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BENFIELD, WILLIAM GRADY

**PERSPECTIVES OF THE 'I': LITERARY AND DRAMATIC
INTERPRETATIONS OF MARTIN BUBER'S 'I-THOU' AND 'I-IT' CONCEPTS**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

ED.D. 1981

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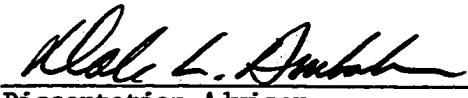
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William G. Benfield

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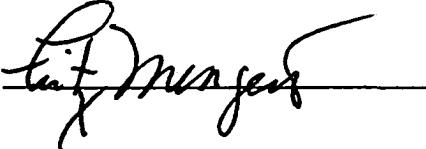
APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor



Committee Members



May 19, 1981

Date of Acceptance by Committee

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BENFIELD, WILLIAM GRADY. Perspectives of the I: Literary and Dramatic Interpretations of Martin Buber's I-Thou and I-It Concepts. (1981) Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker. Pp. 85.

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of human relationships on human development as different types of relationships have been identified in the I-Thou and I-It concepts of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. The focus of the study was centered on the human self as the self is referred to as I in I-Thou and I-It relationships.

Two methods were used in exploring, interpreting, and communicating the content of this study. First, the process of analytical reasoning and methodology was used in giving consideration to some of Buber's major concepts. From these writings some basic assumptions related to the development of the I were extracted and research questions were formulated. The questions, which dealt with definitional, relational, and practicality issues, enabled the study to go beyond the objective information found in Buber's writings.

The central focus of the research was to find support for a greater emphasis of the subjective qualities of human life in defining the human self. The I-Thou concept of Buber represented this subjective quality, while the I-It concept represented objective qualities. The conclusion was that the development of the I or self is dependent on I-Thou relationships because it is only through others (subjects or objects) that man is truly human. The subjective element that defines mankind lies in the "between" which is present only in I-Thou relationships. Mankind's natural tendency is to place distance between himself and others. Life without I-Thou relationships is a life of isolation from the world of subjects and objects.

It was concluded that the transition from I-It to I-Thou relationships is an effable event. The self cannot become an I without a Thou, but the relationship between the I and the Thou is exclusive. It is a single setting exclusive of all that surrounds it. While it exists, it cannot be talked about by the I or the Thou and remain an I-Thou relationship. To discuss it afterwards converts the event into an I-It relationship. I-Thou relationships are always in the present and to remember them as past events is to speak of them as I-It relationships.

Since the development of the I is dependent on I-Thou relationships, it was concluded that the I-Thou concept is important to institutions of education. The I-Thou and I-It concepts were used in the study to evaluate educational purposes and processes present in society. The result of this evaluation was that education for social purpose and the scientific method of education utilize values that may be identified with the I-It concept. Education for the individual person and the humanistic, person-centered approach to education represent values found within the I-Thou concept. Both education purposes and methods are valuable to the education of persons. However, to utilize only I-It values and omit the values of the I-Thou concept is to neglect vital subjective values which are part of the total person. Thus education may fall short of educating the whole person.

A second method used in presenting, interpreting, and making application of the major concepts selected for consideration was to create mime sketches which visually portrayed the concepts. The sketches were created and performed on videotape as a part of the

dissertation. Through the process of creating and performing the mime sketches, the selected Buberian concepts became more real as they were more deeply internalized. This occurred as the actor sought to reveal the concepts to an audience through himself. Commentaries and interpretations of the mime sketches were provided in the appendices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express appreciation to Dr. Fritz Mengert for the inspiration and guidance he provided during the writing of this manuscript. To know him is to encounter a Thou. Gratitude is also extended to Dr. Dale Brubaker for his assistance in giving the work form, to Dr. Sarah Robinson for her clarifications, and to Dr. Dwight Clark for his stimulating ideas. A special expression of gratefulness is extended posthumously to a friend, Jim Mauney, whose I-Thou relationships with the writer will never be forgotten.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the time of Socrates (469-399 B.C.),¹ one of the most puzzling subjects of philosophy has been the human being. Although philosophy was at one time the umbrella under which all disciplines of study existed, it is that no longer. The demise of philosophy, as a single discipline, with its branches reaching out to encompass knowledge of all subjects, was inevitable. The disintegration began thousands of years ago when the world itself was no longer believed to be sacred. At some point in Western history, no one can say exactly when, there came the realization that the earth was not a part of a deity but was an object to be used for human benefit. The result of that realization was not immediate, but it has led the world through centuries to the present time when knowledge, and the search for knowledge, is categorized into various disciplines. The pursuit to understand and utilize the external objects in the world has been assigned to the natural and technological sciences. The efforts to understand the social development and the behavior of humankind have become the tasks of the social sciences. Specialization, in a world where there has been a knowledge explosion, is an ever-expanding activity. Humankind has explored the depths and heights of the earth and has reached into the very mind of its own kind in the pursuit of knowledge. The

¹Robert F. Davidson, Philosophies Men Live By (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974), p. 14.

knowledge gained is often considered to be very precise. It is recorded and preserved as steppingstones from which to launch further studies which, in turn, will produce more precise information about humankind, and the earth on which humankind exists, and the universe in which the earth exists.

The subject matter of this study cannot be classified among those of the sciences which claim to be precise. The scientist may take an object into a laboratory and test it, using scientific procedures, and conclude his study with the precise properties of the object which will explain precisely the behavior of the object under certain conditions. Likewise, the psychologist may examine his subject, and, using tried and tested techniques developed for use in extracting unconscious information from his subject, he can follow a path of action in working toward a cure for the subject. However, the problem involved in this study cannot be solved by the use of analytical procedures. In fact, a solution to the primary question, "What is man?" around which the various aspects of this study are directed, will remain unclear. Philosophers from ancient times to the present have sought a solution to this question, but it remains unanswerable. Either the preliminaries of this question have been answered or extensive progress has been made toward solutions on the physical, biological, and social levels. In fact, it would seem that there is little left to be known about humankind. However, the realm of humankind's being is as mysterious today as it was at the first dawning of the earth's sun. The mystery remains because the study of the self or the essence of humankind is not an exacting science. This study can take

its place among many others in the philosophical arena as speculation regarding questions about human nature. The fact that what follows in the content of this presentation is speculative in no way makes it apologetic.

Statement of Purpose

This study involves the task of exploring the development of the human self when the self is referred to as the I in the I-Thou and I-It concepts of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber.¹ This effort will be far more difficult than the study of the body or the mental processes of the human being. Studies concerning these aspects of mankind use analytical methods as focal points. However, in an effort to study the self or the I of a human being, the body and the mind are of concern, but the focal point is on the quality of human life and not upon physical aspects which may be scientifically verified. In other words, if a human being looks into a mirror, the first thing to be perceived is the body image. The perception may end there, but the question regarding the essence or quality of the I which does not reflect in the mirror is still there. The way in which one perceives the physical image in the mirror, as well as the way any image is perceived by the person gazing into the mirror, will depend a great deal upon the quality of the I. Whereas studies concerning the body, thinking, and social behavior are studies which focus on the objective factors of the human being, this study is clearly centered in the exploration of the subjective qualities of the human being.

¹ Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 3.

As stated earlier, Martin Buber's philosophical anthropology will be used to give direction to this study. Let us now briefly consider an overview of the concepts which are central to Buber's thought. Buber presents two poles of human existence which are identified as I-It and I-Thou. These terms refer to two different postures toward the world and reality which human beings adopt as they experience the world around them.¹ It is the I of the I-It and the I of the I-Thou and the perception of the world as viewed from these two attitudes which will be given particular attention in this study.

Further, Buber uses the primary words I-It and I-Thou to clarify what is known as his dialogical principle. Human beings live out their existence in one or both of these attitudes. However, dialogue takes place only in the I-Thou relationship. Briefly developing the thought behind the I-It and I-Thou concepts, the I-It and I-Thou concepts refer to particular ways in which a person relates to the world. Participation in the I-It relationship sets one apart from the world and all reality is seen as outside of the self. The result of assuming this attitude is that all encountered reality is perceived as objects to be mastered, owned and manipulated by the I (the self). The focus of the relationship in the I-It is always upon the I. There is no dialogue between the I and that which is encountered, only the monologue of the I. The intent of the I-It relationship is to raise the presence of the I at the expense of the Other. The I-It relationship is a subject-object relationship in which the I always encounters the Other as a thing.²

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 31-34.

In contrast, the I-Thou relationship is an encounter with the Other in which the relationship is characterized by openness, directness, mutuality and presence. There is a subject-subject relationship in the I-Thou encounter which permits the uniqueness of both parties to be realized. There is no analysis of the I by the Thou or the Thou by the I in the relationship. Each raises the presence of the Other in an I-Thou relationship and each experiences the Other as an encounter of wholeness. Through dialogue the I and the Thou live in the present and each becomes a reality to the Other.¹

All that is experienced by persons is experienced either through an I-It or an I-Thou relationship. At a glance, it would appear that the I-It concept carries with it only negative connotations. However, Buber says, "Without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man."² The focus of Buber's I-It and I-Thou concepts is on relationships. Whenever one says "I," the "I" is used either in the I-It or the I-Thou relationship. The I in the I-It and the I in the I-Thou relationship are not the same.³

Research Questions

Although the primary purpose of this study is to examine the development of the I of the I-Thou relationships in contrast to the I of I-It relationships, there are also other factors to be considered which will give depth to the study. These may better be stated in the form of definitional, relational, and practicality questions.

¹Ibid., pp. 32-33.

²Ibid., p. 34.

³Ibid., p. 4.

Definitional Questions

There is a basic assumption in Buber's central thought that the I-Thou relationship is a significant factor in the development of the self or the I. This assumption is one which is fully accepted and will be explained through interpretation of the following definitional questions:

What qualities relating to a meaningful existence in I-Thou relationships are not qualities in I-It relationships?

What differences are there between the world as perceived through an I-Thou relationship and the world as perceived through an I-It relationship?

Relational Question

Another assumption which is present in Buber's thought is that humankind must live in both I-It and I-Thou relationships if life is to be meaningful. It seems impossible to live indefinitely in an I-Thou relationship, and, according to Buber, a person is not a person if one lives only in I-It relationships. This assumption may be further explored by considering the relational question:

How does one make a transition from an I-It relationship to an I-Thou relationship?

Practicality Questions

It is apparent after considering the concepts of Buber that he assumes that the I-It and I-Thou concepts may be useful in any environment where relationships exist. This assumption raises the following practicality questions:

How useful would these concepts be to the institution of education?

What differences are there between educational processes based on I-It relationships and those founded on I-Thou relationships?

Methodology for the Study

Two forms for communicating content will be used to give consideration to the purposes and questions proposed for this study. Both forms will be the result of interpretations of Buber's I-It and I-Thou concepts and both will reflect the formation of personal opinions regarding the issues described above. First, through the use of analytical reasoning and methodology, a manuscript will be prepared to embody the formation of concepts to be considered. This work will reflect knowledge and understandings which come out of an investigation of the objective world of facts and data. From this initial work, mime sketches will be created, along with commentaries, in an effort to transform the concepts into a visual context. This work will reflect understandings and interpretations of the concepts as they are experienced by the subjective self and are given physical form.

