Martin Buber

An Existentialist Approach to Education

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ABSTRACT

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Martin Buber's educational philosophy is examined and offered as presenting the necessary balance between freedom and authority as required by education in contemporary society. The teaching situation is presented as being a fundamental although special form of Buber's I-Thou dialogue. His concept of confirmation, like his dialogical philosophy, is shown to be at the centre of the student-teacher relationship. Buber is placed within the context of existentialist thought, and the teaching approach of Dr. Carl Rogers is offered as a practical application of Buber's philosophy.

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Introduction

> We are, in my mind, faced with an entirely new situation in education where the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security.
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> -Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn.

Increasingly in the past decade, numerous books have emerged telling parents and teachers what is wrong with education and the public schools. Writers such as John Holt, Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg and others, have described the authoritarianism that structures many classrooms, the stress on grades and discipline, the boredom, the fear, and the lack of learning that too often accompany schooling. In the main their insistence is for more individual freedom and attention to the child's social and emotional needs, rather than higher academic standards. As a teacher in the public school system, I am in sympathy with many of their observations. Their effect, I feel, has been a greater awareness on the part of the public as to what is actually taking place in the classroom. A further result has been the questioning of the validity of the public institution itself. This can be seen in the increasing numbers of experimental "free" or "community" schools which are springing up throughout the country. Supported not by the government but by parents and teachers, they hope to develop a new kind of education, free of the restrictions which characterize the public schools, which will develop

people able to deal with the shifting complexities of the modern world.

The current dissatisfaction is focused mainly on the system itself. This does not imply a rejection of education; on the contrary, I feel, the criticism stems primarily from a genuine desire for better, not less, education. Far too often students who ask real questions are looked upon as a threat; they destroy the orderliness of the procedures, they upset routines.

Despite a genuine effort on the part of many educators, the classroom seems to have changed very little. Students coming out of high schools tell us repeatly that we are not meeting their real needs. This dissatisfaction is something that is genuinely felt, yet not so easily articulated. They tell us that their education, in varying degrees, has been meaningless, and they hope for something better. Unfortunately to date we have not been all that successful. I believe as does Marcia Buchanan, when she says: "our attempts at change are merely a manipulation of the externals, institutionally and socially accepted placebos which seldom treat the illness and never seem to effect a cure."[1]

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[1] Marcia Buchanan, "Preparing Teachers to be Persons", Kappan. LLI (June, 1971), P. 615.

Many young people today are disillusioned with the status quo. Not having really faced financial insecurity, they reject such security as a goal. Since their day is not taken up "grubbing" for a daily existence, they have the time and the inclination to seek ways to alleviate social problems. They are sensitive to politics, to racial prejudices; they have time to concern themselves with the import of personal growth and human relations. It is primarily in this area, that of human relations, that Peter Marin sees the real failure of the schools. He sees them as being "systematic corrupters of the relations among persons." Instead of a genuine warmth and communion, "the school makes the teacher-student replaceable units in a mechanical ritual that passes on, in the name of education, an emotional plague."[1]

What many students want and need, particularly the more aware, the more intelligent, are qualities of the soul; warmth, honesty, imagination, loyality, etc., the things that cannot be "taught" or programmed into a machine. These qualities, says Marin, "seem to be learned in activity and communion, in the adventuruous presence of other real persons."[2]

It has been a long established principle that a teacher must

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[1]Peter Marin, "Children of the Apocalypse", Saturday Review. (Sept. 19, 1970), P. 72.

[2]Ibid., P. 73.

start where his pupils are, if he is to take them somewhere else. For this generation of students I feel it means starting with more freedom (fully understood) than previous generations enjoyed. To take them somewhere else, however, implies that the teacher must have some convictions about where they should go, convictions about what is worth learning. There occurs then the real possibility of a conflict between rival judgements about what is most worth knowing. However, I am not so sure it is a conflict that can or, indeed, need be resolved. If both teacher and student have educational goals, albeit different ones, there exists an atmosphere for dialogue, and true education is or should be a confrontation - a confrontation with a discipline as well as a confrontation with a teacher. No matter what the curriculum or physical enviroment, the teacher is still the single most important factor in the classroom. The teacher is the content, the method.[1] The teacher is the enviroment, the very essence of what happens in the classroom. Here a teacher must be able to open himself to students and to look into students as individuals if he intends to communicate on a deeper level than the typical impersonal teacher-student type. It is the person to person contact that begins the change in the classroom enviroment. The

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[1] Martin Buber, "On Contact", A Believing Humanism. Translated by Maurice Friedman. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), P. 102.

teacher is responsible for the initial move, one he cannot make if he does not have a trust both in himself and in the individual he is encountering. I strongly feel great effort must be made to direct the philosophy of the teacher and the administrator to this end. As simple as it may sound, it would, I feel, be a revolutionary step toward change in the public classroom.

In view of my above 'credo', the aim of this paper is to bring into focus the thought of Martin Buber, the Jewish religious philosopher and existentialist whose ideas I feel are of great importance for contemporary education. In contrast with other major existentialists, he has developed the educational implications of his philosophy in several articles on the subject, as well as in his practical activity as a teacher and as a director of adult education. This is not to say that he presents us with"the" existentialist philosophy of education; one does not exist; rather, he has carved out a philosophical examination of education from the standpoint of his own particular brand of Existentialism. In doing so he speaks directly to teachers. In a wider context, Buber speaks for and to a generation skeptical of traditional beliefs and values, and in search of a meaningful and responsible life. Instead of the ideological approach of the preceeding century and the impersonal scientific perspective of the early twentieth century, he advocated the sharing of deep convictions between persons in a manner which respects and encourages individ-

uality. His interpretation of dialogue lays the foundation for a model of teaching which John Scudder states, "combines freedom and authority within the context of the intellectual and moral confusion of our time."[1] In a world seemingly in search of an educational prophet, the thought of Martin Buber deserves to be better known.

I should like, by way of introduction, to give a brief analysis of the main tenents of existentialist thought; in addition to being an aid in the understanding of Buber, it might, however inadequate, shed some light for those teachers to whom "existentialism" is still but another unknown segment of thought. The main body of the paper will be devoted to an analysis of Buber's educational thought, with attention being given to the question as to whether Buber offers the necessary balance between freedom and authority as claimed.

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[1] John Scudder, "Freedom with Authority: A Buber Model for Teaching", Educational Theory. Vol. XVIII (Spring, 1968), P. 133.

Chapter I Existentialism

> If it is true that modern civilization has aggravated the tension in man - or, to put it differently, if the responsibility of being a person presents modern man with an increasing temptation to escape it; if the fundamental purpose of education is to bring people face to face with their responsibilities as persons and enable them to cope with life at that level - then the relevance of existentialism to education is already apparent.
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> -M.C.V. Jeffreys, Education and the Philosophic Mind.

