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Dorothy M. Rath

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A PHILOSOPHY OF MUTUALITY IN MARTIN BUBER'S WRITINGS--  
IMPLICATIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING

by  
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Bachelor of Science, University of Illinois, 1957  
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A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the  
University of North Dakota  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

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1980

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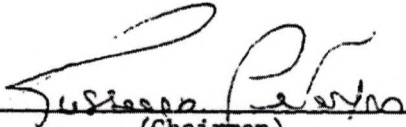
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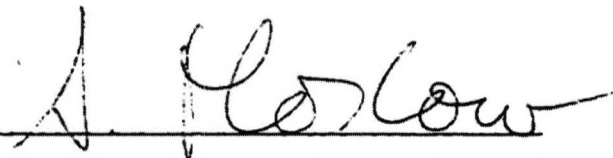
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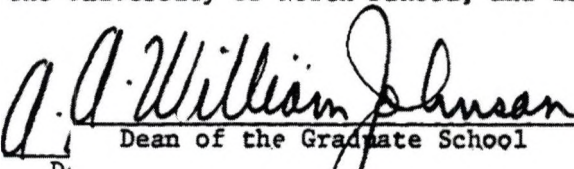
  
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For Tom Colberg

In this study frequent use is made of the generic masculine noun and pronoun. When I use the generic masculine, I fully mean both male and female, be they men and women, or boys and girls.

## ABSTRACT

The study suggests a relationship which exists between Martin Buber's philosophy of mutuality and a humanistic educational mainstreaming. Mandated by parent-initiated legislation, mainstreaming is intended to reduce the isolation of the handicapped by including them as nearly as possible within the larger group in the regular class, and by giving them greater access to educational resources. This becomes problematic even for those handicapped children in nearest physical proximity. Among the obstacles are society's frequent exclusionist response to the different reflected in the school's preference for homogeneity, and the ideas of competition which dominate education.

The literature indicates that mainstreaming in its present stage is largely a one-sided effort to change the handicapped through individual remedial instruction. There is less evidence suggesting a substantial coinciding effort to make the structure of the regular class conducive to their inclusion.

In the introductory chapter, a need is proposed to develop such a structure, to clarify how any child, not only the handicapped, may be educated as an individual by strengthening the bonds of human contact. Once the essential human relational element is defined, special methods and techniques can be brought to serve it. Buber's thought is relevant to this problem, since his concern was for the humanization of the modern institution by means of the growth of

mutuality between its members. Therefore, the various aspects of mutuality as indicated in his writings are researched and applied to mainstreaming.

Biographical information reveals Buber's attentiveness to the phenomena of human difference and communication between the different. Chapter III states that there is a potentiality in all human beings which can be actualized through mutual relation. The components of mutuality, namely, uniqueness, awareness, responsibility, and others are studied. A bond of mutuality exists between two persons engaged in spontaneous communication when they have become "presences," each for the other. It is only when each becomes aware of the other's presence as a whole, and as a unique person of equal worth, and responds as a whole person on that basis, that mutuality can be established. Based on a Jewish world affirming tradition and his philosophical anthropology, Buber attributes to all people the capacity to enter into mutuality. The second basic human relation is the partial and detached perception of the other as an object which can be categorized, used, and even changed.

In the remaining chapters, Buber's evolutionary view of education is presented as a conscious experiment toward equity and humanness. The greatness of the "genuine teacher" is seen in an impartial, yet personal involvement with pupils which imbues them with courage and enables a confirming relation to their world. Hence, Buber advocates strong participatory roles for the teacher and child. His goal of character education is fostered in the "community of achievement" founded on mutuality between children in their common learning

pursuit. Community provides a sense of belonging, educates to responsibility, and it is the essential bearer of knowledge. The teacher helps pupils to experience their world of people subjectively, and helps them to see the unity behind the diversity of aspects. This presupposes an objectivity which sets limits to biases, an openness to the facts and how they interrelate by which prejudice is replaced with a realistic value judgment. Individual experience is not weakened, rather it is enriched by differing experience. This epistemology links to an openness to humanity, an integrative perception of the world, and an independent "world view."

The conclusions emphasize quality education as generalizable to all students; education as inclusive; education as conscious and willed; education for community; and education for uniqueness defined by awareness and responsible service.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

This will be a study of a philosophy of mutuality in Martin Buber's writings, and its significance for educational mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming is a movement toward the education of handicapped children with the general population of children attending the regular class. As viewed in this study, its aim is to enable learners to overcome or live with their handicaps and to develop their potentialities through authentic participation within the regular educational setting. Such participation involves children in personal relations with their teacher, and with other class members. The second participation is seen to be concentrated around the common work of learning, and not only in occasional secondary contacts between class members who accept one another. This implies for the educator a conscious effort to provide the conditions which foster mutual recognition and help between children in their pursuit of learning.

The mainstreaming impetus comes from the law. State and federal legislation mandating mainstreaming has followed court decisions favoring those parents who have protested the total exclusion of many children from school, and the isolation of other children in segregated environments where children are often subject to stigma and neglect, as are

other populations so isolated. Mainstreaming as a movement, as "progressive inclusion," brings a greater degree of integration than has existed in recent decades. Not every child can be included in the regular classroom within schooling as it exists, but the federal Handicapped Children Act requires that all of the handicapped be educated and that each one be educated in the "least restrictive" setting. This is meant to reduce the isolation of children by including them as nearly as possible within the larger group, and to give them better access to our educational resources.<sup>1</sup>

Least restrictive alternative is a term used interchangeably with mainstreaming, and is preferred by some educators, since mainstreaming has often been misinterpreted to mean that all special classrooms must close and that all children must be educated in regular settings.<sup>2</sup> Least restrictive alternative assumes that there are a variety of alternative settings for the child, ranging from the regular classroom to more restrictive environments such as special classes on a full or part-time basis, special schools, and residential institutions which are the most restrictive. From a legal point of view, it means that removal of a person "from a normal situation as a matter of public policy into one which is restrictive is a limitation of that person's liberty."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Abeson and Jeffrey Zettel, "The Quiet Revolution: Handicapped Children Act of 1975," Exceptional Children 44 (October 1977): 114-28; Alan Abeson, Nancy Bolick, and Jayne Hass, A Primer on Due Process--Education Decisions for Handicapped Children (Reston, Virginia: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1975), p. 29; Edward Martin, "Integration of the Handicapped Child into Regular Schools," Minnesota Education 2 (Spring 1976): 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>See Josephine Hayes and Scottie Torres Higgins, "Issues Regarding the IEP," Exceptional Children 45 (January 1979): 268.

<sup>3</sup>Abeson, Bolick, and Hass, A Primer on Due Process, p. 29.



The concept of a continuum of services was substantially formulated in 1962 by Maynard Reynolds and later revised as a conceptualization of preferred practices for the future. Before moving a child to a more restrictive setting, effort is made to adapt the present setting to the needs of the child. As explained by Maynard Reynolds and Jack Birch, regular schools and classes would have, for example, diversified staffing and offer many forms of individualized programs to accommodate a greater variety of pupils. There would be a variety of learning centers, equipment, facilities, and materials to serve pupils with special needs and preferences. Amplification devices for pupils with hearing impairments is an example of special equipment.<sup>4</sup>

Regular teachers would be challenged to become broadly resourceful in managing the diverse environment and serving the broad range of needs of a diverse student population. Special educators and other professionals with highly specialized knowledge and skills would be employed in collaborative teaching and supporting roles with regular teachers.<sup>5</sup>

While this is a practical organizational and technical conceptualization, Reynolds and Birch conclude that changes represent, at root, moral issues. "What do we think of human differences? How closely will we link our lives to people who may be different? How much investment will we make in schools for literally all children?"<sup>6</sup>

Given the present state of schools, least restrictive alternative implies that special classes must be maintained, improved, and in certain circumstances even created. Such classes would include children whose

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<sup>4</sup>Maynard C. Reynolds and Jack W. Birch, Teaching Exceptional Children in All America's Schools (Reston, Virginia: Council for Exceptional Children, 1977), pp. 31-39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 700.

handicaps are more severe in nature, and some would include even the mildly handicapped where the regular environment is yet unprepared to minister to their needs. The point has been emphasized by James Smith and Joan Arkans that existing regular classes are particularly unadaptive to retarded children with severe multiple handicaps. They point to a specific minority population of children "who have all too often been ignored in special education." Schooling for them requires highly specialized personnel and physical facilities. The increasing numbers of moderately to profoundly handicapped in the local schools include not only those children who live at home and have been denied an education, but also the former residents of institutions who have in recent years returned in increasing numbers to the community and who are now living in foster homes, in hostels, and in community group homes.<sup>7</sup>

Still, the overriding assumption is that

no educational "place" is impervious to change and development and that through good efforts many of the varieties of specialized and intensive forms of education can be moved into a developing mainstream . . . that students should be removed from the mainstream only for limited periods and for compelling reasons, that when in specialized and limited environments their progress should be monitored carefully and regularly, and that they should be returned to the mainstream as soon as feasible.<sup>8</sup>

Children who do not require extraordinary facilities and services of the kind referred to by Smith and Arkans are by far the greater proportion of children who have been considered, in the typical school, as likely candidates for segregated placement. While the prevalence of "educationally handicapped" among the school age population totals

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<sup>7</sup>James O. Smith and Joan R. Arkans, "Now More Than Ever: A Case for the Special Class," Exceptional Children 40 (April 1974): 497-502.

<sup>8</sup>Reynolds and Birch, Teaching Exceptional Children in All America's Schools, p. 36.

roughly ten percent (a figure projected by the United States Office of Education for 1971-1972, derived from estimates provided by school districts), Dunn estimated that only 1½ percent of the school-age population are severely disabled. Dunn arrived at this 1½ percent estimate by totaling the reported numbers of children who are blind, deaf, severely emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted, moderately and severely retarded, severely cerebral palsied and pupils with other severe conditions usually associated with multiple disabilities.<sup>9</sup> But even among these children, ways can and have been found to provide at least partial contact with the normal environment.

Educational mainstreaming is part of a more comprehensive community mainstreaming trend. Increasingly, the foster home and the small hostel are replacing institutional residence. Some workers in the helping professions have begun to function away from their professional centers and within the life of the community, fostering a variety of support systems among family, neighbors, employers, and teachers to maintain the handicapped in ordinary surroundings. State regulated architectural change to accommodate the physically disabled is a way of facilitating community mainstreaming. Many changes come about through "self emancipation," the organized effort of the adult handicapped, themselves. As for education, every state in the nation is now making efforts to admit handicapped children into regular settings, and this is reflected in the efforts of a large number of school districts.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Lloyd M. Dunn, ed., Exceptional Children in the Schools: Special Education in Transition, 2d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 13-16.

<sup>10</sup>See Reynolds and Birch, Teaching Exceptional Children in All America's Schools, pp. 22, 37-38, 40-41.

But much of this change has been accomplished through contractual arrangement; mere physical presence of the handicapped by no means implies real participation in the sense that mutuality exists between one person and another around a given common task or living situation.

The state of readiness in the typical school for mainstreaming depends on prevalent attitudes toward the handicapped, educational priorities as they now exist, and how these may interact. How do regular class teachers and their pupils respond to the presence of handicapped children? To what extent are their attitudes affected by the educational priorities established in the classroom? Do these priorities help or obstruct the inclusion of handicapped pupils? Research conducted by Orville Johnson and Samuel Kirk on the social position of "educable mentally handicapped" or "educable mentally retarded" children in regular classes (of the kind called progressive as well as the traditional) suggests that it was their very isolation therein which contributed to the initial growth of segregated special classes.<sup>11</sup> (This group has by far comprised the largest population of children segregated from the regular classroom.) And a sample of recent surveys indicate that regular class teachers for the most part reject changes associated with mainstreaming.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>G. Orville Johnson and Samuel A. Kirk, "Are Mentally Handicapped Children Segregated in the Regular Grades," Exceptional Children 17 (December 1950): 65-68, 87-88. Refer also to Willie K. Baldwin, "The Social Position of the Educable Mentally Retarded in the Regular Grades in the Public Schools," Exceptional Children 25 (November 1958): 106-108; J. E. Wallace Wallin, "Trends and Needs in the Training of Teachers for Special Classes for Handicapped Children," Journal of Educational Research 31 (March 1938): 525.

<sup>12</sup>Maynard C. Reynolds, "Addendum," Minnesota Education 2 (Spring 1976): 69; Jay R. Shotel, Richard P. Iano, and James F. McGettigan,

Much of the literature about mainstreaming has focused on the individual and individualized instruction. Attention is given to the question of the individual rights of average and gifted pupils versus the rights of the handicapped to educational resources.<sup>13</sup> Particular importance is attached to the need for teaching to individual differences, since over-emphasis on uniformity and conformity has proved to be incompatible with the differences which exist among all children. It conspicuously excludes the "very different" child. Since individualization means more than varying the level and pace of learning tasks, the task itself is called into question, its purpose, and whether or not it has meaning for the individual learner.<sup>14</sup> Is the child a genuine participant in learning?

The question of interpersonal relations between the handicapped and their teacher and classmates has received far less attention in the literature about mainstreaming. Such contact is an important problem to be faced whenever children are brought together in their education, particularly when the regular class includes minority children--the ethnically different, the poor, the handicapped, and the intellectually gifted as well, any children whose experience or capacity differs markedly from the larger group. Isolation, then, is not overcome merely by putting

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"Teacher Attitudes Associated with the Integration of Handicapped Children," Exceptional Children 38 (May 1972): 677-683; Nicholas A. Vacc and Nancy Kirst, "Emotionally Disturbed Children and Regular Classroom Teachers," The Elementary School Journal 4 (March 1977): 309-17.

<sup>13</sup>Michael Scriven, "Some Issues in the Logic and Ethics of Mainstreaming," Minnesota Education 2 (Spring 1976): 66-67.

<sup>14</sup>See John I. Goodlad, Facing the Future: Issues in Education and Schooling (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 126-27. Goodlad does not speak specifically to the mainstreaming issue. He theorizes a model non-graded school based on a recognition of individual differences among all learners.

children side-by-side working at individual activities of individual import. Does the child participate as a person in relation with other class members? With the teacher? Jeanne Frein, centering on the question of "what schools are for," has noted that the tension between individual development and communal cooperation is germane to the mainstreaming movement, and "unless both poles of the tension are dealt with in a reasoned manner, the movement is in for disaster."<sup>15</sup>

With or without the advance of mainstreaming, the difficulties faced by the teacher are enormous. As Seymour Sarason observed during his long and intensive service relationship to teachers and children in their schools, the teacher's role is one of "constant giving" and "constant vigilance required by the presence of many children."<sup>16</sup> He emphasizes the teacher's serious need for help and advice. Yet he criticizes the lack of teacher involvement in some important decisions which affect their work. Sarason notes, for example, that the hardship inherent in the coverage of educational material in fixed time periods increases with the number and diversity of pupils, but rather than segregate the different child, he would have teachers question that the time criterion is necessary.<sup>17</sup> The tendency to segregate children is influenced also by a felt pressure stemming from the need to meet narrow criteria of academic progress, and by overconcern with technical matters. Mainstreaming is, however, facilitated by providing an atmosphere of community involving

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<sup>15</sup>Jeanne B. Frein, "Changing Public Policies: Discussion," Minnesota Education 2 (Spring 1976): 19.

<sup>16</sup>Seymour B. Sarason, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 167.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 38; 152-56.

everyone, teachers and pupils, in problem solving around such issues as resources, values, and learning. One consequence of the failure to do so is that as children grow older "the classroom becomes an increasingly uninteresting place in which the sense of personal growth and a satisfying interpersonal mutuality is absent."<sup>18</sup>

Mainstreaming is contractual. How can it be humanized? This is the main problem to be here addressed. What appears needed in developing a theory and practice of mainstreaming is to clarify the ways in which any child, not only the handicapped, may be educated as an individual by strengthening the bonds of human contact; once the essential human element is defined, it will become clearer how special methods and techniques can be brought to serve it.

Martin Buber was deeply concerned with the humanization of the impersonal modern institution by means of a growing mutuality, a more genuine form of living and working together in which individuality and group cohesion are complementary. According to Buber, mutuality is always a "pluralistic form of association."<sup>19</sup> Mutuality in Buber's thought by no means implies a constant togetherness; it does imply, in Buber's words, a "steady potential presence of the one to the other."<sup>20</sup> His philosophy accommodates people with handicaps because it makes room for difference, and centers on the reality of those differences which

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<sup>18</sup>Seymour B. Sarason, The Psychological Sense of Community (San Francisco: Jossey-Boss, 1974), pp. 171-72.

<sup>19</sup>Martin Buber, Knowledge of Man, ed. Maurice Friedman; trans. Maurice Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith: "Distance and Relation" (New York: Harper & Row, 1965; Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 67.

<sup>20</sup>Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith: "Education" (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 98.

exist in every group. His approach is relevant also to educational mainstreaming. He shows that the give and take among individual needs and involvements results in a sharing of knowledge impossible in contacts limited largely to material things.

It is believed that the environment characterized by an atmosphere of mutuality is a necessary condition of true mainstreaming. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine a philosophy of mutuality in Martin Buber's writings, and then to consider its significance for education, in particular, educational mainstreaming. A basic concern will be the interaction between peers, yet this is part of a larger matrix of relations and it will be examined as such.

#### Delimitations and Limitations

The study excludes certain information relevant to the advancement of mainstreaming, such as information about learning problems and their alleviation specific to a given disability, and the social-political complexities surrounding the mainstreaming issue. The study is limited largely to the essentials of mutuality and its implications within the educational setting conducive to mainstreaming.

#### Need for the Study

The responsibility of educational mainstreaming rests ultimately with educators, which implies that educators must try to clarify the values underlying mainstreaming as a guide to practice. Law as it accommodates civil rights has directly influenced the mainstreaming movement, acting on an emergency basis in response to student and



parent complaint; and medical classification systems and treatments have had a profound influence on education of the handicapped. While the cooperative effort of education, the various other professions, and the public is imperative, the position taken in this study is that the initiative rests with educators to seek to define the value premises of their own work. It is proposed that unless this is done, mainstreaming will signify, for the most part, only a perfunctory reaction to external pressures.

A second related need is a perception of handicapped children primarily in reference to what is common to all children. Only when children are known in their wholeness can it be understood what a handicap implies for their education.

#### Organization of the Study

The remainder of this chapter contains a biographical sketch of Martin Buber and a glossary of terms.

A selection of descriptive and critical literature on Buber's writings will be reviewed in Chapter II. In Chapter III an interpretation of mutuality is developed by way of answering certain questions arising out of Buber's writings. The questions are:

1. What is meant by "setting at a distance" and why is setting at a distance a presupposition of mutuality?
2. What is meant by uniqueness as Buber defines it?
3. According to Buber, mutuality begins with the self. What direction is taken to actualize the unique self?

4. Buber contrasts awareness with objectification. What is implied by "becoming aware" of the unique partner in relation?

5. How does Buber define responsibility?

Chapter IV applies mutuality to Buber's philosophy of education.

Here follow the main questions to be addressed:

1. What educational priorities are established by Buber?

2. What in Buber's view is the nature of the child?

3. How does Buber define character, and how can the teacher influence the growth of character?

4. What is the nature of community? By what means can the teacher create an atmosphere of mutuality in the learning community?

5. What is implied in Buber's idea, the "reciprocal sharing of knowledge"?

Chapter V makes direct application of the foregoing to mainstreaming. It attempts to answer the central question, How can mainstreaming be humanized?

#### Martin Buber as a Person

(1878 - 1965)

Buber's biographical statements reflect a life-long attentiveness to the phenomena of human difference and communication between the different, for example: "Born in Vienna, I came in my early childhood to Lvov (Lemberg), the capital city of the Galician province in which an unusual multiplicity of languages stamped upon me indelibly the fact of very different people living next to one another."<sup>21</sup> Grete Schaefer, Buber's

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<sup>21</sup>Martin Buber, A Believing Humanism, ed. Ruth Nanda Anschen, trans. Maurice Friedman: "Reminiscence" (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 29.

friend and scholarly interpreter, writes:

Even as a child Buber experienced abstract, intellectual phenomena with a sense of physical participation. When he reflected on the misunderstandings that arise among people attempting to communicate with one another in different languages, his heart began to pound within him. He felt as if he were probing the secret of the meeting of the two languages at the point of their intersection. And does not something of that same tension remain, he was to ask later, when people of different temperament and character speak the same language? Has a word ever precisely the same meaning for any two people? The basic problem here is whether serious dialogue is at all possible without grave misunderstandings. Is it the philosopher or the poet who raises this question? The problem is beyond the competency of both. These questions, which concern man as a whole but find no place in any philosophical system, are precisely the questions that are characteristic of Buber's thinking.<sup>22</sup>

Buber's early life is a mixture of Polish, Austrian, and Jewish influence. He inherited a restlessness from his Slavic background as well as the intellectual tensions of his Jewish heritage. In 1957 he wrote: "I am a Polish Jew." His acceptance of human difference was apparently influenced by several factors:

Tolerance, as a form of social convenience and an enlightened human attitude, was a basic element of the Austrian character. In Buber it was combined with the ancient Jewish striving for the supranational and the universally human, and constituted a counterpoise or antidote to his passionate Zionism. His rediscovery of Hasidism as a popular religious movement was also facilitated by the social relations that existed naturally in Austria between the upper classes and the common people; the attitude of his father to his subordinates exemplified this for Buber.<sup>23</sup>

Schaeder characterizes Buber's early and maturing attitude in the following passage; she emphasizes his "vital interest in human fellowship":

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<sup>22</sup>Grete Schaeder, The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber, trans. Noah J. Jacobs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), pp. 28-29.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

The convictions that there is a divine spark in all human beings that can be redeemed and that man's native goodness can find expression in an atmosphere of tolerance were among Buber's basic beliefs. The hardships of his early years awakened in his deeply religious nature a restlessness which, according to St. Augustine, "finds its rest only in God." To the outside world his restlessness was expressed as an "out-going soul element," as a vital spiritual force which imparted to every "meeting" a specific color and illumination. In the "Autobiographical Fragments" this vital interest in human fellowship speaks to us in clear tones and illuminates Buber's early years as he considered them in retrospect. Again and again the merely conceptual and the sensuously opaque are transformed in the pure flame of this life into the same soul-element of a warmer and yet not too intimate humanity. . . . The personalities and events of his youth pass before us as the spoken and heard elemental words of his existence, bound to the fleeting moment and preserved by memory and imagination in an ultimate harmony as lived and irrevocable decision.<sup>24</sup>

At the age of three following the separation of his parents, Buber was brought to the home of his paternal grandparents in Lvov. A year later an older girl of the neighborhood told him the harsh truth that his mother would never return to him.

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 something that concerned not only me, but all men. Later I once made up the word . . . "mismeeting," or "miscounter," . . . to designate the failure of a real meeting.<sup>25</sup>

Schaeder describes the atmosphere in which Buber grew up as characterized by "a deep respect for tradition and for the dignity of labor, by an appreciation of poetry and a candid acknowledgment of responsibility, by an atmosphere of enlightened sincere piety."<sup>26</sup> The grandfather Salomon Buber was a prosperous merchant, an outstanding Hebraic scholar,

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>25</sup>Martin Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, Vol. 12, Library of Living Philosophers (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, Ibid., p. 25.

and an editor of Hebrew books of biblical interpretation, Midrashim. Buber says that his grandfather manifested "the childlikeness of a pure human nature and an elementary Jewish being."<sup>27</sup> The grandfather left his business in general to his wife Adel who, typical of the Jewish women of the period, managed the business of their husbands in order to create for them the leisure to study. Self-taught, she occupied herself as well in the study of German classics. Buber writes that she reared in her sons and in him "a respect for the authentic word that cannot be paraphrased." He relates further:

When she looked at the street, she had at times the profile of someone meditating on a problem, and when I found her all alone in meditation, it seemed to me at times as if she listened. To the glance of the child, however, it was already unmistakable that when she addressed someone she really addressed him.

My grandfather was a true philologist, a "lover of the word," but my grandmother's love for the genuine word affected me even more strongly than his; because this love was so direct and so devoted.<sup>28</sup>

Buber spent several summers at his father's estate and returned there to live at the age of fourteen. His father was a landowner with scientific knowledge of agriculture which increased the productivity of his land. Buber describes his father as an unromantic man from whom he learned a concern about genuine human contact with nature, something he had not learned from any of the many authors he had read. This relationship with nature was connected with his relationship to the workers attached to his estate, an active responsible contact. He was also a gifted story teller; the stories were always about the simple occurrence

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<sup>27</sup>Martin Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Horizon Press, 1958; Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 56.

