

EXISTENTIALISM AND THE TEACHER-PUPIL  
RELATIONSHIP: SOME IMPLICATIONS  
OF SARTRE AND BUBER

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David Earl Jones

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Major professor

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## ABSTRACT

### EXISTENTIALISM AND THE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP: SOME IMPLICATIONS OF SARTRE AND BUBER

By

David Earl Jones

The intent of this study is to examine the bases for educational theory derived from Jean-Paul Sartre's and Martin Buber's existential philosophy. This study is not a comprehensive investigation of both Sartre's and Buber's philosophies. The study discusses some of the implications of Sartre and Buber in regard to specific educational practices and to the teacher-pupil relationship.

This study is organized as a descriptive study of Sartre's and Buber's concepts of ontology, epistemology, and axiology as the concepts are extended into the educational situation. Both the purpose of this dissertation--to introduce the reader to Sartre's and Buber's educational thought--and the nature of the source material urge that the method of scholarship move out from the conventional objective, critical approach of academic scholarship, and follow that methodology especially theorized and employed by Martin Buber himself.

One of the more important findings of this research is that the relationship between the teacher and the student

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David Earl Jones

is the most crucial aspect of pedagogy. Also noted is the matter of grouping students, the importance of providing alternatives, and the value of cooperative rather than competitive pedagogical methodology.





EXISTENTIALISM AND THE TEACHER-PUPIL  
RELATIONSHIP: SOME IMPLICATIONS  
OF SARTRE AND BUBER

By

David Earl Jones

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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1977

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This study belongs to Rosie and Steven in token payment for everything it took away from them.

It is dedicated, however, to Professors Earl Newman, John Suehr, Dale Alam, Howard Hickey, and George Ferree, my guidance committee. I should like to express my gratitude to these gentlemen for giving me the encouragement to begin and the freedom to explore the ramifications of this study. Without their encouragement, kindly understanding, and the influence of their orderly and enthusiastic scholarship, I would never have completed my project.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Questions and Goals of the Dissertation

It is the intent of this study to examine the bases for educational theory derived from Jean-Paul Sartre's and Martin Buber's existential philosophy. This study in no way is intended to be a comprehensive investigation of both Sartre's and Buber's philosophy as a whole. The study will discuss some of the implications of Sartre and Buber in regard to specific educational practices and to the teacher-pupil relationship.

The basic assumptions I am making are these:

- (1) That there are some logical conclusions one can draw from a philosophical position that can be applied to pedagogy.
- (2) That this dissertation is addressing itself to schools as they exist today in anticipation that the implications drawn from Sartre and Buber will enhance and facilitate a more positive learning environment in public schools.
- (3) Given that the goals of public education are to provide adequate knowledge and skills for adult living, I intend to describe the prescriptions Sartre and Buber would likely give, considering their particular ontological, epistemological, and axiological views.

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The major questions the dissertation will address itself to are these: What should be taught? How is curriculum to be chosen? What are the roles of the teacher and student in the decision making process?

This study is significant to all educators. For the classroom teacher, the implications drawn from both Sartre and Buber should prove valuable in the drawing up of useful pedagogical methodology. It should be of value to administrators because it will discuss the implications of the existential thought of Sartre and Buber for the selection of personnel in an educational setting. This paper will also discuss the importance of involving teachers and students in the decision making process.

How, then, should the task of revealing the bases of educational theory in a particular philosophy be pursued? Educational philosophers have pretty generally followed a traditional format to accomplish this purpose. Theodore Brameld has written,

Philosophy has been divided into specialized branches, methods, and divisions, each of which concentrates upon one major area of belief. This is an admission, perhaps, that the question (What are the grounds of belief?) is simply too complex to be treated as a whole. As to the number of such divisions philosophers have differed among themselves--some speaking<sup>1</sup> of four or five, others of as many as eight or nine.

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Brameld, Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955), p. 239.

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For my purpose in this paper I will consider but three, regarding others as subsidiary to them. These are:

(1) study of the principles of reality; and (2) study of the principles of knowledge; and (3) study of the principles of value or good. Respectively, these questions often are expressed in philosophical shorthand as ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Most educational philosophers would accept a primary assumption that the philosophical bases for educational theory should emerge from the answers, tentative or final, which are given in reply to these questions.

If educational theory is to be meaningful for the day to day business of the schools, it should establish as its primary point of reference the juncture between the notions of philosophy and the actual practices going on in educational institutions. Comprehensive examination of the contributions of a philosophy to educational theory must consider practice, at least to the extent that the latter clarifies the theory and indicates continuities extending from philosophical abstraction to concrete behavior. In a general sense, then, for the bases of educational theory, Sartre's and Buber's philosophy should be sought in their answers, direct or implied, to such questions as: What is Being? What is Knowledge? What is Good? And the answers to these philosophical questions should then be conceptually

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tended to show what they would mean in terms of educational practice.

When the educational theorist talks about any facet of educational policy or practice, he cannot avoid reference to beliefs grounded in these fundamental branches of philosophy. Ontology, for example, which asks the question, "What does it mean to exist, or to be?" is deeply involved in contemporary education's preoccupation with individual differences. Any attempt to define the nature of an individual involves related ontological questions. Consider the following questions as illustrative of this relationship: How does one distinguish between those characteristics of the individual which may be attributed to all men and those which are unique to this particular man? Are these individual differences fixed or dynamic? What is the nature of intelligence--does it belong primarily to the order of reality which we refer to as physical, or is it mental? If it is both, what real connections can be established between mind and body? Do individual differences come about as a result of accidents in nature, or are they the manifestations of a master plan? To what extent is the individual responsible for these differences? Does the individual exercise a measure of freedom in choosing ways in which he will be different from his fellow men? A philosophy of education which proposes to understand the

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eds of individuals must strive to provide consistent answers to questions such as these.

In no less a degree, policy and practice in public education may be influenced by answers to the epistemological question, "What is Truth?" One of the most controversial issues in schools today concerns the question what should be taught. Should the curriculum builders proceed from the standpoint that there is an order of truth existing "out there" independently of anyone's knowing and that the compartmentalization of knowledge into subject-matter areas represents mankind's inroads into this region of truth? Does education attempt to lift the veils of ignorance from this ultimate truth, such as one peels back the leaves of an artichoke in search of its secret? Is truth keyed to particular events; is it found in the critical examination of the consequences flowing from specific choices? Should curricular experiences be selected from a body of truth which culture has revealed to us, or should the curriculum consist of those problems which individuals and groups of individuals encounter in striving to satisfy their needs? If the curriculum is planned without regard for these cogent, though theoretical, questions, it represents an uncritical acceptance of the beliefs and opinions of individuals and institutions only secondarily concerned with education; or it may represent a haphazard

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conglomeration of beliefs reflected in the confused behavior of those who are subjected to it.

Formal education is also inextricably involved in the axiological questions--What is Good? What ought to be? What is beautiful? What is valuable? How should I act? And because education is ordinarily construed as a facet of social process, these questions are asked, not in terms of isolated individuals, but of individuals within a social context. Should the schools exert their efforts in maintaining the status quo, or should they seek to build a new social order? Should children be encouraged to question established values from their cultural heritage, values which have stood the test of centuries of application? In matters of taste, should schools encourage acceptance of mass decisions, or are there ultimate standards for judging ethical or aesthetic choices? Where does authority rest; in society, in the individual, or in some supernatural being? The answers which educators give to these questions will, of course, influence every aspect of the school program.

It should be noted that these basic problems or questions of philosophy are inextricably interrelated, and the direction which educational theory provides for problematic situations at the level of policy and practice may draw on one or all three. Consider the problems of curriculum construction: Here the "how" and the "what" of the

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learning situation (epistemology) become deeply involved with the being of the learner and of the objects about which learning is to take place (ontology), and finally with whether what is to be learned is of such value as to warrant being learned at all (axiology). Educational decisions may be, and often are, made without conscious regard for these theoretical dimensions, but if consistency is to be achieved, it will be facilitated by continuities which emerge from a transactional relationship between educational philosophy and experiences at the level of policy and practice.

A better understanding of existentialism and its major theses might aid in redefining the reciprocity of teacher-pupil influences. With an increased understanding of this highly important, but often misunderstood relationship, one might perceive ways in which an existentially-oriented classroom encounter could benefit the two persons involved. In the mutuality of all humanly-founded contacts, eventually, the social and educational institutions might also be revitalized. In the same vein a community and its educational forces sympathetic to the existential message would encourage a wholly real, truly human relationship. Teacher, pupil, and social institutions would then be intertwined in an admirable exchange of message and response. Thus, the teacher-student association would neither be authoritarian nor overly permissive. Within their shared

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world each would respond more fully to the other as he grasped more completely the significance of his own self.

Existentialism, the philosophy keenly aware of contemporary man's anxiety-filled, object-centered existence, might illuminate a new course to follow in creating a favorable atmosphere for the teacher-pupil relationship.

The teacher-pupil relationship is the life-blood of the school. From it flows the best and worst of societal influences. If society and education suffer from the existential complaints of alienation, fragmentation, and loss of communication, the teacher and pupil in the shared event of confrontation will probably reflect a similar malaise. However, a school and society awakened to the importance of human values and freedom evidenced in respect for the individual and responsibility toward the community would be evidenced in a true I-Thou<sup>2</sup> relationship of student and teacher. Furthermore, a teacher and pupil sensitive to the existential concern for self-hood and reality might be an effective force in redirecting contemporary man whose individuality is masked by anonymity. The shallow artificiality that characterizes much in current society might be relieved by a dedicated teacher and pupil.

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<sup>2</sup>The I-Thou relationship is that relationship between teacher and pupil by which reciprocity is established. The other is perceived as another self. The teacher remains paradoxically as the one who comprehends the ends of the partnership at the same time. Such a relationship would be neither authoritarian nor overlymissive.

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Teachers need a philosophy of teaching which places the proper emphasis on the teachers and the pupils as persons. Knowledge learned in the classroom is easily forgotten, but the face-to-face encounter is the living edge of the education process. This study recognizes the significance of teacher-pupil interaction, and from this position attempts to develop some of the concepts of Sartre and Buber as an appropriate base for personal interaction.

The problem or question then is whether existentialism has a contribution to make toward a clarification, opening, or re-focusing of the teacher-pupil relation in present society. Concomitant with this would probably emerge the related answers as to the effect of the existentially-centered teacher-pupil relation on the school as a whole and even on society.

Granted that the teacher-pupil relationship is of great importance in any educational scheme, it is of particular relevance in any discussion of existentialism and its relation to education. In this school of thought, the relation of person to person relationships between free, autonomous individuals would seem to be a paramount goal.

According to Kneller it must be a relationship of intimacy and communion. In an article, he stated:

The only thing that counts in education is the ultimate relation of student and teacher . . . . Education is not a social institution but a meeting of persons; one of which the child encounters my personality in

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the act of learning and through me the world which I embody. I liberate his capacities setting him on the road to 'authenticity' while he for his part realizes himself through encountering in me the knowledge that I bring to life.<sup>3</sup>

ch a task would be fraught with difficulties because no  
 sy or pat answers would be provided. Yet, it would be a  
 rposeful one in which the teacher sought to encourage  
 e pupil's search for self-realization.

Kneller in his examination of the existentialist  
 teacher-student relation felt that it would in its final  
 ffect influence the entire character of school life. He  
 ncluded primarily that the teacher-student association  
 ould be one of intimacy and commitment with little regard  
 r empty formal responses or relationships. United in an  
 ploration of the field of values, both teacher and student  
 ould exist in an I-Thou relation using but not being  
 nited to scientific and psychological universals.<sup>4</sup>

#### Methodology

This study is organized as a descriptive study of  
 tre's and Buber's concepts of ontology, epistemology,  
 axiology as the concepts are extended into the edu-  
 tional situation. The extension is organized around

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<sup>3</sup>George F. Kneller, "Education, Knowledge, and the  
 Problem of Existence," Harvard Education Review XXXI  
 (1961):433-434.

<sup>4</sup>George F. Kneller, Existentialism and Education  
 (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1958), pp. 114-

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the three categories of (1) formation of self-concept, (2) teacher-pupil interaction, and (3) the learning process. The purpose of the extension of these concepts into the educational situation is to develop principles which might relate to a theory of education. The development of this theory and this type of research has as its goal the formulation of significant hypotheses about a particular topic. According to Kneller, prediction and experimental testing can begin only after the hypothesis has been formulated. The formulation calls for imaginative daring and the ability to sense an order and pattern in things where they had not previously been sensed. Kneller further stated that empirical knowledge is not necessarily the most dependable kind of knowledge we have. It can only present results as more or less probable and is just another avenue to understanding reality.<sup>5</sup>

Both the purpose of this dissertation--to introduce the reader to Sartre's and Buber's educational thought--and the nature of the source material urge that the method of scholarship move out from the expected objective, critical approach of academic scholarship, and follow that methodology especially theorized and employed by Martin Buber himself.

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<sup>5</sup>George F. Kneller, Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964).

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Buber argued that there are two legitimate forms of scholarship, critical and personal. In the critical form, the tradition is treated as an object of knowledge and is advanced exactly and comprehensively. The scholar must distinguish between primary material to be fully developed and secondary material to be left in the background. In his decisions, he proceeds along strict principles of critical research.

In the personal form, the scholar seeks primarily to re-present to the reader the force and vitality of the past tradition in such a way that its former spirit will infuse itself into the present. This cannot be accomplished merely by re-presenting the content or the conceptualizations which formerly embodied this spirit. Rather the spirit itself must be perceived and communicated.

There is a "content" in either form of scholarship, but in critical scholarship, the author strives to stand outside his content as a detached observer, there to comprehensively present the content, carefully evaluating each part in relation to the others. In personal scholarship, the author stands within, participating in the content and thereby communicating with the "something more than facts" that originally gave it such force, i.e., with its spirit.

Here you do not attain to knowledge by remaining on the shore and watching the foaming waves; you must take the venture and cast yourself in, you must swim, alert and with all your force, even if a moment comes

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when you think you are losing consciousness: in this way, and<sup>6</sup> in no other, do you reach anthropological insight.

the former, the author seeks to bring the reader factual information; in the latter, he seeks to bring the reader the spirit with and by way of the content.

But how can personal scholarship be evaluated? It appears to be thoroughly subjective. The personal form of scholarship can be evaluated, not by its objective presentation alone, but also by a careful evaluation of the scholar himself. Has he entered his material beyond an objective consideration? Has he communicated with his material? Has he engaged his reader as a person speaking to a person? Has he communicated to the reader the spirit of the content which he himself has already absorbed and consciously articulated?

To the superficial observer, it may seem that the personal scholar lightly evokes subjective, uninformed interpretations. In reality, he is severely disciplined by the heavy responsibility of fidelity and openness to the "spirit" of his material. This fidelity cannot be allowed to stop even at the limits of one's own particular viewpoint.

Admittedly, there are strengths and weaknesses to the form of scholarship. On the positive side lies the

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<sup>6</sup>Martin Buber, Between Man and Man (New York: Allan Publishing Co., Inc., 1965).

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scholar's study of the facts and of his faithfulness to what he perceives. But on the negative side lies both the bias of the original author he is studying and the bias of his own world-view. Nevertheless, truth is mixed with bias under either form of scholarship, no matter what claims to critical objectivity might be advanced.

It is not granted us to possess the truth; but he who believes in it has a share in building its kingdom. The ideological factor in what each individual calls truth cannot be extracted; but what he can do is to put a stop in his own spirit to the politization of truth, the utilitarizing of truth, and unbelieving identification of truth and suitability. Relativizing rules in me as death rules in me; but unlike death, I can ever, again set limits to it; up to here and no farther!

Unquestionably, truth is the goal of all personal scholarship, not the particular author's truth only, but the truth of reality as he attempted to communicate it. The scholar's presentation, then, will be evaluated by the reader as he recognizes truth's face within himself.

Of course this paper must also be judged by how accurately Sartre's and Buber's philosophical views are portrayed. Then one must ask if the conclusions drawn from these two philosophers are logical conclusions for pedagogy. Another point to keep in mind while reading this paper is to see if the paper answers the major educational questions that were proposed at the outset.

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Buber, Pointing The Way, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 101.

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### A Defense of This Study

The question of the effect of existentialism on the teacher-pupil relationship is one which might include any related areas and important questions. However, the main focus of this study will zero in on the relationship as it exists in the classroom between the two individuals, the teacher and pupil.

Several people such as Flanders and Combs, have given much consideration to the teacher-pupil relationship. In discussing the learning process Flanders discussed goal perceptions of students and teachers. These perceptions were in terms of motivation, reality, and clarity.<sup>8</sup> His discussion went beyond the usual discussion of learning goals in terms of curriculum organization and content. When the learning process is discussed in terms of motivation, reality, and clarity, Sartre's and Buber's concepts of Being, Knowledge, and Value may be related to the learning process.

Flanders was trying to establish principles of teacher behavior that can guide a teacher who wished to control his own behavior as a part of his plan for classroom management. Combs was concerned with the interaction of teachers and pupils through the self-concept of each and the effects of actions based on the self-concept. Basically

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<sup>8</sup> Ned A. Flanders, Teacher Influence, Pupil Attitudes, and Achievement (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1965), p. 12.

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relationship between teacher and pupil is a relationship person to person. Teacher control and pupil response functions of the self-concept. A proper sense of "freedom" and "The Between," are definitely involved in the relationship of persons with persons.

Today a great deal of concern is shown for the many problems in education. This concern indicates the presence of a need, but oftentimes neither the need nor a possible solution is understood; however, the possibility that the philosophy operating in the schools might be the basis of a problem is seldom given consideration. Instead, new equipment, different methods, a longer school year, and other innovations are suggested as solutions. When experimentation does discover effective techniques, they are used without consideration toward implementation of a total philosophy. On the other hand, the results of experience are frequently absorbed into the teacher's existing philosophy without being examined thoroughly. There is a need to inject experience and practice into a framework which can be the basis for present and for future action. In this study the writing of Flanders and especially Combs provided the connection with educational experience and the writings of Sartre and Buber provide the framework for future action.

The main concern of this study is the pupil in the classroom situation and, in addition, this study may

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vide not only for experienced teachers but also for  
 inning teachers a better understanding of teaching.  
 ein is the significance of this study: Although Sartre's  
 Buber's elaboration of the concepts of ontology,  
 stemology, and axiology seem to hold sweeping impli-  
 cations for education, these concepts must be translated  
 o an educational framework.

Although Sartre is an atheistic existentialist and  
 er a theistic existentialist, a philosophy which has  
 ue for education can be taken from the existential frame-  
 k. Such valuable philosophy may be seen in the work of  
 ris<sup>9</sup> and Kneller.<sup>10</sup> Existentialist thinkers may be far  
 rt in their interpretations, but their interest in man  
 he exists is the link which joins all of them.<sup>11</sup> This  
 k is the same fundamental point which is of central  
 erest to the educator - man as the starting point.

#### Source Material

The sources to be consulted and critically inter-  
 ed will consist of writings on existentialism, not only

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<sup>9</sup>Van Cleve Morris, Existentialism and Education  
 York: Harper and Row, 1966).

<sup>10</sup>George F. Kneller, Existentialism and Education  
 York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1958).

<sup>11</sup>Ralph Harper, "Significance of Existence and  
 gnition for Education," Modern Philosophies and Edu-  
on, Fifty-Fourth Yearbook, Part I (Chicago: National  
 ety for the Study of Education, 1955), p. 254.

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philosophical works but also the plays, essays, and  
 els, which existentialists choose often to express their  
 ughts. In addition, educational writings dealing with  
 stentialism, the role of teacher and pupil, and related  
 as will be used.

As existentialism and its themes have been reflected  
 psychology and sociology, these fields too, will furnish  
 ther insights. For example, existential psychologists  
 psychiatrists such as Carl Rogers and Rollo May have  
 nsformed the therapist-patient relationship into a  
 suppositionless, shared experience.

The compilation of these varied fields would seem  
 offer a wide gamut of suggestions all of which might  
 ve useful in the creation of a relationship between  
 cher and pupil that would be more meaningful and grati-  
 ng to both.

The primary source material then will be Sartre's  
Being and Nothingness, and Buber's I and Thou and Between  
and Man.

Secondary sources employed in this study fall into  
 categories. The more central will be those articles and  
 ographs in English which have developed an interpre-  
 on or commentary on some aspect of Sartre's or Buber's  
 ight. A second group represents the concerns of  
 ican philosophers of education in their dealings with  
 tential philosophy up to the present moment. These will

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serve to keep the dissertation within the ongoing American educational conversation and relative to its concerns.

### Design and Organization

The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the philosophical base for the relationship between Existentialism and education and more specifically the teacher-pupil relationship. No attempt will be made in this study to posit the philosophy of Existentialism as a whole, but rather to indicate one way of relating this philosophy to education. Also, the development of this relation will not constitute the building of a "philosophy of education" as is usually understood. Instead it will consist of an examination of some of the specific philosophical problems involved. More specifically, this study will consist of four main parts: first, a critical analysis of the ontology of Sartre and Buber; second, a critical analysis of the epistemology of Sartre and Buber; third, a critical analysis of the axiology of Sartre and Buber; fourth, an examination of the implications of Sartre and Buber for curriculum.

This study represents, then, a comprehensive investigation of Sartre's and Buber's philosophy within the framework of traditional areas of inquiry--the problem of reality, and the problem of knowledge, and the problem of value--with particular attention to the import of these findings to some particular implications for curriculum.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE PROBLEM OF BEING

It is not an intent of this study to defend with few arguments the case for a precise relationship between philosophy and educational theory. That a link does exist is a basic assumption accepted in the first chapter. The work of John Dewey has supplied the precedent for relating philosophy to the problems of educational practice. In Democracy and Education, Dewey writes:

If a theory makes no difference in educational endeavor, it must be artificial. The educational point of view enables one to envisage the philosophic problems where they arise and thrive, where they are at home, and where acceptance or rejection makes a difference in practice.<sup>1</sup>

Dewey, however, would not have held that the manner in which a teacher conducts his professional activities in a classroom can be traced directly to a clearly understood philosophical viewpoint.

There are, undoubtedly, many instances in which teachers successfully carry out their responsibilities completely oblivious of the philosophical implications of

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<sup>1</sup>John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Millan Company, 1916), p. 386.

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their behavior. Dewey recognized this possibility, but he is also aware of its limitations. He wrote:

Where interests are so superficial that they glide readily into one another, or where they are not sufficiently organized to come into conflict with one another, the need for philosophy is not perceptible. But when the scientific interest conflicts with, say, the religious or the economic with the scientific or aesthetic, or when the conservative concern for order is at odds with the progressive interest in freedom, or when institutionalism clashes with individuality, there is a stimulus to discover some more comprehensive point of view from which the divergencies may be brought together, and consistency or continuity of experience recovered. Often these clashes may be settled by an individual for himself; the area of the struggle of aims is limited and a person works out his own rough accommodations. Such homespun philosophies are genuine and often adequate. But they do not result in systems of philosophy. These arise when the discrepant claims of different ideals of conduct affect the community as a whole, and the need for readjustment is general.<sup>2</sup>

is out of just such conflicts of interest and a general need for readjustment" that existentialism allegedly has emerged as a philosophical expression of the problems of modern civilization.

However, existentialism is less a system than it is a broad cultural current. It identifies a revolution against traditional ideas. Individual systems, of course, have emerged from the general movement and have pulled these ends together into comprehensive and consistent theories. The systems have organized the content of the philosophy into principles, methods, and special terminology. Each individual philosopher has done this according to his

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 381.

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a rationale, and only in a general sense can he be identified with the cultural movement. If, then, implications for practice in the ideology are to be made as specific as possible, relationships should be established with the systems of individual philosophers. The present study is concerned primarily with the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber; any contribution which it may make toward understanding existentialism in general is of purely secondary concern.

### The Study of Reality

If we are concerned with reality, or what is real, does it not turn to science? Can we not through scientific investigation and observation; that is, through controlled experiments and the careful accumulation of data, amass an array of facts which will enable us to define the world and what is in it? Can we not define the student's desk in terms of biology, chemistry, physics, and sociology? Will these scientific disciplines provide adequate data for describing and defining a real desk? If the reasoning of a physicist is followed, the desk will be described as cellulose, molecules, atoms, electrons, protons, and neutrons; and then, the physicist will confess that he has reached the limit of his information, that there are some things about the desk which remain unexplained.

The sociologist might define the desk in terms of utility for the classroom and for the student who sits

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it. But if its function as desk cannot be defined in separation from the people who use it, did not the physicist err in overlooking them? Furthermore, what about the name, "desk?" What kind of reality does the name have? Or consider the idea of desk in the mind of the desk designer; how does one determine the reality of the idea of desk, and is it a separate kind of reality from the name or from the desk itself?

Finally, consider the pupil who sits at the desk, a real live human being. Are the ideas which flash about his mind his countenance a part of him, or do they belong to a separate reality with which he enjoys communication? What about all the instances of his having sat at the desk in the past; are they a part of the reality of the pupil? Is the fact that he will sit there tomorrow a part of him? Can all these instances of past, present, and future be strung together into some coherent expression of reality?

The questions which one may raise in connection with a single event or occurrence are innumerable. The job of investigating or assessing the reality of a single event seems to be an interminable task. A more important question, perhaps, is the significance of such matters for the practice of everyday living. What difference, for example, does this make for the business of education and more particularly, curriculum?

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Most philosophers of education maintain that the teacher's answers to such questions as these will influence the manner in which he conducts his classroom. If, for example, he believes that there is an established order in the universe, one which may be discovered, plotted, and used as a map or blueprint in subsequent experience, he will, perhaps, organize his curriculum and his methods differently from the teacher who sees the universe as flux and process. The teacher who instructs the student sitting before him will be affected to an extent by how he regards the machinery of the student's learning activity. Is the student's mind an ordered entity situated somewhere inside consciousness? Is the Self to which this consciousness belongs contained within an epidermis? Is the Self another name for the soul which is sometimes thought to slip its protoplasmic skin at the instant of death? These questions are deeply involved with the methods, the content, and the ends of the educative process.

The quest for ultimate reality which is implied in the foregoing is carried out within a theoretical conceptual framework designated as ontology or metaphysics. George Kneller in his Introduction to the Philosophy of Education uses a familiar problem to indicate how metaphysics has relevance for education at the level of practice. He writes:

Take another practical problem in education, which is basically metaphysical. One hears a great deal about

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teaching the child and not the subject. What does this statement mean to a teacher? Even if the teacher replies, "I prefer just to teach my subject," the question still remains, "Why?" What is the ultimate purpose of teaching the subject?<sup>3</sup>

questions about ultimate reality do have meaning for beliefs concerning educational practice, then an investigation into the bases for educational theory in the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber should include an analysis of their ontological or metaphysical theory and its possible relation to educational practice.

For some, such as George F. Kneller, the terms 'ontology' and 'metaphysics' may be interchangeable, but for the purposes of this study a distinction exists, one that must be made manifest and accepted or the sense of what follows will be lost. Hazel Barnes states Sartre's distinction in her, "Translator's Introduction," to Being Nothingness. She writes:

Mistakes are often made by those who would treat the work as a metaphysics, Sartre states clearly his distinction between the two. Ontology studies "the structures of being of the existent taken as a totality"; it describes the conditions under which there may be a world, human reality, etc. It answers the question "How?" or "What?" and is description rather than explanation. For this reason it can state positively. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with origins and seeks to explain why there is this particular world. But since such explanations seek to go behind the Being which they must presuppose, they can be only hypotheses. Sartre does not

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<sup>3</sup>George F. Kneller, Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), 1.

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disapprove of metaphysical attempts, but he noticeably refrains from them.<sup>4</sup>

### Sartrean Ontology

In the introduction to his magnum opus, Being and Nothingness, Sartre launches an attack on traditional ontological dualisms which would do credit to John Dewey. One by one he strips away from the phenomenon the dualistic characteristics of interior and exterior, being and appearance, appearance and essence, potency and act. With stark realism, he argues that there is nothing hiding behind the appearance of the object, nothing nestled at the unrevealed core of the phenomenon. The object is plainly and simply what which appears, and this appearance or series of appearances which constitutes the phenomenon does not conceal on its shady side a mystical Being. To use Kant's terms there is no noumenon behind the phenomenon. In a different context, there is no potency out of which an act emerges; it is as it appears. Sartre writes:

But if we once get away from what Nietzsche called "the illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene," and if we no longer believe in the being-behind-the-appearance, then the appearance becomes full positivity; its essence is in "appearing" which is no longer opposed to being but on the contrary is the measure of it. For the being of an existent is exactly what it appears. Thus we arrive at the idea of the phenomenon such as we can find, for example in the "phenomenology" of Husserl or of Heidegger--the phenomenon or the

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<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. H. E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. xxvii.