Major Concepts of the Mime Messages

The mime sketches performed and recorded on video tape will become a permanent part of the presentation. The following concepts, which either parallel or closely relate to the research questions of this study, will be used in creating mime sketches:

<u>Concept to be Portrayed</u>	<u>Title of the Mime Sketch</u>
1. The development of the <u>I</u> by contrasting the <u>I</u> of the <u>I-It</u> concept with the <u>I</u> of the <u>I-Thou</u> concept	1. "Emerging"

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2. The transition of the <u>I</u> from the <u>I-It</u> relationship to an <u>I-Thou</u> relationship | 2. "The Chrysalis and the Butterfly" |
| 3. Barriers to <u>I-Thou</u> relationships | 3. "Walls" |
| 4. The world of the <u>I-It</u> concept and the world of the <u>I-Thou</u> concept | 4. "Inclusion and Illusion" |
| 5. Differences between educational processes based on <u>I-It</u> relationships and educational processes based on <u>I-Thou</u> relationships | 5. "The House Built for Jack"; "The House Jack Built" |

Since the art of mime is wordless, like a painting, and depends upon body movement and facial expressions for communicating messages to an audience, the commentary of each mime will be useful in relating the content of each mime sketch to the ideas and concepts selected to be portrayed. This does not mean that the sketches cannot speak for themselves. The commentaries will be useful in revealing the intentions of the creator regardless of what an audience may see.

There is an obscure purpose in formulating this presentation which is embedded in the processes to produce a finished product. Yet, it is perhaps the most important. In the process of creating mime sketches which speak with unspoken words, the creator enters the world of I and Thou. The world of the I will be transformed into substance which will, upon completion, become an It. This act of creation involves risk which may or may not result in creations which will be received by those who encounter the creations. Yet, the creation leads the creator beyond himself to the realms of the I-Thou where the I of the I-Thou may be experienced. What more appropriate experience can be sought than the fulfillment of this purpose?

Significance of the Study

Modern man is not unlike all human beings who have preceded him in existence. As man continues to uncover the mysteries of the world in which he lives, his environment changes with each new discovery. Throughout history man has searched for meaning and fulfillment in his existence. This search has been a motivating power which has led him to invent his own world.

Man now lives in the technological world which is symbolic of his mastery over many of the natural elements which were so mysterious just a few centuries ago. Buber believes that man now lags behind his works. The machines, social structures, and political organizations which were invented to serve man are now demanding to be served by man. Man's responses to these characteristics of modernity have been to withdraw into individualism or to become absorbed into collectivism. Individualism understands only a part of man as it sees man only in relation to himself. Collectivism understands man as having value only through his contribution to society.¹

The significance of this study is that it brings into focus an alternative starting point from which man can live a meaningful existence. Rather than beginning with a dependence upon the systems of society or the rugged stance of individualism for meaning in life, an alternative is to begin with persons in relation to each other. There can be no recognition of nor authentic relationships with others when man takes his stand in individualism. In collectivism man

¹ The Writings of Martin Buber, ed. Will Herberg (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 20-21.

becomes an object for serving the purposes of society and cannot be confirmed as man. However, it is only in man's relationship to another that he can be confirmed and live an authentic existence. Maurice Friedman captures the meaning of Buber's statement, "real life is meeting," when he said, "The reality of the external world comes from our relation to other selves."¹

¹Ibid., pp. 14-21.

CHAPTER II
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE I

Defining Man

Philosophical statements about human nature usually begin with definitions of humankind. To mention a few, Aristotle defined man as "a rational animal." Emmanuel Kant insisted that "man is essentially a creature who poses problems beyond his power of reason." Martin Heidegger said, "Man is that being who asks what being is." Soren Kierkegaard claimed that "man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis." Jean Paul Sartre argued, "Man is nothing but what he makes of himself."¹ On these and the multitude of other definitions which exist, philosophies have been constructed. Philosophers have used the intellectual, social, economic, psychic, physical and spiritual natures of mankind in efforts to understand what it means to be human.

Martin Buber, in a real sense, uses all that comprises mankind in his definition. There is, however, a unique feature found within his definition which is not present, or if so, not so clearly stated in other philosophies. Buber does not define man from one side, but from

¹ Abraham Kaplan, The Pursuit of Wisdom (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1977), p. 266; Ibid.; Sidney Hook, The Quest for Being (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1961), p. 156; Brian V. Hill, Education and the Endangered Individual (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 36; Martin Heidegger, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 591.

two sides. He does not define man apart from that to which he is related. It is the quality of the relationship between a person and another person or object which defines man. In other words, the definition does not rest with man alone, nor does it reside in the person or object to which man is related. Man is defined by what Buber calls the "between."¹ Without an understanding of the "between," all attempts to understand the concepts of Buber are futile. It is by first realizing the full meaning of the sphere of "between" that conjectures may be made concerning the development of the I.

Let us begin by considering Buber's basic premises regarding the I and then move to a discussion of the "between" which identifies or defines the I. In the first section of his classic book entitled I and Thou, Buber poetically states the basic concepts which are given more depth the further one reads.² He uses the terms I and Thou in combination, and that which exists "between" the I and the Thou defines the I.³ Similarly, Buber uses the terms I and It in combination, but it is that which is absent or not "between" the I and the It which defines the I. Buber states, "The I of the primary word I-Thou is a different I from that of the primary word I-It".⁴

¹ Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1965), p. 203.

² Buber, I and Thou, p. 3.

³ See chapter I for an explanation of the I-Thou relationship. A more complete explanation and interpretation is rendered in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (1967), vol. 12 of The Library of Living Philosophers (La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1939--).

⁴ Buber, I and Thou, p. 3.

In the attempt to make a distinction between the I of the I-Thou attitude and the I of the I-It attitude, Buber refers to the former as Person and the latter as Individual. The term Individual "means literally 'its-own-being,' suggesting a holding onto oneself and thus an inability to share oneself with the Thou."¹ The Individual is one who is incapable of hearing and responding to another being. In the stance as an Individual, the world mirrors back to the I his own desires. All things are defined in relation to the Individual as the I takes a stand in bodily difference from others. There is no sharing between the I and the Other.²

In contrast to the I as an Individual is the I as a Person. A Person shares openly with his whole being with the Other. In this relationship to the Other, a Person shares in reality. Buber states,

All reality is an activity in which I share without being able to appropriate for myself. Where there is no sharing there is no reality. Where there is self-appropriation there is no reality. The more direct the contact with the Thou, the fuller is the sharing.

The I is real in virtue of sharing in reality. The fuller its sharing the more real it becomes.³

A Person is one who shares the "between" which exists only in an I-Thou relationship. Each, the I and the Thou, shares in the Otherness of the Other, letting the Other be in relation. Through this relationship the I and the Thou are made manifest, that is, present and real.

¹ Robert E. Wood, Martin Buber's Ontology (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 81.

² Ibid.

³ Buber, I and Thou, p. 63.

The definition of man then, according to Buber, depends on which attitude man takes, the I-Thou or I-It, toward that which he encounters in the world. A person may alternate between the attitudes which define him in this limited relative way. Buber is clear, however, that man is truly man only when he has encountered another in an I-Thou relationship.

The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each, considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction. The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relationship with other individuals. The aggregate is a fact of existence in so far as it is built up of living units of relation. The fundamental fact of existence is man with man. What is peculiarly characteristic of the human world is above all that something takes place between one being and another the like of which can be found nowhere in nature.¹

"Through the Thou a man becomes I." Again and again Buber emphasizes that it is the positioning of oneself in the I-Thou attitude in relation to another subject or object where the cradle of real life is found. The person who addresses the Other (subject or object) standing before him as a Thou does so with wholeness of being. Addressing the Other as an It can never be with the whole being. It is man in his wholeness who is truly man, according to Buber. All persons have the potential for wholeness which, like new birth, may arise at any moment in life through an I-Thou relationship. Even if man addresses another as Thou when the other is unaware of being addressed, the manifestation of the Thou by the I makes the I whole.²

¹Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 202-203.

²Buber, I and Thou, pp. 3, 9, 11, 28.

Differences Between the I of I-It and
the I of I-Thou Relationships

An essential difference between the I-Thou and I-It attitudes, in reference to the definition of man, is what occurs in the "between." In the I-It there is no "between." There is a recognition of the Other by the I but the Other is seen only as an object for one's use. Such a manifestation of the Other results in a bending back to oneself, and the Other becomes a function of the I or the self.¹ It is the act of using the Other as a way to raise the presence of the self that reminds one of the Greek myth Narcissus. Tiresias, a seer, told the mother of Narcissus that her son would have a long life provided he never looked upon his own features. However, Narcissus fell in love with himself one day when he saw his own image in the waters of a spring. It was there he stayed, gazing at his own reflection, until he died.²

If all that one encounters is to be bent back to the self for the enhancement of the self, then life becomes an experience lived in isolation. In I-It relationships the I is separated from the world around him in his individuality. He cannot participate. He can experience the Other only in estrangement.³ The It of the I-It relationship is isolated in observation by the I, and the I remains apart

¹Wood, pp. 38-39.

²Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1971 ed., s.v. "Narcissus."

³Eliezer Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1974), p. 69.

from the It. There is no mutuality or "between" in the I-It relationship. The I is incomplete.¹

In the I-Thou relationship the sphere of "between" becomes a reality. The I does not bend back toward the self, but rather turns toward the Other in order to communicate with the Other. The sphere of "between" is common to both the I and the Thou. Meaning in the I-Thou relationship is not located in the I or the Thou but "between" them.² The "between" becomes a vital part of Buber's effort to establish I-Thou relationships as necessary for the emergence of the I.

For Buber the Between is a realm which is neither objective nor subjective nor the sum of the two. If one were to remove all that belongs to the object and all that belongs to the subject, there still would remain the Between.³

Buber explains the "between" in this way:

We tend, to be sure, to forget that something can happen not merely 'to' us and 'in' us but also, in all reality, between us. Let us consider the most elementary of all facts of our intercourse with one another. The word that is spoken is uttered here and heard there, but its spokenness has its place in 'the between.'⁴

Where the I and the Thou meet, there is the "between." "It is a field of energy, as it were, which actualizes man's personal aspects: to the extent that man says 'Thou,' he becomes I."⁵ Thus, man is

¹ Buber, I and Thou, p. 29.

² Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 203.

³ Wood, pp. 41-42.

⁴ Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 112.

⁵ Grete Schaefer, The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber, trans. Noah J. Jacobs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), p. 186.

defined as I by Buber even though man falls from this identity or fails to assume it. Buber has gone beyond simply defining man. He has opened the window so that man can see the way toward becoming I. In this sense, Buber establishes an I-Thou relationship with all mankind.

One other matter concerning the I-Thou and I-It relationships must be considered before turning to the development of the I of the I-Thou relationship. Lest one may be misled into thinking that all aspects of the I-It concept are negative, this matter needs clarification. Buber himself says:

The primary word I-It is not of evil--as matter is not of evil. It is of evil--as matter is, which presumes to have the quality of present being. If a man lets it have the mastery, the continually growing world of It overruns him and robs him of the reality of his own I.¹

All Thous are destined to become Its and all Its are potential Thous. As one faces another in an I-Thou relationship, the relation is out of the realms of time and space. This realm is a characteristic of the sphere "between." However, a person cannot live forever in this realm. There comes the moment when the I-Thou relation is broken. Only the memory of it remains. It is then that the relationship becomes an I-It relationship residing in the memory as an event in time and space which had a quality. The remembered relationship may now be coordinated and systematized as a historical event removed from "between" to settle in the cognition of man.² Just as it is essential

¹Buber, I and Thou, p. 46.

²Werner Manheim, Martin Buber (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), pp. 30-31.

for man's being to have I-Thou encounters, it is also essential to have I-It encounters. More will be said about this in a later section.

Becoming I

Any consideration of the development of the I must begin with Buber's view of how an individual becomes I. "Through the Thou a man becomes I."¹ Buber means by this that man's I-consciousness is developed only from relational events. In the life of mankind there is a preoccupation with his I, which is a prerequisite for I-It relationships, which begin at birth.² Buber indicates that "the antenatal life of a child is one of a purely natural combination I-Thou, bodily interaction and flowing from one to the other."³ This confirms the belief that all persons possess the potentiality in the course of life to return to the Thou. In the womb of the mother a child exists in the I-Thou relation in natural combination. After birth the child experiences the natural separation of the I-It. The connection of the I-Thou and the separation of the I from the Thou has been explained in a Jewish mythical saying, "In the mother's body man knows the universe, in birth he forgets it."⁴ Whereas Sartre said, "Existence precedes essence," Buber strongly implies that essence precedes existence.

