle, corresponding to the ordered world of It, focuses on the centralization of power (i.e. the state) and is characterized by compulsion and domination. On the other hand, the social principle, corresponding to the dialogical relation of I and Thou, focuses on the creation of small communities and associations and is characterized by mutual responsibility and direct relationships between persons.

Like the I-It mode of relating, Buber acknowledges that the political principle is necessary to modern human life. A state is necessary to resolve conflicts and to maintain order and unity. However, the political principle has come to dominate modern society, Buber argues. The power and centralized authority of the state exceeds what is necessary to resolve conflicts and to maintain order and unity. Buber refers to this excess as the "political surplus," and one of the tasks in restructuring society is to replace the political surplus with the social principle. Such a restructuring can take place when there emerges in society a federation of communities that allows for the exercise of communal autonomy within a framework of voluntary order, thus reducing the need for the compelling authority and the dominating, centralizing features of the modern political state.

> The essential point is to decide on the fundamentals: a re-structuring of society as a League of Leagues, and a reduction of the State to its proper function, which is to maintain unity; or a devouring of an amorphous society by the omnipotent state ... The right proportion, tested anew every day according to changing conditions, between group-freedom and collective order; or absolute order imposed indefinitely for the sake of an era of freedom alleged to follow "of its own accord."[15]

Before such a League of Leagues can ever be created, genuine community and the social principle have to be developed within society. And the development of the social principle within society does not come about through political revolution or other political means, according to Buber, but through social education.

Social education, for Buber, does not mean transmitting knowledge or instilling or facilitating habits and values. To the extent that the teaching of such skills aim at mastery and control, this kind of education only perpetuates the functional, objective mode of I-It. Rather, for Buber, social education is meant to alter the ways that people relate to each other.

As we saw in the previous chapter, human beings are born with an innate drive to commune and relate to one another. Yet such a drive can go unrealized in the modern society dominated by the functional, objective mode of I-It. To counter the alienating effects of the I-It world, social education thus seeks to nurture and actualize a person's drive to relate and to enter dialogical relationships with others.

> Social education ... seeks to arouse and to develop in the minds of its pupils the spontaneity of fellowship which is innate in all unravaged human souls and which harmonizes very well with the development of personal existence and personal thought. This can be accomplished only by a complete overthrow of the political trend which nowadays dominates education throughout the world.[16]

In social education, the teacher models confirming, dialogical relations by relating to the student as an I to a Thou. The education transpires through "no content of an utterance, but the speaking voice; no instructing, but the glance, the movement, the being-there of those teaching when they are inspired by the educational task."[17]

While social education is essential to the development of the social principle in society, the ultimate goal is to restructure society by constructing entire communities of small and large groups that cultivate dialogical relationships and that are joined together in an overall confederation.

> The primal hope of all history depends upon a genuine, hence thoroughly *communally disposed* community of the human race. Fictitious, counterfeit, a planet-size lie would be the unity that was not established out of real communal living of smaller and larger groups that dwell or work together and out of their reciprocal relationships.[18]

The development of such communities in society will by no means do away with the political principle. Even as small and large communities join together in an "organic commonwealth,"[19] centralization will still be necessary, "but only so much as is indispensable in the given conditions of time and place."[20]

For Buber, community and the balance between the social and political spheres are not things that can be defined and delineated in the abstract and then applied uniformly and ideologically for all times and places; rather the development of community and the measure of centralization in the political sphere and decentralization in the social sphere is to be determined in the unique, concrete situation — "always it must be the moment's answer to the moment's question, and nothing more."[21]

Furthermore, when Buber speaks in terms of communities, he is speaking in terms of communes or "co-operatives" in which the collective controls the means of production. Identifying with "'Utopian Socialism', with particular reference to its postulate of a renewal of society through a renewal of its cell-tissue,"[22] Buber regards the socialist community of the "Full Co-operative" as the healthiest cell for the restructuring of society. According to Buber, the Full-Cooperative is a commune in which "communal living is based on the amalgamation of production and consumption, production being understood not exclusively as agriculture alone but as the organic union of agriculture with industry and with the handicrafts as well."[23]

Buber points to the Israeli kibbutz of the 20th century as a concrete example of a Full Co-operative that comes closest to realizing his concept of *gemeinschaft* – genuine community.

> As I see history and the present, there is only one all-out effort to create a Full Co-operative which justifies our speaking of success in the socialistic sense, and that is the Jewish Village Commune in its various forms, as found in Palestine... Nowhere else in the history of communal settlements is there this tireless groping for the form of community-life best suited to this particular human group, nowhere else this continual trying and trying again, this going to it and getting down to it, this critical awareness, this sprouting of new branches from the same stem and out of the same formative impulse.[24]

In contrast to communities that are based on abstract ideas and theories, Buber held the kibbutz movement in high regard because it was based on the particular needs and situation of a particular people.[25] Furthermore, the kibbutz movement combined the concrete "dictates of the hour"[26] with the ideal motives and teachings of Russian communes, "utopian" socialism and the social justice of the Bible. Buber hesitated to call the kibbutz movement a

success, however. Instead he preferred to speak of it as a "signal non-failure,"[27] feeling that much still needed to be done, particularly in the area of "neighbourly relationship"[28] between the communes. Nevertheless, Buber regarded the kibbutz movement as a high point in the history of humanity's effort to achieve genuine community.

> But that the men of the Jewish Communes have laboured so strenuously with one another and against one another for the emergence of a *communitas communitatum*, that is to say, for a structurally new society — this will not be forgotten in the history of mankind's struggle for self-renewal.[29]

Towards a Sane Society

As we saw in the previous chapter, Fromm posited that the deepest need of a human being is to overcome his or her existential separateness through the union of love — brotherly love, motherly love, erotic love, etc. For Fromm, one's capacity to love and one's development in creating loving relationships is dependent on the society in which one lives.[30] Accepting this assumption, the question then becomes whether or not modern society is conducive to cultivating and nurturing loving relationships. "To raise the question," Fromm asserts, "is to answer it in the negative."

> No objective observer of our Western life can doubt that love — brotherly love, motherly love, and erotic love — is a relatively rare phenomenon, and that its place is taken by a number of forms of pseudo-love which are in reality so many forms of the disintegration of love.[31]

According to Fromm, healthy love cannot take root in an unhealthy society — and modern society is unhealthy, pathological, indeed insane.

In his first book *Escape From Freedom*, Fromm argues that people in modern society, instead of embracing their freedom, choose to escape from it by placing themselves in authoritarian relations of dependency, which leads to a conformist mentally that can eventually become destructive (evinced by Nazi Germany). The majority of individuals in modern society adopt the role of "automatons" in an effort to escape awareness of the overwhelming power of the world outside of themselves and the overwhelming anxiety of their individual separateness. The "automaton" conforms to the way the mass of society thinks, feels and acts and thereby removes the anxiety and fear that comes from the knowledge of one's separateness and powerlessness vis-a-vis the world. Through "automaton conformity,"

> The individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be. The discrepancy between "I" and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness ... But the price he pays, however, is high; it is the loss of his self.[32]

Furthermore, Fromm argues in *Escape From Freedom*, the modern individual's feeling of aloneness and powerlessness is intensified by the alienating nature of human relationships in modern society. Personal and social relations in modern society are characterized by instrumentality and manipulation, following the pattern of relation set by the economic market. With instrumentality and manipulation being the characteristic elements of modern economic and social relations, the individual in society thus feels alienated from her work, her personal relationships and her own self.[33]

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm extends and deepens his analysis of modern society, expanding on the meaning and implications of automaton conformity, the instrumentality that pervades modern society, and the resulting alienation

that people experience. In *The Sane Society*, Fromm offers his most thorough analysis, critique, and solutions to the problems of modern society; so it is to this book that we will look for Fromm's most developed ideas on the subject.

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm argues that a society can be called "sick" if it hinders the development of mental health in its members. For Fromm, mental health is characterized by "the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from incestuous ties to clan and soil, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason."[34]

Whereas one might argue that the mental health of an individual depends mainly on the individual's biological constitution and particular individual life experiences and reactions to those life experiences, Fromm argues that "whether or not the individual is healthy, is primarily not an individual matter, but depends on the structure of his society."[35] Fromm thus defines healthy and unhealthy societies in terms of furthering or impeding an individual's mental health.

> A healthy society furthers man's capacity to love his fellow men, to work creatively, to develop his reason and objectivity, to have a sense of self which is based on the experience of his own productive powers. An unhealthy society is one which creates mutual hostility, distrust, which transforms man into an instrument of use and exploitation for others, which deprives him of a sense of self, except inasmuch as he submits to others or becomes an automaton. Society can have both functions; it can further man's healthy development, and it can hinder it; in fact most societies do both, and the question is only to what degree and in what directions their positive and negative influence is exercised.[36]

According to Fromm, the socio-economic conditions of modern, industrial society — the modes of production and consumption and the social and political

organizations — create the personality of modern Western human beings and are responsible for the disturbances in their mental health.[37] Of course, this is not say that there are not individual differences in personality between members of a society. Fromm distinguishes between "social character" and individual character, in which social character refers to "the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture" and individual character refers to the individual differences in each person of the same culture.[38] Therefore, when Fromm speaks of socio-economic conditions creating personality, he is referring to the creation of social character. And, according to Fromm, the creation of social character is necessary for the enduring operations of society. The social character's function is to "mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society."[39]

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm's focuses on the impact of capitalism on the social character of human beings in Western society. He characterizes capitalism by four common features: 1.) the existence of politically and legally free people; 2.) the fact that free people (i.e. workers and employees) sell their labor to the owners of capital on the labor market; 3.) the existence of the commodity market as the mechanism by which prices are determined and the exchange of the social product is regulated; and 4.) the principle that each individual acts to seek his or her own profit, and that by this competitive action of many, the greatest advantage is supposed to accrue for all.[40]

Dating capitalism from the 17th-century, Fromm divides the history of capitalism into three periods, each with its distinctive features.