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relative-absolute. Relative the phenomenon remains, for "to appear" supposes in essence somebody to whom to appear. But it does not have the double relativity of Kant's *Erscheinung*. It does not point over its shoulder to a true being which would be, for it, absolute. What it is, it is absolutely, for it reveals itself as it is. The phenomenon can be studied and described as such, for it is absolutely indicative of itself.<sup>5</sup>

Although he eliminates traditional dualisms one by one, Sartre seems to explode any hope that dualisms might be banished forever from the concerns of ontology. The old dualisms simply are replaced, or, more accurately, are given a new context by an over-arching dualism which he refers to as the infinite in the finite. It is the relative-absolute character of the phenomenon which reveals to us its quality as finite-infinite. Because there is a subject to which the phenomenon appears, it is obvious that the succession of appearances of the phenomenon must be infinite for the reason that the perspectives which the subject may take on the phenomenon are infinite. At the same time, it is also obvious that taken in isolation from the series of appearances to which it belongs, an appearance is complete, plenitude. Thus, a new dualism replaces the old, or, in this sense, provides a new base on which to reconstitute them. That which appears is only an aspect of the object, and yet the object must be said to be in that aspect. It is entirely outside the aspect in so far as the appearance is finite, but is outside the aspect in so far as the appearance refers

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

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the series of appearances of which it is a part. By the token, works of art represent completed acts. Each has a quality of finiteness about it. Finally, in the process of reconstituting the old dualisms under the umbrella of the new dualism, the infinite in the finite, Sartre contends that the appearance of the phenomenon taken as a singular cannot possess being in itself; that is, it simple is, and since there is no noumenon through which to account for its appearing, being is infinitely ascribed to the series of appearances.<sup>6</sup>

On the surface these intellectual gymnastics with terms finite and infinite seem rather pointless; but, as it turns out, they are essential to locating man in the world. Although Sartre replaces the old dualisms with the new one, something drops out in the transition. Left behind with the old dualisms is the opposition of the effable to the ineffable, the describable to the undecipherable--in short, the mystical backsides of phenomena disappear. Thus the world of appearance is the world of reality. Nothing is hidden from view as if in a lunar shade. However, if being is said to be present in the appearance of the phenomenon, should not a phenomenon of being be present in the appearance of the phenomenon? Quite simply, if phenomena are revealed through their appearances, would not the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

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phenomenon of being reveal itself as appearance? Sartre  
 replies an affirmative answer:

The phenomenon is what manifests itself, and being manifests itself to all in some way, since we can speak of it and since we have a certain comprehension of it. Thus there must be for it a phenomenon of being, an appearance of being, capable of description as such. Being will be disclosed to us by some kind of immediate access--boredom, nausea, etc., and ontology will be the description of the phenomenon of being as it manifests itself; that is, without intermediary. However, for any ontology we should raise a preliminary question: is the phenomenon of being thus achieved identical with the being of phenomena? In other words, is the being which discloses itself to me, which appears to me, of the same nature as the being of existents which appear to me?

In this sense, Sartre's first novel, Nausea, stands as a fictional description of the phenomenon of being; in a word, an ontological novel. A physiological description of nausea, however, is not a description of the phenomenon of being; it is a complex assessment of the characteristics of existents in their appearances. There is a distinction between the being which discloses itself to me and the being of the existents which appear to me.

Being and Nothingness it will be remembered is subtitled "An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology." The entire work is an attempt to analyze and explain through the phenomenological method the meaning of the Being of the subject and of the observed.

Sartre maintains that the essence of a particular object is the redness which is revealed as the synthetic

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

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nciple in the series of its appearances. Redness, however, is a quality of an object and can be defined or specified like any other objective relationship, but it is found equally in all qualities and relationships. Although the object and the synthetic principle may be considered as a totality, "object-essence," being is neither sphere of totality:

The object does not refer to being as to a signification; it would be impossible, for example, to define being as a presence since absence too discloses being, since not to be there means still to be. The object does not possess being, and its existence is not a participation in being, nor any other kind of relation. It is.<sup>8</sup>

He concludes that being is in no sense a relationship, but that it is the condition of every revelation of appearance:

Being is simply the condition of all revelation. It is being-for-revealing and not revealed being.<sup>9</sup>

He gets into difficulty in the quest for being if an attempt is made to track it down through the application of knowledge alone. The chair, for example, appears, and its meaning is determined through concepts, but when one attempts to move beyond the appearance of the chair to the being of the appearance, the being of the chair seems to fade with the fading of the appearance of the chair and is replaced by the phenomenon of being in general. The being of the

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

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

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phenomenon, then, is not identical with the phenomenon, of  
ing. Sartre concludes:

What is implied by the preceding considerations is that the being of the phenomenon although coextensive with the phenomenon, can not be subject to the phenomenal condition--which is to exist only in so far as it reveals itself--and that consequently it surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

phenomenon of being, then, cannot be apprehended by  
knowledge. Reality cannot be known by the observer--only  
subject is known, and it is known through its objec-  
ity, its appearance. It is in this sense that Sartre's  
ition sometimes is said to be an anti-intellectualism.

#### Relevance for Educational Theory

Although it is too early to point conclusively to the  
educational significance of the view of reality which has  
n partially set forth in the preceding paragraphs, some  
sequences seem inevitably to follow. First, if the series  
appearances of a phenomenon in infinite, the knowledge  
h we have of an object can never be final since the evi-  
e will never be all in. The real world, then, the world  
appearances of phenomena, is open-ended, subject to con-  
t modification, a world of probability. The subject  
er of science will, as a consequence, be most accurately  
essed in terms of laws of probability, statements of  
unted assertability, and hypotheses to be tested,

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

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vised, or abandoned. At the same time, if there is no apprehended reality behind the appearance of the phenomena, then whatever is must be available for examination in the phenomena themselves. The question of purpose, for example, must be answered in terms of the world of appearance. It would be sheer futility to seek for it in a design which lies hidden behind the phenomena. Whatever appears is open to investigation, and this would apply to purpose no less than to the molecular structure of stainless steel.

If values, too, may be regarded as objective in nature, then society will also be dynamic and uncertain. Since we have not yet dealt with Sartre's treatment of the being of man, however, we would be premature to push the consequences of this view further. We have barely opened the question of Being.

### Being and Knowledge

Thus far Sartre has said that reality is to be found in phenomena and that the being of phenomena is in their appearance:

What determines the being of the appearance is the fact that it appears. And since we have restricted reality to the phenomenon, we can say of the phenomenon that it is as it appears.<sup>11</sup>

We are compelled to search for Being in the appearance of the phenomenon, because that is the absolute limitation of

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

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objectivity. In order to arrive at this conclusion, Sartre skirts dangerously near the point of embracing a universal:

The essence finally is radically severed from the individual appearance which manifests it, since on principle it is that which must be able to be manifested by an infinite series of individual manifestations.<sup>12</sup>

If reality is confined to the phenomenon, and if the being of the phenomenon is in its appearance, then Being seems very much like a universal essence which holds together the infinite appearances of the phenomenon. The appearing of the phenomenon, however, might be compared to a motion picture film with a beginning but no end. Like this motion picture film, the series of appearances is infinite, but like the individual frames of the film, each appearance is complete, a plenitude. In this way, Sartre avoids the necessity for making Being the universal cement which holds the appearances together. Being is present in the finite appearance of the phenomenon, and it is present in each of the appearances comprising the infinite series. This infinite series of possible appearances may be regarded as the essence or "idea" of the phenomenon. Being is not a quality of the phenomenon; it is quite simply the condition of every appearance. The phenomenon of being, then, is not identical with the being of the phenomenon.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

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Sartre has said that there is nothing in the phenomenon beyond its appearance and that its being is coextensive with this appearance. He asks:

Why not push the idea to its limit and say that the being of the appearance is its appearing?<sup>13</sup>

As the perceiver implied by the appearance becomes the source of being.

Sartre rejects the primacy of knowledge in metaphysical concerns. If being is reduced to the knowledge which the perceiver has of it, then one must establish a being of knowledge prior to a knowledge of being. If on the other hand knowledge is granted the status of a given without concern for its being, the objective world is trapped in an ontological limbo. The being of the phenomenon is established through an appearance but is the condition of every appearance, and it achieves its transphenomenality in the being of the subject (it is the subject which makes possible the multiplication of the appearances to infinity). Sartre writes:

We can always agree that the percipi refers to a being not subject to the laws of the appearance, but we still maintain that this transphenomenal being is the being of the subject. Thus the percipi would refer to the percipiens--the known the knowledge and knowledge to the being who knows (in his capacity as being, not as being known); that is, knowledge refers to consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

quest of Being, then, comes to focus on consciousness.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. lii.

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

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Consciousness

As Sartre points out in the passage quoted above, the percipi refers us to a being which is exempt from the laws of the appearance, and this being is the subject, more specifically, consciousness. Sartre states, "the law of being in the knowing subject is to-be-conscious."<sup>15</sup> Although the structure of Being in Sartre's philosophy has been only faintly traced up to this point, the prime ingredients have been supplied. On the one hand is the world of appearances, phenomena, and, on the other is that being which is not subject to laws of appearance; namely, consciousness. Once consciousness has been introduced, it is possible to talk about human reality, and unless we can talk about human reality or human existence, the entire notion of an educational theory would be meaningless. It is the task of Sartre's ontology to reveal how consciousness is related to body, to knowledge, to the entire world of phenomena or appearance, to other consciousnesses, to life as a project, and to freedom and choice as fundamental characteristics of human reality. Educational theory will in turn be concerned to reveal how these factors influence theories of personality, learning, human relationships, values, action, emotions, etc. Every educational theory must confront a similar problem; that is, each should attempt to account

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

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for how there may be a world and a conscious human being situated in the world.

### The In-itself and the For-itself

Sartre's ontology splits Being into two regions or modes. The being of consciousness Sartre labels "being-For-itself," and the being of the phenomena he designates as "being-in-itself." Consciousness or pour-soi can be explained only through the concept of "Nothingness," but en-soi, the being of the world out there, is understandable through three dominant characteristics: Being is, Being is in-itself, and Being is what it is. Sartre means by this that being is neither created nor uncreated: it simply is. It is neither passivity nor activity. He says:

Both of these notions are human and designate human conduct or the instruments of human conduct. There is activity when a conscious being uses means with an end in view. And we call those objects passive on which our activity is exercised, in as much as they do not spontaneously aim at the end which we make them serve . . . . The self-consistency of being is beyond the active as it is beyond the passive.<sup>16</sup>

The law of noncontradiction applies to being-in-itself--being cannot both be and not be. The principle of identity is also applicable--being is what it is. Being has no becoming, no possibility, no necessity, no inside, no outside. It is purely contingent. It is outside of time. It is. That is all that can be said of it. It is full,

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

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Having established two regions of being, Being-in-itself and being-for-itself, Sartre admits that he has reached an impasse with his ontology, for it remains to be revealed how there can be realtions between the regions:

It is enough now to open our eyes and question ingenuously this totality which is man-in-the-world. It is by the description of this totality that we shall be able to reply to these two questions: (1) What is the synthetic relation which we call being-in-the-world? (2) What must man and the world be in order for a relation between them to be possible? In truth, the two questions are interdependent, and we cannot hope to reply to them separately. But each type of human conduct, being the conduct of man in the world, can release for us simultaneously man, the world, and the relation which unites them, only on condition that we envisage these forms of conduct as realities objectively apprehensible and not as subjective affects which disclose themselves only in the face of reflection.<sup>17</sup>

question which one asks in an attempt to reveal the relation of man to the world presupposes a being who is questioning and a being questioned. This interrogative relation makes possible either an affirmative or negative answer. To the question, "Is there any conduct which can reveal to me the relation of man with the world?"--a negative answer is possible. The answer may be, "Such conduct does not exist." Thus nonbeing as a possibility enters the world.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

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What possible importance can nonbeing, nothingness, and negation have for a philosophy of education? Nonbeing for Sartre has a greater significance than simply to serve as an indicator of the world's cantankerousness in the face of those who attempt to understand it! Without negation, there would be neither a world nor a worldling, much less a theory of education or a social structure. Being, in Sartre's view, has been separated into two regions--being-in-itself and being-for-itself. Being-for-itself, or consciousness, exists through placing a "nothingness" between itself and the rest of being. It is this nonbeing or nothingness which enables a world to exist through separating consciousness from that Being which it is presence to. Through the dialectic of being and nothingness, Sartre can account for the world, for human reality, for human personality, knowledge, value and action. It has become a commonplace in Sartrean philosophy that man not only introduces negation into the world; but makes it possible for there to be a world and to situate himself in that world through the nihilating activity of consciousness. Consciousness is the central fact of human reality, and through its negating activity, it builds the human context. However, nothingness in Sartre's scheme has an ontological foundation and cannot be defined in terms of an epistemological category.

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Against Hegel, Sartre denies that being and nothingness can be opposed antithetically. He holds that logical opposition requires simultaneous terms which are equally positive or equally negative. Thus, being and nonbeing are in contradiction rather than opposition. He points out that when Hegel regards being as an empty abstraction he has forgotten that emptiness must be emptiness of something and that this something refers to every determination except being's identity with itself. At the same time, Hegel has said that nonbeing is empty of being. Thus Sartre is logical in concluding, "that being is and that nothingness is not."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, if nonbeing is emptiness of being, then being is prior to nothingness. Sartre warns us that we can think being without thinking nothingness, but nothingness is dependent upon being, and the disappearance of being would not leave nothingness behind; the latter would disappear also. This is his meaning when he says, "nonbeing exists only on the surface of being."<sup>19</sup>

Sartre continues:

Thus the rise of man in the midst of the being which "invests" him causes a world to be discovered. But the essential and primordial moment of this rise is the negation . . . . Man is the being through whom nothingness comes to the world. But . . . What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being?

Being can generate only being and if man is inclosed in this process of generation, only being will come out of him.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

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But man is not trapped in "this process of generation." Man is a being who can question the universe and who is open to question even unto himself. Sartre contends that man isolates himself behind a shield of nothingness and intrudes nothingness into the world through interrogation. In other words, in questioning the universe, he is denying that he is it, and in questioning himself, he is denying that he is himself. If this last contention is bothersome, one should recall that man is a being which is what he is not and which is not what he is.

The implications of this viewpoint for educational theory begin to come into focus. If man is ceaselessly moving beyond his present moment in time toward the objectives of his future oriented project, then any attempt to understand him in terms of static generalizations will be futile. The context for learning, the relationships between teachers and pupils, the learning experiences themselves, the instructional resources, the curriculum design, all of these will need to be planned for a dynamic human being "which is what it is not and which is not what it is." So, too, the educational process will require attention to those moments in time which the individual scatters behind him like scraps of paper dropped by the hunted in a paper chase. Where one is going can be best predicted by attention to where one has been. What has been becomes instrumental in the achievement of what will be. The teacher's attention to

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regression, however, must be as concerned for the past of Galileo as it is for the immediate past of the student in the second seat in the third row. From Sartre's view, negation, perhaps, should become an essential factor in the entire educative process. As we have seen, the not is all important in defining man. Because of his orientation toward the future, he is not as an existing being what he was in the past or what he appears to be in the present, but, at the same time, he is not yet what he projects to be in the future. While this would be basic to the teacher's understanding of individual behavior, the role of negation would be of central concern in the student's coming to know the world and himself as an existent in that world.

#### Freedom and Anguish

Whether manifested through interrogation or doubt, human reality is a freedom which stands out from the remainder of being and questions it. Plants and beasts do what they have to do, but man chooses a course of action. The cat pounces upon the canary because it must. The sunflower heliotropically turns its face to the sun; there are no alternatives. The colorful male guppy swims ceaselessly alongside the fat female, compelled to infiltrate the water around her with spermatazoa.

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How does man lay hold of this freedom which he is?

How does consciousness become consciousness of freedom?

Sartre writes:

What form does this consciousness of freedom assume? In freedom the human being is his own past (as also his own future) in the form of nihilation. If our analysis has not led us astray, there ought to exist for the human being, in so far as he is conscious of being, a certain mode of standing opposite his past and his future, as being both this past and this future and as not being them. We shall be able to furnish an immediate reply to this question; it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself.<sup>21</sup>

Anguish reveals to man that he is totally and inescapably free. Whether I look to the future or to the past, I can find nothing to determine me to act in any particular way. The path ahead of me is scattered with possible courses of action. Up there ahead, in my future, I will make my decisions, but it is I who sustain the full range of possible acts, and I am anguished by the absence of any factor which might determine me to choose one possibility over the others. One looks with equal futility to the past. Although I may have firmly resolved yesterday to carry out a particular course of action today, I discover that I am not protected by past resolutions--I must reaffirm my resolution at each instant. I discover in anguish the inefficacy of my resolution.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

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Sartre anticipates at this point those who would raise the question of psychological determinism in connection with the anguish which accompanies the consciousness of freedom;

It would be in vain to object that the sole condition of this anguish is ignorance of the underlying psychological determinism. According to such a view my anxiety would come from lack of knowing the real and effective incentives which in the darkness of the unconscious determine my action. In reply we shall point out first that anguish has not appeared to us as a proof of human freedom; the latter was given to us as the necessary condition for the question. We wished only to show that this consciousness is anguish. This means that we wished to establish anguish in its essential structure as consciousness of freedom. Now from this point of view the existence of a psychological determinism could not invalidate the results of our description. Either indeed anguish is actually an unrealized ignorance of this determinism--and then anguish apprehends itself in fact as freedom--or else one may claim that anguish is consciousness of being ignorant of the real causes of our acts. In the latter case anguish would come from that of which we have a presentiment, a screen deep within ourselves for monstrous motives which would suddenly release guilty acts. But in this case we should suddenly appear to ourselves as things in the world; we should be to ourselves our own transcendent situation. Then anguish would disappear to give way to fear, for fear is a synthetic apprehension of the transcendent as dreadful.<sup>22</sup>

In a word, anguish may not be dismissed on the grounds that it springs from my ignorance of the real causes of my particular actions. As Sartre points out, he is not employing anguish as a proof of freedom; he is merely indicating that anguish is the mode of being conscious of freedom. Certainly, one is not anguished in every instance of action. Does this occur only in extreme situation; this

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

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business of anguish, anguish which has no role in the major portion of one's conscious moments even though they are reflective? What possible concern might the matter of anguish have for, say, an elementary school teacher?

Is Sartre prepared to say that little children experience this sense of anguish in their awareness of personal freedom? And if they do, what possible concern could it have for the teacher? In most instances, freedom is revealed to the individual during adolescence, but the manner in which man faces his freedom will most likely be influenced by his behavior as a child. Most likely, it is not the anguish itself which is of consequence for the individual, but the posture which he takes before it. The teacher who pretends to understand individual behavior would, from Sartre's view, need to understand the influence which childhood behavior may have upon the individual after that moment of crisis when he discovers himself to be totally and inescapably free. Ordinarily, man flees from anguish through one or more of four principal escape routes: the spirit of seriousness, psychological determinism, an autonomous self which dwells deep inside us, and finally, bad faith. Child psychology may become an instrument through which to analyze man's behavior as he attempts these escapes from the anguish of total freedom. It seems certain that Sartre's ontological interpretation of human freedom and anguish will be basic to an educational theory which

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emerges from his total philosophy. For the present, however, we need to pursue further the problem of freedom and anguish.

### Freedom, Motive and Act

Sartre contends that no motive can determine one to a particular act. The freedom which we apprehend through anguish is characterized by a nothingness which is intruded between motive and act. This simply means that an interrogating consciousness must always stand between the motive and the act. The motive, then, incites me to action or influences my choice, but:

Consciousness is not subject to it [the motive] because of the very fact that consciousness posits it; for consciousness has now the task of conferring on the motive its meaning and its importance.<sup>23</sup>

In Sartre's view, human freedom chooses the meaning of any motivating influence, and this is hard to square with much of our ordinary thinking about motives, perhaps, for the reason that psychology and literature often have made of motive a mysterious force hidden deep within human personality. Sartre, of course, is unwilling to grant a psychological or physiological factor an independent role as a causative agent in complex human behavior. Certainly, this objection would not extend to such physiological circumstances as those under which a sneeze is forced, or the eyes water, or the esophagus undergoes a reverse peristalsis. Nevertheless, he might insist that even in the instances

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

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cited the element of attendant volitional behavior is difficult to set apart. In a word, acts should be understood in terms of the total context in which they occur.

In acting I realize my possibilities. The context of action can be interpreted only by a self; this is what is meant by the self always being in a situation--in situation. The facticity of the self is this situation, but the act transcends any situation. The essence of self (man) is what has been. Man is the sum total of his acts:

Essence is everything in the human being which we can indicate by the words--that is. Due to this fact, it is the totality of characteristics which explain the act. But the act is always beyond that essence; it is a human act only in so far as it surpasses every explanation which we can give of it, precisely because the very application of the formula "that is" to man causes all that is designated, to have-been.<sup>24</sup>

As action, the act is nonreflective. It encompasses an interrelationship of instrumentalities which refer to further possibilities, but because acts involve the realization of possibilities, possibilities only and not determinations, the action can be interrupted at any instant by an interrogation which on the ground of reflection reveals these possibilities in anguish.

Anguish is also a factor in the problem of values:

Value derives its being from its exigency and not its exigency from its being. It does not deliver itself to a contemplative intuition which would apprehend it

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

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as being value and thereby would remove from it its right over my freedom. On the contrary, it can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognizing it as such. It follows that my freedom is the unique foundation of values and that nothing, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values. As a being by whom values exist, I am unjustifiable. My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation. It is anguished in addition because values, due to the fact that they are essentially revealed to a freedom, cannot disclose themselves without being at the same time "put into question," for the possibility of overturning the scale of values appears complementarily as my possibility. It is anguish before values which is the recognition of the ideality of values.<sup>25</sup>

It is I who make of value a baseball card of Jake Wood or a well fertilized lawn, and I realize in anguish my role as creator of values.

Can man escape his anguish? Not really, but there are sands where he can hide his head like an ostrich. Man may resort to the spirit of seriousness; i.e., he conscientiously pursues those goals which others have pointed out to him. Anguish rises again, however, in the knowledge that man's involvement in the world is not supported by a network of a priori obligation, that man creates his responsibilities through the process of giving them meaning.

Psychological determinism is another escape hatch through which to flee anguish. Sartre writes:

Psychological determinism, before being a theoretical conception, is first an attitude of excuse, or if you prefer, the basis of all attitudes of excuse . . . .

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

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It provides us with a nature productive of our acts, and these very acts it makes transcendent; it assigns to them a foundation in something other than themselves by endowing them with an inertia and externality eminently reassuring because they constitute a permanent game of excuses.<sup>26</sup>

Determinism for Sartre is nothing more than a "satisfying hypothesis" which accounts for the facts but presents no evidence against freedom.

The device for escaping anguish which is most fruitful for understanding human conduct is that which Sartre labels "bad faith." In this mode of being, man attempts to escape his anguish through attempting to hide it from himself. Nevertheless, the result is always the same; there is no escape from anguish, just as there is no escape from freedom.

### Being, Nothingness, and Education

From Sartre's point of view it can be said that wherever education is thought to be taking place a human reality will be pursuing a personal project within a unique situation. And, if, in very elementary terms, education is conceded to be the acquisition or expansion of knowledge, then the answers to such epistemological questions as, "What is meant by knowing?" and "What is it possible to know?" are not only educationally relevant but are dependent upon ontological determinations concerning the character of knower and known. Although they are far from being synonymous

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

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terms, knower and known in Sartre's frame of reference are expressed as being-for-itself and being-in-itself. All experience may be expressed as a relationship between these two regions of being.

So far in this chapter on ontology, the basic ingredients of Sartre's philosophy have been introduced--the regions of being, freedom and anguish, the devices through which man seeks to escape anguish, i.e., the spirit of seriousness, psychological determinism, and bad faith. Too, the notion that man always exists in a situation is expressed, and also the concept of man as being nothing but the sum total of his acts. Moreover, in the discussion of bad faith, it was revealed that man himself causes values to spring up in accordance with his project, his choices. All of these topics require greater explication, but they signal the shape for an educational theory based on Sartre's philosophy.

In the discussion of the being of the phenomenon and the phenomenon of being, for example, it was pointed out that consciousness is always present to an object which is nothing beyond its appearances. Sartre, in rejecting the notion of a noumenon behind the phenomenon, posits a stark realism which leaves all that is open to examination and study. No sector of reality is immune to the probings of man's consciousness. All that is can be revealed. However, Sartre's stark realism does not present a world out there

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independent of anyone's knowing it. Without consciousness there would be no world, and conversely, without the world, consciousness could not come into being. Consciousness and the world are not two separate being, but they are two regions of the same being. The world as an undifferentiated plenitude can be conceived abstractly, but it is meaningless without the introduction of human reality. These are the necessary conditions on which all knowing must depend; these are conditions on which educational and curriculum theory will be based.

The learner, the focus of all educational activity, is the "human reality" of which Sartre speaks. Human reality is human consciousness, but it is also being-for-itself--for-itself because through consciousness human reality is aware of itself. Human reality is also nothingness--nothingness because it is through translucent consciousness that human reality defines itself as not being the world which it is presence to. All of these terms are simply aspects of the same human reality. Human reality has another important aspect: freedom, and this may very well be the most significant aspect in so far as the curriculum person is concerned. If the learner is totally free, then neither heredity nor environment can be charged with the responsibility for what a man becomes. Deterministic psychologies cannot account for the learner's behavior; Freud's "unconscious" cannot be allowed to direct behavior;

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man is totally responsible for what he is and what he becomes. Confronted by this overwhelming freedom, man is swept by anguish, and in his desire to escape anguish, his behavior is characterized by a duplicitous attitude which Sartre labels "bad faith."

Freedom and bad faith present an altogether unique interpretation of individual behavior. However, there are other major facets of human reality. On the surface, heredity and environment may seem to be of no consequence in interpreting human behavior, but Sartre's concept of "situation" brings them back to a role of significance. As we have already discussed, Sartre's human reality causes values to exist through individual choices; however, these choices are always made in a situation, and the situation varies in its influence. For example, I may freely choose to be a professional baseball player, but if I lack a "good batting eye" my situation places a different meaning on this choice. So too, if I should choose to enroll at Harvard University as an undergraduate but I am the son of uneducated, lower socio-economic class parents living in semi-poverty in central Michigan and have not particularly distinguished myself as a scholar, I am freely choosing, but the meaning of this choice is clearly determined by the situation in which the choice is made. The learner cannot be understood as a unique individual except in the context of a unique situation. The implications for education, and

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curriculum in particular, in this concept seem infinitely significant.

Despite the importance of situation in the development of a human reality, or self, an act transcends situation. One by one the acts of a person are performed, in a sense are individually accumulated, and it may be said of a man that he is the sum total of these acts. Here is a most important factor in the development of a child's personality. There is no entelechy mysteriously hidden away inside the child, directing and limiting the unfolding of his life. His daily existence is not presided over by an a priori essence. On the contrary, essence is nothing more than what has been. Man shapes himself through his freely chosen acts. The child whom the teacher confronts, however, is at once more than the sum total of his acts, and less than what he is! The explanation of this paradox lies in the fact that man as "pro-ject" is in a sense already his future; thus, he is more than the sum total of his acts but less than what he is as future. Sartre says, "I await myself in the future," but, "the future which I am remains out of reach."<sup>27</sup> Each child's life is like the carrot on a stick which dangles just beyond the donkey's nose. The child stretches toward himself in the future, but his life skips on ahead just out of reach. This is an ontological condition of being-in-the-world. The teacher who understands

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

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Sartre's philosophy will also understand that to change this situation; that is, to attempt to change it, is to wish to make of human reality an in-itself. The consequences of such a misguided desire are frequently catastrophic. This problem like all the others which have been opened up in the discussion of the basic elements of Sartre's ontology deserves fuller treatment at a later point in the study. They must be accorded particular attention in terms of their implications for curriculum theory and practice.

The philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre is first of all a phenomenological ontology, but the epistemological problem of how man can know the world is a central issue in almost everything he has written. For example, the basic tenet borrowed from the doctrine of intentionality, consciousness is always consciousness of something, is simultaneously an ontological statement and a statement of Sartre's epistemological position. A theory of education, then, based on Sartre's philosophy must inevitably be grounded in ontology, but it must also reveal the relationships between a knower and the known; it must attempt to answer such epistemological questions as were suggested earlier--e.g., "What is meant by knowing?" and "What is it possible to know?" These are questions for a theory of knowledge, but first let us now take up the ontology of Martin Buber.

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### Buberian Ontology

Buber's sole concern is to relate his immediate experience of reality--an experience too well tested to be considered merely "subjective" and yet too insufficient to be set into a once-and-for-all system.

If we begin with the terms, metaphysics and ontology, Buber expresses himself quite clearly: he rejects the former repeatedly and accepts the latter cautiously. But little has been said until we see the connotative meaning he attached to each of these terms.

Within the term "metaphysics," Buber sensed either a system of truth rigidly closed against new experience, or a description of reality standing above experience and resting on the isolated feet of its own logical conclusions.

He refuses to reset his ideas on a system of sure statements about the absolute, and prefers the "holy insecurity" of a "narrow rocky ridge between gulfs" where there is no sureness of knowledge but only a yet unknown meeting.<sup>28</sup> Systems, on the other hand, are preferred by those who choose inner security to the risk of uncertainty. Such people desire to be securely oriented in a solidly founded and well structured world, and so build for themselves a mental system much like an ark which shelters them against all experiences of reality.

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 184.

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Buber stresses that the "experience" of which he speaks is not merely subjective or epistemological, but real--of the ontic level--therefore ontological. According to Buber, reality rests upon an arch of relationship between the I and the world.

He accepts the term ontological to stress that the basis of his thought is ontic, not merely psychic, and that he is attempting to develop a view that over arches both the subjective and the objective, a view which he himself describes as ontologic. He is also careful to insist that any attempt to systematize his thought is unfaithful to his aim, and yet he is aware that every Thou is fated to become an It. Like any Thou in our experience, his work, too, has elements of structure which are analyzable. The attempt of analysis, though indeed fraught with the very serious danger of destroying the immediacy of experience, likewise puts us in a position of being able eventually to experience the immediate more profoundly.

Buber's thought gives us an ample basis for a description of the nature of being. The reader would be misled if he were to see this as a complete system or to see it based upon a rationale other than the immediate experience of reality. Ontology, for Buber, is basically a description of the deepest experience of being available to man. Within these limits, it is most helpful to fully outline this unusual perception of being offered us by

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Buber and to describe what many call a revolution in Western thought.

### Reality Begins In Relationship

Buber was raised with a pre-Kantian, "objective" view of the universe. He saw it as an objective order around which subjects moved and oriented themselves. However, at an early age, he became intrigued by the conflicting images of the edge of space and its further spacelessness, and of the beginning of time and its prior timelessness. It was Kant's Prolegomena to All Future Metaphysics which led him then to reverse the order and see the objective world oriented by man's subjective perception.

This book showed me that space and time are only the forms in which my human view of what is, necessarily works itself out; that is, [space and time] were not attached to the inner nature of the world, but to the nature of my senses.<sup>29</sup>

Buber had joined the insight that being itself was beyond the reach of the forms of reality, space and time, and that it only appeared in space and time, but did not itself enter into this appearance. Thus Buber saw two worlds, the first the real but incomprehensible world, the second an image of the first. The second, although validly grounded in the world of reality, is man's creation, a development required by man to give order and sequence, a continuum of place, time and causality to his world.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

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Buber moved beyond Kant by maintaining that man also encounters the world of reality on a level prior to the conceptual or epistemological. Man has an ontological relationship with reality itself.

We know what Kant points out to us of the thing-in-itself, namely, that it is. Kant would say: "And nothing more." But we who live today must add: "And that the existent meets us. That is, if we take it seriously enough, a powerful knowing. For in all the world of the senses there is no trait that does not stem from meetings, that does not originate in the co-working of the x in the meeting."<sup>30</sup>

This "meeting" and the "x" quality inherent within it, becomes the central concern of Buber's philosophy. Here, epistemology becomes ontology, the subject-object relation of man to the world becomes a subject-subject relationship with active elements on both sides and with a factor of Presence between the two participants which refers to something beyond all the parts or sum of the parts of either pole involved in the relationship. Emphatically, it is not a relationship which dissolves the parties into a newly realized unity, but an "identity-in-difference" in which the uniqueness of each is intensified over against the other.

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 157.

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Relationship: I-Thou and I-It

Man's experience of the world is that "in the beginning is relation."<sup>31</sup> Relation is the fundamental reality of life, whether we are speaking chronologically or ontologically, whether we are speaking of the individual man or of the entire cosmos. Buber does not think of man under the category of a substance to which he adds the accident of relation, but first sees him under the category of relation, out of which his own ontological identity is derived.

Primary words (I-Thou, I-It) do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.<sup>32</sup>

It is only within the relationship that the personality or person comes to exist.

There is one qualification to this to which Buber is most sensitive. The opening words of I and Thou are: "To man, the world is . . . ."<sup>33</sup> Buber can only speak within the limits of man's experience. He holds for no transcendental knowledge realized outside the concrete and the immediate experience of life. The view is not a rational deduction derived out of a systematic metaphysics.

There are two relationships found in the world. There are the I-It and the I-Thou, and these are basic

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<sup>31</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 18.

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

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid

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words. When spoken, "the speaker enters and takes his stand in them."<sup>34</sup> They are combined words. The "I" is not to be taken separately, but in combination with the "It" or the "Thou." The "I" of I-Thou is different from the "I" of I-It, both because the relationship is different and because, thereby, the "I" is constituted differently. "The existence of I and the speaking of I are one and the same thing."<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, there are not two kinds of men, but these two polarities within each man. When a man enters into a relationship, he holds himself in one or the other attitude, but both attitudes are, at one time or another, in the same man. "Every man lives in the two-fold I."<sup>36</sup> But it is true that most men can be dominantly characterized by either of the polarities and so be designated as such.

In the I-Thou relationship, the "I" meets the object over against him in subjective mutuality and presence. He relates with his whole person. In the I-It relation, on the other hand, he involves only part of his "I" and seeks to use or experience the object of his relationship. For example, one can be said to "love" in either relationship. But for the I-It, love is a feeling

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

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which exists within the person while, for the I-Thou, love is between the I and the Thou. "Feelings dwell in man; but man dwells in his love."<sup>37</sup>

Two relationships, then, but one world. And while each is conceptually abstracted, neither is found in either man or world without being in polarity to the other. Every Thou relationship must eventually become an It relation, and while man cannot live without It relations, "he who lives with It alone is not a man."<sup>38</sup>

#### I-It

"You cannot hold on to life without It, its reliability sustains you; but should you die in It, your grave would be in nothingness."<sup>39</sup> A less penetrating reading of I and Thou might leave many a reader with the impression that the I-It is of negative value, or even to be identified with evil itself. But this totally ignores Buber's insistence on the embrace of both polarities rather than electing one while discarding the other, an insistence fundamental to his thought.

"The primary word I-It is not of evil--as matter is not of evil . . .";<sup>40</sup> it establishes an order and a stability in life, sustains life as we know it. Only through its words and concepts can we communicate with one another.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 16, 34.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

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Science and technology, with all their amazing developments, belong to this sphere. Academic scholarship is founded in the world of It.

Nor would it be true to say that its forms and categories which give us security and stability, are fictitious. They are based on real life-experience, and are inserted, through reflection, into an intelligible continuum. The categories are of It and not of reality, but they reflect man's experience of reality in analogical terms.

The world of It is one side of a rhythmic continuum between realization and orientation. It gives order and stability to the individual returning from an encounter with reality. But should a man come to love its security in preference to the risk of new meeting, should he come to value the orientation above the realization, then the dominant enthronement of It over Thou assumes the vestiges of evil.

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, till the incubus over him and the ghost within him whisper to one another the confession of their non-salvation.<sup>41</sup>

Such a domination snuffs out realization. Man's power to enter into relation is decreased; the process of realizing his person and the world over against him is

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

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42 Ibid

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The ordinary manner of relating to the world of It is through experiencing and using. As the world of It grows, man's ability to experience and use also grows.

The individual can, to be sure, more and more replace direct with indirect experience, he can "acquire items of knowledge," and he can more and more reduce his using of the world to specialized "utilization"; nevertheless, a continual development of this ability from generation to generation, cannot be avoided.<sup>42</sup>

As man's ability to experience and use increases, his power to enter into relationship decreases--"the power in virtue of which alone man can live the life of the spirit."<sup>43</sup> These two areas separate themselves off from each other, experience into the province of the "I," i.e., into the feelings a man has within himself, and using, into the province of the "It," i.e., into the institutions a man erects outside himself.

Withdrawing into himself, the It man privately enjoys his own feelings of "love" and hatred, of pleasure and pain. "Here he is at home, and stretches himself out in his rocking chair."<sup>44</sup> Such feelings are carefully restricted from his outside, "institutional" life, and should they ever be expressed there, he is quick to restore the correct separation. Compartmentalization is the law of

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

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the It world. Going out into the institutional world, the It man influences, makes connections, organizes and officiates. Here, a variety of aims are pursued.

But the separated It of institutions is an animated clod without soul, and the separated I of feelings an uneasily fluttering soul-bird. Neither of them knows man: institutions know only the specimen, feelings only the "object," neither knows the person, or mutual life.<sup>45</sup>

Both the history of individuals and of the human race confirm the fact that the ordinary rhythm between I-Thou and I-It has, in our time, been disturbed and threatened by a progressive growth of the world of It. The danger comes not simply from the expansion of science and the explosion of factual knowledge and technical information, but more from the "thousand petty means of life which have taken on the features of ends in themselves," so that man is now lost in his instruments and no longer has a true personal goal. He no longer knows how to relate to his inner feelings with his institutional activities. Human life becomes impersonal, mediate and instrumental, and realization is replaced by appearance and imitation.

If this insight speaks crisis for the life of man, it becomes magnified in our educational endeavors. The progress of our twentieth century, especially in the area of technology, has understandably impressed us to the point of a hypnotic trance. But man dare not abdicate his

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

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### I-Thou

Buber has no difficulty explaining the I-It relation; its presence in our world is an experience all too common to all of us. But the I-Thou, the key experience he wants so urgently to communicate, the core of all his philosophy, is elusive of explanation. Initially, he will seem to be presenting us with a series of analogous, descriptive terms. But in time we will see that, step by step, he is telling us what the I-Thou is not, removing this and that orienting experience until there lies before us, in the center of his negative circle, the "between." Buber leads us to the door, but only his reader can enter for himself. If the reader can identify in his own experience this "x" to which Buber has led him, he "knows" of what Buber speaks. If he does not, then the "x" which our philosopher has circumscribed is not reality. But ever again the reader has authenticated Buber's words.

- What, then, does one experience of the [Thou]?
- Nothing at all. For one does not experience it.
- What, then, does one know of the [Thou]?
- Only everything. For one no longer knows particulars.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1970), p. 61.

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The I-It is spoken with a part of man's being and relates to particulars. It classifies, analyzes, and deduces objective elements about the object, but always remains dealing with a part of the object, never the object as a whole. I-It knows particulars only; I-Thou knows the underlying whole.

Buber distinguishes two types of knowing: the philosophical which regards a thing as an object, and the religious or experiential which is a relationship of total being. Such a knowing is used in the Book of Genesis when it says that Adam knew his wife, Eve.<sup>47</sup> The philosophical knowing looks away from the concrete situation. Beyond its limits lies religious knowing where there arises, single and inderivable, the unique reality of the concrete world presented me by God; the continual creation in each moment. This moment is not foreseeable or foreknowable; one cannot plan the details of the meeting. One can only enter the relations encounter and hold his ground in the face of the concrete world before him. One "knows" by opening himself up in his totality to the concrete addressing him in its totality.

In addition to totality, Buber will also speak of the characteristic of mutuality. An I-Thou relationship must be mutually jointed from both sides. The "I" must

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will the total giving of himself to the Thou without limitation or ulterior motive. Yet equally, the meeting depends upon the free and total response of the Thou to the "I," the gift of its whole self. Thus in the relation, the I chooses and is chosen; he is active and passive at one time. "My Thou affects me, as I affect it."<sup>48</sup>

Mutuality does not imply a resulting unity or common identity; in mutuality, each is confirmed in his own unique identity. "I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou."<sup>49</sup> But retaining and strengthening one's own identity over against the other, full mutuality brings about an inclusion of the I into the Thou. Inclusion, or experiencing the other side, means to feel an event from the other side of the person one meets as well as from one's own side. For Buber, marriage is the exemplary bond of the fullest realization of mutuality.

The I-Thou relationship is also characterized by its immediacy and presence. In the I-It relation, the It becomes an object by the very fact that some means is placed between the subject and the object, the I and the It in the relation. Whether linked to some past plan or future purpose, the relation is "for the use of" or "for the purpose of." "Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means

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<sup>48</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), pp. 11, 15.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 11, 15.

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has collapsed does the meeting come about."<sup>50</sup> In this immediacy of the relationship, everything mediate becomes as nothing. I-It relates to the past and to objects; I-Thou is the present and the presence awaiting it.

I-Thou is no longer subject to causality and fate, for both of these are handmaidens of the ordered world of continuity and take their meaning from it. The I-Thou relation interpenetrates the world of It without being determined by it, for meeting is not in space and time but space and time in meeting.

Again, Western man is so conditioned to think of the world in precise segments of measured, objective time, and in the precise, iron clad order of cause and effect, that he finds it nearly impossible to conceive of another order. But while Buber gives full recognition to this cosmological time in which all, even the future, is determined, he also perceives anthropological time in which the future is undetermined and in which the present is not an abstract point on a continuum, but the real, filled present.<sup>51</sup> It is the present of immediacy and wholeness, found not within the person, but "between" in the meeting of

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>51</sup>Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 140.

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relationship.<sup>52</sup> The presence is the sustained and deepening presence of the Thou to the I.

Totality, mutuality, immediacy, presence, all refer us to the "x," the between. It is not within man nor outside men, but between. This is the something more than the sum total of parts which enter into an I-Thou relationship. It is the place where subjectivism and objectivism are transcended by man's reaching Being, which encompasses and grounds Buber's ontology.

In concluding his remarks about the I-Thou, Buber states an all-too-forgotten warning: The I-Thou is not an unqualified good; it is, in fact, risk and sacrifice. It is risk because "the primary word can only be spoken with the whole being. He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself."<sup>53</sup> It takes us out of the security of an oriented world into the discontinuous present where, stripped of all safeguards, one embraces the wholly other.

The I-Thou is sacrifice as well because of the "endless possibility that is offered up on the altar of form."<sup>54</sup> All forms which up to that moment gave perspective and order must now be renounced. The endless possibility about to be faced makes this demand.

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<sup>52</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 12.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

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I-Thou cannot sustain life, but only give a glimpse of reality. It is,

seductive and magical, tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosening the well-tried context, leaving more questions than satisfactions behind them, shattering security.<sup>55</sup>

Thou takes us into the whirlpool of chaos where we would surely be enveloped, were it not for an imminent return to the I-It. The Thou could never be sustained by man in his present condition. "This is the melancholy of our fate, that every Thou in our world must become an it."<sup>56</sup>

#### The Element of "Trust" in Buber's Ontology

"In times of healthy life, trust streams from men of the spirit to all people . . . . All men have somewhere been aware of the Thou; now spirit gives them full assurance. But in times of sickness . . . the world becomes an oppressive, stifling fate."<sup>57</sup> Trust, or its sacral name, faith, is the differentiating element in Buber's primal dichotomy between I-Thou and I-It. Its presence or its absence determines which of the two is in possession of the moment. Existential Trust is the underlying confidence in human existence. It is the confidence that genuine relationship is possible, that the world does have meaning, that life is not determined fate but the true responsibility of

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-54.

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man. It is the experience which "transports a person in all his component parts, his capacity for thought certainly included, so that, all the doors springing open, the storm blows through all the chambers." Buber believes, at least in his own situation, that all the experiences of being gradually became present to him as one great experience of faith or trust.

The communication of this existential trust is the task of education. While the teacher must acknowledge and instruct his student in the world of It, the great task of the educator is to awaken in him an awareness of this other world of Thou.

How shall we go about this task? Through his dialogical relationship with the student, through what he is, and through this moment in which he and the student stand. "Trust, trust in the world because this human being exists--that is the most inward achievement of the relation (between teacher and student) in education."<sup>58</sup> When he, the teacher, trusts and has the "life" of Thou flowing through himself, he will be able to awaken an awareness of the Thou in the student--an awareness that is already present, but lying dormant. This is the genuine task of curriculum, to awaken the student to the Thou-world.

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 98.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps at some level of educational theory, the hackneyed question, "Should the teacher teach the child or the subject matter?" opens up a matter of philosophical pertinence concerning the educative function. Frequently, an educator thinks he has summarily dispensed with the question when he replies, "Neither; the teacher should teach the subject matter to the child!" Actually, most educational theorists would be unwilling to give a glib answer to this rather simple but loaded question. They would resist for the reason that an answer which is sufficiently informed by educational philosophy should take guidance from theories of reality, knowledge, and value, and a brief and hasty reply could not possibly do justice to these important theoretical concerns.

Regardless of how the question is interpreted, it seems to imply that the child and the subject matter are separate entities and that the teacher who is outside either may decide whether to discourse on the intricacies of a segment of knowledge without concern for who is listening, or whether to attend first to the unique needs of each student. In practice, of course, the educative act is

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seldom analyzable in such simple polar terms. Nevertheless, the teacher's function does seem to involve facilitation the confrontation of the world by the student, and to achieve this objective with optimum effectiveness, the teacher should have consistent points of view concerning the nature of the world and of the student and how student and world interact. In order to formulate these points of view, the teacher needs to erect on the foundation of a theory of reality a consistent theory of knowledge or epistemology. When this has been done and attention has been given also to matters of value theory, the teacher will be in a better position to respond with philosophical competence to such questions as whether he should teach the child or the subject matter. He will see also that teaching the subject matter to the child is not very far removed, philosophically speaking, from simply teaching the subject matter.

For a theory of curriculum based on the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre or Martin Buber, none of the three alternative answers given above seems acceptable; each is too nearly an expression of either idealism or realism. If the teacher concerns himself with the child in preference to the subject matter, he may be doing this because he believes that the world as world known exists only in ideas which are locked up in an individual mind. "Teaching the child," then, means doing something to ideas which are contained in the child's mind. If, on the other hand, the

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teacher grounds his educative activity on the notion that the objective world exists independently of any knower, but may be apprehended through the senses, he will, perhaps, give primary attention to the subject matter. Whether he teaches the subject matter or teaches the subject matter to the child, the teacher in these activities seems to be ordering the objective world or disclosing its structure, and in this sense, he is a realist. Sartre and Buber, both, deny that knowledge is possible from the standpoint of either idealism or realism. The ontological basis for this denial is explained in the discussions of the previous chapter.

Let us now begin to explore a theory of curriculum based on Sartre's philosophy. Such a theory should be guided by the disclosure of how human reality (the child) can be united with subject matter (the world or in-itself) in order that knowing may take place. The role of the teacher in assisting children to a comprehension of the truth of the human situation, of truth in the complex relationships of being-in-the world, will be influenced by this disclosure of the unity of being and nothingness.

#### The Reef of Solipsism<sup>1</sup>

The question of the relationship of the knower and the known which has been introduced somewhat naively through

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<sup>1</sup>The title of a chapter subdivision in Being and Nothingness. Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 223.

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discussion of the old pedagogical saw about teaching subject matter or child is, of course, the basic problem of epistemology, and it will be discussed at a later point in this chapter. A related problem concerns the question of how other human-realities may be said to inhabit the world. Although common sense tells us that the world is populated with other humans, a rigorous philosophy must account for their existence.

Solipsism is the term given to the point of view which holds that these others are of no consequence for my existence since outside of me nothing exists. In this view, my relationship with the world is confined to the circle of my own ideas, and I have no assurance that the world is anything other than a personal mirage. Moreover, from the solipsistic standpoint, my relationships with those common sense souls who share my world have no significance since they, like the remainder of the in-itself, are nothing more than products of my own mental operations. If, however, I can demonstrate the necessity for there to be what Sartre calls the Other; that is, a separate subjective entity, then I can reconstitute a universe which exists outside my own consciousness. Unless this problem of solipsism can be resolved, educational theory is restricted to the advocacy of the application of common sense; not a bad idea, except that common sense in this case is too vulnerable to such

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influences as whim, persuasion, accidents, imagination, emotion, and physiology.

In his philosophical essay, The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre attempted an escape from the "reef of Solipsism." He maintained that the Husserlian notion which places the ego in consciousness also oppresses consciousness to all other existents. In effect, for Husserl, consciousness is constitutive of the world, and the fact that it becomes aware of a structure of relationships between existents within that world hardly can be accepted as evidence that other I's inhabit the world. On the other hand, if consciousness is emptied of its content, and the I is thrown back into the world where it must exist on an equal footing with all other existents, "solipsism becomes unthinkable from the moment that the I no longer has a privileged status."<sup>2</sup> Sartre concludes the argument with a statement which Dewey might well have applauded. He writes, "My I, in effect, is no more certain for consciousness than the I of other men. It is only more intimate."<sup>3</sup>

A few years later in Being and Nothingness he acknowledges the weakness of this attempt at refuting solipsism and contrives a new argument. He states the case

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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for abandoning his first refutation of solipsism quite clearly:

Formerly I believed that I could escape solipsism by refuting Husserl's concept of the existence of the Transcendental "Ego." At that time I thought that since I had emptied my consciousness of its subject, nothing remained there which was privileged as compared to the Other. But actually although I am still persuaded that the hypothesis of a transcendental subject is useless and disastrous, abandoning it does not help one bit to solve the question of the existence of Others. Even if outside the empirical Ego there is nothing other than the consciousness of that Ego--that is, a transcendental field without a subject--the fact remains that my affirmation of the Other demands and requires the existence beyond the world of a similar transcendental field. Consequently the only way to escape solipsism would be here again to prove that my transcendental consciousness is in its very being, affected by the extra-mundane existence of other consciousnesses of the same type.<sup>4</sup>

In the discussion which he presents in Being and Nothingness, Sartre points out that idealism and realism both fail in attempting to escape solipsism. The realist posits the Other much as he would any other object in his world and then goes on to identify this object as Other through a process of analogy. The appearance of the Other is a representation which has features analogous to the knowledge which I have of myself. The existence of the Other, however, can never achieve more than some degree of probability--it remains nothing more than a hypothesis. The realist ultimately must turn to idealism in order to establish the existence of the Other. In order for the

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<sup>4</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 235.

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idealist to establish the existence of the Other, he must resort to a relationship of exteriority. The relationship between a knowing subject and the Other (since it must depend upon the relationship of one body to another) is external. Bodies are externally related in the same way as chairs and tables--the indifference of externality demands the "third man theme." Ultimately the existence of the Other seems to call for an appeal to God, God the ultimate third man. However, God as witness does not settle the issue of externality. As long as relations between subjects remain external, there is no escape from the ego-centric predicament, regardless of whether these relations are between man and man or man and God.

Behaviorist psychology, for example, is based on external relations, and it must proceed by placing in "brackets" any element of psychic activity which is not directly observable. Sartre writes:

A psychology which wants to be exact and objective, like the "behaviorism" of Watson, is really only solipsism as a working hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

Unless one is content to work with a psychology of objects, the problem of solipsism must be bridged.

Sartre believes that the primary difficulty in resolving the problem of solipsism has sprung from the fact that my relation to the Other has been characterized as one of knowledge to knowledge rather than one of being to being.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

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Husserl made the mistake of measuring being by knowledge; Hegel was mistaken in identifying (in the sense of logical identity) knowledge and being. In Sartre's view, the existence of the Other is revealed through negation much as anything which stands outside consciousness is revealed through negation. However, in the problem of the existence of the Other, the negation must be internal rather than external.

Moreover, the relation between me and the Other is an internal relation of reciprocity; therefore, a totality. In other words, the for-itself of the Other has nihilated me at the same time that I, as a for-itself, have nihilated him. But the totality contained in the terms of this reciprocal negation is a detotalized totality. Thus, these human-realities are not linked together one after another until a spiritual communion has unified all human souls. Although any number of human beings may be tied together psychologically, the conflict or tension which reveals a solitary Other is a relationship of for-itself to Other which is ontologically prior to such external relationships as counting. Sartre writes:

There can be no question of viewing this opposition to the Other in terms of a pure numerical determination. We do not have two or several consciousnesses here; numbering supposes an external witness and is the pure and simple establishment of exteriority. There can be an Other for the For-itself<sup>6</sup> only in an spontaneous and prenumerical negation.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

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Manking, then, is not a "synthetic unity" of individuals; nor is a universal consciousness possible in this view. On the contrary, it is possible to conceive of a solitary human existence.

Consciousness is not constitutive of the Other, nor is my existence dependent upon the Other. The appearance of the Other in the world is a contingent event:

We encounter the Other; we do not constitute him. And if this fact still appears to us in the form of a necessity, yet it does not belong with those "conditions of the possibility of our experience" or--if you prefer--with ontological necessity. If the Other's existence is a necessity, it is a "contingent necessity"; that is, it is of the same type as the factual necessity which is imposed on the cogito. If the Other is capable of being given to us, it is by means of a direct apprehension which leaves to the encounter its character as facticity, just as the cogito itself leaves all its facticity to my own thought, a facticity which nevertheless shares in the apodicticity of the cogito itself--i.e., in its indubitability.<sup>7</sup>

The encounter with the Other is a fact of my experience, but we are not linked together in perpetuity.

Sartre has not refuted solipsism through a proof of the Other's existence. The existence of the Other is as certain as my own. One can validate or invalidate an object about which new evidence can be accumulated, but the existence of myself and the Other is a circumstance about which no new conjectures can be advanced. One does not prove the existence of the self or the Other--Descartes' proof is not a proof but an affirmation.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

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I become aware of the Other's existence, not as an object but as a subject. I realize his presence each time he attempts to objectify me. Unless I choose to degrade myself, I escape objectivity at the moment I turn my gaze on the Other and destroy his subjectivity through rendering him object. Although the for-itself of the Other is outside my immediate experience, I, nevertheless, experience the Other's factual necessity each time he fastens me with a "look." This reciprocal tension between human-realities is not only the basis on which Sartre resists the notion of solipsism, but it is also the fundamental relationship on which he builds his entire theory of human intercourse.

In resisting solipsism and affirming the existence of the Other, Sartre has developed ideas which are of distinct significance for a theory of curriculum based on his philosophy. The concept of conflict as the basic human relationship, for example, calls attention to the teacher's need to understand the social dynamics of his classroom in terms of conflict rather than in terms of a potential spiritual communion. If conflict is the basic human relationship, then the teacher's relations with his students will also be based on interpersonal tension. How, then, can teacher and students work together productively toward cooperatively selected goals if they are confined from the very beginning to a relationship of conflict rather than community? An answer to this question will be attempted later.

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This reciprocal tension which characterizes interpersonal relations also calls attention to the fact that the Other cannot be finally regarded as either subject or object. Frequently, the implication is stated in educational theory that the student should not be treated as an object. In Sartre's view, however, one cannot escape objectifying the student--objectification results each time the teacher turns his gaze upon him. And, in turn, the student will objectify the teacher. These are not damaging occurrences. They simply represent the necessary context of man-to-man relationships.

#### The Possibility of Knowledge

Thus far the discussion of the problem of knowledge has been confined to Sartre's argument against solipsism. Epistemology, or knowledge theory, however, also concerns other problems.