Existentialism presents a form of philosophical inquiry which cannot be easily categorized within the context of Western thought. Part of its ambiguity can be ascribed to the diversity of those who are most closely identified with it. The word existentialism calls to mind such figures as Soren Kierkegaard and John-Paul Sartre. The former who may be said to be the originator of modern existentialism, was a theist, the latter, an atheist. The names of Heidegger and Gabriel Marcel come to mind, the first a secularist, the second, France's leading Roman-Catholic exponent. Then there is Karl Jaspers, Tillich, Niebuhr, and of course, Martin Buber. Not withstanding the inner contradictions and disagreements which exist[1], it is possible to find its position represented throughout Western history by men who, rejecting metaphysical speculation as too abstract and sterile, sought the meaning of essence in experience. The root of existentialism

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[1] See, Kneller, George, Existentialism and Education. John Wiley & Sons Inc. (New York, 1958).

can be found traced from Socrates through St. Augustine, Pascal, and Nietzsche, but it is only in recent years that it has become an important movement.

Existentialism, to use Barrett's definition, "is a philosophy that confronts the human situation in its totality, to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are, and how man can establish his own meaning out of these conditions."[1]

The existentialist wants to answer questions that are truly relevant to human experience. He is opposed to schematic and abstract answers about human facts which are always concrete and individual. One begins with human existence as a fact without any pre-conceptions about the essence of man; thus, existence precedes essence. Sart expressed it thus:

> Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world, and defines himself afterwards. If man as an existentialist sees he is not definable it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. ...Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing - as he wills to be after that leap toward existence.[2]

This belief contrasts sharply with the position that man's essence exists prior to the individual, a position upheld for

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[1] William Barrett, "What is Existentialism", Van Cleve Morris ed., Modern Movements in Educational Philosophy. Houghton Gifflin Co., Boston, 1969.

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), P. 18.

centuries by the followers of Plato and Aristotle. In his article, Existentialism and the Education of Twentieth Century Man,[1] Morris points to a seeming paradox, which to him is the central predicament of human existence. On the one hand we assert the primacy, the importance of our own existence; on the other hand, each of us knows that we count for absolutely nothing. The universe does not require our existence. This contradiction of absolute worth and absolute worthlessness prompts such language as "anguish", "despair", etc. Morris contends that throughout history man has conceived various palliatives, to evade the issue; thus we have not treated the disease, we have chosen a pleasant numbness. These measures, however, have blocked the avenues to the discovery of our own authentic self. When we become aware of our human existence, when we can proclaim, 'I am a person', 'I'm here'(the Existential Moment), we are placed whether we like it or not, in a circumstance of choice and responsibility. The world that opens up to us is baffling and confusing. This world of meaninglessness presents the possibilities. To quote Morris directly:

> If there is no a priori meaning to it and there is the way Existentialism looks at the world - then we can

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[1] Van Cleve Morris, "Existentialism and the Education of Twentieth Century Man", Educational Theory. Vol. XX (Jan., 1961)

> creatively assign meaning to it. We are on our own. And it is not too early to suggest that boys and girls, as they grow up and go to school, might better be inducted into this kind of open-ended world than into the ready-built card-house worlds which our traditional educational programmes would have them know.[1]

An individual cannot be expected to take charge of his own life, to fashion in the living of his life a statement of what he thinks his life is all about, if he refuses to involve himself in moral decision. "If we mean to assert our humanity", says Morris, "it can only be done in the thick of the human predicament, not in some comfortable isolation booth of social convention."[2]

The question of decision making brings into focus another facet of existential thought - that of freedom. The individual is free to choose and become what he will. Yet it is a freedom not without responsibility, not without discomfort. This vital point is overlooked by those who discredit freedom. To be free, one must surrender the privilege of seeking comfort in a supernatural o superhuman authority. This involves suffering and pain. In fact Fromm would say history is one long episode of mans toilsome struggle to escape the burden of responsibility.[3]

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[1] Ibid., P. 56.

[2] Ibid., P. 57.

[3] Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955).

Existential man feels the burden of responsibility thrust on him by the withdrawal of all other supports. "Far from being carefree and responsible, existential man is continually in the presence of doubt and anguish as to what he should do for he knows that what he choses, he choses for man."[1] Although freedom always exists in some form for the individual, we become aware of it only when we realize that to be alive means assuming the responsibility for making our own decisions.

The problem of alientation occupies the existentialist philosopher more so than any other philosopher. Alienation is a characteristic of the human condition that manifests itself in a variety of ways. The most common form is the individual's inability to have deep feelings for, or to derive significant meanings from, the experiences he undergoes. We also become alienated from ourselves when we live without knowing why, and when we try to avoid present realities by living for the future or in the past.

Mr. C.A. Bowers points out that the existentialist, in effect, draws our attention to a new kind of universal, the universal condition of man. Everybody is confronted with the challenge of discovering his own identity. Moreover, we are all faced with a decision which we have the freedom to make, the decision of settling

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[1] Morris, op. cit., P. 365.

for a mundane existence, or chosing a life characterized by a search for a deeper truth and meaning. It is this latter area of human existence that Mr. Bowers claims should be the centre of attention for educators who are concerned with providing learning experiences which contribute to the development of a free and morally responsible being. To quote him directly:

> The use of the existentialist's concept of a universal, as opposed to that of the metaphysician, has the salutary advantage of allowing us to justify educational programmes on philosophical grounds which do not contain a final definition of man. Instead of justifying the development of the individual's power of reasoning on the grounds that man is a "rational animal", a definition that tends to limit man by ignoring his other capacities - the existentialist would justify it with the argument that the ability to think rationally gives the individual a greater degree of freedom to choose and realize the kind of life that is determined from within.[1]

By way of summation we might say existentialism is a theory of individual meaning which asks each man to ponder the reason for his existence. In an age when youth is caught up with itself as much as it is today, its educational value cannot be overestimated.

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[1] C.A. Bowers, "Existentialism and Educational Theory", Educational Theory. Vol. XV (Summer, 1963), P. 225.

Chapter II

Buber: Philosopher of the I-Thou Dialogue

> Reading Buber is like roaming through the woods on a dark misty night. We are not actually lost, nor is the experience particularly scary, but murkiness obscures landmarks we cannot quite identify. We have the uneasy feeling that somewhere in the mist lies important truth. An occasional lightning flash illuminates the landscape, and we see, for an instant, what Buber is thinking. But then the picture fades and we have to trudge on. With each subsequent walk through his prose, the lightning strikes new images and if memory were accurate and cumulative, we might gradually acquire a working picture of the territority. But it is difficult, and we long for daylight.
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> -V.C. Morris, "Toward Dialogue", Modern Movements in Educational Philosophy.

Buber is known as the philosopher of the I-Thou dialogue. This dialogue is basic to his religion, his philosophy, and what he has to say about education. It is this latter category which is of interest to us.