¹Buber, I and Thou, p. 28.

²Schaeder, p. 152.

³Buber, I and Thou, p. 25.

⁴Ibid.

The development of the I begins in the natural combination, and it leaves in the child an impulse for saying Thou. This impulse is present in the earliest life stages of the child who portrays a living model of human development.¹ Buber refers to this portrayal as "the a priori of relation, the inborn Thou." As the child grows, his I-consciousness gradually separates itself from the I-Thou and the possibility for I-It relationships comes into being. Even in the young child there are evidences of reaching out to establish relations. Having been fed and made comfortably secure, a child often grasps outward toward a Thou. The sounds made by the child are attempts to communicate and put himself in relation with those around him. Almost as if it is instinctive, a child first reaches out to touch and is fulfilled by the Thou. Later these efforts to relate are partially satisfied by seeing and speaking as the "inborn Thou" is brought to its full power.²

The "inborn Thou" of every child is a vital concept for realizing human potential. It is the inborn Thou which remains with the child, if only in a vague memory at times, throughout life. As the I develops, there is an increasing preoccupation with I-It relationships. The world of the child becomes ordered and systematized. The real world is caught by glimpses of those timeless and spaceless moments when the I was bound together with the Thou.³

¹Schaeder, p. 153.

²Buber, I and Thou, pp. 27-28.

³Schaeder, p. 153.

In explaining the occurrences of I-Thou relationships in the life of man, Buber describes the Thou as "over against" the I. This reference is to the I of the I-It. The terms "over against" appear to be negative, but they are not. When a Thou stands "over against" an I, there is a beckoning for the I to move out of the I-It into the I-Thou. If the I does move to the I of the I-Thou, then exclusiveness is established between the I and the Thou. All other objects and subjects are excluded. The relationship is direct and transcends time and space to dwell in the present. Only the I and the Thou exist in mutual relationship, addressing each other. Thus, the I has developed, based on the a priori of relation. The true nature of man becomes a reality as he confirms the Thou and is confirmed by the Thou who stands before him. Between the I and Thou, the I is fulfilled and complete.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSITION FROM I-IT TO I-THOU RELATIONSHIPS

A consideration of the transition from an I-It relationship to an I-Thou relationship is a most difficult task. It involves asking the question, "What happens between the I (the self) and another (object or subject) which changes the relationship?" In the search for an answer to this question, there is an immediate awareness of mystery which surrounds the issue. The movement from an I-It to an I-Thou relationship appears to be an ineffable event.

Buber seems to be at a loss to explain how transitions occur. He is aware of conditions which establish the potential for possible occurrences of movement, but in describing what actually occurs, very little is said. This is in no way a critical judgement of Buber because he is clear in making it known that the I-Thou relationship is not bound by time and space.¹ Therefore, only the I and the Thou know the quality of the relationship. It is impossible for the I or the Thou to talk about the relationship while it exists, for to do so would dissolve it. To talk about it after its duration is to speak of it as a historical event which has become an It.

Internal and External Barriers to I-Thou Relationships

Let us put the problem of transition from I-It to I-Thou into proper perspective by asking a more pointed question based on what is

¹Buber, I and Thou, p. 100.

known about the two positions. Essentially, the problem is, "What causes persons to objectify and manipulate in an act of bending back toward the self as another stands before him?" From the discussion of the I in chapter I, it was learned that upon entering the world "the I-Thou relation does, in fact, precede the I-It, and entering into relation precedes the thickening of distance that obstructs relationship."¹ There is a natural tendency in man, as he develops from infancy to adulthood to put distance between himself and others. This becomes a barrier to an I-Thou relationship. A consciousness of one's separateness grows through a process of self-emergence. The self becomes more and more insecure and the need to find refuge in the world of objectivity and the private inner self becomes greater.²

Buber explains the withdrawing of the self in this manner:

Each of us is encased in an armour whose task is to ward off signs. Signs happen to us without respite, living means being addressed, we would need only to present ourselves and to perceive. But the risk is too dangerous for us, the soundless thunderings seem to threaten us with annihilation, and from generation to generation we perfect the defence apparatus. All our knowledge assures us: "Be calm, everything happens as it must happen, but nothing is directed at you, you are not meant; it is just 'the world,' you can experience it as you like, but whatever you make of it in yourself proceeds from you alone, nothing is required of you, you are not addressed, all is quiet."

Each of us is encased in an armour which we soon, out of familiarity, no longer notice. There are only moments which penetrate it and stir the soul to sensibility.³

The reason man resists moving from an I-It relation to an I-Thou relation, bare of his armour, is understandable. The attitude

¹ Buber, Knowledge of Man, p. 23.

² Ibid.

³ Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 10-11.

of the I-Thou cannot be assumed except with man's whole being, and this involves risk. The self-will which has been for him a protective shell must be shed. There is a possibility of sacrifice and suffering in the movement toward an I-Thou relationship. He must open himself to the Other without any prearranged decision when he says Thou.¹

There can be no possessing or manipulating in meeting the Thou:

He listens to what is emerging from himself, to the course of being in the world; not in order to be supported by it, but in order to bring it to reality as it desires, in its need of him, to be brought--with human spirit and deed, human life and death.²

To present oneself to another without protective devices is sufficient cause for man to hesitate in making the transition from the I-It to an I-Thou relationship. However, there is more involved. Only when man is open and present to others can he really know suffering and pain. The nature of suffering, as it surely exists in the world, can only be recognized as one shares the pain of others. This is not with an attitude of sympathy, which does not enter one's being, but an attitude of great love. Only then does the ultimate depth of one's own suffering and pain light the way for seeing the suffering of the world.³

Buber did not say that the I-Thou relationship is the same as love, but he did say "love is between I and Thou".⁴ He refers to Jesus as one who did not succeed in loving every man he met. Yet, Jesus at

¹ Donald J. Moore, Martin Buber, Prophet of Religious Secularism (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), p. 106.

² Buber, I and Thou, pp. 59-60.

³ Moore, p. 107.

⁴ Buber, I and Thou, p. 14.

least stood in direct relation to those he could not love and turned toward them with his whole being. The price was awesome for Jesus as it would be for anyone who takes the stand in I and Thou.

The one who steps into the realm of the I-Thou must do so without holding anything back. He assumes responsibility for the Thou who stands before him. This is a part of the love which is between the 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. 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. In a wonderful way, from time to time exclusiveness arises--and so he can be effective, helping, healing, educating, raising up, saving. Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou. In this lies the likeness--impossible in any feeling whatsoever--of all who love.²

Not only does the tendency to turn inward in a protective act cause a person to fear I-Thou relations; there are also outside barriers to the I-Thou which reinforce inward barriers. It has been noted that for Buber man is a creature of dual origin. His bipolar nature begins to develop at the moment of birth through bodily separation from his mother. From the moment of birth until death, life is a series of encounters with Others.

As man encounters others, his self-awareness develops, causing him to place distance between himself and the other encountered. No longer is man defined by direct and whole relations of the undivided self to the undivided Other. A function of the divided self is to

¹Moore, p. 107.

²Buber, I and Thou, p. 15

build structures, arrange things and provide order to secure the self.

Generation after generation has been occupied with this task of inventing structures which confirm man and offer pseudo security.

Buber described his generation as an age of I-It relation, "gigantically swollen and practically uncontested."¹ In this age, the social sphere of man grows and develops, binding himself to collective systems. There is security in groups where individuals have common experiences and reactions. The elements of personal relations are given up in favor of the elements of collectivity. These settings, created by man, do not eliminate the possibility for I-Thou relations, but often become substitutes for them.²

In his book Daniel, which was written before I and Thou, Buber struggled with describing man's tendency to create walls around himself in the effort to find security in his world. In Daniel Buber introduces the duality of orientation versus realization. Man may choose to respond to life by adopting one of these attitudes which correspond to his twofold nature. If one chooses to live in the power of realization, then he celebrates life in open and direct encounters. However, Buber indicates that ours is an age when persons do not realize enough.

They have aims, and they know how to attain them. They have an environment, and they have information about their environment. They also have spirituality of many kinds, and they talk a great deal. And all of this outside of the real. They live, and they do not realize what they live. Their experience is ordered without being comprehended. . . . To each of them eternity calls, "Be!" They smile at eternity and answer, "I have information."

¹ Martin Buber, To Hallow This Life, ed. Jacob Trapp (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1958), p. 117.

² Buber, The Knowledge of Man, p. 25.

Their limitation is so closely cut to the body that they are glad and proud of it, and call it by elegant and pretentious names, such as culture, or religion, or progress, or tradition, or intellectuality: Ah, the unreal has a thousand masks.¹

Man yields to orientation in fear and insecurity. He establishes institutions which promise him security. It is a choice which enables him to use and experience rather than standing in relation. Basically it is a choice of I-It rather than I-Thou. Orientation structures the world for man so that he does not need to struggle for meaning and direction. What appears to be a help to mankind often becomes a barrier to his own being.²

Man's Ability to Have I-Thou Relationships

Having considered some of the major reasons Buber gives for man's resistance to change from I-It to I-Thou relationships, let us now review the ability of man to make the transition. Already the "inborn Thou" has been noted as the root of man's ableness to encounter another in an I-Thou relationship. At the center of the I and Thou there is a Jewish concept which Buber uses to give credence to his belief that man can change. "Turning stands at the center of the Jewish conception of the way of man."³ Buber maintains that there is always a possibility that man will turn from the force of the I-It because there is One Thou who never ceases being Thou. Some refer to

¹ Martin Buber, Daniel, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 75.

² Moore, p. 101.

³ Martin Buber, Hasidism and Modern Man, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (n.p.: Horizon Press, 1958; reprint ed., New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1966), p. 164.

this Thou as God. Perhaps a more universal term of reference for this Thou would be "Ultimate Reality," or Buber's term, "Eternal Thou." Certainly the realization of the divine Being as over against the I is one way in which man may turn from the self to another.¹ The Eternal Thou may be the first voice one may hear addressing him. If he hears the summons and responds to it, the I-Thou encounter is complete.

A Thou may address the I at any moment. Buber's life was filled with I-Thou encounters which give witness to man's ability to transcend the self in a movement toward I-Thou. This account of a simple encounter with a horse reveals that I-Thou encounters may occur unsuspectingly, in any place and in any setting:

When I was eleven years of age, spending the summer on my grandparents' estate, I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad dapple-gray horse. It was not a casual delight but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. If I am to explain it now, beginning from the still very fresh memory of my hand, I must say that what I experienced in touch with the animal was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other, which, however, did not remain strange like the otherness of the ox and the ram, but rather let me draw near and touch it. When I stroked the mighty mane, sometimes marvellously smooth-combed, at other times just as astonishingly wild, and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of Thou and Thou with me. The horse, even when I had not begun by pouring oats for him into the manger, very gently raised his massive head, ears flicking, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognizable only by his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved. But once—I do not know what came over the child, at any rate it was childlike

¹ Martin Buber, Eclipse of God, trans. Maurice S. Friedman, Eugene Kamenka, Norbert Guterman, and I. M. Lask (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1952), pp. 28-30.

enough--it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before, but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing. And the next day, after giving him a rich feed, when I stroked my friend's head he did not raise his head. A few years later, when I thought back to the incident, I no longer supposed that the animal had noticed my defection. But at the time I considered myself judged.¹

Ineffableness of the Transition from
I-It to I-Thou Relationships

How do transitions from I-It to I-Thou relationships occur?

There are no words in any language which may be used to describe them.

Mircea Eliade, author of The Sacred and the Profane, introduces a term which he uses to explain the manifestation of the divine to man. The term adds some understanding to what happens in an I-Thou relation.

