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The unity of Buber's thought: the I-Thou in his ethics, social philosophy, epistemology and ontology.

Rudolf Zuckerstaetter

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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THE UNITY OF BUBER'S THOUGHT

ZUCKERSTAETTER

1961
THE UNITY OF BUBER'S THOUGHT

The I-Thou In His Ethics, Social Philosophy, Epistemology and Ontology

Rudolf Zuckerstaetter

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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In 1923 Martin Buber published his book *I and Thou*, in which he formulated for the first time his concept of the two fundamentally different types of relation of which man is capable: the I-Thou relation and the I-It relation.

In its formulation and in its importance for our time, I feel, this concept - which is at the same time the central theme of all of Buber's thought - is unique and outstanding.

It will be the purpose of this thesis, first, to give an account of Buber's concept of the I-Thou relation as opposed to the I-It relation, and secondly - and mainly - to elaborate and interpret Buber's views on religion and ethics, social philosophy, epistemology, and ontology in the light of his I-Thou philosophy. Lastly, a short comparison of the mentioned aspects of Buber's philosophy with the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Bergson, Whitehead, and with Hinduism and Buddhism will follow.
I-THCU and I-IT
Buber holds that man is capable of two fundamentally different attitudes, two radically different types of relation. These can be expressed with the primary words 'I-Thou' and 'I-It.' 'The spheres in which the world of relation arises are three.'

First, our life with nature. There the relation sways in gloom, beneath the level of speech. Creatures live and move over against us, but cannot come to us, and when we address them as Thou, our words cling to the threshold of speech.

Second, our life with men. There the relation is open and in the form of speech. We can give and accept the Thou.

Third, our life with spiritual beings. There the relation is clouded, yet it discloses itself; it does not use speech, yet begets it. We perceive no Thou, but nonetheless we feel we are addressed and we answer - forming, thinking, acting. We speak the primary word with our being, though we cannot utter Thou with our lips. (ITh p. 6)

**Authentic Personal Existence is Existence in the I-Thou**

A man can enter into an I-Thou relation only with his whole being, as a genuine person, while the I-It relation does not require such complete giving. It is not even possible that the primary word 'I-It' is spoken with the whole being.

The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being. (Ibid. p. 3)

The I-Thou relation - also called 'dialogical relation' or 'true relation' - is a relation of person to person, of subject to subject. It is characterized by mutuality, direct-
ness, presentness, intensity, and ineffability. The I-It relation, on the other hand, is a relation of individual to thing, of subject to object, usually involving some form of utilization, domination, or control.

The 'I' in the two relations is not the same. While the 'I' in the I-It relation is an 'individual,' the 'I' in the I-Thou relationship is a 'person.' Only the silent or spoken dialogue between the I and the Thou brings personality into being. Although we all are different from one another by virtue of heredity, we are not necessarily persons. By virtue of our heredity we differ only as individuals. Personalities come into being only insofar as the individual enters into dialogical relationships with others. 'Personality is neither simply an individual matter, nor a social product, but a function of relationship... Our personalities are called into being by those who enter into relationship with us... To become a person means to become someone who responds to what happens from a center of inwardness.' (Fried pp. 60-61)

The Dialogical Meeting Defies Causality and Fate

In the dialogical meeting, i.e. in the I-Thou relationship, man is no longer subject to causality and fate. Both belong to the realm of the world of It and receive their meaning therefrom. Unlike the It, the Thou is not determined. 'So long,' says Buber,

as the heaven of Thou is spread out over me the winds
of causality cower at my heels, and the whirlpool of fate stays its course. (ITh p. 9)

'He who goes out to the Thou with concentrated being and risen power to enter into relation becomes aware of freedom.' (Ibid. p. 58) 'He who knows about the presence of the Thou is capable of decision.' (Ibid. p. 51) Only

in times of sickness... the world of It is no longer penetrated and fructified by the inflowing world of Thou as by living streams but separated and stagnant... then smooth causality rises up till it is an oppressive, stifling fate. (Ibid. pp. 53-54)

The I-Thou is not in Space and Time

Meeting the Thou is also not in space and time, but space and time are in the meeting. While the I of the I-It experiences moments which have no present content since they are filled with experiencing and using, the present of the I-Thou is something real and filling; it is an end in itself. It is not the abstract point between past and future, but the present filled with intensity and wholeness. (Ibid. pp. 9,12; Fried p. 58)

Mutuality of the I-Thou

In order to be fully real, the I-Thou relationship has to be mutual. This mutuality of the I-Thou is so unconditional, that even God seems to be subject to it. Buber says:

You know always in your heart that you need God more
than everything. But do you not know too that God needs you - in the fullness of His eternity needs you?...You need God in order to be - and God needs you for the very meaning of your life. (ITh p. 82)

However, 'mutuality' in this context must not be confused with unity or identity, neither is it any sort of empathy. 'Although I-Thou is the word of relation and togetherness,' writes Friedman, 'each of the members of the relation really remains himself, and that means really different from the other. Though the Thou is not another It, it is also not another I. A man who treats a person as another I does not really see that person, but only a projected image of himself. Such a relation, despite the warmest "personal" feeling is really I-It.' (Fried p. 61) The dialogical relationship Buber is talking about always requires two. The I and the Thou never melt into one another.

Every Thou in this World has to Become an It

Buber realizes that although authentic existence is existence in the I-Thou - in the life of dialogue - living in this world does not allow the human being to remain permanently in the I-Thou relation. For in order to survive we have to know, control, and use things and even human beings. We often have to de-personalize and de-humanize our fellow-men, have to treat them as objects rather than persons - make them to mere Its. 'This is the exalted melancholy of our fate,' says Buber,
that sometime every Thou in our world must become an It... Every Thou in the world is, by its nature, fated to become a thing, continually to re-enter into the condition of things... The It is the eternal chrysalis, the Thou the eternal butterfly. (ITh p. 116)

The particular Thou, after the relational event has run its course, is bound to become an It. The particular It, by entering the relational event, may become a Thou. These are the two privileges of the world of It. (Ibid. p. 33)

God is the Eternal Thou

Even God we sometimes treat as though He were an object, an It. Yet, Buber says, God is the only Thou that never, by its very nature, ceases completely to be a Thou for us. Everyone who knows God, knows also very well the remoteness from God, but he does not know the complete absence of God.

It is we only who are not always there... By its nature the Eternal Thou is eternally Thou, only our own nature compels us to draw it into the world and the talk of It. (Ibid. pp. 99-100)

But by virtue of the privilege of pure relation to the Eternal Thou in which 'potential being is simply actual being,' there always 'exists the unbroken world of Thou' in which 'the isolated moments of relation are bound up in a life of world solidarity.' Similarly, just as man, by virtue of the Presence of the Eternal Thou, can never become a complete It, so - on account of his limitations as a human being - he can never become a pure Thou. 'No man,' says Buber, 'is pure person Likewise, and no man is pure individuality Likewise.' (Ibid. p. 65)
Relation is Good, Alienation is Evil

Since, as was stated above, our personalities are called into being through our entering into relationship with others, it is the relation of our Self to the Thou which, for Buber, constitutes the essence of Selfhood. Authentic personal existence emerges only in the meeting of others. Entering into relation is the fact through which we constitute ourselves as human beings, as true persons. 'Through the Thou a man becomes I.' (Ibid. p. 28) 'I become through my relation to the Thou.' (Ibid. p. 11)

It is, thus, man's true relation to the Other which brings him into contact with reality. His I-It relation, on the other hand, drives man into bare unreality. On the basis of this fundamental belief, Buber holds that it follows that the I-Thou relation is good, while the I-It relation, that is, alienation from the Thou, is evil.

Complete alienation from the Thou, however - as was stated above - is never possible. By virtue of the presence of the Eternal Thou 'we are not given up to alienation from the world and the loss of reality by the I - to domination by the ghostly.' (Ibid. p. 100) Without this unbroken world of I-Thou there would be no assurance for man that his relation would not fall into complete dualism of I-It; there would be no guarantee of his being able to transform any I-It into I-Thou, and of evil's becoming radically real and absolute. (Fried p. 73)
The World of It is not an Unqualified Evil

Although, in general, alienation from the Thou is evil, it would be incorrect to say that the I-It relation is completely bad. For the world of It - though detrimental when dominating the life of dialogue - is absolutely necessary for man to live and survive. For example, man's drive to possess things insofar as it is directed at things which we need for survival is necessary; consequently it is not bad. Impulses in themselves are not evil. Only when man lets loose his drives instead of controlling (not suppressing) them, if he does not give them the proper direction by the I-Thou, do they become It in the evil sense.

Man's will to profit and to be powerful have their natural and proper effect so long as they are linked with, and upheld by, his will to enter into relation. There is no evil impulse till the impulse has been separated from the being. (ITh p. 48)

Thus, on account of man's limitation - he needs the world of It for his survival - the I-It is unavoidable. It is therefore not existence, but predominance of the I-It over the I-Thou that is the source of evil. 'Without it,' says Buber,

man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man. (Ibid. p. 34) The more man, humanity, is mastered by individuality, the deeper does the I sink into unreality (Ibid. p. 65). /For/ all real living is meeting. (Ibid. p. 11)

Thus, although it is man's fate that he can never completely dispense with the world of It, he must constantly strive
for the subordination of the I-It to the I-Thou

All Real Living is Meeting and Meeting Requires Personal Wholeness, Being a Single One, Making the Other Present, Total Inclusion of the Other, Experiencing the Other Side, Mutual Confirmation, Direction, and Responsibility

As against the exclusive life of I-It, there is the self-giving love of genuine relation, there is the going out in order to meet the Thou. This entering into I-Thou relationship, however, must not be equated with emotions or feelings which remain within the I.

It is also not a matter of intimacy at all; this appears when it must, and if it is lacking, that's all there is to it. (FU pp. 144-145)

Rather, true relation is love that is between the I and the Thou. 'That,' says Buber,

is no metaphor, but the actual truth. Love does not cling to the I in such a way as to have the Thou only for its "content," its object; but love is between I and Thou. (ITh pp. 14-15)

'Feelings only dwell in man; but man dwells in love.' (loc. cit.) Love is 'blind,' and thus not real love or relation, 'so long as it does not see a whole being.' (Ibid. p. 16) The Eros of dialogue has the 'simplicity of fulness,' in it the lover turns to the other human being 'in his otherness, his independence, his self-reality.' The 'erotic man' of monologue, on the other hand, is concerned only with himself. He does not comprehend the beloved in his wholeness, but only mirrors himself in the
other, and enjoys his own feelings.

There a lover stamps around and is in love only with his passion. There one is wearing his differentiated feelings like medal-ribbons. There one is enjoying the adventures of his own fascinating effect. There one is gazing enraptured at the spectacle of his own supposed surrender. There one is collecting excitement. There one is displaying his "power." There one is preening himself with borrowed vitality. There one is delighting to exist simultaneously as himself and as an idol very unlike himself. There one is warming himself at the blaze of what has fallen to his lot. There one is experimenting. And so on and on - (BM pp. 29-30)

The true lover, however, turns to the beloved with 'all the power of intention' of his heart. He does not assimilate the other to his soul, but faithfully vows him to himself.

The essence of true love, of genuine relation, is thus, 'experiencing the other side,' (Ibid. p. 96) in its wholeness. It is complete inclusiveness of the other person in his particularity, in his actual being.