The early period, covering the 17th and 18th centuries, was distinguished by the existence of primitive technique and industry compared with the

development in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it was distinguished by medieval ethical ideas that restrained economic practices and competition.[41]

In the 19th century, however, ethical restraints disappeared. According to Fromm, the most characteristic element of 19th-century capitalism was the ruthless exploitation of the workers. "There was hardly any human solidarity between the owner of capital and his workers. The law of the economic jungle was supreme."[42] The human being had lost his central place in society and had become a commodity himself. The principle of "the use of man by man,"[43] whereby a human being becomes the means for the economic interests of another, himself, or the impersonal, economic machine, prevailed across the entire social order. Competition and profit became the guiding principles. And capital, "the world of things and their amassment," ruled labor, "the world of life and its productivity."[44] Furthermore, on the institutional level, 19th-century capitalism was still private, not yet the capitalism of huge corporations which no one really owns. On the psychological level, the social character at this time was essentially competitive, hoarding, exploitative, authoritarian, aggressive andindividualistic.[45]

In the 20th century, the most important elements of capitalism, according to Fromm, include "the revolutionary increase in industrial production, the increasing concentration of capital and bigness of business and government, the increasing number of people who manipulate figures and people, the separation of ownership from management, the rise of the working class economically and politically,"[46] and the "miracle of production"[47] in which steam, oil, electricity, and atomic energy are employed for mass production, leading to mass consumption and the growth of marketing and advertising industries designed to manufacture the desire to consume.

Whereas the 19th-century social character was marked by exploitation and a hoarding orientation, the social character of 20th-century capitalism is marked by a receptive and marketing orientation.[48] The receptive-oriented personality, according to Fromm, aims to receive something from an outside source — material things, knowledge, love, pleasure, etc. The aim is "to 'drink in,' to have something new all the time, to live with a continuously open mouth, as it were."[49] The marketing orientation is rooted in the experience of oneself as a commodity and of one's value as exchange value.[50] The marketing orientation is the dominant aspect of social character of the 20th century, according to Fromm. He offers the following comprehensive description of the marketing orientation prevalent in modern society:

> In this orientation, man experiences himself as a thing to be employed successfully on the market. He does not experience himself as an active agent, as the bearer of human powers. He is alienated from these powers. His aim is to sell himself successfully on the market. His sense of self does not stem from his activity as a loving and thinking individual, but from his socio-economic role ... That is the way he experiences himself, not as a man, with love, fear, convictions, doubts, but as that abstraction, alienated from his real nature, which fulfills a certain function in the social system. His sense of value depends on his success: on whether he can sell himself favorably, whether he can make more of himself than he started out with, whether he is a success. His body, his mind and his soul are his capital, and his task in life is to invest it favorably, to make a profit of himself. Human qualities like friendliness, courtesy, kindness, are transformed into commodities, into assets of the "personality package," conducive to a higher price on the personality market. If the individual fails in a profitable investment of himself, he feels that *he* is a failure; if he succeeds, *he* is a success. Clearly, his sense of his own value always depends on factors extraneous to himself, on the fickle judgment of the market, which decides about his value as it decides about the value of commodities... *Things* have no self and men who have become things can have no self.[51]

The socio-economic structure of modern capitalistic society and the social character structure that it has spawned has led to the sickness of the modern human being in society. That sickness, according to Fromm, is the sickness of alienation.

Alienation in modern society arises in part because of one of the fundamental economic features of capitalism is the process of "quantification" and "abstractification." Quantification occurs in modern economic activity with businesses' reliance upon the balance sheet and its strictly quantifiable figures that tell the business manager whether or not the business is profitable. Large corporations add to the abstractification of economic activity in that they control millions of dollars, millions of customers, thousands of stockholders and thousands of employees; "all these people become so many pieces in a gigantic machine which must be controlled, whose effects must be calculated; each man eventually can be expressed as an abstract entity, as a figure, and on this basis economic occurrences are calculated, trends are predicted, decisions are made."[52] Moreover, economic relations are regulated by money, "the abstract expression of work."[53] People receive the same thing — money — in different quantities for different qualities of work. And people give the same thing — money — in different quantities for different products and services. Money thus stands as the "abstract quality of concrete work."[54] In addition, the increasing division of labor in capitalist production adds to abstractification. The modern worker of industrial production is not involved with the concrete product as a whole, but performs one specialized function. Although the manager is engaged with the whole product, it still remains an abstraction, in that it's essentially regarded by the manager for its exchange value.

Although abstractification and quantification are necessary for mass production, its increase and predominance in the economic sphere has spilled over into the social and relational life of human beings, Fromm argues. "In a society in which economic activities have become the main preoccupation of man, this process of quantification and abstractification has transcended the realm of economic production, and spread to the attitude of man to things, to people, and to himself."[55]

Fromm observes that the increased ability to form abstractions is characteristic of cultural development and philosophical and scientific thought.[56] Yet there are two ways of relating to an object, he argues. One can relate to an object in its full concreteness, perceiving all its specific qualities and its uniqueness from all other objects. And one can relate to an object in an abstract way, emphasizing only those qualities that it has in common with other objects in the same category, thereby ignoring its other qualities. To fully relate to an object, Fromm says, one must balance the polarity of "perceiving it in its uniqueness, and at the same time in its generality; in its concreteness, and at the same time in its abstractness."[57] However, modern Western culture fails to balance the polarity, focusing almost exclusively on the abstract qualities of people and objects.

> In contemporary Western culture this polarity has given way to an almost exclusive reference to the abstract qualities of things and people, and to a neglect of relating oneself to their concreteness and uniqueness. Instead of forming abstract concepts where it is necessary and useful, everything, including ourselves, is being abstractified; the concrete reality of people and things, to which we can relate with the reality of our own person, is replaced by abstractions, by ghosts that embody different quantities, but not different qualities.[58]

In modern capitalistic society, things are primarily experienced as commodities, as embodiments of exchange value. A cigar is referred to as a "five-dollar cigar" or a watch is referred to as a "three-hundred-dollar watch." Moreover, people are experienced in the same way. Someone is "worth 50 million dollars" — an abstraction, no longer a concrete person. People further become abstractions when commonly defined by their economic and occupational functions. "Tell me about so-and-so?" we may ask someone. The response usually focuses on the person's occupation. "He's a doctor." "She's a lawyer." Thus a unique person with certain human qualities, hopes and frustrations is reduced to a job title. "The richness and concreteness of a human life is expressed in the abstract formula of economic function,"[59] Fromm observes.

All of this quantification and abstractification in modern capitalistic society leads to human alienation, according to Fromm, which he defines as:

> A mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts — but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively.[60]

Although the term "alienation" is relatively new in human history, Fromm points out that the concept to which it refers is, in fact, quite old. For Fromm, alienation is what the prophets of the Hebrew Bible referred to as "idolatry." In idolatry, a person bows down and worships the work of his own hands. According to Fromm, the idol is nothing but the projection of a quality found in

the idol-worshipper himself. In other words, "the idol represents the [idol worshipper's] own life-forces in an alienated form."[61] For Fromm, the process of alienation in modern society is no different, wherein "man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished 'thing,' dependent on powers outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance."[62]

Alienation pervades modern society, Fromm argues. In the workplace, the worker is alienated from the whole product because he produces only part of it on the assembly line; the manager is alienated from the concreteness of the product and his employees, customers, etc.; and the "owner" of a large corporation is alienated from the enterprise, in that he has no concrete relationship to it, his ownership consisting of a piece of paper, representing a certain fluctuating amount of money.

Furthermore, the process of consumption is as alienated as the process of production, in that we acquire things with money, the abstract form of labor. People acquire things not solely based upon need or use, but for the mere possession of them. The advertising and marketing industries aim to manipulate wants and needs or create wants and needs that people do not have in order to sell products. All of this leads to further alienation from real human need. Thus, according to Fromm, "consuming is essentially the satisfaction of artificially stimulated phantasies, a phantasy performance alienated from our concrete, real selves."[63] Furthermore, people are surrounded by gadgets and technologies (e.g. today cars, telephones, answering machines, televisions, VCRs, stereos, computers, the Internet) of whose nature and origin we know little or nothing — thus adding to our alienation.

Not only are human beings alienated from the processes of production and consumption, human beings are alienated from each other, according to

Fromm. "What is modern man's relationship to his fellow man? It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other. The employer uses the ones whom he employs; the salesman uses his customers. Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later."[64] Such a way of relating invades and corrupts love relationships, in that "love is often nothing but a favorable exchange between two people who get the most of what they can expect, considering their value on the personality market."[65]

Just as a person is alienated from another, so too, a person is alienated from himself or herself, according to Fromm. Here self-alienation takes its form primarily in the "marketing orientation"[66] that dominates the modern social character. Here a person experiences himself or herself as just another commodity on the market, a socio-economic package to be successfully sold, abstracted from the fullness of human life and cut off from the human powers of love, creativity, and reason.

