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# Inseparability of Self-Love and Altruistic Love: P.A. Sorokin and E. Fromm

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## Abstract

This paper sets out to examine in a comparative framework Pitirim A. Sorokin and Erich Fromm's conceptions of love. The core argument is s in the complementarity between self-love and altruistic love. In conclude, altruistic love and self-love are not contradictory to each other. Those who don't love themselves cannot love others, nevertheless, those who ignore others cannot love themselves. What I try to show in this thesis is to clarify this fact.

**Keywords** Altruistic love · Self-love · P.A. Sorokin · E. Fromm · Love tyu neighbor

## Difficulty of Altruistic Love

The paper of Mangone and Dolgov (2019) quite rightly compares P.A. Sorokin's study of altruism with recent positive psychology. To understand Sorokin's study of love and altruism (Matter 1975; Merlo 2011; Nichols 2019), we should see not only his sociological perspective but his psychological and psychoanalytical perspective as well. This paper is a comparison between P.A. Sorokin and Erich Fromm.

The Bible says "Love thy neighbor." What impression does a modern person have from these words? One may feel "that is fine," but others do not think so. One may say it is infeasible. If we turn to the real world of today, the reason comes out. Some religious groups collect donations on the pretext of altruistic love even though they use them for their own benefit. For extreme example, there are many antisocial and anti-governmental or religious groups who regard terrorism as an altruistic behavior (Pape 2005). These reasons made us skeptics of to "Love thy neighbor." The secularization of religion also sports this understanding. Aside from religion, there is a simple fact that only after satisfying our own needs, we can

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think about another person. It is impossible for an average person to help others without also having a strong belief in cherishing others.

However, though the modern world is filled with selfishness and secular values, altruistic love or “Love thy neighbor” can exist. Even if people consider such love to be a lie, the reason of that is not because of the altruistic love itself. Altruistic love and self-love are not contradictory to each other. Those who do not love themselves cannot love others; nevertheless, those who ignore others cannot love themselves. In short, the aim of this paper is to clarify this fact.

## P.A. Sorokin and E. Fromm: Influenced by Totalitarianism

There is no contradiction between altruism and self-love or rather they are integrated. P.A. Sorokin and E. Fromm have logical reasons behind this integration. Sorokin is famous as an eminent sociologist and Fromm as a worldwide social psychologist. They have similar theoretical ideas on many points. They become famous as scholars of love. They are especially regarded as emigrant intellectuals who worked actively in American academic world.

Sorokin banished from the motherland by the anti-Bolshevism activities in 1922. He moved from Russia to Berlin and then to Prague. Finally, he settled in America after 1923. As for Fromm, because of his Jewish origin, he was forced to escape from Nazi Germany. First, he moved to Geneva, and then, he started to work in America from 1933 (Sorokin 1963).

Referencing their writings and biographical materials, there is nothing special about the intellectual relationship between them, though they spent many years in America during the same period. But there are some similar points in their academic and nonacademic writings. These are outlined as follows:

Sorokin's main theme was to understand the massive history of civilization as a process of ever-changing essence. His analysis of the crisis of today is derived from those conclusions. Such a standpoint appeared in his early *Sociology of Revolution* (1925) or *Social Mobility* (1927). In the middle of his career, as it appeared in *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937–1941), he sharpened his methodology. It disclosed the risk of modern materialistic, egoistic, and secularistic values. In *Dynamics*, Sorokin described such secularistic and egoistic values as “sensate cultural mentality.” And his conclusions led him to the study of altruistic love as his final project. The agenda of the study appeared in his *Reconstruction of Humanity* (18), and following *Altruistic Love* (1950) and *The Ways and Power of Love* (1954), a logical and experimental method was pursued (Johnston 1996).

Well, what do we see in the case of Fromm? He started his career with a psychoanalytic study of human mentalities that were contained in Nazism. Such a motive can be seen in an early book entitled *Escape from Freedom* (20). He deals with the change in human mentality from the age of the Renaissance to the Reformation. In Fromm's opinion, the change is paralleled with the change of mentality of peoples who come to support Nazism. After finishing this work, he developed this idea to the more general discussion about the modern world. The works such as *Man for Himself* (18) and *The Sane Society* (1955) discussed how to remove the feeling of alienation and loneliness that a modern person inevitably gets in the process of social development. And then the method was popularized in *The Art of Loving* (6) and *The Heart of Man* (1964). These belong to his later works in the middle of his career (Funk 2000).