The initial problem of all epistemology concerns the possibility of knowing anything at all. In other words, is it possible for man to achieve an understanding of the world which squares absolutely with what is out there in the world? Sartre might reply that this states the problem incorrectly, that it loads the dice on the side of traditional and biased ways of looking at the question. It is to this objection that he seems to refer when he writes:

We know that there is not a for-itself on the one hand and a world on the other as two closed entities for which we must subsequently seek some explanation as

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to how they communicate. The for-itself is a relation to the world. The for-itself, by denying that it is being, makes there be a world, and by surpassing this negation toward its own possibilities it reveals the "things" as instrumental-things.<sup>8</sup>

In the early stages of the quest for being, Sartre pointed out that any theory which posits knowledge as prior to being starts from an untenable premise. All knowledge, of course, is consciousness; but not every consciousness is knowledge. For Sartre, the first concern of philosophy is not to ground knowledge, but to ground the being of consciousness. Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to mention once again that Sartre is not attempting to answer the question of "why" there is consciousness; this is a metaphysical question. His concern is with the question of "how" there can be consciousness of the world of being. In a sense, his entire essay on phenomenological ontology, Being and Nothingness, is devoted to answering this question and to answering the epistemological query concerning how genuine knowledge is possible.

#### The Origin of Knowledge

At the beginning of a chapter entitled, "Transcendence," in Being and Nothingness, Sartre asks:

Since the in-itself is what it is, how and why does the being of the for-itself have to be a knowledge of the in-itself? And what in general is knowledge?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

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In the pages which follow, he spins out his answer to the epistemological question concerning the origin of knowledge, and we know from the very start that, "it is in the for-itself alone that we must look for the key to that relation to being which we call . . . knowing."<sup>10</sup>

As pointed out previously, Sartre rejects both the idealist and realist solutions to the problem of establishing a relationship between an isolated subject and a world of objectivity. He could not conceive of the world as existing out there independently of anyone's knowing it, waiting in all its instrumental complexity to affect or act upon a subject. Neither could he accept a point of view which wishes to construct the world out there through the agency of subjective elements. Sartre's view, which makes both idealism and realism superfluous, contends that there is only Being, and that knower and known represent modes of that unity. The knower, represented by consciousness, may be considered as an abstraction since consciousness cannot exist independently of that which it is presence to. This is the meaning of the principle, "Consciousness is always consciousness of something."

The known may also be looked upon as an abstraction since it cannot be grasped as phenomena except through the presence of consciousness to it. However, being-in-itself is no abstraction; as previously indicated it is, and it

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

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#### Education and Knowledge

That curriculum theory embraces as a subtopic the concept of learning is a rather obvious conclusion. It is also clear that a theory of learning while, perhaps, basically psychological in structure implies also a theory of knowledge. In Sartre's view the knowledge situation is a detotalized-totality, which as a quasi-totality is expressed as Being, but as a detotalized-totality it is expressed in its two aspects as being-in-itself and being-for-itself. Being-for-itself, i.e., consciousness, and being-in-itself as realized through phenomena are not two isolated substances; therefore, the traditional theories of learning which, based either on idealism or realism, attempt to establish external relationships between a subject and an object must be rejected. A theory of learning based on Sartre's philosophy must start with the principle that the relationship between consciousness and the phenomenon is internal. If the goal of learning is the acquisition of knowledge, what is the character of knowledge and knowing in Sartre's view?

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### Intuition

Sartre holds that, "There is only intuitive knowledge."<sup>11</sup> In contending this, he does not purpose to discredit deductive or inductive reasoning; he would not wish to quarrel with Dewey's experimentalist pattern for establishing knowledge. He would look upon all of these as devices for delivering consciousness to the door of a particular intuition. Intuition in this sense should not be equated with some flash of recognition. Sartre's intuition is a phenomenological term, and he means by it something very close to Husserl's meaning, but with one very significant difference: For Husserl, intuition refers to the presence of the phenomenon to consciousness; for Sartre it refers to the presence of consciousness to the phenomenon:

If someone asks for a definition of intuition, Husserl will reply, in agreement with the majority of philosophers, that it is the presence of the thing (Sache) "in person: to consciousness. Knowledge therefore is of the type of being which we described in the preceding chapter under the title of "presence to . . . ." But we have established that the in-itself can never by itself be presence. Being-present, in fact, is an ekstastic mode of being of the for-itself. We are then compelled to reverse the terms of our definition: intuition is the presence of consciousness to the thing.<sup>12</sup>

In their translation of Sartre's The Transcendence of the Ego, Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick devote a three and one-half page note to an explication of the term intuition in its phenomenological sense as contrasted with

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

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its meaning in traditional British and American philosophy. The concluding statements of this note have particular relevance for our concern with Knowledge. They write:

The notion of intuition in phenomenology does not necessarily imply the notion of certain knowledge. Yet the primary mode of evidence in any cognitive inquiry must be intuitive, according to the phenomenologist, for to learn, one must at the very least confront some of the objects in question, e.g., physical things, psychological states, number, principles of logic.<sup>13</sup>

Intuition, then, is a concomitant of the principle that consciousness must always be consciousness of something. This something is an important link in the relationship of knower to known. Without it, consciousness would be isolated. Worse, without a "something" for consciousness to be consciousness of--, self-consciousness would be impossible! The act of reflection would be as empty as if two mirrors were aimed squarely at each other with nothing intervening!

In Sartre's terminology, the effort of consciousness to become consciousness of self results in "the phantom dyad--the reflection-reflecting." When consciousness becomes reflective, as in the game of mirrors, the reflected-on refers to the reflecting, and the reflecting refers to the reflected-on. If reflection is to be productive of knowledge, it must be more than this infinite and empty circuit. The reflected-on must be reflected as a relation to something outside itself, something which it is not.

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<sup>13</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), p. 113.

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The reflected-on may be consciousness of any transcendent existent including its own states; e.g., anger, love, doubt. In all of this, the method remains that of intuition.

### Internal and External Negations

Sartre has written, "The original relation of presence as the foundation of knowledge is negative."<sup>14</sup> For Sartre, this is a necessary and sufficient condition for a specific entity to be theoretically split off from the remainder of Being, whether in the epistemological sense or the psychological.

To understand this clearly we need to examine two forms of negation--internal and external. An external negation is quite simply a negative judgment drawn from empirical experience. For example, the statement, "Lansing, not Detroit, is the capital of Michigan," is a determination which can be made by any informed student of geography, and the determination does not change in any fashion the concrete facts about these two cities. The negative facet of the statement establishes a kind of connection between the two beings, but it is external to both. When a child, however, peers ruefully at his report card on which conventional marks spell out a story of failure, and when he confesses to himself, "I am not a good student," the

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<sup>14</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 174.

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negation is internal. It expresses itself as an absence; in this case, the absence of academic achievement. The effect is not external to the being involved; it is internal, and it is significant for an entire sequence of subsequent determinations which the child will make. Internal negation does not belong to being-in-itself, but it is a product of the for-itself,<sup>15</sup> like negation in general. Sartre says, "Knowing belongs to the for-itself alone, for the reason that the for-itself can appear to itself as not being what it knows."<sup>16</sup>

#### Transcendence

In ordinary negation, e.g., a cube is not a sphere, it is necessary that the terms of the negation must exist prior to the negation. In the relation of knower to known, however, this is not the case. Knowledge is negation; that is, the knower or for-itself is the nothingness through which the known is revealed as being there. By the same token, the for-itself does not first exist as unextended so that it can later enter into a relation with an extended being-in-itself. If it were possible to place in parentheses the idea of extension in the in-itself, then the for-itself would be neither extended nor unextended, but more nearly aspatial.<sup>17</sup> Sartre holds that extension is a

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

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transcendent determination which the for-itself must make in the process of apprehending itself as not being that extension. Relatedly, he holds that the expression "to realize" is the best characterization of the relation between being and knowing. To realize means to give being to a thing, to make it real, and at the same time, it means to live it, to make it be with my own being.<sup>18</sup> Transcendence refers to this realizing negation which reveals being-in-itself while determining being-for-itself. Operationally interpreted, Sartre could be saying that the fourth grade boy knows the project of the Hudson's Bay fur trapper through a negative determination which makes him not be the trapper and his project. More difficult to understand is the operational revelation which makes the fourth grade boy know that it is he who occupies the second seat in the third row, through a negating consciousness or for-itself which exists as not being the occupant of the second seat, third row. In either case, knowledge comes from an internal negation.

#### Projects, Instruments, and Education

To be consistent with Sartre's theory of knowledge, a theory of curriculum should give particular attention to the instrumental character of the world and the character of human reality as project. Anything which is

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differentiated out from that mass called being-in-itself possesses a quality of utensility. Actually, the world consists of vast complexes of instrumentality. Things are tools. Whatever is at hand is for the use of man. Mountains are to be climbed, to be tunneled through, to be painted into a landscape. As experience slips into the past, it joins the in-itself; therefore, language, history, scientific formulae--all ideas--are tools.

We have seen that man, according to Sartre, is a project; that he lives his life through projecting himself into the future. He projects himself for the reason that the for-itself is lack. The relationship of the for-itself to the world is that of a presence to lacks or absences. Thus man moves ceaselessly forward to fill these gaps which appear as tasks to be performed.

It would seem, then, that the tasks which constitute the school program would have the greatest possibilities for acceptance if they are closely related to the individual projects of children.

While the pragmatic philosophy which John Dewey developed may not square with the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, that facet of their educational theory which called for the curriculum to be organized around tasks and the tools for the achievement of those tasks seems compatible with Sartre's theory of knowledge.

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### Choice and Appropriation

In a word, what is it that propels man to seek for knowledge at some level of empirical effort? For Sartre, motivation, act, and end constitute the continuum of freedom. Every consciousness intends something. It can be said that every act is intentional. What is it that the act intends? Every action intends an end which is integrally related to my project, a project which is freely chosen. This project is chosen on the ground of an original choice of myself. While this is not the place to review the full argument, it may be helpful to indicate that whereas the choice is at bottom ontological it is made manifest in choices which may be empirically described. I may choose myself as effeminate and unable to face up to the masculine demands of my environment. I may choose myself as insignificant and defensive in a life situation where the power of my peers seems to cast in bold relief my personal inadequacy. Whatever I choose, I choose freedom. Sartre writes:

Man is free because he is not himself but presence to himself. The being which is what it is can not be free. Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is made-to-be at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to make itself instead of to be.<sup>19</sup>

Briefly, man's basic project is to ground being in the absolute value, being-in-itself--for-itself. Only God, in whom essence and existence combine, can achieve this absolute syncretism; thus, man is a desire to be God, and

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 440.

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it is in this sense that Sartre concludes, "Man is a use-less passion."<sup>20</sup>

Obviously, man cannot escape his liberty. Freedom is ontological; empirical or social freedom consists only of external relationships, whatever choices I may make, I make them in complete freedom. As Sartre points out, to choose not to choose is still to have chosen; man is condemned to be free! It is desire which gives expression to man's lack of being, and he attempts to achieve the unity of being through the existential subcategories of having and doing. Sartre opens the fourth and final part of his lengthy essay, Being and Nothingness, with the statement:

"Having," "doing," and "being" are the cardinal categories of human reality. Under them are subsumed all types of human conduct. Knowing, for example, is a modality of having."<sup>21</sup>

Through what he calls the ontological reduction these three categories are first reduced to two, being and having, since making or doing is only transitional. Finally, having is reduced to being, since under careful analysis it turns out that having is nothing more than appropriation of being. What can be said of knowing as a form of appropriation?

In knowing as in the work of art, I am both the creator and the professor, and as in the work of art, this thought which I form pursues its own independent existence. This thought is I as I relate to the world, and it is also

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 615.

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not me since it reveals itself to me. Sartre maintains that this synthesis of the self and the not-self is what is meant by the term mine.

There is also an element of enjoyment in this appropriative act. Sartre draws on the imagery of western culture to point out the allusions to sexual activity in the knowing process. The object of knowledge is delivered from its pristine state almost as the virgin gives up her treasure to the probings of the male:

Every investigation implies the idea of nudity which one brings out into the open by clearing away the obstacles which cover it, just as Actaeon clears away the branches so that he can have a better view of Diana at her bath. More than this, knowledge is a hunt. Bacon called it the hunt of Pan. The scientist is the hunter who surprises a white nudity and who violates by looking at it . . . .

By taking this idea of the hunt as a guiding thread, we shall discover another symbol of appropriation, perhaps still more primitive: a person hunts for the sake of eating. Curiosity in an animal is always either sexual or alimentary. To know is to devour with the eyes.<sup>22</sup>

One devours books, digests articles, browses in the library, disgorges information, and less commonly one hears it said that someone has "mental indigestion."

The for-itself, however, wishes to assimilate the object without really digesting it. To transpose a metaphor, it wants to eat its cake and have it, too. The object must remain undigested. If the for-itself truly assimilated its object, the in-itself would disappear and

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 578.

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there would be only the for-itself. This is illogical and impossible since the for-itself can be only as presence to the in-itself.

Sartre notes that the symbolism of the ingested-undigested is closely related to basic sexual drives. For the lover, it is important that the loved one should be equipped with thighs as smooth as marble:

What is smooth can be taken and felt but remains no less impenetrable, does not give way in the least beneath the appropriative caress--it is like water. This is the reason why erotic descriptions insist on the smooth whiteness of a woman's body. Smooth--it is what re-forms itself under the caress, as water reforms itself in its passage over the stone which has pierced it.<sup>23</sup>

She must be possessed--"had" in slang terms--but perpetually renewed. I desire the Other to become me without losing identity as Other; I wish to achieve through the paradox of absorption without dissolution the ideal value, for-itself--in-itself. Thus, Sartre sees in scientific research a situation in which through appropriation of an object one may experience the promise of becoming in-itself while remaining for-itself:

Knowledge is at one and the same time a penetration and a superficial caress, a digestion and the contemplation from afar of an object which will never lose its form, the production of a thought by a continuous creation and the establishment of the total objective independence of that thought. The known object is my thought as thing. This is precisely what I profoundly desire when I undertake my research--to apprehend my thought as a thing and the thing as my thought. The syncretic

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 579.

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relation which provides the basis for the ensemble of such diverse tendencies can be only a relation of appropriation. That is why the desire to know, no matter how disinterested it may appear, is a relation of appropriation.<sup>24</sup>

The acquisition of knowledge, then, is simply one clear manifestation of man's desire to appropriate things, and as we have seen, man's compulsive need to possess things is a direct expression of his futile quest to be and not to be, simultaneously.

A theory of curriculum requires a theory of learning, and a theory of learning requires a theory of motivation. Sartre's theory of motivation is consistent with the remainder of his philosophy. He has attempted once more to avoid the positions both idealism and materialism. Man's striving toward future objectives cannot be attributed simply to tissue needs; nor can it be accounted for by the individual's participation in some universal idea. Human reality is motivated by the desire to become God. Sartre has pointed out a motivation for man's acquisitive tendencies, but he has failed to answer the question of "why." Of course, he has openly avoided the "why" or what he regards as a metaphysical question. The fact remains, however, that we have no universally accepted basis for knowing why human reality should demand all of this and Heaven, too.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

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Truth

No doubt this discussion of Sartre's theory of knowledge leaves much too much unsaid. One omission stands out. An epistemology is incomplete if it does not come to grips squarely with the question of truth. Is there knowledge of such a nature that it provides substantially the same appearance to all men at all times? Are there in the universe phenomena on which we can depend with such absolute certainty that we may confidently plan our lives in accordance with them? Is it possible for man to discover in the world meanings which in their stability can qualify as absolute Truths? Sartre, of course, would be unwilling to accept traditional theories of truth--correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic. This is not to say, however, that he dismisses the possibility for there to be a truth for human reality.

To seek for a truth, however, which is independent of man's living it is the ultimate in futility. Genuine knowledge is possible; but it is knowledge of existence, of man's involvement in a world for which he has the responsibility to accord meaning at every succeeding moment. Sartre does not wish to imply that truth is relative; nor does he subscribe to the point of view of skepticism--that absolute truth is unattainable. He merely wishes to point out that meanings are "man made" and that absolute

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truth can be ascribed to Being but not to the objectivity of the world. Sartre writes:

We can see the very particular position of consciousness; being is everywhere, opposite me, around me; it weighs down on me, it besieges me, and I am perpetually referred from being to being: that table which is there is being and nothing more; that rock, that tree, that landscape--being and nothing else. I want to grasp this being and I no longer find anything but myself. This is because knowledge, intermediate between being and nonbeing, refers me to absolute being if I want to make knowledge subjective and refers me to myself when I think to grasp the absolute. The very meaning of knowledge is what it is not and is not what it is; for in order to know being such as it is, it would be necessary to be that being. But there is this "such as it is" only because I am not the being which I know; and if I should become it, then the "such as it is" would vanish and could no longer even be thought. . . . Knowledge puts us in the presence of the absolute, and there is a truth of knowledge. But this truth, although releasing to us nothing more and nothing less than the absolute, remains strictly human.<sup>25</sup>

If truth for Sartre is the truth of absolute being and if he seems to be an irrationalist or an anti-intellectualist by virtue of not attempting to establish a truth for objective reality, it should be recalled that he qualifies his stand by the reminder that truth, "remains strictly human." Truth in this sense is the truth of human reality, but reason and intellection are concerned with making objective knowledge instrumental to the project of a human-reality and not with establishing its truth. Meanings are assigned within the context of an individual situation, and they are meaningful only in so far as they are instrumental. Knowledge stands for the presence of the

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

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world to human consciousness, and there is no apparent need for a truth which reaches beyond the truth of absolute being. The implications for curriculum in this view are reasonably clear. The world of instrumental knowledge is a world of probability. Science and technology, history, literature, and the other traditional classifications of human knowledge are hypothetical in nature; they are abstract, theoretical, and probable. Sartre would not deny that there is often merit in the behavioral sciences in treating man as an object, but, again, to do so is to enter the world of probability. Certainty, on the other hand, can come only from the absolute, from Being. The world of certainty exists at the level of absolute Being; the world of probability is the objective world which owes its existence to the original upsurge of being-for-itself.

So long as the curriculum person treats the objective world as only hypothetical and probable, his view is compatible with Sartre's philosophical position. But when he regards science, technology, or other facets of the objective world as comprised of certainties, he has denied that the subjective is the original and only source of truth, and he is in conflict with Sartre's philosophy.

Let's now turn to Martin Buber's epistemology for its unique contribution to existential thought.

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### Buberian Epistemology

For many, epistemology begins with the presupposition that the knowledge question must begin with the irresolvable duality of idea and reality. When a discrepancy between the two is suspected, the question followed: which one of the two is valid? Buber moved outside this dilemma by accepting the duality, but placing its two poles into an alternating dialectic in which each affected the other as the two moved toward a yet unrealized unity. The two are in relationship with each other, a relationship which is not only epistemological, but ontological in base. And it is neither idea nor reality, but the relationship, the "between," which is our first concern.

This study will deal first with the dialectic on the more limited level of individual knowledge, then advance to the level of community knowledge and the "cosmos," the dialectic of the world-view.

### The Individual and His Knowledge

According to Buber, knowledge begins in the relational experience. As maintained in his ontology, Buber holds here his principle that relation is prior to the objective concept. Considered chronologically, we consider the Inborn Thou of the child. The child first advances his hands and eyes out into the world about himself, attempting to bring himself into relation with whatever surrounds him. "This very movement of the hands will win from a woolly

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Teddy-bear its precise form, apparent to the senses, and (he will) become lovingly and unforgettably aware of a complete body."<sup>26</sup> This embrace does not give the child an object but a correspondence to what is alive and effective over against him.

It is simply not the case that the child first perceives an object, then, as it were, puts himself in relation with it. But the effort to establish relation comes first . . . second is the actual relation, a saying of Thou without words. The thing, like the I, is produced late, arising after the original experiences have been split asunder and the connecting partners separated.<sup>27</sup>

On another occasion, Buber spoke of the primitive man who, similar to the animal, used whatever material was available in his situation as a tool or a weapon. It was as an extension of himself. But then, he set this object aside, gave it an identity of its own, and retained it from one need to another.<sup>28</sup>

Again, Buber theorized on the emergence of language. Men first found themselves together in situations. Then, out of the particular nature or event of the situation, they communicated to each other in one word sentences, the content of the situation. Finally, the term was retained for

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 26.

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

<sup>28</sup> Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 68.

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The principle remains true throughout Buber's epistemology: the experience of reality within which the individual is involved stands prior to the distancing and conceptualization of that reality. In the terminology of the curriculum specialist, process precedes content.

### Concepts

As every Thou must become an It, every relational experience must become a concept. This is the necessary and constructive path of the development of knowledge.

What he beheld as present, he will have to comprehend as an object, compare with objects, assign a place in an order of objects, and describe and analyze objectively; only as an It can it be absorbed into the store of knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

This is not a regretful, but a developmental step. Buber believes that general concepts are the most important stands and supports. He felt, for example, that the task of teacher training began by inculcating in the new teacher a sense of responsibility for concepts and clear speech. The existence of a community is largely determined by the clarity or lack of clarity of concepts.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1970), p. 90.

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In an interview with Carl Rogers, he complained that, especially in the field of psychology, too little care is given to the concept.

I have learned in the course of my life to appreciate terms. And I think that in modern psychology, this does not exist in a sufficient measure. When I find something that is essentially different from another thing, I want to find a new term.<sup>31</sup>

Modern science sometimes requires the making of new, exact concepts to express some new factor, but Buber is ever more concerned that the educator purify the old terms, especially the basic, great concepts, by carrying them back to the situational roots from which they were engendered.

The primary value of the concept does not lie in its clarity but in its ability to lead us back into experience. The concept, in Buber's imagery, is like a sign which points back to the experience of the past. It retains the memory of the past. More, it gives intellectual clarity and stability to the life-experience before it, but it can also mask that experience from the eyes of the world. Only when one approaches it, not as a thing for its own sake, but as a true sign which leads one to re-encounter the past event in the present, is the concept able to retain its validity. The concept is an It form which points to the Thou of the situation from which it came. If one meets it as a sign, seeking to meet the experiential knowledge

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<sup>31</sup> Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 179.

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behind it, then that knowledge again becomes present and immediate.

Whoever unlocks it and beholds it again as present, fulfills the meaning of that act of knowledge as something that is active and actual between men.<sup>32</sup>

But the It concept can easily block the return to the Thou experience by posing, not as a sign of reality, but as if it were reality itself. It asserts that reality is ultimately of the nature of abstract reason or of the objective category and that it can be understood as something external, clearly defined, and entirely "objective."

Knowledge can also be pursued by stating: so that is how matters stand; that is the name of things; that is how it is constituted; that is where it belongs. What has become an It is then taken as an It, experienced and used as an It, employed along with other things for the project of finding one's way in the world, and eventually for the project of "conquering" the world.<sup>33</sup>

So long as the dialectic is observed--experience leading to the "distanced" concept, and the concept returning the knower back to the experience from which it was derived--man will continue to grow, not only in knowledge, but in personality. To the extent that the concept is allowed to dominate, to squeeze out the primal value of experience and to masquerade itself as reality rather than as the sign of reality, to that extent man's knowledge and man himself

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<sup>32</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1970), p. 90.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

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will be deceived and repressed. This is the heart of Buber's epistemology.

### The Aura

Modern science can manufacture concepts as a medium of understanding within its limited sphere, concepts that are exact by definition and without ambiguity. But generally, concepts are not "established" by men and engendered in the community out of the human spirit. These concepts, called "the spoken word," are not exact but have an ambiguity about them. There is a "remainder" left over between their common meaning and the experience they attempt to signify but cannot completely or concisely incorporate. This ambiguity or aura becomes problematic in conversation for when two use the same concept to communicate a common experience, the essential is carried over well enough, but each holds an ambiguity or difference based on his own unique experience not shared by the other.

Out of this aura of conversation occurs--the coming into presence of the "in between." The overcoming of this ambiguity leads, not to assimilation, but to the creative fruitfulness of conversation. The "aura" in epistemology is analogous to the "in between" of Buber's ontology.

When asked, Buber once remarked that thinking within oneself cannot be regarded as true dialogue because "the ontological basic presupposition of conversation is missing from it: the otherness, or more concretely, the moment of

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surprise."<sup>34</sup> The speaker, in genuine conversation, is unpredictable to some degree to his partner because of the aura of his words.

. . . language by its nature is a system of possible tensions--and thinking is just for this reason not a 'speaking with oneself' because it lacks the real tension.<sup>35</sup>

So the aura, the between, can be described as a moment of surprise or a tension. Nor does this cease to be true even when the two begin by agreeing on a definition of each concept since the great fact of personal existence will penetrate even into the definition.

The tension is the source of creativity. If the tension of ambiguity is too great, the bridge between I and Thou will not be able to be sustained and conversation will be destroyed. If the words are too rigidly defined, the creativity of the conversation will be diminished or even destroyed. On the aura of the concept depends the vitality of the spoken word and the creativity of the conversation. Therefore, here again must be sensed the "line of demarcation" which strives to keep the tension at its optimum height to allow for its greatest creativity and growth.

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<sup>34</sup> Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 113.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

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From Scientific Conceptualization to  
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Science, scholarship, conceptualization, philosophizing are all acceptable, important and necessary steps in the development of mankind. They are comparative to the essential step of distancing in the maturation process of man. And only a critical distortion of the thought of Buber would find him in contempt of these areas.

What I have just said is not an attack on the analytical method of the human sciences, a method which is indispensable wherever it furthers knowledge of a phenomenon without impairing the essentially different knowledge of its uniqueness that transcends the valid circle of the method.<sup>36</sup>

The world of It need not be curtailed since precision and objectification are necessary, but man must learn to plunge his work back into the truth of relation. Analysis is only the gateway, nothing more.

Scholarship and science have a limit; they can observe nothing beyond their subject-object area. But the scholar and the scientist may and must look beyond to the concrete situation. Science observes its own limits, yet remains installed within the larger, integral, I and Thou relationship. And so the scientist must avoid the sin of the thinker of our time who not only refuses to look beyond the limits of science, but denies all that is beyond.

As the principle of human life is twofold, the one a presupposition of the other, so the principle of human

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

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knowledge is two-fold, the first movement of conceptualization a presupposition of the second movements toward an experience of the wholeness of the world. From his childhood relationship to the Inborn Thou, the individual must not only separate himself from the world over against him, giving himself distance, but he must, in the process, identify that world as a thing-for-itself and identify each of the parts within it. He must conceptualize. The purpose of this step is the enlargement of the I and the object so as to prepare for a more profound meeting.

Conceptual-knowledge gives something to man; it is partial and categorized. It gives him structure, orientation and security. Experiential-knowledge relates to the whole of man and ontologically changes him in his whole being.

But to achieve this, the conceptualized elements must be brought back from objectivity to a new realization of wholeness and unity in a present meeting. But the difficulty lies with this second movement from abstract concept to present reality. We become "adult" and lose the capacity to sense the hidden presence within the abstractions; we lose the ability to meet the wholeness in the variety of categories; we lose the wonder which perceives the "life" within so many objects. A planned and controlled routine replaces real life.

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Man must "turn" from the sterile concepts and re-enter into relation with the life-experience within him. Epistemologically, he must acquire a synthesizing apperception.

We may characterize the act and the work of entering into relation with the world as such--and, therefore, not with parts of it, and not with the sums of its parts, but with it as the world--as synthesizing apperception, by which we establish that this pregnant use of the concept involves the function of unity; by synthesizing apperception I mean the apperception of a being as a whole and as a unity.<sup>37</sup>

I can do this only with the wholeness of my being; I can do this only by "turning" to the world and stepping into relation with it. I perceive it, not as an aggregate of qualities that can be added to at will, but in its genuine wholeness and unity.

#### Truth

Buber is asked if his concept of truth is absolute or relative. He responds that his is the "narrow ridge" between the either-or "where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains, undisclosed."<sup>38</sup> If we continue to follow his epistemology as a paradigm of his basic ontology, we can see that Buber accepts neither an absolute truth existing in the present behind apparent contradiction, nor a

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>38</sup>Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 184.

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permanent dualism of relative concepts before an illusive reality. Rather he proposes a dynamic dualism which is gradually creative of an undisclosed truth which does not yet exist and whose face cannot yet be seen, but which is in the procesw of being realized through each meeting.

Each concept is a sign of a prior reality; it is "true." But each concept is inadequate to the reality it signifies and contains an aura of ambiguity. Nevertheless, each time the Thou of the concept is met in conversation, the concept is purified and man moves closer to realizing within his experience the absolute truth who is not an idealized abstraction but living Presence.

To exemplify Buber's "narrow ridge" it is helpful to see his response to the basic law of contradiction. Conceptual-knowledge, he says, stands under the law of contradiction, while the experiential-knowledge is the abode of the lived as one experiences it. In the first order, where truth is turned into abstract logic, A and non-A dare not dwell together. Here we have determinism and indeterminism, a doctrine of predestination and a doctrine of freedom, each excluding the other.