Thus, according to Fromm, alienation in modern society is almost total, pervading the relationship of a person to her work, to the things she consumes, to other people, and to herself. The psychological results of alienation on a person in modern society are

> that man regresses to a receptive and marketing orientation and ceases to be productive; that he loses his sense of self, becomes dependent on approval, hence tends to conform and yet to feel insecure; he is dissatisfied, bored, and anxious, and spends most of his energy in the attempt to compensate for or just to cover up this anxiety.[67]

People in modern society are thus sick. And the economic and social structure of society itself is the root cause of the illness. Society, therefore, is sick and in need of a cure so that people can get well. Fromm proposes a cure

to bring about the sanity and mental health of modern society in chapter eight of *The Sane Society*.

Before presenting his cure, Fromm first offers a picture of what a sane and mentally healthy society should look like.

> First of all, a society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself; hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers; where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth. A sane society is one in which qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness, narcissism, have no chance to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. Where acting according to one's conscience is looked upon as a fundamental and necessary quality and where opportunism and lack of principles is deemed to be asocial; where the individual is concerned with social matters so that they become personal matters, where his relation to his fellow man is not separated from his relationship in the private sphere. A sane society, furthermore, is one which permits man to operate within manageable and observable dimensions, and to be an active and responsible participant in the life of society, as well as the master of his own life. It is one which furthers human solidarity and not only permits, but stimulates, its members to relate themselves to each other lovingly; a sane society furthers the productive activity of everybody in his work, stimulates the unfolding of reason and enables man to give expression to his inner needs in collective art and rituals.[68]

To create such a sane society, Fromm emphasizes that changes must take place simultaneously in all realms of society — economic, political, social, psychological, etc. — and not just in one or two areas. He argues that changes to some structures of society that neglect changes to other structures of society will ultimately be destructive.

> Sanity and mental health can be attained only by simultaneous changes in the sphere of industrial and political organization, of spiritual and

> philosophical orientation, of character structure, and of cultural activities. The concentration of effort in any of these spheres, to the exclusion or neglect of others, is destructive of *all* change.[69]

In the economic realm, Fromm proposes a change in modern Western society from capitalism to communitarian socialism. The essential aim of communitarian socialism is to achieve an economic system in which "every working person would be an active and responsible participant, where work would be attractive and meaningful, where capital would not employ labor, but labor would employ capital."[70] To realize this goal, all economic activity is to be guided by the principle that "the primary purpose of work is to serve people, and not to make a profit."[71] The rights of the owners of capital do not include management of the industry. Capitalists are entitled only to a reasonable rate of interest for the use of their capital.[72] Industry is instead governed by the principles of "co-management and workers' participation."[73] Combining centralization and decentralization, the principles

> can be worked out in such a way that the responsibility for management is divided between the central leadership and the rank and file. Well-informed small groups discuss matters of their own work situation and of the whole enterprise; their decisions would be channelled to the management and form the basis for a real co-management. As a third participant, the consumer would have to participate in the decision making and planning in some form.[74]

Only if the workers achieve full participation in governing industry will alienation from work — the root of all alienation — be overcome. But to govern properly, the workers must be educated to a "wider knowledge of all the technical problems involved in the production of the whole product"[75] and they must also be educated to understand the place of their enterprise in the

national and world economy. All this knowledge will be learned through schooling and continuous on-the-job training.[76]

These reforms, according to Fromm, will do much to make work meaningful and attractive. In addition, informal social organization needs to be fostered in the workplace. There must be a real community of work, but this needs to be balanced by an attitude among the members of a particular community that eschews "a kind of local patriotism"[77] – which perpetuates alienation – in favor of the "one truly social orientation, namely the one of solidarity with mankind."[78] When workers come to realize that the purpose of their work is to serve people and not to make profit, the main incentives for work will change from money, power, prestige and status, to motives of interest in the work, participation in the community, and the building of an independent economic existence.[79]

Certain measures of economic equality and security must also be realized in a sane society, according to Fromm. He argues that while all incomes need not be equal, "inequalities ... must not transcend the point where differences in income lead to differences in the experience of life."[80] A multi-millionaire who can afford whatever he or she wants leads a qualitatively different life than someone who cannot afford any luxury – such a gross inequality has no place in a sane society, according to Fromm. Regarding economic security, Fromm advocates, in addition to a full system of social security for sickness, unemployment and old age, a "universal subsistence guarantee."[81] Such a guarantee, according to Fromm, would ensure that each person could always act freely and responsibly, without the threat of starvation that forces people to accept working conditions that they would otherwise not accept. In practical terms, the universal subsistence guarantee would mean that

> every citizen can claim a sum, enough for the minimum of subsistence even though he is not unemployed, sick, or aged. He can demand the sum if he has quit his job voluntarily, if he wants to prepare himself for another type of work, or for any personal reason which prevents him from earning money ... shortly, he can claim this subsistence minimum without having to have any "reason." It should be limited to a definite time period, let us say two years, so as to avoid the fostering of a neurotic attitude which refuses any kind of social obligation.[82]

The costs for such a guarantee would be offset by increased productivity of workers under the new economic system and a decrease in government expenses due to criminality, neurotic and psychosomatic illnesses, which would be reduced under communitarian socialism.[83]

In the political sphere, changes must also be made to combat the alienation fostered by modern democracy — particularly as it is practiced in the United States. According to Fromm, the modern alienated individual has opinions and prejudices, likes and dislikes (but no conviction or will) which are manipulated by political propaganda machines just as one's needs and desires are manipulated by the advertising industry in order to sell products and services. The average voter is poorly informed and thus unprepared to make an informed choice when voting. Furthermore, in the modern age of conformity, the very idea of majority rule has become an instrument of alienation and abstractification.[84] Originally, Fromm argues, majority rule "did not mean that the majority was *right*; it meant that it is better for the majority to be wrong than for a minority to impose its will on the majority."[85] Now the majority is considered as right, and the minority is by definition wrong.

Sound decisions cannot be made in an atmosphere of mass voting, Fromm argues. They require informed discussion within small face-to-face groups. Sound decisions must also be based on accurate and complete information.

Thus, a way must be found to supply citizens with full and objective information on all the issues upon which they have to decide. Furthermore, the decisions that people arrive at in small groups "must have a direct influence on the decision making exercised by a centrally elected parliamentary executive."[86]

These goals can be achieved by reviving the town meeting and adapting it to modern conditions. Fromm proposes that the population could be organized into groups of five hundred people on the basis of residence or place of work. The groups would meet regularly, once a month, and would choose their own officials and committees, which would change every year. The groups would discuss the main political issues of national and local concern. And they would receive objective information prepared by a politically independent cultural agency composed of "personalities from the fields of art, sciences, religion, business, politics, whose outstanding achievements and moral integrity are beyond doubt."[87] After discussion and decision, the face-to-face groups would forward their votes to the central government, where the overall result of these votes would be calculated and registered. Then "the decision of the face-to-face groups would constitute the true 'House of Commons,' which would share power with the house of universally elected representatives and a universally elected executive."[88] Through this procedure, "the process of alienation in which the individual citizen surrenders his political will by the ritual of voting to powers beyond him would be reversed, and each individual would take back into himself his role as a participant in the life of the community."[89] Fromm thus proposes a political system which combines a centralized form of democracy with a high degree of decentralization.

In the cultural sphere, Fromm states that "we do not need new ideals or spiritual goals," because "the great teachers of the human race have

postulated the norms for sane living."[90] New wisdom, therefore, is not needed, but richer understanding of and more serious dedication to old wisdom.

Fromm proposes that the main task of education is to impress on people the guiding ideals and norms of civilization. He argues that we must abolish the concept of education as a process of training people to adjust to the "social machine"[91] and instead devote our schools to the development of human powers. Schools should imbue students with the faculty of critical thought and character traits "which correspond to the professed ideals of our civilization."[92] According to Fromm, we need to erase the harmful separation between theoretical and practical knowledge, for "this very separation is part of the alienation of work and thought."[93] From the beginning of schooling, theoretical instruction and practical work must be combined. No primary education would be complete "before the student had a grasp of the fundamental technical processes of our industry."[94] The high school "ought to combine practical work of a handicraft and of modern industrial technique with theoretical instruction."[95] Furthermore, adult education must be enormously expanded.[96]

In addition to reforms in education, Fromm argues that we must develop collective art and rituals which help us "respond to the world with our senses in a meaningful, skilled, productive, active, shared way."[97] This "will begin with the children's games in kindergarten, be continued in school, then in later life. We shall have common dances, choirs, plays, music, bands, not entirely replacing modern sport, but subordinating it to the role of one of the many nonprofit and nonpurpose activities."[98] As in the case of industrial and political organizations, the cultural sphere will be characterized by decentralization, that is, concrete face-to-face groups and active, responsible participation.[99]

Regarding religion, Fromm speculates that within the next few hundred years a new humanistic and universalistic "religion"[100] will develop.[101] In the

meantime, he says, we can unite in firm negation of the idolatries of the state, of power, of the machine, and of success — "the all-pervading alienation that threatens the spiritual qualities of man."[102]

In considering the possibility of achieving the sane society that he proposes, Fromm himself does not think the prospects are hopeful. He judges "that the most likely possibility" for the future "is that of atomic war,"[103] the result of which will be either "the regression of the world to a primitive agrarian level" or the emergence of a single "centralized state based on force."[104] Even if such a major war is avoided, however, the outlook still is not bright, according to Fromm. "In the development of both Capitalism and of Communism as we can visualize them in the next fifty or a hundred years, the process of automization and alienation will proceed."[105]

This having been said, Fromm still has faith in humanity's reason, good will and sanity to choose a sane society based on communitarian socialism instead of the progressively destructive path of alienation and "robotism." In prophetic and rabbinically homiletical fashion, Fromm concludes his vision of a sane society with a Deuteronomic challenge and a *nechemta*.