<sup>28</sup>Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in the Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 5.

"without any embroidery," nothing more than the existence of people and what took place between them.<sup>29</sup>

At the age of twenty-one Buber married Paula Winkler, a woman of strength and independence. Words directed to her in the preface of his essay "Dialogue" indicate the importance he attached to this life partnership: "Dialogue it is and was with thee." She was a poet who in 1912 published her first work under the pseudonym Georg Munk, a volume of mythical stories, and she influenced Buber's own poetical aspirations.<sup>30</sup>

From his early childhood Buber's active imagination exposed him to terrors and confusion. Schaefer points to the loss of his mother at an early age which, in a sensitive child, could not fail to have serious effects. His sense of insecurity

expressed itself with terrifying vehemence when the child felt the force of powers that were beyond his understanding. Thus, Buber recounted how he was overwhelmed by intense emotion when the principal of the school asked him to describe the rude behavior of some of his classmates and how, a few years later, at the age of fourteen, he was almost driven to the verge of madness brooding over philosophical antinomies, and again the death of one close to him when he was seventeen affected him as an almost self-destructive experience.<sup>31</sup>

He was sent to a secluded place in the mountains; surrounded there by nature and the elements "as by an active divine power," he one day envisaged chaos and cruel destruction as the deadly struggle of the primordial powers in a mythical world.<sup>32</sup>

As a child Buber had mastered Hebrew and had become attached to Jewish life and prayer. His Jewish roots were firm, despite many doubts. He became alienated from Judaism when exposed to European culture after

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>30</sup>Schaefer, Hebrew Humanism, p. 84.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-66.

leaving his home to study at a secular secondary school in Lvov and later at the Universities of Vienna and Berlin. "The whirl of the age took me in. . . . Until my twentieth year, and in small measure even beyond then . . . I lived--in versatile fulness of spirit, but without Judaism, without humanity, and without the presence of the divine."<sup>33</sup>

The first impetus toward a renewed connection with his Judaic roots came from Zionism, a movement he joined in 1898. Zionism also gave him a sense of reality by presenting him with concrete tasks "which demanded action and at the same time saved him from too great a passion for abstract truth and disembodied ideals that characterized the impersonal and generalizing mode of thought of many of the German poets and writers of his time."<sup>34</sup> Buber later recalls:

That Zionism seized me and that I was newly vowed to Judaism was . . . only the first step. . . . I professed Judaism before I really knew it. So this became, after some blind groping, my second step: wanting to know it. To know--by this I do not mean a storing up of anthropological, historical, sociological knowledge, as important as these are; I mean the immediate knowing, the eye-to-eye knowing of the people in its creative primal hours.<sup>35</sup>

In this way Buber came to value Hasidism. As a child he had occasionally gone with his father to visit a Hasidic community. In this "dirty village," the showy palace of the rabbi repelled him and the prayer house with its enraptured worshippers seemed strange to him. But as he watched the rabbi, he felt "leader," and when he saw the Hasidim dance with the Torah, he felt "community."<sup>36</sup> Now the

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<sup>33</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, p. 70.

<sup>35</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup>Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 20.

image out of his childhood was recalled, and a lifetime of writings on Hasidism was begun. "Along with his 'I-Thou' philosophy and in fruitful interrelation with it, Buber is best known for his recreation of Hasidism."<sup>37</sup>

Schaeder points to a number of events which influenced the change and growth of Buber's concept of human creativity. After he had joined the Zionist movement Buber was for a short period of time a follower of Nietzsche. Buber's concern was to "instill into the atrophied life of the ghetto a new sense of nationhood, to infuse it with a new vital spirit and restore its 'creative cultural force' that had been moribund for centuries."<sup>38</sup> When Buber refers to the "self-redemption, resurrection and salvation" of the nation in his early Zionist essays, Schaeder discerns the pseudo-religious prophetic tone of Nietzsche.

At the time of Buber's youth prophecy meant one of the forms in which human genius is expressed, similar to poetic expression. Buber linked his own zeal for participation in the creation of things to the prophetic literary task, which he understood to be his calling. But in later years he associated "prophet" with a "distinct, clearly defined period" and held that other uses of this term are uncalled for. "When we first began our service for Israel, our slogan was culture. We yearned, actively, to see the Jewish people give valid expression to its 'reborn' nature in a world of its own making."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Maurice Friedman, "Editor's Introduction," in Hasidism and Modern Man, pp. 10-11.

<sup>38</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, pp. 76-77.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 77.



Another influence on Buber's concept of creativity was his confrontation with the thinking of Christian mystics, the subject of investigation in his doctoral dissertation, "The History of the Problem of Individuation--Nicholas of Cusa and Jacob Boehme." (1904) Buber demonstrated that all beings participate with God, that the manifold emanates from the one divine world ground, that gradations of participation exist but are not indicated, and that "the assigned degrees of participation are at first only inchoate in the individual and only gradually develop from potentiality to actuality." He writes, "It is not the depersonalizing, but rather the personalizing, process that leads things to God."<sup>40</sup>

Of the mystics, Buber links Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), more than any other, with the certainty of human partnership with God in the work of creation--Eckhart's conviction was that people are "of divine race and of God's kin." Buber concurred with Eckhart's teaching of the personal God, God's revelation to the individual, and the unity of God and man. Some of his early poems and essays were influenced by Eckhart's vivid imagery. The union with God, Buber believed, can be expressed only in imagery because it escapes "categories of thought." Thus, "Language of sincere deep emotion which borders on the ineffable, where personal feelings vanish and meet into a nameless unity, was called by Buber, 'brotherly speech'." Buber's experience of an all-encompassing unity is captured in the words: "This is my body; this is my blood."<sup>41</sup>

Eckhart also taught that one must be in harmony with oneself in order to find God. He believed that the way to God is that of separation, renunciation, unbecoming. People must leave themselves and all

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-56.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

creaturely concerns if they would meet God. "Only in complete poverty of spirit can God's work be accomplished in the world." Buber could not accept this idea; one explanation is that the notion of immanence and the modern consciousness of personality had by the beginning of the twentieth century been too far removed from the thought of the medieval person. Thus individuation as something problematic had not yet been confronted in Eckhart's era.<sup>42</sup>

In 1904 Buber's rediscovery of Hasidism began to influence his idea of creativity. The Hasidic orientation is that not through "un-becoming" or by "turning one's back on the world" does one prove oneself worthy of being God's co-worker, "but rather through sanctification of the world by actively participating in its work and by assuming responsibility for the fate of creation."<sup>43</sup> It is this understanding of creativity which for Buber took on a goal of deeply religious significance.

In the figure of the Hasidic zaddik [rabbi], as well as in his own guilty feelings of having failed, he recognized that holiness must not only be represented in poetical form but must also be lived as responsible and sanctifying service. From that time on the spirit of the zaddik as teacher, helper, and leader served to light up the path before him and to guide his steps. In the upheavals of World War I he had a revelation which scattered the mists of self-glorifying creativity and clarified his innate knowledge concerning man's relation to God.<sup>44</sup>

The ideal of European humanism had become in the twentieth century the "caricature" of the alienated intellectual. By contrast, Buber's interpretation of true humanism sees the person "in relation," as an "open person" in confrontation with other human beings. "And in addition

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 385.

to this the people are summoned to become the 'open' community to humanity."<sup>45</sup>

Maurice Friedman, a foremost translator and interpreter of Buber's works, provides the following account of Buber's active career: In his twenties Buber was the leader of Zionists who advocated a Jewish cultural renaissance, rather than a purely political or nationalistic Zionism. In 1902 he helped establish a German-Jewish publishing house, and in 1916 he founded Der Jude, the leading periodical of German-speaking Jewry. From 1926 to 1930 he published jointly with a Catholic and a Protestant the periodical Die Kreatur, concerned with social and pedagogical problems related to religion. Buber taught Jewish philosophy of religion and later the history of religion at the University of Frankfurt from 1923 until 1933 when he was dismissed from this post by the Nazis. He then became director of the Central Office for Jewish Adult Education in Germany, where he trained teachers for the new schools which had to be established after the exclusion of Jewish students from all German educational institutions. He also helped guide the training activities of numerous Jewish youth organizations, and he directed a free college for Jewish adult education. From these positions, Buber led a large number of Jews to a deeper understanding and acceptance of their Jewishness, and he was thus able to save many from spiritual despair.

In 1938, after he was completely silenced by the Nazis, Buber left Germany to live in Palestine. Until 1951 he was a professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. When he became emeritus, the Israeli government asked him to expand the size of the

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 384.

Institute for Adult Education which he founded in 1949 and directed until 1953. This institute educated teachers to go out to the immigration camps to help integrate into the community the mass influx of immigrants.

According to Friedman, those who met Buber discovered the "prophetic force of his personality and the tremendous strength and sincerity of his religious conviction." He has shown what it means to "walk on the narrow ridge" (accept the contraries inherent in dialogue):

He has . . . been the leader of those Jews who have worked for Jewish-Arab co-operation and friendship. Pioneer and still the foremost interpreter of Hasidism, he has preserved in his thinking the most positive aspects of the Jewish enlightenment, Hasidism's traditional enemy. Translator and interpreter of the Hebrew Bible and spokesman for Judaism before the world, he has been deeply concerned since his youth with Jesus and the New Testament and has carried on a highly significant dialogue with many prominent Christian theologians. . . .<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps the most striking example of how Buber has followed the narrow ridge in his life is his attitude toward the German people after the war. He was the leader of the German Jews in their spiritual battle against Nazism, and he counts himself among "those who have not got over what happened and will not get over it." Yet on September 27, 1953, in historic Paulskirche, Frankfurt, Germany, he accepted the award of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.<sup>47</sup>

Buber justified his attitude in his speech of acceptance:

Manifestations such as the bestowal of the Hansian Goethe Prize and the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade on a surviving arch-Jew . . . are moments in the struggle of the human spirit against the demony of the subhuman and the anti-human. . . . The solidarity of all separate groups in the flaming battle for the becoming of one humanity is, in the present hour, the highest duty on earth.<sup>48</sup>

Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations, so influenced by Buber's writings on "the age of distrust" and his philosophy of unity created "out of the manifold," proposed Buber for the

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<sup>46</sup>Maurice Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 8-9.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

Nobel Peace Prize (1959). He had planned to translate some of Buber's works into Swedish, and had already begun his translation of I and Thou before he was killed in a plane crash during a peace mission. Buber was a friend of Albert Schweitzer; they cooperated several times on appeals against the spread of nuclear weapons.<sup>49</sup>

The immediacy of Buber's democratic way of thinking is apparent in a number of biographical anecdotes. When Aubrey Hodes consulted with Buber about his work with a group involved in establishing a reformed synagogue in Israel, Buber asked, Are

women prominent in roles other than seeing to the decorations? . . . From what you have told me your members are wealthy and living in a middle-class suburb. . . . You must be careful not to become narrow and exclusive. Try to bring in people from other sections of society, even if they cannot pay membership fees. They have other things to contribute.<sup>50</sup>

Malcolm Diamond remarked to Buber that Freud is reported to have answered a question concerning the meaning of life by saying that it was work and love. Buber laughed and said that this was good, but not complete. He would say, work, love, faith, and humor. On a visit to Buber after his eighty-seventh birthday when his health was failing, Hodes brought up that conversation. Buber confirmed what he had said to Diamond. He then added, "The real philosopher has to have a sense of humor, an awareness of the comic, not only about the world we live in but also about himself." He will look at his own suffering "a small distance away," even if "there is a danger to his own life."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Aubrey Hodes, Martin Buber: An Intimate Portrait (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 136-152.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-35.

Definition of Terms

**AWARENESS:** An action of the mind in perceiving and confirming the reality of the self or outer reality.

**BETWEEN:** A "primal human category," the "mysterious" intervening dimension in which dialogue takes place. When two human beings meet, there is a reality between them which transcends both; thus the between is distinguished from that which is localized to one or the other partner.

**CENTER:** God; or the meaning of existence which transcends a relative, utilitarian meaning.

**COLLECTIVISM:** When Buber contrasts collectivism with community, he refers to the group existence characterized by centralized control. Inherent in this system is a loss of individuality and personal responsibility. Buber observed a progressive increase of collectivism as a way of life, and considered this a great danger to the modern world.

**COMMUNITY:** Mutuality in group life. Community is organized around a common Center and a common task or goal.

**CREATIVITY:** The capacity given to each individual to realize through dialogue a potentiality in that which meets him, and to give form to it. The product joins what is original in the emerging form with the originality of the producer. The creative process is found in the social sphere of interhuman relations, and in the sense world of the artist who relates to his art form. Scientific discovery may also be considered creative. The creation is not necessarily the "monumental"; it happens more typically in the everyday form-giving encounter.

**DISTANCE:** The fact or condition of existing as different, apart, and independent. When a reality is so recognized as distant, it is "set at a distance," the presupposition of all relation.

**EDUCATION:** (1) The process of learning to choose and act on the basis of values revealed by participating in one's world. (2) The influence of the educator who selects the effective world, manifests it in himself, and guides the learner in the process of valuing its content.

**EGOISM:** A tendency to put the self ahead of communal interests. "Collective egoism" is a thoughtless loyalty to one's group and may be chauvinistic, i.e., in prejudicial regard of outside individuals or groups as inferior.

**ETERNAL THOU:** God, the Absolute; in each Thou addressed, the eternal Thou is addressed.

**EVIL:** A lack of purposeful direction. Failure to decide in service to creation is evil.

**EXISTENTIAL:** Existential pertains to authentic existence as such, experienced in a concrete situation preceding any abstraction, idealization, or distortion of it.

**EXISTENTIALISM:** To Buber, a position which places human existence itself in the center of rational contemplation. Authentic existence as defined by Maurice Friedman is a tension between the freedom to decide and the responsibility which means both address from without and free response from within.

**HANDICAP:** A highly elusive term used interchangeably in the literature with "exceptionality" (excluding giftedness), "disability," "impairment," "disorder," "deviance," etc. Handicap may be viewed in at least two ways: (1) As a real functional impairment, such as mental retardation, emotional/social disorder, orthopedic impairment, blindness,

and deafness. (2) As an inability to meet the criteria of competence and worth established by one's culture, regardless of whether or not objective impairment exists. An example of the second meaning of handicap is the young non-reader who in the school may be perceived as handicapped solely on the basis of inability to read, owing to the importance attached by that child's culture to reading competence. As a corollary to this perception, the child may experience a label and a stigma which in turn may induce a real social/emotional disorder, as well as life-long reading incompetence or aversion to reading.

**INCLUSION:** The fuller state of awareness occurring when a common situation is experienced from the standpoint of the other, not with imagination but with the entire self. The reality of the self is not excluded for the sake of the other but is extended by it. Inclusive awareness deepens in proportion to the degree of the self's involvement in the person and life of the other.

**INDIVIDUALISM:** The belief that the interests of the individual should take precedence over those of the social group or the state. Like collectivism, the practice of individualism precludes individuality and responsibility.

**INDIVIDUALITY:** The state or quality of being unique.

**INDIVIDUATION:** Becoming that which one is born to become; a completion of uniqueness.

**INDIVIDUALIZATION:** A teaching method which joins the teacher's valuation of learning content with the child's freely expressed valuation. Individualization can be achieved in dialogue with a group of learners, not only in contacts circumscribed by the teacher and a single learner.



**KNOWLEDGE:** (1) I-Thou, or personal awareness of an object through direct dialogical relation with it. (2) I-It knowledge attained in a relation of monologue, in which the object is reduced to attributes mentally represented by a general concept.

I-It knowledge provides the symbol (categories, words) necessary for dialogue. But the symbol is a product of the concrete I-Thou knowing which takes place in dialogue. It is an expression of what has been mentally derived from dialogue and stored for future use.

**MAINSTREAM CLASS:** The regular class in which handicapped children are willingly included; mainstream community. Mainstreaming is a movement toward this point of inclusion.

**MEETING:** The immediate encounter of relation in which each partner confirms the other as the unique person he is.

**MUTUALITY:** A spiritual stance "between" the different I and Thou having the same relationship each to the other; a being there for the other in constant potential presence.

**MUTUAL RELATION:** The unfolding of mutuality in the immediate meeting of two people; dialogue, I-Thou relation, reciprocity, essential relation, etc.

**OBJECTIFICATION:** Characteristic of I-It relation, objectification is a partial and detached perception of anything stemming from an "orienting" attitude, as contrasted with a "realizing" attitude.

**ONTOLOGISM:** The unending dynamic structure of immediate communication which arises from mutuality in creation. (Ontic is the adjective pertaining to ontologism.)

**PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:** Philosophical anthropology, as distinguished from scientific anthropology, is the study of human nature

in relation to being.

POTENTIALITY: The "possibility" of becoming; the value of anything uncovered in dialogue.

PRESENTNESS: In the interhuman relation, the spiritual fullness of "being there" as a person which becomes explicit to each partner.

(Present is the here and now in which relation takes place.)

RELIGION: A bond with everything that is lived in its possibility of dialogue.

RESPONSIBILITY: Response to the unreduced claim of a Thou-address and commitment to the Thou of that response.

REVELATION: The everyday meeting with God which strengthens one's humanity. "At times it is like a light breath, at times like a wrestling bout." Revelation does not impose a law, but exposes universal values to human scrutiny. Revelation means also the "mighty" disclosure of meaning found in religious tradition.

SPIRIT: In accordance with the Hebrew tradition, Buber defines spirit in its human manifestation not as the isolated intellect, but as the totality which comprises all of one's capacities, powers, and urges. This totality, the spirit, is the response of the human being to his Thou. Buber defines spirit also as the human power to give order to the world, which happens only through bodily participation in it.

SPIRITUAL FORCE: "The practice of the religion of communal living." It does not mean "intellectual standards or cultural achievements."

STRUCTURE: The configuration of anything. The diverse parts and processes which, in complementation of one another, comprise and enhance the purposeful whole.

UNIQUENESS: The unrepeatable reality of an existent as a unified whole.

VALUE: Value as defined by Maurice Friedman is the intrinsic good or worth of anything. According to Friedman, VALUING is deciding what is good and what is evil, and the subsequent attitude toward the possibility of avoiding evil or changing it into good.

WHOLENESS: A person becomes whole when his individual impulse unites with the single, absolute direction which renders it capable of love and service. (In the meeting between two people, perception of wholeness refers to becoming aware of the other as a presence.)

WILL: A power of the mind which chooses to relate, or the exercise of that power. (Arbitrary self-will is not true will and choice.)

## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL LITERATURE

#### Literature Related to Mutuality

In a commentary on the work of Martin Buber, the Roman Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel writes:

Buber . . . has shown with the greatest possibly cogency that only what he calls a philosophy des Zwischen [the mutuality of the between]--I would say, for my part, a philosophy of intersubjectivity--can rescue us from either the impasse of an individualism which considers man solely in reference to himself or the other impasse of a collectivism which has eyes only for society. These are, indeed, but complementary expressions of a single state of affairs, a humanity uprooted that no longer feels at home in the cosmos, and that has, moreover, seen the circumscribed communities such as the family, of which everyone used to feel himself a member, collapse one after another. . . . It is only when the individual recognizes the other in his very otherness, as a human being other than himself, and when on this basis he effects a penetration to the other, that he can break the circle of his solitude in a specific, transforming encounter.<sup>1</sup>

By a remarkable coincidence, Marcel discovered the "particular reality of the Thou" at approximately the same time Buber was writing his book I and Thou.

His name was quite unknown to me, moreover, as were the names of Ferdinand Ebner and Friedrich Rosenzweig, who appear to have preceded us on this path. Thus, we are faced with one of those cases of spiritual convergence which always merit attention. . . . At a time when a philosophy which concentrated more and more exclusively upon the world of the It . . . was leading into technocratic developments increasingly perilous for the integrity of man and even for his physical existence--the current

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<sup>1</sup>Gabriel Marcel, "I and Thou," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 42.

atomic threat representing merely the paroxysm of this trend-- it was surely inevitable that here and there men were moved to bring clearly and methodically to consciousness a counterpoise, that is, a consideration of the Thou.

Having underscored this convergence of the thought of Buber and my own investigations as these appeared in my Journal Métaphysique, I feel bound to stress the fact that the Jewish thinker went much further than I in elucidating this structural aspect of the fundamental human situation.<sup>2</sup>

As Buber has said, Marcel continues, it was a remark by Feuerbach which contributed initially to Buber's realization: Feuerbach writes,

The individual person does not contain in himself the essence of man either in so far as he is a moral being or in so far as he is a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community, in the unity of man and man--a unity which rests upon the reality of the difference between 'I' and 'Thou'."

Feuerbach himself did not succeed in exploring or drawing the consequences of this discovery, which Buber terms Copernican.<sup>3</sup>

In Buber's own development of the I and Thou, the starting point is his philosophical anthropology, the problem of man in relation to his world. Maurice Friedman has succeeded in condensing this philosophy, stated in Buber's classic I and Thou, into the single page of an essay (Buber himself edited the essay), which serves as an introduction to those who are unacquainted with Buber's thought:

Man's two primary attitudes and relations, according to I and Thou, are "I-Thou" and "I-It." The I of man comes into being in the act of speaking one or the other of these primary words. But the two I's are not the same: "The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being." The real determinant of the primary word in which a man takes his stand is not the object over against him, but the way in which he relates himself to that object. I-Thou is the primary word of relationship.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Maurice Friedman, "Introductory Essay," in Knowledge of Man, p. 12.

I-Thou is mutual, and it is characterized by directness, present-ness, intensity, and ineffability. Although it is only within this relation that personality and the personal exist, the Thou of I-Thou is not limited to people, but may include animals, trees, objects of nature, and God.

I-It is the primary word of experiencing and using. It takes place within a man and not between him and the world. Hence it is entirely subjective and lacking in mutuality. Whether in knowing, feeling, or acting, it is the typical subject-object relationship. It is always mediate and indirect, dealing with objects in terms of the categories and connections, and hence is comprehensible and orderable. It is significant only in connection and not in itself. The It of I-It may equally well be a he, a she, an animal, a thing, a spirit, or even a god, without a change in the primary word. Thus I-Thou and I-It cut across the lines of our ordinary distinctions to focus our attention not upon individual objects and their causal connections, but upon the relations between things. . . .<sup>5</sup>

What at one moment was the Thou of an I-Thou relationship can become the next instant an It and indeed must continually do so. The It may again become a Thou but will not be able to remain one, and need not become a Thou at all. People can live continuously and securely in the world of It, but if they live only in this world they are not real persons.<sup>6</sup>

Although Buber refers to the meeting with human beings as the main sphere of worldly relation, he insists that mutuality is possible in the sphere outside the human. Of this Malcolm Diamond says:

Whatever encounters Buber may have experienced, his talk of mutuality in man's relation with beings that lack consciousness introduces more confusion than illumination. Our mode

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

of apprehending any and all beings does vary radically as between the It and the Thou postures, but mutuality is not one of the factors that constitutes the difference.<sup>7</sup>

It would have been better, Diamond suggests, if Buber had given up the notion that mutuality is also applicable to a general description of the I-Thou encounter as are the categories of exclusiveness, presentness, engagement, concreteness, and the rest.<sup>8</sup>

Friedman admits a difficulty in understanding Buber's meaning when he writes in his essay "Dialogue" that all things "say" something to us. What is mutual is the fact of "otherness" and active being:

We cannot help suspecting Buber of "animism" or mystical "projection" when he speaks of an I-Thou relation with non-human existing beings: we can only imagine such a relation as possible with things that have minds and bodies similar to ours and in addition possess the consciousness of being an I.

In the presentness of meeting, however, are included all those things which we see in their uniqueness and for their own selves, and not as already filtered through our mental categories for purposes of knowledge or use.

Though natural things may "say" something to us and in that sense have "personal" relations with us, they do not have the continuity, the independence, or the living consciousness of self which make up the person. A tree can "say" something to me and become my Thou, but I cannot be a Thou for it. This same impossibility of reciprocity is found in the work of literature and art which becomes Thou for us, and this suggests by analogy that as the poem is the "word" of the poet, so the tree may be the "word" of Being over against us, Being which is more than human yet not less than personal. This does not mean, however, any monistic or mystical presupposition of unity between subject and object. Quite to the contrary, this view alone allows to non-human existing beings their true "otherness" as something more than the passive objects of our thought categories and the passive tools of our will to use.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Malcolm L. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist (New York: Oxford Press, 1960), p. 31.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, pp. 170-171.