Eliade says that man lives in a world of sameness with regard to time and space. Buber says I-It relations are in time and space. The term Eliade uses to refer to this sameness is "homogeneity." Man lives in the "homogeneity" of time and space. When that which is sacred breaks into time and space, nonhomogeneity of time and space is experienced. Life is not the same anymore. The breaking in on homogeneous life affects one's reflection of the world at the center of one's being.

The "holy Other" has entered unholy time and space.²

Transitions from I-It to I-Thou relations occur in a similar fashion. Man is here on this earth struggling to create order so that

¹ Martin Buber, Meetings, ed. with an introduction by Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court Publishing Company, 1973), pp. 26-27.

² Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1959), pp. 20-22.

his life may find meaning. But the order he establishes by manipulation and possession still does not confirm him. The gift of confirmation cannot be taken but must be given. Therefore, man yearns in his state of separation to be confirmed. All persons seek it and anticipate receiving it. Even in I-It relationships the desire for confirmation is present, but only through a Thou can it be wholly realized. The how, when, what and where questions concerning the appearance of a Thou are unknown. It is indeed the "mysterium tremendum" which comes like a gentle, sweeping wind becoming a Thou in many forms. The Thou mysteriously enters the spirit of man and his spirit reflects the gift back to the Other.¹

¹ Robert C. Monk, et al., Exploring Religious Meaning (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), pp. 95-96.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWOFOLD WORLD OF THE I

The world as man objectively knows it is one. It is a tiny planet situated between the planets Venus and Mars in our solar system. How man lives on the planet earth and perceives his existence in relation to it is a different matter. "To man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude."¹ Because the I of an I-It relationship is not the same as the I of an I-Thou relationship, the world is perceived by the I in the way which corresponds to the stance taken in relationship to it. In this sense, the I is the architect of the world. A person may build his world in relating to it in I-Thou or I-It relationships, or in a combination of the two relations.

Primitive Perceptions of the World

The twofold world Buber speaks of then does not refer to the physical qualities of the world, but rather to its appearance as viewed by the I. As an illustration of this, let us consider a historical appearance of the world in relation to the I or the self found in primitive culture.

It becomes apparent in the study of primitive man that the world was twofold for him, but not in the same sense that Buber understands it. That is, primitive man divided the world into two opposite parts--the inhabited, which was known, and the unknown. Primitive man,

¹Buber, I and Thou, p. 31.

like modern man, was often insecure and felt a sense of alienation from his world. The inhabited territory was space he occupied. There was something special about it because he considered it to be sacred. All other space surrounding primitive man was believed to be chaos (disorder) peopled by demons, ghosts or other dreaded beings and, therefore, to be feared. The inhabited space was a cosmos (an ordered world) for primitive man because it had been founded for him by the gods. Hierophanies had occurred in the past during which time the gods created cosmos out of chaos for primitive man. This occurrence appears to have been repeated again and again with reference to different primitive tribes.¹

When primitive tribesmen left the place of their habitation for any reason, they always felt a sense of estrangement from their world. Some, like the Australian tribe Achilpa, carried with them a sacred object from their place of habitation so that they would not feel alienated from their gods. All members of the tribe felt secure only when they could reside near the divine being made manifest to them in their ancient past, represented by a sacred object. The object they carried from place to place established the center of the world for them because it was a source of contact with their deity. So no matter where they journeyed, as long as a sacred pole or stone or some other object was carried with them, they lived in the center of the world.²

For primitive man his world was sacred. He could not live in chaos. If contact with the transcendent being was ever lost, existence

¹Eliade, Sacred and Profane, pp. 20-65.

²Ibid., pp. 32-46.

in the world would not be possible. As primitive man moved from place to place, his first act in creating a new habitation was to establish a point of contact between the spirit world above and the spirit world below him. The sacred pole of the Achilpa tribe served as a vertical axis in the center of the tribe. It extended invisibly into the heavens and below the surface of the earth where spirits dwelled. Having set the pole in the center of the village, the tribe dwelled in sacred space where Ultimate Reality (the Divine) unveiled itself. The world of primitive man was complete when he lived at the center of the world. Primitive man was complete as he lived in a sacralized world.¹

Unknowingly perhaps, primitive man lived on the verge of an I-Thou relationship with the divine (the Holy Other) and with nature because it too was holy. He was surrounded always by mysteries which prohibited him from analyzing his world. However, he could not say Thou to the world because fear and awe filled his consciousness of the world and he sought to control it.²

Commonalities of World Perceptions Between Primitive and Modern Man

With this background, showing the world as perceived by primitive man, it is easily recognized that there are commonalities shared between primitive man and modern man. Their views of the world are different due to the advanced knowledge of modern man concerning the physical aspects of the world. However, the perceptions regarding

¹Ibid., pp. 62-63.

²Ibid., pp. 61-62.

their relation to the world reveal certain commonalities. Modern man, like his ancient ancestor, still experiences estrangement from his world. His experiences of alienation are more often internal than external. When the I of modern man separates itself from the world, as a primitive man who had lost his contact with the divine and lies down to die, he turns inward away from the Thou which is his ground of being.

In this state of estrangement man endeavors, similar to primitive man, to create a "cosmos" out of "chaos."¹ Like primitive man, he yearns for the security of an ordered world. Like primitive man who sought to manipulate the world by appeasing the gods, modern man, in I-It relationships, often seeks a world organized for predictability and utility to meet his desires and needs. As man responds to the world in an I-It relation, each entity encountered lets itself be taken, but it does not give itself to man. Primitive man feared chaos because it was unordered. Modern man fears a world that is unpredictable and unordered. To avoid this, man often dwells in the world of It. He is not always at home in this world.²

The above illustration of primitive man involves the perceived world of a people in relation to what Buber calls the "Eternal Thou."³ It is a representative view of the world as experienced in an I-It relation centered in the sphere of life with spiritual beings. In a

¹Ibid., pp. 29-30.

²Wood, Martin Buber's Ontology, pp. 70-71.

³Buber, I and Thou, p. 75.

sense, all persons experience an aloneness in the world as if the world were a foreign land. This aloneness sometimes becomes a gate to the world of Thou. In moments of loneliness at times an unsuspected perception arises in man. Even concern with oneself in the world of It can be transformed into the world of Thou as man reaches out beyond himself to confront a being worthy of being called Thou.¹

Perceptions of the World Through
I-It Relationships

In considering the world as perceived through I-It and I-Thou relations, some significant concepts may be raised out of Buber's writings. As the world of objects and subjects is perceived to be an It, man takes an I-It stand before it. His relationship to it is like that of a master lording over his servant. Man summons the world to serve him in the fulfillment of his needs and desires. However, there is only limited satisfaction in this relationship. As man encounters another, object or subject, he must take that which he desires because it is not given freely. In the I-It relationship to the world man becomes his own Thou and again sees himself as the center of the universe. He lives in an illusion that he is free and that the world revolves around him. However, the freedom he experiences is only the freedom to take from the world. He makes demands upon the world, but in an I-It relationship there is no freedom for the other (object or subject). Without freedom there can be no relation between the I and the Other, and no response of the Other can be rendered.

¹Ibid., p. 103.

Perceptions of the World Through
I-Thou Relationships

There are no cultures which may be examined to illustrate the world as perceived through I-Thou relationships. An I-Thou relationship is always a single being in relation to another single being or object. While through an I-It relation the world is perceived as an ordered world, a perception of the world through an I-Thou relation is world order. What exists in I-Thou relationships is opened to the I. In the encounter with a Thou nothing but the Thou is present for the I and it implicates the whole world. This clarifies how Buber can describe an I-Thou relationship as both exclusive and inclusive. A meeting with a Thou is not organized to make the world, but rather it is a sign of world order. I-Thou relationships are not linked to each other, but each I-Thou encounter assures the I of his solidarity with the world. The world which appears in I-Thou relations is always unreliable because it continually takes on new appearances.¹ "It has no density for everything in it penetrates everything else; no duration, for it comes even when it is not summoned and vanishes even when it is rightly held." The world comes to the I in I-Thou relations to bring out the I and to give it the present.²

Through I-Thou relations the world becomes present in the momentary now. The past is not a reality anymore. It is a memory which may be thought about. The future is not yet a reality, and to think of it as reality is an act of fantasy. To think of the past and

¹Ibid., p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 32.

future is useful but both destroy a lived moment in the present with a Thou.

The realization of world-shaping as an inner-self activity is not new. The history of religions reveal world-shaping as a part of many religions, particularly the Oriental religions. The Buddhists, for example, understand the world as an illusion from which they must escape. Human life is only one position a person may attain as he moves through a series of life cycles either toward or away from Nirvana which is the final step out of illusion into reality.

Perception of the Common World

Buber reinforces his concept of the world uniquely perceived through I-Thou relationships in his discussion of "What Is Common to All."¹ Buber quotes Heracleitus, a Greek philosopher, who said, "One must follow that which is common,"² in emphasizing his concept of the common world which may be shaped by persons. The shape of the common world, Buber explains, may be understood by distinguishing it from the shaping of the world in another fashion. Heracleitus describes two ways man shapes his world. Man may live in the world as if he is asleep, but in sleep there are no bonds with others. His dreams are of others, but those of whom he dreams cannot take part in his dream. The shape of the world, in a state of sleep, resembles the world perceived through I-It relations. Man is submerged in his own private sphere where relationships are passive. Life as it is experienced in

¹Buber, Knowledge of Man, pp. 89-109.

²Ibid., p. 91.

this sleep-like state is illusionary. It is a flight from authentic relationships.¹

The other way man may shape his world is by being awake. Waking persons contribute to the world-shape itself. "They associate with one another in the world, helping one another through the power of the logos word to grasp the world as a world order."² Through I-Thou relations the world also grasps man. It is a mutual relationship which may be described as an inclusive relationship. Man is in the world and the world is in man. Each shapes the other. In the common world, the world of the awake, and the world perceived through I-Thou relations, man does not experience his relations with the world as I, but rather as We. For Buber, to say the word "We" is to refer to that mode of existence which he calls "betweenness." In We relations a cosmos (Buber interprets this as world order) is created. It is a world-shape in which persons regard one another in the mutuality of I and Thou.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., pp. 90-91.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF THE I IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

In considering the development of the I in educational processes, it is not an intention to delve into particular areas of education. Rather, the focus will be on two general overlying aspects of education which are often used for acquiring directions and providing foundations in establishing educational structures. These two concerns have to do with ideologies underlying various purposes for education and ideologies which determine ways education should occur. Buber's I-It and I-Thou concepts will be used for identifying some of the values found within these various ideologies.

Purposes of Education

There are several ideologies in American education today which provide guidelines for determining the purpose of education. However, only two ideologies which currently exist in conflict with each other will be given consideration. These will be sufficient illustrations for making some application of Buber's concepts.

Education for Social Purpose

One of the most popular ideologies accepted today as adequate for establishing educational systems is the ideology of social purpose. This ideology considers the basic objective of education to be the preparation of persons to assume roles in the expanding and complex society of the present. The purpose for education founded on this

ideology is based on what is judged to be good for society rather than what may be good for the individual in society. This ideology provides for a continual monitoring of society in order to determine its needs so that educational purposes may be established to correspond with those needs. Thus, education for social purposes adopts values which emphasize the security and productivity of society.¹

Social purposes historically have been embedded in the educational purposes of America. These are seen in the efforts of educators to transmit cultural heritage, lower the juvenile delinquency rate, and "help allocate the distribution of noneducational benefits in society such as income, status, occupational opportunity, and the like."²

Of course, there are slogans which may be cited in favor of education for social purposes. One such slogan is "what is good for society is good for the individual." This may be true, but the point to be made here is that when this ideology is pursued to extremes, education may fall short of accomplishing its purposes in relation to all persons. Education for social purposes tends to divide persons into groups. Some persons enter educational tracks or employing ability tracks which control their destinies. Along the educational path there are educators, administrators and counselors who determine the winners and the losers within society. The results are that decisions are made within the educational system which help decide which persons fit into society and which do not.³

¹Richard Pratte, Ideology & Education (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1977), pp. 137-38.