> Man today is confronted with the most fundamental choice; not that between Capitalism or Communism, but that between *robotism* (of both the capitalist and the communist variety), or Humanistic Communitarian Socialism. Most facts seem to indicate that he is choosing robotism, and that means, in the long run, insanity and destruction. But all these facts are not strong enough to destroy faith in man's reason, good will and sanity. As long as we can think of other alternatives, we are not lost; as long as we can consult together and plan together, we can hope. But, indeed, the shadows are lengthening; the voices of insanity are becoming louder. We are in reach of achieving a state of humanity which corresponds to the vision of our great teachers; yet we are in danger of the destruction of all civilization, or of robotization. A small tribe was

told thousands of years ago: "I put before you life and death, blessing and curse — and you chose life." This is our choice too.[106]

Notes

[1] *Eclipse of God: Studies in the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy*, trans. Maurice Friedman. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988, p. 129.
[2] "I and You: A Prologue," by Walter Kaufmann, p. 38, in *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.
[3] *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, p. 55.
[4] *Pointing the Way: Collected Essays*, trans. and ed. Maurice Friedman. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p. 102.
[5] *I and Thou*, pp. 70-72.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[10] *Paths in Utopia*, trans. R.F.C. Hull. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988, p. 135.
[11] *Between Man and Man*, pp. 31-32.
[12] *Paths in Utopia*, pp. 144-145.
[13] *A Believing Humanism: My Testament, 1902-1965* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 95.
[14] *Paths in Utopia*, pp. 130-132; *Pointing the Way*, pp. 174-176.
[15] *Paths in Utopia*, p. 148.
[16] *Pointing the Way*, p. 176.
[17] *A Believing Humanism*, p. 98.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
[19] *Paths in Utopia*, p. 136.
[20] *Paths in Utopia*, p. 134.
[21] *Paths in Utopia*, p. 134.
[22] from Buber's "Foreward" in *Paths in Utopia*.
[23] *Paths in Utopia*, p. 140.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 142, p. 148.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[30] *The Art of Loving*, p. 75.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[32] *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1941, p. 184.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 118ff.
[34] *The Sane Society*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955, p. 69.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 99. In his book *Man For Himself*, Chapter Three, pp. 50-117, Fromm describes five types of personality or character types: receptive, exploitative, hoarding, marketing, and productive.
[49] *The Sane Society*, p. 136; *Man For Himself*, p. 62.
[50] *Man For Himself*, p. 68.
[51] *The Sane Society*, pp. 141-143.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 116.
[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[66] See Fromm's definition of the "marketing orientation" cited previously in this chapter.
[67] *The Sane Society*, pp. 270-271.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 271.
[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 283-284.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 323.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 324.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 323.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 323.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 293.
[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 335.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 336.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 338.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 339.
[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 339-340.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 341.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 343.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 343.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 343-344.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 345.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 346.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 350.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 350.
[100] In his later book *You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), Fromm states that it is misleading and ambigious to use the term "religion." This is so because Western "religions" usually include a theistic God concept, whereas some Eastern "religions" are nontheistic. Therefore, to avoid confusion, Fromm employs the term the "x experience" instead of "religious experience" in *You Shall Be As Gods*. See pp. 56-62 in *You Shall Be As Gods* for Fromm's discussion of the "x experience."
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 352.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 351.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 363.

Chapter Four

Putting It All Together

Having described Martin Buber's and Erich Fromm's philosophies, we now turn our attention to a comparison, analysis, critique and evaluation of them. Beginning with their views on interpersonal relations, one is immediately struck by the similarities between the two thinkers.

To begin with, both Buber and Fromm maintain that human beings are aware of their existential separateness from other beings in the world. Buber speaks of the human awareness of the "primal setting at a distance," wherein a person realizes that other beings exist as separate entities, "independent opposites," to one's own existence. This realization occurs early in life. The young child (at age one or two) who reaches out her hand to make contact with the world is acutely aware that others are set at a distance. Separation is, therefore, an inherent element of human perception, according to Buber.

It is that for Fromm, as well. The fetus and the newborn experience harmony and union with the world through their mother. But as the child grows and develops self-awareness, reason and imagination — defining characteristics of human life — the child realizes that she is separate from mother and from all things in the world. That is, the child's sense of "I," her formation of identity and concept of self, lead to the awareness of separation from others.

For Fromm, this awareness of existential separation leads to intense anxiety. Indeed, he goes so far as to refer to the awareness of existential separation as "the source of all anxiety." Furthermore, such an awareness leads to feelings of helplessness, guilt and shame, in that one feels vulnerable to

the outside world and cut off from others. Buber, however, makes no such claims of negative and painful reactions resulting from a person's awareness of separateness in the "primal setting at a distance." Fromm may indeed be correct that such negative feelings accompany the awareness of separateness, and Buber may have overlooked an important consequence of the primal setting at a distance. Yet Fromm's premise seems difficult to prove or disprove. It may just as easily be argued that the feelings of anxiety and helplessness come not from an awareness of separateness, but rather from a small child's awareness of total dependency on another for the maintenance of its life and the subsequent fear of abandonment (and death) of which one carries memories and vestiges of throughout one's life.

Just as Buber and Fromm both posit that human beings are aware of existential separateness, so too, they both maintain that human beings have a need to relate to others. In *I and Thou*, Buber referred to the *a priori* of relations, the "inborn Thou," that fuels a child's instinct to make contact with others. Buber argues that there is a human desire and need for relationships, which he later refers to as the fundamental drive to commune. He took the concept one step further in his writings of the 1950s, when he emphasized the human need to confirm one another, that is, for a human being to be confirmed as what he is and what he can become, just as he has the capacity to confirm another in the same way. An animal does not have such a need, Buber argues, only human beings do. The human being's unique awareness of the primal setting at a distance creates the need for such confirmation in human relationship. For Fromm, the deepest need of a human being is to overcome one's separateness. Because of this need, the need for relatedness and "interpersonal fusion" arises. For Fromm, the need to relate to others is "an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends. This need is

behind all phenomena which constitute the whole gamut of intimate human relations."[1] Thus, once again, Buber and Fromm agree on the fundamental human need to relate based on an awareness of separateness. Whereas Fromm the psychotherapist maintains that one's *sanity* depends on the fulfillment of the need to relate, Buber the philosopher maintains that "actual humanity" and "self-being" depend on the fulfillment of the need to relate and confirm.

Just as Buber and Fromm both posit that human beings are aware of their existential separateness and that human beings have a fundamental need to relate to others, so too, they both offer a highly developed paradigm of relating to others. Buber offers the dialogical relation of I-Thou. Fromm offers the art of "productive" loving. Looking at Buber's dialogical relation and Fromm's productive loving, one observes several similarities and several differences.

As we have seen, Buber's dialogical relation involves a person turning to another in truth with one's full being, communicating to the other what one really is, without seeming and without reserve. One makes the other person present by perceiving the other person as she really is, whole and unique, without reduction, abstraction or objectification. In making the other person present, one combines one's "experiencing" senses with imagining the real, that is, imagining to oneself what the other person is at that very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking, and then actually experiencing the other person's reality. One confirms the other person, not only affirming and accepting who the other person actually is at that given moment, but confirming who the other person potentially can become and is meant to become. Such a confirmation *if* free of imposing one's own beliefs and attitudes on the other, helps the other unfold her potentiality by the meeting between

one's actual being and the other's potential being. In the dialogical relation, each person must bring all these elements of relation to the other person — for the dialogical relation is mutual. Furthermore, the dialogical relation takes place *between* two people. It cannot occur through an act of will by one person. Rather, the relationship depends on "grace" as each Thou confronts each I.

As we have also seen, Fromm's art of "productive" loving involves four characteristic attitudes that are mutually interdependent. These attitudes are care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. Furthermore, according to Fromm, love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity and one's individuality. Love is an active power within a human being. And love primarily involves giving, not receiving. Furthermore, it is inclusive, that is, the productively loving person loves all persons, loves himself or herself, loves the world and loves life. Love is an attitude — a character orientation — which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole.

In comparing Buber's dialogical relation with Fromm's productive love, we find that, in both ways of relating, people maintain their uniqueness, wholeness and integrity. In the dialogical relation, each person must perceive the other as unique and whole, without reduction or abstraction. And each person must enter the relation in truth, with integrity, and without seeming to be what one is not. Similarly, in productive love, one must preserve his or her integrity and uniqueness while loving another. When one relates in productive love, one gives only of that which is truly and uniquely alive in oneself — one's thoughts, one's feelings, one's knowledge, one's interests — "all expressions and manifestations of that which is alive" in oneself.

