

The Practice of Love

HAVING dealt with the theoretical aspect of the art of loving, we now are confronted with a much more difficult problem, that of the practice of the art of loving. Can anything be learned about the practice of an art, except by practicing it? The difficulty of the problem is enhanced by the fact that most people today, hence many readers of this book, expect to be given prescriptions of "how to do it yourself," and that means in our case to be taught how to love. I am afraid that anyone who approaches this last chapter in this spirit will be gravely disappointed. To love is a personal experience which everyone can only have by and for himself; in fact, there is hardly anybody who has not had this experience in a rudimentary way, at least, as a child, an adolescent, an adult. What the discussion of the practice of love can do is to discuss the premises of the art of loving, the approaches to it as it were, and the practice of these premises and approaches.

The steps toward the goal can be practiced only by oneself, and discussion ends before the decisive step is taken. Yet, I believe that the discussion of the approaches may be helpful for the mastery of the art—for those at least who have freed themselves from expecting "prescriptions. "The practice of any art has certain general requirements, quite regardless of whether we deal with the art of carpentry, medicine, or the art of love. First of all, the practice of an art requires discipline. I shall never be good at anything if I do not do it in a disciplined way; anything I do only if "I am in the mood" may be a nice or amusing hobby, but I shall never become a master in that art. But the problem is not only that of discipline in the practice of the particular art (say practicing every day a certain amount of hours) but it is that of discipline in one's whole life. One might think that nothing is easier to learn for modern man than discipline. Does he not spend eight hours a day in a most disciplined way at a job which is strictly routinized? The fact, however, is that modern man has exceedingly little self-discipline outside of the sphere of work. When he does not work, he wants to be lazy, to slouch or, to use a nicer word, to "relax." This very wish for laziness is largely a reaction against the routinization of life. Just because man is forced for eight hours a day to spend his energy for purposes not his own, in ways not his own, but prescribed for him by the rhythm of the work, he rebels and his rebelliousness takes the form of an infantile self-indulgence. In addition, in

the battle against authoritarianism he has become distrustful of all discipline, of that enforced by irrational authority, as well as of rational discipline imposed by himself. Without such discipline, however, life becomes shattered, chaotic, and lacks in concentration. That concentration is a necessary condition for the mastery of an art is hardly necessary to prove. Anyone who ever tried to learn an art knows this. Yet, even more than self-discipline, concentration is rare in our culture. On the contrary, our culture leads to an unconcentrated and diffused mode of life, hardly paralleled anywhere else. You do many things at once; you read, listen to the radio, talk, smoke, eat, drink. You are the consumer with the open mouth, eager and ready to swallow everything—pictures, liquor, knowledge. This lack of concentration is clearly shown in our difficulty in being alone with ourselves. To sit still, without talking, smoking, reading, drinking, is impossible for most people. They become nervous and fidgety, and must do something with their mouth or their hands. (Smoking is one of the symptoms of this lack of concentration; it occupies hand, mouth, eye and nose.) A third factor is patience. Again, anyone who ever tried to master an art knows that patience is necessary if you want to achieve anything. If one is after quick results, one never learns an art. Yet, for modern man, patience is as difficult to practice as discipline and concentration. Our whole industrial system fosters exactly the opposite: quickness. All our machines are designed for quickness: the car and airplane bring us quickly to our destination—and the quicker the better. The machine which can produce the same quantity in half the time is twice as good as the older and slower one. Of course, there are important economic reasons for this. But, as in so many other aspects, human values have become determined by economic values. What is good for machines must be good for man—so goes the logic. Modern man thinks he loses something—time—when he does not do things quickly; yet he does not know what to do with the time he gains—except kill it.

Eventually, a condition of learning any art is a supreme concern with the mastery of the art. If the art is not something of supreme importance, the apprentice will never learn it. He will remain, at best, a good dilettante, but will never become a master. This condition is as necessary for the art of loving as for any other art. It seems, though, as if the proportion between masters and dilettantes is more heavily weighted in favor of the dilettantes in the art of loving than is the case with other arts.