To compare their life histories, it seemed they had some similar experience. It could be said that this was the similarity between Bolshevism and Nazism. Sorokin and Fromm were involved in historical trends. Needless to say, Bolshevism and Nazism are both compulsory

systems that never regard the individual consciousness. Both are called simply “totalitarianism.” Individuals must have an obligation to serve the nation as a system automatically. The similarity of Sorokin and Fromm can be found in their questions: “How are people involved in the compulsory system?” and “What kind of mentalities do such humans have?” Sorokin describes such human consciousness as being “sensate cultural mentality” and Fromm as “authoritarian personality.” Both are a mentality that is irrelevant and indifferent to the transcendental religious values and mysterious energy of love.

## History of Social Thought about Self and Love

Now I would like to look back to the history of social thought on self and love discussion by Sorokin and Fromm. The important point that they discuss is the historical process of denying the elements of self-love that is really contained in the ethics of “Love thy neighbor.”

After Christ preached “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:9–18), altruistic love was seen as worth practicing. What meaning does the adjective “altruistic” have? *Alter* is derived from Latin and means “other.” Then altruism comes to have the meaning of “other-centered” or “other-centric.” Of course, the opposite word is egoism. Sorokin defined altruism as follows:

[...] when an individual freely sacrifices his rightful interests in favor of the well-being of another, refraining from harming him, even though his legal right entitles him to do so, and helping him in various ways, though no law demands of him such action. (Sorokin 1948: 58–59)

In short, altruism is self-sacrifice, self-control, and service for others. From Christian Fathers in ancient times to religious thinkers in the middle ages, there had been no objections against this altruistic attitude. However, a Christian mystic in the middle ages, e.g., Meister Eckhart (1260–1328), thought about the unity of self and others through love.

Some people imagine that they are going to see God, that they are going to see God as if he were standing yonder, and they here, but it is not to be so. God and I: we are one. By knowing God I take him to myself. By loving God, I penetrate him. (Fromm 1956: 68)

In the age of Reformation, the mainstream of social and religious thought tries to deny selfishness or narcissism, instead of emphasizing altruistic love.

The selfish person is only interested in himself, wants everything for himself, is unable to give with any pleasure but is only anxious to take; the world outside himself is conceived only from the standpoint of what he can get out of it; he lacks interest in the needs of others, or respect for their dignity and integrity. (Fromm 1947: 130)

The critical point changed from not to recommend altruistic love but to admonish selfishness. Jean Calvin (1509–1564) saw self-love as “pest.” Here, Fromm found a kind of paradigm change in the age of Reformation.

to be fond of oneself, to like anything about oneself is one of the greatest imaginable sins. It excludes love for others and is identical with selfishness. (Fromm 1947: 120-121)

This change in meaning of the word “self” caused a serious problem. The connection between self and others and self and God became harder to find. The same as Fromm’s understanding of Reformation, Sorokin understands it negatively. How does Sorokin evaluate Protestantism, especially sects such as Calvinists, Methodists, and Baptists? They are usually considered to display asceticism. It is sure that we feel something transcendental and other-world ethics (*Ideational*) in Protestantism. But it is a superficial ethic. In fact, such kind of Asceticism is fixing the weak bodily self in the manner of the Puritans. It is merely a reaction against the flesh (bodily need) influenced by the external environment.

In this sense, Protestant asceticism does not come from pure religious godliness (*Ideational mentality*), but from bodily desire (*Sensate mentality*). Sorokin called this Protestant consciousness “pseudo-ideational mentality” that appeared after the end of the fifteenth century.