But in the order of experiential-knowledge, the reality of life as one lives it, the contraries are inseparable and must be embraced in their totality. For example,

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is the Mysterium Tremendum that appears and overthrows; but He is also the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my I.<sup>39</sup>

Truth is not conformity between a thing thought and the thing as being; it is a participation in Being. It is not simply intellectual, it is personal; it is not simply epistemological, it is ontological. To say that one speaks the truth means that one says what he means, and this, in turn, is based on the integrity of the existence of the person speaking: ". . . the speaker, because he is who he is, means what he means, so also because he is who he is, he says what he means."<sup>40</sup> The relation between meaning and saying points to the relation between the intended unity of meaning and saying on the one hand, and between the meaning-saying and the personal existence itself on the other.

Truth, then, is the etymon of the Hebrews. Etymon means faithfulness. Three different elements must be distinguished within it. There must first be faithfulness in relation to the reality once expressed and now conceptualized, faithfully bearing it to the hearer for re-encounter. Second, there must be faithfulness to the person addressed. This refers to the concept of inclusion. "To mean a man

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<sup>39</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 79.

<sup>40</sup>Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 119.

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means nothing less than to stand by him and his insight . . . even though at the same time one fundamentally remains and must remain with oneself."<sup>41</sup> Thirdly, faithfulness must be maintained in relation to the speaker, to his factual existence.

The human truth of which I speak is not pneuma that pours itself out from above on a band of man now become superpersona;: it opens itself to one just in one's existence as a person. This concrete person, in the life-space allotted to him, answers with his faithfulness for the word that is spoken by him.<sup>42</sup>

Truth, then, is the existential trust which stands at the heart of Buber's teaching. Its dichotomy of conceptual knowing and experiential-knowing is rooted in the presence or absence of basic human trust. Existential trust alone enables man to meet his present situation in all its concrete nature and receive from it true knowledge. The certainty which it offers is not the certainty of dogma, metaphysics, or science, but that of the "holy insecurity" of the "narrow ridge" where one has no assured continuity of meaning.

#### The Knowledge of the Community

Experiential-knowing always comes to man as an "I" in his individual life-experiences with the other. "But it is as We, ever again as We, that he has constructed and developed a world out of his experiences."<sup>43</sup> The individual

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

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"I" always stands in the center, but man's concepts are engendered out of the community and will reach their greatest development in the genuine We of community.

The spoken word begins in the "between" of the I and the Thou and their dialogue with one another, and is then extended into the "spirit" of the communal We. Such is the case when one shows another something of the world in such a way that from then on he begins to really perceive it in this way; when one gives another the insight so that from then on he can recognize the situation as he could not before; when one communicates to another his experience so that from then on it enters the other's circle of experience and becomes part of his world.

All this flowing ever again into a great stream of reciprocal sharing of knowledge--thus came to be and thus is the living We, the genuine We, which, where it fulfills itself, embraces the dead who once took part in colluquy and now take part in it through what they have handed down to posterity.<sup>44</sup>

Buber describes it analogously as a tiny flame which is enkindled into a leaping fire. "Leaping fire is indeed the right image for the dynamic between persons as We."<sup>45</sup>

The We is not a collective, a Kierkegaardian "group," nor an objectively exhibitable multitude. It is related to the saying of We as the I is to the saying of I, and like the I, it cannot factually be carried over into the third person They. But unlike the I, it does not have the

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

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permanence or continuity; communities arise, then disappear.

### Origins of Cosmos

Through the We, not the I, man has constructed and developed a world out of his life-experiences. In his anthropology, Buber observed that, while the animal has a realm, the extension of itself in its environment, only man has a world distanced from himself and yet a world within which he lives. Only he knows the world as a unity, its space as space, its time as time, and knows himself in it as knowing it.

That does not mean, as has been asserted, that the world exists over again in man's consciousness, but that a world in our sense, a unified, spatio-temporal world of the sense, only exists in virtue of man, because only the human person is able to combine into a cosmic unity the data of his own senses and the traditional data of the whole race.<sup>46</sup>

He knows it as one who dwells in an enormous house which is always being added to and whose limits he can never reach. Yet he can grasp as a unit the whole, even that which he has imagined but not yet experienced.<sup>47</sup>

This world, or cosmos, as Buber frequently calls it, is from the order of the "in between" of man's community

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 61.

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conversation. It is relative to the world-view which exists in each man's mind as an actual experience is relative to its corresponding concept. The actual cosmos contains the "something more" but yet undefined, which this or that particular world-view has not been able to express. But more important, a world-view exists within each man; it is his own subjective idea. The cosmos exists in the between of the human community; it is not a mental, psychic phenomenon but an ontologic reality.

Many generations contribute to a particular world-view of the cosmos, and it establishes a culture's mode of dwelling within the real world totality. The Greeks understood the world as a static, self-contained space in which man too had his fixed place,<sup>48</sup> while the Christians divided the world into the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Earth, the "above" and the "below." In contrast to these earlier, spatial world-views is the more recent Hegelian view which conceives of the world in temporal dimensions.<sup>49</sup> Buber even observes periods of clear definition "when man lives in the world as in a house, as in a home," and periods of alienation when "man lives in the world as in an open field and at times does not even have four pegs with which to set up a tent."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 127.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

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The "between," the true cosmos underlying each of these world-views, is being realized and "purified" in the ongoing conversation of the We community of mankind. That ordering of known phenomena which we call the world is indeed, the composite work of a thousand human generations. And it is to be stressed that this cosmos is not simply the composite which exists in the mind of man, but which actually creates world in its being and development outside of man. Just as in the I-Thou conversation, I confirm the Thou in his identity, bringing him from potentiality to actuality, and my "I" is also confirmed and actualized in its identity, so in the conversation of the genuine We, the cosmos moves from potentiality to actuality of being.

The cosmos develops and the individual man develops. A reciprocal relationship exists between the world as a whole and each individual person within it, a parallel relationship based on their common origin in the primeval cosmic. Man and world initially were one and even now, in some way include each other. In each man, the world comes into being all over again through the same dynamic process.

#### World-View and the Educator

On many occasions, each of us sees the need to relate to the world about us from a political point of view, i.e., to assert our world-view positively and without ambivalence. Only in this manner can we act concisely and without

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But other, more vital occasions require that we relate to the world about us from an educational point of view, i.e., open to the limitations of our world-views, sensitive to the cosmic meaning within, and serious to move from image to reality and back again. In this realm of education, Buber urges the teacher especially (1) to continually evaluate his own world-view, (2) to continually relate it back to reality, and (3) to ever again purify it through conversation with other world-views.

For the first task of evaluation of our own world-view, he offers two criteria. The first questions the source of the world-view and asks: Upon what has it been developed . . . life experience, or an awkward groping? Has it been drawn out of men's experience or out of men's imagination? Only a world-view which has validly been engendered by the community out of actual experience can merit recognition and following. The proof of a world view is not proved in the clouds but in lived life.

The second questions the motivation of those who bear it, and asks: What are you undertaking with your world-view? Do you fight for, or live in your world-view? Today's political world does not distinguish in the marching crowd, between those who walk "in eloquent gesture" and those who have "direction-moved existence." Yet this distinction



which cuts across each world-view group is more important than that which distinguishes one group from another.

The great task for the teacher is to move from his world-view, back to the cosmos by searching the original forces of his own experience. These involve his ethnic, religious and cultural experiences, but many more. For political relations, it is necessary that the individual clearly differentiate his world-view and act from it concisely and positively. In curriculum, one must always be willing to move from this surface thinking, back down to reality, yet always in the context of his immediate situation. Even the best image receives a thin crack when brought into contact with reality, a hardly noticeable but most important hairline. This emersion into reality is the trial which determines its future and the future of those who follow it. A world-view is good, but it is educationally good only if the person is "teachable," i.e., able to look anew and open his view to the reality of the actual world.

Finally, Buber urges that world-views not remain off to themselves and contemplate reality through their own common view, but rather seek the whole (cosmos) by confronting their world-view with other, opposing views. Today each group wants to have its view accepted as the exclusive one; it wants to become the whole and moves politically to achieve this position. But the whole is not made, it grows;

it cannot be "established" but must be engendered through conversation. Only when there is a growing in vision through differing view points within the community and between communities does each have an experience of the whole which lies hidden behind all of them.

Reducing this to the particular, the student must contend with the world-view of his teacher, not for the purpose of adopting it as his own, but as a point of conversation through which he can seek the genuine meeting and return with his own world-view, tested and matured.

The teacher must continually question himself: Am I leading my student to a new world-view only, or within it, to an experience, a meeting, of the real world?

Knowledge searches not facts or world-views, but for the reality of the cosmos. Such a knowledge comes only through a community meeting of a variety of differing minds who wish to overcome otherness in living unity. These conversing minds are in no way a concerted team hitched to a great wagon, but rather a strenuous tug of war for a wager. Education is a tension, but it leads ever anew to "the harmony of the lyre."

#### Existential Mistrust

Today, Buber sees community dialogue being destroyed by an existential mistrust. We have forgotten the dialectic between our world-view and reality. In our divided world of we and they--democracy and communism--we see our

world-view as identical with reality. We have forgotten as well that our opponent has a demarcation line between his world-view and the reality he realizes behind his world-view. We therefore deduce that his is an ideology, a masked role, and therefore not to be heard or trusted in genuine conversation. All simulated conversation is to hear and unmask his false position.

Such has always been the case between political opponents; we have always suffered from this ancient mistrust. But in our time, something basically different has been added. One no longer merely fears that the other will voluntarily dissemble, but one simply takes it for granted that he cannot, do otherwise. The mask is not merely worn by him, but has been existentially imbued into him, so that he is deceived in his own consciousness. The integrity of his existence has been deceived; he is existentially in a role. Trust is impossible; conversation is pointless!

The resolution of this mistrust is not made by returning to an uncritical acceptance of all men, but by perceiving them in their wholeness, both their biased world-image and the reality beyond, with the relation between the two. We must also become sensitive to the fact that there is also a demarcation line within ourselves, between our world-view that suffers bias, and the world beyond.

There is a role in the world for the political, but the hope of this hour lies in the educational. The entrenched stand-off of one world-view against another must be uprooted. The dialectic between world-image and cosmic reality must be re-engaged. Both tasks will be accomplished only when the teaching of existential trust is restored to its position of priority.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROBLEM OF VALUE

Although in a broad sense education appears to be the business of a wide variety of institutions and agencies--family, church, clubs, libraries, and museums, as examples--the school, whether public or private, is the agency organized specifically to facilitate the individual's present and future participation in the dominant culture of his time and place. If culture is thought of as the funded experience of a group of people, whether a tribe, a nation or an entire civilization, it follows that such diverse elements as language, beliefs, tools, laws, and customs all are constitutive of that culture. At the risk of over simplification, values may be regarded as the preferences which individuals or groups express in connection with the alternatives proffered by these elements of the culture. If the work of the schools is thought to consist of such things as reviewing, analyzing, interpreting, defending, and transmitting a society's culture for the benefit of its children, the preferences (values) of that society become inextricably involved in the activities of the school. A theory of education or curriculum, then,



if it is comprehensive, must attend to the problem of values.

What should be the role of the school in connection with these cultural preferences which we have alternatively called values? Should values be transmitted with all the force of indoctrination? Should children be taught to question, criticize, and when so inclined, to reject the values of their culture? These questions may not be dismissed lightly. The tremendous responsibility which the adult community faces in the enculturation of its children is made clear by the fact that children tend to accept without question the culture which is offered to them. Education's problem with values is compounded as the child gains in knowledge of human culture and discovers that the values of one society conflict with the values of another. As a matter of fact, the values of one neighborhood may conflict with those of another. The great diversity of culture within a small area of time and space complicates the role of the school in the transmission of a society's values.

The problem also deepens when the child who has accepted the values of the adult community without question emerges into adulthood himself and clings through "bad faith" to an image of himself which he is, in a sense, free to abandon.

Previous discussions of the problems of being and of knowledge in the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre have revealed that human reality is being-for-itself. Human reality is not a static event which can be sealed off and described like any other object. Human reality is a dynamic and future oriented project. As a consequence, it is not determined by a closed value system from an inherited situation. What can schools do, then, to insure that these human realities which come under its roofs are given maximum opportunities to negotiate successfully that period of frozen values in early childhood, to survive the rigors of adolescence when the values of the infantile world collapse, and to enter adulthood as authentic human beings? Sartre has not specifically answered these problems, but an analysis of his concepts of bad faith, freedom, and interpersonal relationships may enable one to infer answers which would give shape to an educational theory of curriculum.

#### Sartre's Theory of Value

The final two paragraphs of Being and Nothingness are reminiscent of those "soap operas" which dominated daytime radio in its golden years just before the advent of television. It will be recalled that each episode closed with a series of questions designed to whet the appetite of the listener and condition him to "tune in at the same time tomorrow." In the final twenty-five lines of



the Barnes translation of Being and Nothingness, there are a dozen interrogative sentences. Sartre concludes:

All these questions . . . can find their reply only on the ethical plane. We shall devote to them a future work.<sup>1</sup>

As his critics are wont to point out, the years have slipped past, and Sartre has failed to produce the volume which will answer these dozen questions! The fact that this key work has never appeared, however, does not mean that Sartre's attention to value concerns has been inconsequential and insignificant. Actually a theory of value has been adumbrated in all his written work: in the dramas and the novels, in the literary and political essays, and in the philosophical essays. Again, the major source is Being and Nothingness, and what one finds in all the other writing is clarification and support for those viewpoints set forth in this magnum-opus.

Under the stress of their taxonomic compulsions, the philosophers of education have rather traditionally made of axiology a generic term which includes as subdivisions ethics and aesthetics and sometimes political philosophy. It is here, also, that the antinomy of free will and determinism receives attention. Sartre's literary and philosophical writing comes to grips with all of these value questions, even if he has never succeeded in knitting

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 628.



together the composite ethical theory promised in Being and Nothingness.

In almost everything he has written, the question of values looms large; but so do the question of being and the question of knowledge. It is obvious, then, that one splits his philosophy apart only as a matter of convenience and does violence to the unity which he attempts constantly to achieve. Although Sartre's fundamental concern is for the problem of being, his phenomenological ontology attempts even more; it is a tool kit with which to disassemble the knowledge problem. It is also a map by which to find one's way in a world of values.

Certainly, I have need for such a guide as I choose my course in the world where, as Sartre says, "Values are sown on my path as thousands of little real demands, like the signs which order us to keep off the grass."<sup>2</sup> A significant thing to remember about these values is that they do not have a foundation in being. If they did, then human reality would no longer exist as freedom, but would be determined by a series of ontologically independent demands or values. On the contrary, the foundation of value is in human freedom, and this freedom is anguished before the demand that it provide the foundation for values while itself existing as foundation. As Sartre has said repeatedly, I can find absolutely no justification outside myself for

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



this choice or that one. My acts are keyed to values, of course, but it is I who cause these values to exist:

The immediate is the world with its urgency; and in this world where I engage myself, my acts cause values to spring up like partridges.<sup>3</sup>

It is I who give meaning to those countless little tugs and pulls which steer me from one task to another. My life is a project, an original choice of myself, and all of the twistings and turnings of this life descend from this original choice. Without foundation for its being, the for-itself must strive ceaselessly to ground itself as being-in-itself-for-itself. Anguished in the face of this fruitless attempt to bring stability to human reality, the for-itself attempts to escape through flight. The for-itself may flee its anguish in order not to know it, but it cannot escape the knowledge that it is fleeing, and so flight becomes nothing more than, "a mode of becoming conscious of anguish."<sup>4</sup> This paradox of the for-itself Sartre labels, "bad faith." By flight, he means simply that man strives to fix the responsibility for the world and for his values, choices, and acts in some intelligible heaven or in some set of circumstances over which he has no ultimate authority. Somewhat in the manner of the apathetic television audience to a brutal slaying, he prefers to pretend that he is not involved in the course of events. But he only pretends; and for that reason, Sartre says, his

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 43.





flight is into "bad faith." It is this concept of bad faith which provides one of the principle underpinnings for Sartre's theory of value.

#### Bad Faith

Although bad faith may be construed as a falsehood which one tells himself, it should not be equated with lying in the ordinary sense. The ordinary lie is an external relationship; it requires no ontological explication. The child who tells his teacher that he has not cheated on an examination when, in fact, he has, misrepresents a past action, and he knows that he has not been truthful. The lie itself is negative, but the intent of the liar is positive; he knows what it is that he wishes to accomplish. The lie is external; it is transcendent. At the same time, the liar who attempts to bring off his deception through theatrical devices is transcendent. In other words, he is not the character whom he portrays--the liar as actor is a transcendent. What about the man of whom we say, "He has come to believe his lie?" Sartre holds that this is a degenerate form of the lie, and while it might be said to fall at one end of a scale with bad faith at the other, the infinite gradations in between are populated with related degenerate forms of the type example. He concludes, "The lie is a behavior of transcendence."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

Sartre points out that falsehood can be a relationship within what Heidegger terms "Mitsein," the relationship of being-with-others. In this connection it makes capital of the ontological duality of being-for-itself and being-for-others. The intent of the for-itself is hidden from the view of the Others. The lie to oneself, however, is a different kind of relationship. It is not something which happens to the for-itself as a consequence of extraneous motivation. Neither is it something immanent which has sprung up as mushrooms suddenly appear overnight in the sour soil of a moist lawn. Bad faith is intentional; it is a project of the for-itself; it has a structure, and it is a pattern of behavior which has been adapted to cope with a particular situation. Aside from occasional abrupt awakenings or brief excursions into good faith, some people, according to Sartre, are able to conduct their entire lives at the level of bad faith. Perhaps it is this striving to detach responsibility from human action which is involved in the familiar dictum which advises against allowing the left hand to know what the right hand is doing.

Sartre contends that Freudian psychoanalysis presents an escape from the impossibility of self-deception through the intrusion of the concept of the unconscious:

. . . psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar; it allows me to understand how it is possible for me to be lied to without lying to myself since it places me in the same relation to myself that the Other is in respect

to me; it replaces the duality of the deceiver and the deceived, the essential condition of the lie, by that of the "id" and the "ego."<sup>6</sup>

This cellar theory of human activity presents an epistemological paradox, "a knower which is ignorant of itself."<sup>7</sup> Sartre concludes that Freud's "censor" does not bring off the task of separating consciousness from the unconscious. How can a repressed drive be disguised unless there is knowledge of what it is that is being repressed, an awareness that it has been buried because of what it is, and a recognition of the repression as a project? The lie to oneself cannot be explained by Freud's "I which is not-I."

The question which Sartre wishes to settle is, "What must be the being of man if he is to be capable of bad faith?"<sup>8</sup> Essential to answering it, he believes, is the necessity to provide clear descriptions of the patterns of bad faith. One pattern is that in which bad faith attempts to achieve the identity of facticity and transcendence while maintaining their differences. This pattern is readily identifiable as one which society compels the adolescent girl to impose upon those aspects of her situation which are flavored by emphasis on the attraction between the sexes. The high school baton twirler, for example, who tantalizingly struts in an abbreviated costume may not admit

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

that the admiration of the males in the stands transcends the finesse of her bodily actions toward the sexual activity implied by her sensual undulations. The acclaim of the crowd must be caught and held as the facticity of the present moment. The whistles and the applause must be thought to be for the expertise of her twirling and for the precision and grace of her body movements. At the very same moment the rhythmical contortions of shoulders and hips and the alternating flexion and hyperextensional snap of the knees increase in intensity in order to draw the audience into surpassing the significations of the exhibition. It begs the issue to speak of five-year-old girls who imitate these actions. Obviously they only imitate. All this, of course, is a superimposition on a skill which does require long hours of practice, rigid self-discipline, and dedication to an ideal. This duplicity of attempting both to be (facticity) and to be beyond (transcendence) is commonplace in the folkways of this generation. It is an essential concomitant for beauty contests, queen competitions, and other activities where fairness of face and figure are pre-requisites for success. Winning form in these instances seems to be based on the individual's skill in carrying out the duplicity.

Can one, then, achieve an attitude of candor or sincerity? Does one in achieving sincerity leave bad faith behind? Sartre points out that if sincerity is posited as a

universal value, then man has the responsibility to be what he is. Stated as a maxim this value would no longer demand simply knowing what one is, but would necessitate being what one is. Using an example which has become familiar through its repetition by commentators, Sartre points out that the waiter since he only plays at being a waiter transcends the role and thus is a waiter only in the mode of not being one. Sartre writes:

The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the <sup>9</sup>cafe plays with his condition in order to realize it.

That society has come to identify the behaviors through which one pretends to be that which he is, is manifested in role playing, socio-dramas, and in the captivating performances of interpretive modern dance. Sartre is referring not to an amateur or professional performance but to what one might call real life actions when he writes:

. . . there is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer.<sup>10</sup>

One can be a teacher only in the sense of being a representation of that teacher which one is taken to be. And at every instant, one is compelled to build through free choices an imaginary teacher which he transcends through being at any one time far more than just that

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



teacher. One is compelled to admit, however, that there is a sense in which I am that teacher, since I am not a plumber or a gardener. Sartre concludes:

I am a waiter in the mode of being what I am not.  
 . . . Furthermore we are dealing with more than mere social positions; I am never any one of my attitudes, any one of my actions. The good speaker is the one who plays at speaking, because he can not be speaking. The attentive pupil who wishes to be attentive, his eyes riveted on the teacher, his ears open wide, so exhausts himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything.<sup>11</sup>

If one appeals to sincerity for rescue from the dilemma of bad faith, it turns out to be a trap. In order to be sincerely this or that, one must seek to abandon being-for-itself in favor of being-in-itself. Since one is inescapably consciousness-of-being, sincerity is a futile quest. I can never be anything in the way that the chalk or the blackboard is. Bad faith and the futile quest for sincerity are products of my being project. This is not to say that I cannot strike a sincere attitude concerning what I was yesterday. The sincere appraisal of my facticity is present at every moment, but as we have seen, a sincere pronouncement concerning my facticity slips into bad faith when it aims at my transcendence.

The third structure of bad faith Sartre calls the faith of bad faith. He points out that the very notion of faith involves belief, but that the belief which undergirds the faith of bad faith is a belief which does not quite

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 60.





reach certainty. Bad faith must rely on evidence, but it is never quite fulfilled by the available evidence. Too, belief itself is impossible of achievement. "To believe is to know that one believes, and to know that one believes is no longer to believe."<sup>12</sup> Sartre points out as support for this contention the fact that one may use the word "believe" in the sense of "I believe in God," which is an expression of positiveness; or in answer to the question, "Was Hammurabi a Babylonian?" a student might answer, "I don't know, but I believe so." Either use indicates a point of view based on insufficient evidence. In the first case, this belief based on limited evidence is classified as faith in God.

Significantly, Sartre mentions in connection with this disbelieving-belief that, "science escapes by searching for evidence."<sup>13</sup> At this point, one can appreciate Dewey's case for the efficacy of "warranted assertability." There is a sense in which Sartre's treatment of bad faith, seriousness, and belief turns out to be an ontological support for Dewey's view. If the destiny of consciousness "is to be what it is not and not to be what it is," and, as a consequence, to conceal "in its being a permanent risk of bad faith,"<sup>14</sup> then science would seem to be on the right track

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.



when in committed research it treats candidates for truth as instrumental and relentlessly searches for support for them on the grounds that the evidence is never all in.

At the end of the section on bad faith, Sartre suggests that there may be an axiological escape from the paradoxes of bad faith, belief, and seriousness. In a footnote heavy with promise he writes:

If it is indifferent whether one is in good or in bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith and slides to the very origin of the project of good faith, that does not mean that we can not radically escape bad faith. But this supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted. This self-recovery we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here.<sup>15</sup>

Along with accounting for a goodly slice of human behavior, then, the concept of bad faith implies a central value, authenticity, which if achieved would have the power to restore trust in human relationships. In none of Sartre's works, however, is there a clear definition of how this self-recovery may be accomplished.

#### Relevance for Curriculum

It is a commonplace in Sartre's philosophy that conflict is the basic human relationship. It should be equally well understood that he does not mean by this that man necessarily is pitted against man in machete wielding combat.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Conflict seems to be implied even in the language of much contemporary learning theory. Whether one invites or coerces, if the instructional objective is to bring about "desirable" changes in individual behavior, the assumption is implicit that there is also the threat of alternative behaviors which are "undesirable." Thus behavioral objectives which are proposed by anyone other than the "behavior" suggest immediately the conflict of subject against subject. Actually, all relations between student and teacher or between student and student are expressions of conflict between consciousnesses. The ontological foundation of this conflict is "the look," and while in many cases it may never become more violent than an exchange of objectifying glances, the acts which persons perform either to or for others are based on the fundamental alternatives for attempting to unite the for-itself and the in-itself. Either one makes himself object in order to capture the Other as subject, or as subject, he attempts to capture the Other as object.

A classroom in which this inevitable tension is recognized will present a different climate than one in which the relationships of children are thought to be imperfect experiences leading toward the ultimate objective of social cohesion emanating from the ideal of brotherly love. Such a classroom will be far different also from one in which social harmony is thought to be possible of



achievement through practice in criticizing and solving social problems arising from the normal flow of experience. The emphasis in the classroom where human conflict is accepted as ontologically basic will most likely be directed toward learning to withstand the pressures of a world in which one intermittently is used as a means or uses someone else as a means. Of course, the ultimate lesson to be learned will be that any progress toward a personal or social end necessitates that someone be used as a means. By virtue of one's very presence in the world he threatens the projects of his contemporaries; therefore, the man who is sensitive to his involvement in mankind will wish to advance the welfare of all men through authentic behavior.

The extreme situations which Sartre analyzes should be important to the educator in his various helping roles; that is, as teacher, counselor, coach, librarian, administrator. These extremes of interpersonal relationships should be understood as type examples of behaviors which one might expect to find in various degrees of intensity in ordinary life situations. The responsibility of the school in helping children to understand, to modify and to harness their own behavior and that of others is as important in an existentialist oriented classroom as in a classroom organized according to the view of experimentalism, realism or idealism.

### Freedom

The quest for a theory of value in Sartre's philosophy must eventually come to grips with the problem of freedom. Although the contention that freedom is the summum bonum in Sartre's philosophy misses the mark, it seems certain that an understanding of his theory of freedom is essential for understanding his moral theory.

Sartre holds that the age-old argument between free will and determinism cannot be settled without first turning to the structures contained in the idea of action; and freedom, for him, is the first condition of action. Concerning the act he writes:

To act is to modify the shape of the world; it is to arrange means in view of an end; it is to produce an organized instrumental complex such that by a series of concatenations and connections the modification effected on one of the links causes modifications throughout the whole series and finally produces an anticipated result.<sup>16</sup>

It is not an act, however, unless it is intentionally carried out as a conscious project. When a careless camper flicks away his lighted cigarette butt, and a forest fire ensues, he has acted only in so far as he ridded himself of the cigarette. The forest fire properly cannot be thought of as a part of the camper's act although it is certainly a consequence. One can never be certain of all the consequences prior to an act; this is the risk of action.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 433.



If, then, every act must be intentional, what is the motivating force which brings about an action? Sartre holds that an act springs forth from a desideratum, an objective lack. It does not arise from a factual state of affairs; that is, from facticity itself. Its condition is a double negation; an ideal situation is posited as nonbeing, and the existing situation is posited as nonbeing in relation to the ideal situation. Sartre's further clarification of this point is also a strong argument for universal opportunity for education, since the ignorant man is incapable of wrenching himself away from his situation in order to posit an improved state of affairs:

It is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we decide that these are unbearable. A worker in 1830 is capable of revolting if his salary is lowered for he easily conceives of a situation in which his wretched standard of living would be not as low as the one which is about to be imposed on him. But he does not represent his sufferings to himself as unbearable; he adapts himself to them not through resignation but because he lacks the education and reflection necessary for him to conceive of a social state in which these sufferings would not exist. Consequently he does not act.<sup>17</sup>

At this point, one might exclaim that Sartre has re-enforced Dewey's contention that freedom achieves latitude through an increase in the alternative choices available for decision making or problem solving, an increase stemming from additional knowledge or information. This is true so long as the reference is to freedom's external relationships.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 435.