Buber begins by attacking the traditional western theory of knowledge which assumes that the primary problem is overcoming the polarity which exists between myself and the world. This problem arises because one assumes the identity of the I is self-evident. It is Buber's belief that I is a differentiating word of identity which makes no sense, indeed, cannot be spoken without the correlative words "Thou" or "It", through which and with which I establish my identity. Man's two primary attitudes then, according to Buber's central work I and Thou, are "I-Thou" and "I-It". Man's "I" comes into being as he says "Thou", and it develops as he says one or the other of these two primary words. What is important in these attitudes is not the object over

against one, but the way one relates to that object. For Buber, the inborn Thou is expressed and realized in each relation but it is consumated only in the direct relation with the Eternal Thou, "the Thou that by its nature cannot become It,"[1] I-Thou is the primary world of relation. It is characterized by "mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and ineffability."[2] Although it is only within this relation that personality and the personal really exist", says Friedman, "the Thou of the I-Thou is not limited to men, but may include animals and trees, objects of nature, and God."[3] In speaking of the I-It relationship, he continues:

> 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 or 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.[4]

To live in the It world is to live in the past for here nothing really changes, but stands in relation. In this objective world I place my I in relationship to something and thereby experience and know it. Such a world can tell me about myself, in

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[1]Martin Buber, I and Thou. trans, by Ronald Gregor Smith (2nd edition; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), P. 75.

[2]Maurice Friedman, "Martin Buber's Theory of Education, Educational Theory. Vol. VI, No. 2 (April, 1956), P. 95

[3]Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man. edited with an introductory essay by Maurice Friedman; trans by M. Friedman and R.G. Smith (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1965), P. 12.

[4]Ibid., P. 12.

terms of what I am, but it can in no way advance my understanding of who I am. Ketcham states:

> The It-World is the technological world, the world of things - Structures, Systems, Organizations, and Relations without which, as a total person, I cannot live. The It-World is exceedingly important to my It-self--its health, physical and social welfare, etc. The great problem arises when the It-World assumes too large a proportion of our time, interest, and energy; or, more devastatingly, when we endeavor to let it perform the function of the Thou for our lives.[1]

And so Buber cautions his readers: "And in all seriousness of truth, hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man."[2]

The relationship of my I with another person's I, Buber calls a subject to subject relationship, or (from within the relationship itself), an I-Thou encounter. It is this experience which informs me who I am rather than what (I-It) I am. The I-Thou relationship, therefore, is the most fundamental primordial human relationship of all. One actually begins with it as a child. A child says Thou to its mother before it learns to say I. Only gradually does the I emerge and develop and grow through encounters with others as persons. Meaning and identity are created in the encounter so that in a very real sense I am a "different person" in terms of each genuine I-Thou relationship, that I have.

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[1] C.B. Ketcham, The Search for Meaningful Existence. (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968), P. 86.

[2] Martin Buber, I and Thou. Op. cit., P. 34.

Each relationship has its own impact. Thus it is not strange that I find myself a somewhat different person in the relationship I have with my wife, my mother, my daughter, and my friends. Each is a creative situation, which has its own unique meaning, impact and result. Ultimate spiritual identity is the result of my encounter with the eternal Thou, God, who meets me in and through all of the I-Thou encounters I have with other persons. Indeed, he is the possibility of such encounters. In speaking of the necessity of encounter or dialogue with others, Buber states; "Life is not lived by my playing the enigmatic game on a board by myself, but by my being placed in the presence of a being with whom I have agreed on no rules for the game and with whom no rules can be agreed on."[1]

Because the I-Thou relationship has to do with my identity and meaning as a person, and as such involves my total self, the relationship is located in time and place. However, the meaning of the relation transcends such limitations. Within the relationship I am aware of anything but the meaning of the encounter. I am not even self-conscious in any isolated way. It is only when the I-Thou relationship has terminated that I am aware that I participated in such and such a relationship, at this place

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[1]Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. (New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1967), P. 166.

for that length of time; when I am able to make such an assessment, the relationship has been objectified, has become part of my It-World. For Buber, the I-Thou encounter is lived in the present, but it is a present experience in terms of continuous duration.

The I-Thou relation, in Buber's terminology, is one of 'dialogue', the I-It, one of monologue. This basic distinction is taken up in Buber's book, Between Man and Man. In monologue I only allow the other to exist as a content of my experience. Not only do I see him primarily in terms of his social class, his color, his religion, but I do not even leave myself open to him as a person at all. Genuine dialogue, according to Buber, can be either spoken or silent. Its validity derives from the fact that "each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them."[1] Buber continues: . . .the life of dialogue is not one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do."[2] It is only when I "really have to do" with the other that I can be responsible to him. The necessary element of

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[1] Ibid., P. 19.

[2] Ibid., P. 20.

genuine dialogue, therefore, is "seeing the other, or experiencing the other side." To meet the "other" one must take up the nature of the other into one's own thinking and think in relation to it; it is only because we truly have the other who thinks other things in other ways that we have the Thou over against the I.

"Experiencing the other side" means to feel an event from the side of the person one meets as well as from ones own side. It is, says Friedman, "an inclusiveness which realizes the other person in the actuality of his being, but it is not to be identified with 'empathy' which means transposing oneself in the dynamic structure of an object."[1] This leads, says Buber, "to the exclusion of one's own concreteness, the extinguishing of the actual situation in life, the absorption in pure aestheicism of the reality in which one participates."[2] Inclusion is the opposite of this:

> It is the extension of one's own concreteness the fulfillment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates. Its elements are, first, a relation, of no matter what kind, between two persons, second, an event experienced by them in common, in which at leastone of them actively participates, and, third, the fact that this one person,

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[1] Maurice Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue. (Harper & Row, New York, 1960), P. 88.

[2] Buber, op. cit., P. 97.

> without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same times lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other.[1]

Thus for Buber, life is real when it is openly engaged with others-authentic living is authentic sharing. The moment I withdraw myself from such encounters with others and make a claim in terms of my individuality, I am isolated, living in the past. Affirmation is everywhere evident within the destiny of the I-Thou relation. It is the Yes which my life is accepted within that relationship; it is the love which is the most characteristic form of it. This affirmation is the expression of my true being to another and his to me. Buber says:

> Love is between I and Thou . . .Love ranges in its effect through the whole world. In the eyes of him who takes his stand in love, and gazes out of it, men are cut free from their entanglement in bustling activity. Godd 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 confron him as Thou. In a wonderful way, from time to time, exclusiveness arises - and so he can be effective helping, healing, educating, raising up, saving. Love is a responsibility of an I for a Thou.[2]

Buber's philosophy of dialogue is given a philosophical base in the philosophical antropology which he developed in his work, The Knowledge of Man, published in 1965. Philosophical antropology is concerned with the uniqueness of man, with what makes man

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[1] Ibid., P

[2] Martin Buber, I and Thou. op. cit., PP 14-15.

a problem to himself. Buber establishes the focus of the problem of man in the "interhuman", the "sphere of the between". The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man, the genuine dialogue between man and man. Buber sees two basic movements associated with human life: "the primal setting at a distance" and "entering into relation". This is an act peculiar to the human species. Once distance has been given, man is able to enter into relation with other beings. The unfolding of the sphere of "the between" Buber calls the "dialogical". The meaning of this dialogue is found in the interchange between the two individuals. According to Friedman, for Buber, the essential problematic of the sphere of the between is the duality of being and seeming.[1] The man dominated by being gives himself to the other spontaneously without thinking about the image of himself awakened in the beholder. The "seeming" man, in contrast, is primarily concerned with what the other thinks of him and produces a look which he thinks will win the other's approval. This "seeming" destroys the authenticity of the life between man and man. The tendency toward "seeming", says Friedman, "is man's need for confirmation and in his desire to be confirmed falsely