[...] an Ideational reaction against the loose mores and Sensate ethics of the end of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (Sorokin 1937-1941: Vol2, 499)

The next question is about mental change after the early modern age. How can we balance our own interests and others’ interests? This is one of the central questions in this era. The keyword that gives a clue to the problem was “self-interest.” One of the meanings of this word “interest” is clearly an “economic” one. But Fromm pays attention to the other meaning that realizes the potential of human beings. He cited Baruch De Spinoza (1632–1677) and explained:

The more each person strives and is able to seek his own profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he possess; on the other hand, in so far as each person neglects his own profit, that is to say, neglects to preserve his own being, is he impotent (Fromm 1947: 133, Spinoza, *Ethics*, Proposition 20)

The saying “Love thy neighbor” was still alive in the age of Spinoza. Though self-interest had such a meaning, it finally comes to be regarded as synonymous with selfishness.

It has become identical with selfishness, with interest in material gains, power, and success; and instead of its being synonymous with virtue, its conquest has become an ethical commandment. (Fromm 1947: 134)

It had been forgotten that self-interest is decided by humanity and human need. To make matters worse, subjective interests that people feel were worthily identified as self-interest. Though interest should be understood as the *objective*, it was misunderstood as *subjective*. This is the paradigm change in social thought concerning interest. It is the so called Marxist’s *alienation* (Entfremdung). Eventually, people incorrectly come to this conclusion.

[The] modern man lives according to the principles of self-denial and thinks in terms of self-interests [...] The failure of modern culture lies not in its principle of individualism, not in the idea of that moral virtue is the same as the pursuit of self-interest, but in the deterioration of the meaning of self-interest, but that they are not concerned enough with

the interest of their real self; not in the fact that they are too selfish, but that they do not love themselves. (Fromm 1947: 135, 139)

Add to this, I would introduce Sorokin's historical view after the twelfth century. He explained the trend as the prosperity of "compulsory relationship." The way of life in the twelfth and thirteenth century is centered around religious and moral values. Economic value has only a negative meaning. Wealth was supposed to be the cause of eternal destruction. This fact is symbolically explained in the Bible as "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24). A person who does not worry about money considered economic interest as a means for religious and moral goals. When they felt that economic interests were contrary to religious goals, they were soon rejected. Citing from the work of Richard Henry Tawney (1880–1962), Sorokin explained the difference of economic thought between the middle age and modern (Table 1).

[The] economic interests are subordinate to the real business of life, which is salvation, and that economic conduct is one aspect of personal conduct, upon which, as on other parts of it, the rules of morality are binding. [...] There is no place in mediaeval theory for economic activity which is not related to a moral end. [Therefore] at every turn, therefore, there are limits, restrictions, warnings against allowing economic interests to interfere with serious affairs. (Tawney 1926: 31–32, Sorokin 1937–1941, Vol. 2: 501)

## Concerning This Citation, I Add to the Other Sentences from the Same Tawney Book

The most fundamental difference between medieval and modern economic thought consists, indeed, in the fact that, whereas the latter normally refers to economic expediency, [...] the former starts from the position that there is a moral authority to which considerations of economic expediency must be subordinated. (Tawney 1926: 39)

Getting more wealth and saving more money equals greed, vice, and sin. Such a way of thinking gradually changed from the thirteenth century. During the age of Reformation, economic interests were accepted and finally became a basis of human interest (Sorokin, 1937–1941, Vol. 2: 497–507). On the other hand, the social relationship also changed from the

**Table1** The percentage of religious and secular works in pictures and sculptures (Sorokin 1941: 27)

Century	Religious	Secular	Total
Before	81.9	18.1	100
The 10th			
10th–11th	94.7	5.3	100
12th–13th	97.0	3.0	100
14th–15th	85.0	15.0	100
16th	64.7	35.3	100
17th	50.2	49.8	100
18th	24.1	75.9	100
19th	10.0	90.0	100
20th	3.9	96.1	100



“familistic” to “contractual” and to “compulsory.” The idea of ownership also changes from sharing to privatization eventually, and personal economic interest is definitely acknowledged.

Needless to say, Sorokin does not try to stop the trend away from “familistic” relationships to “compulsory” (obligatory) relationships. It is impossible to stop such a historical trend. Sorokin paid attention to the dogma that thinking just one of the social relationships is fixed and unmoving. Such way of thinking resembles *existential determination* (Seinsverbundenheit) formulated by Karl Mannheim (1893–1947).