²Ibid., p. 138.

³Ibid., pp. 140-41.

The point of this discussion is not to detail all that may be said about the ideology underlying the establishment of education for social purposes. It is, however, to increase an awareness that something very vital is missing in the educational processes which affect all persons who must, by compulsion, experience them.

Effects of Education for Social Purpose on the I

Buber would say that a concern for the I as a person is missing in education for social purposes. There is no other way to perceive the implications of this ideological foundation for education. The value of the I is measured by the value the I is to society. Society becomes an It which is constantly evaluated for determining its needs. Persons who are prepared through educational processes to meet the needs of society are conditioned to become I's of the I-It relationship to society. The I of the I-Thou concept is left to chance for development.

Brian V. Hill in his book Education and the Endangered Individual describes what is happening to individuals who have been educated for social purposes:

. . . in the present day the sanctity of the individual is being eroded from all sides. Industrialization has absorbed the craftsman into vast labor pools, mass media have begun to homogenize cultural patterns, mechanization has destroyed the tightly knit community by increasing the mobility of the individual, and collectivist responses to political issues have become increasingly common. Interpersonal relations lack concern and permanence, and the individual is losing his identity because of pressures to conform. Even the social sciences, committed as they are to the study of such phenomena, tend, through assumptions that define the

individual in terms of entities such as "the group" or "the role," to disparage his uniqueness.¹

The concepts of Martin Buber regarding the impoverishment of the I are consistent with the views expressed by Brian V. Hill. Buber described the present world situation as being firmly fixed in a progressive move toward the world of It. The history of the human race indicates that from generation to generation since the time of primitive cultures, man has been occupied with a gradual enlargement of the world of It. As this occurs, it becomes increasingly more difficult to say the primary word I-Thou through which, Buber asserts, man becomes truly human.²

Education Based on Humanistic Purpose

There is an alternative ideology for establishing educational purposes which emphasizes the element missing in the ideology behind education for social purpose. This ideology is the foundation for an educational purpose referred to as humanistic or person-centered education. There is a good deal of support today for this approach in education, but realistically speaking, it is an ideal which few persons perceive as becoming the dominant purpose for education. However, discussions regarding its validity can draw attention and raise more interest among those persons who find dissatisfaction with the present educational trends.

¹Hill, p. 15.

²Buber, I and Thou, pp. 37-38.

The psychology underlying the humanistic approach to education is based on the belief that the individual is more than an instrument existing for functional purposes. The individual student, not society, is the most important entity in the educational process. The purpose of the humanistic approach is to assist persons in their search for the truth of their being.

Effects of the Humanistic Approach
to Education on the I

The humanistic approach to education embodies Buber's conceptual terms, I and Thou, and more readily provides an atmosphere in which persons may develop their I. Whereas education for social purpose implies that the reality of life is somewhere in the distant future when the educational process is ended, the humanistic approach emphasizes life as it is lived now in relation to others. The educational process is understood as an ongoing activity through which persons may now and then enter into pedagogic relationships through which authentic existence may be realized. In other words, the humanistic approach creates an environment whereby persons may more easily make a transition from I-It relationships to I-Thou relationships. The greatest possibility that this may occur is for students to encounter more Thous than Its in the educational process. In the humanistic approach to education the promotion of such an environment is intentional.¹ More will be said about methods for providing a humanistic person-centered education.

¹Donald Vandenberg, Being and Education (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. 147-50.

Educational Methodology

Professors James B. Macdonald, Bernice J. Wolfson, and Esther Zaret have identified two main ideologies concerning the way education should occur which have persisted in conflict with each other for the past five decades. These ideologies we know as the scientific movement in education and the humanistic person-centered approach to education. The scientific movement involves adopting a concept of education based on "educational objectives, performance contracts or competency based instruction." The humanistic approach stresses "human development, self-realization and social reconstruction" in education as desirable ends.¹ Although the term "humanistic" was used in considering one of the purposes of education, it is also a term which has been adopted for use in discussing ways education may occur.

Significance of the I in the Scientific Approach to Education

It becomes apparent simply from examining the definition of the two ideological concepts mentioned above that the scientific movement in education establishes an environment in which there is a greater possibility for I-It relationships to exist. The purpose for using the scientific approach is to know the content of the experience of the learner. This is not to say that concern for the learner as a person is not present, but that other factors appear to have priority. The techniques of the scientific movement in education have developed

¹James B. Macdonald, Bernice J. Wolfson, and Esther Zaret, Reschooling Society: A Conceptual Model (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1973), p. v.

parallel to the technological advances of the world. As man endeavors to find new ways to control his world, new ways to control the educational process have been invented. The result of these efforts has produced educational structures which resemble scientific laboratories where experimentations are performed, analyzed and evaluated on the basis of usefulness. This is one of the reasons the scientific approach to education is often referred to as a mechanistic method.

If the worth of a person lies in the content of his experience as it is inferred in the scientific approach to education, then a hidden value is present in the educational process. Man is defined by what he knows rather than by who he is. Buber would say that this educational process utilizes what he calls "technical dialogue." This kind of dialogue is "prompted solely by the need of objective understanding."¹ Technical dialogue is used in an I-It relationship, and what is said through it is more important than the person who says it.²

The mechanistic approach, as a means for education, may be described as a control method which is designed to determine the behavior of persons. James B. Macdonald once stated to his class studying curriculum theory that the mechanistic model teaches persons how to be machines by treating them as objects.³ From all appearances then, this way of educating persons seems to neglect the significance

¹ Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 19.

² Wood, p. 58.

³ James B. Macdonald, "Problems of the Mechanistic Model," lecture given in a curriculum theory course at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 29 January 1980.

of relationships as an important factor in the development of the I or the human self.

Significance of the I in
the Humanistic Approach
to Education

The humanistic person-centered approach as a way of educating persons is more in line with the tenets of Buber's I-Thou concept.

While practitioners of the scientific or mechanistic educational model may speak of "learning," the practitioners of the humanistic person-centered approach to education speak of "a person learning."

Bernice J. Wolfson, in an article entitled "A Phenomenological Perspective on Curriculum and Learning," gives excellent insights regarding what is involved in the humanistic way of education. Professor Wolfson says:

Schools are for living, learning and growing individually and in groups. The quality of life and of human transaction in the school is central. I have tried for some time to describe what I mean by "quality of life" but I must confess, without much success. I have considered some possible indicators: evidence of aesthetic satisfaction, of caring relationships, of sharing and humor; a variety of activities including inquiry, creative, expressive and recreational activities; brotherhood, peace, poverty, love, self-awareness, freedom. I believe that children (and adults, too) learn through involvement in and interaction with their environment; searching, selecting, experimenting, assimilating, and making meaning.¹

The humanistic approach to education opens several avenues for learning which are either partially or fully closed in the scientific approach. The uniqueness of each human being is valued and efforts to

¹Alex Molnar and John A. Zahorik, eds., Curriculum Theory (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1977)

standardize people are opposed. Liberation is valued as a necessary part of the educational process which allows responsible choices and decision making to be an integral aspect of learning. To these values is added the value of growth and self-realization. The growth of the person is understood as an individual building his own inner house which represents the I or self. In his encounters with others (subjects and objects), a person may be selective regarding what he will take into his house.

Relating Buber's Concepts to
the Educational Process

Although Martin Buber never constructed an educational model or developed an educational theory, his writings make it clear that he considered educational methods which objectified persons to be less than desirable. He described such methods as processes of imposition which impede the growth of life between persons.¹ The views of Buber which may be brought to bear on the educational process are centered in his perceptions concerning the individual, the educator, and the relationship between the two. "He has nothing to say about curriculum, teaching aids, special methods, measurement and evaluation, or administration."²

The focus of Buber's view of the individual as it is related to the educational process is upon the subjective dimensions of human life. He is opposed to any explanations regarding the nature of man

¹Buber, Knowledge of Man, p. 84.

²Hill, p. 242.

which omit this aspect. When Buber speaks of man as a person, he means body, mind, soul and spirit brought together in unity. It is man as a unified being who is more capable than any other of entering into relationships with other beings.¹

Let us now consider some of Buber's concepts which may be regarded as significant to the development of the self or the I in the educational process. In writing about the individual, Buber attempts to go beyond the behavior psychologists in the description of the individual. He begins by stating that everyone is endowed with a basic power which is called the "originator instinct." It is this instinct which is the starting point for the development of the I which confronts the world in I-It and I-Thou relationships. The "originator instinct" is the instinct to make things, build things, and turn formless matter into form. Man, through this power, desires to share in the becoming of things. The I of this instinct is the I of an I-It relationship to the world.²

One of the most significant insights which comes from the study of the "originator instinct" concept is that an individual may find deep satisfaction in continuing to develop this instinct without going further in the development of the I. That is, the "originator instinct," when sufficiently powerful in a person, may render a great sense of achievement which gives recognition to the individual. This is a positive force which enables a person to pursue many meaningful

¹Ibid., p. 238.

²Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 84-85.

and useful tasks. It can become a source of direction which gives a person a sense of worthiness, dignity, and pride via his accomplishments. The scientific or mechanistic models of education do much to discover and promote the "originator instinct" of the individual.

However, a problem comes clearly into view regarding the development of the I solely through the "originator instinct." The "originator instinct" is an autonomous instinct which Buber says cannot be derived from others.¹ Although it is present in all persons, by itself it cannot make a person whole. The action of the "originator instinct" is a one-sided event. As a person reaches out through the "originator instinct" to make an impression in the world, his achievement arises and runs its course. The movement is solitary as it runs from the spirit into the world. Even if the achievement is great and is recognized by many other persons, it is still a solitary movement.² What is needed in making the transition from the I-It relationship to the world of the "originator instinct" to the I-Thou relationship is another human being. A Thou is needed who will take the hand of the I, not as an authoritarian or propagandist who imposes himself on the I, but as a person who sees the I in the process of becoming a unique, single person.³

Through the "originator instinct" a person learns much that cannot be learned in any other way. In taking up a piece of wood or

¹Ibid., p. 85.

²Ibid., p. 87.

³Buber, Knowledge of Man, p. 83.

paper, a lump of clay or some other object, there is seemingly a call from the object itself to be grasped so that it may give up its secrets of origin and structure. No amount of observation or talk about the object is sufficient to enable a person to learn the possibilities of it. The world as objects is learned within. This is the world of I-It relationships seen in a proper perspective.¹

There is another instinct, however, which is also present in every human being. It is the "instinct for communion." This is the instinct to meet the world as a subject and to experience the world as becoming present. The "instinct for communion" is a desire to confirm the world and be confirmed by it.² Buber suggests that, although a person may be confirmed by the world through relations with nature and art, confirmation more likely occurs in dialogue between man and man. In dialogue the "instinct for communion" may be fully realized.³

Both the "originator instinct" and the "instinct for communion" are presuppositions for the educator and the educational process. The "originator instinct" calls the pupil to know about his world but it cannot lead him to it. The "instinct for communion" is a call for the pupil to be present in the world and for the world to be present in him through the sharing of an undertaking and entrance into mutuality with another person. Buber defines education as "a selection by man of the effective world."⁴ The selection of the world involves both the

¹Buber, Between Man and Man, pp. 87-88.

²Ibid., p. 88. ³Buber, Knowledge of Man, p. 27.

⁴Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 89.