The meeting on a Thou-to-Thou basis, Schaefer emphasizes, was for Buber a single, undivided act felt as both a sensuous and a spiritual experience.

And this conjunction of sensuous and spiritual spontaneity as an inseparable unity in the depths of the soul was characteristic of Buber's personality and is the key to the understanding of his philosophy. . . . Poets will readily understand this, although it would be an error to underestimate Buber as a philosopher simply because of his undeniable poetical gifts. We are dealing here with a dimension of existence that not only goes back to the common root of poetical and religious-philosophical experience but also transcends the purely poetical.<sup>10</sup>

Of the book I and Thou, Schaefer comments that the extension of reality from which Buber proceeded made it impossible for him to develop a systematic philosophy. He could only illuminate partial areas of being out of the fullness of his basic insight, so that his teaching developed naturally and unsystematically and not as a coherent theory. After describing the nature and function of the primary attitudes in I and Thou, he attempted, by means of a series of separate questions and by referring to fragmentary though exemplary life situations, to contribute to the basis of mutuality or the "ontic" basis of the I-Thou relation.

It is not basic concepts but rather basic attitudes which Buber took for examples; the I-Thou relation is for him above all a way into life and not a philosophical principle. . . . He was now not so much interested in elaborating a life philosophy as in finding a life teaching that would serve as an antidote to the crisis of the age. Although Buber had always inquired into the unchanging basic conditions of human existence, from the very outset he deliberately directed his word to the needs of his own age.<sup>11</sup>

Buber's main concern was to show that the I-Thou relation is not a problematic mysticism, but a reality that leads to the depths of being

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<sup>10</sup>Schaefer, Hebrew Humanism, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 177.



and which can be tested in daily life. What is required is a "complete acceptance of the present" in the context of a meeting. Not only must the partner be accepted but the fact that the moment of meeting is not permanent must also be accepted, the fact of "discontinuity" in the I-Thou relation. Buber points out that there is something in things of the nature of a gift, a value that reveals itself only to the one who loves and who embraces them with his whole being. In *I and Thou* the "effective" presentness of things, the knowledge of the cosmic love-unity inherent in things and in beings which is to be realized "between" them, signifies "mutuality."<sup>12</sup>

It is required that the other be known as an "independent opposite," not as an extension of the self and not as an object of appropriation for one's own use. The sphere in which mutuality takes place is called by Buber the "between," to Marcel a "creative middle."<sup>13</sup> Buber and Marcel acknowledge this between to be a "mysterious" concept. It cannot be defined in an arithmetical or geometric language. Yet it seems mysterious "only because one has not up till now been concerned about it."<sup>14</sup> The between is defined by Schaefer as a field of energy, as it were, which actualizes man's personal aspects: to the extent that man says 'Thou,' he becomes I. The between of the interhuman is the sphere "that must be strengthened if modern man's fast disappearing personal life is still to be saved so that genuine community, beyond individualism and collectivism, might be restored."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 185-186.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Buber, "Replies to My Critics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 707.

<sup>15</sup>Schaefer, Hebrew Humanism, p. 186.

In Schaefer's view, "the language of I and Thou reflects Buber's character and spiritual quality more perfectly than any other of his works, since it was at the same time a panegyric and a religious tract, a philosophical treatise and a modern myth in one." The Thou which is directly addressed is the human and God the eternal Thou within the same life movement. Man transcends his I through the "embrace" of the Thou.

The uniqueness of this work, which was composed in a spirit of "irresistable enthusiasm" and which ranges from mysticism to the speech usages of primitive peoples, thus anticipating an anthropological basis of a highly personal experience of faith, was apparent from the very outset. . . . The work Dialogue, which was written many years later, is calmer in tone, but it is characterized by the same . . . indifference to philosophical conceptual language. In it the author is concerned with illustrating dialogic life by giving examples of concrete situations in which it appears in the daily life of individuals and society. . . . The presentation of Dialogue makes no claim to completeness, but it adheres as closely as possible to lived life.<sup>16</sup>

Over time, however, Buber sought to find a "generally understood conceptual language for a non-conceptual unique experience." The change which occurred in his language between the works I and Thou and "Elements of the Interhuman" is a clear indication of his efforts to find a suitable language and a philosophic method stemming from his urge to communicate. In "Elements of the Interhuman" Buber took pains to keep in the background the basic religious experience and the knowledge of mutual ontic participation within creation. "He did not speak of it but out of it, and confined himself to the limited sphere of the problem he was discussing."<sup>17</sup>

Diamond helps to clarify the meaning of the It, and how it contrasts with the Thou in Buber's formulation. Since the I-Thou posture

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 428.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

is the one to which the deeper meaning of existence is revealed, Buber's readers are sometimes misled into thinking that the I-It is meant to imply a negative, or even an evil category. This is not at all accurate. It is true that the "I" of the I-It differs from the "I" of the I-Thou. In the I-It posture the "I" holds back, measuring, using, and even seeking to control the object of its attention, and never, as in the I-Thou relation, affirming the other just as it is in itself. But the I-It relation is necessary and appropriate to many activities.

Through knowledge acquired in detachment, man is able to achieve a reliable perspective on the world and a considerable degree of control over nature. It is in the It perspective that physicists all over the world can communicate by means of mathematical symbols that are free of the cultural nuances that haunt words such as "democracy" and "freedom" and make them susceptible to so many radically conflicting interpretations.<sup>18</sup>

The I-It posture is not evil any more than power or any other basic element of existence is in itself evil. Power becomes evil when it is abused. . . . In the realm of thought, the It posture becomes evil when it oversteps its limits and claims to encompass the totality of truth, thereby choking off the possibility of response to the deeper levels of meaning that may emerge from I-Thou encounters.

The I-It attitude becomes a source of evil whenever the individual becomes so addicted to it that he remains absorbed in his own purposes and concerns when he should be responding in a fresh way to the beings he meets.<sup>19</sup>

As a philosopher, Buber does not fit into any category, unless it is that of his own dialogical approach to philosophical anthropology. Nevertheless, he is often referred to as an existentialist. Buber agrees he can be so categorized, if existentialism means the transposing of "human existence itself into the center of rational contemplation." He adds that the genuine existentialist must himself "exist," must not

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<sup>18</sup>Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

content himself with theory alone.<sup>20</sup> Friedman gives Buber an important place among existentialists, but points out that existentialism is not a single philosophy but a mood uniting a number of philosophies more divergent than they are similar.

Existentialists like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Tillich, and Berdyaev tend to see existence as centered in the self and to see man's relations to other men and to the non-human world as dimensions of this self. In contrast to them, existentialists like Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Franz Rosenzweig, and Ferdinand Ebner see existence as inseparable from communication, dialogue, or the I-Thou relationship. But it is Martin Buber alone who has placed at the center of a monumental corpus the task of pointing to the essential difference between the direct, mutual meeting, into which one enters with one's whole being and in full presentness, and the indirect, non-mutual relationship of subject and object, the "I-It."<sup>21</sup>

Friedman points to the importance of this teaching for drama, literature, theory of knowledge, theology, psychotherapy, and education. "Precisely through this concrete application, indeed, some readers may come to understand the life of dialogue for the first time from within."

In Diamond's critique, the mutual meeting takes into account these factors--multiplicity in existence, the primacy of actual experience over intellectual speculation, and resolute decision. The last two emphases cut across all the various existentialisms. "The central task for the individual is to achieve authentic selfhood by means of resolute decision. This summons to free and responsible decision is the stuff of existence and the focus of existentialism." Concrete experience has been emphasized also by empiricists.

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<sup>20</sup>Martin Buber, "Responsa," in Philosophical Interrogations, eds. Sydney and Beatrice Rome (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 18.

<sup>21</sup>Maurice Friedman, "Introduction," in Pointing the Way, by Martin Buber (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957; Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. ix-x.

But the empirical tradition has taken all the data of experience--of willing and thinking, sensing and feeling--and analyzed them in an attitude of detachment. This tradition, no less than the rational one it opposed, attempted to strip human judgments of subjective involvement and passion. By contrast, the existentialists have consciously adopted the posture of passionate engagement as an integral part of their philosophizing.<sup>22</sup>

Most existentialists summon the person to authentic life, but they stress the obstacles to its realization, the anxieties and anguish of the decisions involved in authentic, free expression. Although Buber's affinities with existentialism are apparent, his thought has also interacted with "the world-affirming tradition of Judaism, which has always cautioned its adherents against overanxious preoccupation with sin."<sup>23</sup>

Friedman points to a fundamental difference between Buber and Jean-Paul-Sartre. Sartre defines value as the meaning of life which the individual chooses; this implies an "invention" of value and a self-created morality.

Such a self-created morality means freedom without genuine responding and responsibility, just as a "moral duty" imposed from without means "responsibility" without either freedom or genuine responding. The narrow ridge between the two is a freedom that means freedom to respond, and a responsibility that means both address from without and free response from within. Sartre's definition of value as the meaning of life which the individual chooses, Buber points out, destroys all meaningful notion of value.<sup>24</sup>

Friedman quotes directly from Buber's statement:

One can believe in and accept a meaning or value . . . if one has discovered it, not if one has invented it. It can be for me an illuminating meaning, a direction-giving value, only if it has been revealed to me in my meeting with being, not if I

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<sup>22</sup>Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>24</sup>Maurice Friedman, "The Bases of Buber's Ethics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 177.

have freely chosen it for myself from among the existing possibilities and perhaps have in addition decided with a few fellow creatures: This shall be valid from now on.<sup>25</sup>

To Ernst Simon (Buber's close colleague and co-worker for international peace), Buber's ethic most resembles a "believer's occasionalism." He compares it with other ethical views. The ethical for Buber cannot be identified, for instance, with pragmatism, relativism, or formalism: "It surely is not a pragmatic or utilitarian one, nor a psychologically relativizing or sociologically relativizing one. Nor is it a formalism in the Kantian sense, because it does not recognize a law-giving categorical imperative, which stands rigorously in every situation." It most resembles a believer's occasionalism (but one which is not limited to a belief that the mind and body cannot interact). It "refers to the 'occasions,' or in Buber's language, to the situations, which are sent by God to man so that he may live up to their demands," and each of these requires individual choice and action. At the same time, the universal values of revelation are also essential. Buber negates "the possibility of a 'moratorium of the Decalogue,' as if 'killing would become a good deed if it is done in the interest of one's own society' and false witness, on behalf of one's own nation."<sup>26</sup>

Buber is also referred to as humanist. Schaefer shows that Buber's humanism is in contradistinction to Western humanism. The latter is concerned more with the individual in his release of creative powers, whereas Buber's humanism has to do mainly with the "open person." This person is "directed to the community and as such is not concerned with noble form

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ernst Simon, "Martin Buber, the Educator," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, pp. 570-71.

but with relation. . . . Meaning is not to be found in structure and form but in confirmation from moment to moment."<sup>27</sup> Western humanism derives from the Greeks. "In the *Crito* and *The Republic*," Friedman says, "the good is intrinsic to a person's being but not to relations between man and man themselves. . . . In the *Psalms*, in contrast, man's very existence is set in relationship with reality that confronts him." So to Buber what is meant by happiness has its home in a sphere other than self satisfaction, transcends the realm of ethics as well as that of self-consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

Again, Buber describes his thought as proceeding along a "narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge." This implies an acceptance of uncertainty and insecurity but one which is, Buber says, a "holy insecurity." Friedman sees Buber's position as a genuine third alternative to the insistent either-or's of our age. Thus Buber does not ignore the reality of "paradox and contradiction" which produce "suffering."<sup>29</sup>

E. la B. Cherbonnier asks, How might Buber's philosophy be corrected should it contain any errors?

Specifically, how does one determine which paradoxes are true and which are not? Unless these questions can be answered, would not the "narrow ridge" of "holy insecurity" broaden, in practice, into a boundless plain with unlimited room for maneuver? Would not I-Thou statements then begin to resemble statements ex cathedra?<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, pp. 433-34.

<sup>28</sup>Friedman, "The Bases of Buber's Ethics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 199.

<sup>29</sup>Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup>E. la B. Cherbonnier, "Interrogation," in Philosophical Interrogations, pp. 50-51.

Diamond points out that Buber's philosophical accounting is based on experience, but also on reason and consistency:

Buber is not an irrationalist; he does not set some non-rational faculty, such as intuition, above reason and use it as the path to truth. He regards reason as relevant to all human concerns, and he uses reason to explore the I-It posture to social, moral, and religious issues.<sup>31</sup>

Buber employs criteria frequently, and his thought has more content than that of almost any other contemporary thinker, but neither the criteria nor the content are objective.<sup>32</sup>

Buber seeks an understanding between himself and his readers by pointing them to their own experiences: "I know no criterion for the 'objective existence' of what becomes present to me in the I-Thou relation. . . . He who wishes to live securely would do better to stay far from the way which I have indicated."<sup>33</sup> Ultimately for Buber's readers, Diamond believes, "his illustrations provide the only reliable guide to his meaning."<sup>34</sup>

#### Literature Related to Education

Before his acceptance of the chair of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University, Buber was offered the Chair of Pedagogy but declined it on the grounds that the field had always interested him practically rather than theoretically. To Simon, this assertion has been vastly contradicted but becomes comprehensible in the light of Buber's

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<sup>31</sup>Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p. 35.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>33</sup>Buber, "Responsa," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 54.

<sup>34</sup>Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p. 20.



characterization of a Hasidic master who was a teacher, though evidently not "by profession." Buber's yearning "is for a 'master,' but his insight into the essence of the epoch and of his own nature drives him to teaching, and even beyond that, to an almost unwillingly adopted pedagogical theory," one which is without system.<sup>35</sup> Haim Gordon observes that during the half century Buber wrote on such topics as the essence of education, the education of character, and national education, he always linked the topic to contemporary need, spoke as a participant in a specific "historical situation," and directed himself to fellow educators who might benefit from his insights.<sup>35</sup>

The consistent main goal of education for Buber is the education of character. Schaefer describes the background of Buber's addresses having to do with character education; the content of the addresses have broad application to modern Western society.

Schaefer writes that during the rise of Naziism Buber's addresses to German Jews conveyed that after all external assurance had failed, "the Jews needed a new, personal, existential hierarchy of values, and that they must rediscover the sources and goals of their Jewish destiny." German Jewry at that time of crisis was not in consensus, but was divided into groups with different world views, religious and non-religious. In an address of 1933, "Education and the World View," Buber insisted that education confront all the different groups having different world views with the common reality of humankind. The groups within a community are

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<sup>35</sup>Simon, "Martin Buber, the Educator," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 544.

<sup>36</sup>Haim Gordon, "An Approach to Martin Buber's Educational Writings," Journal of Jewish Studies 29 (Spring 1978): 85.

united not by bustling activity directed toward different ends but by "the common unfolding of the common reality."

A further educational consideration is the need to help implant a world view in the soil of one's own world, to train one's "world view conscience," the individual existential responsibility for a world view. Education must be a constructive "inner-forming power" and not "the dismal uniform step of marching columns" prevalent in nationalistic-oriented modern societies. Buber says, "In the uniform marching line of the group today there is no distinguishing any more between one person's step which is the expression of his direction-moved existence and another person's step which is nothing else than an eloquent gesture." Buber's teaching had both immediate and universal application. She observes, "To the German reader of today it appears as a mene tekel [writing on the wall] that proved true ten years later."<sup>37</sup>

Schaeder points to the theme which can be read between the lines of "The Education of Character": Buber here asks that Jews also stand the test and prove themselves. Before coming to Palestine he had appealed to the Zionist community to realize a model society founded on peace and national justice, a society founded on the "common memory" preserved in history, the tradition of Jewish spiritual strength. This was the goal of spiritual Zionism to which Buber for decades had been calling the youth. But when he came to Palestine in 1938, he found the country in turmoil, with tension between Jews and Arabs.

Under the pressure of historical events the youth in the country had succumbed to rabid nationalism, rejected religious calling, and in a desire to be like all the other

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<sup>37</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, pp. 197-98.

nations, were prepared like them to suspend the Ten Commandments if the existence of the people was at stake. Much of this can be read between the lines of "The Education of Character"--an impressive testimony to Buber's incorruptible sense of justice and love of truth. . . .

Thus enormous difficulties attended character training at the time, yet it was under just these difficulties that Buber's pedagogical genius fully came to light:

Despite the fact that he was deeply rooted in the tradition of his forefathers, he could "accept" the young generation wholeheartedly and "comprehend" it. . . . Buber's point of departure was his trust in creation, in "its being permeated throughout by vital dialogue," in the common participation of its creatures and their need of one another. If direct contact is restored between man and man, the eternal Thou will by that same token also be the object of personal address, and we shall have entered the sphere of reconciliation.

The capacity was given to Buber, as to few people of the older generation, to "accept" the young generation and to confirm it in its refusal to have fixed values imposed upon it. It is in such a situation that the educational ideal can be realized, the ideal that Buber regarded as the highest, even though it appeared so seldom: a person of great character, one who in every situation acts with his entire substance, who realizes that every situation is a unique portion of life . . . and demands the entire person.<sup>38</sup>

To Buber, the teacher's power of influence rests in the fact that the trusting pupil will ask for his advice in his moral dilemmas. "Hugo Gaudig," Simon writes, "had once defined the school ironically as that remarkable institution in which questions are asked by those who know, while the answers are attempted by the ignorant"; thus he "unmasked most of the questions of teachers as open and undisguised examinations, and he had wished to replace them from centrality by the genuine unrheterical questions of students who really wished to learn."<sup>39</sup> In character

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-201.

<sup>39</sup>Simon, "Martin Buber, the Educator," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 566.

education Buber wants a similar reversal from the catechized teaching of morals to the spontaneous questions of pupils, who examine their own conscience as well as that of the teacher. The teacher might be faced with a moment of surprise, an ethical difficulty.

In mere instruction an unanswered question can only lead to a transitory embarrassment, and not even that, if the teacher had not assumed the false nimbus of omniscience. Should it occur, he ought to have the courage to say: "I don't know it at the moment, and I shall give you the answer tomorrow," or better still, "We could find that out together in the following way: . . ." Therefore, here the delay of an answer is only of an accidental nature. But it is different in character education. The inability to answer is there existential and belongs to the substance of the value crisis of our time.<sup>40</sup>

Buber believes in eternal values but would not have the teacher dictate them to his pupils. Buber's solution is to refer the child to his disturbed relation with his own self. The first step to recovery is the consciousness of illness which, in Simon's interpretation, is "carefully awakened and never drugged by the understanding educator who knows the secret remedy."<sup>41</sup> In order to achieve trust, in Buber's view, the teacher needs not moral perfection, but needs to be really there for the pupil.

The democratic-elitist dichotomy in Buber's educational philosophy is explored in depth by Simon, and here summarized: Buber opposes every detachment of the intellectual from life, and in particular, against every "bourgeois privilege of education," which threatens culture with collapse everywhere. He sees the solution of the division between the exemplary lives of the few, and the dull vegetation of the many, between the "elite" and the "masses," to lie mainly in the future. But this is a future which one can anticipate and for which one must prepare now by means of

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 567.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

education for leadership. Simon cites Buber's conviction, "It is not the aim that there should be only leaders and no followers any more. . . . The aim is that the leaders should remain leaders and not become dominating rulers. More precisely stated, they should assume only those elements of dominion which are necessarily demanded by the circumstances." Buber knows very well, Simon relates, how prolonged control in every society works toward class formation, "estranges the leaders from their original legitimate task and makes them to be mere representatives of vested or even imperialistically expanding interests." But a legitimate, "serving" elite can maintain itself through education, by influencing youth to continue their work of service. Here Simons points to a paradox:

Decisive assignments fall to the educators--parents and teachers--and again a vicious circle is generated, which Buber does not discuss in this form. Namely, to select and educate the elite, the educator himself should belong to it. This is not and cannot be the case, since they, as teachers, constitute a mass profession.<sup>42</sup>

Relevance to the contemporary situation is also central to Buber's address "Education," which contains what he calls the general "groundwork" of educating: The nature of the teacher-pupil relation in our time of the "crumbling" of values is a major part of the address. As observed by F. H. Hilliard, it was presented during the period following the First World War, when freedom and creativity in Germany were the watchwords of a form which aimed to develop a progressive education in contrast to the authoritarian education of an earlier era.

Buber recognizes that at a time when traditional values were still widely accepted it was all too easy for a teacher of the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 553.

"old" school to use his position in an authoritarian manner. But so, indeed, is it all too easy in a time when the old traditional values and beliefs have been shattered for a teacher of the "new" education to project himself and his own values into his teaching in a manner which distorts the true educational process.<sup>43</sup>

Hilliard points out that Buber was very much alive to the danger of indoctrination which he described as "interference" or "arbitrariness." At the same time, Buber viewed education as a process which required the educator not merely to assist but also positively to influence growth and development. As Hilliard writes, "For schools and teachers to provide merely . . . exploratory experience . . . was not enough. It was their task to select the sort of experience which would lead to the kind of education which was judged to be desirable."<sup>44</sup> Like Dewey, Buber was aware of the influence which progressive education was exerting and was likely to continue to exert on educational thought and practice. That he clearly perceived its limitations as a theory of education, is in itself some indication of his abilities as a student and a teacher of the pedagogy from which he deliberately turned away.<sup>45</sup>

But, Hilliard asks, "how are influence and arbitrariness to be distinguished, and how and in what circumstances does a teacher cross the ill-defined boundary which separates the exercise of educationally desirable from undesirable influence? Buber attempts more than once to find a satisfactory answer but . . . he fails to do so."<sup>46</sup>

Haim Gordon comprehends from Buber's address that influence ("conveying the spirit") relates to the whole person by involving oneself as

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<sup>43</sup>F. H. Hilliard, "A Re-Examination of Buber's Address on Education," British Journal of Educational Studies 21 (February 1973): 45.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

a whole person. He suggests the need for inquiry into the possibility of a curriculum which facilitates openness toward nature and human beings. "Most curriculum thought stresses individual achievement or teamwork, but not knowledge acquired through relating on a personal level." No model can assist the teacher in this, since a model confines education too narrowly to behavior, skills, and intellect.<sup>47</sup>

The personal relation in education, called by Buber the dialogical "inclusion" of the other side, is that which enables the teacher to experience the standpoint of the pupil as well as his own, and to thereby avoid arbitrariness. Ernst Simon considers inclusion, along with Buber's concept of the "line of demarcation," to be Buber's most original contribution to pedagogy.<sup>48</sup> Hilliard makes no mention of inclusion, nor does he discuss Buber's point that the experience of the pupil's side is often necessarily "uncertain," and must be constantly renewed, hence Buber offers no security. Nevertheless, one gains from Hilliard's article a helpful insight into the historical context in which Buber's address "Education" was stated. In addition, he underscores the dangers of indoctrination, while showing that the line between it and educational influence is a recurring question for the sensitive practitioner, one which cannot be dismissed lightly by the theorist.

That education is an art more than a science is stressed in Zvi Kurzweil's commentary. The outstanding features of the address "Education" are its focus on the teacher-pupil relationship, the "most simple and essential factor of the educational process," and its emphasis on a

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<sup>47</sup>Gordon, "An Approach to Martin Buber's Educational Writings," pp. 222-23.