Only an inclusive Eros is love. Inclusiveness is the complete realization of...the "partner," not by the fancy but by the actuality of being. (Ibid. p. 97)

Inclusiveness, however, must not be identified with 'empathy,' for the latter entails the 'exclusion of one's concreteness, the extinguishing of the actual situation of life, the absorption in pure aestheticism of the reality in which one participates.' True inclusiveness, on the other hand, has nothing to do with 'transposing' oneself into the other one or with suppressing one's Self, but it means the
extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfilment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates. (loc. cit.)

It means a relation between two persons, 'an event experienced by them in common;' it means that the participating persons, 'without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of [their] activity, at the same time live through the common event from the standpoint of the other.' (loc. cit.)

A relationship that is not inclusive is not a true dialogical relationship. Only

a relation between persons that is characterized in a more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation. (loc. cit.)

The stronger and the more mutual this common experience is, the truer is the dialogical relation. In true relation, thus, it is not enough to include the other one in his otherness, but to bring the totality of one's authentic being to the meeting too. In order to make this possible, man has to become a Single One, a true person; he must not suppress his Self.

Man can have dealings with the [Thou] only as a Single One, as a man who has become a Single One. (Ibid. p. 43)

A man of the 'crowd,' a Massenmensch, cannot enter into a dialogical relation.

One can do this only as a Single One, through having become a person with the complete and independent
responsibility of singleness. (Ibid. p. 173)

Only the man who has become a Single One, a self, a real person, is able to have a complete relation of his life to the other self...It is true that the child says Thou before it learns to say I; but on the height of personal existence one must be truly able to say I in order to know the mystery of the Thou in its whole truth. (Ibid. p. 175)

Not before man can say I in perfect reality...can he in perfect reality say Thou. (Ibid. p. 116)

Only if authentic personalities enter into relationship with one another can the dialogue in turn be authentic.

Once man has achieved personal wholeness, 'personal unity, unity of being, unity of love, unity of action - unity of being, life and action together' - which, however, 'does not mean a static unity of the uniform, but the great dynamic unity of the multiform in which multiformity is formed into unity of character' (Ibid. p. 116) - man is ready to enter into dialogical relationships with others. For, by virtue of his wholeness and authenticity the Single One will experience his uniqueness, his vocation, and his direction as given to him by God. (This awareness of his unique way to God is neither conscious nor subconscious but is at the very center of ourself as I; in the end it is a mystery, (cf. Fried p. 96))

This awareness of direction is absolutely necessary along with man's wholeness, since only the actual union of 'direction' and personal unity will enable man to achieve complete authenticity and wholeness. True and complete wholeness of man is not exhausted by the 'totality
which comprises and integrates all his capacities, powers, qualities, and urges' (IW p. 175) - Buber calls it Spirit-, neither is the mere awareness of 'direction' sufficient for man's perfect authenticity. But man's full realization depends upon his entering into relationship with the Other, that is, upon his actual living according to the God-given direction with the united powers of his being.

This state of man as a united being working into the direction, Buber calls 'responsibility.' It is the essence of man's life, and without it man is not a man.

Being truly responsible means that man is ready to respond to everything that addresses him, to every - ultimately God-given - 'sign,' with his whole being, that he embraces it fully by making it completely present to him, in its full reality, uniqueness, and otherness. It means that man affirms his Thou in the middle of 'simple, unexalted, unselected reality,' (PU p. 135) that he accepts what he meets as it is, with courage, not shunning any problematic, danger, etc., that is connected with it. It means that he answers from the depths of his soul to the mystery of the Other.

The monological man, in opposition to the dialogical and truly responsible man, is not aware of the 'otherness' of the other, but he attempts to incorporate the other into himself. This attitude of the non-dialogical man Buber calls 'Rückbiegung,' reflexion. It is a bending back on oneself and not a 'turning away as opposed to turning
towards.' 'Reflexion' is also different from egoism or egotism. But it means man's withdrawal from the acceptance of the other one in his particularity and otherness, his inability and unwillingness to see more in the other one than those parts which correspond to himself.

It is not that a man is concerned with himself, considers himself, fingers himself, enjoys, idolizes and bemoans himself; all that can be added, but it is not integral to reflexion... I term it reflexion when a man withdraws from accepting with his essential being another person in his particularity - a particularity which is by no means to be circumscribed by the circle of his own self, and though it substantially touches and moves his soul is in no way immanent in it - and lets the other exist only as his own experience, only as a "part of myself." (BMM pp. 23-24)

As a result of this reflexion, dialogue becomes a fiction. The mysterious intercourse between man and man becomes a game, and through the rejection of real life 'the essence of all reality begins to disintegrate.' (loc. cit.)

From this it follows that if the non-dialogical man were to strive for being able to enter into true relation, it would not be his self that would have to be given up, but that false self-asserting instinct that makes a man flee to the possessing of things before the unreliable, perilous world of relation which has neither density nor duration and cannot be surveyed. (1Th p. 78)

He has to exchange this self-will for genuine responsibility. For the truly dialogical response of man, unlike the conditional reflex of the self willed man, comes from the whole of his being, and it embraces the Thou in its totality, in
its unreduced otherness.

For that reason it was said earlier that the I-Thou relation is not subject to causality and fate. This does not mean, though, that the dialogical man acts without external influences, but it means that his response to what he meets in the world is a free response with his whole being to the Other in its uniqueness. The dialogical man is free from any psychological and social conditioning - which always entails a limitation of man's actions - he is free to react with the whole of his being to each concrete and new situation and is able to see in it the new and unique. Freedom and dependence merge here. In true relation, says Buber, you feel 'yourself to be simply dependent... and simply free. The unfree man, the monological man in the state of reflexion, on the other hand, sees in what he meets only the resemblances to himself and other things and persons he already knows. His actions are determined and defined by public opinion, social status or psychological conflicts. He cannot respond openly and freely but merely reacts to what he considers repetitions of former experiences, and to what he sees in terms of its usefulness.

Not only does the life of dialogue entail freedom but also self-confirmation, which in turn leads to greater authenticity and ever truer relation. Since every man, according to Buber's anthropology, needs self-confirmation, man - when he is not confirmed by others in his innermost
essence - has to resort to appearance. He will try to be what others want him to be in order to receive confirmation. By doing so, however, he has to deny his authenticity - consequently he is unable to enter into true dialogue since this requires wholeness and authenticity of one's self. Different is this, when men enter into relation with one another. For, since true relation means the making fully present of the other one in his uniqueness and wholeness there is no longer any need for denying one's self-hood in the aim of being confirmed, since one is confirmed in one's very essence.

Not always, of course, are we confirmed in our essence. And it is especially then when we have to have the courage to retain our authenticity, even if the price we have to pay for it is high. For only as a Single One, as a real self, can we truly meet the Other. And 'all real living is meeting.'

The True Life of Dialogue has to Include God, Man, and the World

The dialogical life of man - if it is to be authentic - must be triadic - it must include God, the Self, and God's creation, i.e. men and the world. True relation is essentially triadic. The responsibility of the Single One thus, must not be directed exclusively either towards God or Man, but it has to include both.

Although God is the primal Source of all creation, to
Whom everything must be directed and returned, and although it is only through grace and with His help that man can be redeemed, God wants man to come to Him by way of entering into relation with His creation. It is there that He will address us and where we can respond to Him and enter into relation with Him. Man, if he wants to meet and reach God has to hallow also His creation from the depths of his soul.

Consequently the I-Thou relation among men, and of man to the world, is essential and not unessential or coincidental, or simply a means to some further end which is thrown away once the end is obtained. It has intrinsic value.

Real relationship to God cannot be achieved on earth if real relationships to the world and to mankind are lacking... Both love of the Creator and love of that which He has created are finally one and the same. (AT p. 39) The man who loves God also loves him whom God loves. (Ibid. p. 37)

Man's dialogues with God and his fellow-men cannot really be separated from one another. For God is the Eternal Thou in whom

the extended lines of relation meet... Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou. By means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou. (ITh p. 75)

Life, says Huber, cannot be divided between a real relation with God and an unreal relation to the world.
You cannot both truly pray to God and profit by the world. He who knows the world as something by which he is to profit knows God also in the same way. (Ibid. p. 114)

Man's relation to God can be authentic and 'raised to constancy' only if he embodies in it 'the whole stuff of life...if he realizes God anew in the world according to his strength and to the measure of each day.' (Ibid. p. 114)

The relationship between God and man is a one-to-one relationship and an all-inclusive relationship at the same time. 'In the relation with God are unconditioned exclusiveness and unconditioned inclusiveness one and the same.' (Ibid. p. 78) While entering in an I-Thou relationship with a particular human being with His whole being, God at the same time leaves room for, even demands, an authentic relation of this man to his fellow-men. For him 'who enters on the absolute relation...everything is gathered up in the relation.' (loc. cit.)

For to step into pure relation with God is not to disregard everything but to see everything in the Thou, not to renounce the world but to establish it on its true basis. To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a man to reach God; but he who sees the world in Him stands in His presence. "Here world, there God" is the language of It; "God in the world" is another language of It; but to eliminate or leave behind nothing at all, to include the whole world in the Thou, to give the world its due and its truth, to include nothing beside God but everything in him - this is full and complete relation...Man do not find Him if they leave the world. Only he who goes out with his whole being to meet his Thou and carries to it all
being that is in the world, finds Him who cannot be sought. (Ibid. pp. 78-79)

Man cannot have a more direct relationship to God than the one via His creation. It would be 'foolish and hopeless,' writes Buber, for man to turn aside from the course of life in order to seek God. 'For there is nothing in which He could not be found.' Even if a man 'won all the wisdom of solitude and all the power of concentrated being he would still miss God.' (Ibid. p. 80)

The real God lets no shorter line reach him than each man's longest, which is the line embracing the world that is accessible to this man. For he, the real God, is the creator, and all beings stand before him in relation to one another in his creation, becoming useful in living with one another for his creative purpose. To teach an acosmic relation to God is not to know the creator. (BBM p. 52)

The Single One, thus, must not hold himself aloof from the crowd, rather, he is to spend his life in the 'body politic,' for the 'body politic' is the - at least potential - 'reservoir of otherness.' He has to do the paradoxical work of making the 'crowd no longer a crowd.' (Ibid. p. 65) The Single One, writes Friedman on Buber, is thus the truly responsible man who bears 'the unreduced claim of each particular hour in all its crudeness and disharmony and answer it out of the depths of his being. This responsibility does not exclude a man from membership in a group or community, but it means that true membership in a community includes a boundary to mem-
bership so that no group or person can hinder one's perception of what is spoken or one's answer from the ground of one's being.' (Fried pp. 93-94)

Similarly, as man's relation to God is not authentic if relation to mankind and the world is lacking, so is a true dialogue with human beings and the world possible only if the respective human beings, at the same time, have an I-Thou relationship with God.

Solitude, to be sure, is necessary now and then for it 'frees oneself from the intercourse of experiencing or using' thus preparing man for the supreme relation.