"originator instinct" and the "instinct for communion." Education can provide for the selection to take place through the medium of the educator. However, it must occur only through dialogue between the pupil and the educator. The educator must be willing to say I-Thou first in the presence of the pupil. Even then, as he says I-Thou a paradox is present. As the educator and the pupil engage in the mutuality of giving and taking, the educator experiences the pupil's being educated, but the pupil cannot experience the educating of the educator. If it were so that the pupil did experience this, the relationship between the educator and the pupil would change to friendship and the dialogical relationship would take on a different character.¹

Because the "instinct for communion" is present in the pupil, the position of the educator is unique. The selection of the effective world by the pupil is by and large in the hands of the educator, regardless of whether the educator is a teacher, parent, or some other person. Buber's definition of education as the selection of the effective world means that there must be freedom involved in the educational process. He chooses to focus on the educational process as an act of communion rather than an act of compulsion. "Compulsion," he says, "means disunion, it means humiliation and rebelliousness. Communion means being opened up and drawn in."² Freedom in education is "the run before the jump, the tuning of the violin, the confirmation

¹Ibid., pp. 89, 98-99.

²Ibid., p. 91.

of the primal and mighty potentiality which it cannot begin to actualize."¹ This understanding of the educational process requires educators of a particular disposition and attitude.

There are several ways in which the educator may affect the selection of the effective world of a pupil. The educator must be a person of "being" rather than a person of "seeming." These are terms Buber uses to describe the stances a person may take in relationship to another. An educator who has the attitude of "being" gives himself to the other freely and spontaneously without thinking about the projected image of himself to the other. The "seeming" educator, in contrast, is more concerned about what others think about him and is always striving to make himself appear favorable to others.² The attitude of "seeming" destroys the possibility of authentic relationships and actually works against the intention of the person who assumes this stance. What is desired by the "seeming" person is to be confirmed by others. However, the confirmation received is false because it arises through inauthentic relationships.

Another way educators may affect the lives of others is by their understanding of the educational process. Buber states that persons may affect others in one of two ways, by "imposition" or by "unfolding." Perhaps no educator would describe his actions as impositions, but it occurs when one person tries to impose himself on another in such a way that the other feels that whatever has been

¹Ibid.

²Buber, Knowledge of Man, p. 27.

imposed upon him is his own insight. Buber calls one who imposes himself on others a "propagandist who is not in the least concerned with the person whom he desires to influence."¹ Relationships through this stance are always I-It relationships because the effort of the propagandist is always to get to know the other or win the other for his own purposes. In this relationship between educator and pupil, the educator gives no freedom for the pupil to select an effective world unless it benefits the educator or his cause.

In contrast to the "imposition" way of affecting persons in the educational process is Buber's concept of "unfolding." To unfold means in the Buberian sense to work with a person in the sphere of the "between" through dialogue. "The meaning of this dialogue is found in neither one nor the other of the partners, nor in both added together, but in their interchange."²

The act or acts of the educator in "unfolding" a pupil who may be described as "preformed" are not acts which overpower the pupil through efforts to pull knowledge out of the pupil. On the contrary, to unfold in an educational environment means to give the pupil "decisive effective power to the selection of the world which is concentrated and manifested in the educator."³ The educator becomes a medium through which a pupil may make selections. Buber refers to the educator-pupil relationship as one-sided because, if the act of

¹Ibid., p. 82.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 89.

"unfolding" is to occur, the educator must exercise restraint in order not to violate the autonomy of the pupil. The educator becomes a person who is wholly present and alive to the pupil and yet able to accept dissent from his views by the pupil. This can be done only as the educator is able to practice grace in relation to the pupil. Grace in this sense is not totally a religious term because it can rise above religious or cultural orientations. To act with grace is the I of the educator responding to the Thou of the pupil. It may be explained as an act of extending love to a pupil even when love has yet to be merited. If the educator himself seeks communion with the world, he can do no other than to acknowledge the existence of a pupil who is that world with which communion is sought. There is no other relation between educator and pupil like that coming from the I-Thou relationship which can establish an educational environment for the "unfolding" of a pupil.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 98-100.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

There is nothing more basic and peculiarly human in the life of human beings than relationships with other beings and objects. Relationships affect who we are, how we feel about ourselves and others, what our goals are, and what motivates us to respond in self-centered or other-directed ways. The attempt in this study has been to examine the effects of human relationships on human development as different types of relationships have been identified and explained by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Buber uses the terms I-Thou and I-It as word images which refer to different postures human beings assume as they experience and relate to the world around them.

Through an I-It posture toward the world, a person assumes an attitude which sets him apart from the world. The focus of the I in I-It relationships is always on the I (self). All reality encountered in I-It relationships is perceived as objects to be mastered, owned, and manipulated by the I. The intent of the I in I-It relationships is to be the beneficiary at the expense of the Other. I-It relationships are subject-object relationships in which the subject (I) always encounters the object (Other) as a thing.

An I-Thou posture toward the world is characterized by openness, directness, mutuality, and presence in relationships. I-Thou

relationships are subject-subject encounters in which the first subject (I) and the second subject (Thou) are permitted to remain unique and fully present. Both the I and the Thou in I-Thou relationships are beneficiaries.

This study attempted to explore various perspectives of the I as the I is referred to in the I-Thou and I-It concepts of Buber. Some of Buber's basic assumptions were used in formulating questions which raised issues extending beyond, but relating to, his concepts. The questions, stated in the introduction, were dealt with throughout the text, but not necessarily in sequential order.

The first assumption under which definitional questions were formed was that I-Thou relationships are significant for the development of the self or the I. Although both I-Thou and I-It relationships are necessary to human life, Buber maintains that only through I-Thou relationships can a person become truly human. The development of the I, which is present in both I-Thou and I-It relationships, is dependent upon I-Thou encounters. It is only as the I is able to stand in an I-Thou relationship to an Other that the wholeness of being human is realized. When Buber defines mankind, he does not focus on man alone. Rather, he looks to the realm he calls the "between" and defines man in terms of man's relationships to the Other (subject or object).

A consideration of definitional questions helped in giving more substance to the significance of I-Thou relationships in the development of the I.

Definitional Question #1

What qualities relating to a meaningful existence in I-Thou relationships are not qualities in I-It relationships?

The essential difference between I-Thou and I-It relationships is what occurs "between" the I and the Other in an encounter. In I-It encounters there is no "between" or mutuality in the relationships. The I recognizes the Other as an object for the enhancement of the self. As the I takes a stance toward the Other, there is estrangement between the I and It. The relationship is one in which the I seeks to dominate the Other at the Other's expense. Because of the possessive attitude of the I in I-It relationships, the stance of the I prohibits the uniqueness of the Other from being revealed. Thus, the I is incomplete.

In contrast to I-It relationships, I-Thou relationships establish a sphere of "between." It is this sphere which releases a quality not present in I-It relationships. Meaning flows "between" the I and the Thou because each is allowed to remain unique to the other. When the word "I-Thou" is said, there is a turning toward the Other in direct openness. The I experiences the otherness of the Other and is confirmed by a mutuality in the relationships. Only through a Thou does the I emerge. It is the act of turning toward the Other in I-Thou relationships rather than bending back to the self in I-It relationships which contributes to the development of the I.

This is not to say that only I-Thou relationships are of value. I-It relationships are necessary to many intellectual, social, and political endeavors of man. However, it is only through I-Thou

encounters that man becomes truly human and through such encounters all relationships are affected.

The significance of I-Thou relationships in the development of the I lies in the basic need of human beings for confirmation of the self. Buber believed that all persons possess the potentiality for establishing I-Thou relationships. The seed of this potentiality is sown even before birth in what Buber refers to as "the a priori of relation of the inborn Thou." In the womb of the mother a child exists in the I-Thou relation in natural combination. It is only after birth that a child experiences the natural separation of the I-It relation, but the inborn Thou remains with the child throughout life. If I-It relationships dominate life, there is separation and isolation of the I from all that the I encounters. If a Thou is encountered, the I is confirmed and the Thou is confirmed by the I and the true nature of man is realized.

Definitional Question #2

What differences are there between the world as perceived through an I-Thou relationship and the world as perceived through an I-It relationship?

The world is always relative in appearance to a person's frame of reference. The reality of relativity is realized by examining human perceptions in relation to time and space. Buber indicates that "to man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude."¹ Although his concepts of I-It and I-Thou do not

¹Buber, I and Thou, p. 31.

directly deal with time and space, they do deal with man's position in relation to the world of time and space.

All people today dwell within time and space in much the same way all people from the beginning of the human species have lived in time and space. The only difference between ancient man and modern man is that the latter understands more about his time and space. The struggles are the same. All persons desire to live in the world with a sense of well-being and of being at home. However, this is not always a reality. Man continually struggles with either estrangement from his external world or estrangement within the inner self. Both of these conditions affect man's perceptions of and relationships with the world around him.

From this perspective Buber's view of the twofold world perceived by man is useful in understanding more about the development of the self. World views do affect the way man responds in his relationships to others. If man lives in a state of estrangement which produces a sense of fear, he seeks to conquer and control his world. This leads to an I-It relationship to the world. The estrangement from the world is still present, but the attitude of mastery renders a substitute sense of satisfaction. Neither the I nor the Other encountered in this relational attitude is free to give or receive. The world becomes static in an I-It relationship, subject to manipulation and ordering.

Only through an I-Thou relationship is the world perceived in proper perspective. The world remains dynamic as it is in actuality. The I approaches the Other with an attitude of openness, permitting the

I and the Other to remain unique. Each I-Thou encounter is an acceptance of world order rather than an attempt to create an ordering of the world. The view of the world through I-Thou relationships is both inclusive and exclusive. It is exclusive in that each I-Thou encounter is similar to a single frame in a motion picture film. All other frames are excluded while the I-Thou relationship involves a single setting with a single being. Yet, the relationship is inclusive because the I-Thou encounter affects all other relationships in much the same way a single frame of a film gives essence to the whole film. The world becomes present in a momentary I-Thou relationship because the I becomes present and is confirmed.

A second assumption present in Buber's thought is that mankind must live in both I-It and I-Thou relationships if life is to be meaningful. While this assumption may be fully accepted, there is a question concerning the movement from I-It to I-Thou relationships.

Relational Question

How does one make a transition from an I-It relationship to an I-Thou relationship?

A discussion of the transition from an I-It to an I-Thou relationship is difficult because it appears to be an ineffable event. Since an I-Thou relationship is exclusive and only the I and the Thou participate in the relationship, it is not an encounter which can be analyzed. To do so is to make the event an I-It relationship.

A question related to the subject of transition is, "What causes persons to bend back toward the self in I-It relationships rather than to approach relationships with an I-Thou attitude?"

Basically, the answer to this question is insecurity which involves a fear of shedding the protective shell provided by I-It relationships. Because of insecurity, man puts distance between himself and others. This, Buber maintains, is done not only by building invisible walls around oneself, but also building structures or collective systems which offer a measure of pseudo security. Buber uses the term "orientation" to identify man's choice to build and use institutions for security. He refers to the choice of living in open and direct encounters as a life of "realization." All barriers to I-Thou relationships, however, stem from insecurity.

All persons have the ability to form I-Thou relationships. The "inborn Thou" has already been noted as a factor which contributes to each person's ability to have I-Thou encounters. Wherever there is a Thou, the possibility for an I-Thou relationship exists. A Thou may address the I at any moment. When, where, and how an I-Thou relationship will occur is unknown. It cannot be planned; yet one may be ready to respond. Man yearns for it in all of his relations, and how it comes and what is its content are indescribable.

A third assumption given consideration in this study is that the I-Thou and I-It concepts may be useful in any environment where relationships exist. This assumption leads to asking some practicality questions.

Practicality Question #1

How useful would these concepts be to the institution of education?

The foundation of education is usually philosophical. At least philosophical concepts are used as a basis for establishing aims and purposes of education. It is at this point, in any discussion concerning education, that Buber's concepts may be useful. A consideration of the implications of I-Thou and I-It relationships may help in grasping more fully the issues involved in the two major educational purposes, educating for social purpose and person-centered or humanistic education. Briefly explained, education for social purpose appears to devalue the person being educated in favor of valuing society while humanistic education places the highest value on the person. To use Buber's concepts in the debates regarding the purpose of education may assist in defining and clarifying the issues involved.