The ability to respond is also characteristic of both dialogical relations and productive love. When Buber speaks about the movement and activity involved in the dialogical relation, he refers to a person turning toward the

address of another, and responding to that address. Dialogue consists of address and response. And as we have seen, Buber had also stated that love is "responsibility of an I for a Thou." Just as responsibility is an integral part of the I-Thou dialogical relation, so too, responsibility is a characteristic feature of productive love. For Fromm, responsibility consists of the willingness and ability to respond to the expressed and unexpressed needs of another. In productive love, therefore, one must be willing and able to respond to another – similar to the willingness and ability to respond to another in the dialogical relation.

Furthermore, one can discern a similarity between Buber's concept of "imagining the real" in the dialogical relation and Fromm' concept of knowledge in productive love. In the dialogical relation, one imagines what the other person is really thinking, feeling, perceiving, etc. Similarly, in productive love, one's knowledge of the other penetrates to the core of the other person's existence, thus allowing one to know when another is angry, anxious, worried, lonely, guilty, etc. Knowing the core of another's existence implies that one can imagine what another is really thinking, feeling, perceiving, etc. Thus, we can see a strong similarity between imagining the real in dialogical relations and knowledge of another's core existence in productive love.

Perhaps the major similarity between Buber's dialogical relation and Fromm's productive love is their strong emphasis on accepting the wholeness of the person who one is relating to. In the dialogical relation, one confirms another by accepting who the other person is and by accepting who the other person is created to become, that is, by accepting the fullness of the other person's actualities and potentialities. In such an acceptance and confirmation of the other, one does not try to impose one's attitudes and beliefs on another, yet one helps the other unfold his or her inherent potentialities by the meeting

between one's actual being and the other's potential being. Here I think Buber fails to explain how specifically one helps another unfold his or her potential by the dialogical relation. I can only surmise that, in a dialogical relation, the one who has actualized certain potentialities becomes a model for the other who has not yet actualized such potentialities. In perceiving how an actualized being acts, one's potential being is stimulated and can become actualized if one assents to and learns from the actualized being's behavior. This may be what Buber has in mind, it's difficult to ascertain. Regardless, the point is that Buber's dialogical relation lays emphasis on accepting the other person and not imposing one's will on the other person. This is strikingly similar to Fromm's concept of respect and knowledge in productive love.

As we have seen, respect in productive love means that one perceives another as he or she actually is — to be aware of his or her unique individuality. To respect someone means that one wants another to grow and unfold for his or her own sake, in his or her own ways, and not as an object for one's own use. Furthermore, the knowledge in productive love that penetrates to the core of another's existence also requires that one has the ability to perceive another as he or she is, without being distorted by one's own needs and concerns. Thus, Fromm's concepts of respect and knowledge in productive love parallel Buber's concept of confirmation in dialogical relations, albeit Fromm does not talk about helping the other actualize his or her potentialities through productive love. We can also note in Fromm's concept of respect another similarity to Buber's dialogical relation. In both cases, there is an absence of instrumentality and functionality; one does not use another as a means to an end. Here Fromm seems to go one step further than Buber, which I believe, gets Fromm's theory of love into trouble. Whereas Buber argues — correctly I believe — that a human being naturally moves between the two poles of I-It

and I-Thou relations, Fromm, in presenting his theory of love in its most developed form in *The Art of Loving*, doesn't seem to express a natural and healthy counterpoint to the ideal standards of productive love. That is, when Buber speaks of the dialogical relation of I and Thou, he acknowledges that the relationship is not a permanent state of being. Every Thou is by nature fated to become an It, Buber says. We cannot maintain the dialogical relation of I and Thou indefinitely. Therefore, we will revert to utilitarian ways of relating; we will at times use people — even people that we love. Fromm does not seem to allow for such instrumentality to enter into a loving relationship. He does acknowledge that everyone is in need of help from time to time.

> Inasmuch as we are human, we are all in need of help. Today I, tomorrow you. But this need of help does not mean that one is helpless, the other powerful. Helplessness is a transitory condition; the ability to stand and walk on one's own feet is the permanent and common one.[2]

How receiving such help fits into his theory of love and differs from using another as a means to an end, Fromm does not make clear. I think Fromm errs in not addressing this issue and in not allowing instrumentality to enter a loving relationship. The concept of respect in productive love implies never using another person as a means to some end. If that is what Fromm maintains as a realistic and attainable goal on a permanent basis, I think he is mistaken. Buber's position that one naturally moves between the two poles of I-It and I-Thou seems closer to the truth. That is, realistically, sometimes we will relate to others in terms of their instrumentality and sometimes we will relate to others in the uniqueness and fullness of their being, without instrumentality. Fromm does not seem to allow for an instrumental way of relating. There is no place for it in productive love, and he makes no mention of an acceptable alternative way of relating to productive love.

As much as we can perceive several similarities between Buber's and Fromm's theories of interpersonal relations, so we can also perceive several differences. One major difference, as noted above, is that dialogical relations are temporary in nature, albeit they occur again and again, whereas productive love seems to be a permanent way of relating. Given the high, idealized standards of interpersonal conduct in both Buber's dialogical relations and Fromm's productive love, Buber's model of relating seems more realistic. That is, Buber acknowledges the impermanent and changing nature of relations. One relates to the world in two ways: the I-It mode and the dialogical relation of I-Thou. A human being cannot live permanently in the dialogical relation. Instrumentality, abstraction and detachment are also a natural part of human relationships. To deny their necessity or to rail against their existence is futile. To put the I-It mode of existence into proper perspective and to recognize that the dialogical relation is also necessary for the fulfillment of human life is a worthy and attainable goal. Fromm's model of productive love is an inspiring, abundantly kind and highly ethical way of relating to others (I will elaborate on this theme later), yet if one is expected to relate in a productively loving way on a permanent basis, such a paradigm, I believe, would prove to be too difficult, unrealistic and inhuman. There will be times when we use others. There will be times when we will not be able to respond to the needs of others. There will be times when we will not be able to care for others. There will be times when we will not be able to give to others. There will be times when we will not be able to see a person as he or she actually is — recognizing his or her unique individuality. And there will be times when our knowledge of another person does not penetrate to the core of his or her existence. As far as I have seen, nowhere does Fromm acknowledge that the productively lovingly person

will experience such times, and that it is natural and altogether human to experience such times.

Another major difference between Buber's dialogical relation and Fromm's productive love is that dialogical relations exist *between* persons, whereas productive love comes from inside a person.

In the dialogical relations of I and Thou there is an address and response, a mutuality, a giving and receiving, a reciprocity, and a mutual sharing. The relation is between people, and not an act of one person's will. As Buber says in *I and Thou*, the relation depends on "grace." There is both activity and receptivity involved in the dialogical relation. In productive love, however, love stems from the individual powers inside of a person. It is characterized almost exclusively by activity and giving. Fromm does not speak of mutuality in productive love, nor does he speak of reciprocity, receptivity, give and take, or mutual sharing. Here, once again, I think Fromm overstates his case. He overstates the active, giving quality of love to the point of denigrating the receptive and reciprocal qualities of love. His focus and elevation of the active element in love parallels his elevation of the productive character orientation. For Fromm, one of the main goals of human life is psychological development and maturation. A person is to fully develop one's own powers of love, reason, creativity and sensuous capacities. I wholeheartedly agree. However, toward this aim, Fromm seems to minimize or deny the receptive elements of life that naturally lead us to this end. There is a natural give *and* take in the process of growth and development. Buber's metaphor of operating between two poles is instructive here. Just as one naturally operates between two poles of relating, I-It and I-Thou, so too, I believe, one naturally operates between the two poles of giving and taking. The goal is to find a harmonious balance between the two. Fromm leans too heavily on the giving pole (the active element in love) and

fails to incorporate the natural element of taking in a relationship (the receptive element in love). Fromm is correct in decrying those who relate only from the taking pole – the receptive character orientation – because they have not fully developed and achieved psychological maturation. As Fromm says, they cannot stand on their own two feet. Yet Fromm seems to go to the opposite extreme – where all power and activity resides inside the giving, productively loving individual. In place of dependency, Fromm advocates independency. Yet is one truly independent? Fromm himself admits that all human beings are in need of help: "Today I, tomorrow you." Here is the recognition of the give and take of life that is absent in Fromm's concept of productive love. Thus, leaning on the pole of taking (dependency) is not the way. And elevating the pole of giving (independency) is not the way either. Rather, balancing somewhere between the two poles and achieving *interdependency* seems to be the natural and harmonious way of relating and living. The mutuality, reciprocity and sharing characteristic of the dialogical relation are, I believe, also necessary elements in any discussion of love. Fromm fails to include these in his discussion of productive love.

As we have seen, theology also plays a role in Buber's philosophy of interpersonal relations. When one relates to another being in the world as a Thou, one is at the same time relating to God, the eternal Thou. In Buber's panentheistic world-view, everything in the world is in God; therefore, God is present in all meetings between I and Thou. Yet, paradoxically, while all things are in God, God is also "outside" the world and absolutely Other. One cannot, therefore, describe God, classify God or know God's essence. However, one can enter into direct relation with God. As Buber says in his postscript to *I and Thou*, written in 1957: "Whatever else [God] may be ... [God] enters into a

direct relation with us men in creative, revealing and redeeming acts, and thus makes it possible for us to enter into a direct relation with him."[3]

That one can enter into direct relation with God and that God enters into direct relations with human beings in "creative, revealing and redeeming acts" is perhaps the central Jewish element in Buber's philosophy of dialogical relations. Here Buber affirms one of the cornerstones of Judaism: the belief in a personal God who creates, reveals and redeems. Furthermore, Buber continually speaks of "turning" toward the other in dialogue. When Buber speaks of one turning toward the other, he means that through the turning toward the other one is ultimately turning toward God, the absolute Other. Hence Buber takes the Jewish concept of *teshuva* and makes it an integral part of dialogical relations.