But if solitude means absence of relation, if solitude is the stronghold of isolation, where a man conducts a dialogue with himself - not in order to test and master himself for that which awaits him but in the enjoyment of the conformation of his soul - then we have the real fall of the spirit into spirituality. The man can advance to the last abyss, where in his self-delusion he imagines he has God in himself and is speaking with Him. But truly though God surrounds us and dwells in us, we never have Him in us. (I Th p. 104)

It is only in the simultaneous meeting of God, man, and the world that man can truly realize himself, meet God, and realize Him in this world. Only by walking on the 'narrow ridge' of true responsibility does he encounter reality and truth.
PART TWO
Ever since the appearance of *I and Thou* Buber has been a very productive writer, and he has shown an extended range of interests in different fields of knowledge. However, his later writings sustain an intimate connection to his *I and Thou*. Buber has shown in them the validity of the I-Thou for various fields; he has explored the implications of his I-Thou philosophy for ethics, religion, education, community, sociology, psychology, art, epistemology, ontology, and political theory. The I-Thou is an integral part of all of Buber philosophy. Buber himself, mentions Friedman, states in *Dialogisches Leben* that the purpose of all the essays and talks in the volume, written between 1922 and 1941, is to show a reality that has been forgotten, a reality of which I am today, as in the beginning of this work, certain that it is essential for the existence of man, mighty in meaning and in saving power...

'I and Thou' stands at the head while all the others stand in an illustrative and supplementary relation to it. (quoted by Fried p. 161)

Buber, however, is not a systematic thinker. 'I have no inclination to systematizing', Buber said himself in a letter to Friedman. (loc. cit.) His theories are spread out over a vast amount of writings and it is the reader's task to search for the fragments and then to fit them together to a whole.

It will be my aim in this second part of the thesis to undertake this task with respect to Buber's ethics and
religion, social philosophy, epistemology, and ontology. I shall attempt to elaborate Buber's views and to show how he integrated the above mentioned four disciplines into his philosophy of the I-Thou.
ETHICS and RELIGION
An account of Buber's ethical and religious doctrine can be documented more thoroughly than any other field of knowledge Buber has dealt with, such as epistemology. For, more than with any other subject has Buber dealt with the nature and redemption of evil. This is so, because for Buber the problem of evil is the central problem of human existence. In the end, the total attitude shown in man's life is an expression of his concept of good and evil. It underlies all evaluations, which in turn, are the central part of all fields of human thought, of all of man's decisions. It is decisive for man's life after death. Thus, although the problem of evil may be most relevant to, and seen most clearly in ethics (as defined traditionally), for Buber it bears great importance in all other fields of human enterprise, such as philosophical anthropology, psychology, social philosophy, and even politics. It receives concrete application in all fields of life and is no longer, as it was traditionally, restricted to ethics, metaphysics, and theology. 'Ethics,' thus, if it is to remain the label for the problem of good and evil, has to become a broader term including all of man's life, since in the end, man's concept of good and evil underlies all his evaluations and decisions.

Just as the concept of evil and ethics was widened by Buber so to pertain to man's total life, so does he conceive of Religion as embracing man's whole life. Consequently, a close inter-relationship and inseparableness between religion and ethics and the problem of evil - defined in its
broadest sense, as above - is necessitated. Religion, according to Buber, although not dealing directly with the distinction between good and evil, is intimately connected with it, since religion, that is, the binding to God, is possible only via the world, that is, it is dependent upon the good or bad life in this world. Only a good secular life allows for genuine religion. The redemption of evil, thus, - leading to a more complete relation with God, to a better religion - is as much a problem of ethics as of religion.

It is this view of religion and ethics as embracing the whole of man's life and as being inseparable, which accounts for Buber's emphasis, in all his writings, on the concept of religion and ethics.

According to these basic views of Buber I shall divide the present chapter into three main parts. The first one I intend to devote to an exposition of the nature and the problem of evil as viewed by Buber; in the second one I shall deal with Buber's conception of the inseparableness of religion from ethics - defined as being the basis of all of man's life; finally I shall give an account of the way which Buber suggests for the overcoming and redemption of evil.
I. **The Problem and Nature of Evil**

Buber's concept of evil - like the rest of his philosophy - cannot be labelled with traditional terms. Walking on the 'narrow ridge,' Buber overcomes and yet retains traditional and opposing views on the nature of evil.

**Evil is Real but Redeemable**

There are, on the whole, two major doctrines of evil: the first, reducing evil to an illusion, or to objective error of the mechanistic universe run by a first and impersonal cause, the second one, absolutizing evil as something radical, pure, and unredeemable. The first view sees good and evil as part of a higher unity, the second one looks at them as independent realities irreconcilably opposing one another. Especially in our modern age - where man, as pictured drastically by many existentialist writers, experiences a gnawing loneliness before a hostile universe and men with whom he only associates but whom he does not meet, where powers gained by scientific techniques seem to escape man's ability to integrate them into his life, where the most cruel wars are waged and where human life is degraded in a totalitarian system - man seems to be confronted with evil in a more intense way than ever before, the belief in the reality of evil is forced upon him, and consequently the two opposing views of evil, as pictured above, are driven to extremes. Evil cannot be regarded any longer as illusion,
rather, in order to escape the responsibilities of evil, man flees into a more and more complete determinism. The second view of evil, which conceives of evil as an absolute reality, either, if belief in God is retained, falls into an even more accentuated dualism between good and evil so to be able to maintain the idea of God as being absolutely good, or it may lead to an atheistic existentialism like Sartre's, Nietzsche's, and Heidegger's, which assigns the creation of reality to man himself. Here the absolutization of evil is at its peak. Evil, Sartre says, 'can in no way be turned, brought back, reduced, and incorporated into idealistic humanism... Evil... like Good [is] absolute... In spite of ourselves, we came to this conclusion, which will be shocking to lofty souls: Evil cannot be redeemed.' (Fried p. 14)

Buber's concept of evil is different from the two views indicated above. Its standpoint is in between, including a dialectical view of good and evil which sees evil as both real and redeemable, therefore not as something absolute, or as an illusion, or an objective error. Good, writes Friedman on Buber, 'cannot exist in solitary splendor, nor is it opposed by a radically separate evil with which it has nothing to do. Evil must exist in this middle position, but it is bound up with the good in such a way that both are parts of a larger process, of a greater whole, which is at once origin and goal. Thus evil is in one way or another recognized as having reality, even if only that
of a temporary accompaniment of unredeemed creation; but its reality is never permanent, nor is it ever completely divorced from the good. Hence it is capable of redemption by the process of the world spirit, the grace of God, or the redemptive activity of man.' (Fried p. 14)

**Good and Evil are Mutually Dependent Upon Each Other**

The redemption of evil, Buber feels, is made possible because evil — although it has 'emotional and ontological reality' (loc. cit.) — is not an absolute reality apart from the good. Rather, evil stands in dialectical relation with the good. 'Good and evil,' writes Buber, 'despair and hope, the power of destruction and the power of rebirth, dwell side by side.' (EG p. 21)

Good and evil are intimately bound together, requiring one another for their existence. Since evil for Buber is lack of direction, and good the finding of direction, the one direction, the mutual dependence of good and evil can readily be seen. For direction without something that can be given direction is valueless. Possibilities and forces, on the other hand, that do not receive guidance are futile. Moreover, the Thou, in order to be fully realized, has to have another Thou with which it can enter into relation. But it can only do so, if there is an It (evil) which can be permeated and transformed into a Thou.

Good and evil are thus 'strangely concerned with one another,' (EKK p. 78) and therefore
cannot be a pair of opposites like right and left or above and beneath. "Good" is the movement in the direction of home, "evil" is the aimless whirl of human potentialities without which nothing can be achieved and by which, if they take no direction but remain trapped in themselves, everything goes awry. (Fried p. 103 from BMM p. 78)

Good and evil must not be thought of as 'two poles, two opposite directions,...as belonging to the same kind of being, as the same in nature, but the antithesis of one another.' This may appear to be so only if good and evil are treated as ethical abstractions. In the actual context of life, however, where good and evil are 'existent states of human reality...the fundamental dissimilarity between the two in nature, structure and dynamics' is disclosed. (IGE pp. 62-63) Good and evil could not be connected the way they are if evil were a completely independent reality. The good needs evil for its development. 'Good,' says Friedman for Buber, 'can be maximized not through the rejection or conquest of evil but only through the transformation of evil, the use of its energy and passion in the service of good.' (Fried p. 15) Evil is not avoided or destroyed by the good; 'the divine force, /the source of all good/ which man actually encounters in life does not hover above the demonic, but penetrates it.' (EG p. 21)

Evil is Truly Encountered Only Within Oneself

Successful 'attack' on evil, feels Buber, is possible only if man knows about its nature and causes. The encounter with evil, from which the necessary knowledge can be gained,
however, is not possible as long as a man remains a stranger to himself. For, not from what man encounters outside himself can he attain the knowledge of evil, but only from his own inner experience.

I certainly gain no experience of evil when I meet my fellow-men. For in that case I can grasp it only from without, estrangedly or with hatred and contempt, in which case it really does not enter my vision; or else, I overcome it with my love and in that case I have no vision of it either. I experience it when I meet myself, within me, where no element of strangeness has divisive force and no love has redeeming force, there do I directly experience that something which would force me to betray God and which seeks to use for that purpose the powers of my own soul. (FSE p. 57)

Only when man comprehends the inner condition in which he is evil and knows what the condition was which now is lost and was considered 'good' formerly, does he attain access to knowledge about evil. In the world apart from man, i.e. in the world of ethical abstraction, evil exists only in the form of quite general opposites. This, however, as pointed out above, is not the true nature of evil. It is by introspection only, that evil can be perceived in its true nature, that it can be encountered and afterwards made demonstrable in the world. 'A man,' writes Huber, 'only knows factually what "evil" is insofar as he knows about himself, everything else to which he gives this name is merely mirrored illusion.' (IGE p. 33)

The encounter with evil through introspection is really first an address by an inner voice called 'conscience,' which tells man in an unmistakable way when he is doing wrong, and
also lets him know what it is that makes him evil. By 'conscience' Buber understands 'that court within the soul which concerns itself with the distinction between the right and the wrong in that which has been done and proceeds against that which has been determined as wrong.' (EG p. 86) 'It is the individual's awareness of what he is "in truth," of what, in his unique and non-repeatable created existence, he is intended to be.' (Ibid, pp. 95-96) It is the voice that tells man where to go when he 'confronts the demonic fullness of the possible conduct and actions given to the individual in this moment.' (Ibid, p. 96)

Conscience, however, is not a 'book of rules which can be looked up to discover what is to be done now, in this very hour,' it is not

the routine conscience, which is to be used, is being used and worn out, the play-on-the-surface conscience, ... but it is the unknown conscience in the ground of being which needs to be discovered ever anew... in the single composure of every genuine decision. The certainty produced by this consciousness is of course only a personal certainty; it is uncertain certainty; but what is here called person is the very person who is addressed and who answers. (BMM pp. 63-69)

Although this voice calling man to be what he has been created for occurs 'in the most varied strengths and degrees... and for the most part is stifled,' it is to some extent 'inherent in all men.' (EG p. 95)

From this 'fundamental awareness' of one's vocation (Bestimmung), especially
when it is fully present, the comparison between what one actually is and what one is intended to be can emerge. What is found is measured against the image, no so-called ideal image, nor anything imagined by man, but an image arising out of that mystery of being itself that we call person. (Ibid. p. 96)

When this comparison coincides with a discrepancy between the image of what one is called to be and what one really is, the feeling of guilt arises.

Each one who knows himself...as called to a work which has not been done, each one who has not fulfilled a task which he knows to be his own, each who did not remain faithful to his vocation which he had become certain of - each such person knows what it means to say that "his conscience smites him." (Ibid. p. 87)

Guilt, thus, comes about as a consequence of one's not being true to one's vocation, of one's not taking the direction indicated by his consciousness, a direction which is always a direction towards God via the human and natural Thou. Guilt arises when man avoids relation and dialogue.