One more point must be made with regard to the general conditions of learning an art. One does not begin to learn an art directly, but indirectly, as it were. One must learn a great number of other—and often seemingly disconnected things—before one starts with the art itself. An apprentice in carpentry begins by learning how to plane wood; an apprentice in the art of piano playing begins by practicing scales; an apprentice in the Zen art of archery begins by doing breathing exercises.' If one wants to become a master in any art, one's whole life must be devoted to it, or at least related to it. One's own person becomes an instrument in the practice of the art, and must be kept fit, according to the specific functions it has to fulfill. With regard to the art of loving, this means that anyone who aspires to become a master in this art must begin by practicing discipline, concentration and patience throughout every phase of his life. How does one practice discipline? Our grandfathers would have been much better equipped to answer this question. Their recommendation was to get up early in the morning, not to indulge in unnecessary luxuries, to work hard. This type of discipline had obvious shortcomings. It was rigid and authoritarian, was centered around the virtues of frugality and saving, and in many ways was hostile to life. But in a reaction to this kind of discipline, there has been an increasing tendency to be suspicious of any discipline, and to make un-disciplined, lazy indulgence in the rest of one's life the counterpart and balance for the routinized way of life imposed on us during the eight hours of work. To get up at a regular hour, to devote a regular amount of time during the day to activities such as meditating, reading, listening to music, walking; not to indulge, at least not beyond a certain minimum, in escapist activities like mystery stories and movies, not to overeat or overdrink are some obvious and rudimentary rules. It is essential, however, that discipline should not be practiced like a rule imposed on oneself from the outside, but that it becomes an expression of one's own will; that it is felt as pleasant, and that one slowly accustoms oneself to a kind of behavior which one would eventually miss, if one stopped practicing it. It is one of the unfortunate aspects of our Western concept of discipline (as of every virtue) that its practice is supposed to be somewhat painful and only if it is painful can it be "good." The East has recognized long ago that that which is good for man—for his body and for his soul—must also be agreeable, even though at the beginning some resistances must be overcome. Concentration is by far more difficult to practice in our

culture, in which everything seems to act against the ability to concentrate. The most important step in learning concentration is to learn to be alone with oneself without reading, listening to the radio, smoking or drinking. Indeed, to be able to concentrate means to be able to be alone with oneself—and this ability is precisely a condition for the ability to love. If I am attached to another person because I cannot stand on my own feet, he or she may be a lifesaver, but the relationship is not one of love. Paradoxically, the ability to be alone is the condition for the ability to love. Anyone who tries to be alone with himself will discover how difficult it is. He will begin to feel restless, fidgety, or even to sense considerable anxiety. He will be prone to rationalize his unwillingness to go on with this practice by thinking that it has no value, is just silly, that it takes too much time, and so on, and so on. He will also observe that all sorts of thoughts come to his mind which take possession of him. He will find himself thinking about his plans for later in the day, or about some difficulty in a job he has to do, or where to go in the evening, or about any number of things that will fill his mind—rather than permitting it to empty itself. It would be helpful to practice a few very simple exercises, as, for instance, to sit in a relaxed position (neither slouching, nor rigid), to close one's eyes, and to try to see a white screen in front of one's eyes, and to try to remove all interfering pictures and thoughts, then to try to follow one's breathing; not to think about it, nor force it, but to follow it—and in doing so to sense it; furthermore to try to have a sense of "I"; I = myself, as the center of my powers, as the creator of my world. One should, at least, do such a concentration exercise every morning for twenty minutes (and if possible longer) and every evening before going to bed. Besides such exercises, one must learn to be concentrated in everything one does, in listening to music, in reading a book, in talking to a person, in seeing a view. The activity at this very moment must be the only thing that matters, to which one is fully given. If one is concentrated, it matters little what one is doing; the important, as well as the unimportant things assume a new dimension of reality, because they have one's full attention. To learn concentration requires avoiding, as far as possible, trivial conversation, that is, conversation which is not genuine. If two people talk about the growth of a tree they both know, or about the taste of the bread they have just eaten together, or about a common experience in their job, such conversation can be relevant, provided they experience what they are talking about, /and do not