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[1]Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man. op. cit., P. 27.

rather than not be confirmed at all."[1]

Thus in human societies, according to Buber's philosophical anthropology, persons confirm each other in a practical way in their personal qualities and capacities. A society might indeed be termed human in the measure to which this mutual confirmation takes place. Man sets man at a distance and makes him independent. He is therefore able to enter into relation with those like himself. To quote Buber directly:

> The basis of man's life is two fold, and it is one - the wish of every man to be confirmed as what he is, even as what he can become, by men; and the innate capacity in man to confirm his fellowman in this way. That this capacity lies so immeasurably fallow constitutes the real weakness and questionableness of the human race: actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds. On the other hand, of course, an empty claim for confirmation, without devotion for being and becoming, again and again mars the truth of the life between man and man.[2]

The importance of Buber's teaching of confirmation and its application to education is seen most clearly in light of the distinction Buber makes between acceptance or affirmation of the other, and confirmation. For Buber, confirmation means that while I accept the other as a person, I may also wrestle with him against himself. This is how he describes it:

> I not only accept the other as he is, but I confirm him, in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that is meant by him and it can now be developed, it

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[1] Ibid., P. 28.

[2] Ibid., PP. 67-68.

can evolve, it can answer the reality of life. Let's take for example, man and wife. He says, not expressly, but just by his whole relation to her, "I accept you as you are." But this does not mean, "I don't want you to change." Rather it says, "Just by my accepting love, I discover in you what you are meant to become. ...And there are cases in which I must help him against himself. He wants my help against himself. The first thing of all is that he trusts me ...what he wants is a being not only whom he can trust, as a man trusts another, but a being that gives him now the certitude that there is a soul, there is an existence. ...And if this is reached now I can help this man even in his struggle against himself. And this I can do only if I distinguish between accepting and confirming,[1]

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[1]Ibid., P. 182-183.

We have seen, in the preceeding pages the main tenents of Buber's I-Thou dialogue. It is first and foremost personalistic, in that it insists on the primacy of the person; it is a philosophy of relationship - the more contact with the Thou, the fuller the sharing; it is social in the sense that true community among men cannot come into being until each individual accepts full responsibility for the other; it is experiential in that the dialogue must be lived. As Buber himself comments, "The more abstract the concept, the more does it need to be balanced by the evidence of living experience."[1] It will now be our task to ascertain how Buber sees this dialogue operating in what I conceive to be one of the most dynamic of all relationships, namely that of the teacher-student.

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[1] Martin Buber, Eclipse of God. (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1957.), P. 14.

Suggested Readings in Existentialin and Education

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Chapter III Buber's Educational Philosophy

> The good teacher educates by his speech and by his silence, in the hours of teaching and the recesses, in casual conversation, through his mere existence, only he must be really present to his pupils; he educates through contact.
> -M. Buber, "On Contact", A Believing Humanism.

Buber's dialogical philosophy, as presented in his major works I and Thou and Between Man and Man, is grounded on the two basic attitudes man may take toward the world, I-It and I-Thou. This distinction is closely related to the distinction made in his essay, "Education"[1], between the two instincts which ground education, the originative or creative, and that of communion. Baker points out that, "just as he attempts to overcome the subjective-objective dichotomy at the heart of the I-It attitude, Buber is concerned to transcent this same persistent conflict in educational theory."[2] The modern "subjective" emphasis on creativity, like the "objective" stress of the classical tradition, fails to touch the essence of education for Buber. For him, education is a form of the fundamental I-Thou relation, which, in an educational framework, is the student-teacher relation. Education for Buber, is to be found in terms of the communion between teacher and student because the development of the pupil as a person rests on the impact of one human being

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[1] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1665), PP. 83-103.

[2] Bruce Baker, "Existential Philosophers on Education", Educational Theory. Vol. XVI (Summer, 1966), P. 330

upon another. "The relation in education is one of pure dialogue", he emphatically states.[1]

Buber first of all recognizes the uniqueness of the individual:

> In every hour the human race begins. We forget this too easily in the fact of the massive face of past life, of so-called world history, of the fact that each child is born with a given disposition of "world-historical" origin, that,is, inherited from the richness of thw world's events. This fact must not obscure the other no less important fact that in spite of everything, in this as in every hour, what has not been invades the structure of what is... This potentiality, streaming unconquered, however much of it is squandered, is the reality, child: this phenomenon of uniqueness, which is more than just begetting and birth, this grace of beginning again and ever again.[2]

"This grace," says Buber, "must not be squandered. The future is to be determined and shaped by the decisions and future generations. The part we as educaters are to play is no less measureable than that of the child."

The I-Thou dialogue demands the assumption that the other is unique; any other assumption could lead to a condescending I-It dialogue - a type of dialogue one may frequently find in the classroom from kindergarden to graduate school.

Buber places the challenge directly on education; "...if

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[1]Martin Buber, op. cit., P. 898.

[2]Ibid., P. 83.

it (education) at last rises up, it will be able to strengthen the light-spreading force in the hearts of the doers - how much it can do this cannot be guessed, but only learned in action." With education properly conceived, the new generation can "Illumine the grey face of the human world."[1]

But what is the reality of education? For Buber it is not simply the development of the creative powers. This phase he considers an over-extended metaphor. The decisive influence, he states, "is not the release of an instinct, but the forces which meet this released instinct, namely, the educative forces."[2] This originative instinct, left to itself, does not lead to a sharing in an undertaking or to entering into mutuality. These two processes, according to Buber, are necessary for a fully human life. As a mere originator, man is alone; any education based only on the drawing of an instinct of origination would prepare a new human solitariness. What teaches us the saying of Thou is not the originative instinct but the instinct for communion.

For Buber, the release of powers can be no more than a presupposition of education. The spontaniety of the child must not be suppressed, but met with a very delicate approach from the

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[1]Ibid., P. 84.

[2]Ibid., P. 89.

teacher. "The raising of a finger perhaps, or a questioning glance."[1] This is what Buber says is the other half of what happens in education.

Educational theory characterized by too much freedom or too much authoritarianism misunderstands the true meaning of education. It is the pump being exchanged for the funnel.[2] Buber has described his standpoint as a "narrow ridge".[3] For Friedman this narrow ridge is no 'happy middle' which ignores the reality of paradox and contradiction in order to escape from the suffering they produce. For him, Buber's philosophy of dialogue leads to a genuine alternative. "Only the Philosophy of dialogue makes possible an adequate picture of what, in fact, takes place: the pupil grows through his encounter with the person of the teacher and the "Thou" of the writer....the pupil must encounter something really other than himself before he can learn."[4]

Education for Buber is a "selection by man of the effective world."[5] This selection is found in the educator himself. Buber, while recognizing the necessity of schools, maintains that the

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[1] Ibid., P. 89.

[2] Ibid., Buber uses this metaphor in reference to the old and new theories in education, neither of which for him provide the answer.