<sup>48</sup>Simon, "Martin Buber, the Educator," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 571.

profound religious element. "God, the teacher, and the pupil are the three focal points around which the fabric of his educational thought is woven. . . . The Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo also based his educational thought on these three points." Buber's thought is an important balancing factor in the current trend in education:

The modern trend emphasizes in a most one-sided manner the multifarious aids, techniques, and other "scientific" devices, sometimes of a very trivial nature, which are associated with the practice of teaching, such as audio-visual aids, statistical surveys, intelligence and aptitude tests, etc., while quite failing to recognize the essential purpose of education as opposed to mere instruction. The enormous flow of American magazine-literature on the minutest technicalities of instruction is witness to the alarming proportions that the new trend is assuming. This educational literature presents a distorted picture of educational values. . . . In our materialistic civilization the exact sciences and technology are preferred to philosophy and the arts. . . . An ever-increasing number of educationists like to see themselves as educational technologists . . . thus emulating their colleagues in the exact sciences. Against this tendency the voice of Buber is raised in loud and lonely protest.<sup>49</sup>

Kurzweil cites Herbert Read who, in his interpretation of Buber's pedagogy, stresses the importance of the creation of an atmosphere of "spontaneity, of happy childish industry," the main secret of successful teaching; this atmosphere is the creation of the teacher and can exist in "a village school, or in a dingy barracks in some industrial city." To Buber, Kurzweil points out, education cannot "teach" to belief in God nor inculcate religion. Yet the I-Thou relationship to God and to the human being are two facets of the same universal principle, and belief in God can arise spontaneously out of the experience of meeting human beings. According to Buber, Kurzweil reports, education can lead the pupil a step further towards a spiritual perception of the universe, first, by

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<sup>49</sup>Zvi E. Kurzweil, "Buber on Education," Judaism 11 (Winter 1962): 54.



fostering in him a critical attitude free of prejudices propagated by political parties or other organizations through the various media of mass propaganda, and then by helping him to become an independent "person" who is sensitive to spiritual influences.<sup>50</sup>

Howard Rosenblatt, who has written extensively on education and minority youth, comments that within Buber's frame of reference, "techniques are not discarded; rather they seem to be included as important tools leading to professional competence. Teaching techniques are learned to enhance opportunities for person-to-person dialogue, but they are not seen as ultimate goals in and of themselves."<sup>51</sup>

Buber's emphasis on education of the "whole person" stands in opposition to materialism; as noted by Simon, it also opposes intellectualism as the sole purpose of the educational endeavor. Robert Hutchins concurs, he is against a one-sided intellectualism. Nevertheless, he expresses the following concern:

No doctrine has promoted the disintegration of American education as much as that of the "whole man"; it has been used to justify the inclusion of the most frivolous trivialities in the course of study.

There is grave danger in too literal and immediate an interpretation of Buber's insistence on "our present situation" and "our hour". . . . The whole view of American education that we must adjust the student to his environment . . . can be justified by an interpretation of Buber's language, of which he would be the last to approve.<sup>52</sup>

A great teacher, like Socrates or Buber, can start with anything and move by ordered stages to the most tremendous issues. The ordinary teacher who begins with triviality is almost

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>51</sup>Howard Rosenblatt, "Martin Buber's Concepts Applied to Education," The Educational Forum 35 (January 1971); 217.

<sup>52</sup>Robert M. Hutchins, "Interrogation," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 64.

certain to end there. The virtue of great books is that they are the thoughts of great men about great issues, most of which are so fundamental that they are issues of our present situation and our hour in any definition of these terms. We must bring our own concrete reality to our reading, of course.<sup>53</sup>

Buber, too, sees a great danger in a too literal interpretation of his view of the educational task. "Every all-too-literal interpretation of a truth is dangerous. What is important is not formally to fix the true, but to preserve it in its living context." He also opposes the view of adjusting the student to his environment. "We must not adjust ourselves to the changing situations, but we have to take our stand toward them and master them." As to Socrates, his method is at odds with that of Buber:

I know of very few men in history to whom I stand in such a relation of both trust and veneration as Socrates. But . . . Socrates overvalued the significance of abstract general concepts in comparison with concrete individual experiences. General concepts are the most important stays and supports, but Socrates treated them as if they were more important than bones. . . . Stronger, however, than this basic objection is my criticism of a pedagogical application of the Socratic method. Socrates conducted his dialogue by posing questions and proving the answers that he received untenable; these are not real questions; they are moves in a sublime dialectical game that has a goal, the goal of revealing a not-knowing. But when the teacher whom I mean . . . enters into a dialogue with his pupil and in this connection directs a question to him, he asks . . . because he wants to know something.<sup>54</sup>

Like Socrates, Buber believes that the teacher must strive to awaken in the pupil the need to communicate of himself and thereby bring him to a greater clarity of existence. But he also learns, himself, concretely the becoming of the human being which takes place in experiences. Although this is not full partnership, it is still a real dialogue.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>54</sup>Buber, "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogations, pp. 67-68.

### CHAPTER III

#### MUTUALITY

When Buber speaks of mutuality between two people, he refers to the continuing potential presence of one for the other, an attitude and a willingness in each to enter into dialogue and a trust that the other will reciprocate.<sup>1</sup>

Buber ascribes several terms to dialogue, the unfolding of mutuality, such as mutual relation, I-Thou relation, essential relation, and reciprocity. In this relation persons become presences for one another in the context of a concrete and transforming meeting. Each confronts and responds to the other not as an object, as happens in the relation of monologue or I-It, but as a partner in a shared event. Mutuality and its unfolding are necessary to the inmost growth of the partners of relation: "I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou."<sup>2</sup>

But Buber understands the relation not only as a psychological phenomenon or something which occurs within each self. It refers to the ontology of meeting, to both the within and the without, to the intersubjective. What happens takes place between the two in the most precise sense. "Each considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction.

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, 2d ed., trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1958), p. 11.

The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into relation with other individuals."<sup>3</sup>

### Distance and Relation

The presupposition of all relation is distance and the act of setting at a distance. Distance is just the state of being, that is, each partner exists as unique, and within this uniqueness has the quality of wholeness and unity. Setting at a distance the unique other being means granting it an independence and allowing it to exist for itself as a separate identity, as different from oneself.

Distance and setting at a distance create a contradiction and a tension--an "over-againstness"--to which the self reacts in one of two ways: Either it wills to enter into mutual relation or it wills to withhold itself from this relation. In the first instance the overcoming gives rise to unity, the polar tension of distance and relation together. This means that the primary uniqueness of each partner is not changed but enhanced or completed through the relation. The second choice constitutes a "thickening" of the distance corresponding to the I-It relation, by which the self persists in a detached manner of perceiving. The self may then begin to make the other its object, that is, by observing and using the other, it is made a part of the objective world and no longer an independent subject with whom the self has to deal as another self.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," pp. 59-71.

There are gradations of both the I-Thou and I-It relations. And people vary in the extent to which they relate to the other as a Thou or an It. People must live in the impersonal, more secure world of It in order to survive, but to exist as human beings they must step out of it repeatedly and meet the Thou in ever changing form, in new and unpredictable situations.<sup>5</sup> At times the tension of difference seems unsurmountable, but to Buber it is also true that the humane mutual relation, which includes the other, serves it, and learns from it, is made possible only by the fact of difference and the confirmation of difference.

Buber explains the principle of distance and relation by contrasting human reality with the existence of animals. It is only for people that an independent opposite exists; an animal does not know the state of relation because it cannot perceive anything as contrasting and existing for itself, and as whole and unified. He therefore suggests that human beings have moved into a special category; they have moved into "reality," have a world. One cannot view individual beings as independent and whole, repeat this again and again, without viewing the world that way, both temporally and spatially. "An animal's actions are concerned with its future and the future of its young, but only man imagines the future." An animal has no world but is limited to a realm. Its "image" of its realm and its activity have only to do with a "selection of elements" which meet the necessities of its life and the functions of its life which are to be performed. "Wherever swallows or tunny wander, their bodily being (Leiblichkeit) carries out this selection from 'nature,' which as such is completely unknown to them, and on which they in turn

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<sup>5</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 34.

have an effect, again as on something which they neither know nor can know."<sup>6</sup>

Given distance, the fulfillment of mutual relation requires the inner and outer actions, awareness and responsibility. Awareness implies more than just acknowledging the other as different. Being aware means to accept the different and to confirm it in its wholeness and uniqueness as a "being made in this particular way." By contrast, an insect state excludes every variation and reward. In responsibility the partner is helped to unfold through one's presence and one's influence, but the desire to be present and to influence the other does not mean an effort to change the essential being of the other, to inject one's own rightness into the partner in relation. Rather it means "the effort to let that which is recognized as right, as just, as true . . . through one's own influence take seed and grow into the form of individuation."<sup>7</sup>

Such influence is the heart of education, contrasted by Buber with propaganda.

There man learns not merely that he is limited by man, cast upon his own finitude, partialness, need of completion, but his own relation to the truth is heightened by the other's different relation to the same truth--different in accordance with his individuation and destined to take seed and grow differently.<sup>8</sup>

One finds it difficult to understand Buber's meaning of mutual relation with non-human beings which "say" something to the self. Since the non-human lacks consciousness, it cannot, of course, respond to the self as the self responds to it. Buber describes the character of the relation by pointing to an element common to all mutual relation, the

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<sup>6</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," p. 61.

<sup>7</sup>Buber, *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>8</sup>Buber, *Ibid.*

active reciprocity of being. On the question of mutuality with nature,

Buber writes:

That living wholeness and unity of the tree, which denies itself to the sharpest glance of the mere investigator and discloses itself to the glance of one who says Thou, is there when he, the sayer of Thou, is there: It is he who vouchsafes to the tree that it manifest this unity and wholeness; and now the tree which is in being manifests them. Our habits of thought make it difficult for us to see that here, awakened by our attitude, something lights up and approaches us from the course of being. In the sphere we are talking of we have to do justice, in complete candor, to the reality which discloses itself to us.<sup>9</sup>

This, Buber adds, is not a meeting of Platonic ideas, but a meeting with the on-going course of being.<sup>10</sup>

Setting at a distance, awareness, and responsibility are not viewed by Buber as firmly separate entities, nor are they understood strictly as sequential steps in the relational process. Rather, awareness of the Thou makes possible an attitude of responsibility, and awareness deepens with the act of responding. The integrity of the difference between the I and the Thou, distance and independence, is maintained throughout. "The Thou is not another I."

The remainder of this chapter will examine more fully Buber's concept of mutuality, with particular emphasis on the human sphere. This calls for further description of the concepts uniqueness, awareness, and responsibility, each of which will be treated in terms of its constituent components.

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<sup>9</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

The Unique Person

Wholeness

Uniqueness is often associated with an observable attribute or a loose aggregate of attributes. There is a tendency to compare the attributes of one person with those of another, which says nothing of the whole existence of that person. Buber, however, speaks of the unrepeatable "wholeness of the person defined by spirit," and of the "dynamic center" which stamps one's "every utterance, action, and attitude with the recognizable sign of uniqueness."<sup>11</sup>

Uniqueness is "not analysable into any elements and not compoundable out of any."<sup>12</sup> The Thou response is directed to the other in his unified entirety, not to single attributes or allegiances abstracted and generalized to the whole. Similarly, the self confronts itself as irreducible to attributes:

Just as the melody is not made up of notes nor the verse of words nor the statue of lines, but they must be tugged and dragged till their unity has been scattered into these many pieces, so with the man to whom I say Thou. I can take out from him the color of his hair, or of his speech, or of his goodness. I must continually do this. But each time I do it he ceases to be Thou.<sup>13</sup>

Consistent with Buber's idea of wholeness and unity is his denial that the distinguishing feature of humanity is only reason, as has been so often claimed, especially since Descartes. Nor does emotion constitute the whole of the person. "Man is not a centaur, he is man through

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<sup>11</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman," p. 80.

<sup>12</sup>Martin Buber, Good and Evil, 2d ed., trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1953), p. 141.

<sup>13</sup>Buber, I and Thou, pp. 8-9.



and through," thinks with "his whole body to the very fingertips."<sup>14</sup>

The Thou is perceived as whole when relation takes place in the present and becomes exclusive to the partners in relation. The one to whom I relate has "no neighbor," but occupies my fullest attention. "This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in his light."<sup>15</sup> Relation to the It is removed from the present, compares and categorizes. Here Buber illustrates how categorizing prevents a tree from becoming a unique Thou:

I can classify [a tree] in a species and study it as a type in its structure and mode of life. . . . I can dissipate it and perpetuate it in number, in pure numerical relation. In all this the tree remains my object, occupies space and time, and has its nature and constitution.<sup>16</sup>

Attributes must, in fact, be acknowledged and dealt with, but in real relation they are seen as they are in actuality, in their relativity:

To become bound up in relation it is not necessary for me to give up any of the ways in which I consider the tree. There is nothing from which I would have to turn my eyes away in order to see, and no knowledge that I would have to forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and type, law and number, indivisibly united in this event.

Everything belonging to the tree is in this: its form and structure, its colors and chemical composition, its intercourse with the elements and with the stars, are all present in a single whole.<sup>17</sup>

Wholeness comprises also the actual and the potential. Buber repeatedly characterizes the Thou not as a static entity, but as the dynamic being before you with all of its possibilities.

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<sup>14</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", p. 198.

<sup>15</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

### Equality of Worth

The wholistic view of uniqueness confers on each partner an equality of worth. The uniqueness and irreplaceability of every person, Buber points out, is a basic teaching of Hasidism. He refers to the teaching of Rabbi Pinhas: "In everyone is something precious that is in no other," and each has "an importance in which none other can compete."<sup>18</sup> The essential uniqueness, that which one is and can become in one's whole being is, after all, immeasurable. It is not one's relative position on a hierarchy of physical attributes, nor skills and knowledge attainments, nor attitudes of faith and ethics, even though such differences are recognized as actual.

Certainly, there are great and small, those rich in teaching and those poor in teaching, those adorned with virtue and those seemingly bare of virtue, those devoted to God and those who have crept away into themselves, but God does not deny Himself even to those decried as foolish and as wicked. . . . So every man who wishes to walk in God's way must avoid making absolute differences out of relative ones.<sup>19</sup>

The capacity for uniqueness and genuine relation exists in all people. It is not a privilege of intellectual skill like dialectic, nor of "spiritual luxuriousness. . . It begins no higher than where humanity begins. There are no gifted and ungifted here." Thus Buber includes the factory, mine, and office worker, and the "yoked," the "turbid," and the "repressed."<sup>20</sup> He includes the "evil" as well; "only their evil deeds shall one hate."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 251.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," pp. 35-36.

<sup>21</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 247.

Hasidism taught Buber to value people who take responsible direction, who turn toward existence with the whole self without being able to grasp conceptually this turning. For them "I have saved my love," he writes.<sup>22</sup>

Here a paradox presents itself: For Buber, the unique potentiality of each person is immeasurable and incomparable. Yet, as Ernst Simon states (see Chapter II), the point can be made that some of his ideas are suggestive of elitism. For instance, Buber defines the "Great Character" in his essay "Education." Simon infers that a "serving elite" is in fact established in Buber's way of thinking. Buber answers that "serving" and "organizationless" elites are necessary to the growth of the spirit on earth. But he firmly discounts the notion of norms or standards for them, since each Thou responds to its world in its own particular way. "The distinction to be made here is not between norm and norm, but between way and way."<sup>23</sup>

Further insight is gained into Buber's perspective of the difficult concept equality by knowing he considers the devotion to all things an expression of welthaftes Wirken--a cosmic love, a world-permeating action and influence. To Buber love is an attitude, not a feeling. Feelings accompany love, but are of greatly differing kinds. The lasting attitude of responsible love contained in one's posture toward the world is actualized in exclusive encounter with a single incomparable Thou.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Buber, "Replies to My Critics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 724.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Buber, I and Thou, pp. 14-15.

Creativity, Individuation, and Power

Uniqueness, for Buber, has an obvious positive connotation, and this is born out further in his view of its origin and its purpose. "Uniqueness is the essential good of man that is given to him to unfold."<sup>25</sup> It is given, but only partly developed, and what remains to be developed exists as the potential for creativity and individuation. Uniqueness is genetically underivable. It is designed or preformed by the creator, the "author" of uniqueness. But that a unique being is created does not mean that it is put into being for mere existence. For creation has a goal. Uniqueness "is entrusted to me for my execution, although everything that affects me participates in this execution."<sup>26</sup> Actualization of one's endowed uniqueness, then, is vitally conditioned by the world, but responsible action toward this goal begins with the self.

What goal is intended for one's creativity and individuation? The goal is a single one generalized to all people, the "humanly right" direction in service to the work of creation. Taking the right direction is, at the same time, personal and situational and therefore dependent upon free decision.

Basic to Hasidic beliefs was the Cabbalistic myth of the holy sparks and its implication for "service to the work of creation" by actualizing the potential within the self and the other. The "world-vessels" broke in the time before creation because they could not hold the creative overflow. Sparks fell into all beings and are imprisoned in them until repeatedly people use a thing in holiness, and thereby free the concealed sparks to re-unite with God as they yearn to do.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 111.

<sup>26</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, pp. 141-42.

<sup>27</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 32.

It was not the Hasidic speculations indicated in this myth about the world's origin which held lasting meaning for Buber, but rather the underlying implication of the potential for human participation in redemption. Through partnership with God in world redemption, individual energy became the purpose and task of humanity.<sup>28</sup> As said by Buber in his old age, he had no views of the origin and the future of the cosmos and within it of humanity.

I have never sought to philosophize about beginning or end or the like. I have in these matters nothing to establish other than my faith, and my faith in the meaningfulness of creation and in its completion as a goal seems to me to exist beyond optimism and pessimism. . . . I do not philosophize more than I must.<sup>29</sup>

The human "admittance to power" which Buber took from the Hasidic teachings appealed to his nature and enlisted his deepest allegiance.<sup>30</sup> Power as a necessary tool in becoming a unique person is emphasized by Buber, but he makes a careful distinction between power and the avidity for power. In a critique of Nietzsche's "will to power" concept, Buber cites the view of that philosopher that ascetic ideals give one a "bad conscience" toward power attainment and suppress the will to power, whereas good conscience to this will has fostered all "great humanity" and "great culture." Nietzsche defines the will to power as the striving for "increase in power," for a "maximal feeling of power," and as the "insatiable desire to display power, or to employ, to practice power." Buber argues that, from a psychological and historical point of view, real greatness cannot be understood as either an increase or

<sup>28</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, p. 77.

<sup>29</sup>Buber, "Replies to My Critics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 702.

<sup>30</sup>Schaeder, Hebrew Humanism, p. 77.

or a display of power.<sup>31</sup>

The productive person is "involuntarily and composedly powerful," but not avid for power.

What he is avid for is the realization of what he has in mind, the incarnation of the spirit. Of course he needs power for this realization; for power . . . means simply the capacity to realize what one wants to realize; but the great man is not avid for this capacity . . . but for what he wishes to be capable of. This is the point from where we can understand the responsibility in which the powerful man is placed, namely whether, and how far, he is really serving his goal; and also the point from where we can understand the seduction by power, leading him to be unfaithful to the goal and yield to power alone.<sup>32</sup>

Buber goes on to say that people have a sick attitude toward their work who desire power instead of their real goal, and that culture is judged from the same standpoint. Power, then, is not to be isolated from responsibility and thought of as a possession. In opposition to Nietzsche, Buber concludes that the will to power "corrupts the history of the world."<sup>33</sup>

Love is "responsibility of an I for a Thou. In this lies the likeness . . . of all who love, from the smallest to the greatest." The egoistic self lives only in monologue, a "world of mirrors and mirrorings," in which people enjoy their feelings. Love is for self gratification. Such lovers love only their individual passion and enjoy their own effect, their excitement, and their power.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", pp. 148-51.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>34</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 29.

Buber is more troubled by a kind of "leader" such as the demonic leader Napoleon whose mission requires him to know nothing but a connection with his particular cause, that is, "no longer to know any real relation with or present realisation of a Thou--to have everything about him become an It, serving his particular Cause. . . . Towards him everything flames, but his fire is cold."<sup>35</sup> According to Buber, the world is truly received by the person who turns to another human being: "Only the being whose otherness, accepted by my being, lives and faces me in the whole compression of existence, brings the radiance of eternity to me."<sup>36</sup>

#### Authenticity

The human power to participate in creation includes predominantly the power to communicate authentically with other human beings. Buber compares living from being "what one really is" with living from an image of "what one wishes to seem." Being and seeming are usually combined in human existence, since few people function independent of the impression they make on others, and virtually no one exists who is entirely motivated by the desire to make an impression. By way of illustration, Buber describes a situation in which two people exchange glances: The first person, while wanting to be understood, is nevertheless unmoved by any thought of the effect his look will have on the other's perception of him, and so communication remains unimpaired by such anxiety. This is the spontaneous, unreserved look of someone engaged in direct, personal communication. The second person "makes

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<sup>35</sup>Buber, I and Thou, pp. 67-68.

<sup>36</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 30.

a look," since he is concerned with the image his glance produces in the other. A look is produced "which is meant to have, and often enough does have, the effect of a spontaneous utterance." But this is not the same as the "genuine seeming" of a child, for example, who while imitating a heroic model learns the meaning of heroism; or the person who believes it important to try to perform a life role which gains authenticity in the doing, however unspontaneously or imperfectly carried out.

In these situations the imitation, the part, and the mask are all genuine.

But where the semblance originates from the lie and is permeated by it, the interhuman is threatened in its very existence. It is not that someone utters a lie, falsifies some account. The lie I mean does not take place in relation to particular facts, but in relation to existence itself, and it attacks interhuman existence as such. There are times when a man, to satisfy some stale conceit, forfeits the great chance of a true happening between I and Thou.<sup>37</sup>

Yet true communication does not depend on two people saying everything that occurs to them, but only on their letting "no seeming creep in" between them. It is not a matter of letting go, or total unreserve. It is a matter of becoming transparent to the extent that the other can share in one's presence as one really is. Buber sees the common tendency to live from the impression one makes not as an aspect of one's "nature." It originates on the other side of mutuality itself, in people's dependence upon one another. Making an image is seen as a step one person can take to receive the confirmation from another which is crucial to their communication. But here only the image, "the ghost of semblance," can be confirmed, not the reality.

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<sup>37</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman," pp. 76-77.



Still, the child, and even the adult encompassed in an "increasingly tough layer" of semblance, is redeemable. Though at times with great personal risk and sacrifice, one can struggle to become authentic through "confidence in being."<sup>38</sup>

Self Awareness: The Particular Way

The important confidence in one's own uniqueness is an idea which Buber expresses concretely in his interpretation of Hasidic teachings. Everything in the world is new, "God never does the same thing twice." The great possibility of humankind lies precisely in the unlikeness of human beings. And everyone's task is the "actualization of his unique, unprecedented, and never-recurring potentialities, not the repetition of something that another . . . has already achieved." One is only to recognize and learn from the contribution another makes, not duplicate it. Rabbi Susya said, shortly before his death: "In the world to come I shall not be asked: 'Why were you not Moses?' I shall be asked: 'Why were you not Susya?'" Thus however small our achievements may be in comparison with others, "they have their real value in that we bring them about in our own way and by our own efforts."<sup>39</sup>

Here is a principle which recognizes that people are "essentially unlike one another" and which therefore "does not aim at making them alike." Each person starts from his particular place in a way determined by his individual quality and inclination, and God is reached through this "multiple advance" of humankind. It is useless to envy other people, and it is misleading to study and imitate them in

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>39</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, pp. 110,139-41.

disregard of one's own particularity, since that which is intended for the self is thereby precisely missed. At the moment someone seizes the "rung" of another person and abandons his own, neither person is actualized.

Buber illustrates the principle of individual direction in a discussion of participation versus withdrawal from the world. Hasidism emphasizes participation, and it emphasizes rejoicing in the world by "hallowing" it with one's whole being. But it is peculiar to some people that only by asceticism at certain crucial moments of their lives can they gain freedom from their "enslavement to the world." Still, one may withdraw from nature only to return to it.<sup>40</sup>

How is the particular way known to the self? Through self knowledge, through perceiving one's own "essential quality" and perceiving that which moves the self's inmost being. Of course, it often happens that the central inner wish is known only in the shape of directionless impulse. One naturally begins by rushing at objects which lie across one's path. It is necessary, therefore, that the power of even this impulse be diverted "from the casual to the essential" and "from the relative to the absolute."<sup>41</sup> Everything depends on listening to the question: the conscience.<sup>42</sup> Thus Buber's unwavering trust is in the power of human beings to authenticate themselves through decision to follow the single direction of service, each one according to his particular way.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-44.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 140-42.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

Despite the fact of uniqueness, a person does not exist who is, in himself, whole and individuated. Ultimately the human being can become whole not in relation to himself but through relation with another self. This is not understood, however, as self-abnegation. According to a Hasidic saying, "Everyone must have two pockets, so that he can reach into the one or the other, according to his needs. In his right pocket are to be the words, 'For my sake was the world created,' and in his left: 'I am dust and ashes'."<sup>43</sup> Buber emphasizes self-comprehension, which requires solitude and reflection, but in keeping with the Hasidic world-affirming tradition he warns against not only self-glorification, but also against incessant preoccupation with sin and self-reproach. Rabbi Eliezer says: "Do not keep worrying about what you have done wrong, but apply the soul power you are now wasting on self-reproach to such active relation to the world as you are destined for. You should not be occupied with yourself but with the world."<sup>44</sup>

#### Awareness of the Other

To enter into relation, one must become genuinely aware of the other, not only the self, as independently unique. Buber contrasts becoming aware with objectification, the prevalent way of perceiving in our time. Awareness is identified with ideas of directness, presentness, and confirmation.