If we are to discover the nature of evil in more detail, then, Buber feels, we must not consult psychology which tries to reduce conscience to a moral censorship of society and explains evil in terms of 'inhibitions' and 'repressions,' etc. Real encounter with evil is generically different from what is called self-analysis in modern psychology. The latter...is concerned to penetrate "behind" that which is remembered, to "reduce" it to the real elements assumed to have been "repressed." The former, on the other
hand, 'is to call to mind an occurrence as reliably, concretely and completely remembered as possible, which is entirely unreduced and undissected.' (IGE pp. 64-65)

Real knowledge about the intrinsic structure of evil is, thus, not gained by the psychologist who, in trying to remain "objective" undertakes 'a specific division of consciousness,' but it can be gained only with the 'unbroken wholeness of events' upon which only later on, after having gained the indispensable distance necessary for objective knowledge, he reflects, thus going beyond the 'psychological differentiations' accompanying the state of evil, to evil as an ontological reality. (BMI pp. 124-125)

**Interpretation of Myths - A Source for the Deeper Understanding of Evil**

If the deeper meaning of evil as an ontological reality, 'which transcends the anthropological' meaning, is to be grasped, Buber feels, man must make use of the truth found in the myths of the origin of evil. For in them 'the experience which has taken place (not "been gained") in factual encounters with evil in the world and the soul is directly embodied...without making the detour through conceptual or semiconceptual determinations.' (IGE pp. 57-58)

Only in form of myths can the meaning of evil be communicated to the generality of mankind. (Ibid. p. 12)

The precondition necessary for a right interpretation of these myths leading to an understanding of 'the human constitution and movement of evil' is the accord of man's
belief in evil, as gained from his own encounter with it, to the account of the myths. (Ibid. p. 58-59)

We are competent to interpret the myths of the origin of evil only by virtue of our personal experience of it, but they only lend it the character of truth. Only out of the conjunction of these two, primordial mythic intuition and directly experienced reality, does the light of the legitimate concept arise for this sphere too, probably the most obscure of all. (Ibid. p. 60)

Although this anthropological exposition of the myths is only an aid for man to understand them, 'its construction is indispensable... needs the bridge.' (Ibid. p. 12)

**Evil Emerges in Two Stages: Decisionlessness, Wrong Decision**

Buber sees evil emerging in two fundamentally different stages. In the first, which he finds typified in the Biblical stories of Adam and Eve, and Cain, evil is decisionlessness, directionlessness. Adam and Eve and Cain, holds Buber, did not decide between good and evil, but rather indulged in the imagination of possibilities of action; afterwards, almost without knowing it, they acted out one of these imaginations. Their action was, however, not the result of a firm decision but was triggered off because of an intensified indecision. 'In the vortex of indecision,... at the point of greatest provocation and least resistance' they acted. It was not baseness of the soul that caused the sinfulness of Adam, Eve, and Cain, but
the intervention...of the evil "imagery"...The wickedness is derived from its, the imagery's wickedness...Imagery is play with possibility, play as self-temptation, from which ever and again violence springs...This imagery of the possible, and in its nature, are called evil. (Ibid. p. 36)

Imagery in itself is not bad. It is good and evil, man's 'greatest danger and greatest opportunity at once.' (Ibid. p. 39) It is the seat of man's urges and passions 'without which he can neither beget nor bring forth, but which left to itself remains without direction and leads astray.' (Ibid. p. 42) It is thus directionlessness of possibility that causes man to be evil. In his confusion and indecision, 'in the swirling space of images...he grasps at them like a wanton burglar, not with decision, but only in order to overcome the tension of omnipossibility.' (Ibid. p. 37) Every human being, Buber holds, becomes time and again - usually in a period of evolution like puberty - aware of infinite possibility, in which the 'substantial threatens to be submerged in the potential.' In this 'swirling chaos of possibilities of action,' in this 'dizzy whirl,' the soul cannot be fixed. 'It strives to escape.' (Ibid. p. 67) This escape can take on two forms:

One is repeatedly offered it: it can clutch at any object, past which the vortex happens to carry it; or else, in response to a prompting that is still incomprehensible to itself, it can set about the audacious work of self-unification. In the former case, it exchanges an undirected possibility for an undirected reality, in which it does what it wills not to do, what is preposterous to it, the alien, the 'evil'; in the latter, if the work meets with
success, the soul has given up undirected plenitude in favor of the one taut string, the one stretched beam of direction. (Ibid. p. 68)

The type of evil involved in these Biblical myths of Adam and Eve and Cain is, thus, lack of direction, unguided and unbridled possibility and 'that which is done out of it...: grasping, seizing, devouring, compelling, seducing, exploiting, humiliating, torturing and destroying of what offers itself.' (Ibid. p. 71) This kind of evil is not the result of decision or action, it is the reflection upon it, a playing with its possible actualization. Its execution is only an unessential part in it. For the final decision to the evil act is no real decision, it is only a pseudo-decision. A real decision is a decision with one's whole being. But the decision resulting from the unbearableness of the swirling chaos of possibility is a mere flight, it is not made with one's whole being, and therefore, is a pseudo-decision. It involves only acts, no real choices.

In the second stage, typified by the Biblical stories of the Tower of Babel and the fall of Lucifer, and the Iranian myth of Yima, evil is no longer decisionlessness, but it is wrong decision, it is a decision of self-sufficiency against God. 'It is the existential lie in which man sees himself as self-creator.' (Fried p. 107)

According to the Iranian myth (which Buber chooses to deal with in detail), Yima, the primeval king, assumed domination over the world at the order of Ahura Mazda, the
highest god. Already, previously, had he entreated the Godhead to make him immortal and to attain power over the demons. Everything was granted to him. But Yima's hubris and self-adoration found no end; finally, after an enormous flood, he claimed

that what was only vouchsafed to him he had done himself; he saw himself as self-creator, through himself immortal and immortalizing, saw it as self-established self-grandeur that he held over the demons; he now live[d] and act[ed] according to this viewpoint; he thus committed... "the inner untruth against God and himself," more exactly: he committed with his existence the lie against being. (ILG pp. 53-54)

The people of Babel, and Lucifer - who imagined themselves god-like - committed the same existential lie against being.

The evil involved in these myths is different from decisionlessness. Here, evil results from an actual decision to evil. Only in this second stage does evil assume substance, it becomes 'obsessive and demonic.' (Will Herberg, The Writings of Martin Luther, p. 18) While in the first stage man is 'slipping and falling into evil,' in the second stage we 'deal with an entry or descent into evil.' (ILG p. 60) Thus, while the evil in the first stage involves an element of chance, accident, the evil of the second stage results from pure deliberation.

Although there is a fundamental difference between evil as decision and evil as indecision, there is no contradiction between them. 'In fact, they are supplementary to one another... They are not supplementary to each other
in the manner of the two sides of an object, but rather
in the manner of the two stages or steps of a process.'
(Ibid. p. 62) Repeated experiences of indecision 'do not
remain in \( \text{man}'s \) self-knowledge as a series of isolated
moments of non-decision,' but they 'merge into a course of
indecision, ... into a fixation in it.' Now, this self-
knowledge is "repressed" as long as the will to self-
preservation dominates that to being-able-to-affirm him-
self.' But when the will to affirm himself asserts itself,
'because \( \text{his} \) self-knowledge no longer enables him to
affirm himself... man calls himself in question.' (Ibid. p.
75) This inner rejection by one's self-knowledge

either assumes a pathological form, that is, the
relationship of the person to himself becomes fragile
and intricate; or the person finds the way out where
he hardly expected it, namely through an extreme
effort of unification... called "conversion." (Ibid.
p. 76)

There is yet a third alternative - it is the decisive one:
Man, says Buber, 'is an audacity of life... he therefore
requires confirmation' in his 'being-this-man' by others
and himself. 'Again and again the Yes must be spoken to
him, from the confidant and from the stirrings of his own
heart, to liberate him from the dread of abandonment, which
is a foretaste of death.' For a short while man can do with-
out being confirmed by others, but 'the encouragement of
his fellow-men does not suffice if self-knowledge demands
inner rejection.' If then man 'cannot readjust his self-
knowledge by his own conversion,' and does not want to fall
into a fragile relationship with himself, he will displace his self-knowledge by complete self-affirmation. 'He must render affirmation independent of all findings and base it, instead of on judgement-of-oneself, on a sovereign willing-oneself.' He will choose himself as he is, and the picture of what he is intended to be is extinguished completely. The 'good' becomes what he is, the eternal order that established good and evil is, accordingly, denied. (Ibid. pp. 76-78)

This absolute self-affirmation, involving the domination of one's own self-knowledge, is the worst kind of evil, it is the evil Yima committed, the lie against Being. Adam, too, was guilty of self-deification. But while his aim was the becoming-like-God 'through knowing good and evil,' Yima aimed at the 'being-like-God' (Ibid. p. 62) 'through proclaiming oneself as the creator both of one's existence and of the values by which that existence is judged.' (Fried p. 108) The evil of the first stage is not yet 'radical' evil since

whatever misdeeds are committed, their commission is not a doing of the deed but a sliding into it. In the second stage evil grows radical, because what man finds in himself is willed: whoever lends to that which, in the depths of self-awareness was time and again recognized by him as what should be negated, the mark of being affirmed, because it is his, gives it the substantial character which it did not previously possess. If we may compare the occurrence of the first stage to an eccentric whirling movement, the process of the freezing of flowing water may serve as a simile to illustrate the second. (IGE pp. 80-81)

A man committing evil of the first kind is a 'sinner;' one
committing evil of the second kind is 'wicked.' The sinner does evil, the wicked is evil. While the sinner may stand before God, the wicked one will never be judged by Him. This, however, does not mean that God's way is closed to him. It is the wicked himself who has closed the way to God, since he has negated his own existence which initially was intended to have a relation with God. Unlike the sinner, he does not even wish to turn. He will be his own judge. (Fried p. 109; GE pp. 51, 58)

In the end, Buber concedes, evil remains a mystery with no answer. No human being can answer how it is possible that an evil will - a man at the radical stage of evil - can exist when God exists. 'The abyss which is opened by this question advances onto the darkness of the divine mystery even more dreadfully than the abyss opened by Job's question.' (GE p. 60) Yet, however great the mystery of the nature of evil may be, Buber insists on one thing throughout his writings: 'It must not be attributed to a metaphysical or ontological dualism, which sees good and evil as substantive entities or powers. Such a dualism would, in effect, be a ditheism, and against every ditheism Buber repeats the words of the Lord to the prophet Isaiah: "I am the first and the last, and beside me there is no God."' (Herberg, op. cit., p. 18) Despite his strong emphasis on 'radical' and 'substantive' evil in his later writings, Buber holds fast to his belief in God as the ultimate source of good and evil. Man is not evil by nature, what is evil
is only the use he makes of that nature. Certainly, there are men who bring evil to the radical stage. But this does not mean that this evil is absolute, independent, and unredeemable; it only means that it has become fixed in its opposition to God.