Later, Sartre's discussion of freedom as it relates to situation will disclose that it is the situation which is enriched or broadened through increased knowledge or information, and ontological freedom cannot be diminished or increased since it is fundamental to human reality. The for-itself stands beyond being-in-itself, it transcends its essence; in Heidegger's terms, existence precedes and commands essence. In the sense that man must go on creating himself through his choices, Sartre can say, "I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free."<sup>18</sup>

Determinism, Sartre says, is an attempt to disclaim freedom through reducing the for-itself to in-itself. Causes and motives in this view are apprehended as things; they exist ahead of the upsurge of human reality. By the same token, ends are thought to be prehuman; they descend from God, nature, or society. What the determinist fails to see is that ends, causes, motives, or values have no permanence beyond that which I ascribe to them. Whatever meanings they possess they derive from my project. I assign them their meanings through my acts. Although they belong to a cultural tradition, I affirm them or reject them through my acts within this cultural context. Human reality is nothing more than an inescapable freedom to make oneself through choosing among infinite alternative courses of

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 439.

action. So, for Sartre, freedom is not a separate being, but it is the being of man himself:

If we start by conceiving of man as a plenum, it is absurd to try to find in him afterwards moments or psychic regions in which he would be free. As well look for emptiness in a container which one has filled beforehand up to the brim! Man can not be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.<sup>19</sup>

Sartre rejects any and all forms of determinism, including the Cartesian view which would make all volitional acts free and all passional acts determined. How, he asks, is it decided which situations permit the will to function and which demand that emotion take over? As far as freedom is concerned, there is no distinction between situations, he contends. Courses of action are chosen with complete freedom whether they be emotional or rational. He does point out, however, a distinction between motive and cause:

We shall . . . use the term cause for the objective apprehension of a determined situation as this situation is revealed in the light of a certain end as being able to serve as the means for attaining this end.

The motive, on the contrary, is generally considered as a subjective fact. It is the ensemble of the desires, emotions, and passions which urge me to accomplish a certain act.<sup>20</sup>

Actually cause, motive, and end are all caught up in a unity which can be grasped across the act which reveals them. Cause and motive are equally meaningless in separation from the values which the for-itself places upon them.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 446.

At the same time, the for-itself chooses its ends in terms of the fundamental project which it is--the project to be in-itself-for-itself. As a consequence, if one wishes to speak of voluntary deliberation on the part of the for-itself, he is practicing a deception, because such deliberation would be carried on in terms of motives, causes, and ends upon which values already have been placed. Deliberation is simply one alternative for realizing the means by which an end is achieved. Other alternatives are realization of the means through passion or simply through the act itself. In a particular situation, whether we choose to act rationally or passionately amounts to the same thing in so far as our freedom is concerned. In either case we choose the manner in which we shall act to achieve a given end, and at the same time, we choose the values which we confer upon the means and the ends.

In the sense that human activity is performed always by a consciousness, or, in slightly different terminology, is accompanied always by consciousness, it must be either reflective or nonreflective. In a nonreflective act, consciousness is only nonthetically aware of the motive. Said another way, a motive is merely a nonthetic consciousness. However, it is nonthetic consciousness of the causality behind the act, for action implies the recognition of an objective structure in the world. In a reflective act, however, and this is what is meant by a voluntary act, the



reflective consciousness grasps the motive as a quasi-object, and the cause since it is grasped originally by the consciousness-reflected-on, appears as separate. Sartre points out that for Husserl this meant that the cause was placed in brackets; that is, an epoche was achieved in connection with it. Thus, the cause being suspended in brackets, the reflective consciousness appears to be carrying out a deliberation. This is Sartre's meaning when he holds that voluntary deliberation is a deception. Actually, what we call the will is simply a reflective consciousness which is attempting to realize itself as being-in-itself-for-itself. The will is not concerned with choosing ends, since these are already posited in terms of the choice which I have already made of myself. What remains to be decided is the means to an end already posited. What we term the will, then, is simply a psychic event which like all such events derives its support from a basic ontological freedom.

If my acts are not determined by the circumstances presented by the world or if they are not determined by a train of antecedent behaviors, they appear to be completely gratuitous, according to traditional views of freedom. Ordinarily, an act is said to be free if it could have been otherwise. Sartre employs the illustration of a man suffering from fatigue to explain his disagreement with these traditional views. If a man drops out of a long march and is upbraided for not continuing, he may reply that he was





too tired to go on. Sartre suggests that any debate concerning justification for the man's having dropped out of the march is based on incorrect premises:

There is no doubt that I could have done otherwise, but that is not the problem. It ought to be formulated rather like this: could I have done otherwise without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects which I am; or is the fact of resisting my fatigue such that instead of remaining a purely local and accidental modification of my behavior, it could be effected only by means of a radical transformation of my being-in-the-world--a transformation, moreover, which is possible? In other words: I could have done otherwise. Agreed. But at what price?<sup>21</sup>

The exercise of freedom must occur in the context of a "given," and this given is simply the necessary connection of the for-itself with the in-itself. This is what Sartre has called the "facticity" of freedom. Therefore, each decision will be influenced, although not determined, by the total texture which constitutes the individual's being-in-the-world.

This is a point which frequently has been overlooked in discussions of Sartre's theory of freedom. The tendency has been to interpret total freedom to mean that man chooses and acts gratuitously. This is far removed from Sartre's meaning; he has consistently held that man's future is conditioned by his past, that his choices are influenced by his situation.

Man encounters at every turn what Sartre has termed the coefficient of adversity.<sup>22</sup> He experiences a constant

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 454.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

confrontation of resistances and obstacles which impinge upon the project which he is. Paradoxically, freedom can exist only in a situation, and situation comes into being only through the upsurge of freedom. There is no such thing as an obstacle or a resistance which precedes consciousness. The hurdle on the running track is manmade, and Mt. Everest, as a mountain to climb, is freely projected by man. This is not to deny that there is an ineffable stuff heaped up there on the surface of the earth, but as brute existent it is incomprehensible. For a consciousness, as it weaves its project, the line of demarcation between this ineffable stuff and the instrumental complexity of the world is not discernible. For the climber, Everest is to climb; for the aircraft pilot, it is to be avoided; for some, it has spiritual significance. In each case, consciousness freely chooses the meaning of Everest, and the choice is made within the context of a unique situation.

#### Freedom and Responsibility

If Sartre is open to criticism for implying an ethics without really stating one, there is little question that his theory of freedom attacks certain ethical problems with preciseness and clarity. However, the whole notion of deontology is contradictory to his concept of freedom. A person who is obligated to make certain choices cannot at the same time be regarded as free. For Sartre the for-itself chooses its values, and these values are choices of a

spontaneous freedom which enjoys no support or guidance.

As a consequence, man is totally responsible:

. . . man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. We are taking the word "responsibility" in its ordinary sense as "consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object." In this sense the responsibility of the for-itself is overwhelming since he is the one who makes himself be, then whatever may be the situation in which he finds himself, the for-itself must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar coefficient of adversity, even though it be insupportable. He must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of engagement which I am that they appear. It is therefore senseless to think of complaining since nothing foreign has decided what we feel, what we live, or what we are.<sup>23</sup>

This austere doctrine of personal responsibility is all-inclusive:

. . . since every event in the world can be revealed to me only as an opportunity (an opportunity made use of, lacked, neglected, etc.), or better yet since everything which happens to us can be considered as a chance (i.e., can appear to us only as a way of realizing this being which is in question in our being) and since others as transcendences-transcended are themselves only opportunities and chances, the responsibility of the for-itself extends to the entire world as a peopled-world.<sup>24</sup>

It is because of the all-inclusive nature of my responsibility that I face the world in anguish. If I am responsible for everything and everybody, how can I be certain that my choices are in their best interests and thus in mine. It is the dreadful magnitude of this responsibility

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 553.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 556.

which casts one into anguish and which causes one to seek to escape this anguish along the avenue of bad faith.

Formation of Character: Buber's Ethics

The ethical for Buber is located in experience, or in his phraseology, in the situation which addresses man in the here and now. Ethics are based on values, and values are to be found in the concrete. It is the specific answer to the question: "What ought I to do in this situation?"

There is a very close link between Buber's ethics and his theory of knowledge. As the I-It thickens, we regard others as objects, there for our use and exploitation. But such "objectification" advances in two stages. First, one views the other conceptually, seeing him abstracted from his context and his wholeness. Secondly, he then acts upon this "object" approaching him for his own personal use and exploitation. The first stage, of the order of knowledge, leads into the second stage, of the order of the ethical. On the other hand, Buber's ethics, linked with his theory of knowledge, reverses the trend and restores man to the alternative I-Thou pattern.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 25.



Parallel to his approach in the theory of knowledge, Buber denies that he has any system of ethics or scale of criteria to offer his reader.

. . . I neither acknowledge a traditional framework nor a system of ethics of my own. In fact the deficiency exists; and it is so closely tied up with the totality of my knowledge, that filling it is unthinkable. If I sought to do so, I would injure thereby the core of my view.<sup>26</sup>

Rather than base his ethics on a set of principles which need only to be applied to the situation, Buber bases it on the authentic response of the individual in this situation facing him here and now.

The ethical is found only where an individual confronts a situation with the wholeness of his being. In that confrontation, he must seize, out of all its potentiality, that one direction which appears to him to be right in his situation. The direction which he seizes, should he respond to it with the wholeness of his being, is not only based upon the authentic person that he is, but leads him to become the person he potentially is meant to be. In this sense, Buber's ethics are ontological in basis.

Neither Buber's anthropology nor his ethics, however, hold the "self" as the goal of life; rather authentic

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Buber, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, trans. Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1967), p. 173.



existence has the "between" of the I-Thou as its principle.<sup>27</sup> The "ought" of man's life is found in the relationship which exists between man and man. This of course, embraces the entire dialectic of the relationship.

So then for Buber, the ethical is not a set of values which an individual may choose or not choose to follow, but more accurately, the very basis of his ontological fulfillment as a human being. But this point is not enough to understand the particularity of Buber's ethics. It is not only ontological in its basis, but religious as well.

As the dialogical life is basically religious, founded upon the primal dialogue between the I and the eternal Thou, so the ethical life is also basically religious, since it is founded on the dialogue between an independent man, capable of free and spontaneous dialogue and the God who addresses him through his concrete everyday.

Buber sees the ethical in this Hebrew frame of reference. This address from God to man is called revelation. To the Hebrew, every ethos has its origin in a revelation, whether or not he is still aware of and obedient to it. This revelation with God sends forth rays that effect a structural change in the whole life of the

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 85.





individual. God bids his people to be holy as he is holy, i.e., not to be good, but to be like God.

In one sense, Buber argues, only God, an absolute Person, can be the source of absolute value. Man, either within himself or in his relationships with other men, cannot give source to absolute values nor bind absolute values on each other. Only God, the absolute Person, can bind man absolutely. Accordingly, man cannot be said to choose his values of his own accord, but "discovers" them out of his relationship with the eternal Thou.

This is not to say that every act must be linked with God to be morally significant, at least not consciously. But it must be linked with the Thou of one's life to which one responds with his whole being. "If a man decides with his whole being, he can decide only for the direction of God."<sup>28</sup>

In another sense, it is easily seen that the reader's response to Buber, here as elsewhere, stands or falls upon his basic response to life. It begins with an act of faith (trust)--trust that all the world is essentially dialogical.

Do we accept life as consisting totally of an invariable order of causality, time and space, or do we trust that the world is essentially dialogical? Such trust

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 52.



is based upon experience. Do we experience life as essentially cause-effect? or address-response? Those who agree with Buber's basic analysis of reality will agree with his view of ethics; those who do not will necessarily reject all of his ethical postulates.

### Revelation and Law

The above introduction permits us now to review the essential elements of Buber's ethical thought. This requires a clarification of revelation and law, responsibility and freedom, good and evil, conscience and guilt, and the ever occurring demand for criteria on which to base one's moral decisions. Buber offers us no system, but his ethical thought has been developed around these particular pivotal terms. First let us begin with revelation and law.

In the covenant between God and man, man is taught the way, not by the cosmic order, but by the personal address of God to man. This meeting between God and man is called revelation<sup>29</sup> and is known by man directly and from within. It is commonly understood under two forms which differ, not in their nature, but in their degree of certainty: the historical, and the personal revelation.

Historical revelation comes from an event experienced by an entire community and preserved in their memory over generations. The natural event is not itself the

<sup>29</sup>Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 153.

revelation, but embodies God's Word and bears it forth to his people. The prime event to which Buber refers is the covenant event of Sinai and the giving of the ten commandments.

In addition to this historic experience which can be objectified and communicated, there is the parallel experience each has in his own personal life. It does not have the "objective" existence or embodiment of the historic, but to the individual, it is just as real and valid.

One serious limitation is that God's "voice" is heavily modified by the particular human being in whom it is heard. "Revelation does not pour itself into the world through him who receives it as through a funnel."<sup>30</sup> The "voice" seizes this man in his whole elemental being. He is not a tube but an organ who sounds and modifies the sound according to his own nature. Only in this moment and situation do I hear the living address of the Thou; only in my particular context. Therefore I cannot say with precision and certainty what is God's voice and what is my modification.<sup>31</sup>

The limitation placed on the degree of certainty of God's address is not only true of personal revelation,

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 117.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 114.

but of historic revelation as well. Particularly today, as we become conscious of this mixture of historic revelation and human influence, do we grow cautious of a fundamentalist acceptance of revelation. Yet, while conscious of a mixture, we have no grounds to reject this historic revelation as a delusion.

Even during those periods when the Thou world is nearly eclipsed, the spark of "life" remains hidden within the embodying tradition which bears it down through the centuries. True, the movement of It at times "threatens to suppress and to smother the movement out again to the Thou,"<sup>32</sup> but only for a time. In our own day, revelation is weak and we must make our ethical decisions in "fear and trembling." In time, the sensitivity to the voice of this fundamental dialogue will emerge to the surface and men will hear the voice with much more confidence.

But in any age, man never hears this voice with certitude. The voice never speaks a prescript or a program, but only addresses a question to which man, in his responsibility, must give the answer. The ten commandments, as an arch-example, are not part of an impersonal code, but rather were uttered by an I and addressed to a Thou. God is not a law-giver and it is only through man in his self-contradiction that revelation becomes legislation. It is

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<sup>32</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 116.



not the legal transformation of man to which Buber sees himself responsible, but to the unmediated word of God directed to a specific hour of life. Society, too, has transferred these commandments from the realm of religion to that of the moral, hoping that the power of public opinion will strengthen their enforcement, and again from the moral to the political, again hoping that the state's punitive powers will further increase their enforcement. This is acceptable, so long as society does not claim the authority of God for its actions. At all times, it remains the man who hears in the concrete situation, and he who must choose and freely respond to the address. When asked if the fourth commandment is valid, Buber responds:

I never doubted the absolute validity of the command, but to say that in fact one knows always and under all circumstances what "to honor" means and what it does not, of him I say that he does not know what he is talking about. Man must expound the eternal values, and, to be sure, with his own life.<sup>33</sup>

#### Responsibility and Freedom

"The idea of responsibility," writes Buber, "is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an 'ought' that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Buber, The Philosophy of Martin Buber, trans. Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1967), p. 720.



there is real responding."<sup>34</sup> Responsibility, then, in Buber's language, is not that moral obligation which I am supposed to fulfill, but rather that Thou-response which I make to this person before me in this particular situation. I am responsible to the degree that I have come to see him as he sees himself (inclusion). It means hearing the unreduced claim of each hour, in all its confusion and contradiction, and answering it with the wholeness of one's being.

There are no criteria or principles one can consult to tell him what should be done in this hour. Rather I learn what God demands of me for the hour only in the hour. Responsibility is the continuing quality of openness to the Thou which my trust sustains in me, even when an actual response is not presently being made.

The problematic of responsibility begins in the situation which addresses the individual.

The situations have a word to speak. And the real . . . situations are not simple and plain, like principles; they bear the contradiction in themselves, they lift it to our faces, and we may not ignore it, for the reality stands in contradiction.<sup>35</sup>

Once and for all answers are of no help to us here; the individual facing the situation must penetrate into all its

<sup>34</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Buber, The Philosophy of Martin Buber, trans. Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1967), p. 722.



contradiction and, out of the many folded possibilities, make his singular decision. On what basis does he come to this particular decision? Not, says Buber, in terms of usefulness or convenience, but according to intrinsic value. And what is the source of value? The inherent awareness within the individual of what he is and what he is intended to be.

Traditional values are useful, suggestive, and are followed in almost all cases, but one may not proceed from them to the situation. They counsel me as I move from my situation to my decision. Only in the situation can I "hear" the living address of the Thou and become capable of a genuine response; all my pre-situational information and maxims cannot dictate the decision for me.

Yet we are not speaking here of an individualism either. The community surrounding the individual is taken into account in his decision; their counsel is sought and enters into the context of the decision. In no way is it meant that man must alone, without counsel, arrive at an answer from within himself. Buber is simply insisting that the community's advice may not replace his own decision; at the moment of "yes" or "no," he alone must utter the word.

Out of the flame of one's own inner awareness of himself, he tentatively recognizes his direction and on this basis, he makes his decision. It is no guarantee; he



may err. But if he errs, he will recognize this in the effects of his decision and correct his self-understanding. As he makes more and more decisions, he comes to see more clearly his true direction, which in turn allows him to give a whole person response to each new situation with no more preparation than his presence and readiness to response. "Inner awareness" does not refer to his place in society or personality type, but to his one unique way to the "Thou" of his life.<sup>36</sup>

It is not to be imagined that every decision is made with a great struggle and inner conflict. While on occasion this may be true, some decisions are made quickly and decisively.

Buber's ethics are not for the elite only; God addresses all men. But there is a distinction between the simple man and the perfect man, a distinction of two different ways but with the same norm and the same dignity. All must be "whole!"

The simple man is one who trusts God completely and meets him in the world with an unperturbed soul. His personality might be compared to the child or primitive one of Buber's anthropology. He knows the Thou and is immediately open to it. He has not yet reflected upon himself, not yet stepped back and regarded the world as an It. The totality of his life is the full, open relationship prior

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 176.



to distance. He is admired for his singular, total commitment to the Thou.

In this regard, the other, the perfect man, envies him and seeks to arrive once again to that point in life when his now distanced personality will re-acquire this integrity of personality. The perfect man is the concrete realization of the full human potentiality. His very existence calls all others to become their human selves.

In our ethical context, Buber acknowledges, not only the perfect man who bases his ethical decisions on a mature understanding of what he is and what he is capable of becoming, but also the simple, traditional man who bases his response on his traditional, cultural norms, so long as he genuinely hears God addressing him through these norms in the here and now and holds fast to this address.

. . . when in his spontaneous believing he is able righteously to equate the instruction transmitted by the mothers and fathers with the divine command, then I know nothing else to say to him than "Happy you!" One thing only I object to: that a man should hold fast as a command to a command traditionally held divine, without really and truthfully "being concerned about God."<sup>37</sup>

In either way, the critical flame must make this an alive, here and now choice, not a response to an It command of the past.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 724.





Good and Evil

The Good, for Buber, is not the permanent ideal order of being. It is relationship, the primal, creative element in reality. Evil, then, is not a counter reality situated at its opposite pole--a substantial reality never to be reconciled--but an absence of relationship which can and should be engaged.<sup>38</sup>

Evil lies primarily in the human heart. The objective evil situations and actions we see in the world are manifestations of this evil within; the heart of man is their true source. Evil is a relative, redeemable situation within man rather than an absolute, substantial being outside. On the other hand, evil is not merely a psychological phenomenon, but cosmic. The evil that exists in the outside world is real, not illusion, and is an expansion and effect of the evil within man.

Note that since Buber sees evil only in correspondence to the good, and since he defines the good as relationship, the prime factor or existence, then it must follow that his valuation and ethics are of the ontological order--the order of man's being and his becoming--rather than of a secondary, merely ethical order which is added to the prior ontological reality.

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<sup>38</sup>Martin Buber, Good and Evil, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1952), p. 64.



Buber concluded that there are two types of evil which he describes as decisionlessness and relationlessness. The first is the state of a man who is caught up in the confusion of possibility and never takes decision to orient himself in one direction. He never selects and realizes this one potentiality, and thus is never confirmed by his fellow man. The second is the man who has achieved "distance," but then refuses to re-enter into relationship. To use a contradiction, he relates to himself alone.

In discussing the first man more at length, Buber explains that there are two instincts or "urges" in man, one good and one evil. In his anthropological terms, these compare to "direction" and "power." The evil urge is man's aimless energy, originally without orientation.

As long as man allows the "evil urge"--his unbridled energy--to dominate him, roaming about dissipating itself where ever it will, he is "decisionless" and remains without the relationships which confirm his personhood. When, however, he coordinates these "urges" into a whole and empowers his direction with all his energy, then he enters relationship, man to man and man to God.

When a man has changed his heart and taken direction, he receives a change in his view of reality. That which before was meaningless now takes on meaning. He becomes oriented within himself and in relation to the world about him. Moreover, the world changes; its evil chaos recedes



and its cosmic unity becomes that much more realized. Man is responsible, not only for himself, but for the world about him as well.<sup>39</sup>

The second form of evil is called relationlessness. It is the more severe state, sufficiently so to be problematic as to whether or not it is redeemable. Using the terms "sinner" and "wicked" to differentiate the first and second stages of evil, Buber says:

Sinners again and again miss God's way, the wicked oppose it in accordance with the basic attitude of their constitution. The sinner does evil, the wicked man is evil . . . . Is the way, then, closed to the wicked? It is not closed from God's side . . . but it is closed from the side of the wicked themselves.<sup>40</sup>

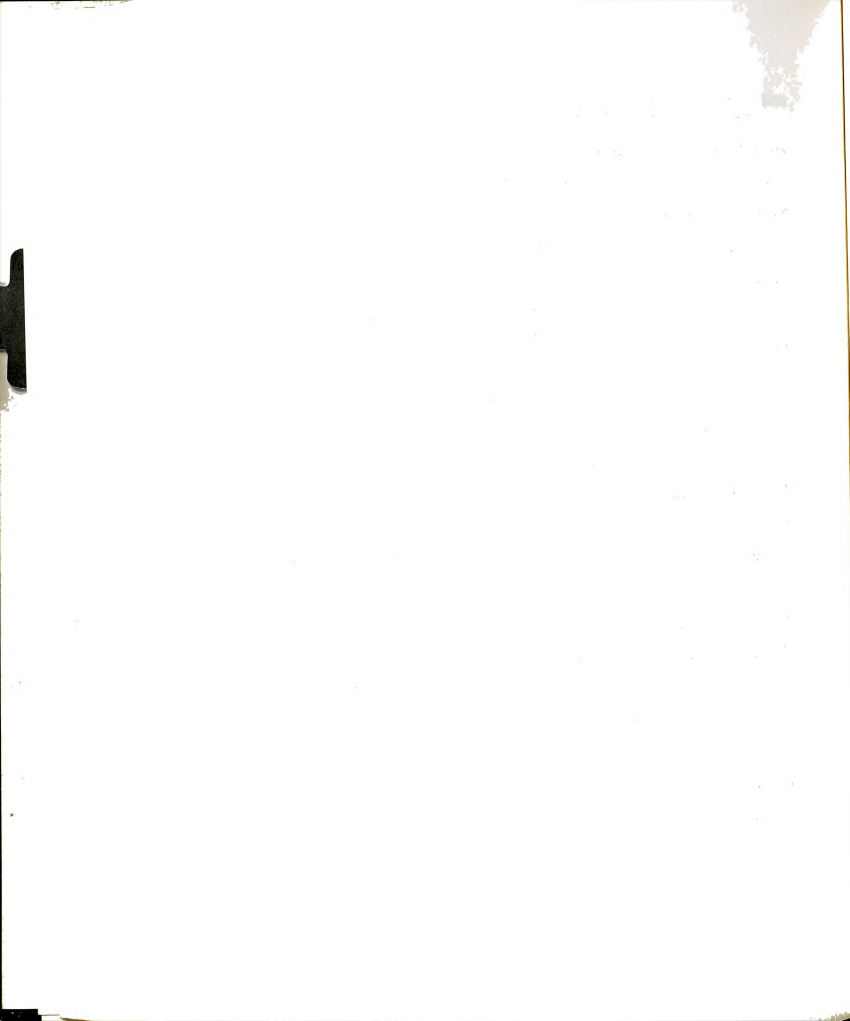
Once an individual has achieved distance, he is faced with the problematic of re-entering into relationship. The step is threatening since it means risk and uncertainty, but without it, he will lack further confirmation of his personality. He has one of three options: he can continue to endure this fragile and painful situation, neither deciding nor firmly rejecting decision; he can turn and re-enter relationship; or he can withdraw within himself and self-confirm his own image of himself.

That man, if he cannot readjust his self-knowledge by his own conversion, must withdraw from it the power of the Yes and No; he must render affirmation independent of all findings and base it instead . . . on a sovereign willing oneself; he must choose himself,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60.



and that not "as he is intended"--but just as he is, as he has himself resolved to intend himself.<sup>41</sup>

This is the existential lie; the truth is no longer what this man experiences, but what he has ordained it to be. Evil has become radical. If genuine dialogue is the ontological basis of reality, then the lie is the ultimate evil act in the world. It is treason against one's self, but more, it oppresses mankind under a falsification of its being.<sup>42</sup>

#### Conscience and Guilt

While God may tender the situation, the response must come from man. He must decide. Buber says that the decision is made, not on the situation's usefulness or convenience, but on its intrinsic value. The basis or source of this value is called conscience--a fundamental awareness of what he is and what he is intended to be. This is not his "self-concept" but his basic relational experience which will later be conceptualized into his "self-concept."

This is not the surface, routine, discredited conscience which forbids me this and that as a substitute voice of authority, nor is it a "voice of God" speaking within. It is my own voice, my own awareness. For this reason it is human and can err.<sup>43</sup> When it does, it is only

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 136-137.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>43</sup>Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p/ 148.

for man to see this reflected in the effects of his decision and to adjust his self-understanding.

As the individual enters into relation with the other and is confirmed in his awareness of himself, his conscience comes into the full light of self-identity. This presentiment of purpose is

. . . inherent in all men though in the most varied strengths and degrees of consciousness, and for the most part stifled by them.<sup>44</sup>

To the extent that a man's conscience is not stifled, he cannot help but compare what he is with what he is called upon to become. On this basis he distinguishes within himself those decisions of his which were right and those which were wrong. The negative result of his self-analysis is guilt.

Buber distinguishes between neurotic and existential guilt. The first is subjective rather than relational, encompassing feelings within man. It is of a psychic, sub-conscious nature. This would be the guilt referred to by Freud, who places it in the super-ego, and Jung, who grounds it in the self. Both place it within the individual person.

Existential Guilt is of the ontological nature of man, the whole being rather than his feelings alone, and is founded in the "between." Located in his conscious memory, conscience is the guilt a person has acknowledgingly taken

<sup>44</sup> Martin Buber, The Philosophy of Martin Buber, trans. Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 175-176.





on himself as a person as a result of his faulty response to a situation. This guilt would embrace two elements: the recognition of the disparity between what he is in fact and what he is intended to be--a disparity he is responsible for--and the recognition of the injury in the world about him for which he is responsible.

An objective relationship in which two men stand to one another can arise, by means of the existential participation of the two, to a personal relation; it can be merely tolerated; it can be neglected; it can be injured. Injuring a relationship means that at this place the human order of being is injured. No one other than he who inflicted the wound can heal it. He who knows the fact of his guilt and is a helper can help him try to heal the wound.<sup>45</sup>

Buber observes, not one, but three spheres in which a man can reconcile his guilt: the sphere of society where he confesses and pays his penalty; the sphere of faith where he confesses, repents and does his penance, and the sphere of conscience where he clarifies his guilt, perseveres in his insight, and restores the damaged order.<sup>46</sup> The third sphere alone belongs to the field of ethics.