[3] For a more detailed account of Buber's "narrow ridge", position see: Maruice Friedman, Martin Buber's, The Life of Dialogue. Chapter I (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), PP. 3-11.

[4] Maurice Friedman, "Martin Buber's Philosophy of Education", Educational Theory. (Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1956), P. 98.

[5] Martin Buber, op. cit., P. 89.

master who in older times taught without being concerned with it, must remain the model for the teacher. If we have to consciously teach, we must, nevertheless, do it as though we are not. As was mentioned before, that raising of the finger, that questioning glance, is the teacher's genuine doing.

This release of powers, this freedom, gives us the capacity for growth, but it is not growth itself. Buber disagrees with the theory that freedom is the opposite of compulsion; for him compulsion is opposed by communion, the positive reality.

> Compulsion in education means disunion, it means humiliation and rebelliousness. Communion in education ... means being opened up and drawn in. Freedom in education is the possibility of communion; without it nothing succeedes, but neither does anything succeed by means of it.[1]

Freedom, then, is not something positive; it is only a means, a milieu for a potentiality to develop. Buber expands further:

> Let us realize the true meaning of being free of a bond: it means a quite personal responsibility takes the place of one shared with many generations. Life lived in freedom is personal responsibility or it is a pathetic farce.[2]

From this point of view Buber reaches a much deeper understanding of the role of the teacher. He discusses two existing principles of education and dismisses them both. The first is based on the will to power. The teacher approaches the child

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[1] Ibid., P. 91.

[2] Ibid., P. 92.

with fixed values. This, Buber concluded, is fraught with danger, and can easily be abused, degenerating into an exploitation of the individual will-to-power. Buber also forsees that this relationship might well lead to its opposite, on which is based the second of the existing principles of education dismissed by Buber. The teacher faces the pupil as individual to individual, and as, Read points out, "the attitude of domination is changed for the attitude of enjoyment ...The teacher is filled with a secret longing to be loved for himself."[1] Both attitudes are false, for the teacher's relationship to his pupil must be one of disinterest. This is clearly seen in what Buber calls the "unerotic" situation of the teacher. In dialogue with Carl Rogers[2], Buber maintains that in helping situations, such as teacher-pupil or therapist-patient, inclusion, or experiencing the other side must necessarily remain one-sided. In friendship and love, of course, it is mutual. Buber would say that neither the patient nor the pupil can equally well experience the relationship from the side of the therapist or teacher without destroying or altering the relationship. This does not mean the relationship becomes an I-It; it is still based on mutuality and

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[1] Herbert Read, Education Through Art. London: Faber and Faber, 1943, P. 289.

[2] Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man. London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1965. See, Appendix, P. 165, "Dialogue between Martin Buber and Carl Rogers.

trust. The common situation, however, does not mean that both teacher and pupil enter from the same or even a similar position. Buber pinpoints this directly:

> In order that he may coherently further the liberation and actualization of that unity in a new accord of the person with the world, the psychotherapist, like the educator, must stand again and again not merely at his own pole in the bipolar relation, but also with the strength of present realization at the other pole, and experience the effect of his own action. But again the specific healing relation would come to an end the moment the patient thought of, and succeeded in, practising "inclusion" and experiencing the event from the doctor's pole as well. Healing, like educating, is only possible to the one who lives over against the other, and yet is detached.[1]

Education, then, excludes Eros, or the desire to enjoy students. Eros is choice made from an inclination which is not education. The teacher does not chose his pupils, he finds them there before him:

> He enters the school-rrom for the first time, he sees them crouching at the desks, indiscriminately flung together, the mishapen and the well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all.[2]

If education is to be understood in terms of the communion between teacher and student, then the development of the pupil

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[1]Martin Buber, I and Thou. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), P. 133.

[2]Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1965), P. 94.

rests on the impact of one human being upon another. This does not mean that subject matter is neglected, but that it is seen in its proper perspective. Through mutuality, the student develops an awareness of the meaning of what the teacher and the author of a book (as a Thou) present before him. In this way says Barker, "subject matter is brought from the abstract impersonality of objective knowledge to a personally meaningful reality that is alive because it is grounded on that which is 'between' man and man."[1]

In order for true dialogue to transpire between teacher and student it is essential that the pupil have confidence in a teacher who is not a dominating symbol of power:

> When the pupil's confidence has been won, his resistance against being educated gives way to a singular happening: he accepts the educator as a person. He feels he may trust this man; that this man is not making a business out of him, but is taking part in his life, accepting him before desiring to influence him. And so he learns to ask.[2]

Buber feels that only when there is this trust in the teacher can there be an I-Thou dialogue:

> Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists-that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists, meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the

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[1] Bruce Baker, "Existential Philosophers of Education", Educational Theory. (Vol. XVI, No. 3, July 1966), P. 331.

[2] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. New York: MacMillan Co., 1965), P. 106.

> real truth. Because this human being exists, in the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of one's fellow-men the great Love.[1]

This means, says Buber, that the teacher must be really there facing the child. Although he cannot be continually concerned, there will, nevertheless, exist a mutuality. This imposes a heavy burden upon the teacher who is in the position of "selecting" the "world" of reality and truth for the student. The teacher must attempt to understand the point of view of the pupil by "experiencing the other side", which Buber calls inclusion. The teacher must see the student as a Thou to be met in dialogue, rather than an It, an object to be manipulated and used to his own advantage. Unlike friendship, however, this inclusion must be largely onesided. As Friedman points out, "the pupil cannot equally well see the teacher's point of view without the teaching relationship being destroyed."[2] This does not mean that the complete relation for teaching is destroyed but that this particular relation of teacher and student is now dissolved and may presently be replaced by friendship.

The teacher learns to distinguish the real needs of his pupil. As he becomes aware of what the individual does and does

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[1] Ibid., P. 98.

[2] Maurice Friedman, Martin Buber's Philosophy of Education", Educational Theory. Vol. VI, No. 2 (April 1956), P. 98.

not need, he understands more deeply what the human being needs in order to become human. The teacher also learns how much he himself is able to give and what he cannot give. Thus as Read states, "he learns his responsibility for the particle of life entrusted to his care, and as he learns he educates himself.... the education of a pupil is thus always the self-education of the teacher."[1]

In the conclusion of his essay on "Education", Buber speaks of the imitation of the unknown God as the only direction left for the educator of our day, in contrast to ther ages which knew a figure of general validity such as the Christian, the gentleman and the scholar. He considers our culture too diverse and complex to permit a single educational model to dominate. Thus the only general direction that remains is a response to the divine, creative spirit of the cosmos. The highest "earthly" model that Buber offers is the free man who voluntarily comes together with others in community, who attains the level of being able to speak as an authentic We. Buber finds inadequate both collectivism, which values the collective above the self, and individualism, which glorifies individual existence and regards the self

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[1]Read, op. cit., PP. 291-292.

as sufficient and absolute. According to Buber, we need to recognize what is common to all without human uniqueness. For this we must be able to listen to each other and thus come to know a Thou. Then and only then, is it possible to know a We. Genuine community requires genuine dialogue.[1]

In his essay, "The Education of Character"[2], Buber conceives of education as essentially education of character, the concern of the teacher being with the whole person, his present reality and future potential. He cautions us however, not to overestimate what can be done in this direction. Most importantly, it must not and indeed, cannot be done in any intended way:

> Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them.[3]

From his description of the great character it appears that Buber conceives him to be an exceptional human being. He describes him thus:

> I call a great character one, who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way

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[1]Martin Buber, "What is Common to All", The Knowledge of Man. (New York: Harper & Row Inc., 1965).