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<sup>43</sup>Martin Buber, Ten Rungs: Hasidic Sayings, trans. Olga Marx (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), p. 106.

<sup>44</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 163.

### Awareness vs. Objectification

To be aware of a thing or a being encountered means to experience it as a whole, and yet at the same time without reduction or abstraction, in all its concreteness. Awareness of a human being is similar but now a different element enters in. Here the person encountered is grasped on the basis of the spirit which belongs to human beings alone and determines what they are. This is vastly different from knowing someone as a separated object of contemplation or even observation. The key to understanding the difference, and central to Buber's entire philosophy, is his point that the wholeness and center of the person "do not let themselves be known to contemplation or observation," but are revealed only in spontaneous communication, when the other is "made present." Such awareness is uncommon. Today the objectifying or analytical, reductive, and deriving look is the dominant way of perceiving.

This look is analytical, or rather pseudo analytical, since it treats the whole being as put together and therefore able to be taken apart—not only the so-called unconscious which is accessible to relative objectification, but also the psychic stream itself, which can never, in fact, be grasped as an object. This look is a reductive one because it tries to contract the manifold person, who is nourished by the microcosmic richness of the possible, to some schematically surveyable and recurrent structures. And this look is a deriving one because it supposes it can grasp what a man has become, or even is becoming, in genetic formulae, and it thinks that even the dynamic central principle of the individual in this becoming can be represented by a general concept. An effort is being made today radically to destroy the mystery between man and man. The personal life, the ever near mystery, once the source of the stillest enthusiasms, is levelled down.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman," pp. 80-81.

Buber's grave assessment of the modern attitude is not, however, meant as an attack on the analytical method of the human sciences. The scientific method is useful when it advances the knowledge of a phenomenon without impairing one's awareness of its uniqueness--an awareness that transcends the valid analytical method. This method must therefore stay within its boundary. When transmitted from scientific study to "life," the boundary becomes ambiguous.<sup>46</sup>

"Observing" and "looking on" are two ways of objectifying. They are similarly oriented because their very purpose is to perceive what exists before them, and because what is seen is an object detached from the personal lives of the perceivers. The observer, Buber explains, carefully "notes" the object, "probes him and writes him up. That is, he is diligent to write up as many 'traits' as possible. He lies in wait for them, that none may escape him. The object consists of traits, and it is known what lies behind each of them." The onlooker, however, is not intent, ignores traits, "traits lead astray," and "gives his memory no tasks, he trusts its organic work which preserves what is worth preserving." But awareness involves the self in meeting:

It is a different matter when . . . a man meets me about whom there is something, which I cannot grasp in any objective way at all, that "says something" to me. That does not mean, says to me what manner of man this is. . . . But it means, says something to me, addresses something to me, speaks something that enters my own life. It may be something about this man, for instance, that he needs me. But it can also be something about myself.<sup>47</sup>

Were an attempt made to describe him, that would be the end of the saying:

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>47</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 9.

This man is not my object; I have got to do with him. Perhaps I have got to accomplish something about him; but perhaps I have only to learn something, and it is only a matter of my "accepting". . . . In each instance a word demanding an answer has happened to me. We may term this way of perception becoming aware.<sup>48</sup>

### Directness

According to Buber, much of conversation is devoid of such awareness. People today typically do not listen to one another, nor do they really speak directly to one another but only "speechify." This is the monologue of Chekhov's characters in The Cherry Orchard, where family members talk past each other to a "fictitious court of appeal," that is, the life of the other is perceived to consist of nothing but listening to the concerns of the self. Chekhov portrays only the deficient type of person who is "shut up in himself." Sartre, however, has raised such enclosure to a principle of human existence. One has to do only with oneself and one's own affairs; there is no direct mutuality, nor can there be. "This is perhaps the clearest example of the wretched fatalism of modern man, which regards degeneration as the unchangeable nature of [the human being] . . . and which brands every thought of a breakthrough as reactionary romanticism." Buber encourages anyone who understands the meaning of the loss of free giving between the I and Thou to practice directness, even if he were the only person who did so, and to persist until those around him "hear in his voice the voice of their own suppressed longing."<sup>49</sup>

Directness means that each speaker becomes aware of the other as different from himself, in the unique way peculiar to him, and that each

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>49</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman, p. 79.

accepts the person thus seen so that the words go out to him as the one he is. In the course of conversation, the views of the speakers may be in strict opposition, but the other is accepted in his being out of which his conviction has grown, even when a stand must be taken against this very conviction. It now depends on the partner whether dialogue, or mutuality in speech, takes place. The address may indeed remain unanswered, but if the partner is given his authentic standing as a person "with whom I am ready to enter into dialogue, then I may trust him and suppose him to be also ready to deal with me as his partner."<sup>50</sup>

#### Making the Other Present

Buber also believes that awareness exists at different levels, and that the intensity of awareness corresponds to the intensity of the involvement of oneself in meeting with the other. "Making the other present" is to imagine the other's reality, his attitude and participation, and not as a detached content but as a living process in the person. "Inclusion," the full making present, does more: Now the self becomes more actively a participant in the meeting. An event occurs in which there is an experience, of pain for example, not as a general suffering but as the pain specific to the other. This making present increases when two partners are involved in a common living situation and one experiences the pain he inflicts upon the other, revealing the "contradictoriness" of interpersonal life. At this point the other, a component of the independent world confronted, is no longer a component but becomes truly "a self for me" and "a self with me." When the other other knows he is so perceived, it becomes an "ontological" event which

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

brings about his inmost self becoming.

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 . . . 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.<sup>51</sup>

### Confirmation

Buber defines confirmation in a dialogue with Carl Rogers.

Rogers emphasizes unconditional acceptance in a therapeutic relationship, whereas Buber emphasizes confirmation which, although it accepts, may also help the other struggle against himself. Rogers says that full acceptance releases individual potentiality, "because . . . there is no longer any need for defensive barriers, so then what takes over are the forward moving processes of life itself." A relationship of warmth and safety, which allows the person his feelings and attitudes and to be what he is, will help him to realize what is "deepest in the individual, that is the very aspect that can be most trusted to be constructive or to tend toward socialization or toward the development of better interpersonal relationships."<sup>52</sup>

Buber answers, "I would say every true existential relationship between two persons begins with acceptance" which makes the other person feel "that I take you just as you are." There is a basic trust, then, but what may be trusted stands in polar relation to what can be least trusted in the person. The positive pole through the influence of

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<sup>51</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," p. 71.

<sup>52</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Dialogue Between Martin Buber and Carl Rogers," p. 180.



another person can be strengthened, and "perhaps we can even strengthen the force of direction in him because this polarity is very often directionless . . . chaotic." So confirmation is acceptance of the whole potentiality which can evolve and answer the reality of life. It is a discovery and a legitimizing of the person with whom I have to do in real dialogue as "a being meant to become." This being meant to become is a concept for which simple, factual language has no word.<sup>53</sup>

Buber presupposes an innate capacity in people to confirm other people in this way. In his view, however, this capacity lies fallow, and that is what "constitutes the real weakness and questionableness of the human race: actual humanity exists only when this capacity unfolds." It is noted that an empty claim to confirmation, without devotion for being and becoming, repeatedly mars the authentic relation between people. Nevertheless, in human society people have always to some extent confirmed one another in a practical way, not only in their personal qualities but also their functions:

And a society may be termed human in the measure to which its members confirm one another. Apart from the tool and the weapon, what has enabled this creature . . . to assert himself and to achieve lordship of the earth is this dynamic, adaptable, pluralistic form of association, which has been made possible by the factor of mutual individual completion of function and the corresponding factor of mutual individual recognition of function. Within the most closely bound clan there still exist free societies of fishers, free orders of barter, free associations of many kinds, which are built upon acknowledged differences in capacity and inclination. In the most rigid epochs of ancient kingdoms the family preserved its separate structure, in which, despite its authoritative quality, individuals affirmed one another in their manifold nature. And everywhere the position of society is strengthened by this

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 180-82.

balance of firmness and looseness. . . . An animal never succeeds in unravelling its companions from the knot of their common life.<sup>54</sup>

### Responsibility

For Buber responsibility is the readiness to enter into dialogue by responding to the address of a spoken or silent "word" out of the creation entrusted to us. Creation is not identified with anything esoteric or remote from human experience, but in the immediate Thou's encountered during the on-going course of daily life. One becomes responsible only as one is able, and "a creative glance towards a fellow creature can at times suffice for response."<sup>55</sup> Responsibility is life related and it requires resolute decision.

### Responsibility as Related to Life

Ronald Gregor Smith points to a quality of immediacy and concreteness in Buber's application of the "word." Smith says of responsibility, the main point of the essay "Dialogue," that its significance is brought out more acutely in German than in English:

Wort, Antwort, antworten, verantworten, etc., are part of a closely interrelated situation in which speech and response, answering for and being responsible for, and so on, are more intimately connected than the English version can hope to show. If the reader will remember that "responsibility" carries in itself the root sense of being "answerable," then the significance of the "word" in actual life will not be lost. Buber's teaching about the "word" always carries a strict reference to "lived life," and is very far from being an abstraction, theological or other.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," p. 67.

<sup>55</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 39.

<sup>56</sup>Ronald Gregor Smith, "Translator's Notes," in Between Man and Man, p. 206.

Buber says, "The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an 'ought' that swings free in the air, into that of lived life."<sup>57</sup> This is not to suggest a denial of absolute values but only that each absolute, honesty for example, is realized in the concrete situation in which it is practiced, and that the uniqueness of every situation calls for a unique response. So the mutuality of address and response takes place in actual meeting, in what Buber calls the between. This between does not exhibit a smooth continuity, but it is ever and again reconstituted in men's meeting with one another. <sup>58</sup>

There is a continuity, however, in the sense of commitment to that which one answers. "A situation of which we have become aware is never finished with, but we subdue it into the substance of lived life. Only then, true to the moment, do we experience a life that is something other than a sum of moments." We respond to this moment, but at the same time we respond on its behalf, we answer for it.<sup>59</sup>

#### Decision

While countless decisions are made in day-to-day living, decision as here applied is the exercise of one's "will to relate." Decision implies freedom and "turning to the other."

Buber attributes to modern society a more oppressing belief than has ever before existed. Belief in the dogma of fate leaves no room for freedom. It fails to recognize the meaning of personal

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<sup>57</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 16.

<sup>58</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", p. 203.

<sup>59</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 17.

responsibility assumed when one is no longer prone to merely "let things happen," but instead decides. The dogma of fate or determinism--"the unlimited world of causality"--belongs to the closed system of the It-world. The Thou world is not closed but frees one to enter into relation. This is not fate, Buber says, but human destiny. This dogma of fate "is always willing to allow you to fulfill its limitation with your life and to 'remain free' in your soul; but he who is turning looks on this freedom as the most ignominious bondage."<sup>60</sup>

Buber contrasts people who exercise the will to relate with those who exercise an arbitrary self will. The first are recognized in free persons who believe in the reality of the I and Thou. They believe in destiny and believe that destiny needs them. Destiny does not restrict them but "awaits" their decision, even though the consequence may not correspond to what they decide. Those who will arbitrarily are in fact determined, since they see no alternative to the use and appropriation of things. They are concerned with their "my--my kind, my race, my creation, my genius."<sup>61</sup> The disposition to will freely and the disposition to will arbitrarily are combined in all people, but those who are defined by free will attain the fuller human existence.

Good is identified with decision to enter into mutuality and evil with the failure to so decide. The human being is neither radically good nor radically evil, but always good and evil mixed together as "two servants" who accomplish their service in collaboration. The "evil urge" is

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<sup>60</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 57.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

described by Buber as passion, impulse, a whirling potentiality--"the ferment placed in the soul by God, without which the human dough does not rise."<sup>62</sup> It is positive in the sense that without it there would be no competition whatever, and no survival of humanity itself. One's task is not to eliminate the evil urge but to unite it with the good. This is accomplished by deciding in the direction of love and service. "Good is direction and what is done in it; that which is done in it is done with the whole soul, so that in fact all the vigor and passion with which evil might have been done is included in it."<sup>63</sup>

### Turning

The Jewish concept turning, Teshuvah, means that with a reversal of his whole being a person who had been lost in indecision, in the maze of selfishness, finds a way to the fulfillment of a particular task for which he has been destined by God. Turning requires a full acceptance of the present and the attitude which values that which is present.

This does not mean a mystical relinquishing of the self. What is given up is rather the false, self-asserting urge that causes people to place the possession of things above the uncertain world of relation "which has neither density nor duration and cannot be surveyed."<sup>64</sup>

To what does one turn? To nothing extraordinary, and yet to a "world happening" in the form of an address of the existential moment, to "what happens to one, to what is to be seen and heard and felt by the 'attentive' person." Each moment with its content is an address."

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<sup>62</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, p. 94.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-31.

<sup>64</sup>Buber, I and Thou, pp. 77-78.

A dog has looked at you, you answer for its glance, a child has clutched your hand, you answer for its touch, and a host of men move about you, you answer for their need."<sup>65</sup>

People throw up a defense to ward off the "signs" of address because they carry with them a risk. And so only by "sterilizing" the happening and removing the "seed" from it, can one take it as that "which does not refer to me." Modern civilization provides the ready means by which the turning can be evaded. The address can be ignored by referring not to its meaning but how it is understood physically, biologically, and sociologically. Response to what is significant in the event seems to have no place in the logical world and denies an immediate and secure mastery of the situation. But for the attentive person, the relation to the Thou is direct, and thus nothing from the past is readily applicable, "no knowledge and no technique, no system and no program." Now one is confronted with concretion impossible to classify. "This speech has no alphabet, each of its sounds is a new creation and only to be grasped as such."

In the essential action of turning, one person steps forth and becomes a presence, giving the world its very form. The modern tendency to think of this turning to the other as sentimental and out of place in the bustling activity of life is judged by Buber to be false and "grotesque." It reveals only that people let the condition of the time determine what is possible, instead of stipulating for themselves what form is to be given to human existence.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," pp. 16-17.

<sup>66</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 22.

Knowledge, precept, and preparation are important to relation, but can never supersede the simple immediacy of turning. God is a "moment God," Buber claims, and above and below are bound inseparably to one another. Nothing about God is known, rather the address of God is experienced through the signs of creation. Buber suggests the following analogy:

When we really understand a poem, all we know of the poet is what we learn of him in the poem--no biographical wisdom is of value for the pure understanding of what is to be understood: the I which approaches us is the subject of this single poem. But when we read other poems by the poet in the same true way their subjects combine in all their multiplicity, completing and confirming one another, to form the one polyphony of the person's existence.<sup>67</sup>

This is made clearer in Buber's account of an event which took place at a time when, Buber indicates, religious experience was for him the experience outside the context of life. After a morning of "religious enthusiasm," Buber was visited by a young man whom he treated as openly as all of the other visitors who came to him for advice. Soon after, Buber learned that the man had taken his life, had come to Buber in despair and for a decision. He realized he "omitted to guess the questions" which the man did not put, because Buber was not there in spirit. "What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man? Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning." Buber then experienced a "conversion," gave up the pseudo-religious, the separate and the ecstatic, for a religion of worldly claim and responsibility.

I do not know much more. . . . religion is . . . simply all that is lived in its possibility of dialogue. Here is space

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

also for religion's highest forms. As when you pray you do not thereby remove yourself from this life of yours but in your praying refer your thought to it.<sup>68</sup>

The turning to the other in responsibility is not for Buber synonymous with solicitude nor with altruism, since they do not necessarily set a person's life "in direct relation with the life of another," but may only imply one person's solicitous help in relation with the other's "lack and need of it."<sup>69</sup> The person who has access to the "otherness of the other" apart from solicitude will also find it in the solicitude practiced by him. But if someone does not have access without solicitude, "he may clothe the naked and feed the hungry all day and it will remain difficult for him to say a true Thou. If all were well clothed and well nourished, then the real ethical problem would become wholly visible for the first time."<sup>70</sup>

Nor is responsibility the same as duty. "Duty and obligation are rendered only to the stranger; we are drawn to and full of love for the intimate person." Responsible decision is calm and spontaneous, purposive and not empty; this action "is no longer imposed upon the world, it grows on it as if it were non-action."<sup>71</sup>

Mutuality is two-sided; it means being chosen and choosing, being at once passive and active.<sup>72</sup> But what if one's address to the other

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>69</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", p. 169.

<sup>70</sup>Buber, "Replies to My Critics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 723.

<sup>71</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 109.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



is not reciprocated? Buber suggests that one begin with confidence in being itself, trusting that response is forthcoming so the "barriers of individual being are in fact breached," while remembering that a relationship cannot be forced--the Thou "is not found by seeking but meets me through grace." Accordingly, initiative rests with the self, yet only will, not control, is the self's responsibility. Buber says, then, "We have to be concerned, to be troubled, not about the other side but about our own side, not about grace but about will. Grace concerns us in so far as we go out to it and persist in its presence; but it is not our object."<sup>73</sup>

Again, Buber generalizes to all people the capacity for Thou responding. In this connection, Walter Blumenfeld poses the following question:

Is "the human being of Buber the real human being or a rare, if ever realized, ideal, the "authentic" and especially the mature, normal person? Buber's teaching can hardly be applied to the mentally ill, to small children, and to idiots. Is not his "man" potentially and in no case a universally prevalent being?

To this Buber answers that what is of concern to him "does not belong to an upper story of human nature . . . the I-Thou relation establishes itself, naturally as it were, in the small child as in the 'primitive'. . . . As for the so-called idiots, I have many times perceived how the soul of such [a person] extends its arms--and thrusts into emptiness." By contrast, Buber indicates, he has known people who possess remarkable conceptualizing powers whose basic nature was to withhold themselves from others,

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.

even if they let this one and that one come near them. No, I mean no "spiritual elite," and yes, I mean man as man. Hindrances everywhere place themselves in the way, from without and from within; it is heart-will and grace in one that help us mature and awake men to overcome them and grant us meeting.

What is of importance? That the spirit execute in a spiritual manner the projects that nature lays before it.<sup>74</sup>

### Breakthrough

Although Buber stresses responsible decision, he is fully aware of the risk and the difficulty: "It is a cruelly hazardous enterprise, this becoming a whole, becoming a form, of crystallization of the soul."<sup>75</sup>

Buber insists that his concern is not for perfection but for a "breakthrough." The speech of dialogue takes many forms, and it is open to everyone in all places. Once Buber had a dispute with a Christian over the situation between Jews and Christians in which, owing to the "unreserve" and the "actuality" of the words between the men, the discussion ended in the kiss of brotherhood and the beginning of a friendship.<sup>76</sup> A breakthrough in Soviet-American relations is possible when one person here sees the standpoint of a person there in his mind's eye.<sup>77</sup>

It is not a question of "all or nothing." Dialogue is just the quantum satis, sufficient amount, of which this person at this hour is able to give and receive. The director of a huge technical organization can practice the responsibility of dialogue at the point of

<sup>74</sup>Buber, "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogation, p. 36.

<sup>75</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, p. 129.

<sup>76</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," pp. 5-6.

<sup>77</sup>Buber, "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 79.

comprehending an employee not as a "number with a human mask but as a person," and responding indirectly through mediation when necessary, but also directly whenever he is able. The workers toughens himself to get through his tasks and return to the personal world when his shift is over, yet no setting "is so abandoned by creation that a creative glance could not fly up from one working-place to another, from desk to desk," a sober and kindred look which communicates the "reality of creation which is happening--quantum satis."<sup>78</sup> In this way creation is helped to unfold in the way it is intended.

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<sup>78</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," pp. 34-39.

## CHAPTER IV

### MUTUALITY AND EDUCATION

For Buber, education is a conscious and willed "selection by man of the effective world; it means to give decisive effective power to a selection of the world which is concentrated and manifested in the educator."<sup>1</sup>

In Buber's view, the words conscious and willed are especially relevant to modern education. Whereas education is consciously provided today, in former times apprentices lived with a master and learned from participating in his work. They also learned, without his or their noticing it, "the mystery of personal life," but nowadays such a thing is exceptional, it happens "only on the heights."

Although the old form of educating is irretrievable, the loss is advantageous to society, because the way is now open to replace the incidental with a deliberate experiment toward equity and humaneness.

We can as little return to the state of affairs that existed before there were schools as to that which existed before, say, technical science. But we can and must enter into the completeness of education's growth to reality, into the perfect humanization of its reality. Our way is composed of losses that secretly become gains. Education has lost the paradise of pure instinctiveness and now consciously serves at the plough for the bread of life. It has been transformed; only in this transformation has it become visible.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

Yet Buber points to the former master as the model teacher, whose strength was marked by personal contact and non-interference. Even Socrates' decisive influence was not what he taught but through his life. "Contact is the primary word in education."<sup>3</sup> In Buber's pedagogy, then, educating is a paradoxical composite of "willing" and "non-doing", the teacher must do it "as though he did not."<sup>4</sup>

The genuine teacher wills to be a chooser of curriculum; the choice is a "gathering in" of the constructive forces of the world. The teacher lives what is chosen and becomes educated by it. "The forces of the world which the child needs for the building up of his substance must be chosen by the educator and drawn into himself."<sup>5</sup> In 1922 Buber said, "Education is opening up." Education is ready to serve without subservience to the political realm, "without fanaticism, prepared to wait and yet beginning--and reflecting on the mystery of how the starry sky, the forest, and everything unarbitrary educates in incomprehensible moments, the man already stands in his new work."<sup>6</sup>

The teacher wills to mediate those constructive forces not by enjoying or dominating children, for this "stifles the growth of their blessing." Rather, he meets pupils, accepts those he finds before him in all their diversity. "From this unerotic situation the greatness of the modern educator is to be seen."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Buber, A Believing Humanism: "On Contact," p. 102.

<sup>4</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," pp. 89-90.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>6</sup>Buber, A Believing Humanism: "The Task," p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 94.

In this chapter, the exposition of Buber's pedagogy along with his clarifying examples indicate there are I-Thou relationships which do not, by their nature, attain full mutuality. What does prevail in all I-Thou relationships is the mutuality of "being" and "action," that is, each being exists as a unique subject in its own right, and each in some sense responds to the address of otherness.

The rest of the chapter will focus on those elements of Buber's pedagogy which deal with goals, the nature of the child, character education, community, and knowledge theory.

### Goals

What goals determine the teacher's choice and mediation? Two priorities are discerned in Buber's writings: spontaneity of expression and the growth of character. Youthful spontaneity must not be suppressed, and the right opportunity must be provided for it to give what it can. The influence of character is the teacher's actual task. This influence is manifested at the point where the self-assertive, spontaneous child through the teacher's guidance becomes responsible for a Thou, while still retaining its selfhood and independence. The Thou is met in all things, subject matter and people, everything in nature is a potential Thou. Yet education is not a "purposeless streaming of all things." The teacher selects and guides.

### Nature of the Child

In 1925 Buber addressed the Third International Conference on Education at Heidelberg. Here he discusses the content and method of

education, but only in relation to the nature of the child and its significance for the teacher's work. He develops the connection between individual spontaneity and freedom on the one hand, and character (responsible participation) on the other. He expresses serious doubts concerning the topic of discussion, "The development of the creative powers of the child"--except for the last two words, the child, an undeniable reality. Buber questions the meaning of creativity, apparently assuming the Conference organizers to equate it with aesthetic achievement. He rejects such a limited concept of creativity, and he rejects any notion that aesthetics should be the major goal of education. Second, he opposes the view held by some progressive educators that education means only to let children "develop" spontaneously out of themselves and to preside over their development.

Consistent with his concept of the human being, Buber calls the "reality child" above all a phenomenon of uniqueness, both in his present manifestation and his potentiality. To an extent the child is already determined at birth. The child inherits a given disposition characteristic of all human beings, and is born into a given culture. But the fact of past life and culture must not obscure the other fact that in every hour as thousands of children are born, "the human race begins . . . a creative event if ever there was one, newness rising up, primal potential might." Buber could set no societal aim above that of education for the strengthening of the individual force of youth.

What greater care could we cherish or discuss than that this grace may not henceforth be squandered as before, that the might of newness may be preserved for renewal. . . .