God does not abridge the free will he has given to man and, therefore, allows him to close himself off from Him and to end up in non-existence. Yet God remains open to man's turning, to whatever 'radical' stage he may have brought evil. Certainly, a turning in the state of complete self-affirmation - especially since God has 'hardened' in response to man's decision against Him - will be extremely difficult and can be effected only through a conversion. 'Sin is not an undertaking which man can break off when the situation becomes critical, but a process started by him, the control of which is withdrawn from him at a fixed moment.' (TTF p. 34)

Thus, Buber has remained faithful to his dialogical principle also in his account of the nature of evil: it is entering into relationship that makes man really man, and it is failure to enter into relation that constitutes evil or non-existence. The problem of man and the problem of evil seem to merge here. 'Primal guilt consists in remaining with oneself.' (BMM p. 166) Sin is the refusal to enter into relation, the turning away of man from God in self-sufficiency and self will. Since the basic principle is that 'all real living is meeting' the primary evil is estrange-
ment, alienation from the Thou. It consists in the de-
personalization of life through the predominance of I-It
over I-Thou.

In the first stage of evil, man is without direction,
without relation. He is unable to make the decision to
enter into relation with his whole being. In the second
state, man deliberately decides to break off any genuine
relation. He is not only unable to make up his mind to
respond to God, to take direction towards him, to enter in-
to relation with Him, but he freely chooses not to have
dialogue with God. At the stage of 'radical' evil, man is
not 'disabled' to take direction, but he deliberately 'dis-
ables himself' from entering into an I-Thou relation with
God or the world.
II. The Inseparability of Ethics and Religion

Buber's view of evil, since it is also based on the tradition-breaking dialogical principle - which demands that man's relationship to God be accompanied by his having relationships with men and the world - necessarily implies a change in the traditional concept of the inter-relationship of ethics and religion. Up to now, Buber feels, there has prevailed a rather severe split between ethics and religion. Ethics, to put it in a very general way, traditionally has been, and is so now, concerned with the distinction between good and evil, in the moral sense, in this world, while religion is concerned with the supernatural. This division, Buber feels, does not really exist between ethics and religion. It is an artificial product created by man, and detrimental in its present form.

Pseudoreligions - A Cause of the Traditional Split Between Ethics and Religion and a Threat to the True Life of Dialogue

Buber holds that a major cause for the traditional and still existing split between ethics and religion is the existence of pseudoreligions in their various forms.

First, it is the false dogmatism of the theologians that often is responsible for religion's gaining independence from ethics. The logical and dialectical God of the theologians, Buber feels, is not the God who meets us as the eternal Thou in the dialogic life. God is merely 'met'
but not 'sought.' The dogmatism of the theologians is a real threat to the dialogical life, since the 'once for all' contained in it makes unnecessary the 'ever anew' of real responses to every unique Thou that is said to us. The 'once for all' of dogma is a hindrance to the genuine meeting with God in the 'lived concrete.'

Gnosis, springing from dogmatism, is an even greater enemy to religion. In its attempts to 'raise the veil which divides the revealed from the hidden and to lead forth to the divine mystery,' (Fried p. 114) and in trying to resolve all contradictions of existence, Gnosis stands as a great threat to the life in dialogue. 'It,' says Buber, (and he is in particular referring to the psychology of C.G. Jung, according to which God is a projection of the human psyche) 'and not atheism which annihilates God because it must reject the hitherto existing images of God - is the real antagonist of the reality of faith.' (EG p. 136)

Magic, another fruit of dogmatism, is a further threat to the turning towards God. In magic 'one celebrates rites without being turned to the Thou and without really meaning its Presence.' (Ibid. p. 125) God here becomes the source of power which is possessed and used, a mere It.

Religious symbolism and ritualism too, are a danger to religion: 'The religious reality,' says Buber,

of the meeting with the Meeter...knows no image of Him...It knows only the presence of the present One. Symbols of Him, whether images or ideas, always exist first when and insofar as the Thou becomes He,
and that means It... They always quickly desire to become more than they are, more than signs and pointers toward Him. It finally happens over again that they swell themselves up and obstruct the way to Him, and He removes Himself from them. (Ibid. p. 45-46)

The philosopher, although he 'rejects both the image and the God which it symbolizes' and instead offers the 'pure idea' of God is equally dangerous to the dialogic life, (Ibid. p. 45) for he holds to another form of gnosis. Philosophy's 'primary art of abstraction' (Ibid. p. 38) and conceptualization are not adequate methods for having relation with God. God cannot be represented by an idea, or thought of as the Eternal Thought in which all ideas are contained. He 'cannot be "inferred" in anything, in nature, say, as its author, or in history as its master, or in the subject as the self that is thought in it.' (ITh p. 80) The real God is a living God and thus cannot be conceptually comprehensible like a thing among other things. Since 'philosophy,' according to Buber,'is grounded on the presupposition that one sees the absolute in universals,' (EG p. 41) it follows that it denies, or at least neglects, the living with the concrete and the 'ever anew' of genuine dialogue. 'Religion,' in opposition to philosophy, 'means the covenant of the absolute with the particular, with the concrete.' (loc. cit.) 'Genuine religious expression has an open or a hidden personal character, for it is spoken out of a concrete situation in which the person takes part as a person.' (Ibid. p. 37)

And lastly, neither is God met in the mystic's 'divine-
ness' with which the self is united. Mysticism is an obstruction to genuine relation with God and the world.

**The True God is not the God of the Pseudoreligions but the Mysterious and Personal God encountered in Fear in the Concreteness of Life**

The real God is not the God of the theologians, philosophers, psychologists, magicians and mystics, or of the dogmatic ritualistic religions, but He is a mystery and cannot be known. He can only be met. And this encounter is intensely personal, taking place in the fullness of life. Buber's religion does not allow for any security - in dogma, magic, or false gnosis, but he preaches a 'holy insecurity.' 'Woe to the man so possessed that he thinks he possesses God.' (I Th. p. 106) All we know about God is that He enters into personal relationships with us. Thus, when Buber uses the term 'Eternal Thou,' he does not mean a symbol of God but our relationship to Him. Conversely, when Buber calls God the 'Absolute Person' then he does not mean to say that God's nature is exhausted by his personality; he does not want to reduce God to a person.

It is indeed legitimate to speak of the person of God within the religious relation and in its language; but in so doing we are making no statement about the Absolute which reduces it to the personal. We are rather saying that it enters into the relationship as the Absolute Person whom we call God. One may understand the personality of God as his act. It is, indeed, even permissible for the believer to believe that God became a person for love of him, because in our human mode of existence the only reciprocal relation with us that exists is a personal one. (Ec. pp. 96-97)
God only manifests Himself in the world as person and as such we have to meet Him. But He cannot be reduced to one of these manifestations. Buber walks on the 'narrow ridge' between the mystic who claims complete union with God and the Gnostic who claims complete knowledge about the nature of God, but removes Him into a sphere transcendent to that of human relations. Buber neither claims union with God nor knowledge about Him but only relation and knowledge of one aspect of God's nature, better, of one manifestation of God - God as personality. If man tries to reach God through theology, metaphysics, or psychology, he will 'come to the unfathomable.' If, as in mysticism, 'you deny the life of things...you stand before nothingness, if you hallow this life you meet the living God.' (ITh p. 79) 'God is the being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly, over against us, but may properly be addressed, not expressed.' (Ibid. pp. 80-81) He is 'nearer to me than my I.' (Ibid. p. 79) 'God is the "wholly Other," but He is also the wholly Same, the wholly Present...He is the Mysterium Tremendum,...the mystery of the self-evident.' (loc. cit.)

Magic however, with its desire to use and possess God, all forms of gnosis which attempt to do away with all riddles and contradictions of life, as well as the acceptance of traditional dogmas and laws as 'once for all,' and mysticism with its endeavour to achieve union with God - all do not meet the real God, for all prevent man from say-
ing Thou to God in the concrete of everyday life. They effect a detrimental dualism between the religious life and the life in the world. Mysticism in its complete neglect of the world, the Gnosis of theology and philosophy, and social science with its exclusively reflective and contemplative attitude towards God, and pseudoreligion in its preoccupation with false symbols, all disregard any concern with the world. Consequently, all evaluations in most fields of human enterprise are made apart from the religious life — supposedly the relationship with God. Morality, by this is meant the distinction of good and evil in the moral sense, as well as good and bad in the natural sense, is cut off from religion completely.

If any connection with the truly religious is retained, then it is done so by dogmatic religions only through traditional supernatural (revealed) laws which have really become independent from the absolute and been reduced 'to a mere symbolic-ritual requirement which may be adequately satisfied in the cultic sphere.' (Af p. 15) Or else they have 'degenerated into a human convention' (loc. cit.) which, in turn, is adhered to slavishly rather than being considered general guides of action, requiring an ever new interpretation in each new concrete situation in life. They have lost their religious (dialogical) character and retained only the normative one.

Since any genuine personal relationship to the real living God is lacking in all those pseudoreligions described
above, the philosophical doctrine that the absolute manifests itself in the universal can creep easily also into ethical doctrines. Ethical laws, then, lose their connection to actual religious experiences and to revelation even as far as their origin is concerned. They are now only human conventions — in addition to the fact that they, too, like degenerated traditional moral laws, are crutches for people who want to live in the pseudo-security of the 'once for all,' preventing them from the primary relationship with man and the world. Consequently, also, from entering into an I-Thou relationship with God, since the meeting with God requires the meeting with men and the world in the lived concreteness, uniqueness and presentness of the human and natural Thou. The god of the theologians, philosophers, magicians, and mystics, however, is not met in the lived concreteness, He is not met at all. Although their 'relation' to God is more exclusive than that of the dialogical man, since man and the world do not interfere with this 'relation,' it is much less inclusive as far as the genuine meeting with God is concerned. For, inclusiveness and exclusiveness in one's relation to God go together. Every Thou in this world is a pointer towards God. There are no short cuts.

The Religious and Secular (Ethical) Life Depend on Each Other for Their Authenticity

The foundation of the problem which Buber poses — the alternative between a life in dialogue which is the
good life, or a life in isolation, in an I-It relationship to the world, Man, and God, which is evil - it, in the end, the question of the relationship of religion and morality (ethics). Since, for Buber, people's concept of good and evil underlies, ultimately, to some extent almost all evaluation and consequently, almost all decision in all fields of human activity, the problem of the dichotomy of the life in spirit, i.e. the religious life, and the life in the world, including all disciplines of knowledge, is basically a problem of the connection between ethics and religion.

At this point the relationship of Buber's doctrine of evil and his idea of the ideal relationship between ethics and religion (which I shall expound in more detail in the last section of the present chapter) may be clearer. Since 'evil,' for Buber, is lack of relation, and relation, if it is genuine, is always directed towards God via men and the world, the traditional split of religion - as concerned exclusively with 'God,' and ethics - as independent from religion and concerned only with man and the world by way of a 'once for all' pseudo-relation, falls itself into the category of evil and consequently, has to be rejected and replaced by a religion intimately related to ethics (defined as the basis of all of man's life).

Religion apart from ethics, in form of magic, mysticism, Gnosis, or dogmatic cult, is not 'real' religion any longer, for it cannot involve the whole of man's existence in its
relation to the absolute, but only one aspect. Since
dialogue requires the giving with the wholeness of one's
being to God and the world, the separation of ethics (taken
in its broadest sense) and religion, of the 'living in
God' from the 'living in the world' is ultimately a big
obstruction to the life of dialogue.