[2]Martin Buber, "The Education of Character", part IV in Between Man and Man. (London: G. Allen & Urwin Ltd., 1965).

[3]Ibid., P. 105.

> that the sum of his actions and attitudes express at the same time unity of his being in its willingness to accept responsibility. As his being is unity, the unity of accepted responsibility, his active life, too, coheres into unity. And one might perhaps say that he has responded to in responsibility, the indefinable unity of a moral destiny.[1]

Buber also wrote that today's "great characters" are still enemies of the people; "they who love their society, yet wish not only to preserve it, but to raise it to a higher level. Tomorrow they will be the architects of a new unity of mankind."[2]

Buber believed strongly in the existence and validity of universal values and norms - indeed he sees their denial as part of the sickness of our age. He also states that the forces and values that the child needs for his growth must be chosen by the educator:

> The educator gathers in the constructive forces of the world. He distinguished, rejects, and confirms in himself, in his self which is filled with the world. The constructive forces are eternally the same: they are the world bound up in community, turned to God. The educator educates himself to be their vehicle.3

Thus it would appear that the teacher who is in the position of selecting the world of reality and truth for the student has imposed on himself a heavy responsibility.

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[1]Ibid., P. 114.

[2]Ibid., P. 116.

[3]Ibid., P. 105.

With regard to norms and the great character, Buber has this to say:

> The great character is (not) beyond the acceptance of norms. No responsible person remains a stranger to norms. But the command inherent in a genuine norm never becomes a maxim and the fulfillment of it never a habit. Any command that a great character takes to himself in the course of his development does not act in him as part of his consciousness or as material for building up his exercises, but remains latent in a basic layer of his substance until it reveals itself to him in a concrete way.[1]

The difference Buber sees between the maxim and the command is that the "command speaks to us in the second person, and the Thou in it is no one else but one's own self. Maxims command only in the third person, the each and the none."[2] In other words, it speaks to me and to you, not to him or they. The message is unmistakeable. Somewhere in his development the great character has acquired such a command.

Buber argued that insight into the structure of the great character can help a generation lacking a sense of eternal values to attain them. The teacher begins by helping the students to realize the sickness in their own souls, their lack of eternal values; they become aware of their own lack and endeavor to unify

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[1] Ibid., P. 114.

[2] Ibid.

their souls. Through such a unity of self, they can be brought to encounter the mystery of the command and can regain a sense of eternal values. It can be seen that the great character can serve as a model for both teacher and student.

From what has been said it appears that in being the selection of the effective world the teacher, in effect, takes on a command. The question arises, how is his command any more valid than anyone elses; how can the teacher claim to be any more of an authority than his students? In this context John Scudder lays stress on the teacher's dialogue with the academic world:

> Certainly a teacher, as an authority in comparision to his students, should select the principles to be introduced to them. Surely students should be required to understand and master these principles. After all, the teacher has been given his position as teacher because he is responsibly related to the world of scholarship and especially to the subject which he is to teach....the teacher at the same time he participates in conversation with his pupils, should engage in dialogue with the academic world. From this dialogue he brings principles, understandings, and convictions to bear on the problem being consulted, always weighing and deciding what is appropriate, significant and relevant to the conversation.[1]

Scudder recognizes that dialogue with books or the academic world can be an I-It relationship; however he contends that his primary

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[1]John R. Scudder, "Freedom with Authority: A Buber Model for teaching", Educational Theory. Vol. XVIII (Spring, 1968), P. 136.

responsibility is not to scholarship but to his students, and this involves the I-Thou relationship. He sees his task as that of evoking a response from the students which will promote their growth. He recognizes that he must not try to control their response; "He (the teacher) openly, honestly, and personally shares his relationship to this discipline and the meaning he has found from this relationship in such a way as to cause the student to respond. But he must not violate the integrity of the student by attempting to control the response."[1]

Edward Kiner, in what may be considered a rebuttal to Scudder, feels that this position is one of over-simplification. He considers that dialogue with knowledge is essentially an I-It relationship, and that for Buber the I-It relationship cannot lead to full being:

> Buber would contend that the teacher ought to be able to live with men, instructing by example, by living dialogue, more than by the authority of the realm of the It-Knowledge crammed into the cells of his brain. His authority is his doing, his deed, his living being, his person, and not his academic, his creed.[2]

Kiner says that the teacher's authority can be based on his dialogue with knowledge only if it ultimately leads to meaningful I-Thou encounters. "In the final analysis", says Kiner, "books

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[1] Ibid., P. 139.

[2] E.D. Kiner, "Some Problems in A Buber Model for Teaching", Educational Theory. Vol. XIX (Fall, 1969), P. 403.

are always second in importance to men!"[1]

In reviewing the above mentioned articles, I conceive not so much a direct difference of opinion, as a different direction in emphasis; in combination, they appear to compliment one another, and in their totality, contain Buber's resolution of the freedom-authority dichotomy. Because of responsible scholarship, the teacher does not impinge on the freedom of his students, if in his inter-action with them, he is able to relate meaningfully, and does not impose his relationship to truth upon his students, but permits individual appropriation. Buber does not believe that teachers can or should maintain a purely objective detachment from the developing attitude of students. This would imply that the teacher does not have a true committment to his field of knowledge, to set of values. This does not mean that the students integrety is violated or his individuality is suppressed. In this context Buber makes what I feel to be a very important distinction between the two basic ways of affecting men in their views and attitudes toward life. One is developed in propaganda, the other in education. In propaganda, says Buber in his essay, "Elements of the Interhuman"[2], a person imposes

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[1] Ibid.,

[2] Martin Buber, "Elements of the Interhuman", Chapter III in, The Knowledge of Man. (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1965), PP. 72-88.

his opinions and attitudes in such a way that the subject is led to believe that they are his own. The propagandist is not concerned with the individual as a person; his purpose is to use people; pepple are manipulated they are "Its", to be attuned to another's will.

By contrast, in education, the educator discovers and furthers in the soul of the other, what one has recognized in oneself as the right. Because it is the right, it must exist in the other as a possibility. The development of this potential takes place through meeting, "through the existential communication between one who has found direction, and one who is finding it."[1] This meeting or dialogue means that one accepts the other. Although the teacher wishes to lead the student to share in his relation to truth, he must accept and confirm him in his own unique individuality, and permit him to relate to the truth in according with his own individuality. Buber states this clearly:

> The desire to influence the other then does not mean the effort to change the other, to inject one's own 'rightness' into him; but it means the effort to let that which is recognized as right, as just, as true (and for that very reason must also be established there, in the substance of the other) through one's influence take seed and grow in the form suited to individuation.[2]

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[1] Ibid., P. 82.