The next problem that I would like to bring up has to do with the words *sympathy* and *compassion*, both have a close relationship with altruism. The statement of Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733) is very interesting. He said that individual egoistic activities lead to public benefits. It could say that it is one of the modern versions for the justification of egoism. Such utilitarian thinking that represented the egoistic interest was inherited by Adam Smith (1723–1790) and John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) and occupied a central position in modern liberalistic economic thought.

## Modern Ego and Sociology

In the modern era, altruism meets with criticism. Its representative is Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900). He said that “Love thy other” is nothing but a thought of the weaker. He encouraged exploitation and oppression against neighbors.

We must think through the reasons for this and resist all sentimental frailty: life itself in its essence means appropriating, injuring, overpowering those who are foreign and weaker; oppression, harshness, forcing one’s own forms on others, incorporation, and at the very least, at the very mildest, exploitation - but why should we keep using this kind of language, that has from time immemorial been infused with a slanderous intent? (Nietzsche 1990, no.259)

Sociology as a science established in the nineteenth century has explored the relationship of self (ego) with others. Such a relationship is called “interaction,” while favorable interactions for a given society are referred to as “solidarity.” Discussion about altruistic love, though not so much, was described in that context (Sorokin 1947: Ch.5). Auguste Comte (1798–1857) is a famous advocate of altruism. Actually, altruistic love was one of the aims of his positive philosophy (sociology). The sacred formula of positive philosophy was as follows:

love as a principle, the order as a foundation, and progress as a goal.

In the treatment of social questions Positive science will be found utterly to discard those proud illusions of the supremacy of reason, to which it had been liable during its preliminary stages. Ratifying, in this respect, the common experience of men even more forcibly than Catholicism, it teaches us that individual happiness and public welfare are far more dependent upon the heart than upon the intellect. (Comte 1875, Vol.1: 11)

Unfortunately, such claims were not regarded as sociological knowledge. Rather, it was treated as a doctrine of *religion de l’humanité* that the late Comte built. The mainstream of sociological exploration would always see human society as a place of “struggle for existence” where individuals compete with each other. A good example of such sociology is seen in the work of



Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). Though he emphasized both egoism and altruism in human society, his adherents excessively emphasized only egoistic struggle.

As to *social ego* which is one of the main topics in sociology, George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) and Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) are also worth focusing on. By including the view of society in ego, Mead concludes that “I” will change “Me.” Such statements are closely connected to Cooley’s “looking-glass self.” Both sociologists treated self as neither isolated nor being self-righteous.

It is true that these theories correctly evaluate the relationship of self (ego) with others. However, they never deepened their discussion along the line of the relationship with an absolute other and the ultimately unified relationship of self and others.

Among other sociologists, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) is famous for using the words “egoistic” and “altruistic.” In his classic work, *Suicide* (1897), he classified suicide as a formula of “Le suicide égoïste” and “Le suicide altruiste.” In addition to this, his word “individualism” also has a unique meaning because Durkheimian individualism is completely deferent to utilitarian individualism. Their individualism is universally individual, beyond ethnicity or religion. In this sense, individualism does not mean isolation but solidarity, and not laissez-faire but normative (Durkheim 1889).

## Phenomenology of Love

The phenomenon of “love,” expressed in one word, has quite diverse aspects. For instance, the relationship of friends, intimate acquaintances, teacher and student, or sexual relationships, social bonds with neighbors or gods, as well as the attachments to nations and ethnicity, all these are called “love.” Traditionally there is the Greek classification of love such as Eros, Agape, or Philia. Taking a glance at such separate forms of love, they are regarded as indeed manifold things. Sorokin, however, tried to find one integrated consciousness in this diversity. It can be said that his originality can be seen here.

In the relationship with the environment, sexual and symbiosis relationships derive biological pleasure, culturally influenced relationships of friends and romantic love has appeared in human affairs, and last, the mystical energy of altruistic love and neighbor love is brought by about faith or belief, such all of them are parts of an integrated system.