> We can dedicate to [God] not merely our persons but also our relations to one another. The man who turns to [God] need not turn away from any other *I-Thou* relation; but he properly brings them to [God], and lets them be fulfilled "in the face of God."[4]

In reference to God, Buber's dialogical relations and Fromm's productive love once again part company. Whereas the dialogical relation always takes place in God's presence and always involves a direct relation with a personal God who is absolutely Other, productive love never does. This is so because, for Fromm, God is nothing more than a symbol of one's own human qualities of love, truth, reason, justice, etc. Whereas for Buber, God is a Power "outside" of human beings, a Power that everything in the world stands in relation to, for Fromm, God is a metaphor for powers within human beings that we project outside of ourselves.

Although Fromm rejects the Jewish belief in the existence of God, and, therefore, God per se does not inform productive love, many other Jewish elements do inform Fromm's concept of productive love.

As we have seen, Fromm quotes extensively from the Hebrew Bible. He incorporates the story of Adam and Eve to support his view that human beings have become aware of existential separateness and as a result suffer and feel existential guilt and shame. From the story of Jonah he derives the lesson that love involves labor – the active care and concern for the life and growth of that which we love. From the story of Creation he derives the teaching that love involves the very affirmation of life itself. And in the verse of Lev. 19:18: "Love your fellow as yourself," he finds support both for the inclusive nature of love – that is, love extends to all persons – and for self-love being prerequisite for love of another.

In addition to Biblical Judaism, Fromm also employs the modern Jewish philosophy of Hermann Cohen. As we have seen, Fromm refers to Hermann Cohen's teaching about the biblical love of the stranger when discussing his concept of brotherly love. Subscribing to Cohen's teaching, Fromm argues that by having love for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger – by loving those who do not serve a purpose in society – one begins to develop love for one's fellow human being. Compassion involves knowledge and identification thus the Hebrew Bible says: "You know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; therefore love the stranger!"

In addition to Biblical Judaism and the writings of Hermann Cohen, Fromm also employs the medieval writings of Moses Maimonides. As we have seen, the full, active powers within a human being inform productive love. Productive love is the realization of one's own human potential and does not depend on any other source. Fromm finds support for his position through his

interpretation of Moses Maimonides' concept of "negative theology," in which positive attributes are denied to God. For Fromm, negative theology leads to the logical conclusion that all knowledge about God is negated so that God, at most, becomes a symbol for the highest human values of truth, love and justice.

Here it must be emphasized that although Fromm rejects Judaism's God as the creator of the values of truth, love and justice, Fromm embraces these values with a devotion that equals – and most likely surpasses – the devotion of any true believer in God. Fromm's love and reverence for life, his love of human beings, his faith in the goodness of human beings, his profound sense of social justice and moral conduct, and his devotion to truth and wisdom are all rooted in his Jewish upbringing and understanding of Jewish texts. Through and through, Judaism inspires and informs Fromm's concept of productive love. And as we shall see later, Fromm's dedication to creating a better society is also rooted in prophetic Judaism.

So let us now turn to the subject of society in the philosophies of both Martin Buber and Erich Fromm. Once again, when looking at Buber's and Fromm's views on society, one is immediately struck by the many similarities between the two thinkers.

To begin with, both Buber and Fromm diagnose modern society as sick and in need of a cure. According to both thinkers, the human tendency to perceive another as an abstraction and as an instrument for use has become the dominant mode of relating in modern society. With striking similarity to Buber's philosophy of I-It and I-Thou relations, in *The Sane Society* Fromm himself refers to two fundamental ways of relating to people (concreteness-uniqueness vs. abstraction), he observes an increase in the abstractifying way of relating, and he critiques modern society for relating almost solely through

abstractions, as does Buber. In addition to the dominance of abstraction in modern society, both Buber and Fromm also critique modern society for the dominance of instrumentality and functionality in all realms of society – economic, political, social and interpersonal. For both thinkers, the instrumental mode of relating to another, which arose in the economic market, has overgrown to the point that it now permeates and harmfully affects the political, cultural, social, interpersonal and intrapersonal spheres of human existence. In short, the abstract and instrumental world of "It" is clearly overblown, out of control and wreaking havoc in modern society, according to both Buber and Fromm.

For both Buber and Fromm, the human being in modern society has been reduced from a full, unique and alive being to a mere cog in the machine, cut off and alienated from himself, other people, and the world. With abstraction and instrumentality reigning supreme, modern society fosters and breeds alienation. Now for both Buber and Fromm, part of the alienation that people in modern society experience is inherent in the human condition. That is, for Buber, human beings are aware of the primal setting at a distance from another; and for Fromm, human beings are aware of their existential separateness from one another. An element of alienation, therefore, already exists. Thus, human beings have a fundamental need to overcome the existential separation through interpersonal relations. However, both Buber and Fromm rightly take modern society to task for profoundly intensifying existential alienation with the all-pervasive relational mode of abstraction and instrumentality. Furthermore, both Buber and Fromm rightly criticize modern society for failing to cultivate interpersonal relations that could overcome the original existential alienation.

In their mutual rejection of the structure of modern society, with its all-pervasive alienating forces and its inability to foster their respective paradigms of interpersonal relations, both Buber and Fromm advocate a restructuring of society based on socialist models.

Both Buber and Fromm advocate forms of socialism in which the means of economic production is put into the hands of the workers. As we have seen, Buber advocates the creation of village communes in which communal living is based on the amalgamation of production and consumption — production being understood as the organic union of agriculture, industry and handicrafts. Such communes would be joined together into an organic commonwealth. Fromm's concept of communitarian socialism, however, doesn't involve the creation of the commune as such. That is, Fromm is not calling for the organic union of agriculture, industry and handicrafts within one group or community. What Fromm is calling for, similar to Buber, is that whatever type of work workers are engaged in, they control the means of production. That is, labor employs capital; capital does not employ labor. The primary purpose of work is to serve people and not to make a profit. To this end, workers are active participants and co-managers of industry and economic enterprise.

In addition to both advocating forms of socialism in which the workers control the means of production, both Buber and Fromm also advocate a form of socialism in which the centralizing power of the state is reduced. Both argue that the centralizing power of the state leads to the prevalence of abstraction and instrumentality in society, thereby intensifying the alienation that people experience. Thus, they both call for a reduction in centralization wherever possible. For Buber, this means that the village communes act with as much autonomy as possible, minimizing the power of the state to act only as is necessary to maintain order and resolve conflicts that cannot be resolved by

the communes themselves. Here Buber purposely does not go too far into specifics and prescriptions, believing that the balance of centralization and decentralization must always be "the moment's answer to the moment's question, and nothing more." Fromm, on the other hand, goes into considerable detail about how society can achieve a better balance between centralization and decentralization. Just as Fromm calls for the active participation and co-management of the worker in the economic sphere, so too, he calls for the active participation and co-management of the citizen in the political sphere. As we have seen, Fromm advocates a revival of the town meeting, wherein groups of 500 people would meet once a month to discuss local and national issues, then register their decisions with the central government. Thus, citizens would share political power with elected representatives and an elected executive, reversing the alienation that people feel in the political sphere. Whether or not the specifics of such a proposal are realistic or even desirable in the political sphere is beyond the scope of this thesis. The point is that both Buber and Fromm are advocating the strengthening of community and the reduction in the centralizing power of the state in order to reverse the alienating effect that the state has upon people in society.

As we have seen, for Buber, a genuine community or society requires two fundamental elements: that people stand in dialogical relation to each other and that people stand in dialogical relation to God, the common Center. Here we find one of the major differences between Buber's and Fromm's concept of society. Whereas for Buber, God is essential and central to all genuine communities and society, for Fromm, humanity stands firmly at the center of any sane society. According to Fromm, the purpose of society is to foster the unfolding of human beings' powers of love, reason and creativity. Unlike Buber, Fromm considers the concept of God to be another alienating factor in the life

of human beings. According to Fromm, when one worships God, one is merely projecting one's own human powers onto God, thereby making oneself feel dependent on something outside of oneself. In this process, one feels cut off — alienated — from one's own active powers. Thus, for Fromm, the concept of God only adds to the all-pervasive alienation of modern society. Unlike Buber, Fromm looks forward to a time when a new humanistic and universal "religion" will develop that does not involve theism.

In additions to differing on God's role in society, Buber and Fromm also disagree as to the role of education in society. As we have seen, Fromm proposes that the main task of education is to impress on people the guiding ideals and norms of civilization. He argues that schools should be devoted to the development of human powers, that is, schools should imbue students with the faculty of critical thought and character traits which correspond to the professed ideals of our civilization. Furthermore, schools must teach both theoretical and practical knowledge. Therefore, Fromm proposes that primary education should include knowledge of the fundamental technical processes of industry and high school "ought to combine practical work of a handicraft and of modern industrial technique with theoretical instruction."

According to Buber's philosophy of education, most of the educational reforms that Fromm proposes only serve to perpetuate the functional, objective mode of I-It. For Buber, educational reforms should focus on social education, that is, altering the ways that people relate to each other. In social education, the teacher is to model confirming, dialogical relations by relating to the student as an I to a Thou. Through this process, social education counters the alienating effects of the I-It world by nurturing and actualizing a person's innate drive to relate and to enter dialogical relations with others.