deal with it in an abstractified way; on the other hand, a conversation can deal with matters of politics or religion and yet be trivial; this happens when the two people talk in clichés, when their hearts are not in what they are saying. I should add here that just as it is important to avoid trivial conversation, it is important to avoid bad company. By bad company I do not refer only to people who are vicious and destructive; one should avoid their company because their orbit is poisonous and depressing. I mean also the company of zombies, of people whose soul is dead, although their body is alive; of people whose thoughts and conversation are trivial; who chatter instead of talk, and who assert cliché opinions instead of thinking. However, it is not always possible to avoid the company of such people, nor even necessary. If one does not react in the expected way—that is, in clichés and trivialities—but directly and humanly, one will often find that such people change their behavior, often helped by the surprise effected by the shock of the unexpected. To be concentrated in relation to others means primarily to be able to listen. Most people listen to others, or even give advice, without really listening. They do not take the other person's talk seriously, they do not take their own answers seriously either. As a result, the talk makes them tired. They are under the illusion that they would be even more tired if they listened with concentration. But the opposite is true. Any activity, if done in a concentrated fashion, makes one more awake (although afterward natural and beneficial tiredness sets in), while every unconcentrated activity makes one sleepy—while at the same time it makes it difficult to fall asleep at the end of the day. To be concentrated means to live fully in the present, in the here and now, and not to think of the next thing to be done, while I am doing something right now. Needless to say that concentration must be practiced most of all by people who love each other. They must learn to be close to each other without running away in the many ways in which this is customarily done. The beginning of the practice of concentration will be difficult; it will appear as if one could never achieve the aim. That this implies the necessity to have patience need hardly be said. If one does not know that everything has its time, and wants to force things, then indeed one will never succeed in becoming concentrated—nor in the art of loving. To have an idea of what patience is one need only watch a child learning to walk. It falls, falls again, and falls again, and yet it goes on trying, improving, until one day it walks without falling. What could the grown-up person achieve if he had the child's

patience and its concentration in the pursuits which are important to him! One cannot learn to concentrate without becoming sensitive to oneself. What does this mean? Should one think about oneself all the time, "analyze" oneself, or what? If we were to talk about being sensitive to a machine, there would be little difficulty in explaining what is meant. Anybody, for instance, who drives a car is sensitive to it. Even a small, unaccustomed noise is noticed, and so is a small change in the pickup of the motor. In the same way, the driver is sensitive to changes in the road surface, to movements of the cars before and behind him. Yet, he is not thinking about all these factors; his mind is in a state of relaxed alertness, open to all relevant changes in the situation on which he is concentrated—that of driving his car safely. If we look at the situation of being sensitive to another human being, we find the most obvious example in the sensitiveness and responsiveness of a mother to her baby. She notices certain bodily changes, demands, anxieties, before they are overtly expressed. She wakes up because of her child's crying, where another and much louder sound would not waken her. All this means that she is sensitive to the manifestations of the child's life; she is not anxious or worried, but in a state of alert equilibrium, receptive to any significant communication coming from the child. In the same way one can be sensitive toward oneself. One is aware, for instance, of a sense of tiredness or depression, and instead of giving in to it and supporting it by depressive thoughts which are always at hand, one asks oneself "what happened?" Why am I depressed? The same is done by noticing when one is irritated or angry, or tending to daydreaming, or other escape activities. In each of these instances the important thing is to be aware of them, and not to rationalize them in the thousand and one ways in which this can be done; furthermore, to be open to our own inner voice, which will tell us—often rather immediately—why we are anxious, depressed, irritated. The average person has a sensitivity toward his bodily processes; he notices changes, or even small amounts of pain; this kind of bodily sensitivity is relatively easy to experience because most persons have an image of how it feels to be well. The same sensitivity toward one's mental processes is much more difficult, because many people have never known a person who functions optimally. They take the psychic functioning of their parents and relatives, or of the social group they have been born into, as the norm, and as long as they do not differ from these they feel normal and without interest in observing