If that is true, how are they integrated? Sorokin said that there are four dimensions in human consciousness: (1) *biological unconscious*, (2) *biological conscious*, (3) *sociocultural conscious*, and (4) *superconscious*.

First, (1) *biological unconscious* is an instinct or a physiological desire. In other words, to obey bodily hunger or thirst means behavior based on *biological unconscious*. The *struggle for existence* also belongs here. Thus, love in biological unconscious takes the form of a sexual relationship or as coexistence with the same species.

Next, (2) *biological conscious* is some kind of primitive self-consciousness. Animals feel uncomfortable if their instincts and physiological needs are not satisfied. However, *biological consciousness* tries to remove this discomfort consciously. And this consciousness can distinguish “male from female” and “old from young.” To satisfy their own desire, creatures often steal food. Those who have been stolen from might seek revenge. In this sense, this state of consciousness never provides peace of mind. On this stage, selfishness that adheres to ego will arise.

To avoid such a stressful life, the (3) *sociocultural conscious* is needed. Members form a group and draw up a set of rules so that they do not steal each other’s things or harm

companions. Once the rules have been formulated, they develop into traditions, customs, or legal norms. So, the *sociocultural conscious* is the foundation of community, nation, and ethnic groups. At this stage, love appears as a form of patriotism, fraternity, nationalism, and regionalism.

Of course, the contradictions and conflict in consciousness are not disappearing at this stage. Conflict with the traditions and customs of other groups is inevitable to avoid. It is quite natural that some among the members have a negative feeling against the law and rule of the group. Such a conflict of spirit makes our world and nations violent and full of war. Can we ultimately resolve these contradictions and conflicts? As mentioned above, Sorokin proposed the (4) *superconscious* as an ultimate solution to remove contradiction and conflict. What is *superconscious*? What mental state does it represent? I want to answer these questions from the standpoint of a phenomenology of love.

The cause of anxiety and conflict in the mind is the ego. People try to remove the conflict by pursuing the egoism, the nationalism, the ethnocentrism, and so on. However, it naturally causes another conflict. In case of such intricate sociocultural conflicts, *superconscious* plays a role as a mediator. It weakens selfishness and egoism and changes direction to more altruistic behavior in individuals and groups. Traditionally, in the realm of philosophy, this is called  $\alpha\rho\epsilon\tau\eta$  (virtue). These are some of Sorokin's favorite phrases: "the divine in man," "the manifestations of Godhead," "the sublimest energy of truth, goodness and beauty," "the highest creative genius," and so on (Sorokin, 1954: 96).

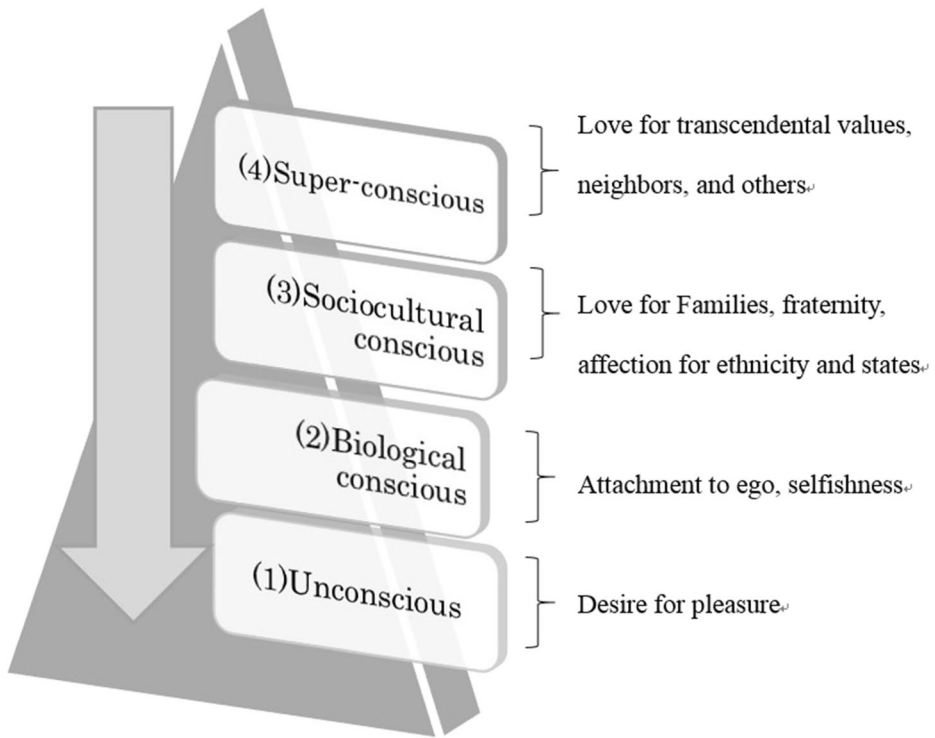
What I want to emphasize here is that the *superconscious* will give us an awareness of altruism. Sorokin picked up the Christian idea of "good neighbors" as a role model that is awakened to *superconsciousness*. In Christianity, Jesus Christ not only demonstrates transcendent existence but also represents a human that took on the hardships (original sin) of people. Those who understood the meaning of this act took action just as Jesus Christ did. A good example has appeared in the behavior of "good neighbors." Chart 1 shows the structure of consciousness.