Having surveyed the major similarities and differences between Buber's and Fromm's philosophies of society, I now want to offer a critique of their respective societies. As we have seen, both of their social visions involve a radical restructuring of society. Buber's model of the village commune in league with other village communes does not seem like a feasible or practical way of restructuring modern Western society on any large scale – particularly in the United States.

Capitalism remains the accepted, tried and successful economic system in America and in most parts of the Western world. Even though there are abuses under a capitalistic system, and granted much of the alienation that both Buber and Fromm speak of results from the nature and abuses of capitalism, most people in Western society would choose to live under the capitalistic system that has proven itself time and again, as opposed to adopting an economic system that has rarely ever taken root and proved successful over an extended period of time. With regard to the village commune, Buber himself admits that "the repeated attempts that have been made during the last 150 years, both in Europe and America, to found village settlements of this kind, whether communistic or co-operative in the narrower sense, have mostly met with failure."[5] Thus, in the entire history of socialistic experiments, Buber holds up the Israeli kibbutz movement of the 20th century as the full-cooperative community that comes closest to realizing his concept of genuine community. But even then he hesitates to call it a success, referring to it instead as a "signal non-failure." Furthermore, the Israeli kibbutz movement of the early to mid 20th century is not the Israeli kibbutz movement of the 1990s. As Israeli society has made tremendous advances in technology and its economy since the creation of the modern state of Israel, the kibbutz movement is fading further and further into the background.

Whereas earlier in this century, socialism was an accepted and desirable economic and political system in certain circles — particularly in Israel — today socialism does not have the appeal and the following that it once did. Today in America, socialism can claim only a small number of adherents. Therefore, the chances of American society being restructured according to socialist principles seem very slim indeed.

Regarding Fromm's vision of a restructured society, as we have seen, Fromm himself was doubtful that such a restructuring would take place. He thought that the automatization and alienation of society under both capitalistic and communist systems had almost reached the point of no return. Yet he did express hope in humanity's reason, goodwill and sanity to choose the path of communitarian socialism instead of the destructive path of alienation and robotism. Here again, I think Fromm is asking for a radical transformation of society that most people are not prepared to commit themselves to. Moreover, Fromm's vision of society is so utopian it does not seem of this earth. Let's look again at his vision of a sane society:

> First of all, a society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself; hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers; where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth. A sane society is one in which qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness, narcissism, have no chance to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. Where acting according to one's conscience is looked upon as a fundamental and necessary quality and where opportunism and lack of principles is deemed to be asocial; where the individual is concerned with social matters so that they become personal matters, where his relation to his fellow man is not separated from his relationship in the private sphere. A sane society, furthermore, is one which permits man to

> operate within manageable and observable dimensions, and to be an active and responsible participant in the life of society, as well as the master of his own life. It is one which furthers human solidarity and not only permits, but stimulates, its members to relate themselves to each other lovingly; a sane society furthers the productive activity of everybody in his work, stimulates the unfolding of reason and enables man to give expression to his inner needs in collective art and rituals.[6]

What Fromm is describing here is the messianic age. This is particularly so when he refers to a society "in which no man is a means towards another's end, but always and without exception an end in himself." However admirable this goal may be, I do not think it is realistic. When has a person *always* and *without exception* treated another as an end in himself? Inevitably there are times, there will be times, when we treat people in a utilitarian fashion. To expect human beings never to treat another in a utilitarian fashion is to expect perfection. And human beings are far from that. Furthermore, it is perfectionistic and unrealistic to expect that a human society can ever be created wherein qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness and narcissism have *no chance* to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. We can strive to build a society in which these qualities are diminished and the chance for material gain from these qualities is also diminished. Furthermore, we can endeavor to build a society that furthers human solidarity and stimulates its members to relate to each other lovingly, and that furthers productive activity in the workplace and stimulates the unfolding of reason, etc. These are worthy and attainable goals, I believe. But I think these can best be achieved by a gradual improvement in the current structures of society as opposed to the radical transformation in all spheres of society that Fromm is calling for. First of all, people are usually resistant to sweeping radical changes — it's overwhelming. Secondly, it takes

time to grow and develop. It's as if Fromm's diagnosis of society and proposed cure is like a doctor saying to an obese patient, "You're 80 lbs. overweight and it's not healthy. At the rate you're going, you'll soon die of coronary disease. Therefore, I propose that you lose the extra 80 lbs. within the next two weeks." Wouldn't a more realistic and achievable goal be to lose 10 lbs. in the next month, and then another 10 lbs. in the following month, etc. In other words, although I agree with some of Fromm's goals for society, I question the efficacy and feasibility of his proposed method and pace to attain the goals.

Having explored the similarities and differences between Buber's and Fromm's philosophies of interpersonal relations and society, and pointing out some areas where I disagree with their ideas, I want to state that there is much in both of their philosophies that seems correct and highly recommendable.

To begin with, in their observations on the human condition, it does seem correct to say that human beings are aware of their existential separation from others in the world and, therefore, that we have a fundamental existential need to relate to others in that world. Buber's and Fromm's paradigms of relating to others are highly commendable, I believe.

That a person maintains his or her uniqueness, wholeness and integrity and that a person relates to the uniqueness, wholeness and integrity of another is a valuable model for human relations. Such a way of relating, I believe, is psychologically and spiritually healthy and vital — that is, "full of life."

Furthermore, I think the emphasis on accepting and affirming the wholeness and uniqueness of the other person in both the dialogical relation and productive love is of inestimable value to human relations — particularly in our society. It seems we spend so much time and energy rejecting who we are, because we are not as we *should* be. And we reject others for who they are,

because they are not as they *should* be. We have all these ideas about how beautiful people should be, how intelligent people should be, how financially successful people should be, how popular people should be, how people should feel, how people should act, how people should think. The list goes on and on. These expectations may be the creation of our parents, our teachers, our friends, our religion, our society, the advertising industry, the media and ourselves. Regardless of where our expectations originate, when we measure ourselves and people against our rule of what *should be*, instead of accepting people for who they are, we're sending a strong message that says: "You are wrong the way you are. I reject who you are." By accepting and affirming the uniqueness and the wholeness of others and ourselves as we are —not as we should be — real life becomes richer, fuller and more fascinating. In an atmosphere of acceptance and affirmation, a person's uniqueness and potentialities begin to unfold as a person is thus given space to breathe and to be. To affirm life is to want life to continue. To accept and affirm a person in his or her uniqueness relates to that person, "I want your life to continue. Your life has value and meaning." This is perhaps one of the greatest gifts one person can give to another.

I also agree with Fromm that love requires active care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. And giving is an important element of love. Yet, as mentioned previously, I think the ability to receive is also important in love — something which Fromm seems to neglect, but which Buber advocates in his concept of mutuality and reciprocity in the dialogical relation.

Furthermore, I think Fromm is quite correct in his theory that love is inclusive, in that it is an attitude that one brings to all of one's relationships. Thus, I wholeheartedly agree with his statement: "If I truly love one person I love all persons, I love the world, I love life. If I can say to somebody else, 'I love

you,' I must be able to say, 'I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself.'"[7] This last point strikes me as a profound insight. That is, love must include love for oneself. If one cannot love oneself, then one cannot truly love others.

Buber makes a similar point about the inclusive nature of love when he speaks about the true love of God in *Ten Rungs: Collected Hasidic Sayings*. Buber writes: "To love God truly, one must first love man. And if anyone tells you that he loves God and does not love his fellow-man, you will know that he is lying."[8] This is a beautiful statement, demonstrating a sincere love for humanity. Such an inspiring and instructive love of humanity is found in both Buber's and Fromm's philosophies of interpersonal relations. Moreover, for the believer in God, Buber offers a beautiful and profound connection between human beings and God. By saying that when one relates to another being as an I to a Thou, one is relating to God, the Eternal Thou, Buber is infusing our relationships in the world with profound meaning and significance. Such an approach can add to a person's affirmation and appreciation for others, for life and for the world.

On the subject of society, I think both Buber and Fromm are quite correct in their diagnosis of modern society's ills. In my opinion, people do feel alienated and cut off from each other. Communities and families are disintegrating. Violent crime, spousal abuse, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, mental illness and divorce dot our social landscape. Many people are cut off, alienated and unable to relate to each other. The dominance of the instrumental and abstract mode of relating to the world alienates us from ourselves, others and the world. Both Buber and Fromm accurately describe the problem. And that this pattern of instrumentality and use of people as objects has been set into motion by our economic system and has infiltrated

the political, social and cultural realms of our society also seems to be an accurate observation. Fromm's analysis of the marketing orientation of people in modern capitalistic society seems particularly on the mark. His description of the prevalent marketing orientation in society strikes me as painfully true.