The deeds of the generations now approaching can illumine the grey face of the human world or plunge it into darkness.<sup>8</sup>

He is clearly unselective of children in his judgment of unique potentiality for positive determination and educability: The part to be played in future history "by everyone alive today, by every adolescent and child is immeasurable, and immeasurable is our part if we are educators." In another context he says:

It is an inadmissible simplification to assume that in all children the same general treasure is hidden. Despite all common traits, we are ultimately without exception unica, and the treasure that is hidden in each child is something irreducibly personal. However cruelly injuries of all kinds affect the child from his mother's womb to school and beyond it, the primal fact of the positive determination of the person is to me certain.<sup>9</sup>

#### Spontaneous Expression

People are a part of creation and are purposeful participants in the transformation of the world, but are not literally creative. The meaning of creation was originally "only the divine summons to the life hidden in non-being," and later, metaphorically, the human genius for forming. The human "imaging of God is authenticated in action." Over the centuries the metaphor creative deteriorated, and in its lowest form was equated almost with literary ability. In designating one power of human expression, Buber chooses the term "instinct of origination."<sup>10</sup> This instinct is not limited to a select few--it exists in all people and reaches its completion in art.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>9</sup>Buber, A Believing Humanism: "Education," p. 98.

<sup>10</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 84.



This instinct is autonomous in that it does not derive from other instincts, such as the libido and the will to power. The tendency in psychology to derive the multiform person from a single element is really a generalization to all people of certain degenerate states in which a single instinct dominates the individual. That many such individuals exist in our times Buber attributes to "the inner loss of community and oppression." But the sick person does not represent what is essential to the nature of humankind.

What is natural to all children is to want to produce pictures, sounds, and ideas, to make something that was not there before, to be a subject of the event of production. This wish is not a sublimation of some pathological wish. Nor is it an urge for purposeless activity: children want to "set up or destroy, handle or hit," but never to "busy" themselves. Just witness the phenomenon of children engaged in the self-initiated construction of coarse, unrecognizable tools, and the astonishment shown at their own inventions. But even in destruction, the originative instinct begins to express itself and becomes dominant. Here Buber provides a telling example: A child tears up a sheet of paper or some other object, but is soon preoccupied with the forms of the pieces, then tries, still by tearing, to produce definite forms. Despite the value of one's product and the recognition it receives, the instinct cannot be identified with greed, "because it is not directed to 'having' but only to doing. . . . Here is pure gesture which does not snatch the world to itself, but expresses itself to the world."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

Such expression is a starting point from which the originators themselves are formed. Buber speaks of the person's growth into form so often imagined and lost, and the implications that has for the work of education. In putting something together children learn much that they can learn in no other way, its possibility, origin, and structure.<sup>12</sup> In I and Thou Buber writes that children must gain for themselves their own world by seeing, hearing, touching, and shaping it. "Creation reveals, in meeting, its essential nature as form. It does not spill itself into expectant senses, but rises up to meet the grasping senses."<sup>13</sup>

The effort to establish relation is already seen in the infant. Even when there seems to be no desire for nourishment, tiny hands reach out to meet something indefinite and become lovingly aware of the complete body of a toy animal. Searching glances settle on a red carpet pattern, and remain fixed there until "the soul of the red has opened itself." Unintelligible sounds later become conversation--"does it matter that it is perhaps with the simmering teakettle?" This expresses the child's "instinct for communion." It is the instinct to "make everything into Thou, to give relation to the universe, the instinct which completes out of its own richness the living effective action when a mere copy or symbol of it is given in what is over against him."<sup>14</sup>

A fine demonstration at the Heidelberg Conference was a performing choir of crippled children who, under the leadership of their

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-87.

<sup>13</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

teacher, were "released to a life of freely moving persons, rejoicing in their achievement." They exemplified what is "formable and forming" in children, knowing "how to shape sights and sounds in multiform patterns and also how to sing out their risen souls wildly and gloriously." But more, they showed how a "community of achievement" made known in glance and response, can be brought together.<sup>15</sup>

Here, in the example of children set off from other children by virtue of a physical limitation, Buber introduces his view that the decisive influence of learning is not limited to the release of an instinct; rather, it centers in the meeting of the educative forces with the released instinct.

#### Influence Toward the Thou

What becomes of the child's expression depends on the influence of the teacher. In the example just mentioned, pupils are led to mutual relation with the content of learning and with their classmates through the mutual relation established with their teacher. The implications for peer relations will be considered later on. Meanwhile there is found a transition from the self's involvement with form as an object to knowledge of form as a Thou. The pupil answers the demand of a form to be perceived as a subject in its own right.

Another specific example helps to clarify this movement; at the same time, it describes what the teacher must do to help bring it about. The example, drawing instruction, contrasts the authoritarian method with the freer one. The former began with rules and current patterns which pupils followed "either in apathy or in despair"; while the latter

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<sup>15</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 86.

encourages the individual expression of pupils who draw what they see before them or who draw what they remember having seen. Youthful spontaneity is suppressed by the compulsory practice, and the newer way stops short of educating. Buber adds to the child's free experiment the teacher's "delicate, almost imperceptible and yet important influence," that of criticism and guidance. The teacher individualizes:

The children encounter a scale of values that, however unacademic it may be, is quite constant, a knowledge of good and evil that, however individualistic it may be, is quite unambiguous. The more unacademic this scale of values, and the more individualistic this knowledge, the more deeply do the children experience the encounter. In the former instance the preliminary declaration of what alone was right made for resignation or rebellion.<sup>16</sup>

#### Toward the Human Thou

The capacity for mutuality existing in all children, then, is realized in relation to the created form through guidance from the teacher. But mutuality is here limited since the created form, of course, can never respond with consciousness. Rather, "mutuality itself as the door to our existence" is realized in communication with other human beings. So the urge in the child is to transform the world and even to meet a Thou in what is transformed, yet Buber's acknowledgment of this urge is not the same as the pedagogical belief of radically "free" educators that education is only a "liberation of the powers."

While committed to aesthetic creativity in education, Buber points out that an individual achievement is nevertheless a "one-sided event," painful and solitary, no matter how directly as being

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

"approached and claimed" by the art form, "as perceiving and receiving in . . . facing an idea which awaits embodiment." Even those artists of wide acclaim cannot know if their anonymous receivers appreciate their efforts. The teacher who leads the child to a community of achievement, a blend of the balanced curriculum and mutuality with other children, thereby educates the whole person of that child. Now there is shared participation in work and a partner who recognizes one's contribution. There is also someone to grasp one's hand "not as a 'creator' but as a fellow creature lost in the world . . . beyond the arts."<sup>17</sup>

True community depends on the genuineness of its individual members. Education for community therefore implies character education.

#### Character Education

"Education worthy of the name is essentially education of character," said Buber in 1939 in an address to the National Conference of Jewish Teachers of Palestine at Tel-Aviv. In this address Buber does not negate technical knowledge and functions, that which helps children find their way in the world. But his prior goal is the education of character, of which the technical is only a part. Character education fosters the growth of the self as a unified whole in relation to the surrounding world. Character is the connection between the child's given personality and the sequence of his actions and attitudes.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

Buber immediately cautions teachers to recognize the real limitations to what they can do to influence character--teachers gain humility by admitting they are only one of the multiple life forces affecting the character of their pupils. But at the same time they gain a sense of responsibility in knowing it is only they who will to educate and that they represent to their pupils a selection of what should be.

For the most part, children come to school with an expectation they will be taught subject matter, and they tend to accept their role as learners of the various subjects, "even if not overmuch." But character education is more problematic; it is not easily taught directly, and it is not a course of instruction in ethics. The teacher is advised by Buber to bear in mind that children tend to resist such methods to educate their characters.

I try to explain to my pupils that envy is despicable, and at once I see the resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying. I have made the fatal mistake of giving instruction in ethics, and what I said is accepted as current coin of knowledge; nothing of it is transformed into character-building substance.<sup>18</sup>

Another difficulty is that teachers are resisted precisely by children of independent character, especially those who seriously struggle with the question of good and evil. Such children "rebel when one dictates to them, as though it were some long established truth, what is good and what is bad; they rebel just because they have experienced over and over again how hard it is to find the right

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<sup>18</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "The Education of Character," p. 105.

way." Nor is teaching by subterfuge the way to educate character, for here even if the child does not catch on to the teacher's motive, the teacher himself suffers a loss of the directness which is his important strength.

How, then, does the teacher influence character? Access to pupils is through their confidence.<sup>19</sup> Teachers are humanly fallible, they cannot be perfect, but they must be "really there" for their pupils and must participate responsibly in their lives. Teachers cannot, however, be continually concerned for pupils either in thought or action. The important point is that when a teacher "has gathered the child into his life, then that subterranean dialogue, that steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endures. Then there is reality between them, there is mutuality." The child, lying with half-closed eyes in face of the lonely night, feels guarded and secure in the knowledge that his mother addresses him in a dialogue which never ceases. Children develop trust in the truth of existence because a nurturing human being exists for them: "Trust in the world because this human being exists--that is the most inward achievement in education."<sup>20</sup>

Buber depicts a situation in which a newly employed teacher begins with an attitude of trust in his pupils. The class is in chaos, it is "like the mirror of mankind, so multiform, so full of contradictions, so inaccessible." The pupils are noisy troublemakers, they stare at him impudently, and the teacher's first impulse is to rely on

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>20</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 98.

compulsion by giving orders. Instead he thinks, "I have not sought them out; I have been put here and have to accept them as they are--but not as they now are in this moment, no, as they really are, as they can become." He reads on a child's face, which is not beautiful or particularly intelligent, the question: "Who are you? Do you know something that concerns me? Do you bring me something?" The teacher then addresses the face with an ordinary question: "What did you talk about last in geography? The Dead Sea? Well, what about the Dead Sea?" But the question is stated in a way that provokes a spontaneous answer filled with meaning, an account of the child's impression of the awesome Dead Sea during a visit to its shores, and the class becomes attentive.<sup>21</sup>

Confidence is not won by laborious effort to win it. The aliveness of the teacher radiates out to children, affecting them most deeply, when no thought is given to affecting them. Ultimately, it is not the educational intention but the meeting between teacher and child which is productive. Pupils sense that the teacher is trustable, does not want to "make a business" out of them, but takes part in their lives and accepts them before wanting to influence them. At this point of trust in the educator as a person, children learn to ask. The responsibility of the teacher is not to dictate a code of ethics but to answer what is right and wrong in a particular situation. "A soul suffering from the contradictions of the world of human society, and of its own physical existence, approaches me with a question. By trying to answer it to the best of my knowledge and conscience I

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<sup>21</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," pp. 112-13.



help it to become a character that actively overcomes the contradictions."

Given this attitude of teachers toward their pupils, the will to participate in their lives and the establishment of mutual trust, all communication can now become a medium for the education of character: "Lessons and games, a conversation about quarrels in the class or about the problems of a world war."<sup>22</sup>

### Conflict

In an atmosphere of trust it is possible to engage pupils in open discussion, and out of this, sooner or later, conflict is bound to arise. Although the teacher must state his values forthrightly, he cannot count on total agreement, and must realize that conflicts are also educational if they take place in a wholesome atmosphere.

A class discussion concerning Jewish acts of reprisal against Arabs brought from a pupil the idea, It is a question of the profit of my people, past present, and future. The teacher asked, "But what was it that made those past generations of the Exile live? What made them outlive and overcome all their trials? Wasn't it that the cry 'Thou shalt not' never faded from their hearts and ears?" The pupil cried out, "But what have we achieved that way. . . . Do you call that life? We want to live!" Conflict of this kind seems to reach an impasse, since it involves more than opposition between two generations; it is one between a generation of faith in truth superior to man and a generation influenced by relativistic values. Buber believes, however, that conflict is the teacher's critical test.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

"But if he is the victor he has to help the vanquished to endure defeat; and if he cannot conquer the self-willed soul that faces him (for victories over souls are not so easily won), then he has to find a word of love which alone can help to overcome so difficult a situation."<sup>23</sup>

Buber recalls that a friend, a master of conversation, once argued with another friend equally skilled "but given more to objective fairness than to the play of the intellect." For the first man the discussion became a "duel" of words, he "did not speak with his usual composure and strength, but he scintillated, he fought, he triumphed. The dialogue was destroyed."<sup>24</sup> The purpose of discussion for Buber is clearly not a monological talking past the other, an impersonal exercise in dialectics. Communication is never a contest of wills.

The educator is not to rely on compulsion or propaganda. Compulsion means "humiliation"; its opposite is not unconditional freedom, but dialogue.<sup>25</sup> Propaganda means "depersonalization" and "sublimated violence," but the very world of the educator is comprised of individual persons. The teacher depicted by Buber is patient, sees "every personal life as engaged in . . . a process of actualization, and he knows from his own experience that the forces making for actualization are all the time involved in a microcosmic struggle with counterforces." The teacher does not wish to impose himself because he believes the actualizing forces to be "what is right established in a single and uniquely personal way," and is committed to help the

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 108-109.

<sup>24</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman," pp. 87-88.

<sup>25</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," pp. 91-92.

right to develop in that special form of the independent person. The propagandist relies on special pressures, feverish and nervous. He "does not really believe even in his own cause, for he does not trust it to attain its effect of its own power without his special methods, whose symbols are the loudspeaker and the television advertisement."<sup>26</sup> In true dialogue, the teacher responds to the occasion, at times quite directly, and other times with a simple suggestion, or an analogy stated "without spinning it out and tying together the threads"--the pupil has the task of working over what has been said and supplying the missing parts.<sup>27</sup>

Teachers who face a conflict in values with their pupils, then, cannot rely on the imposition of their attitudes in order to overcome the difficulty. According to Buber, the denial of the absolute reflects a sickness with which the human race has been afflicted. Today "we are standing on the ruins of the edifice whose tower was raised by Kant." It is self deceptive to believe that the disease can be cured by formulae which assert that "nothing is really as the sick person imagines," to call out, "Look! the eternal values!"<sup>28</sup>

#### Image of Character

Kerschensteiner's definition of character is "voluntary obedience to the maxims" and Dewey's the "interpenetration of good habits."

<sup>26</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Elements of the Interhuman," p. 83.

<sup>27</sup>Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim (New York: The Commentary Classics, 1958), p. 16.

<sup>28</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," pp. 110-111.

In Buber's conception, the teacher should indeed want for each child an acceptance of genuine norms and the formation of good habits. Discipline and order must be introduced, law has to be established, and the teacher can only hope that the law will be internalized in his pupils. But the teacher's real goal is what Buber calls "the great character" who responds to the challenge of what is unique in every situation, for whom such response means more than mere habitual obedience to fixed maxims, "since what is untypical in each situation remains unnoticed and unanswered." A great character is "one who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of a deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being in its willingness to accept responsibility."<sup>29</sup> From this his active life and even the diversity of challenging situations become unified for him.

Although the teacher cannot hope for every pupil the becoming of a great character, insight into the "structure of the great character" provides an image to bring before pupils in their formative years.

### Conscience

What is open to each child is the possibility to "elevate" his conscience. This is a task for which teachers can provide guidance by directing the child to the distorted relationship with his own self, and to thereby enter into a personal relationship with the absolute.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-11.

In Buber's essay "Guilt and Guilt Feelings" directed to the therapist, he opposes the modern assertion of psychologists that no real guilt exists, only guilt feeling and neurotic illness from violations of social convention. Freud wished to "relativize guilt feeling genetically," that is, to deny the ontic, existential guilt which is more than one's individual conception of it and the mere violation of social taboos. The human being is for Buber "the being who is capable of becoming guilty and is capable of illuminating his guilt" which exists consciously when he himself overcomes his resistance to it. People can set at a distance not only their world, but also themselves, as detached objects whom they can approve as well as censure.

According to Buber, there exist both groundless, neurotic guilt and existential guilt. The latter occurs "when someone injures an order of the human world whose foundations he knows and recognizes as those of his own existence and all common existence," such as "betrayal of a friend, or of his cause." Feeling the pain of guilt, the conscience responds in a threefold action of self-illumination, perseverance, and reconciliation. Buber suggests that a step towards illumination was taken by Joseph K in Kafka's Trial when he admitted to himself, "I always wanted to snatch at the world with twenty hands, and not for a very laudable motive, either." In the fullness of such self-illumination, one identifies and differentiates the person one was and the person one is intended to become. The personal, "dynamic" conscience perseveres in this self-identity. Whereas the neurotic conscience persists monologically in self-torment, the higher conscience takes the path of reconciliation by helping the injured

victim to overcome the consequences of one's action against him. This happens naturally out of a new disposition to serve the world constructively.<sup>31</sup>

The injured may be out of reach, yet "the wounds of the order-of-being can be healed in infinitely many other places than those at which they were inflicted."<sup>32</sup> This illustrates Buber's statement, the Thou "comes to bring you out; if it does not reach you, meet you, then it vanishes; but it comes back in another form. . . . Between you and it there is mutual giving: you say Thou to it and give yourself to it."<sup>33</sup>

The task of the teacher is not to remove the pain of a guilty conscience suffering from the loss of personal responsibility. In fact, the teacher, through meeting, ought even to awaken the pain by eliciting values which he can make credible in their application to a given situation and which lead to the "real attitude." For a "generation which honors the mystery in all its forms will no longer be deserted by eternity."<sup>34</sup> But the teacher can do no more than help the child gain the courage to distinguish for himself between those of his past and future actions, those which should be approved and those which should be disapproved. The private sphere of the child, that of the relation between the child and God, is not his legitimate affair.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Guilt and Guilt Feelings," pp. 121 ff.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>33</sup>Buber, I and Thou, pp. 32-33.

<sup>34</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," p. 117.

<sup>35</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Guilt and Guilt Feelings," p. 134. Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," p. 115.

The child must gradually learn to decide for himself with his whole being what he will and will not do, must choose "the constructive forces of the world," or else he becomes "sterile in soul." How can the child be educated to the many unrepeatable and unpredictable situations which confront him? Four points address this question: Buber acknowledges that people experience how hard it is to find the right way. Both human faith and human conscience can err, and both must place themselves in the hands of grace.<sup>36</sup> Second, the teacher "can show that even the great character is not born perfect, that the unity of his being has first to mature before expressing itself in the sequence of his actions and attitudes."<sup>37</sup> Third, the teacher is to help the pupil to experience widely and in depth by which the pupil gains insight into the truth of authentic existence.<sup>38</sup> And finally, one always strives to draw the right "line of demarcation."

Simon asserts that Buber, often falsely labeled a "doctrinaire ideologist," clearly reveals in his line of demarcation concept an attitude of realism. This line is drawn time and again between the absolute command and its relative answerability, for which no fixed rule can guide one since each situation is unique. Simon states another dilemma related to the question of choice: How can "a modicum of coordination between ethical and civic education . . . be reached in the unredeemed world?" Buber's answer is that you cannot remain guiltless, but be resolved "never to do more wrong that you

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<sup>36</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," p. 105.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>38</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Education and the World View," p. 104.

must in order to live." Two examples from politics are considered, the first concerning revolution and the second governmental control: Revolutions cannot take place without violence. Buber does not disapprove of revolutions without exception, but he insists that those who think them necessary make a prior resolution "to go so far and no farther." The insurgents must include not only their own right of self preservation, but also the right of others. As to the need for centralized government, Buber assumes that "there necessarily never will be freedom so long as man is such as he is, and for that time there will always be a state, which means compulsion. What is demanded is this: from day to day there should be no more state than is indispensable, and not less freedom than is admissable."<sup>39</sup>

#### Community

"Vital dissociation is the sickness of the peoples of our age," writes Buber. It exists alike in social groups characterized by individualism and collectivism. Whereas individualism sees the human being only in relation to himself, collectivism sees only society. Community, the third alternative, is the "overcoming of otherness in living unity."<sup>40</sup>

The type of individualism common to Western cultures tends "to understand the individual self . . . as the self simply and as the absolute. Despite all stress on the interest in the 'outer world' . . . what unmistakably rules here is the tendency toward the primacy of the

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<sup>39</sup>Simon, "Buber, the Educator," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 574.

<sup>40</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Education and the World View," p. 102.



individual existence and toward its self-glorification."<sup>41</sup> Collectivism glorifies the group, and it denies selfhood. It is identified with the "totalitarian countries" and with "the parties and the party-like groups in the so-called democracies." Passive allegiance to the collective and its values results from a fear in people of being left to depend on themselves "in this age of confusion."<sup>42</sup>

The reader is referred to Buber's Paths in Utopia for his intensive study of community, his religious socialism. Out of Buber's study of community, he concludes that the values underlying communal life, if they are to be transmitted, will first have to be reawakened in the new generations. The problem of regenerating man's spirit and redirecting human history is mainly a task of education.<sup>43</sup> Community, as such, need not be "founded." In the family, school, office, or factory, wherever historical destiny brings a group of people together in a common fold, there is room for its growth.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, an increase of the world's "community content" occurs through every comradely gesture in the gigantic apartment house and in the rationalized and bureaucratic institution.

Buber defines community in the most general sense as a connection of people,

who are so joined in their life with something apportioned to them in common or something which they have apportioned to

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<sup>41</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "What is Common to All," p. 97.

<sup>42</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education of Character," p. 115.

<sup>43</sup>Ephraim Fischhoff, "Introduction," in Paths in Utopia, by Martin Buber, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. xi.

<sup>44</sup>Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 135.

themselves in common that they are, just thereby, joined with one another in their life. The first and second unity are not meant as continually actual, but as of such a nature that no essential hindrance stands in the way of its transition from time to time from a vital latency to an actuality.<sup>45</sup>

Buber has been interpreted to mean that the immediacy of relation is founded upon the fact of community. Buber corrected this interpretation: "Rather, in my view, it is the other way round: the community is founded upon the immediacy of relation." To bring about a true transformation of society, human relations must undergo a change.<sup>46</sup> In order to understand Buber's particular concept of community, one must know that he views as its core an atmosphere of mutuality between its members, and that such mutuality is made possible by their common, immediate relation to a "living Center." This is a spiritual Center, that which transcends immediate egoistic concerns. "It is not the periphery, the community, that comes first, but the radii, the common quality of relation with the Center. This alone guarantees the authentic existence of community."<sup>47</sup> For Buber, even for those who believe themselves to be godless, the Center resides in a faith in that which is suprapersonal: There is meaning in creation, "there is purpose to the human race, one we have not made up ourselves, or agreed to among ourselves."<sup>48</sup>

Mutuality between community members rests not on a state of constant togetherness, but on a quality of openness. Number and

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<sup>45</sup>Buber, "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 20.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>47</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 115.

<sup>48</sup>Martin Buber, Israel and the World (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 186.

space are critical factors. Buber calls the Kibbutz of six or seven hundred people a "social monster."

Any place which threatens to become as large as this should be organized on the basis of smaller groups, interlocking with one another. Then the individual can feel a part of his group, within which he can discuss his problems without feeling lost in the efficient, smoothly run collective.

It is important also that enough space exists around a person so that his individuality may remain intact. If the density does not allow a community member "to look at his comrade, to have some perspective, he will not be able to acquire any relation to him. And then the fact that they follow the same cause will not be enough to avert a poverty of bonds."<sup>49</sup>

Still, size and space are not the primary determinants of community:

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. A real community is one which in every point of its being possesses, potentially at least, the whole character of community.<sup>50</sup>

Buber states an additional component: the thing in common, a shared cause and task around which communal relations take place. The living community thrives "where people have the real things of their common life in common; where they can experience, discuss and administer them together. . . ." <sup>51</sup> To this end it is understood that each each member can contribute something uniquely important. Wherever

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<sup>49</sup>Hodes, Martin Buber, p. 199.

<sup>50</sup>Buber, Paths in Utopia, p. 145.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

genuine human society has developed, it has always been on the basis of mutual "functional autonomy, mutual recognition, and mutual responsibility. . . . The individual human being, despite all the difficulties and conflicts, felt himself at home at once in the clan, felt himself approved and affirmed in his functional independence and responsibility."<sup>52</sup>

Responsibility in communal life implies a hard, existential reality, never a mere sentiment:

[Community is] a living form that wants to be shaped in the daily stuff of this earth. Community should not be made into a principle; it, too, should always satisfy a situation rather than an abstraction. The realization of community, like the realization of any idea, cannot occur once and for all time; always it must be the moment's answer to the moment's question, and nothing more. . . . Community is never a mere attitude of mind, and if it is feeling it is an inner disposition that is felt. Community is the inner disposition or constitution of a life in common, which knows and embraces in itself hard "calculation," adverse "chance," the sudden access of "anxiety." It is community of tribulation and only because of that community of spirit; community of toil and only because of that community of salvation.<sup>53</sup>

Responsibility implies free decision. Community members must decide for themselves what they will and will not do; they must also have a say in the determination of the community to which they will belong.