**The Detrimental Effects of the Lack of Dialogue -
Resulting From the Chasm Between the Religious and Worldly
Life - in Our Age**

In our modern time, says Buber, the chasm between
religion and the worldly life has grown huge. For modern
man, religion has become a little aspect of life, rather
than its totality. The radical absence of true relation
resulting from this dichotomy - in Buber's eyes the prim-
ary evil - has manifested itself in many negative ways
today:

In general, it constitutes a real threat to the lived
concrete 'in its unforeseeableness and its irrecoverableness,'
in which alone genuine relation is possible. (EG p. 35)
Theology turns temporal facts into symbols; mysticism pro-
claims that all experience can be had at one; dogmatism
deprives new situations of their uniqueness; gnosis denies
all the problematic of the concrete moment, and philosophy
abstracts it from reality.

These extrareligious, better, pseudoreligious elements
exert not only active influence on the secular life, but
also passive influence insofar as they cause the absence of
genuine religion for which they are a substitute. Freedom, says Buber, today is sought for its own sake without the necessary responsibility accompanying it, the responsibility springing only from a personal relationship to God. Purposelessness has become a problem. Through the influence of gnosticism which tries to overrun the realities of life, the belief prevails that good ends justify the use of bad means. This, in Buber's eyes, is a gross distortion of the truth. For wherever there is a separation of means from ends man's I-Thou relation to God, man, and the world, is in danger. For, a means, apart from its ends, by definition is an object of I-It. Today even people, since genuine relation among them is absent, are used as means to further ends, whether on the individual or national level. Especially in work this separation of means from ends has resulted in most detrimental effects on the life of man; modern man often performs dull mechanical work which is only a pre- liminary step to, and thus removed from, the final product of a chain of jobs. The attitude towards one's work has become that of I-It. Lack of responsibility makes men strive for power, whether this be done in politics or psychology or elsewhere. People deal with each other, even help each other, without entering into real relation with one another. Help is often purely technical, and, as it occurs in education and psychotherapy now and then, a means for domination.

Real conversation between people has become rare. Actual monologues are disguised as dialogues. People do
not really have each other in mind when they talk to one
another, but rather, abstract and general opponents,
fictitious partners. Men no longer really desire to commu-
icate anything to the other or to learn from the other.
The only desire is to exert a dominating influence on the
other through which one's self-reliance is strengthened.
There is no real desire to search in the other's personal-
ity - one knows already everything about the other, because
one looks only for what fits into one's picture of the part-
er. All mystery between man and man has dissolved. Only
a reductive, analytic, and derivative glance passes between
man and man. Most public discussions are not real dialogues
but plain I-It talk which tries to win the opponent for
some cause. People are not addressed as unique persons
and in their wholeness, but are thrown in categories and
treated as specifications of those. Psychological and socio-
logical theories of 'seeing through' have become the victim
of oversimplification and unjustified reduction on account
of their detached I-It way of seeing man. Social scientists
do not enter into relationships with people but attempt
to remain 'objective' in their observation. This, Buber
feels, cannot yield anything but a distorted picture of man.
All science, social as well as natural, has become exclusively
an enterprise of I-It, a constant severing of relation into
two parts - an object that is scrutinized by a completely
independent subject, i.e. of man from the world and his
fellow-men. 'The divorce between spirit and instincts' which
has driven whole peoples into a pathological condition, no one but a 'consequence of the divorce between man and man.'

If religion is cut off from life, if the act of faith is subjectivised and God becomes only a small aspect of one's life, then, Buber holds, the social and political bonds between people lose all their strength. The consequence of the resulting lack of dialogue is, in turn, a basic mistrust among men. Man, however, needs confirmation. Since he cannot find it in true community - which alone can give satisfactory confirmation - he seeks it somewhere else - in collectives or through himself. These two types of confirmation correspond to two types of social movement which have arisen in consequence of the dominance of the I-It relation among people in the world - individualism and collectivism. Real community, based on true dialogue, is substituted by centralized states and collectives, by clubs, trade unions, parties, etc. Individualism and collectivism are alike in that both do not know true responsibility in genuine dialogue. Consequently the security and confirmation they yield is a pseudo-security. While collectivism 'aims... at reducing, neutralizing, devaluing, and desecrating every bond with living beings,' (BBM p. 201) individualism leads to subjectivism which usually ends in atheism or some kind of private pseudoreligion, combined with a relativisation of values - thus preferring complete absence of relation to the pseudo-relation of collectivism.
This, and much more, is the consequence of man's turning away from God, of the split between religion, the life with God, and the life in this world. It is an 'eclipse of God' which leaves man in a chaos created by himself. Once God is shut off, the I-It starts to grow into huge dimensions, for without God, no genuine relation of man to his fellow-men and the world is possible. 'In our age,' writes Duber,

the I-It relation, gigantically swollen, has usurped, practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The I of this relation, an I that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all, this I that is unable to say Thou, unable to meet a being essentially, is the lord of the hour. This selfhood that has become omnipotent, with all the It around it, can naturally acknowledge neither God nor any genuine absolute which manifests itself to men as of non-human origin. It steps in between and shuts off from us the light of heaven. (Ibid, p. 129)

What is the most tragic aspect of this 'eclipse of God' is the 'silence of God,' the 'hardening' of God Himself in answer to man's constant turning away from Him. Yet, 'the eclipse of the light of God is no extinction.' Yes 'the I-Thou relation has gone into the catacombs,' but 'who can say with how much greater power it will step forth... Even to-morrow that which has stepped in between may give way.' (loc. cit.) 'The truth is that precisely at such a time the great return and repentance which God expects of us becomes possible, in order that the redemption which He desires for us, be a true self-redemption.' (FSH p. 116)
III. The Redemption of Evil

Redemption of Evil is 'Umkehr' (Turning) to God

Since evil is man's turning away from God, redemption of evil is ultimately the turning back of man towards God, the gaining of direction as indicated by his conscience, the meeting of God and his creation in true responsibility in the lived concrete. The actual redemption of evil is not effected by man, but by God's grace. Yet it is up to man to initiate the redemption by going out into life and meeting God with his whole being - then He will come to us and this meeting will mean our salvation.

The beginning and the beginning alone is placed into the hands of men. But it is placed in them. Simply make a beginning and at once you will see all about you, in the very circle of your personal activity, all kinds of threads. You will have to grasp but a single one of them and it will be, if God wills it, the right one. (FSH pp. 202-203)

Man, however, does not have the power to invoke God's grace by definite acts. God's grace is unattainable, yet not self-withholding. Man must first act and then, if the act was successful, he will know that God has carried him. Man's action, however, is as real in the act of redemption as God's grace. But yet, they are not part-causes either. 'Man's action,' says Friedman for Buber, 'and God's grace are subsumed under the greater reality of the meeting between God and man.' (Fried p. 133)
This turning towards God must not be confused with 'repentance,' for this would be 'a misleading attempt to psychologize.' What the 'turning' really refers to is not something which happens in the secret recesses of the soul, showing itself outwardly only in its "consequences" and "effects;" it is something which happens in the immediacy of the reality between man and God...It is as little a "psychic" event as is a man's birth or death; it comes upon the whole person, is carried out by the whole person, and does not occur as a man's self-intercourse, but as the plain reality of primal mutuality. (IR p. 20)

The 'turning' towards God arises when 'despair shatters the prison which imprisons our latent energies.' Then the 'sources of the primordial depths begin to flow' and man turns with his whole being to God reaching out for His hand by which he lets himself be pulled up. (FSH p. 116)

True Redemption Must be Redemption Of Evil and not From Evil

The turning towards God has to be all-inclusive, consequently, it has to include evil as well as good. Otherwise the turning is deprived of its force. This, however, does not mean that the dialogic man has to accept evil as it is, but only that his attitude towards it must not be one of complete unconcern.

It is no more allowed to any man to live as if evil did not exist. One cannot serve God by merely avoiding evil; one must grapple with it. (Hasidism p. 29)

'This very world,' says Buber in Israel and the World,

this very contradiction, unabridged, unmitigated, unsmoothed, unsimplified, unreduced, this world shall be - not overcome - but consummated...It is a redemp-
tion not from evil, but of evil, as the power which
God created for his service and for the performance
of his work. (FW p. 26, underlining mine)

Our turning towards God has to be done with all our
passions, which means that man, in order to redeem evil,
must not deny or disregard his evil impulses, but he must
transform them into good ones, giving direction to them,
direction towards God. Our passions and our powers of phan-
tasy are not bad by nature, they are evil only if they are
undirected. But if given right direction, - and only if
given proper direction, since passion is a necessary
element in all successful deeds, - can real good result
from man's life. God wants to embrace His whole creation
and not only part of it. Man, therefore, cannot achieve
salvation by trying to fight and extinguish evil, but by
fighting it, defeating it, and - rather than killing it -
turning it around into God's direction, thus turning it
into good. Our phantasy must not be stopped but actualized,
instead of letting it remain pure phantasy which ultimately
will lead to the sin of indecision. Even the worst idols
'we must not simply overthrow' but 'in each of these
images we must seek to discover what divine quality' we
sought in them. (FWH p. 117)

Real dialogue does not mean the keeping of the light
pure by removing it as far from the dark as possible, that
is, it does not mean 'redemption from evil,' but it is con-
cerned with casting light onto darkness and helping it to
pierce it, that is, it deals with the redemption of evil.
'Our mission,' says Yehudi in _For the Sake of Heaven_, 'is not to the realms in which dwells the purity of holiness; it is to the unholy that we must pay attention so that it find redemption and become whole.' (FSH p. 117)

The great danger is that the evil impulse continually separates itself from its companion, the good urge, 'and that the latter in this condition of independence makes an idol of precisely that which was intended to serve him. Man's task therefore, is not to extirpate the evil urge, but to reunite it with the good.' (IGE pp. 40-41)

The evil urge and the good urge have to be brought together 'beneath the yoke.' (Ibid. p. 41) Only this way do we 'equip the absolute potency of passion with the one direction that renders it capable of great love and of great service. Thus and not otherwise can man become whole.' (Ibid. p. 42) Thus 'the evil urge must also be included in the love of God.' (Ibid. p. 41)

The totality of man’s passions was created by God for its potential use for Him. Man has to attempt to find out what the unique task is that God wants him to perform with these urges. The way to fulfil his vocation is revealed to him by his conscience, i.e. by the essential, not casual, quality of his inclinations.

As the totality of one's inner life - good and evil urges, as well as 'imagery' - has to be included in the turning towards God, so the totality of man's environment - really nothing else but the counterpart of his inner life,
the object of his good and evil impulses, and of his phantasy — in short, everything man meets in its concreteness — has to be included in his dialogue with God.

True Relation Means Living in 'Holy Insecurity' and in 'Fear of God'

Genuine relation demands the acceptance of every concrete situation which man confronts. This supreme principle of the truly religious man, which does not allow for any convenient selection among the situations he meets, places man in a position of insecurity. Buber's religion, although comprising a belief in the redemption of evil, is in no sense a cult of reassurance. Just as the prophets of Israel 'have always aimed to shatter all security and to proclaim in the opened abyss of the final insecurity the un-wished-for God who demands that His human creatures become real,' (EG p. 73) so to Buber, any kind of religious security is repugnant. Instead he preaches a 'holy insecurity,' a life on the 'narrow ridge.' 'Oh you secure and safe ones,' he exclaims,

you who hide yourselves behind the ramparts of the law so that you will not have to look into God's abyss! Yes, you have secure ground under your feet, while we hang suspended looking out over the endless deeps. But we would not exchange our dizzy insecurity and poverty for your security and abundance...of God's will we know only the eternal; the temporal we must command for ourselves, ourselves imprint his wordless bidding ever anew on the stuff of reality. (Herberg, op. cit., p. 19, from Der Heilige Weg pp. 67-68)
The man who tries to deny this 'holy insecurity', who shuts himself off from meeting the world in its problematic contradictoriness, who avoids the ever fresh and exacting response in the concrete situations of life, has to set up religious dogmas, philosophic systems, a set of personal values and habits, in order to achieve security, which of course is only pseudo-security. He falls into individualism or clings to collectivism in order to find confirmation, and soon he ends up in blind fear and hysteria since a perfect 'protection' against the unpredictability of the future moment can never be found. The religious man, on the other hand, prefers the 'holy insecurity' of the 'ever anew' in true dialogue; he prefers the meeting of every new situation with the whole of his being - although this is done with fear before the riddles and problems of every new meeting - to a pseudo-security and reality-phobia.