[2] Martin Buber, "Distance and Relation", Ibid., P. 69.

As Friedman points out, "the real choice does not lie between a teacher having values and not having them, but between his imposing those values on the student and his allowing them to come to flower in the student in a way which is appropriate to the students personality."[1] In each instance however, the teacher's standpoint must be revealed in the context of the I-Thou relationship.

Thus the teacher must attempt to understand the point of view of the student by 'experiencing the other side', or "inclusion."

The teacher must see the student as a Thou, a person to be met in dialogue, rather than an It, an object to be manipulated and used to his own advantage. Thus in a given teaching situation, a teacher's concern should be the truth of the topic under discussion and not primarily the projection of his point of view. He must appreciate views other than his own, and allow them to contribute to the dialogue. The teacher cannot always expect agreement. Conflicts, says Buber, have an educational value:

> A conflict with a pupil is the supreme test for the educator. He must use his own insight whole heartedly, he must not blunt the piercing impact of his knowledge

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[1]Maurice Friedman, "Martin Buber's Philosophy of Education", Educational Theory. Vol. VI, No. 2 (April 1956), P. 103.

> but he must at the same time, have in readiness the healing ointment for the heart pierced by it. Not for a moment may he conduct a dialectical manoeuvre instead of the real battle for truth. 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 the word of love[1] which alone can help to overcome so difficult a situation.

As was suggested before, the teacher's task is not an easy one. Buber was well aware of the danger involved:

> If education means to let a selection of the world affect a person through the medium of another person, then the one through whom this takes place, rather, who makes it take place through himself, is caught in a strange paradox. ...since the educator has to such an extent replaced the master, the danger has arisen that the new phenomenon, the will to educate, may degenerate into arbitrariness, and that the educator may carry out his selection and his influence from himself and his idea of the pupil, not from the pupils own reality.[2]

Buber, however provides the answer. It is in the creation of an atmosphere of mutuality, of trust, which occurs as a result of the concern of the teacher for the pupil:

> He need possess none of the perfection which the child may dream he possesses; but he must be really there. In order to be and to remain truly present to the child he must have gathered the child's presence into his own store as one of the bearers of his communion with the world, one of the focuses of his responsibilities for the world. Of course he cannot be continually concerned with the child, either in thought or in deed, nor ought he to be. But if he has really gathered the child into his

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[1] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1965), P. 108.

[2] Ibid., P. 99-100.

> life then that subterranean dialogic, that steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endures. Then there is reality between them, there is mutuality.[1]

As we have seen, the basic principle underlying the relation between teacher and student is the education of character. The teacher relates to the pupil in such a way that he becomes responsible for his own life, his own decisions. In this way his authenticity is created. However true authenticity implies in the student a concern beyond that of his own development. "He (the teacher) can bring before his pupils the image of a great character who denies no answer to life and the world, but accepts responsibility for everything essential that he meets."[2] For Buber, genuine education of character is education for community. This goal of community is found throughout Buber's philosophy. The educated man does not develop in isolation; he emerges in community, where members voluntarily draw toward each other, meeting in I-Thou relationships.[3] By fulfilling his responsibility to the student, the teacher can awaken him to a similar responsibility for his fellow man, society, and the world. As Baker has concluded, "Buber's whole I-Thou philosophy can be looked at as a basis for social reconstruction, and his views

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[1]Ibid., P. 98.

[2]Ibid., P. 116.

[3]Ibid., P. 19.

on education can be seen as the building of the foundation for this reconstruction....in the end it may well be that Buber's philosophy will prove to be one of the most significant and influential contributions to educational philosophy since Dewey."[1]

Before concluding this analysis of Buber's educational philosophy, I would like to add a note of caution to those who might too closely associate Buber's thought with a somewhat disturbing belief in education today, namely that students should be permitted to learn only what they feel is relevant to them. The teacher must make the necessary contributions to sustain that special kind of relation in which learning is enchanced.

This is not to say that Buber denied the value of freedom in education. Rightly so, he is recommended for his clarification of the difference between being treated as a person and as an object, and of the importance of the I-Thou relationship. This is particularly true in our contemporary technological-oriented society, in which the I-It relationship is so dominant. The teacher must exert a counter influence and not forget to teach that people are persons. Buber long ago saw the necessity of gaining freedom for the student:

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[1]R. F. Baker, op. cit., P. 333.

> Freedom - I love its flashing face: it flashes forth from the darkness and dies away, but it has made the heart invulnerable. I am devoted to it, I am always ready to join in the fight for it....I give my left hand to the rebel and my right hand to the heretic:forward![1]

However, unlike some existentialists, Buber does not see freedom as an end in itself. He adds:

> But I do not trust them. They know how to die, but that is not enough; I love freedom, but I do not believe in it....it is easy to understand that in a time when the deterioration of all traditional bonds has made their legitimacy questionable, the tendency to freedom is exalted; the springboard is treated as the goal and a functional good as a substantial good.[2]

Freedom, then, is not an end but a necessary beginning; it offers the potential or possibility to become an I, and I is realized only through communion. Buber's I-Thou relationship can also be easily misinterpreted. We must remember that dialogue is not the content of education, and relationship not the sole reality. This over-emphasis can be seen today, particularly with younger teachers who are constantly "rapping" with students. Unfortunately, I feel, rapping too often becomes a substitute for an advance of personal truth. Buber does not teach that the I-Thou relationship in education is all that is needed; for him,

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[1] Martin Buber, op. cit., P. 91.

[2] Ibid.

education, although it must be centered in the person, is not strictly an I-Thou encounter, that is, a relation of mutual reciprocity or friendship.

What concerned Buber was the role of the the world in the development of a person:

> Self-education....cannot take place through one's being concerned with oneself but only through one's being concerned, knowing what it means, with the world. The forces of the world which the child needs for the building up of his substance must be chosen by the educator from the world and drawn into himself.[1]

He continues: "the world engenders the person in the individual. The world...'educ-eates' the human being; it draws out his powers and makes him grasp and penetrate its objections...."[2] Education, as stated earlier, is for Buber, a selection drawn by man of the effective world. Education as a real person begins, then with the world. It will not do to let things happen, to trust that in due course we will learn what we need to learn or even that it makes no difference what we learn. Buber is quite emphatic on the matter of intellectual discipline and honesty:

> Every form of relation in which the spirit's service of life is realized has its special objectivity, its structure of proportions and limits which in no way resists the favor of personal comprehension and penetration,

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[1] Ibid., P. 101.

[2] Ibid., P. 89.

> though it does resist any confusion with the person's own spheres. 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 the most sacred names and attitudes will not help it past its inevitable consequence of disintegration.[1]

Buber also speaks for the need of discipline in the classroom. He wants a discipline that is consistent with his major goal:

> (The teacher)....has to introduce discipline and order, he has to establish a law, and he can only strive and hope for the result that discipline and order will become more and more inward and autonomous, and that at least the law will be written on the heart of his pupils; but his real goal which, once he has well recognized it and well remembers it, will influence all his work, is the great character.[2]

Buber, in effect, says that education is not the usual I-Thou relationship. He insists that in the educator's movement toward the student, precisely in a learning situation, he does not try to set up a fully reciprocal relationship; he can go over to the learners side but the learner, before he understands the project at hand, can not share the teachers position of knowledge yet. The moment the educator is as much Thou to his pupils as they are to him, education is over and friendship begins because this particular learning situation has dissolved

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[1] Ibid., P. 95.