Psychoanalysis reveals the structure of human consciousness and the unconscious. And in a more elaborate way, Sorokin shows a position of altruistic mentality (*superconscious*) in the structure. It can be said that Sorokin's structural theory of consciousness is comparable to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The counterpart of Maslow's "need for self-actualization" is Sorokin's *superconscious*.

However, it is true that Sorokin's structural theory of consciousness has disadvantages. It may be said that possibly the *superconscious* controls other consciousness. And it is allowed for us to assume in an ideal society, virtue, God, and altruistic love work as a norm. However, today this situation does not exist. In fact, it may be completely opposite. In this age of war and conflict, how can *superconscious* work? Can we find the *superconscious* that may be hidden? Sorokin always used the story of saints and greats like St. Augustine (354–430) or Ashoka (BC268–BC232) as examples. Nevertheless, *superconscious* and altruism of historical saints are never familiar with us. This is because we cannot escape from *biological conscious* or *sociocultural conscious*.

## From Sociocultural Conscious to Superconscious

While possessing biological conscious and sociocultural conscious, there is a way that leads to *superconscious*. Sorokin did not solve this problem. So using the discussion of E. Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, I attempt to find the answer concerning this unresolved problem.



**Chart 1** The structure of consciousness and forms of love

Some people are willing to connect with others in various forms. Sociology treats this theme with the term “social bond,” “interaction” or “self,” and so on. Fromm is discussing this theme as his own humanistic ontology. He said that though the human is a kind of biological being, a human is not a mere animal. The decisive difference is in the fact that a human knows oneself. They know their friend and companion, their own past and future, and their possibilities. The reason is that humans find the facts. However, humans also have some defects. One of them is the fact that humans know what is needless to know.

Man is gifted with reason; he is *life being aware of itself*; he has awareness of himself, of his fellowman, 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 (Fromm 1947: 6-7)

Fromm said that this fact comes from the *separateness* of human. Getting rid of such isolated and lonely separateness, humans try to connect with others.

The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is, indeed, the source of all anxiety [...] The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. (Fromm 1947: 7, 8)

How can humans overcome the sense of *separateness*? When babies are in the womb, they feel a sense of unity with their mother. But they have no sooner been born on the earth, have a sense of self, and find the consciousness of ego, than they begin to feel loneliness.

More interestingly, the same things appeared in large human history. At the beginning of human history, humans stayed in a sense of unity with nature. Nature and other animals were sometimes the environment and sometimes an object to worship. In a sense, the historical development of humans means a kind of separateness from nature. Human started to make houses and store food. By doing so, they got independence from nature. In Sorokin's expression, it could be said that it is an awareness of biological conscious.

Separateness from nature, on the other hand, brings anxiety just like a fetus leaving the mother. Then we try to get rid of the negative lonely feeling. Some of the conceivable solutions are to practice collective rituals and to get into a trance state by the use of hallucinogens, as Fromm (1947: 9) states that "in a transitory state of exaltation the world outside disappears, and with it the feeling of separateness from it."