How does one resolve guilt ethically? First, the individual is asked to clarify within himself the depths of his guilt. He already has some insight, but as yet has not come to see his guilt in its roots and in its full

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<sup>45</sup>Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 132.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 134.



meaning for his life. Since existential guilt remains on the conscious level, and there are no barriers of a psychic nature, he remembers the event well enough. But while his memory has retained the original ingredients of the event, it has re-arranged their pattern in a manner that protects the individual from its original character. "Only when the human person himself overcomes his inner resistance can he attain to self-illumination."<sup>47</sup> This is a hard trial, and a person's allowing himself to see all the way in, is described by Buber as like a door swinging open--as a true break through.<sup>48</sup>

Secondly, the individual is asked to persevere in this self-illumination. This does not call for an ever renewed scourging of his soul with the guilt of his past offense, but rather "a calm perseverance in the clarity of the great light."<sup>49</sup>

Finally the individual can restore the order of being that has been injured by him through an active devotion to the world. The original wounds need not be sought out; "wounds can be healed in many places other than there where it was inflicted."<sup>50</sup>

Buber carefully distinguishes the work of the psychotherapist, who helps the individual achieve clarity

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

of conscience, from that of the priest, who assists the individual to restore his relationship with God through confession and repentance. These seem to be the proper spheres for each category of leadership. But he raises an interesting question when he states that the awakening of conscience in its inner depths is also the work of the educator.

And it is a great, not yet sufficiently recognized, task of education to elevate the conscience from its lower common form to conscience-vision and conscience-courage. For it is innate to the conscience of man that it can elevate itself.<sup>51</sup>

Such a teacher must possess within himself a great conscience; one that has become wholly personal and does not shy away from the glance into the depths, but knows and can communicate the way that lends access to it. But on the other hand, this is not the sole possession of the perfect man; the simple man also can have the integrity of conscience that can penetrate the facile, accomplished deception of another's vision. But the "vulgar conscience" which knows well enough how "to torment and harass, but cannot arrive at the ground and abyss of guilt," is incapable of the educator's responsibility.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Criteria Question

Buber agrees when Kierkegaard, in Fear and Trembling, demonstrates that God's voice comes through the situation,

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

not at all clear and unmistakable, and that the "Knight of Faith" is left to his own resources, single and alone, and therein lies the dreadful. But before the problematic of faith lies the problematic of hearing: whose voice does one hear?

In the past, a more or less valid image of the Absolute stood before men's eyes and the right and the wrong were easy to discern. But in our age, the traditional image has declined so that each man is thrown back upon his own personal conscience. He must summon all the power of his spiritual insight to penetrate, again and again, the pseudo-absolutes to reveal their limitedness.

#### Buber's Character Formation

Education worthy of the name is essentially education of character, and character formation is the central interest of the educator when he studies the ethical.

First and foremost, Buber underscores: education, primarily, is not the instruction of information, nor is it the training of the student to know or be capable of certain utilitarian functions. Even to those who agree that its first task is the formation of character, Buber must also insist that he is not speaking about instructions in ethics, either by introducing lessons or by cleverly inserting it into the curriculum in a concealed manner. To all these short sighted concepts, he responds, ". . . it is very

easy to understand how powerless modern educational science is when faced by the sickness of man."<sup>53</sup>

The teacher's concern should be for the student as a whole, both in his actuality which stands before the teacher now, and in that potentiality which he can become in his future years. Considered as a whole, however, he can be viewed either as a personality or as a character. Personality is that unique identity, actualized or yet potential, with all its spiritual powers, incorporated as a "whole." This remains what it is and grows to maturity outside the influence of the educator. Character, on the other hand, is the link between what the individual is and the attitudes and actions that follow from this. It is the pattern of response and growth developed by the student to realize his unique personality and potentiality. The task of the educator is to assist in the molding of character, but he may have no direct power over the formation of the student's personality. This remains unique to the student himself.<sup>54</sup>

The educator must be careful; he dare not overestimate his power or influence, even in this important task of character formation. He may help the student in his formation, but it remains the student's responsibility to

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<sup>53</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 112.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 104.





find his way. What he can do is both quite limited and yet far more demanding than any of the tasks listed by "content" and "technique" oriented educators.

Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity, can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them.<sup>55</sup>

Character is taught, not by what he says or does of its own sake, but by what the educator is--a whole person himself. He is asked to be a "great character" himself and to relate what he is to his students. By being this person, present to his students, he forms character in them. The task is simple and monumental.

This man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself is first the man of vision, the man who has penetrated to the depths of his own soul and in doing so, has come to penetrate the meaning of all existence. His vision is not intellectual, but existential, "known" in his relation with others and with the world. Any conceptual-knowledge he may attempt to form of his experience will be inferior to the experiential-knowledge he possesses. Having achieved this actualization of personality, he is alive, wholly alive.

The second characterization of this perfect man, as Buber has come to envision him, is his ability to communicate

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 105.



this vision of the meaning of life. Again, the communication is not conceptual, but existential. It is a conviction, even charism, which in his relationship with others, communicates courage and trust; an atmosphere of trust in the other, and a courage to risk open meeting with the other.

"The world needs him, the perfected man; it awaits him ever again."<sup>56</sup> This is the man Buber has before his mind as he describes the teacher as the "great character"; this is the manner of relationship he is describing when he speaks of the essential character formation of education.

Moving to the more specific methodology of the great character, Buber makes several observations of the educator's manner of relationship with the students.

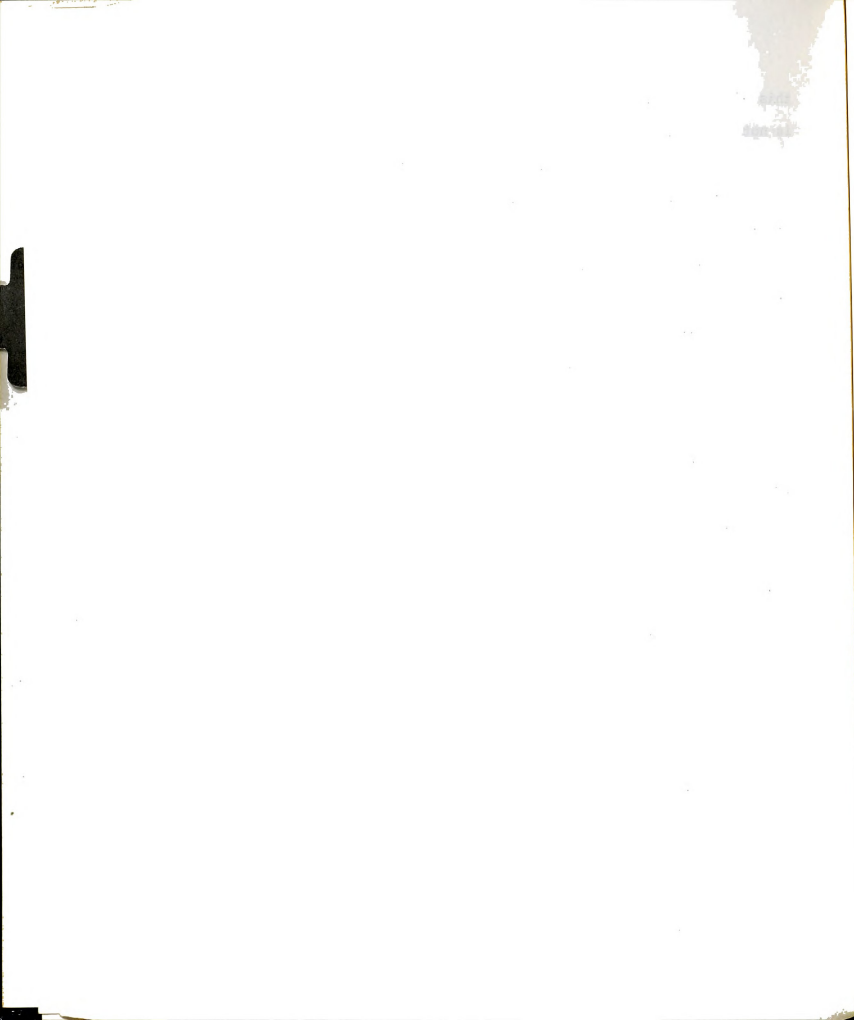
The teacher must learn to understand the student from his side (inclusion), but he is not thereby permitted to lose sight of his own position. This highest of ethical actions does not call for altruism, self-denial, or impersonal judgment on the part of the teacher. True love does not mean self-denial anymore than it means denial of others.

The I is indispensable for any relationship, including the highest, which always presupposes an I and the (Thou). What has to be given up is not the I but that false drive for self-affirmation which impels man to flee from the unreliable, unsolid, unlasting, unpredictable, dangerous world of relation into the having of things.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>57</sup> Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1970), p. 126.



And certainly, education has always been more comfortable with having methods, materials, and techniques than it has with being in genuine relationship.

The educator must also recognize that he is only one of many character-shaping influences in the student's life and, from this viewpoint, his influence is quite small. On the other hand, of all these influences, his alone is a conscious, willed selection of the world, the selection of what is right, of what should be. He alone wants to effect the whole person of the student.

The teacher's one access to the student is through his confidence. "For the adolescent who is frightened and disappointed by an unreliable world, confidence means the liberating insight that there is human truth, the truth of human existence."<sup>58</sup> When the student accepts the teacher as a person and feels he may trust him, all his resistance against being educated gives way. He begins to ask his question.

Confidence cannot be intentionally sought after, nor won by an effort, but comes from a sincere participation in the life of the people one is dealing with and by assuming the responsibility which comes from this participation.

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 106.



"It is not the educational intention but the educational meeting which is fruitful."<sup>59</sup>

Confidence, of course, does not mean agreement on all matters between the teacher and the student, but even conflicts have an educational value. However, after a confrontation must come the healing which will enable the student to feel a continuation of the accepting relationship. This healing, remarks Buber, is a supreme test for the teacher.

In a society dominantly formed by collectives in which the individual has relinquished personal responsibility for the security of "belonging," the teacher has a difficult but crucial role. "Today, the great characters are still 'enemies of the people,' they who love their society, yet wish not only to preserve it but to raise it to a higher level."<sup>60</sup>

In time the student will come to see that when a people no longer decide what they do, and no longer carry their own responsibility, they become sterile in soul. This is where the teacher begins. After creating the feeling that something is lacking, he awakens a courage to shoulder life again, a desire for discipline and order, a patience with growth, and a longing for unity of person.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 116.





"Unity itself, unity of the person, unity of the lived life, has to be emphasized again and again."<sup>61</sup>

In this societal role, the teacher is not leading the student out of a collectivism only to pass over into a new individualism, but beyond the individualism and collectivism into genuine community. "Genuine education of character is genuine education for community."<sup>62</sup> The teacher who has helped in the formation of character of this and that student, has participated in the formation of a new society for mankind. He is the architect of a new unity for mankind.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER V

### IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM

One of the principal problems in linking theory with practice is the obvious fact that what appear to be commonalities in performance may have been arrived at by a multiplicity of routes. One is on shaky ground if he contends that the link between a theory and an example of practice is anything more than one of compatibility.

#### Sartrean Pedagogy

Implicit in the present study is an insinuation that the philosophical bases for a Sartrean theory of education or curriculum are at some points compatible enough with the philosophical roots of progressivism that many similarities in educational theory and practice might reasonably be expected to follow. Consequently, a theory of curriculum based on Sartre's philosophy runs the risk of appearing to be little more than a circuitous route back to many of the progressive practices of American education in the first half of the twentieth century. This is not an objective of the present study, however, and if its pedagogy seems regressive, it may be simply because Sartre's thrust is in the same direction as that of the leaders of the progressive

movement, who were zealously concerned to develop and justify an educational system in which individuals might achieve maximum self-realization while simultaneously building strong group and institutional relationships.

### Learning

The topic of knowledge has been dealt with in this study in one entire chapter, Chapter III, but the problem of Sartrean learning has received little attention. There is a suggestion in Chapter III that the mechanics of the learning process in Sartre's terms will somehow involve intuition (immediate presence to . . .) and what Sartre terms internal and external negations. One learns what a thing is through learning what it is not. This, however, is more nearly a point of departure for a very specialized investigation within learning psychology. A more important concern for a general theory of pedagogy would seem to be the relationship between learning and the purpose or praxis of the individual.

There is certainly nothing new or unusual in the notion that student goals are of prime concern in effective learning situations. In Sartre's view, praxis in the context of an original project supplies the cement which makes of the Self a unity. Therefore, the Sartrean oriented classroom should sponsor learning activities which are meaningful in relation to each student's original project and to the immediate needs and interests growing out of

that project. In this sense, the psycho-bio-physical elements of the learning process are simply tools in the employ of the individual's purposes.

### The School and the Child

The ways in which the school may be organized for learning are the subject of a voluminous literature in professional education, and the curriculum patterns and administrative arrangements which have been placed in actual practice in American schools during the past half century are too numerous and too diverse even to summarize. In recent times, a great amount of attention has been given to the possibilities of instructing large groups of students through employing electronic and visual aids and often through a pedagogical system of "division of labor" known as team teaching. Fear has been expressed that children may become alienated in the resultant relationships where greater importance seems to be placed on what is to be learned and how it is to be presented than on who is doing the learning. In reaction to this threat, some educators recommend a return to the traditional self-contained classrooms wherein the teacher-pupil relationships have sometimes been compared derisively to those of an old mother hen and her chicks.

There is nothing in Sartre's philosophy, fiction, or expository writing which would commend one form of school organization over another; nor is there anything in his



writing which could indicate that he had ever given any time even to thinking about the topic. It is true that he was once a pedagogue himself, but this job was more a means to an end than it was a profession.

If Sartre does not have a theory of education, it cannot be said that he does not have a theory of childhood. Sartre believes that the influences of childhood mark the individual so deeply that he will carry this childhood all the way to the grave. This message is quite clear in Sartre's autobiography, The Words. If one were to draw a single pedagogical principle from his deep concern for childhood and the family relationships of childhood, that principle would have to be that the school's best and surest route to the child is through his family.

Sartre sometimes refers to an original crisis in childhood which tends to influence the individual's behavior for the remainder of his life. This is not to say that the original crisis is akin to the imprinting which experimental psychologists have thought to have identified in ducklings and in infants of other species, but this crisis is the child's achievement of an awareness of his personality, his individuality. He may chip and chisel at this figure for the remainder of his life, but he will never forget the outline which he saw in those first experiences of awareness. If childhood contains this crisis which is so important to the individual's self-concept, then it would





seem important for the school to provide a sheltered context in which this "shock of recognition" might occur.

Because this original crisis has sometimes been referred to as an "existential moment," one should not be misled into believing that it must occur all that fast.

Sartre writes:

Many people have testified to the fact that, around the age of ten, they discovered their individuality with amazement or anguish . . . . But this discovery is usually made without much damage. Adults have nothing to do with it. The child playing alone, a slight change in the landscape, an event, a fleeting thought, is enough to give rise to the reflective awareness which reveals our Ego to us.<sup>1</sup>

In a word, society may set the stage even though unable to write the script.

The term, "existential moment," has been interestingly discussed in Van Cleve Morris' book, Existentialism in Education.<sup>2</sup> Morris believes that this moment, the moment when the child discovers his individuality, occurs sometime around the age of puberty, but he admits that it may occur as early as the age of four. Morris, however, does draw a distinction between the child's "existential moment" and the critical experiences of adolescence. Although every life must have its origins and undoubtedly certain

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1963), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Van Cleve Morris, Existentialism in Education (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 111.



experiences are more critical than others, it may be more accurate, using Sartre's imagery, to think of an individual's life as unfolding in spirals.

Perhaps what is represented in these moments of significance is not so much an abrupt leaving-off and a beginning as a signal experience which one establishes in retrospect to account for a spiral. In any case, in Sartre's view it appears that the concatenation of moments which constitutes a life is segmented by periods of transition, and the needs of the child will undoubtedly vary with each of these periods. The teacher who strives to comprehend the child will watch for these "critical incidents" as one watches for signs along an unfamiliar and tortuous route.

Perhaps there is a lesson for the educator in Sartre's analysis of Genet's painful childhood. Sartre points out that the good folk of Genet's community projected the negative moments of their own personalities into the evil personality of the little boy. Genet was their scapegoat. They cast out their own evil and into him. They needed him in order to preserve the dichotomy of good and evil. Is it possible also that the community (society) has need to project the negative aspect of intellection into the personalities of scapegoats in order to preserve the entire structure of intelligence and stupidity? Can society identify the intelligent, if it does not mark the



stupid? Do not the members of the academic community look upon themselves as "intelligent?" What they have in common as contributors to the educative process is a freedom from mental dullness.

Obviously, there are children who solve problems with greater eagerness and accuracy than others. But does this difference justify the establishment of a system of value judgments which in its universal acceptance overpowers the child and causes him to accept the objectification as a disvalue--in this case, low scholastic aptitude?

Out of submission or respect, we take information which, in any event, is only probable as being an unconditional certainty. On the other hand, we are tempted to regard the information of our consciousness as dubious and obscure. This means that we have given primacy to the object which we are to Others over the subject we are to ourself.<sup>3</sup>

The damage which results from this acceptance by the child of his objectivity for Others is difficult to assess, because in many cases he tends to work it out in a variety of rationalizations; or suddenly when school days lie far behind, he escapes the curse through the creation of his own hierarchy of values. But escape is not always possible.

When children are subjected, from their earliest days, to great social pressure, when their Being-for-Others is the subject of a collective image accompanied by

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1963), p. 43.



value judgments and social prohibitions, the alienation is sometimes total and definitive.<sup>4</sup>

That period in American education when the predominant trend of pedagogical theory was toward an emphasis on the successful social adjustment of individual children was all too brief. Once public education had been scapegoated into responsibility for the failure of American science and technology to surpass the Russians in the race for space, the schools were compelled to quash their interest in social adjustment and expeditiously to take up the cause of pure intellection. Whereas the emphasis of preprimary education was once rather generally devoted to assisting children in the development of social skills, the present trend seems to incline more toward the development of intellectual readiness for the "solid" subjects; attention is directed toward teaching preprimary children to read, to employ set theory, or to do problems in elementary algebra. The once criticized ability groups have matured into "tracks," and the child is given an early opportunity to objectify himself as a gifted student, a mediocre student, or a "slow learner." At least an acknowledgment of the importance of social adjustment in the educative process has been manifested in the "Head Start" preprimary programs for culturally deprived children.

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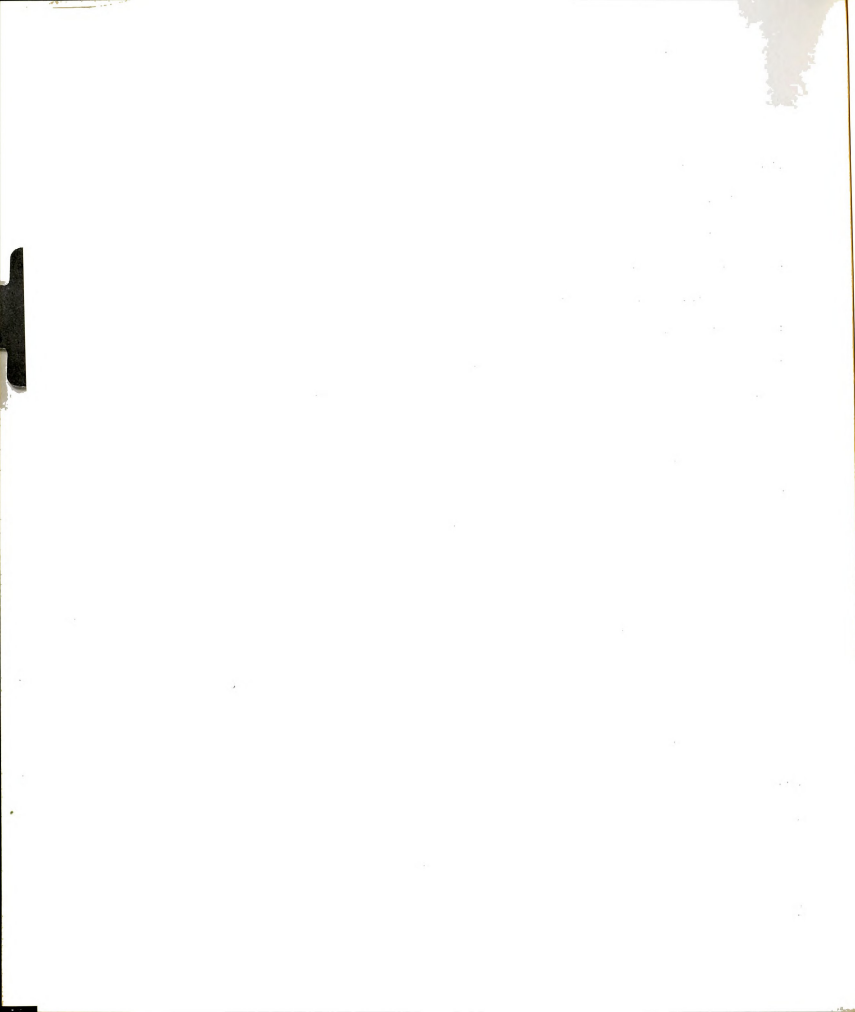
<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 44.





How the school is organized for learning will be dependent upon what society sees as the primary goals of the school. If the main concern is for the development of an intellectual elite with highly developed powers of abstraction and an encyclopedic grasp of universal laws and statements, the development of a support group which is competent in the routine employment of the tools of the culture, and the development of a lumpen labor force for the performance of menial tasks and services, then the emphasis should remain on subject matter and the methods for transmitting this subject matter with greatest speed and accuracy to those minds which are most capable of utilizing it. Social adjustment will come to mean the acceptance of the role which has been assigned to the student throughout his school life on the basis of his intellectual competence. Such objectives will, perhaps, be most effectively reached through graded classes, tracking, instruction by subject matter specialists, and the subordination of such "frills" as music, art, physical education, and special interest classes.

If, on the other hand, schools should become concerned once more for the individual child's opportunities for maximum self-realization; if once more, society should see the importance of education for social adjustment--the development of humanitarian skills for coping with the inevitable clash of man with man; if society is willing to



make of the schools a refuge where children may find fulfillment for their basic needs, then schools will afford situations in which children will be more apt to discover their individuality with amazement than with anguish.

It is difficult to say exactly what kinds of administrative arrangements or curriculum organization such a school should have in order to afford maximum protection to the terribly insecure and at the same time to offer an optimum environment for the children from less violent circumstances. Certainly, it should minimize invidious labels. It should, perhaps, be nongraded, and children should be brought together for instruction in a variety of special groups based on a multiplicity of special interests and characteristics. In so far as practical, instruction should be individualized, but there should also be opportunities for children to work together. For the sake of continuity, the curriculum should be sliced up into large blocks, but students should be encouraged to select individual or group projects within these large units.

The instructional resources and materials should offer maximum possibilities for children to pursue their own interests. And force should have no place in the program of this school inspired by Sartre's philosophy. This does not mean that the school program inspired by Sartre's philosophy should condone an anarchy of children's whims. As he has pointed out, education compels the child whether

it proceeds through force or gentleness. Therefore, there must be responsible direction for the school program.

Thus far, the discussion of formal education has tended to focus on the relationships of the school to pre-adolescent children. But childhood cannot last forever, and eventually the feet of the child's idols turn to clay, and he realizes that the great truths which he has been absorbing day by day are only man-made and that the man-idols are not infallible.

The educational program for the adolescent should, perhaps, afford expanded opportunities for revolution. He should be permitted to appraise, to criticize, and figuratively to disassemble his cultural heritage. This should be the period for examining men and movements in their reciprocal influences. In a real sense, adolescence should be an age of revolt. Recognizing his responsibility for structuring his own life and his future, the adolescent needs encouragement to set aside the "truths" of his predecessors and to build his own world. The school should stand ready to assist him in his battle against the reactionism of those who would enslave him. The curriculum for the adolescent must strike a most delicate balance. It must attempt to reveal for the individual the origins of himself, his contemporaries, and their institutions, but it must also encourage him toward a vision of a future which surpasses in satisfactions his past and his present.

Recalling Sartre's distinction between intellection and comprehension, one might readily conclude that the instructional processes, curricular patterns, and administrative arrangements for the transmission of conceptual knowledge are of less importance than the opportunities which are built into the school program for enabling teachers and students to achieve an understanding of one another as unique human realities. Actually, a distinction should not be drawn between the two roles. Knowledge includes both intellection and comprehension. Sartre attempts to explain that, "Man is, for himself and for others, a signifying being,"<sup>5</sup> and that the various objects and facts in the world,

are never entirely passive realities; the work of other people has given to them their meaning, has made out of them instruments, possibilities for an other (any other).<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the chemistry formulae which the student strives to memorize during a period of independent study are significations. They point toward certain possibilities, certain instrumental capabilities, but they are not understandable in separation from directed human activity. The formula,  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , may sometimes seem almost as if it were a reality independent of human activity, but it merely signifies a

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<sup>5</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, Search for a Method, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1963), p. 152.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

possibility for quantification on the part of an existing human being. Man is the giver of meanings, and no subject matter is meaningful except as it relates to human enterprises.

Much of education will involve the analysis, the memorization, and the application of significations and instruments, but this does not mean that the teacher may disregard the importance of what Sartre refers to as comprehension, that is, the understanding of a human reality through living the relationship. The chemistry teacher, the mathematics teacher, the typing teacher, all who teach, will need to be able to search out the origins of a student's fundamental project and catch a glimpse of the ends which define it. This is the basic requirement and the defining principle for a theory of curriculum based on the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre.

#### Buberian Pedagogy

What the educator wants to hear is the "how to" of pedagogy. In this context, Buber's educational writings will be deeply frustrating and disappointing to the average reader for he has none of these to offer, nor does he even write in this vein.

Even the few descriptions he offers of his own applications of his theory would mislead the reader if he were to see them as patterns for imitation. They should remain Buber's applications, developed by his particular

personality out of his situation. Buber communicates to us a philosophy, not his own applications; a way, not a specific methodology. Should we accept his contention that his philosophy is inherent in each of us, validated by our own experience, we must follow, each by finding his own unique application.

Education, to Buber is an art far more than a science; a meeting of persons more than an application of a technique or a giving of information; a realization of human potential more than a training of the mind or body.

Martin Buber's contribution to education, then, is not on the surface of technique, but in the basic area of a philosophical foundation for education. And as one truly comes to focus education into this deeper, anthropological level, he sees how close is the connection between philosophy and education. Following Buber, he also sees that such a philosophy of education is profoundly dynamic and relevant because it answers the radical needs of the present situation. What Buber offers us, then, is the foundation out of which our educational work can successfully and effectively proceed.

The intent of this section of the chapter is not so much to introduce new material, although this will be done, but to weave into the educational situation the variety of threads drawn from the prior Buberian philosophical considerations. First, we will look at education through

Buber's dialogical-dialectical frame of reference, then follow by an exposition of the critical teacher-student relationship, and conclude with a study of the "world" selected and embodied by the teacher. Under these three points can we best survey Buber's theory of curriculum.

### Dialogical Education

Education in our time has been dominated by the "transmission of values" concept, a euphemism for a political education in which one generation imposes its values on the next in such a manner that the younger assumes them as if these values were their own. This concept is both inspired by and fosters in others a political vision of life, man to man. Each sees every other man as a being of productivity of varying capacity. Each is to be met and employed in his specific capacity in whatever way will further the first individual's ends.

All of our public life and all of its relations are patterned on this basic political model. It pervades even our personal life which allows only now and then, the intrusion of love and friendship--a momentary experience of the Thou--"after which man, as if nothing has happened, resumes at any given time the usual practice."<sup>7</sup> When we apply this political pattern to a relation between adult and child, we have what is generally called "education":

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<sup>7</sup>Martin Buber, Believing Humanism, trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 99.



a utilitarian relationship in which the child is recognized to have certain capacities for productivity which are to be nurtured, managed and exploited for some local or national purpose.

Man is experiencing a turning and a breaking-through of this political dominance into a new social order. And within it, Buber sees a new education opening up, based on an entirely new valuation, man to man. For all his common traits, each is to be recognized as a unique person. He is to be made conscious of this value which he alone is and is capable of becoming. He is to be made conscious of the world of Thou which waits and meets him in every situation.

In this new form, it is not instruction which educates, but the instructor. Contact is the primary word. The teacher is to be the medium of the new education, not as a conveyor of information, but as a human being before human beings. And the teacher, not as a director from above to the uninformed below, but in genuine interaction. This is what Buber calls the dialogical principle in education. It does not form the exclusive element in his new form of education which he perceives, but it is the heart and soul of it. The "political" remains but not as the dominant, let alone exclusive, theme. That which truly educates is the relationship "between" teacher and student. It is the person of the teacher more than his content, in his being more than in his calculated intention which educates the student. The

goal of the curriculum is the formation of a man capable of a Thou relationship with his environment. The individual as an object of knowledge lying before the It world, is to be transformed into a person who encounters the Thou world. Education, then, is far more the present formation of character than the communication of past information or past values. In a word, Buber awakens us to a dialogical education.