anything. There are many people, for instance, who have never seen a loving person, or a person with integrity, or courage, or concentration. It is quite obvious that in order to be sensitive to oneself, one has to have an image of complete, healthy human functioning—and how is one to acquire such an experience if one has not had it in one's own childhood, or later in life? There is certainly no simple answer to this question; but the question points to one very critical factor in our educational system. While we teach knowledge, we are losing that teaching which is the most important one for human development: the teaching which can only be given by the simple presence of a mature, loving person. In previous epochs of our own culture, or in China and India, the man most highly valued was the person with outstanding spiritual qualities. Even the teacher was not only, or even primarily, a source of information, but his function was to convey certain human attitudes. In contemporary capitalistic society—and the same holds true for Russian Communism—the men suggested for admiration and emulation are everything but bearers of significant spiritual qualities. Those are essentially in the public eye who give the average man a sense of vicarious satisfaction. Movie stars, radio entertainers, columnists, important business or government figures—these are the models for emulation. Their main qualification for this function is often that they have succeeded in making the news. Yet, the situation does not seem to be altogether hopeless. If one considers the fact that a man like Albert Schweitzer could become famous in the United States, if one visualizes the many possibilities to make our youth familiar with living and historical personalities who show what human beings can achieve as human beings, and not as entertainers (in the broad sense of the word), if one thinks of the great works of literature and art of all ages, there seems to be a chance of creating a vision of good human functioning, and hence of sensitivity to malfunctioning. If we should not succeed in keeping alive a vision of mature life, then indeed we are confronted with the probability that our whole cultural tradition will break down. This tradition is not primarily based on the transmission of certain kinds of knowledge, but of certain kinds of human traits. If the coming generations will not see these traits any more, a fivethousand-year-old culture will break down, even if its knowledge is transmitted and further developed. Thus far I have discussed what is needed for the practice of any art. Now I shall discuss those qualities which are of specific significance for

the ability to love. According to what I said about the nature of love, the main condition for the achievement of love is the overcoming of one's narcissism. The narcissistic orientation is one in which one experiences as real only that which exists within oneself, while the phenomena in the outside world have no reality in themselves, but are experienced only from the viewpoint of their being useful or dangerous to one. The opposite pole to narcissism is objectivity; it is the faculty to see people and things as they are, objectively, and to be able to separate this objective picture from a picture which is formed by one's desires and fears. All forms of psychosis show the inability to be objective, to an extreme degree. For the insane person the only reality that exists is that within him, that of his fears and desires. He sees the world outside as symbols of his inner world, as his creation. All of us do the same when we dream. In the dream we produce events, we stage dramas, which are the expression of our wishes and fears (although sometimes also of our insights and judgment), and while we are asleep we are convinced that the product of our dreams is as real as the reality which we perceive in our waking state. The insane person or the dreamer fails completely in having an objective view of the world outside; but all of us are more or less insane, or more or less asleep; all of us have an unobjective view of the world, one which is distorted by our narcissistic orientation. Do I need to give examples?

Anyone can find them easily by watching himself, his neighbors, and by reading the newspapers. They vary in the degree of the narcissistic distortion of reality. A woman, for instance, calls up the doctor, saying she wants to come to his office that same afternoon. The doctor answers that he is not free this same afternoon, but that he can see her the next day. Her answer is: But, doctor, I live only five minutes from your office. She cannot understand his explanation that it does not save him time that for her the distance is so short. She experiences the situation narcissistically: since she saves time, he saves times; the only reality to her is she herself.

Less extreme—or perhaps only less obvious—are the distortions which are commonplace in interpersonal relations. How many parents experience the child's reactions in terms of his being obedient, of giving them pleasure, of being a credit to them, and so forth, instead of perceiving or even being interested in what the child feels for and by himself? How many husbands have a picture of their wives as being domineering, because their own attachment to mother makes them interpret any demand as a restriction of