[2] Ibid., P. 113.

when learner and teacher stand on equal terms of knowledge. Friendship is not what students should be getting from teachers. In other words the teachers does not fully present himself as a Thou. This is not a contradiction in Buber's I-Thou philosophy; it is a special instance of I-Thou relation, which he explicity states, relates to the 'helping' professions.[1]

Thus it can be seen that Buber takes both discipline and structure in education seriously, not withstanding his dialogical emphasis. It perhaps should be further noted that Buber's philosophy is not a purely theoretical one; he had extensive experience in the classroom, teaching both students and teachers, as well as experience in educational administration.

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[1] Vide Supra, P. 24, No. 2.

It is my belief that Buber's concept of dialogue in teaching, as analyzed above, does indeed afford to the teacher the authority which education demands, while at the same time, offering the student the opportunity to develop his own individuality. This is not to say the process will occur automatically; as pointed out earlier, the teacher must constantly walk a "narrow ridge", however, as an expert in his field compared with his students, he can present, with authority, his relationship with truth. The student need feel no compulsion to accept; he will relate to the teacher in his own unique way; he will respond in a manner which, if authentic, will promote growth. The most important thing to remember is that of the primacy of the student over scholarship. Teachers teach students a subject; others teach a subject. The former involves an I-Thou relationship, the latter an I-It. Unfortunately it is my experience that too many teachers do not make this important distinction. Buber's preference for people over books was alluded to earlier; here is what he himself says on the subject:

> Imagine yourself in a situation where you are alone, wholly alone on earth, and you are offered one of the two, books or men. I often hear men prizing their solitude but that is only because they are still men somewhere on earth even though in the far distance. I knew nothing of books when I came forth from the womb of my mother, and I shall die without books, with another human hand in my own. I do, indeed, close my door at times and surrender myself to a book, but only because I can open the door again and see a human being looking at me.[1]

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[1]Martin Buber, "Replies to my Critics", Library of Living Philosophers. Vol. XII (LaSalle: Open Court, 1967) P. 692.

Epilogue

If, as suggested at the outset, the teacher is the essence of what happens in the classroom, then we must be prepared to shoulder a certain responsibility for the malaise that is characteristic of our schools. It is becoming abundantly clear that education and schooling are not one and the same thing; that in fact, we are not educating our children in a way which permits them to adjust or relate to our rapidly changing technological society. In short, we have for the most part, been transmitting knowledge or facts which are unrelated to the personal growth and development of the individual; simply put, we have not been teaching.

As teachers, I feel that we are, in a vague way, aware of our shortcomings, yet we find it much more comfortable to lay the blame elsewhere. We are bound by curriculu m, by prescribed standards and goals, by administration, etc. This will no longer do; as Buber says, we must start where we find the pupil. Not withstanding the real obstacles which exist, if we are to be concerned with the development of the whole person, our most important task is to create the type of atmosphere and enviroment necessary for the growth of the human potential which is entrusted to us.

To do this, the teacher must be really present to the pupils; contact, says Buber is the primary word of education

> It is not the instruction that educates but the instructor. The good teacher educates by his speedh, and by his silence, in the hour of teaching and in the recesses, in

> casual conversation, through his mere presence, only he must be a really existing man and he must be really present to his pupils; he educates through contact.[1]

Buber says we must be ready to enter into dialogue with our students. The business of the school is not mere instruction but the life of the child in the world in which he lives, and in the world in which he will live in the future. When the teacher loses sight of the child as a human being, there is no reality between them, there is no relationship, no mutuality. To achive Buber's 'mutuality', we have to be open to the life in the classroom; it means that the teacher must be aware of human values as well as social and intellectual values. It means respecting the validity of the child's perceptions in the classroom; his freedom to be and to chose must be respected. To do this, the teacher must become aware of the meaning of freedom in his own life; before he can help the student achieve self-awareness, he must achieve the same in his own life. Socrates' dictum: "Know Thyself", must still be a starting point for teachers.

An atmosphere for dialogue implies freedom, not the unbridled type so much in evidence today, but a freedom which implies a personal responsibility on the part of the student. For Buber and also for existentialists in general, one cannot exist without the other.

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[1]Martin Buber, A Believing Humanism. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), P. 102.

In his book, Freedom to Learn, Dr. Carl Rogers, who bases his approach to learning almost exclusively on Buber, says that the amount of freedom which can be given is not particularly important. Even under the most rigid conditions, (preset curriculium, text, external examination, etc.), the important thing is that within these limits the freedom that is given is real, and perceived as real by the students. Then, even in a seemingly narrow sector of their work, they can experience freedom of choice, freedom of expression, freedom to do.[1]

To enter into real relationship with students means that the teacher must take a risk, a risk in the true existential sense. He must be open to the students, but he must not always expect to find agreement. In an encounter with a student, confrontation must be expected and accepted. Only when people are open to dialogue is it possible to establish real genuine bonds. If the teacher forces the student into his way of thinking, the latter soon realizes that the only possible avenue is that of conformity of rebellion. A confrontation can end without agreement, but the important thing is that teacher and student are not at odds with each other.

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[1]Dr. Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn. (Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1969), P. 74.

Although every confrontation is an encounter, not every encounter need involve a dispute, or controversy. Sometimes the encounter is a single coming together, a reality between two persons where there is a relatedness and a mutuality. To be able to achieve this, a teacher must be receptive. Buber relates such an encounter between an educator and a student, a meeting which occours when a young teacher faces his classroom for the first time. Amid the noise, when the teacher is about to establish rigid rules of conduct, he suddenly encounters a face in the class which strikes him; not a beautiful face, but a real one, a face that addresses itself to him directly. The ensuing description of what transpired[1] makes us realize that the opportunity for encounter is always present if the teacher is willing to make the required commitment.

Dr. Rogers, who views the teacher primarily as a facilitator of learning, says that the facilitation rests upon "certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner."[2] The most basic attitude he considers is that of realness or genuiness. The teacher must be a real person in his relationships with his students; he

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[1]Martin Buber, Between Man and Man. (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1965), P. 113.

[2]Dr. Carl Rogers, op. cit., P. 106.

cannot present a front or a facade. He also must genuinely accept the student as a person worthy in his own right; in a word, he must care.

If Buber, does in fact, open the door to a new approach to learning suitable for our time, then the teacher must certainly be the key. If he possesses the necessary values and attitudes, and can communicate them to the student, meaningful learning can and will take place. If the teacher is the core, the content, and the curriculum, then the greatest challenge facing education today is the discovery of this mission on the part of the individual teacher. Only then can he be properly prepared for the all important task that is entrusted to him; only then can he give of the spontaniety of self demanded of the I-Thou dislogue. In so doing, he will be fulfilling what for Buber is one of man's greatest callings, the education of one human being through another. For me, he makes it seem all worth while.

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