### Embracing the Polarities

Not only is Buber's educational philosophy dialogical, but dialectical as well, following a dialectical development which clearly parallels the dialectical alternation of all existence. This can be more clearly exposed by first discussing the two educational polarities dealt with by Buber, and then by placing them into his dynamically unfolding pattern.

Under a variety of descriptive terms, each with its own nuance, Buber sees the first pole occupied by the traditional form of education, which concerns itself with content, with the giving of knowledge, and with clear and distinct concepts. This form pours education into the student in the manner of a "funnel." Its teacher is a "sculptor" who wishes to impress his preconceived image on to his student.

The first pole of instruction is opposed by Buber to its alternate pole, the formation of character. This



second polarity, closer to Buber's concept but lacking the dialectic, is occupied by the progressive form of education, and concerns itself with process, with the creative freedom of the student, and with "doing." This form draws education out of the student in the manner of a "pump," and its teacher is a "gardener" who provides for the student but trusts his inner natural growth without interference.

Educationally, Buber can identify with much of the thinking of either polarity, but not with all of it, nor can he accept either exclusive of the other.

Sculptors have too much confidence in themselves and their pre-set patterns, thinks Buber, and have forgotten the creativity of the student. Students have many potentialities, not one; they are plastic and should be given greater initiative and responsibility. A resolute opponent to the compulsive rigidity of this polarity, Buber nevertheless respects and endorses their concern for the clarification of concepts as a presupposition of education and their desire to meet the "great ideas" of other ages. As noted, one of the accents of Buber's education is the need to encounter other world-views in true dialogue rather than to exclude them as affronts to one's own "valid" world-view.

The Gardener has not enough confidence in himself; he believes in the goodness of the student, but also that he is predetermined by his potentialities. This makes the



teacher a humble but passive educator who often falls into excessive indulgence. Responding to the child's creative instinct, the progressive educator raises the standard of "freedom" as the great panacea of all education's ills. But like its counterpart in Buber's philosophy, the world of Thou, freedom would be disastrous if left to its own ways. Buber appraises it:

I love freedom, but I do not believe in it. How could one believe in it after looking in its face: It is the flash of a significance comprising all meanings, of a possibility comprising all potentiality. For it we fight, again and again, from of old, victorious and in vain.<sup>8</sup>

Freedom is imaginative of all possibilities, but it lacks direction--the necessary It to give it structure, solidarity, and continuity. Freedom is a foot-bridge, not a dwelling place for education; it is the means which leads us to the end of communion. Communion alone bridges sculptor and gardener, funnel and pump, traditional and progressive. Communion, not freedom, is the fundamental task of education.

In response to a Hutchins or a Maritain, Buber is uncomfortable with the permanent division of man into body and soul, as he is with a theory of curriculum which seeks to develop the mind of man as something separate from the remainder of his personality. But on the other hand, the "whole man" of a Dewey, considered as an individuality collected as so many parts from the natural environment,

<sup>8</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 91.

is only the substratum for the personal "whole man" intended by Buber. And the object of Dewey's education, the empirical world to be verified by scientific investigation, closely resembles Buber's world of It, not his world of Thou. The object of Buber's education is rather the authentication of the student's own truth in the whole of his personal life.

Clearly, Buber would not have opposed the teaching machines and programmed education of B. F. Skinner when used as instrumental methods to give knowledge and concepts, but he would be opposed to their exclusive or even dominant use in a "scientific education" which places the teacher to one side allowing the far more effective machine to do the central work of "teaching." On the other hand, he would have equally opposed Carl Rogers who also places the teacher to one side as a resource provider and facilitator of the educational process, admitting that he cannot teach and that the student learns far better when left to his own devices. For Buber, the teacher and the relationship between teacher and student, is the indispensable heart of education. Without this relation, education masks as attempted magic which "desires to obtain its effects without entering into relation, and practices its tricks in the void."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 83.

The Dialectical Alternation of Education

Originally, remarks Buber, there was no "educational system" but only the "master." Bearing a semblance to the original state of the primeval Thou, Buber describes this medieval educational situation as a simple, instinctive and unconscious education where the apprentice and journeyman lived with the master, whether philosopher or craftsman, learning his handiwork and brainwork.

But they also learned, without either their or his being concerned with it, they learned, without noticing they did, the mystery of personal life: they received the spirit.<sup>10</sup>

But in the process of growth, society's education has become "distanced" and we have now separated original education into formal school, the institutional, and personal formation, the educational. And unfortunately, it is the distanced institution which usually dominates the relational education. While the present state is often far less satisfactory than the former, we cannot realistically think of returning to that earlier, unified relationship. Rather we must accept reality as it stands here and now, and yet seek some transformation of it by awakening the dialogical relationship within it. "Education has lost the paradise of pure instinctiveness and now consciously serves as the plough of the bread of life."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), pp. 89-90.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



Social development away from more organic forms and into an industrialized society has required this conscious, formal institution for education called schooling. Here, the content of an education, the concepts and information, skills and cultural patterns, are consciously imposed into the student. The genuine education, unconsciously communicated through the personal relationship with the "master" has been pressed to one side and made that exceptional "something" which occurs only "on the heights."

It is clearly unrealistic to condemn the schooling and propose a return to the structureless education of the past, just as it is unrealistic to condemn the It and propose a life with the structureless Thou. Such a venture, so strongly recommended by contemporary romantic educators, could never survive for long. Rather, one must enter into the dialectical alternation, meet the formalized schooling with personal relationship, and gradually humanize it through alternation. As the simple man, who has distanced himself, must begin his long, patient growth to become the perfect man, so education, once distanced from the "master" experience, must begin its gradual ascent, continually humanizing its institutions, until it becomes a matured, relational education.

The fact of life of this dialectic is the presence of tension. Those concerned with demonstrable progress in content and order will see the nebulous concerns of the

humanizers as threats to their stability. In turn, the humanizers will see all order and structure as threats to spontaneous relationships. It is always the line of demarcation which must be sought, the point of tension which will achieve the optimum of growth.

The key factor in Buber's humanizing dialectic, then, is the teacher. It is he who must strive to bring his "content" and "information" within himself, personalizing it and thereby making himself "a selection of the effective world." He alone, in his relationship with his students, partially restores the spiritual quality of the "master," educates the student, and humanizes the school.

Buber's education is essentially dialogical, not in a static, uniform sense, but rather in the dynamic alternating pattern of the dialectic.

#### The Teacher-Student Relationship

The personality of the teacher occupies the central position in Buber's educational picture. Understandably, if education is to be founded on mutuality, people rather than systems must be the key factor. And the one person who occupies the immediate relational role and bears the responsibility for mutuality in the actual educational situation is the teacher. Yet it becomes immediately obvious that the qualities of personality called for by Buber, are rare indeed. If there is to be a change in education, there must be a change in the educator, and this

means that we must begin with the education of the educator. If the teacher must be a personality of unusually humanistic quality, the teacher of teachers, the college and university professor must above all be a man of great quality and stature. Can the dynamics of the educational relationship required of this teacher be more precisely defined? What is unique about this educational relationship?

As a professional, the teacher comes to the classroom armed with his expertise--a fund of knowledge and a methodology--with which he strives to objectivize the abyss of energy and confusion which sits before him into a program which can, to some degree, be handled. And he does make a contribution when he clarifies concepts and brings new information and resources to the student. But there comes a moment when the educator begins to suspect that, at least in this situation, then perhaps in all, something entirely other is demanded of him. He must step out of his correct methodological objectification and out of his professional superiority, achieved and guaranteed by training and practice, "into the elementary situation between one who calls and one who is called." Once having "met" and helped his student in this particular educational relationship, the teacher returns to his former mode of operation, but as a changed person. He returns to it as one for whom the necessity of genuine personal meetings in the depths of human existence between one in need of help and the helper has

been revealed. As a result, he both modifies his method according to his experience and is himself modified into a realizing man as well.

This relationship, newly discovered and realized to be the true educational relationship, is not that of full mutuality. Such would be a relationship of friendship and not educative. In the "Postscript" added to I and Thou, Buber says, "there are some I-Thou relationships which in their nature may not unfold to full maturity if they are to persist in their nature."<sup>12</sup>

In order to help the realization of the best potentialities in the pupil's life, the teacher must really mean him as the definite person he is in his potentiality and his actuality; more precisely, he must not know him as a mere sum of qualities, striving and inhibitions, he must be aware of him as a whole being and affirm him in this wholeness. But he can only do this if he meets him again and again as his partner in a bipolar situation. And in order that his effect upon him may be a unified and significant one he must also live this situation, again and again, in all its moments not merely from his own end, but also from that of his partner; he must practice the kind of realization which I call inclusion.<sup>13</sup>

The educator must stand well grounded at his own pole in this bi-polar relationship, but also, with his strength, make present the other side. He must reach over and experience the effect of his own action as the student experiences it. He experiences the student's being educated, but the

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<sup>12</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958), p. 131.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

student cannot experience the educating of the teacher.<sup>14</sup> The specific educational quality of the relationship would come to an end the moment the student thought of and succeeded in practicing inclusion, experiencing the event from the teacher's pole as well. Education is only possible to the one who lives over against the other, and yet is detached.

This conception of Buber's does not exclude a feeling of equality and mutuality between teacher and student. The feeling of mutuality is not the same as being in full mutuality with the student. There is a distinction between the ontological, often unconscious but real situation of onesidedness between teacher and student, and the psychic situation in which the attitude of the teacher is one of openness to learning and equality of relationship. The interchange between the matured mind and the mind that is still in the process of formation must be genuine; the experiences of both sides are of importance. The teacher does not question to evaluate the student's knowledge, nor to "Socratically" lead him to a new truth known beforehand by the teacher, but questions genuinely to seek information from the experience and concerns of the student. And the teacher's reply to the student's questions should, in turn, proceed from the teacher's own personal experience.

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 100.

Nevertheless, more important than his feeling of equality and mutuality is the involuntary influence the teacher has on the student through his mature life. This ontological relationship of inclusion, epitomized in Buber's Hasidic Zaddik, is found in society, especially in the three helping relationships of the priest with his parishioner, the psychotherapist with his patient, and teacher with his student. As their inclusive relationship is the same, so their task of existential healing is the same.

The two enemies of the powerful inclusive relationship of the teacher are Eros and the will-to-power. Eros is a subjective attitude which seeks to experience and enjoy his students. He selects and possesses, but all from his own side and without the perception of inclusion. Eros chooses, but his choice is made on self-inclusion.

Similar to the propagandist, will-to-power seeks to use the student by imposing the teacher's will and opinions on him and thereby shape him into the teacher's image rather than confirming him in his own. This will-to-power often inflates itself by claiming the authority of history, but when this authority begins to decay, the will becomes near-dictatorial as it seeks to maintain the passing historic realm through the student.

Both Eros and will-to-power are destructive of the educative relationship; only through inclusion can they be transformed.

Only an inclusive will to power is able to take the lead; only an inclusive Eros is love. Inclusiveness is the complete realization of the submissive person, the desired person, the "partner" not by fancy but by the actuality of the being.<sup>15</sup>

Buber calls this practice the asceticism of teaching, or again, the tragic role of the teacher. In his meeting, the teacher must put aside all desire to dominate or enjoy the student, for this will destroy the student's educative growth. ". . . either he takes on himself the tragedy of the person, and offers an unblemished daily sacrifice, or the fire enters his works and consumes it."<sup>16</sup> He must practice that asceticism which does not select those with whom he will enter relation, but must accept them as they are presented to him.

He sees them crouching at the desks, indiscriminately flung together, the misshapen and the well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and the noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all.<sup>17</sup>

His asceticism requires him to embrace the "worlds" before him, and to assume his responsibility to influence them, but not to interfere in their growth.

The role of the teacher is tragic also because he can never achieve perfection in his work of teaching. In most cases, learning is too fragmentary and seldom evidences itself in a completely existential healing as is the case

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

with psychotherapy. One meets; one embraces; one confirms his student, but seldom may one perceive and experience the full personal transformation that is sought in the educational relationship.

The inclusive relationship is not at all common; some never offer it and some offer it ever again in vain. But once the teacher has experienced the inclusive relationship, a mere elaboration of further subjective relationships of Eros and will-to-power are never again possible nor tolerable to him.<sup>18</sup>

Although he cannot continue without interruption in this inclusive relationship with each student, he now has realized within himself a capacity of Thou-openness for the student which spans over each individual encounter. This is the teacher's responsibility for the student, a continuum based on his confidence in the Thou existence of reality as evidenced in this particular student. Responsibility is the continuum in the teacher which binds together each spontaneous inclusive Thou meeting and allows the entire educative relationship to survive the inevitable, intermittent returns to the world of It.

What is the educative effect experienced by the student who lives in this inclusive relationship?

First, let it be said clearly that the goal of inclusion is not self-realization. Self-realization is a

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 97.





by-product but the goal is completing distance by relation and relation means confirmation, mutuality, and genuine dialogue.

The primary task of education is to awaken in the student the need to communicate. There is in the child an instinct for communion, i.e., a longing for the world to become present to him as a person "which goes out to us as to it, which chooses and recognizes us as we do it, which is confirmed in us as we in it."<sup>19</sup> It is the task of education to keep this longing, this "pain" alive in the individual and to encourage him to bring it into fulfillment.

This task is called primary in a chronological rather than an hierarchical sense; it is the presupposition to the task of education, the necessary step that enables this individual to become a person and thus make real education possible. How is it accomplished? Through the educator's own life in which he meets the everyday and its actions with his open participation. Through the teacher's trustworthiness, the student learns confidence; through the teacher's lived courage, the student learns courage, the courage to communicate himself.

The educator must also foster the other original forces, primarily the originator instinct, in which the child shares in the creation of forms. When encouraged to

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

the exclusion of the instinct for communion, the creative instinct leads to solitude and self-contradiction, but nevertheless, it is a prime force within the child and an essential "way" to the educated life.

The teacher must see the child as a creative event-- a new potentiality. True, he is heavily conditioned by what has come before--his social background, his parents, etc.; the causal I-It cannot be discounted--but the teacher must also see "in every hour, the human race begins."<sup>20</sup> The child is a creative event if ever there was one, newness rising up, primal potential might.

This potentiality, streaming unconquered, however much it is squandered, is the reality child: this phenomenon of uniqueness, which is more than just begetting and birth, this grace of beginning again and ever again.<sup>21</sup>

The educator must never allow himself to become blind to the immense possibility which sits before him in his classroom.

Future history is not inscribed already by the pen of a causal law on a roll which merely awaits unrolling; its characters are stamped by the unforeseeable decisions of future generations. The part to be played in this by everyone alive today, by every adolescent and child, is immeasurable, and immeasurable is our part if we are educators.<sup>22</sup>

A further task for the teacher is to balance the "line of demarcation" of the tension "between" him and his student in this educative inclusive relationship. There is

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 84.



an optimum level which allows the student the highest degree of learning and growth. If by the teacher's confirmation, the student achieves too much self-identity and "distance," he will be reluctant to risk new realizations and venture further encounters with the teacher. The inclusive relationship will collapse and the creative growth, education will come to an end.

If on the other hand, his relationship with his teacher lacks the corresponding distance and confirmation, the student will over-identify and tend backwards toward the primitive Thou. The educative relationship will dissolve into a unity and learning will cease. In the first case, the tension will be too great, in the second, too light. It is for the teacher to sense out the "line of demarcation" between the two, here encouraging more openness to the world of relationship, there confirming the student into more distance and self-identity, but ever seeking that optimum level of relation "between" where his student will enjoy the greatest learning.

This tension level should also be viewed inclusively from within the student: the tension between what he is and what he is able to become. Too little tension secures him in his present self-identity and he shuns all impetus to meeting new experiences and realizing further potentialities. But if he goes out to these potentialities too far too fast, he will lose his orientation and become dangerously anxious



and frustrated. The tension level will have become too intense and existential-learning will not occur. The student must make the necessary effort to incorporate what he learns; he must not lose his own "world," an essential basis of the learning dialectic. Education requires a healthy balance of tension between the present and the future, between the actual and the potential; it needs the properly monitored alternation. It needs the presence of the teacher to wrestle with the student against his less experienced self. And each situation requires that the teacher draw ever again the optimum "line of demarcation" between the two.

A fourth role of the teacher is that of confirmation. This response could superficially be described as the teacher's acceptance of the student and the communication of that acceptance. The student presents himself to the teacher, either honestly in his being or masked behind a seeming person. Then it is for the teacher (1) to communicate to the student out of himself the courage to disclose his true being in some manner, (2) to apperceive in a synthetic "wholeness" the true being of the student, both actual and potential, then (3) to confirm that being by consciously identifying with it, communicating this confirmation back to the student, and by demonstrably approving of his authentic being. This enables the student to know and be himself as he could not have done without his





relationship with the teacher to confirm him. As this is the primal responsibility among men--to confirm each other in their being, without which there is no human development--it is especially the primal task of the teacher.

But the work of confirmation goes beyond the surface description just given. The value of the student is not only what he is but equally all that he is capable of becoming. All of this goes to make up his human identity. The teacher must perceive the totality--not parts or a sum of parts, but a totality--the whole person. When his inclusive relationship allows him to respond to his student on the basis of this "whole vision," he is said to have made the student present. It is this "making present" which gives confirmation its educative power and importance.

Finally, in his individual relationships with his students, the teacher must strive to develop in each a conscience, i.e., he helps each become aware of his own value--who he is and what he is capable of becoming--by a variety of related tasks. His courage enables the student to see beyond the seeming man to his true being. He enables him to see his existential guilt by going beyond an objective statement into a full perception of the roots of his failure to become himself in the past and a full acceptance of the injury this has imposed upon the world about him. Both, conscience-vision and conscience-courage, are taught,



not through the teacher's instruction, but by his own existential vision and courage.

The teacher's responsibility is not exclusive to each student, one by one, but also to the class as a whole. Again, it is unfortunate that so many have misread Buber to insist that his I-Thou, and therefore his educative relationship, must be thought of on the one to one level. Community is essential in the educative process. As the teacher steps before his class for the first time, he sees what resembles far more Kierkegaard's public or Heidegger's mass than Buber's community. Yet, no device or technique can transform this group into a community. It cannot be established from without but must be responded to from within.

Community forms from the center, the teacher, and only secondarily extends around the periphery, student to student. It is the teacher who turns this collective or mass of individuals into a community by meeting each, one by one, and acquiring their confidence. They become community by responding to the need of the moment, to the concern of their present situation under the helping leadership of the teacher. Again, it is far more his qualities of personality "present" to them, his trust and confidence, rather than his directions which create this human bond. Community is the environment in which learning takes place; but more, it is the interpersonal dynamic of relationship itself under the encompassing responsibility and inclusive relationship of the teacher.



The community serves not only to create the optimum environment for the educative process, but responds to the needs of contemporary society at large. If the common form of education today is a type of propaganda called "education for citizenship" which attempts to impose an image preconceived as "idea" by the political, then the task of the Buberian teacher is to educate a generation with a true social outlook and will. This outlook comes from those who have experienced community and who intend to transform life from the political to the social by developing genuine communal "We's" as the pattern of society. Education is naturally social, not political, and the teacher today need only awaken anew in his students the desire and experience of community and thereby educate them for tomorrow's society.

The teacher is the here and now realization--in this situation and among these students--of the true helper, who, through his vision of the meaning of life, and courage to meet life in openness, communicates these two qualities to his students. While he refrains from moralizing, lecturing, or imposing, he nevertheless enables them to develop these qualities in their own lives. True education is the formation of character. It is based on a primal trust enabling the student to follow the teacher in confidence. True education is not technique, but genuine, inclusive relationship.

Teacher as a Selection of the World

The preceding discussion on the educative relationship between teacher and student must not lead the reader to think of education solely as an unfolding of latent potentialities before the teacher. "The growth of the spirit is no more an unfolding than that of the body."<sup>23</sup> Rather it is the world which educates; it is the world which engenders personhood out of the individual. "The world, that is the whole environment, nature and society, 'educates' the human being; it draws out his powers and makes him grasp and penetrate its objections."<sup>24</sup> Education, true education, is not autonomous but one form of the entire culture. Education is only the epitome of a large complex of relationships whose sum and "totality" is the culture.

What is properly called "education," means a selection by man of the effective world. Out of the endless variety of things which stream by the individual in a rather purposeless fashion, the educator consciously selects those which he feels forms a representative whole of the world totality. These forces are not only selected by the educator, they are selected within him. He becomes a living selection of the world. "He distinguishes, rejects, and confirms in himself, in his self which is filled with the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

world . . . . The educator educates himself to be their vehicle."<sup>25</sup>

In other discussions by Buber, the teacher is said to possess a world-view or a vision of the meaning of reality. The point to be stressed is that this selection of the world is not primarily intellectual or conceptual, but is existentially lived by the educators and existentially communicated to his students. He embodies this world selection in the authenticity of his personality. "In this way, through the educator, the world for the first time becomes the true subject of its effect."<sup>26</sup>

Buber, therefore, stresses that the teacher must first of all acquire the trust and confidence of his student. In his personality, the teacher bears into the classroom this embodiment of the world so that the student may encounter it and be educated by it through the teacher. But this requires that the student first freely give his confidence to the selection. He need not agree to toto with the content or accuracy of the teacher's world-view, but only that the teacher's world is a valid, authentic representation; that the selection has been faithfully drawn.

Once this necessary confidence has been conferred, the educative process can advance. The student begins by gaining access to his teacher's world-view and testing it with reality itself. In so doing, the student begins to

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

forge his own world-view for himself. Only by using a world-view, can the educator point to the real world; no other way is possible. He knows that one cannot have a world, but only a world-view. The question is always raised before both teacher and student: does my world-view further my living relationship with the world that is "viewed" or does it obstruct it?

And so the teacher has a two-fold influence upon his students: a founding one and a postulating one. He first helps the student found his own world-view tested deep in the soil of reality and enriching him in perspective and confidence. It offers him an access to the world and its working forces. Further, he educates the student to a "world-view conscience," i.e., to continually authenticate his world-view in the obligation of the thousand small realizations of it.

The teacher, in making himself a selection of the world, shall consider the above as preparatory to entering the classroom. But Buber offers further descriptions of how he should conduct himself in the classroom situation. His first admonition is to preserve, in this situation, the identity-indifference pattern basic to his ontology. Community is not a unity of like-minded individuals, but a genuine living together of men of complementary natures but different minds. Community is based on otherness bridged in



relationship. Differences are respected--they are the basis of relationship.

So in the classroom, Buber feels that the work of educators is to set groups with different world-views in direct relation to one another so that, in their dialogical exchanges with one another, each might refine his own self-identity and yet remain conscious of where its conceptual limitations fail to express the reality of the world itself. Only when world-views are set opposed to one another, or only when they are brought into a 'lived-relationship' with real life, can this fine "dialectical inner line," the new problematic peculiar to this world-view make itself visible.

In this situation with opposing world-views side by side, the teacher should never be anxious to solve obvious contradictions prematurely. One must embrace the whole, bear the contradiction, and allow the resolution to develop out of the embrace rather than artificially settle it by electing one side or another.

Conflicts will inevitably result from such a form of education where different world-views are encouraged, student to student, and student to teacher. But conflicts, when set in a healthy atmosphere, have an educational value.<sup>27</sup> The test of the teacher is his ability to not lessen the piercing impact of the knowledge in question, yet have on hand the healing word for the ego which advances this point

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

of view. If his opinion prevails over the student, he must support the student's acceptance; if the discussion ends in a stand off, he must "find the word of life which alone can help to overcome so difficult a situation."<sup>28</sup>

The teacher must help the student distinguish between a political use of a world-view, and an educational use. In the political, one holds his view rigidly and with a certainty of mind that allows him to defend it without hesitation and ambivalence to all attacks. He acts upon his world-view with complete confidence in its validity.

But such an attitude would be destructive of the educational situation. Here, the student must ever recognize the gap which lies between the limits of his view and the real world itself. He must be willing to continually adjust, out of the class experience, his view to a more radical reflection of reality. This flexibility is essential to learning.

The teacher's work of forming and testing world-views with his students is not limited in its importance to the classroom. This conversation extends to the community, over the land, and over generations. It develops a cultural view and gradually gives birth to a new cosmos with its accompanying new image of man. Such a world-to-live-in can never be invested by man, but is engendered by a culture--principally through its work of education. This is found

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

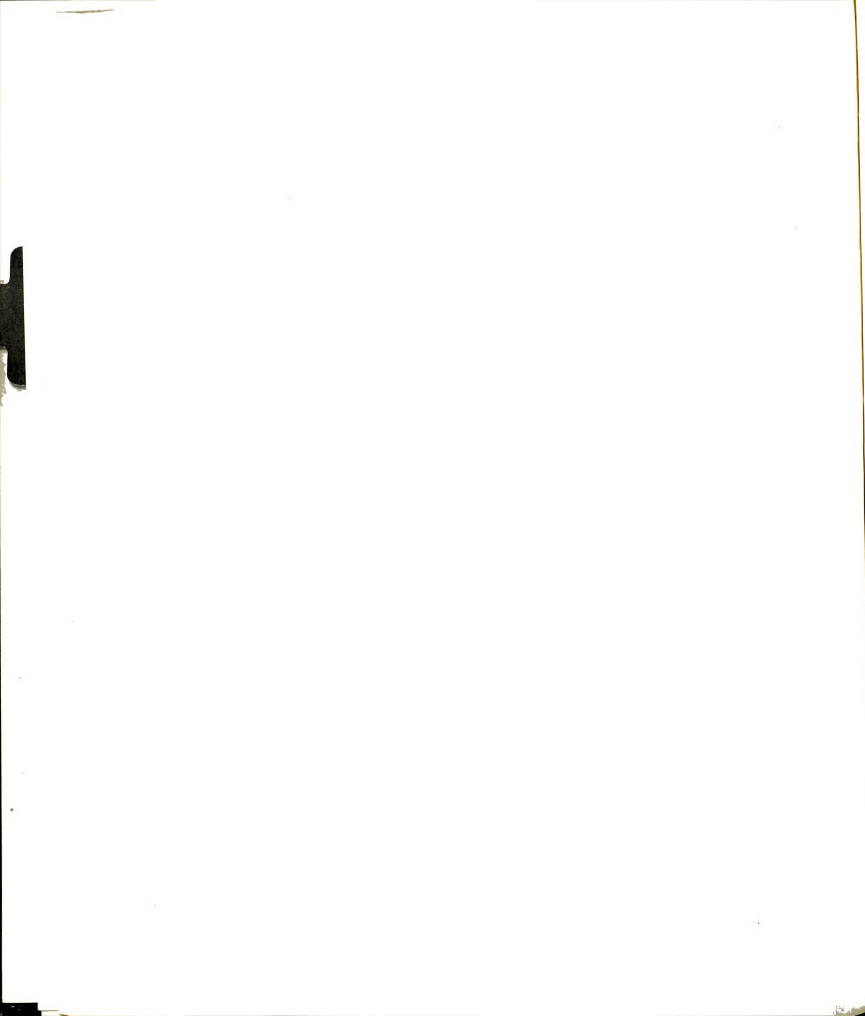
not only in the grammar schools, but throughout education's institutions, especially in the education of adults. Education not only develops character and gives identity, it not only forms and gives evaluation of men's world-views, it not only stirs up an image of man for a future tradition, but it actually gives birth to the very world in which man will live his future. It is the world which educates, but it is the dialogue of education which engenders the world.

#### Personal Reflections

It is very difficult to effectively investigate all of the various interesting aspects of this study. Without doubt this study of two tremendous individuals, outstanding because of their impact on existential thinking, could continue indefinitely. My regret is that since I have placed my own timetable on this particular study, I have not dealt with some of those interesting problems.

Several areas I feel need more investigation and thought are these: How would Sartre ensure that students avail themselves of all possible options in the area of subject matter to be mastered? In what areas are Sartre and Buber compatible in the discussion of curriculum theory? Where do they differ and why?

A complex and important task, I feel, would be to examine the implications for curriculum of a philosophy which states, "Hell is other people," and one that states, "In other people I find God." Here we find Sartre and



Buber in direct contrast as far as interpersonal relationships are concerned. How might they resolve this conflict? How do we?

This study was not meant to compare two outstanding individuals but to bring out the best of each in my search for an existential philosophy of curriculum.



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