their freedom? How many wives think their husbands are ineffective or stupid, because they do not live up to a phantasy picture of a shining knight which they might have built up as children? The lack of objectivity, as far as foreign nations are concerned, is notorious. From one day to another, another nation is made out to be utterly depraved and fiendish, while one's own nation stands for everything that is good and noble. Every action of the enemy is judged by one standard –every action of oneself by another. Even good deeds by the enemy are considered a sign of particular devilishness, meant to deceive us and the world, while our bad deeds are necessary and justified by our noble goals which they serve. Indeed, if one examines the relationship between nations, as well as between individuals, one comes to the conclusion that objectivity is the exception, and a greater or lesser degree of narcissistic distortion is the rule. The faculty to think objectively is reason; the emotional attitude behind reason is that of humility. To be objective, to use one's reason, is possible only if one has achieved an attitude of humility, if one has emerged from the dreams of - omniscience and omnipotence which one has as a child. In terms of this discussion of the practice of the art of loving, this means: love being dependent on the relative absence of narcissism, it requires the development of humility, objectivity and reason. One's whole life must be devoted to this aim. Humility and objectivity are indivisible, just, as love is. I cannot be truly objective about my family if I cannot be objective about the stranger, and vice versa. If I want to learn the art of loving, I must strive for objectivity in every situation, and become sensitive to the situations where I am not objective. I must try to see the difference between my picture of a person and his behavior, as it is narcissistically distorted, and the person's reality as it exists regardless of my interests, needs and fears. To have acquired the capacity for objectivity and reason is half the road to achieving the art of loving, but it must be acquired with regard to everybody with whom one comes in contact. If someone would want to reserve his objectivity for the loved person, and think he can dispense with it in his relationship to the rest of the world, he will soon discover that he fails both here and there. The ability to love depends on one's capacity to emerge from narcissism, and from the incestuous fixation to mother and clan; it depends on our capacity to grow, to develop a productive orientation in our relationship toward the world and ourselves. This process of emergence, of birth, of waking up, requires one quality as a necessary

condition: faith. The practice of the art of loving requires the practice of faith. What is faith? Is faith necessarily a matter of belief in God, or in religious doctrines? Is faith by necessity in contrast to, or divorced from, reason and rational thinking? Even to begin to understand the problem of faith one must differentiate between rational and irrational faith. By irrational faith I understand the belief (in a person or an idea) which is based on one's submission to irrational authority. In contrast, rational faith is a conviction which is rooted in one's own experience of thought or feeling. Rational faith is not primarily belief in something, but the quality of certainty and firmness which our convictions have. Faith is a character trait pervading the whole personality, rather than a specific belief.

Rational faith is rooted in productive intellectual and emotional activity. In rational thinking, in which faith is supposed to have no place, rational faith is an important component. How does the scientist, for instance, arrive at a new discovery? Does he start with making experiment after experiment, gathering fact after fact, without having a vision of what he expects to find? Rarely has a truly important discovery in any field been made in this way. Nor have people arrived at important conclusions when they were merely chasing a phantasy. The process of creative thinking in any field of human endeavor often starts with what may be called a "rational vision," itself a result of considerable previous study, reflective thinking, and observation. When the scientist succeeds in gathering enough data, or in working out a mathematical formulation to make his original vision highly plausible, he may be said to have arrived at a tentative hypothesis. A careful analysis of the hypothesis in order to discern its implications, and the amassing of data which support it, lead to a more adequate hypothesis and eventually perhaps to its inclusion in a wide-ranging theory.

The history of science is replete with instances of faith in reason and visions of truth. Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton were all imbued with an unshakable faith in reason. For this Bruno was burned at the stake and Spinoza suffered excommunication. At every step from the conception of a rational vision to the formulation of a theory, faith is necessary: faith in the vision as a rationally valid aim to pursue, faith in the hypothesis as a likely and plausible proposition, and faith in the final theory, at least until a general consensus about its validity has been reached. This faith is rooted in one's own experience, in the confidence in one's power of thought,

observation, and judgment. While irrational faith is the acceptance of something as true only because an authority or the majority say so, rational faith is rooted in an independent conviction based upon one's own productive observing and thinking, in spite of the majority's opinion.