A counterpart of the blind fear of the non-religious man is the 'fear of God' of the religious man, a fear which results from the state of the 'holy insecurity'. The religious essence of religion, says Buber, 'is the certainty that the meaning of existence is open and accessible in the actual lived concrete, not above the struggle with reality, but in it.' However, Buber is fast to say,

that meaning is open and accessible in the actual
lived concrete does not mean it is to be won and possessed through any type of analytical or synthetic investigation or through any type of reflection upon the lived concrete. Meaning is to be experienced in living action and suffering itself, in the unreduced immediacy of the moment... Only he reaches the meaning who stands firm, without holding back or reservation, before the whole might of reality and answers it in a living way. He is ready to confirm with his life the meaning he has attained. (EG p. 35)

It is from this unquestioned acceptance of every concrete situation, involving problems and suffering, that the 'fear of God' of the religious man springs. 'It comes into existence' for the first time 'when our existence... becomes incomprehensible and uncanny, when all security is shattered through the mystery,' (Ibid. p. 36) a mystery which is not only relative, that is, 'inaccessible only to the present state of human knowledge and hence in principle discoverable,' but it is the essential mystery in its unknowableness and 'inscrutableness.' (loc. cit.) When man 'henceforth accepts the situation as given him by the Giver,' he has to accept it in shattered security as a mystery. 'Everyday... is henceforth hallowed as the place in which he has to live with the mystery.' This is what Biblical religion calls 'fear of God.' With it, 'all religious reality begins.' (loc. cit.)

Fear of God does, thus, not mean 'to be afraid of God' as one is afraid of evil, but it means man's awareness 'of his incomprehensibility. Fear of God is the creaturely knowledge of the darkness to which none of our spiritual powers can reach... out of which God reveals himself,' and
which we have to meet and endure in all the concreteness of life. For that reason 'fear of God' might also be called 'beginning of knowledge.' (IW p. 31) Fear of God is the fear of the unexpected demands and addresses which we encounter in everyday life and which come from the unfathomable God. It is man's enduring 'in the face of God the reality of lived life, dreadful and incomprehensible.' (EG p. 37)

'Buber has no patience with the self-deluding sentimentalists who like to conjure away all that is fearful in the divine.' (Herberg, op. cit., p. 15) A god who isn't met with fear is an idolatrous god. 'The real God is, to begin with, dreadful and incomprehensible,' (EG pp. 36-37) for He shatters man's self-sufficiency and security, and confronts him with the contradictoriness of life and the mystery of suffering and evil.

'Fear of God' is the Gate to 'Love of God'

The 'fear of God,' says Buber, - that is, the acceptance of every concrete situation as given to us by an incomprehensible, unfathomable, therefore dreadful, God - 'is the dark gate through which man must pass if he is to enter into the love of God.' (IW p. 31) Love which does not also comprise fear is idolatrous. 'He who begins with the Love of God without having previously experienced the fear of God, loves an Idol which he himself has made, a god whom it is easy enough to love.' (EG p. 36)
He who wishes to avoid passing through this gate, he who begins to provide himself with a comprehensible God, constructed thus and not otherwise, runs the risk of having to despair of God in view of the actualities of history and life, or of falling into inner falsehood. Only through the fear of God does man enter so deep into the love of God that he cannot again be cast out of it. (IW p. 31)

And in For the Sake of Heaven Buber writes:

It is dreadful, dreadful, dreadful! Dread is the gateway to Him. There is no path to Him save through that somber gate. Only he who has gone through that gate can truly love Him, Him, and in the manner in which only He can be loved. (FSH p. 46)

Fear of God, however, is only a gate and not a dwelling, as some theologians believe. Fear must flow over into love. Although God is 'incomprehensible,' 'he can be known through a bond of mutual relationship.' And although he 'cannot be fathomed by knowledge...he can be imitated.' (IW p. 31)

It is thus only through fear of God that we can achieve love of God, and by the resulting union of fear and love realize that both good and evil flow ultimately from God, from His love. The holiness which is contained in every concrete situation simply is a 'power capable of exerting both a destructive and ballowing effect,' depending on how man meets it. 'The encounter with this holiness is, therefore, a source of danger to man.' For those who, like Jacob, Abraham, and Moses, 'stand the test...the danger is turned into grace.' For those who don't, it is a curse. (Fried p. 253) This is man's predicament.
The Way Towards Redemption is 'All-Sanctification'

From this ambiguity of every concrete situation it follows that, when it was said above that the fear of God implies the unquestioned acceptance of every concrete situation, this did not mean that every situation has to be accepted as it is, and approved of in its pure factuality. No, man

may, rather, declare the extremest enmity toward this happening and treat its "givenness" as only intended to draw forth his opposing force. But he will not remove himself from the concrete situation as it actually is...Whether field of work or field of battle, he accepts the place in which he is placed. he knows no floating of the spirit above the concrete reality; to him even the sublime spirituality is an illusion if it is not bound to the situation. (EG pp. 37-38)

One's attitude towards evil met in the outside world should, thus, be similar to one's attitude towards one's inner evil urges and 'imagery.' Evil must not be discarded but transformed into good. And this, like the transformation of evil urges, which cannot take place within the human soul alone, requires relation. Man, in his endeavour to penetrate the impure with the pure, evil with good, thus stands in between the man who in self-righteousness avoids evil and the one who accepts it unconditionally. (Fried p. 139)

Life then, should be a turning with one's whole being towards God and His creation. It means the realization of our vocation by God. This is true love. Love of God is not possible without loving also his creation, and vice versa.
For, to love God really means to imitate Him in His love towards His creation. We have to love His creation towards Him. (Fried p. 138) This true love of God's creation, however, is not a general love of humanity and of nature in general, but love for the particular individual through loving action, love of the concrete situations in life. (BMM p. 57) Even 'evil,' God wants us to love as a possible good.

Everything in this world, the whole of God's creation, ultimately is to be included in the holy. The final aim of redemption is the removal of the differentiation between the profane and the holy, it is 'all-sanctification.' Everything awaits being hallowed by man. Nothing is 'simply and irreparably profane.'

The profane is...only a designation for the not yet sanctified...Everything physical, all drives and urges and desires, everything creaturely, is material for sanctification. From the very same passionate powers which, undirected, give rise to evil, when they are turned toward God, the good arises. One does not serve God with the spirit only, but with the whole of his nature, without any subtractions. (IW p. 34)

Whatever is hallowed in the name of God is sanctified. 'Hallowing transforms the urges by confronting them with holiness and making them responsible toward what is holy,' (Ibid. p. 180) i.e. by giving them right direction. This 'giving of direction' can mean an actual change of object of desire or a transformation of the desire leaving the same object. Then objects of desire - which could be sinful -
such as the purposeless killing of a sheep - if they and our relationship to them is hallowed in relation to our relationship with God and fellow-men - need not be renounced. Even the doing of evil, as far as it is necessary for the preservation of our life, can become sanctified if it is hallowed and done with responsibility. And with respect to evil in the world independent of our desires, especially with regard to the evil in other people, God
gave us a mouth which can convey the truth of our heart to an alien heart and a hand which can communicate to the hand of our recalcitrant brother something of the warmth of our very blood. It is for this that He has made us capable of loving the sons of Satan. (FSH p. 121)

Redemption of Evil Requires the Bridging of the Chasm Between Ethics and Religion

The redemption of evil might also be expressed in terms of the relationship between ethics and religion. As already pointed out above, evil in this world arises due to an unhappy split between the 'living with God' (religion) and the 'living with the world' (ethics - taken in its broadest meaning as being the basis of all value judgements and all decisions). It follows that the redemption of evil would mean a new interrelationship of religion and ethics, of the 'living with God' and the 'living with the world.'

Elimination of All Pseudoreligions

To this end, a radical elimination of all pseudoreli-
gions has to be achieved: magic, mysticism, dogmatism, and
the gnosis of theology and psychology. These reduce reli-
gion to an aspect of life rather than making it its total-
ity, thus making any genuine I-Thou relationship to God
impossible since this would require the hallowing of both
God, and men and the world. As a result of this split be-
tween the religious and the secular spheres in life, and
the lack of true responsibility and true decision, these
pseudoreligions must lead either - as in a few cases - to
moral autonomy, to complete individualism or - as they
usually do - to an outspoken moral heteronomy accepting
the laws of the society - whether these are traditional
laws of revelation (as especially in dogmatism, with its
pseudo-relation to God in form of a cult as an ally) or
self-created laws of society (although this implies moral
autonomy from the viewpoint of society, from the practical
viewpoint of the individual, however, this is heteronomy) -
with which they guide their extra-religious actions, the
secular life.

Against Moral Autonomy and Moral Heteronomy

Buber sympathizes with neither moral autonomy, nor
moral heteronomy, for they both are incompatible with his
dialogical principle with its emphasis on wholeness, decision,
presentness, and uniqueness. Moral autonomy is only 'freedom
of' and not 'freedom for,' thus denying genuine dialogue
and true turning with one's whole being. Moral heteronomy,
on the other hand, takes away all genuine free decision and responding toward the concrete and unique situations in life. 'The narrow ridge between the two,' Friedman well summarizes Buber, 'is a freedom that means freedom to respond, and a responsibility that means both address from without and free response from within.' (Fried p. 199)

Moral absolutists consider values as absolute, overlooking the fact that values are always values for a person rather than for an absolute, independent existent, and therefore cannot have universal validity for everybody in every situation. Moral relativists or 'subjectivists' reduce all values to the subjective interest of individuals or cultural groups, rendering the 'is' and the 'ought' identical, and therefore eliminating the normative element, the characteristic element of morality, from all moral laws, since it is identical with the objective fact. (Ibid. pp. 200-201)

As a result of this absolute freedom given to the individual to do what he desires, Individual Relativism - whether in form of atheistic nihilism or accompanied by a pseudoreligion which is cut off from the ethical domain - leads into severe totalitarianism and collectivism, since the individual cannot bear the insecurity of the complete absence of norms, hence it leads again into moral heteronomy. 'Thus,' writes Friedman, 'whether the I or the It, the subjective or the objective is stressed, the failure to see moral problems in terms of the relation of the I-Thou ends
in the submission of the I to the world of It." (Ibid., p. 202)

Buber, with his dialogical philosophy cuts beneath the distinction between moral heteronomy and moral autonomy by walking on the 'narrow ridge' in between. Values, for Buber, do not exist apart from the deciding person, yet they cannot be reduced to his personal interests either, since they are bound to the concrete, God-given situation. They lie in between the I and the Thou, i.e. in the relation of the I to the Thou, which, in turn, is one of genuine responsibility. With this, the split between the moral absolutists and the cultural relativist is overcome.