Finally, the community so based has a committed leader who helps its members "hallow life" and from just this starting point to live as brothers and sisters with one another.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>54</sup>Buber, "Responsa," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 68.

Peer Relations and Mainstreaming

The regeneration of community is mainly the task of education, but there can be no learning apart from the doing. Buber warns against the severance of learning and deed, against "cutting off the propagation of values" from action, since one thereby fails to reflect on one's purpose, thus one's act may become the "very caricature" of what one set out to do. On the other hand, "It is bad to have teaching without the deed, worse when the teaching is one of action."<sup>55</sup>

In an educational setting, therefore, the teaching and learning of communal values are inseparable from the living of the same values in that setting. Buber's pedagogy implies that education for community aims at both the near and the remote of one's world, at both present and future in its effect. The atmosphere of community evident among the performing choir of children cited earlier in this chapter was, for Buber, more important even than the integrity of their music which moved him so deeply. The description of his own class in a Polish school conveys a melancholic memory of the lack of real community:

The language of instruction and of social intercourse was Polish, but the atmosphere was that, now appearing almost unhistorical to us, which prevailed or seemed to prevail among the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian empire: mutual tolerance without mutual understanding. The pupils were for the largest part Poles, in addition to which there was a small Jewish minority. . . . Personally the pupils got on well with one another; but the two groups as such knew almost nothing about each other.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Buber, Israel and the World, p. 141.

<sup>56</sup>Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 8.

In his old age, Buber was visited increasingly by young people who came to him for counsel. One such group was from Kibbutz Afikim. Pinchas, a teacher, brought up the fact that many immigrant children came to the kibbutz from various places and widely different backgrounds, and some were from "problem" homes. The other children understood that these newcomers "had to be absorbed into the life of the kibbutz, but, practically speaking, the established kibbutzniks were not ready for this. It was very difficult to get them to accept the immigrant children." Buber called this rejection a display of "collective egoism." He fully realized how difficult it is to combat such an attitude, and suggested no attempt to force relationships. Neither did he recommend that teachers try to ignore the situation (to acknowledge merely the ubiquity of pecking orders, it always goes hard for some). Rather, his answer to Pinchas was "experiment." He recommended as a first approach the way of explanation:

The way of explanation means telling them that what they are doing is detrimental to their way of life. You must explain this both at formal gatherings of the young people and in private conversation. You can prepare the ground and atmosphere for the group meetings through these private talks. But it needs a certain knowledge of psychology.<sup>57</sup>

Later a solidarity of the Kibbutz in support of the immigrant group may have to be built up to stand against those who would exclude them. "But I don't propose that you should follow this path at once. I am, generally speaking, for experiments--for trying. . . . I have no rigid principles. . . . I act according to the situation."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Hodes, Martin Buber, p. 197.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

Model of Openness

The power of personal example is emphasized as a means of influence:

You cannot come along suddenly and say, Now let us invent some values! But if in your class at school there are some children from families of new immigrants, and you treat them in your everyday contact with them as it is prescribed in the admonition, "Love your neighbor as yourself," then that will be a value, something definite and worthwhile.

The teacher should not talk about it in this light. But if, for example, you would . . . act in this way, then certainly something will come out of it.<sup>59</sup>

Of all teacher qualities, the ultimate and critical one for Buber is the teacher's commitment to his pupils. He examines very carefully the meaning of this commitment. Without question, many teachers exhaust themselves in the work of giving to children, but for Buber the real issue is the nature of the giving and whether it is selective or broadly encompassing. More than anyone, the true teacher practices and exemplifies welthaftes Wirken, the love of being. One rightly chooses one's spouse and close friend, but "the modern educator finds his pupil there before him."<sup>60</sup> For the lover of being, "Good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly, become successively real to him; that is, set free they step forth in their singleness and confront him as Thou."<sup>61</sup>

Every group of children is a heterogeneous group, and every teacher is allotted the heterogeneous, randomly assembled. They are a confusing mix, "like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all." The typical teacher

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 124-25.

<sup>60</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 94.

<sup>61</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 15.

faces the uncooperative, the slow, the deformed--the different. "Either [the teacher] takes on himself the tragedy of the person, and offers an unblemished daily sacrifice, or the fire enters his work and consumes it."<sup>62</sup> The egoist educator is moved by what Buber calls "inclination," seeks to enjoy and dominate people--to manipulate them. "Education, the peculiar essence bearing this name, excludes precisely this desire."<sup>63</sup> In this sense, the teacher becomes an objective ascetic, but he is a paradoxical ascetic who rejoices in the world, or a realm of it for which he accepts responsibility for his influence but not his interference.

If the teacher divides children hierarchically according to individual competencies, he is to act not out of the motive to enjoy a select group, but rather out of concern for children as learners. Still, the teacher is to proceed with great caution and constantly re-examine his decision. Buber states the following:

If this educator should ever believe that for the sake of education he has to practice selection and arrangement, then he will be guided by another criterion than that of inclination, however legitimate this may be in its own sphere; he will be guided by the recognition of values which is in his glance as an educator. But even then his selection remains suspended, under constant correction by the special humility of the educator for whom the life and particular being of all his pupils is the decisive factor to which his "hierarchic" recognition is subordinated. For in the manifold variety of the children the variety of creation is placed before him.<sup>64</sup>

Teachers, like doctors, clergy, and other members of the helping professions, must be regulated by a special objectivity, the reliable

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<sup>62</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 94.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 95.



counterpoint of giving and withholding oneself, both intimacy and distance. Such objectivity is not a calculated stance, but arises from the living tact of the spiritual person.

If this structure and its resistance are not respected then a dilettantism will prevail which claims to be aristocratic, though in reality it is unsteady and feverish; to provide it with sacred names and attitudes will not help it past its inevitable consequence of disintegration.<sup>65</sup>

How can the attitude of selectivity be transformed to an attitude of openness? How can the teacher love indiscriminately the being of children? This attitude is made possible, Buber says, through the dialogical experience of inclusion, or making the other present, by which a common event is lived through from the standpoint of the other without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of one's own activity. Inclusion is the very core of the teacher's relation to his pupil, but it is a one-sided relation, because the pupil does not experience the educating of the educator.

The conscious will to influence children creates a great paradox for the teacher; if the teacher tries to exercise this influence only from his idea of the pupil and excludes the pupil's own reality, at just that point his will to influence is impaired by arbitrariness. Buber refers to the accounts of Pestalozzi's teaching method to illustrate how easily arbitrary self-will can be mixed with will in even the noblest of teachers. Hence, from time to time the teacher must experience his own action anew from the other side: "It is not enough for him to imagine the child's individuality, nor to experience him directly as a spiritual person and then to acknowledge him. Only

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

when he catches himself 'from over there,' and feels how it affects one, how it affects this other human being, does he recognize the real limit," change arbitrariness to true will, and renew his legitimacy.<sup>66</sup>

The teacher who practices inclusion experiences at once the tension of being limited by otherness and being bound to the other:

He feels from "over there" the acceptance and the rejection of what is approaching (that is, approaching from himself, the educator)--of course often in a fugitive mood or an uncertain feeling; but this discloses the real need and absence of need in the soul. . . . In learning from time to time what this human being needs and does not need at the moment, the educator is led to an ever deeper recognition of what the human being needs in order to grow.

The growth needs of both child and teacher are revealed by inclusion.

The educator is led to the recognition of what he . . . is able and what he is unable to give of what is needed--and what he can give now, and what not yet. So the responsibility for this realm of life allotted and entrusted to him . . . points him to that which seems impossible, and yet is somehow granted to us--to self education.<sup>67</sup>

#### Theory of Knowledge

In the school community the common purpose and task is learning. The reason for learning is to know the truth. The absolute or ultimate truth is a single one, says Buber, but human relation to truth is a human truth, and human beings have no other truth. This ultimate truth is given to the human being, therefore, only as it enters, "reflected as in a prism," into his true life relations, in his participation in being.<sup>68</sup> This means, first, that perfection realization of truth is

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>68</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Goethe's Concept of Humanity," p. 79.

not given to us. Second, human truth is bound up with personal responsibility; the existential person is able to transcend both collective and individual judgments rooted merely in egoistic and utilitarian motivations. In order to do this, the existentialist, the one who wills for the truth, brings his grasp of absolute values into his everyday relations and "finds the truth to be true only when he stands the test."<sup>69</sup>

All human knowing of an object is through relation to that object. There are two ways of relating and knowing: the existential or personal, and the conceptual.<sup>70</sup> The first is I-Thou knowing and the second is I-It knowing. I-Thou knowing perceives the whole, imagines the reality of the object through immediate, personal meeting with it from which the learner derives meaning. The meeting is always exclusive to the knower and the known. I-It knowing is the detached objectification of that which has been made present. It is concerned with attributes, comparisons, and classifications, which can act either to enrich or obstruct the meaning discovered in I-Thou knowledge.

#### I-Thou Knowing

Earlier in the chapter reference was made to Buber's account of a teacher's first meeting with his pupils. The process of knowing began with a problem, the mutual contradiction of teacher and pupils whose perspectives were diametrically opposed. The teacher set the pupils at a distance allowing them to exist as they were; he accepted the very situation as it was sent to him. In so doing, the possibility

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<sup>69</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Question to the Single One," pp. 81-82.

<sup>70</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Man and His Image Works," p. 163.

was open to him to begin to know the concrete existence and the potentiality of each individual. Then the teacher began to know one pupil directly as a Thou when he perceived and responded to the pupil's question and thereby entered into dialogue, not to use but to meet him. Another example of I-Thou knowing is Buber's description of a drawing class (also cited earlier). The pupil perceived the trusted teacher's valuation of his freely produced sketch, experienced more fully the presence or active quality of the form, "was drawn to reverence for it," and responded to its possibility, to what it could actively become through his own action. He learned a selection of the constructive forces beyond the motivation of using or getting.

Ideas of reverence for the object and activity of the object (as opposed to detachment and passivity) are central to Buber's concept of I-Thou knowing. For Buber, authentic art, science, philosophy, and all other authentic endeavors are indeed confirming and loving experiences. What one extracts and combines is only the passivity of things, but their activity reveals itself to the loving person who knows them.<sup>71</sup> In this connection, Buber refers to biblical Hebrew: The decisive event for knowing is to embrace lovingly. It is "not that one looks at an object, but that one comes in touch with it."<sup>72</sup>

#### Alternation of I-Thou and I-It Knowing

"Every essential knowledge is in its origin contact with an existing being and in its completion possession of an enduring concept." This means that in lived life the two aspects of relation,

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<sup>71</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "With a Monist," p. 29.

<sup>72</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, p. 56.

I-Thou and I-It, alternate with one another "cooperatively" in knowledge attainment. Applied to interhuman relation, one moment a person is over against another, sees him present, and relates to him exclusively as such. "In the other moment he sees everything else collected around him and from time to time singles out, observes, explores, applies, and uses. Both these moments are included in the dynamic of lived life." Thinking has dialogical moments alongside of monological ones. The concept, or the It, of reason originates "ever anew from the fulguration of the Thou relationship that still affords no objective knowledge. Now the transposition into the structured order of It takes place. . . ."73

In science a person and what he stands over against is only presence, the contact of the unique with the unique. What an "original" investigator "finds" he discovers precisely in these I-Thou contacts, for instance, when the intention of the author of a text shines forth to the genuine philologist. Certainly, the scientist must step back and detach himself from the concrete meeting "in order to gain general insights or even exact formulae, but at the beginning of the way he is ever again led by the genius of meetings until it can deliver him to the reliable spirit of objectification."74

Teachers necessarily carry with them a store of conceptual knowledge which bears upon the real meeting with their pupils. They also derive from the meeting new concepts influential of future personal contacts during the on-going teaching and learning process. Similarly, children prior and subsequent to contact with their art form, abstract

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<sup>73</sup>Buber, "Replies to My Critics," in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p. 692.

<sup>74</sup>Buber, "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 40.

certain general principles continually refined which bear upon this and other meetings with the Thou of their art.

The It of reason helps the human being to know with greater precision, to "get to the bottom," by setting right an error in his sense perception. But, in Buber's view, reason "cannot replace the smallest perception of something particular and unique with its gigantic structure of general concepts, cannot by means of it contend in the grasping of what here and now confronts me."<sup>75</sup>

#### Sharing of Knowledge

In the mode of group life between people in mutual communication, the unique person attains what Buber calls the "We." We show one another what exists, describe for one another, and each, supplementing the other, helps him to have a "world-shape, a world."

Speech [spoken or silent] in its ontological sense was at all times present wherever men regarded one another in the mutuality of I and Thou; wherever one showed the other something in the world in such a way that from then on he began really to perceive it; wherever one gave another a sign in such a way that he could recognize the designated situation as he had not been able to before; wherever one communicated to the other his own experience in such a way that it penetrated the other's circle of experience and supplemented it as from within, so that from now on his perceptions were set within a world as they had not been before. All this flowing ever again into a great stream of reciprocal sharing of knowledge-- thus came to be and thus is the living We . . . which, where it fulfills itself, embraces the dead who once took part in it through what they have handed down to posterity.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Buber, "Respona," Philosophical Interrogations, pp. 53-54.

<sup>76</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "What is Common to All," p. 106.

## CHAPTER V

### MUTUALITY AND EDUCATIONAL MAINSTREAMING

In the beginning of this study it was posited that the needs of handicapped pupils are best satisfied in the setting where an atmosphere of mutuality already exists, that mutuality is a necessary condition of true mainstreaming. The purpose now is to see why it is a condition by applying Martin Buber's particular concept of mutuality. An attempt will be made to do this in the following pages, which summarize and develop several Buberian ideas of mutuality related to the child as participant, the teacher as participant, peer relations, and ethics and knowledge.

The "teacher" referred to is in all cases the one into whose class the handicapped child is mainstreamed. In team teaching which combines, say, a regular and a special education teacher, the two, like parents, share responsibility for a heterogeneous group of children ever dividing the merging according to individual involvements and needs. Each teacher has something unique to contribute, yet the roles of each so overlap that no major obstacle stands in the way of the pupil's contact with other pupils and with the main thrust of the teaching and learning endeavor.

The Child as Participant in the Mainstream Class

1. Mainstreaming depends upon the teacher's valuation of what children can become. Mutuality implies that each child in a learning community is valued as a potentially active participant of that community. This requires a wholistic view of uniqueness.

Buber's educational convictions derive not from a fixed normative content or educational strategy, but from his anthropology which asks, What does it mean to be a unique person? Two aspects are treated. First, he recognizes humanity as unique among the categories in nature, and second, he recognizes the fact of uniqueness within the human category.

What is unique to the human category is the distinctive way in which its members relate to their world: they are given a spiritual power which struggles to comprehend and give order to the world through bodily participation in it. Spirit is not to Buber an ethereal or ghost-like quality. It is manifested by people in the earthly, everyday communication of mutuality and dialogue, as much as can be realized in the little bit of territory to which they owe their attention. This power conquers the confusing disorder and gives form to things in picture, sound, and idea. Through human association it gives form to community.<sup>1</sup> It is concluded that mainstreaming, as any educational endeavor, requires that teachers proceed from the realization that all people without exception, all children, are endowed with a strong and active

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<sup>1</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", pp. 197-98.



spiritual force: each wants to participate in the becoming of things and wants to become whole by way of the mutual giving and receiving between the I and the Thou. Each child regardless of functional limitation is positively determined and defined in this way.

The single goal of participation is reached in multiple ways according to the uniqueness of individuals. On perceiving a given child, the teacher recognizes its distance or "oppositeness" as a self with a separate identity, and this sets the stage for relation to the child as either a Thou or an It. I-Thou synthesizes, sees the child in its wholeness as irreducible to attributes. It is true that within this wholeness there are qualities that limit and qualities that free one's participation. For example, the child may enter the classroom as highly dependent, recalcitrant, deaf, or slow to read, and such limitation is a real phenomenon not to be ignored, but dealt with. It is seen, however, as an aspect of the child's entire being whose nature it is to strive for unified growth in the way particular to it.

I-Thou is the opposite of the radical I-It knowing which consistently defines people by their limitations. I-Thou knowing imagines the other's wholeness as being and becoming. I-It knowing reduces the other to an object--pulls out from it a single attribute, categorizes, compares, and assigns a fixed label generalized to the whole. The labeled part may not refer to an impairment at all. Sex, age, height, and skin color are examples of such attributes, just as are intellectual giftedness, nationality, and religious affiliation.

Gordon Allport's wholistic view of uniqueness corresponds with Buber's. Allport notes that people think naturally with the aid of

categories. A label "cuts slices, abstracts from a concrete reality some one feature only with respect to this one feature. The very act of classifying forces us to overlook all other features, many of which might offer a sounder basis than the rubric we select." Some labels are exceedingly salient and powerful. Labels which refer to some highly visible feature are of this type, for example, black, Oriental, as are labels which point to an outstanding incapacity--feeble-minded, cripple, blind person. They are labels of primary potency. "These labels act like shrieking sirens, deafening us to all finer discriminations which we might otherwise perceive." Even though the blindness of one person and the darkness of pigmentation of another "may be defining attributes for some purposes, they are irrelevant and 'noisy' for others." Only one's proper name can refer to the whole of one's nature. "Thus each label we use, especially those of primary potency, distracts our attention from concrete reality. The living, breathing, complex individual--the ultimate unit of human nature--is lost to sight."<sup>2</sup>

This partial way of perceiving, belonging to the sphere of the I-It, shuts out the ineffable Thou in its complexity and unity, and its power to participate in the world.

2. Mainstreaming presupposes the teacher's understanding of the meaning of prejudice and its effects.

When the I-It perception is fixed and enduring, it becomes a concept which may take the form of prejudice. Prejudice is an inflexible

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<sup>2</sup>Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), pp. 175-76.

attitudinal favorableness or unfavorableness which accompanies a prior and unsupported value judgment. Allport identifies gross overgeneralization and denigration as the two basic ingredients of negative prejudice.<sup>3</sup> His investigation suggests that prejudice at times stems from conformity to folkways, but that much of it is also fashioned and sustained by self-gratifying considerations.<sup>4</sup> In either case, the reality of the unique other is unknown, relation is partial and instrumental. The other is merely observed as an object, which in turn sets the stage for the possibility of control and exploitation. Wolfensberger points out that many societies have condoned the destruction of people viewed only in terms of a weakness, inadequacy, or handicap. As a more humane alternative to destruction, the different person can be segregated from the mainstream of society and placed at its periphery:

We have numerous examples of this: we segregate the Indian in reservations, and the Negro in the ghetto; the aged are congregated in special homes, ostensibly for their own good, and these homes are often located at the periphery of, or remote from, population centers; the emotionally disturbed and the retarded are commonly placed in institutions far in the countryside; and we have (or have had) "dying rooms" in our hospitals to save us the unpleasantness of ultimate deviancy.<sup>5</sup>

However, the I-It perception may be only a transitory occurrence. Allport notes a natural fear in infants of the strange. It takes several minutes, perhaps several hours, for infants to "warm up" to the stranger. They may show initial fear if the stranger wears eye-glasses, or if the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Wolf Wolfensberger, Normalization: The Principles of Normalization in Human Services (Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1972), p. 24.

stranger's expressive movements are unfamiliar.<sup>6</sup> Even handicapped people have acknowledged, in common with other adults, at least momentary distraction and anxiety at times on sudden first encounter with persons with noticeable handicaps. Such temporary reaction to the unexpected and the different does not constitute prejudice.

The separation of human groups is often the result of what Allport calls an "automatic cohesion," which also has nothing to do with prejudice. That human groups tend to stay apart is at times explained by the principles of ease, least effort, congeniality, or pride in one's culture. He points out, however, that once this separation exists the ground is laid for all sorts of psychological elaboration. "People who stay apart have few channels of communication. They easily exaggerate the difference between groups, and readily misunderstand the grounds for it. And, perhaps most important of all, the separateness may lead to genuine conflicts of interest, as well as many imaginary conflicts."<sup>7</sup> The lack of communication even among people who exist together in space is for both Allport and Buber a primary concern, and it is central to the problem of mainstreaming.

The literature contains extensive documentation of the ways in which exaggerated difference takes the form of false role generalization. Wolfensberger's historical review describes certain roles thrust on people, roles which show a remarkable transcendence of time, place and culture, and most of which reflect clear-cut prejudice. His description of these roles include those of the person as subhuman

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<sup>6</sup>Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, p. 286.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

organism (e.g., animal, vegetable, changeling), as menace, as unspeakable object of dread, as object of ridicule, as diseased organism, as object of pity, as eternal child, and as holy innocent.

Some corollaries of the subhuman conceptualization are" attrition of animal-like qualities or even skills; belittling of the learning capacity; abrogation of a sense of esthetics; need for extraordinary controls . . . abrogation of human emotions, sensibilities, shame. . . ."8

Buber has noted that solicitude does not necessarily set a person's life in direct relation with the life of another, but may only imply one person's solicitous help in relation with the other's lack and need of it. In a similar vein, Wolfensberger writes that the object of pity attitude is usually benevolent, but it may be devoid of respect. The "sour humanists," for example, might even look upon the recipient of services as entitled to basic assistance and sustenance but not as entitled to the "luxuries, frills, or extras" which others enjoy. The holy innocent generalization is well disposed, yet it implies a reverse form of dehumanization by elevating a human being almost above the human level. Wolfensberger acknowledges the reality of certain child-like traits which may exist in retarded persons without implying that such persons are either holy in an exclusive sense or eternal children.

The segregative effects of the generalizations Wolfensberger describes are more or less apparent. One of the least obvious and clear-cut is the impression of the handicapped as diseased.

To Wolfensberger, "the disease model can be expressed in two variants, one of these embodying the best tradition of medical service

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<sup>8</sup>Wolfensberger, Normalization, p. 18.

to fellow humans, and the other one being concerned with health but not with human values. The latter can be likened to veterinary medicine, and is particularly apt to be encountered in residential institutions."<sup>9</sup> He notes, too, that there often exists a pessimistic preoccupation with the issue of curability versus incurability. When this preoccupation occurs in education it constitutes a major deterrent to mainstreaming.

3. The view of the child as defective leads naturally to an exaggerated effort to remediate.

Literature indicates the mainstreaming trend in its present stage is largely a one-sided effort to change the handicapped through remedial instruction. There is less evidence suggesting a substantial coinciding effort to make the structure of the regular class conducive to their inclusion.

Education obviously implies for the pupil a continuing process of change, but in the relation of I-It, the self may try to change the essential state of the other, to deprive it of its distance and independence. In this connection, Aimé Labregère, adviser of the French Ministry of Education, hypothesizes a universal trend toward a focus on defect and on remediation of the handicapped (the pupil is above all defective, sick, deficient), which occurs with the advent of the right to equality of educational opportunity. Labregère suggests this to be a historical stage tending to follow the stage of compulsory education and preceding the stage of true integration (mainstreaming). Education is competitive and selective. The competition is based on a norm which

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

the pupil is supposed to reach by means of "vigorous action on his defect." Such an approach implies that equality of opportunity requires inequality in the measures taken for the benefit of those disadvantaged by their handicap. It contains "the seeds of an unlimited notion of handicap." Moreover, "based on comparison with a norm which is after all variable, it encourages for the purpose of effectively applying large-scale remedial measures, the setting apart of the handicapped." The "segregative aspects, both direct and indirect," are thus suggested.<sup>10</sup>

A related factor in segregation is the misuse of assessments. In order to identify the nature of the deficiency to be remedied, special education theorists tend to recommend the use of scientifically validated tests and systematic observations conducted by classroom teachers and by specialists. They suggest also the use of information available in pupil files which contain educational-medical histories, and they recommend direct communication between teacher and specialists about the child. Some information so derived helps in important ways to provide for the child's education and general well being, and some is clearly crucial--evidence of hearing or visual loss, for example, resulting in corrective medical prescription or modification of teaching to accommodate the difficulty. Task analysis tailored to individual ability can provide a structure by which retarded persons are helped to acquire important life skills.

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<sup>10</sup>Aimé Labregère, "Conclusions," in Case Studies in Special Education: Cuba, Japan, Kenya, Sweden, by Unesco (Paris: Unesco Press, 1974), pp. 175-76.