> His aim is to sell himself successfully on the market. His sense of self does not stem from his activity as a loving and thinking individual, but from his socio-economic role ... That is the way he experiences himself, not as a man, with love, fear, convictions, doubts, but as that abstraction, alienated from his real nature, which fulfills a certain function in the social system. His sense of value depends on his success: on whether he can sell himself favorably, whether he can make more of himself than he started out with, whether he is a success. His body, his mind and his soul are his capital, and his task in life is to invest it favorably, to make a profit of himself. Human qualities like friendliness, courtesy, kindness, are transformed into commodities, into assets of the "personality package," conducive to a higher price on the personality market. If the individual fails in a profitable investment of himself, he feels that *he* is a failure; if he succeeds, *he* is a success. Clearly, his sense of his own value always depends on factors extraneous to himself, on the fickle judgment of the market, which decides about his value as it decides about the value of commodities.[9]

Even as I agree with both Buber's and Fromm's diagnosis of modern society, and I value their respective goals, to create genuine community in which dialogical relations are realized, and to create a sane society in which productive love flourishes, as we have seen, I question most of their methods for restructuring society. That is, save one: when Buber speaks of social education and when Fromm speaks of imbuing our students with character traits which correspond to the professed ideals of our civilization. By educating people, particularly when they are young, about a way of relating to others that is dialogical and loving, I think we have a chance of spreading a message

and a way of being that, through a grass-roots approach, could make positive changes in society and in people's lives — however small, however large.

In our public and private school classrooms, we don't teach children about love or relationships. We teach them how to read, how to write, how to do mathematics, and we fill their heads with facts and information, the majority of which they soon forget, because it has little bearing on their lives. When do we teach children about care, responsibility, respect and knowing another person's heart and mind? When do we teach children how to relate to another in truth, without seeming to be what one is not? When do we teach children how to see another in all his or her fullness and uniqueness? And when do we teach children how to affirm and accept who another really is, and how to confirm who another can become? I don't think we can assume that children will learn these abilities in the home any more than we can assume that children learn to read, write and multiply in the home. Just as the three Rs are taught in the classroom, so too, I think the skills of loving and interpersonal relations need to be taught in the classroom — preferably in public and private schools *and* our religious schools. The more practice and reinforcement the better.

Children often complain that they don't like or even hate religious school. If, in the religious school, we were to teach children how to love and relate to others and the world, perhaps they would grow to love their lives, love other people, love the world — and perhaps even come to love religious school itself.

Rabbi Akiva said "Love your fellow as yourself" is a great principle of the Torah.[10] It's time to teach this great principle of the Torah to our students. I propose that the teaching of this verse be combined with other biblical, talmudic, midrashic and Hasidic passages that deal with the theme of love and interpersonal relationships. Such Jewish textual passages could be combined into a curriculum with Buber's teachings on dialogical relations and community

and Fromm's teachings on productive love. This religious school curriculum could be titled "*Ahavat HaBriyot*" ("Love of [All God's] Creatures"). *Ahavat HaBriyot* would focus on nurturing and developing a student's love of life, love of oneself, love of fellow Jews, love of all people, and love of all things in the world. This curriculum could span a number of grades, just as Hebrew curriculums currently spans several grades.

In the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum, we could teach biblical stories relevant to the subject, such as, the story of Creation with its emphasis on the affirmation of all life, the story of Abraham's hospitality to strangers with its emphasis on *gemilut chasadim*, the story of Ruth's loving relationship with Naomi, the story of David and Jonathan's friendship, the story of Jonah with its emphasis on love and forgiveness, etc. In addition to biblical stories, the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum would also include midrashic stories, such as, the story of Adam's creation and why all human beings descend from this one human being, the story of Moses and his care for the little lamb and why he was thus chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, etc. In addition to biblical and midrashic stories, the curriculum would also include Hasidic stories that deal with the themes of interpersonal relations, community, the love of life, the love of oneself and the love of others. In addition, any other relevant Jewish stories, teachings and aphorisms from any Jewish literary genre could be used in the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum.

Obviously, Buber's and Fromm's teachings about love, interpersonal relations and community would inform much of the selection of textual materials for the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum. Furthermore, Buber's and Fromm's teachings would inform much of the lectures and discussions in the *Ahavat HaBriyot* course. For example, a lecture could be dedicated to teaching the four characteristic elements of productive love — care, responsibility,

respect and knowledge. Or, for example, a lecture could be dedicated to teaching the attitude of care and Jewish stories that best exemplify care could precede or follow. Or, for example, a Hasidic story could be told and then discussed in light of Buber's concept of "confirming" another.

The *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum would also involve activities that give the students opportunities to cultivate and develop a loving attitude and an ability to enter into dialogical relations.

Students can cultivate and develop active care and concern for others by doing acts of *gemilut chasadim*. Students could prepare and serve food in a soup kitchen, visit patients at a children's hospital and give the patients get-well cards that they have created, visit Jewish residents of a nursing home and give the residents challahs that they have baked, etc.

Students can also prepare themselves for loving and dialogical relations by entering into meaningful dialogue with their classmates. For example, in the classroom, students could pair off and spend time speaking with each other. In one-to-one, face-to-face discussions, students could ask each other particular questions, such as "What makes you happy?" "What makes you sad?" "What is the best thing that ever happened to you?" "What do you love?" Such questions may be geared towards older students, say in grades 8-10. However, young children may enjoy these discussions, as well. I am always amazed at the profound and creative responses of young children when asked meaningful and honest questions.

Another way to encourage the development of loving and dialogical relations in our students is to ask them to share experiences from their own lives — experiences in which they feel that they or others have acted lovingly and realized the teachings that are presented in the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum. Such experiences would be related in group discussions among the

entire class so that the many possibilities and concrete examples of realizing a loving life would be demonstrated and positively reinforced to all the students.

The relationship between the teacher and the students is essential to the success of the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum. Here again, Buber's and Fromm's teachings would inform the approach of the teacher to his or her students. That is, the teacher models the dialogical relation and productive love when relating to his or her students. This approach is in keeping with Buber's teaching that the power and effectiveness of social education derives from the teacher modeling behavior for the student. Therefore, that the teacher embodies productive love and the ability to enter into dialogical relations is as important as the content of the *Ahavat HaBriyot* curriculum.

This is a brief sketch of what a religious school curriculum that fosters dialogical and loving relations might look like. And the fostering of dialogical and loving relations can extend beyond the religious school. The entire synagogue, I believe, provides fertile soil for the cultivation of loving and dialogical relations. Buber teaches that genuine community (*gemeinschaft*) requires that people stand in dialogical relation to a common center and that people stand in dialogical relation to one another. In the synagogue, congregants have a common center: God. And, in the synagogue, congregants can stand in dialogical relation to each another. I think synagogues can offer various opportunities to support and encourage dialogical and loving relations between people. In addition to communal dinners at the synagogue for various Shabbatot and holidays, synagogue members could also be invited to meet in each others homes on Shabbat and holidays to share meals together and to get to know one another. Families who have children in the same religious school class could be invited to share a home-cooked Shabbat meal together. Widows and widowers could be invited to get together and share a Shabbat meal. And

new families to the congregation could be invited to share Shabbat meals with other congregants.

Other ways to be build loving relationships within the congregation include congregants volunteering to visit other congregants in the hospital, congregants offering to visit other congregants who are home-bound or in a nursing home, congregants providing meals for mourners, and congregants providing support and help to new congregants who have recently resettled from another country or another part of this country.

Furthermore, synagogues can offer various support groups for congregants who are going through a difficult transition. Support groups can be offered for widows and widowers, AIDS and cancer patients and their families, new single-parent families, parents with special needs children, etc. Support groups provide another way to establish and maintain loving relationships between members of a community.

And just as the relationship between the teacher and the student is essential to fostering loving and dialogical relationships within the classroom, so too, the rabbi, the cantor, and all the synagogue staff can model loving and dialogical relationships to congregants. In fact, I believe, every interaction between rabbi and congregant, between cantor and congregant, between religious school director and congregant, is an opportunity to foster loving and dialogical relationships between people.

Gemeinschaft, the genuine community that Buber speaks of, can be realized in the synagogue, I believe. In fact, the synagogue may be the only place in American society where *gemeinschaft* can be realized.[11] What a wonderful opportunity the synagogue thus offers us. In a society overrun by the world of It, the synagogue provides a space where I can meet Thou — again and again.

Having looked at some ways that Buber's and Fromm's teachings can be practically realized in the synagogue and in the lives of congregants, I want to return to a final look at the two thinkers themselves. Ultimately, what Buber and Fromm present to us in their philosophies of interpersonal relations and society is a way of being in the world and a vision of what society could be like if we were to realize that way of being. Martin Buber and Erich Fromm strike me as 20th century bearers of the prophetic tradition of Judaism. Not only did they consistently speak out against the social ills of modern society on behalf of humanity, but like a modern-day Micah or Isaiah, they offered visions of what society could be like — visions based on the love of humanity and the affirmation of life and the world. Like prophetic Judaism's vision of a messianic age, Buber's and Fromm's visions still await realization. Perhaps they will never be realized. Yet one can hope — if not in our lifetime, maybe in future generations to come. Regardless, the teachings of Martin Buber and Erich Fromm remain with us, to be realized in the present, at least imperfectly, by each person who chooses to relate to the world in love, saying I to Thou.

Notes

[1] *The Sane Society*, p. 30.
[2] *The Art of Loving*, pp. 43-44.
[3] *I and Thou*, p. 135.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 136.
[5] *Paths In Utopia*, p. 140.
[6] *The Sane Society*, p. 276.
[7] *The Art of Loving*, p. 42.
[8] Buber, Martin. *Ten Rungs: Collected Hasidic Sayings*. New York: Citadel Press, 1947, p. 82.
[9] *The Sane Society*, p. 142.
[10] Sif. Lev., ed. Weiss, p. 89b, quoted in Bialik, H. N. and Ravnitzky, Y. H. (trans. Braude, William G.). *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992, p. 646:48.
[11] Of course, this also goes for the church, the mosque, the temple, any religious community wherein God is the center.

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