Thought and judgment are not the only realm of experience in which rational faith is manifested. In the sphere of human relations, faith is an indispensable quality of any significant friendship or love. "Having faith" in another person means to be certain of the reliability and unchangeability of his fundamental attitudes, of the core of his personality, of his love. By this I do not mean that a person may not change his opinions, but that his basic motivations remain the same; that, for instance, his respect for life and human dignity is part of himself, not subject to change. In the same sense we have faith in ourselves. We are aware of the existence of a self, of a core in our personality which is unchangeable and which persists throughout our life in spite of varying circumstances, and regardless of certain changes in opinions and feelings. It is this core which is the reality behind the word "I," and on which our conviction of our own identity is based. Unless we have faith in the persistence of our self, our feeling of identity is threatened and we become dependent on other people whose approval then becomes the basis for our feeling of identity. Only the person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others, because only he can be sure that he will be the same at a future time as he is today and, therefore, that he will feel and act as he now expects to. Faith in oneself is a condition of our ability to promise, and since, as Nietzsche said, man can be defined by his capacity to promise, faith is one of the conditions of human existence. What matters in relation to love is the faith in one's own love; in its ability to produce love in others, and in its reliability. Another meaning of having faith in a person refers to the faith we have in the potentialities of others. The most rudimentary form in which this faith exists is the faith which the mother has toward her newborn baby: that it will live, grow, walk, and talk. However, the development of the child in this respect occurs with such regularity that the expectation of it does not seem to require faith. It is different with those potentialities which can fail to develop: the child's potentialities to love, to be happy, to use his reason, and more specific potentialities like artistic gifts. They are the seeds which grow and become manifest if the proper conditions for their development are given, and they can be stifled if these are absent. One of the

most important of these conditions is that the significant person in a child's life have faith in these potentialities. The presence of this faith makes the difference between education and manipulation. Education is identical with helping the child realize his potentialities.' The opposite of education is manipulation, which is based on the absence of faith in the growth of potentialities, and on the conviction that a child will be right only if the adults put into him what is desirable and suppress what seems to be undesirable. There is no need of faith in the robot, since there is no life in it either. The faith in others has its culmination in faith in man-kind. In the Western world this faith was expressed in religious terms in the Judaeo-Christian religion, and in secular language it has found its strongest expression in the humanistic political and social ideas of the last hundred and fifty years. Like the faith in the child, it is based on the idea that the potentialities of man are such that given the proper conditions he will be capable of building a social order governed by the principles of equality, justice and love. Man has not yet achieved the building of such an order, and therefore the conviction that he can do so requires faith. But like all rational faith this too is not wishful thinking, but based upon the evidence of the past achievements of the human race and on the inner experience of each individual, on his own experience of reason and love. While irrational faith is rooted in submission to a power which is felt to be overwhelmingly strong, omniscient and omnipotent, and in the abdication of one's own power and strength, rational faith is based upon the opposite experience. We have this faith in a thought because it is the result of our own observation and thinking. We have faith in the potentialities of others, of ourselves, and of mankind because, and only to the degree to which, we have experienced the growth of our own potentialities, the reality of growth in ourselves, the strength of our own power of reason and of love. The basis of rational faith is productiveness; to live by our faith means to live productively. It follows that the belief in power (in the sense of domination) and the use of are the reverse of faith. To believe in power that exists is identical with disbelief in the growth of potentialities which are as yet unrealized. It is a prediction of the future based solely on the manifest present; but it turns out to be a grave miscalculation, profoundly irrational in its oversight of the human potentialities and human growth. There is no rational faith in power. There is submission to it or, on the part of those who have it, the wish to keep it.