Another area in which the I-Thou and I-It concepts may be useful in the educational process is with regard to educational methodology. It is through methodology that the content of education takes form. Educational methodology, as with educational purpose, is affected by two main ideologies which are given prominence among educators today. There is the scientific method which is content-oriented, and there is the humanistic method of education which is person-centered. Both of these methodologies affect the development of the learner by the values they represent.

The scientific method, often referred to as a mechanistic approach to education, may be described as a control method which is designed to determine the behavior of persons. In this respect, it represents the I-It concept functioning as an educational process. The learner is manipulated by techniques to learn prescribed content

and is deemed worthy depending on a favorable emergence in evaluation. On the other side, the humanistic approach to education opposes the standardization of persons, and values the uniqueness of each human being. The I-Thou concept is represented through this method of education and significant value is placed on the relationships between the educator and the learner and between the school environment and the learner. The learner becomes liberated through person-centered methodology.

Practicality Question #2

What differences are there between educational processes based on I-It relationships and those based on I-Thou relationships?

The depth of Buber's concern for the subjective dimensions of human life are evident in his objection to systems which objectified persons. Buber makes some very clear distinctions between educational processes which are based on the I-It concept and those based on the I-Thou concept. His discussions of the "originator instinct" and "the instinct for communion" are efforts to show how the objective and the subjective dimensions of human life, present in all persons, may be joined in the development of the I. The I of the "originator instinct" is the I of an I-It relationship to the world. It is the "originator instinct", or the instinct to create and turn formless matter into form. This instinct is the starting point for the development of the I.

However, if the appeal of the educational process is only to the "originator instinct" of persons, the development of the I will be incomplete. The "originator instinct" is a solitary movement which is not derived from others. What is needed to complete the development

of the I by enabling the I to be confirmed as a person is the fulfillment of the "instinct for communion." This instinct is a desire to meet the world as a subject and to experience the world as becoming present. The "instinct for communion" finds fulfillment only through dialogue with a Thou. The "originator instinct" calls the pupil to know about the world and the "instinct for communion" is a call for the pupil to be present in the world.

Buber defines education as "a selection by man of the effective world."¹ The "originator instinct" and the "instinct for communion" present in all persons provide the educator with unique opportunities. Educators affect the development of the I by the attitude they assume in response to the above human instincts. To allow the selection of the effective world by learners, educators must be persons of "being" rather than persons of "seeming." "Being" and "seeming" are relational attitudes which may be assumed by the educator. Through the stance of "seeming" an educator destroys the possibility of authentic relationships because of an obsession to appear favorably to others. An educator who has the attitude of "being" gives freely and spontaneously without thinking about his projected image.

Not only does the attitude of "seeming" affect the educational process with regard to learners, but the understanding an educator has of the educational process itself affects the learner. Buber identifies two ways educators may respond in their efforts to educate the learner. Through an interpretation of education as acts of

¹Buber, Between Man and Man, p. 21.

"imposition" an educator may seek to impose himself on another in such a way that the other feels that what has been imposed on him is his own insight. Buber calls this an effort of propaganda which is assumed by persons who are more concerned about themselves and their causes than they are about the persons they seek to influence. Relationships based on influence by "imposition" are always I-It relationships. The learner is given little or no freedom to select an effective world.

In contrast to "imposition" as a way of affecting persons in the educational process is the concept of "unfolding." Through this concept the educator exercises restraint in order not to violate the autonomy of the learner. The educator becomes a person wholly present to the learner and yet able to accept dissent from his views by the learner. The relationship between the learner and the educator is an I-Thou relationship through which both are confirmed.

For further review of the concepts discussed in this study, a videotape of dramatic mime sketches has been prepared. The mime sketches were performed and filmed for the purpose of presenting visual interpretations of each major concept discussed in the written portion of this dissertation. Through the creation of the mime sketches and the performance of their content, the concepts considered became more authentic for the creator of the mimes. Commentaries and descriptive interpretations of the mime sketches are presented in the appendices.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Possibilities should be explored for the use of I-Thou and I-It concepts in building an educational model in which the "originator instinct" and the "instinct for communion," as explained by Buber, are given equal consideration in the educational process.
2. A more comprehensive study should be made regarding the importance of aesthetics in the development of the human self. Whereas artistic efforts are often evaluated by quality standards, more attention should be given to the inner dialogue a creator has with artistic form and content.
3. With discipline problems remaining a persistent issue in education, more study should be directed toward the effects of various types of relationships on behavior. Buber's I-Thou and I-It relationships could serve as a framework for such a study.

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APPENDIX A

CONCEPTUALIZING THROUGH THE ART OF MIME

A portion of this dissertation is recorded on videotape in the form of mime sketches which illustrate and interpret the concepts discussed in the literary sections. There are several reasons for choosing mime as a means to do this. First, Martin Buber himself was a creator of drama. He saw in drama the polar situation where individuals, the actors and the audience, are set against each other in an encounter. Drama establishes moments on a stage when persons outside the stage may become aware of the differences or similarities between their own lives and that which is presented on stage. Members of the audience may struggle with their own lives through the medium of another person and moments of awakening can occur.¹ Drama then is a motivating power for creating possible I-Thou encounters. Second, drama is a way of presenting conceptual themes which appeal to more than one level of thought. As concepts are taken into visual imagery, both the actor and the audience are brought closer to actually experiencing the concepts.

Since the art of mime is a dramatic form which is relatively new to the Western world, perhaps a brief exposition about it will be helpful. Mime in its wordless form is the art of communicating with others through the use of body movement and facial expressions. It is a universal language because it is the portrayal of the human being,

¹Manheim, pp. 35-36.

being human without verbal barriers. As the mime attempts to recreate human situations, he uses human emotions, expressions, and characteristics which are common in every culture. Marcel Marceau, the great French mime, says, "Mime is a universal art and a means of communion between all the people in the world who crave for love and beauty."¹

Through the art of mime, concepts may be mapped out and interpreted. The meaning of concepts are more deeply internalized because the actor must recreate and re-present them through his own inner being for others to see.² The concepts which are communicated through mime are done so that the actor first makes real for himself the objects or subjects with which and whom he is interacting. This is accomplished only by knowing the objects and subjects far more completely than just as casual acquaintance. The actor stands in relation to them in such a way that the objects or subjects are seen through him. Left by himself on an empty stage, the actor lives concepts in such a way that this audience sees the process of creation taking place before them.

Each of the mime sketches recorded on videotape has been created for the purpose of conveying a visual interpretation of each concept discussed in the written portion of this dissertation. While a commentary on each mime sketch is presented in this section of the paper for the purpose of revealing the intention of the creator, each sketch can stand alone. That is, an audience may establish its own meanings apart from the intention of the creator.

¹Ronald A. Wilford, Marcel Marceau (New York: Dunetz & Lovett, Publishers, 1973), p. 3.

²Claude Kipnis, The Mime Book (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 5.

The commentaries will consist of the title of each mime sketch, a brief discussion of each concept portrayed in mime, and a descriptive interpretation of the expressive process in creating and performing the mime sketches.

APPENDIX B

VIDEOTAPE COMMENTARY

Introduction to Videotape

The writings of Martin Buber, which spanned a course of six decades, document a variety of manifold interests, issues, and concerns.¹ Buber is today one of the greatest creative forces in contemporary thought. His works have had a significant impact upon many persons among whom are theologians, philosophers, educators, writers, poets, artists, psychologists, sociologists, physicians, social workers, and psychotherapists. Few men of the spirit have left so profound a mark on the best thinking of our time as has this unforgettable Central European Jew. His life and teachings are so fused that each in its way bears authentic witness to the other.²

Throughout all of Buber's writings runs a central motif: the motif of response. It is man's response in a relationship to another which establishes the sphere of authentic existence.³ "This is a realm between the one who calls and the one who answers, the one who summons and the one who fulfills."⁴ To say it another way, if a single statement could hold within it the major theme of Buber's

¹ Martin Buber, The Way of Response, ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 9.

² Herberg, p. 11.

³ Buber, Way of Response, p. 9.

⁴ Ibid.

writings, it might be this: It is only through a Thou that one becomes an I; that is, it is only when an individual encounters another with wholeness of being that he becomes truly human.

This presentation is a series of mime sketches which are attempts to portray several aspects of this major theme. The focus of each sketch is upon the development of what Buber means when he refers to the human being as I. The concepts which make up the content of this series of sketches are these: the development of the I, the transition from I-It to I-Thou relationships, barriers to I-Thou relationships, the world as perceived through I-It and I-Thou relationships, and I-It and I-Thou relationships in educational processes.

Commentary on Mime Sketch--Emerging

This mime sketch was created to portray the inner struggle of man in his efforts to become confirmed as an I (the self). The title Emerging means "to come into existence" and signifies a process of development. It also can be referred to as movement in a metamorphic sense in which a life proceeds through stages of development.

As a life is born, there is the presence of the "inborn Thou" which positions one in relation and establishes one's being and readiness to continue in relation. The "inborn Thou" (see pages 19-20), however, becomes overshadowed as the I of the self emerges and is transformed. The quality of relationships changes as the I becomes more self-conscious and is separated from the Thou. The I then perceives what exists around him as simply things. The I longs for confirmation which is only present in I-Thou relationships. The

struggle for confirmation becomes centered in I-It relations. When an I-Thou relationship occurs, it comes mysteriously and may be described as a return to the confirming relationship of the "inborn Thou." A metamorphosis of the I takes place as man becomes I through a Thou.

A Descriptive Interpretation of the
Mime Sketch--Emerging

Emerging is a mime sketch which may be described as abstract in its symbolization. In creating the sketch it was necessary to select movements which would portray the following elements regarding the development of man:

1. Physical growth
2. Inner changes reflecting the I of the I-It and I-Thou relationship
3. An inner struggle with the self in decision-making
4. Perceptive awareness
5. The continuous presence of the "inborn Thou"

As the sketch begins, the mime is in a kneeling position, symbolizing man in a prenatal existence. Birth is portrayed as an awakening, and the physical movement upward to a standing position means that life has reached a point at which the I may become separated from the "inborn Thou" to exist more fully in the self-conscious. Although it may not be readily noticeable, the music (Rimsky's "The Story of the Kalander Prince") selected to accompany the mime sketch contains a recurring theme which may be distinguished throughout the sketch. This recurring theme symbolizes the presence of the "inborn Thou."

The "inborn Thou" is also reflected in the freedom of movement of the body in relation to encounters with others. As encounters with

one's world of objects and subjects become more frequent, the world as It emerges. The need for others and things for self-satisfaction increases until an I-It stance toward the world is taken in the effort to make it serve one's own needs. This stance is symbolized by a gift which is extended to man. Although the gift appears attractive and tempting, it is an illusion through which man loses his own identity as an I. It is a means by which man may use and manipulate others to serve his own ends.

In the sketch, the mime is representative of man receiving the gift, a box containing unpainted masks which may be painted for use in portraying chosen roles for acquiring that which he desires. The masks are symbolic of the I of man separating from the I of the I-Thou relationships and his attempt to hide his fears in I-It relationships. The chosen mask becomes man's bondage from which he struggles to be free. The I of the I-Thou emerges through an awareness of the self in relation to others. This appears through a grasping for meaning which is inborn in every man. Man struggles to free himself of his own illusions as he is mysteriously called out of the world as It into the world as Thou. The frustration present in the struggle for release from the act of role playing ends as the I discovers that to freely receive from the Other, he must freely give.

Commentary on Mime Sketch--The Chrysalis
and the Butterfly

The transition from I-It to I-Thou relationships is a topic most difficult to discuss. Since the inner person is the focus of concern in the transition, any discussion of the way in which it

occurs cannot reach into the depths of the movement from I-It to I-Thou relationships. What can be said about the transition is that when the I-Thou relationship does occur, the I changes and is never the same again. During the time the transition is happening, there is a turning of the I from the self to the Other. The presence of the Other is raised by the I and each, the I and the Thou, enters into a relationship which is direct and mutual. No longer does the I view the Other as an object to be manipulated and used for the self. Both the I and the Thou are free. The I is freed from this own bondage, the Thou is freed from existing in bondage held by the I.