Fromm does not intend to introduce the case study of ancient people or non-civilized tribes. His main purpose concerns the addictions of alcohol, gambling, and drugs of today. Of course, there is a difference between ancient ritual and modern addiction. As to the transitory state created by alcohol or drugs, once the state is gone, they suffer from a sense of guilt. Addiction to trance is never allowed in modern society. This is because it harms the addict's mind and body. If paraphrased in Sorokin's words, it shows a contradiction between social conscious and biological conscious.

Adding to the other example, sexual orgasm also resembles the trance induced by ritual or drug use. However, it is also a hopeless means to remove a sense of *separateness*. Fromm insists as below:

[...] It becomes a desperate attempt to escape the anxiety engendered by separateness and it results in an ever-increasing sense of separateness, since the sexual act without love never bridges the gap between two human beings, except momentarily. (Fromm 1947: 10)

Is there a hopeful way? Many people think that creative work reduces our sense of separation or isolation. It is true that when workers immerse themselves in creative work, the sense of separateness is suspended. But such creative works are an old method proceeded by craftsman or artists. Such creative works combined workers with the world. It is obvious that craftsmanship resembles the praxis of religious ethics. Nevertheless, Fromm said that this is also hopeless in our world.

In the modern work process of a clerk, the worker on the endless belt, little is left of this uniting quality of work. The worker becomes an appendix to the machine or to the bureaucratic organization. He has ceased to be he – hence no union takes place beyond that of conformity. (From, 1947: 14-15)

When workers sell their labor in the market, alienation occurs. In the labor market, humans require an ability for cooperation in a large group, inexhaustible desire, and a preference that is easily influenced. So to speak, such a person is a machine-alienated man. On the other hand, "desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in man." Here, there is not only a

need for love for others or altruistic love but also its difficulty. In Fromm's words, the falsity comes from a "symbiotic union."

The passive form of the symbiotic union is that of submission, or if we use a clinical term, of *masochism*. The masochistic person escapes from the unbearable feeling of isolation and separateness by making himself part and parcel of another person who directs him, guides him, protects him. (Fromm 1947: 15-16)

An active form of symbiotic union is sadism. It is a desire that makes others a part of oneself. The sadistic person is as dependent on the submissive person as the latter is on the former, neither can live without other.

In contrast to symbiotic union, mature *love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality*. [...] love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. (Fromm 1947: 17)

## Truth of Love

Sometimes we can observe behavior that is a display of love for a neighbor. However, in many cases, it is not a true action of love but a self-centered and selfish love. Moreover, unless love for others is not built on a sound basis of self-love, it falls into being a trap of masochism and egoism, because love for others always has been thought to be built on a base of self-sacrifice. It is merely masochism, sacrificing oneself with a self-hurting attitude of neglect or disregard for oneself. A masochistic person never loves others. They often satisfy their own desires by unconditionally obeying another. To love others must start, on the contrary, with loving oneself.

Now we turn to the above-mentioned words in the Bible "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:9-18). We must pay attention to the last words "as yourself." It is important to help others who need help. It may be a way to display love for God, especially for believers. But the fact that love for oneself is an underlying love for existence, it should not be forgotten.

In the case of Sorokin, altruism means "unselfish love." But this expression can sometimes be misread. Fromm did not distinguish the object of love as oneself and others. Rather, he insists on the importance of self-love, not love for a specific thing or person, but love for one's whole existence. Such openness is a feature of true love. Thus, if there is an unselfish love that is not based on such self-love, it is false and neurotic love.

The "unselfish" person "does not want anything for himself"; he "lives only for others," is proud that he does not consider himself important. He is puzzled to find that in spite of his unselfishness he is unhappy, and that his relationships to those closest to him are unsatisfactory. (Fromm 1956: 51-52)

It is true that selfish love must be rejected. But it is not the same as self-loving. Actually, selfish love and self-loving are completely different. What is important to mention here is the book

review written by Paul Johannes Tillich (1886–1965). Tillich reviewed Fromm's *The Sane Society* and advised the author in the excerpt below:

Paul Tillich, in a review of *The Sane Society*, in *Pastoral Psychology*, September, 1955, has suggested that it would be better to drop the ambiguous term “self-love” and to replace it with “natural self-affirmation” or “paradoxical self-acceptance.”