While to many power seems to be the most real of all things, the history of man has proved it to be the most unstable of all human achievements. Because of the fact that faith and power are mutually exclusive, all religions and political systems which originally are built on rational faith become corrupt and eventually lose what strength they have, if they rely on power or ally themselves with it. To have faith requires courage, the ability to take a risk, the readiness even to accept pain and disappointment. Who-ever insists on safety and security as primary conditions of life cannot have faith; whoever shuts himself off in a system of defense, where distance and possession are his means of security, makes himself a prisoner. To be loved, and to love, need courage, the courage to judge certain values as of ultimate concern—and to take the jump and stake every-thing on these values. This courage is very different from the courage of which that famous braggart Mussolini spoke when he used the slogan "to live dangerously." His kind of courage is the courage of nihilism. It is rooted in a destructive attitude toward life, in the willingness to throw away life because one is incapable of loving it. The courage of despair is the opposite of the courage of love, just as the faith in power is the opposite of the faith in life. Is there anything to be practiced about faith and courage? Indeed, faith can be practiced at every moment. It takes faith to bring up a child; it takes faith to fall asleep; it takes faith to begin any work. But we all are accustomed to having this kind of faith. Whoever does not have it suffers from overanxiety about his child, or from insomnia, or from the inability to do any kind of productive work; or he is suspicious, restrained from being close to anybody, or hypochondriacal, or unable to make any long-range plans. To stick to one's judgment about a person even if public opinion or some unforeseen facts seem to invalidate it, to stick to one's convictions even though they are unpopular—all this requires faith and courage. To take the difficulties, setbacks and sorrows of life as a challenge which to overcome makes us stronger, rather than as unjust punishment which should not happen to us, requires faith and courage. The practice of faith and courage begins with the small details of daily life. The first step is to notice where and when one loses faith, to look through the rationalizations which are used to cover up this loss of faith, to recognize where one acts in a cowardly way, and again how one rationalizes it. To recognize how every betrayal of faith weakens one, and how increased weakness leads to new betrayal, and so on, in a vicious circle. Then one will

also recognize that while one is consciously afraid of not being loved, the real, though usually unconscious fear is that of loving. To love means to commit oneself without guarantee, to give oneself completely in the hope that our love will produce love in the loved person. Love is an act of faith, and whoever is of little faith is also of little love. Can one say more about the practice of faith? Someone else might; if I were a poet or a preacher, I might try. But since I am not either of these, I cannot even try to say more about the practice of faith, but am sure that anyone who is really concerned can learn to have faith as a child learns to walk. One attitude, indispensable for the practice of the art of loving, which thus far has been mentioned only implicitly should be discussed explicitly since it is basic for the practice of love: activity. I have said before that by activity is not meant "doing something," but an inner activity, the productive use of one's powers. Love is an activity; if I love, I am in a constant state of active concern with the loved person, but not only with him or her. For I shall become incapable of relating myself actively to the loved person if I am lazy, if I am not in a constant state of awareness, alertness, activity. Sleep is the only proper situation for inactivity; the state of awakeness is one in which laziness should have no place. The paradoxical situation with a vast number of people today is that they are half asleep when awake, and half awake when asleep, or when they want to sleep. To be fully awake is the condition for not being bored, or being boring—and indeed, not to be bored or boring is one of the main conditions for loving. To be active in thought, feeling, with one's eyes and ears, throughout the day, to avoid inner laziness, be it in the form of being receptive, hoarding, or plain wasting one's time, is an indispensable condition for the practice of the art of loving. It is an illusion to believe that one can separate life in such a way that one is productive in the sphere of love and unproductive in all other spheres. Productiveness does not permit of such a division of labor. The capacity to love demands a state of intensity, awakeness, enhanced vitality, which can only be the result of a productive and active orientation in many other spheres of life. If one is not productive in other spheres, one is not productive in love either. The discussion of the art of loving cannot be restricted to the personal realm of acquiring and developing those characteristics and attitudes which have been described in this chapter. It is inseparably connected with the social realm. If to love means to have a loving attitude toward everybody, if love is a character trait,

it must necessarily exist in one's relationship not only with one's family and friends, but toward those with whom one is in contact through one's work, business, profession. There is no "division of labor" between love for one's own and love for strangers. On the contrary, the condition for the existence of the former is the existence of the latter. To take this insight seriously means indeed a rather drastic change in one's social relations from the customary ones. While a great deal of lip service is paid to the religious ideal of love of one's neighbor, our relations are actually determined, at their best, by the principle of fairness. Fairness meaning not to use fraud and trickery in the exchange of commodities and services, and in the exchange of feelings. "I give you as much as you give me," in material goods as well as in love, is the prevalent ethical maxim in capitalist society. It may even be said that the development of fairness ethics is the particular ethical contribution of capitalist society. The reasons for this fact lie in the very nature of capitalism determined either by direct force, by tradition, or by personal bonds of love or friendship. In capitalism, the all-determining factor is the exchange on the market. Whether we deal with the commodity market, the labor market, or the market of services, each person exchanges whatever he has to sell for that which he wants to acquire under the conditions of the market, without the use of force or fraud. Fairness ethics lend themselves to confusion with the ethics of the Golden Rule. The maxim "to do unto others as you would like them to do unto you" can be interpreted as meaning "be fair in your exchange with others." But actually, it was formulated originally as a more popular version of the Biblical "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Indeed, the Jewish-Christian norm of brotherly love is entirely different from fairness ethics. It means to love your neighbor, that is, to feel responsible for and one with him, while fairness ethics means not to feel responsible, and one, but distant and separate; it means to respect the rights of your neighbor, but not to love him. It is no accident that the Golden Rule has become the most popular religious maxim today; because it can be interpreted in terms of fairness ethics it is the one religious maxim which everybody understands and is willing to practice. But the practice of love must begin with recognizing the difference between fairness and love. Here, however, an important question arises. If our whole social and economic organization is based on each one seeking his own advantage, if it is governed by the principle of egotism tempered only by the ethical principle of fairness, how