Buber would endorse scientific assessments whenever they open the world more fully to children. Yet he would never equate them with real knowing, since they lack immediacy and see the person not as a whole, but in selected parts and functions. Exclusive reliance on this method corresponds precisely to his idea of objectification.

Scientific method, in fact, is man's most highly perfected development of the I-It, or subject-object, way of knowing. Its methods of abstracting from the concrete actuality and of largely negating the inevitable difference between observers reduce the I in so far as possible to the abstract knowing subject and the It in so far as possible to the passive and abstract object of thought. Just for these reasons scientific method is not qualified to discover the wholeness of man.<sup>11</sup>

Buber would also want communication between colleagues on behalf of children, but he would ask if anyone is communicating with, not only about, the pupil in question.

For Buber, real knowing means becoming aware of the signs of address in a living relationship. Peter Schrag and Diane Dvoky censure the "proliferating of categories" assigned to children in the schools; the system may define all sorts of things and may attach all sorts of names, yet too often the issue is conformity, not "a child's silent agony."<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Hobbs asserts that intervention "should be focused on reducing disturbance within the system as a whole, not just on doing something to the child."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Friedman, "Introductory Essay," in Knowledge of Man, pp. 19-20.

<sup>12</sup>Peter Schrag and Diane Dvoky, The Myth of the Hyperactive Child (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), pp. 24, 117.

<sup>13</sup>Nicholas Hobbs, The Futures of Children (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975), p. 236.



Education does require the recognition of functional handicaps and interventions which help children to overcome those handicaps. Thus Annie Sullivan's "remediation" of Helen Keller was effective and legitimate. In Conrad Aiken's Silent Snow, Secret Snow, Paul's progressive withdrawing behavior was a summons to the serious attention of adults before his breakdown occurred.<sup>14</sup>

Buber would endorse only those interventions which help the child's becoming as a person, never the imposition of narrowly fixed norms. According to Buber, there is not and never has been a fixed educational norm, only norms of different eras and societies to which education has complied. He attributes to modern culture a dissolution of spirituality and a "pantechanical mania," with its emphasis on material welfare and the instant mastery of every situation,<sup>15</sup> an emphasis particularly unsuited to the handicapped and mainstreaming. Robert Heiny notes a focus in special education on "code breaking" associated with the mechanics of reading.<sup>16</sup> In reaction to the technical, a few educators choose the arts as the logical alternative, but this too can be rigidly applied--children viewed as uncreative in the arts, if the defect model were operative, would like their slow-reading counterparts become the focus of undue analysis and remediation.

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<sup>14</sup>Conrad Aiken, "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," In Two and Twenty: A Collection of Short Stories, by Ralph H. Singleton (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 170-90.

<sup>15</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Dialogue," p. 39.

<sup>16</sup>Robert W. Heiny, "Renaissance or Retreat for Special Educators: Issues to Explore before 1984," Journal of Special Education 10 (Winter 1976): 420.

Whatever the norm may be, if it dominates the child's will to take part authentically, remediation assumes an exaggerated importance. It is taken alone, for its own sake, instead of both an end and a means to participation. This in turn creates a conception of the child as powerless appendage ever remediated through supplementary activity, not a genuine member of the group in mutual relation with teacher and peers. Mainstreaming means relation which encourages the whole child's shared participation in the life of the school. The view of the child as defective relates primarily to some handicapping feature whether real or not, and it thereby obstructs participation. But the very life of the school is rooted in the reality of its pupils whose human need is to be educated in and for community. As Buber writes, education is to engage children "in fruitful intercourse with the world." The conventional education "sets factory-made human goods, all stamped alike," in place of the free sons and daughters of a free nation.<sup>17</sup>

#### The Teacher as Participant in the Mainstream Class

1. Genuine mainstreaming requires that teachers recognize their own power to participate responsibly in the lives of children. Teacher participation is characterized by a confirming attitude, the root of mutual trust and confidence between teacher and pupil.

Of the professions, Buber holds teaching in high esteem. In fact, he calls the effective teacher "a representative of the true God."

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<sup>17</sup>Martin Buber, Israel and the World: "On National Education" (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 155.

The notable quality of genuine teachers, he believes, is their capacity to love pupils in a way that is ascetic, since their love and nurturance are given freely to the more problematic, as well as to children who are mentally and physically able, to those who cooperate and in general create no special difficulty for the teacher. An attitude of mutuality which includes the presence of the other is meant, not only a feeling. This attitude resists the strictly normative and the competitive in favor of what is uniquely possible to the individual. The teacher "must really mean him as the definite person he is in his potentiality and his actuality."<sup>18</sup>

It does not follow from Buber's idea of the teacher as ascetic that a given teacher's ability to educate extends to every child, regardless of the child's nature and regardless of the availability of resources, but it means that each pupil met in the course of educating is approached by the teacher as a unique Thou in full equality with his classmates. What matters is an attitude of wanting to be accessible to pupils. The immediate inclination of the teacher is not to remove the different child, nor to describe and relate primarily to some handicapping feature. The genuine teacher is disposed to confirm and educate, rather than cater to a select group who are enjoyed in the manner of "dilettantism."

The insecurity felt by young newcomers to school is pronounced in a good many handicapped children. Their feelings derive from a past filled with I-It relationships; they have been treated as objects of pity and ridicule, as holy innocents, as diseased, and so on. If

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<sup>18</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 132.

Buber's humanistic philosophy is applied, handicapped children in mainstream education experience neither rejection nor grudging tolerance, not even pity, but an openness to their presence and a confirmation of their being. Out of that, a mutual confidence and trust grows between teacher and child--the presupposition of educating and mainstreaming. Mutuality is a presupposition--much depends on the teacher's awakening the I-Thou relationship in the pupil, too, who means and confirms the teacher as this unique person.<sup>19</sup>

2. The teacher participates also through becoming involved with curriculum. In mainstreaming the choice and the mediation of curriculum rests predominantly with the teacher.

Buber places tremendous responsibility on teachers who are charged with the task of choosing and mediating the constructive forces of the world which children need for their education. Auxiliary help and advice from other professional workers are in no way negated, are crucial to renewing and strengthening the work of the teacher, but the fundamental responsibility for pupils does not rest with them. Nor does the scientifically designed program prove adequate without the critical evaluation by the teacher of what it holds for the individual child's striving for participation. The teacher is also unique. Authentic educating is possible when suited to the character and conviction of the individual teacher. In Buber's pedagogy, then, teachers are the primary active agents in the education of their pupils. Ultimately, they find they must rely on their own resources.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

This point is of great significance for mainstreaming: One can choose and mediate for a wide diversity of learners first and foremost by knowing them, and one knows by means of the direct, on-going dialogue with children which teachers are in a position to initiate. Thus the chooser and mediator are one and the same. Second, teachers must dialogue directly with the Thou of content, must themselves become learners in order that they may educate. While the choosing and mediating task is difficult, teaching is made creative by it; the teaching profession thereby comes of age in fuller maturity.

3. The teacher's unselective participation in the lives of children, confirming, choosing, and mediating for them, is made possible by an inclusive dialogue.

In direct meeting, teachers turn to their pupils and patiently wait for a look, a question, a word of affirmation or rejection, and thereby experience the act of teaching from both sides, the pupils' as well as their own. The values to which teachers are committed are shared, not through good selling technique or psychological manipulation; values are communicated openly, yet they are conditioned by the pupil's particular standpoint.

Awareness of the other side discloses to teachers what effects their actions have on the individual child with whom communication seems very difficult, reveals the educational needs of both teacher and child. Although the use of scientific assessments at times conveys special needs, this method can never replace, only supplement, what teachers learn from cumulative contacts in the dynamic situation of teaching and learning. In this context there is possibility for an ever deepening

awareness of the unique, many faceted, and unified personality of the child.

Only confirmation and trust can be mutual between teacher and pupil, Buber believes; in the teacher-pupil relation, experiencing the other side cannot be mutual. If the pupil were to become aware of the other side, the educative situation would be destroyed, or it would change into friendship. This point seems to contradict Buber's principle of personal example. At times pupils probably do experience some of the educative event from the teacher's standpoint as well as their own--the teacher's selection of the effective and the motives and feelings which determine the selection, as well as the effects their actions have on teachers. When this happens, does it necessarily follow that the educative relation ends or changes into friendship? It is clear, however, that pupils cannot really reciprocate the teacher's level of awareness and responsible involvement in their person and life, and that the teacher is not sent there to expect that of them, nor to win their friendship. Here the counterpoint of intimacy and distance, subjectivity and objectivity, applies.

Education, like the relation between therapist and patient, is possible only to the person who lives in confrontation with the other, and yet is detached.<sup>20</sup> This objective attitude helps the meeting, even with those children disposed to rebel against their teacher and peers, or to withdraw from relating to them in any way.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

Peer Relations and Mainstreaming

1. The goal of mainstreaming is education for character and community.

Handicapped pupils in ordinary class attendance often find themselves isolated from their class peers and the real activity of the school. It is readily concluded that such isolation is harmful to the learning and personhood of all pupils, not alone the handicapped. This is supported by Buber's concept of community built on the mutual I-Thou relation.

The primary goal of education, the growth of character, is identical to the goal of mainstreaming. Genuine education of character is education for community. Since education is a merger of learning and doing, communal ideals are learned both in reflecting about them and in the here and now of one's active life. Therefore a major educational task is to create an atmosphere of mutuality between members of the mainstream class, to foster in pupils an awareness of their peers and an attitude of responsibility toward them.

2. Mainstreaming exposes children to lives different from their own, but it also guides them to an awareness of their peers as persons through direct relation which involves the selves intersubjectively.

If a child never really confronts a handicapped peer enrolled in the same class because the educational structure sets them apart, both children are thereby disadvantaged--that is, the school insulates them from participation in the differentiated world as it exists around them.

Most important, a potential friendship is denied them. The ethos of mainstreaming is the right of handicapped persons, once all the demands which provide them the medical treatment and education required by their condition have been met, to experience to the extent of their capacities the fullness of education to which all citizens are entitled.<sup>21</sup> It is also the right of all children not to be educated in environments made sterile of difference through the rigid division of groups. As Buber says, the teacher is to guide children into genuine contact with the reality accessible to them, by which both the I and the Thou establish their personality reality.<sup>22</sup>

Children need to perceive and confirm one another as the persons they are by means of genuine meetings. A relation is complete when the partner knows he is confirmed, and "when this knowledge induces the process of his inmost self becoming."<sup>23</sup> This is the process which takes place in a disabled child who is seen as a whole person and no longer reduced in the mind of his peer to his impairment and the wheelchair in which he sits. The child is accepted simply for his presence: "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."<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the image of the subhuman or object of pity is replaced by an image of what is possible, the possibility to be a friend and to achieve in common with all people, yet in a way which is somehow particular to that child.

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<sup>21</sup>Labregère, "Conclusions," in Case Studies, p. 177.

<sup>22</sup>Buber, I and Thou, p. 63; "Respona," in Philosophical Interrogations, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," p. 71.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



Seeing the other as a whole person with potentiality is not to deny the existence of a handicap or to apply a euphemism. "There is nothing from which I would have to turn my eyes away in order to see, and no knowledge that I would have to forget." Inclusion or experiencing the other side, the full development of awareness, brings a realization "from over there" how it is at this moment to suffer a disability--perhaps it is being immobile while others move freely, or being unable for some reason to communicate oneself--and the stigma which might accompany it. Buber insists that a person experiences the other side in this way through direct relation which involves the selves inter-subjectively, when one does not remain an untouched observer of what addresses one.

By being there with one's whole being in response to the "claim of the everyday" there grows in one's "thought and recollection the knowledge of human wholeness."<sup>25</sup> Buber's own understanding reached a high point during the First World War when he imagined the wounds and the killing. "I was compelled . . . to live it. Things which went on just at this moment. . . ." In 1919 Buber's friend Gustav Landauer was killed by anti-revolutionary soldiers in a barbaric way, and again, "I was compelled to imagine just this killing, but not in an optical way alone . . . just with my body."<sup>26</sup>

3. The child's involvement in relation, the source of character development, also educates to responsibility.

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<sup>25</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", pp. 124-126.

<sup>26</sup>Buber, Knowledge of Man: "Dialogue Between Martin Buber and Carl Rogers," p. 168.

Here the child confronts himself with the question, What does my partner's special quality or experience imply for me? The response to this question expresses the child's true creativity, a creativity never limited to the poet and the painter, nor to the intellectually gifted. According to Buber, all people are endowed with the creative power which has "scattered itself." Furthermore, the Thou of one's creative response can be met in anything, animate or inanimate, which addresses one. "The Baal-Shem teaches that no encounter with a being or a thing in the course of our life lacks a hidden significance."<sup>27</sup>

But community, the creative "sharing in an undertaking and entering into mutuality" with the human Thou is of greatest importance to the child. Community educates, and it provides a deep sense of belonging. Contact with nature and with books and machines, however much they contribute, can never replace the mutuality of giving form and being formed which take place in direct relation with another human being. The feral child deprived of human association and brought up by the wolves, Buber points out, has a human body and a human brain, but it is not fully human. It lacks that distance from other selves necessary for its entering into mutual relation with a Thou and becoming an I.<sup>28</sup>

Buber's view calls into question the validity of those forms of education in which children are brought together in space, yet remain spiritually isolated from one another. Buber would question any practice which obstructs mutual giving between children, and even one which fails to promote it. An education aimed only at individual achievement prepares

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<sup>27</sup>Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 173.

<sup>28</sup>Friedman, Life of Dialogue, p. 164.

"a new human solitariness which would be the most painful of all."  
 Participation in the learning community fulfills a real present need,  
 and it prepares for participation in the broader community.

To a small boy just brought to a mainstream class from special placement, a musical recorder was a weapon for striking other class members who could play that instrument. Children reacted with fear, there were retaliations, until one of them, led by her teacher, answered the boy's secret wish to learn the recorder. This girl's response--her opposition and reconciliation, help and encouragement, her "being there"--was the first in a series of relationships which engaged the newcomer in mutually rewarding interaction and collaboration with his peers, and provided him an enduring sense of identity with the learning community to which he belonged. Urie Bronfenbrenner writes, "The most needed innovation in the American classroom is the involvement of pupils in responsible tasks on behalf of others. Opportunities for experimentation are legion."<sup>29</sup> Buber would endorse such involvement, not as a duty but as an expression of the child's Thou saying or a real turning to the address of the other. Without this turning, a person may fulfill many "moral duties," may in addition meet the intellectual challenges of poetry and calculus and the theories of ethics and democracy, yet still suffer an educational impoverishment.

4. Handicapped pupils are to be viewed not only as recipients of help, they are potential contributors.

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<sup>29</sup>Urie Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), p. 157.

The handicapped clearly contribute because they embody and exemplify the nobility of the human spirit in the face of a difficult obstacle to be overcome. But it must be particularly stressed that each can offer personal insights and talents which want expression and have nothing to do with disability, although insights are often deepened by it. In one school a cerebral palsied girl, severely restricted physically but skilled in language, helped her teacher who cultivated in pupils their written expression of the many things they wanted to tell. In the same school a disturbed boy became a proficient reader to younger children in their kindergarten. And a boy with Down's Syndrome told his friend, an outstanding scholastic achiever, that it is wrong to steal from lockers. Endless possibilities become apparent once the equality of children is discovered--that is, each is of unique value, and the purpose of education is to "unearth" the "treasure" of possibility, to help pupils authenticate and individuate themselves by becoming what each can become.<sup>30</sup>

In the true mainstream community, children are needed, feel needed, take responsibility. Although a given class member may be highly dependent in a number of ways requiring something in excess of the usual, the goal is the same as for all others: a gradual shift of responsibility from teacher to child according to his individual capacity. The mainstream community corresponds with Buber's concept of community, which is formed on the basis of growing personal independence with each person a vehicle of a different function, and

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<sup>30</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "Education," p. 84.

mutual responsibility and collaboration on that basis.<sup>31</sup>

The teacher is given the task of influencing this growth of independence, does not relieve class members of doing what they have grown strong enough to do for themselves. But over and over the teacher takes the child by the hand and guides him until he is able to venture on alone.<sup>32</sup>

#### Ethics, Knowledge, and Mainstreaming

The opening of education to mutual peer relations stands in contrast with the modern emphasis on individualized instruction in the mastery of discrete skills. In the former, pupils experience more widely and in greater depth and thereby face the challenge of individual decision.

The ethical implication is that the child, with guidance from his teacher, confronts his own potentiality and decides as an authentic person what is intrinsically good and what is bad in the problematic of the unexpected, the ever changing situation, regardless of whether it is immediately useful to himself and his group. A growing awareness of what he is meant to be helps him to make the decision independently. That which is intended for the individual is personal, "not however in the sense of a free unfolding of infinite singularities, but of a realization of the right in infinitely personal shapes."<sup>33</sup> This means that

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<sup>31</sup>Buber, Paths in Utopia, pp. 130, 131.

<sup>32</sup>Buber, Tales of the Hasidim, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, p. 142.

the normative truth of human existence is included in the present, concrete expression of individual responsibility. Thus group nurturance and loyalty are normative to human existence but defined in action if one's friends are seen tormenting some new member of that group, say a retarded child, and the question of how to be nurturing and loyal has to be decided personally within a living context.

In order to decide and act, the child must be taught to make value judgments based on an interpretation of the facts and their interrelatedness. Buber's epistemology suggests that the teacher, as intermediary of experience, would foster in pupils an openness and a faithfulness to the facts in order to supplant prejudice with an adequate value judgment. That a retarded person is given the capacities shared by everyone (love, joy, suffering, achievement) is a fact to be learned. Ultimately, this openness links to a receptive, confirming attitude to the world and a valid "world view."

The facts are there; it is a question of whether I strive to grasp them as faithfully as I can. My world view can help me in this if it keeps my love for this "world" so awake and strong that I do not grow tired of perceiving what is to be perceived.<sup>34</sup>

Buber emphasizes that perfect knowledge of the truth cannot be possessed. "What is the real situation? Is there a truth we can possess? Can we appropriate it? There certainly is none we can pick up and put in our pocket."<sup>35</sup> What one can do is to "serve the truth, believe in it," and put a stop in one's own spirit to the "politization

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<sup>34</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Education and the World View," p. 100.

<sup>35</sup>Buber, Israel and the World: "The Prejudices of Youth," p. 46.

of the truth and the utilitarizing of truth, and suitability."<sup>36</sup> The approach is similar when one gives "distance" and "enters into relation" with the Thou of literature. By setting limits to one's bias and turning attentively to what is there to be perceived, the aspect of meaning derived supplements one's own knowledge.

The text has been interpreted countless times and in countless ways. I know that no interpretation including my own coincides with the original meaning of the text. I know that my interpreting, like everyone else's is conditioned through my being. But if I attend as faithfully as I can to what it contains of word and texture, of sound and rhythmic structure, of open and hidden connections, my interpretation will not have been made in vain. . . . I have found something. And if I show what I have found, I guide him who lets himself be guided to the reality of the text. To him whom I teach I make visible the working forces of the text that I have experienced.<sup>37</sup>

The important truth to be learned by children in their "manifold togetherness" is the truth of human existence. In mutual dialogue, the pupil perceives not only the uniqueness of the other, but also the experience belonging to him as unique. Although this perception contains only as much as the reality the dialogue imparts, a concept of human wholeness in its complexity takes form out of that nucleus.<sup>38</sup> "The work of education points to the real unity that is hidden behind the multiplicity of aspects. . . . Education unites the participating groups, through access to the educative forces and through common service to the facts, into the model of the great community." Such unity and community encourage independent valuing tested in life by which the content, reality, and reliability of one's view can be decided as opposed to a groundless

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<sup>36</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Education and the World View," p. 101.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Buber, Between Man and Man: "What is Man?", p. 125; Knowledge of Man: "Distance and Relation," p. 71.

view. This resists thoughtless attachment and obedience to any "fictitious conviction" of a group. Commitment to the view particular to a group, Buber points out, can mean "a genuine choice or an awkward groping, as in blind man's buff."<sup>39</sup> So the experience of the many is not levelled down, but it is enriched by mutual openness to differing experience. In other words, this epistemology gives to individual pupils what they need for their own understanding and what they cannot give themselves.<sup>40</sup>

Through relation children begin to sense their "finitude" and their "need of completion." They gain the mutual comprehension of a single truth from two contrasting points of view.

The question is not one of "tolerance," but of making present the roots of community and its ramifications, of so experiencing and living in the trunk . . . that one also experiences, as truly as one's own, where and how the other boughs branch off and shoot up. It is not a question of a formal apparent understanding on a minimal basis, but of an awareness from the other side of the other's real relation to the truth. What is called for is not "neutrality" but solidarity, a living answering for one another--and mutuality, living reciprocity; not effacing the boundaries between the groups . . . but communal recognition of the common reality and communal testing of the common responsibility.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Buber, Pointing the Way: "Education and the World View," p. 103.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



Summary and Conclusions

1. Quality of education. A gradual modification of the prevailing educational practices toward the leading out of individual potentiality, and the encouragement of mutual awareness and collaboration between peers on that basis, will improve the quality of education for the student population as a whole.

2. Education as inclusive. Mutuality is required in mainstreaming, not a conformity of handicapped children to the existing convention essentially untouched by their presence. Such conformity is in any case opposed by human variance. The mainstream teacher is, however, charged with the task of "influencing" the pupil to develop in his uniquely personal way. The line between influence and indoctrination, between education and arbitrary efforts to remediate the child is often difficult to draw--the teacher stands on a "narrow rocky ridge" where there is no sureness of knowledge. But Buber's original concept "inclusion" contributes to the solution: The reality of the child's perception extends the teacher's own perception and enables acceptance and confirmation. What can be known of the point of view of the child is revealed through personal contact and the strength and tenderness of personal relations, the very heart of Buber's method.

3. Education as conscious and willed. Owing to the long history of isolation and rejection of the handicapped, it is concluded that peer relations cannot be left to chance; they must be consciously influenced by the teacher. This is qualified by a recognition that

the teacher is unable to force relations, and that influences outside of education also shape the attitudes of children. Given these limitations, Buber's writings support the conclusion that teachers can create an atmosphere of mutuality conducive to wholesome peer relations. How can this be done? Primarily through personal contact, through dialogue, and through becoming a model of openness.

4. Community of achievement. The effective mainstream class is a "community of achievement" characterized by an atmosphere of mutuality. Children are educated in and for community.

5. Responsibility. Continual togetherness, either physically or in spirit, is not meant. The class diverges according to the special needs, capacities, and involvements of individuals, and it merges in shared involvement. But the prevalence of mutual recognition and responsible help in the common pursuit of learning, which depends on this possibility of alternate separation and coming together, is the underlying bond that unites the class, and it is essential to mainstreaming.

6. Integrative awareness. Mutual recognition and responsible service is the base of Buber's epistemology. Applied to mainstreaming, handicapped children and those around them learn to see the relativity of human attributes and the wholeness of the self and the partner encountered. Ultimately this openness links to a receptive, loving attitude toward humanity, an integrative perception of the world, and an independent "world view."

7. Uniqueness. The central question is now repeated, How can mainstreaming be humanized? The answer again points to mutuality on

a necessary condition, but with an emphasis which follows from this research of Buber's philosophy and from what has been discussed throughout: The focal point of human learning is the truth of human existence --what does it mean to be a unique person? An important way of arriving at this truth is through the pluralistic relations of the learning community, where children are given mutual access to one another and educated to "character," to becoming unique persons capable of independent, responsible decision, and whose decisions are influenced by existential values.

(F)or true human decision, that is, decision taken by the unified soul there is only One direction. This means that to whatever end the current decision is reached, in the reality of existence all the so diverse decisions are merely variations on a single one, which is continually made afresh in a single direction. . . . My uniqueness, this unrepeatable form of being here, not analysable into any elements and not compoundable out of any, I experience as a designed or preformed one, entrusted to me for execution, although everything that affects me participates in this execution. That a unique human being is created does not mean that it is put into being for a mere existence, but for the fulfilment of a being-intention. . . . In decision, taking the direction thus means: taking the direction toward the point of being at which, executing for my part the design which I am, I encounter the divine mystery of my created uniqueness, the mystery waiting for me.

Every ethos . . . is revelation of human service to the goal of creation, in which service man authenticates himself . . . as far as he is able, quantum satis. . . .<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Buber, Good and Evil, pp. 142-43.

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