However, Fromm could not agree with Tillich. It is because:

In the term “self-love” the paradoxical element in self-love is contained more clearly. The fact is expressed that love is an attitude which is the same toward all objects, including myself. [...] The Bible speaks of self-love when it commands [us] to “love thy neighbor as thyself” and Meister Eckhart speaks of self-love in the very same sense. (Fromm 1956: 48)

These significant remarks have appeared in footnote 13. Where is the difference between Tillich and Fromm? It can be said that by understanding this difference, we can find the way from the modern individualistic love and self-loving mentality to altruistic love.

If it is a virtue to love my neighbor as a human being, it must be a virtue—and not a vice—to love myself, since I am a human being too [...] 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. (Fromm 1956: 49–50).

It means that love of others and love of ourselves are not alternatives. In short, self and others are ultimately the same things. This statement resembles Tolstoy's idea discovered by Sorokin. However, Fromm made Tolstoy's somewhat complicated idea clear. The connection of self-loving with altruistic love is also emphasized by Meister Eckhart (1260–1328). Needless to say, Eckhart was a favorite scholar of Fromm.

If you love yourself, you love everybody else as you do yourself. As long as you love another person less than you love yourself, you will not really succeed in loving yourself, but if you love all alike, including yourself, you will love them as one person and that person is both God and man. (Fromm 1956: 53)

## Conclusion

Sorokin contemplates how to make humans more altruistic. This is because he thought that it would be a hopeful means of solving social problems in the modern world where war and conflict never ends. His idea, *superconscious*, is situated at the apex of human consciousness. *Superconscious* is closely related with his *ideational cultural mentality* and altruistic personality. Though not synonymous, there is a relationship between the concepts. Sorokin tried to search the way that an ordinary person perceives the *ideational cultural mentality* with the *superconscious* and eventually becomes an altruistic person. In other words, *superconscious* signifies a kind of consciousness in which humans can

feel something that is transcendental, and one who gains such consciousness can become altruistic human.

Why did Sorokin settle on such a view? Because he wanted to submit an alternative value to modern secularism and economic value system. But in a sense, he also means to emphasize the dangers and ugliness of egoism. Whether Sorokin intended it or not, it is true that some people feel as if they are compelled to take altruistic action. He had many supporters. Sorokin built the Harvard Research Center in Creative Altruism through the funding of Eli Lilly and the Lilly Foundation. However, he also encountered antipathy. If we read the book reviews published in journals at that time, evaluation of Sorokin and his work about altruism appears. It was considerably negative. Such negative evaluation continued several decades after his death. After that, the study of altruism has had no suitable position in sociology.

Putting aside the problem of evaluation of Sorokin, some of the points contained in Sorokin's writings are not without problem. There is a concern that Sorokin's criticism of selfishness and egoism will eliminate Fromm's "self-love." The above discussion about "self-love" and altruism by Fromm is easy to accept for the modern person. It is because he shows the way from "self-love" to altruistic love. Young Sorokin once argued for the unity of self-love and altruistic love. By referencing Tolstoy's work, he concludes that there is no contradiction between to love oneself and love of other (Сорокин 1914). But such an idea goes backward. Is it because he was facing the difficulty of how to divide egoism from true self-love? As far as Fromm's explanations are concerned, it is clearly shown that self-love is inseparable from altruistic love. It is true that if a person can love themselves truly, a person can love others too. To love oneself, that is, self-love, is completely different from selfishness and egoism.

If this is true, we may make Sorokin's conclusion about the study of modern society more understandable. Interpreting his ideas using Fromm's formulation, we can find the way to the superconscious including in modern sociocultural mentalities. As for the present circumstance, "sensate cultural mentalities" seems to dominate all over the world (Brown 1996). Even in an era when "sensate mentalities" are dominant, "ideational mentalities" will never go away. This is the "principle of immanent change" and the "principle of limit" that Sorokin described. We can attain a hopeful altruistic way of life though we live in the hopeless age of egoistic society.

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