can one do business, how can one act within the framework of existing society and at the same time practice love? Does the latter not imply giving up all one's secular concerns and sharing the life of the poorest? This question has been raised and answered in a radical way by the Christian monks, and by persons like Tolstoi, Albert Schweitzer, and Simone Weil. There are others who share the opinion of the basic incompatibility between love and normal secular life within our society. They arrive at the result that to speak of love today means only to participate in the general fraud; they claim that only a martyr or a mad person can love in the world of today, hence that all discussion of love is nothing but preaching. This very respectable viewpoint lends itself readily to a rationalization of cynicism. Actually it is shared implicitly by the average person who feels "I would like to be a good Christian—but I would have to starve if I meant it seriously." This "radicalism" results in moral nihilism. Both the "radical thinkers" and the average person are un-loving automatons and the only difference between them is that the latter is not aware of it, while the former knows it and recognizes the "historical necessity" of this fact. I am of the conviction that the answer of the absolute incompatibility of love and "normal" life is correct only in an abstract sense. The principle underlying capitalistic society and the principle of love are incompatible. But modern society seen concretely is a complex phenomenon. A salesman of a useless commodity, for instance, cannot function economically without lying; a skilled worker, a chemist, or a physician can. Similarly, a farmer, a worker, a teacher, and many a type of businessman can try to practice love without ceasing to function economically. Even if one recognizes the principle of capitalism as being incompatible with the principle of love, one must admit that "capitalism" is in itself a complex and constantly changing structure which still permits of a good deal of non-conformity and of personal latitude. In saying this, however, I do not wish to imply that we can expect the present social system to continue indefinitely, and at the same time to hope for the realization of the ideal of love for one's brother. People capable of love, under the present system, are necessarily the exceptions; love is by necessity a marginal phenomenon in present-day Western society. Not so much because many occupations would not permit of a loving attitude, but because the spirit of a production-centered, commodity-greedy society is such that only the non-conformist can defend himself successfully against it. Those who are

seriously concerned with love as the only rational answer to the problem of human existence must, then, arrive at the conclusion that important and radical changes in our social structure are necessary, if love is to become a social and not a highly individualistic, marginal phenomenon. The direction of such changes can, within the scope of this book, only be hinted at.' Our society is run by a managerial bureaucracy, by professional politicians; people are motivated by mass suggestion, their aim is producing more and consuming more, as purposes in themselves. All activities are subordinated to economic goals, means have become ends; man is an automaton—well fed, well clad, but without any ultimate concern for that which is his peculiarly human quality and function. If man is to be able to love, he must be put in his supreme place. The economic machine must serve him, rather than he serve it. He must be enabled to share experience, to share work, rather than, at best, share in profits. Society must be organized in such a way that man's social, loving nature is not separated from his social existence, but becomes one with it. If it is true, as I have tried to show, that love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence, then any society which excludes, relatively, the development of love, must in the long run perish of its own contradiction with the basic necessities of human nature. Indeed, to speak of love is not "preaching," for the simple reason that it means to speak of the ultimate and real need in every human being. That this need has been obscured does not mean that it does not exist. To analyze the nature of love is to discover its general absence today and to criticize the social conditions which are responsible for this absence. To have faith in the possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon, is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man.