In the mime sketch the chrysalis is symbolic of man in an I-It relationship to an Other. The word "chrysalis" means "anything still in the process of development." Buber says the I of the I-Thou becomes I only by meeting the Thou. The relation between the I and the Thou means being chosen and choosing with wholeness of being. As the collector of butterflies speaks the primary word I-Thou, it is the act which gives his life being. He is then able to be authentic and to recognize his identity as well as the identity of an Other.

A Descriptive Interpretation of the Mime Sketch--The Chrysalis and the Butterfly

This mime sketch is in story form, depicting what is seemingly an ordinary event but which carries a message of extraordinary meaning. All of the actions of the actor portraying the anxiety, pursuit, and capture of a prize butterfly points toward the tendency of all persons to seek the fulfillment of the self. There are thousands of stories just like this one from which any one could have been selected to

communicate the message. The temptation to possess and use other objects or persons for self-pleasure or gain is universal. Too few persons are able to break through the bondage of self-centeredness which holds back the possibility of communion with the world.

In the search for the butterfly the collector sees but does not see. As the imaginary butterfly flutters across space, the collector does not understand nor perceive its uniqueness in an authentic way. He sees himself in the butterfly which is why he is compelled to possess it. When it is finally captured and secure in his possession, the collector is then master of his world. He thinks only of the recognition or the self-satisfaction he will gain by the possession of the butterfly.

As the collector captures a second butterfly to add to his collection, the climax of the story draws nearer. In a moment of awareness that the first captured butterfly is dead, a transition from an I-It to an I-Thou relationship occurs. How it occurs is unknown. One can only speculate what happens to initiate the transition. Perhaps the death of the butterfly is that event which gives an authentic life to the collector. The presence of pain within the life of the collector resulting from death may indicate that the collector himself experienced his own death. Whatever occurred inwardly in the life of the collector, like that which occurs when a chrysalis is transformed inside a cocoon to emerge and live as a new creature, the collector makes a similar transition from an I-It relationship to an I-Thou relationship with the remaining butterfly. The world becomes a reality in that moment.

Commentary on the Mime Sketch--Walls

Not all of the barriers which separate and divide persons and prevent meaningful relationships between them are physical. Cultural, religious, political and even personal orientations to life often serve as invisible walls between persons. This mime sketch is representative of all of these invisible, yet real barriers.

In taking a stand in the world as It, Buber says that man speaks the primary word of separation which holds the I and the Other from one another. The I-It relation to the world divides man's life with his fellowmen into two circled-off provinces, one of institutions and the other of feeling. The former is the province of It; the latter is the province of I. Both of these provinces help in establishing barriers between the I and the Other.¹

The province of institutions is outside of men where all kinds of aims are pursued. They are necessary because of man's decreasing power to enter into relation. They are functional, but in them man is known only as a specimen. Feelings are within man where life is lived and where he recovers from institutions. Here, in the province of feelings, man's likes, hates, and pleasures are indulged. Neither institutions nor feelings know persons or mutual life. They know only objects and become barriers to relations as they become joined in forming foundations for I-It relations. They do not see persons as Thous, but as Its. The mime sketch entitled Walls is an attempt to make visible, and increase the awareness of, the reality of these

¹Moore, pp. 109-110.

invisible barriers which are sometimes deeply embedded in community life.

**A Descriptive Interpretation of
the Mime Sketch--Walls**

The mime sketch entitled Walls brings to mind the innocence and openness of children before they have learned, through various orientations, attitudes which separate and divide them from one another. The question, "What is man?" is so often answered by identifying man with secondary images. How often is it said, "I am a Catholic," ". . . a Protestant," ". . . a Jew"; or "I am an American," ". . . a German," or some other nationality; or "I am white," ". . . black," ". . . red": or "I am upperclass," ". . . middleclass," ". . . lowerclass." Why is it not said, "I am a human being"? Is it not because man fears to stand disrobed of his self-built images which give him security?

Mankind seems compelled to continue building social, cultural, and religious images of himself and to pass them on to the generation which comes after him. There are structures which are servants of men; but so often, for the sake of the structure, men become the servants and are enslaved by them. When this occurs, the structures become walls designed to keep others out and the relation to others is basically I-It rather than I-Thou.

Walls is a mime sketch portraying two children playing freely and spontaneously with one another. There are no barriers between them in the beginning when they meet. Their spirits are free as they encounter an I-Thou relationship. Each child brings herself to the other without holding back anything. Then suddenly, as if a black

cloud has descended upon them plunging them into darkness, a wall appears before them. Its identity could be a multitude of attitudes, dispositions, or images which eventually will leave their marks upon each child. Some of the walls appear out of ignorance which build up prejudices, self-centered pride or arrogance. Some are deliberate and are built from feelings of superiority or authority or the need to control others. As the wall appears, the children go back to their own separate play, but it is not the same. Their play becomes a role they assume and the feeling aroused within them is rebellion.

A Commentary on the Mime Sketch--Inclusion
and Illusion

This mime sketch is intended to portray the world perceived as an It in contrast to the world perceived as a Thou. Someone once said that man is the architect of his world. One of Buber's key concepts is that for man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude. If man perceives the world through an I-Thou relationship, he is in an inclusive relationship to the world. The world perceived as Thou is "always simply a single being." The being may be another person, an object of nature, a work of art or even God.¹ However, only a single being is present to the I:

Between you and it there is mutual giving; you say Thou to it and give yourself to it, it says Thou to you and gives itself to you. You cannot make yourself understood with others concerning it, you are alone with it. But it teaches you to meet others, and to hold your ground when you meet them. Through the graciousness of its comings and the solemn sadness of its goings it leads you away to the Thou in which the parallel lines of relations meet.²

¹Moore, p. 103.

²Buber, I and Thou, p. 33.

In the I-Thou relationship to the world, the I is confirmed by the Thou which is a single being and the world is confirmed by the I who is also a single being. The relationship is inclusive.

If man perceives the world through an I-It relationship, he lives in an illusion. He is alone because he cannot stand in a direct and mutual relationship to the world from which he desires confirmation. In his efforts to be confirmed he uses the world of objects and subjects to raise his own presence. He participates in an illusionary experience through which he perceives the world as giving itself freely, but in reality he is taking from the world. The world does not freely give to the I as in a mutual relationship.

A Descriptive Interpretation of the Mime Sketch--Inclusion and Illusion

In this mime sketch the world is portrayed as it may be perceived through man's twofold attitude toward it. By far, this mime is more abstract and symbolic than any presented. Every movement and visual aspect has a symbolic meaning. The lighting, music, and movement of the sketch come together to depict the world perceptions through I-Thou and I-It relationships.

The world perceived through I-Thou relationships is portrayed by a setting composed of circular lighting which is bright yellow in color. The circle of light symbolizes the never-ending effect of the I-Thou relationship on a person's view of the world. The yellow lighting is symbolic of the warmth experienced in an I-Thou relationship. The mime moves freely and spontaneously within the circle of light. The music is light and free-flowing to correspond to the

feeling expressed in movement. As the mime moves, his steps symbolize every person's journey through life, and his gestures symbolize the mutual giving and receiving of I-Thou relationships.

Again, as portrayed in the mime sketch Emerging, there is the presence of temptation to put distance between the I and the Other. It is a temptation to own and possess the objects and subjects perceived and encountered. This temptation appears on the opposite side of the stage as a dim bluish light in the form of a square. As the mime continues movement in the circular light, the temptation to move into I-It relationships increases. This is portrayed by the slowly increasing intensity of the blue-lighted square.

When the temptation grows to sufficient strength, the mime symbolizes its pulling force as he moves out of the circle of light toward the blue-lighted square. The square setting symbolizes walls of bondage and separation when I-It relationships are the only encounters man experiences. The blue light is a symbol of the coldness present in I-It relationships. Entrance into the blue square is easy and performed without difficulty. As the mime continues his life journey, he reaches out to take from those he encounters. However, they do not give of themselves. As he takes from other beings, that which he receives gives little or no satisfaction and does not confirm the I. This is symbolized by the disintegration, in the hands of the mime, of that which is taken from other beings.

As the mime continues to experience the illusions of the I-It relationships, his desire for the confirmation of I-Thou relationships grows. The transition from I-It to I-Thou relationships is not easy.

This is symbolized by the difficulty the mime experiences in breaking through the invisible walls holding him in bondage within the blue-lighted square. Finally the transition is made back to the soft-lighted circle from the illusion of I-It to the inclusion of I-Thou.

A Commentary on the Mime Sketches--The House Built for Jack and The House Jack Built

The two mime sketches The House Built for Jack and The House Jack Built represent contrasting views concerning educational methodology and purpose.

The sketch The House Built for Jack was created to exaggerate an educational methodology based on education for social purposes. It defines man as an instrument or tool to be used for some purpose outside himself. The educational model portrayed in the mime sketch is often referred to by some educational theorists as "the factory model." This educational process is often interpreted as being mechanistic because of its tendencies to devise systematic and objective ways to make the education of persons effective and efficient through control. Some theorists would maintain that this model adopts techniques of the sciences which are used in relation to nonhuman products and applies them to the education of human beings. Man is perceived as an It in this model and is used and manipulated accordingly.

In contrast to the "factory model" is the humanistic person-centered model represented by the mime sketch The House Jack Built. Buber's definition of education as "a selection of man of the effective world" is portrayed. The focus of this model is on the adoption of an attitude toward educational values which include human uniqueness,

liberation, personal growth and well-being, and self-realization. Education in the humanistic person-centered approach is a process through which persons may experience human transactions characterized by living, learning, and growing in dialogue with educators and others. The dialogue encouraged by this model is based on I-Thou relationships between teachers and pupils through which pupils are encouraged to make responsible decisions about their being-in-the-world and their own learning.

A Descriptive Interpretation of the Mime
Sketches--The House Built for Jack
and The House Jack Built

The House Built for Jack is a mime sketch which relates the process of education called the factory model to the assembly line of a factory. It is satirical in its symbolism and exaggerates the message it portrays.

A line of four mimes represents the educational system. Each mime performs a specific task mechanically as if controlled by some other source of power. The students enter the system as robots who pass through the assembly line to be endowed with discipline, democracy, and intelligence which are symbolized by a hammer, a flag, and a pitcher of knowledge. At the end of the assembly line is a mime who represents a product inspector and who symbolizes the evaluation process of the factory model. The products which pass inspection are then sent into the world to serve society. The products which fail to pass inspection are rejected and sent back through the assembly line.

The second mime passing through the assembly line is rejected twice. As she returns in frustration to the assembly line a third time, she decides to drop out. The system has become meaningless, and her act of turning off each of the mechanical parts of the assembly line symbolizes that she has rejected the educational process.

In the sketch entitled The House Jack Built, a mime enters the world only to discover a barrier to meaningful existence. She has needs which have not yet been met. As she stands before this barrier, a variety of persons bring to her many experiences. First, she is made secure by the presentation of material with which to build a house which symbolizes the self. Having established security, she is then offered various gifts related to education. Persons bring to her works of art, a gun, books, and a calculator. She is given the freedom to make selections of the effective world through the medium of education. With her selections she builds and decorates the house which symbolizes her self. Through the process of selecting, the mime represents a student growing and becoming in an atmosphere which confirms her.

Although the relationships between the student and the educators in the mime sketch appear to be short in duration, this is only because of the limitations of time in the presentation itself. The symbolism present in the acts of bringing various learning experiences to the student and allowing the student freedom to choose from them represents an I-Thou attitude of the educator. To extend this freedom means that the educator is endeavoring to establish an environment through which the student may satisfy both the "originator instinct" and the "instinct for communion" (see pages 48-51).