From the above, another step follows logically: the bridging of the chasm between ethics and religion. According to the above description, Buber's ethic is a 'situational ethic of responsibility.' (Herberg, op. cit., p. 20) But this 'responsibility presupposes one who addresses me primarily, that is, from a realm independent of myself, and to whom I am answerable.' (BMM p. 45) The One Who addresses is God. Now, since in every concrete situation there is an element of the divine, a genuine response to any concrete situation, that is a genuine I-Thou relationship with it - thus also to the ethical situation - must include God. Since the 'ethical situation,' too, is an address coming from God, a genuine I-Thou relation with it will also be a relation to God; since God is the eternal Thou in Whom all 'parallel lines of relation meet,' all genuine ethical decisions are at the same time religious
decisions. The ethical now is bound up with the religious, the chasm between ethics and religion is overbridged.

**Traditional Moral Laws are only General Guides for Action and have to be Re-Interpreted in every Concrete Situation**

Accordingly, as the ethical is bound up with the religious, moral laws, for Buber, as handed down by traditional religion, even if revealed, cease to be convenient 'once-for-all' principles which deprive responsibility and spontaneity. If used in a 'once-for-all' way, they hinder man from entering into genuine I-Thou relationships with God, creating a pseudo-security which covers the actual problematic and mystery of every concrete situation, the uniqueness and irrevocableness, which, in turn, requires a unique and 'ever anew' response.

I appreciate the "objective" compactness of dogma, but behind \[\text{It}\] there lies in wait the...war against the situation's power of dialogue, there lies in wait the "once-for-all" which resists the unforeseeable moment. Dogma, even when its claim of origin remains uncontested, has become the most exalted form of invulnerability against revelation. Revelation will tolerate no perfect tense, but man with the arts of his craze for security props it up to perfection. (Ibid. p. 18)

Buber renders moral laws only general guides, placing the emphasis on the present and the concrete, rather than on the past and the universal. Universals, although once revealed, must be understood as symbolic expressions of the concrete dialogic situation. (Fried p. 204) They may at best be suggestions and guides of action, but the real de-
cision must come from one's apprehension of the concrete situation in its uniqueness. Universals may be pointers to the Absolute, but He is found actually only in the lived concrete. The ethical decision, thus, does not start with the absolutely valid ethical code and then applies it to the concrete situation, but it starts in the concrete situation, the response to which is, with respect to the ethical laws, at best a unique interpretation of these ethical codes, which pertain most closely to the situation. (None do so completely, in most cases).

The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an "ought" that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding. (BMM p. 16)

Whoever really understands the nature of the I-Thou relation to God and His creation will find that all traditional values are implied in it. In the end, thus, writes Buber, no responsible person remains a stranger to norms. But the command inherent in a genuine norm never becomes a maxim and the fulfilment never a habit. Any command that a great character takes to himself in the course of his development does not act in him as part of his consciousness or as material for building up his exercises, but remains latent in a basic layer of his substance until it reveals itself to him in a concrete way. What it has to tell him is revealed whenever a situation arises which demands of him a solution of which till then he had perhaps no idea...Maxims command only in the third person, the each and the none...[The concrete situation] demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility; it demands you. (Ibid. p. 114)

Moral laws, in other words, besides being normative, must
also be dialogical, i.e. religious, in character. Values are thus not simply imposed on us, yet they are also not self-created, invented. Values are discovered in the concrete situation. 'One can believe in and accept a meaning or value,' says Buber in connection with Sartre's claim of the atheistic self-creation of values,

one can set it as a guiding light over one's life if one has discovered it, not if one has invented it. It can be for me an illuminating meaning, a direction-giving value, only if it has been revealed to me in my meeting with Being, not if I have freely chosen it for myself from among the existing possibilities and perhaps have in addition decided with some fellow-creatures: This shall be valid from now on. (EG p. 70)

In his plea for values as discovered in the concrete situation, Buber also warns against 'false absolutes' which people now and then believe to have received from God directly, as plans of action, like Kierkegaard who (falsely) thought that God wanted him to sacrifice Regina as He (actually) had wanted Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. These 'suspension[s] of the ethical,' feels Buber, are to be avoided, since it is usually not God Who reveals them, but one of his 'apes,' Moloch, who prompts them.

Immediacy of one's relationship to God is necessary, but God is met directly only in the lived concrete. Man, thus, must escape from the modern idolatry which leads too readily to the 'suspension of the ethical' (universal) on account of 'false absolutes.'

In the realm of Moloch honest men lie and compassion-
ate men torture. And they really and truly believe that brother-murder will prepare the way for brotherhood! There appears to be no escape from the most evil of all idolatry.

There is no escape from it until the new conscience of men has risen that will summon them to guard with the innermost power of their souls against the confusion of the relative with the Absolute, that will enable them to see through illusion and to recognize this confusion for what it is. To penetrate again and again into the false absolute with an incorruptible, probing glance until one has discovered its limits, its limitedness — there is today perhaps no other way to reawaken the power of the pupil to glimpse the never-vanishing appearance of the Absolute. (Ibid. p. 120)

Religion and Morality are Combined and Wedded to the Concrete in which the Absolute Manifests Itself

'Ethical responsibility,' in its broadest meaning, is thus, in the last analysis, a readiness to answer God's words in the lived moment of existence. The religious and the ethical (as equated with secular) life merge.

Every moral demand is set forth as one that shall raise man, the human people, to the sphere where the ethical merges into the religious, or rather where the difference between the ethical and the religious is suspended in the breathing-space of the divine. (Ibid. p. 104)

This fusion, however, applies totally only to the ethical, since it is only part of the religious, better, corresponds only to a part of the religious realm.

Religion has this advantage over morality, that it is a phenomenon and not a postulate. The reality of morality, the demand of the demander, has a place in religion, but the reality of religion, the unconditioned being of the demander, has no place in morality. Religion is more actual and inclusive. (BMM p. 18)
'Ethics,' Euber says, 'is an inherent function of religion.' (EG p. 107) This, however, does not diminish the value of the ethical life. For it is only through it, and in companionship with it, that our religious life becomes authentic. Only in the concrete do we meet the eternal Thou. And in order that this responding to the concrete situations of life be preserved, we must aim at the elimination of all pseudoreligions which separate their 'God' - which is a pseudo-god, an idol - and man's relation to him - which is a pseudo-relation, - from the worldly life: magic, mysticism, ritualistic dogmatism, and all forms of Gnosis. By virtue of their pseudo-relation to God, these pseudoreligions try to evade the responsibilities in the existential dialogue of life, ending up with a structure of fixed laws, rules, orders, programs, values, standards, etc., which stand between them and the concrete situation, and which decide for the individual rather than leaving the decision to the person. Whether pseudoreligions are followed by the lack of genuine relation to the world or whether the escape from the responding in the lived concrete is followed by the establishment of a pseudoreligion, is hard to say. Probably both directions of development occur. Atheism with its moral autonomy has, like pseudoreligions, with the moral heteronomy usually connected to them, to be rejected on similar grounds.

God is found, and with this, evil redeemed, only by way of an I-Thou relationship to fellow-men and the world.
The alternatives are thus not religion and morality (whether in form of moral autonomy or moral heteronomy) but religion combined with morality and thus wedded to the concrete in which the Absolute manifests itself. (cf. Fried p. 206)

Only out of a personal relationship with the Absolute can the absoluteness of the ethical co-ordinates arise without which there is no complete awareness of self. Even when the individual calls an absolute criterion handed down by religious tradition his own, it must be reforged in the fire of the truth of his personal essential relation to the Absolute if it is to win true validity. But it is always the religious God as met in the concrete which bestows, the ethical universal which receives. (AG p. 98)
SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY
I. Community, Individualism, Collectivism

The Necessity of True Community

Buber's fight against de-personalization and Verdinglichung through the predominance of the I-It over the I-Thou finds an essential application also in his social philosophy. Since the genuine life of dialogue, for Buber, comprises man's true relationship to God, as well as to men and the world, he feels that man can fully realize his vocation only in a true community, for only in it is true dialogue possible.

Buber holds that 'to the essential Thou on the level of self-being' there corresponds the category of the essential We on the level of relation 'to a host of men.' (BMM p. 175) Just as the primitive Thou precedes the awareness of individuality out of which the essential Thou grows, so the primitive We precedes the awareness of separateness from which only afterwards the essential We springs when independent individuals enter into relationships.

The Thou, says Buber, includes the We potentially. 'Only men who are capable of truly saying Thou to one another can truly say We with one another,' (Ibid. p. 176) and thus form a true community. True community, thus - although it cannot be reduced to a complex system of personal I-Thou relationships between particular indivi-
duals - is based on the I-Thou relation of concrete people with one another, it virtually emerges out of the I-Thou. Just as the individual becomes a person, writes Buber, 'insofar as he steps into a living relation with other individuals' so does the social 'aggregate' become a community 'insofar as it is built out of living units of relation.' (Ibid, p. 203) 'And just as the I of the authentic personality emerges only in the dialogic "meeting" with God to Whom every other Thou points, so does the authentic We of community come forth only out of the individual members of the group to the transcendent.' (Herberg, op. cit., p. 20)

The community is built up out of living mutual relation of the individual members of the group, but the builder is the living effective Centre, that is, God... True community does not arise through people having feeling for one another (though indeed not without it), but first, through their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and second their being in living mutual relation with one another. The second has its source in the first, but is not given when the first alone is given. (ITh p. 45)

In the end, thus, relationship to God and relationship to men in true community are inseparable. Neither one can exist without the other; both are essentially necessary for man's full realization.

As already indicated above, the fact that true community is based on, and emerges from, the personal relationships among people, does not mean that society is simply the sum of, or a complex pattern of, dialogical relation-
ships. This assumption would imply an undue blurring of the distinction between the 'social' in general and the actual dialogical relationships among people. While, indeed, society would be unthinkable without true dialogical relationships in it, not everybody in a society has a direct relationship with everybody else in the group to which he belongs. Society is only a social aggregate of individuals bound up with each other according to common interests, needs, circumstances, etc. Although personal relationships are indispensable — and anyway do frequently occur within the smaller groups of organic communities, membership in a group does not necessarily imply personal relationships to the rest of the members.

Rejection of Individualism and Collectivism

With his affirmation of true community, Buber rejects both atomistic individualism and collectivism. For

individualism understands only a part of man; collectivism understands man only as a part; neither advances to the wholeness of man. Individualism sees man only in relation to himself, but collectivism does not see man at all; it sees "society". With the former, man's face is distorted; with the latter, it is masked. (MM p. 200)

Reality, says Buber, is not to be sought in the camps of either individualism or collectivism but 'between' these two alternatives — in the relation between man and man. While for the individualist, interpersonal relations and society are unessential and derivative, and while for those
who make society the basic reality the individual is only
of derivative value and interpersonal relationships are
only essentially indirect, i.e., mediated through their
common relation to society, (Fried p. 209) for the
dialogical philosopher the basic reality is the dialogue
between people from which both the individual and the
society are derived and given reality. 'Individual' (a
man without genuine relations) as well as 'society' (a
political order not based on dialogical relations) are for
him abstractions.

The fundamental fact of human existence is neither
the individual as such nor the aggregate as such.
Each, considered by itself is a mighty abstraction.
The individual is a fact of existence insofar as
he steps into a living relation with other indivi-
duals. The aggregate is a fact of existence insofar
as it is built up of living units of relation. The
fundamental fact of human existence is man with
man. (ENM pp. 202-203)

Individualism and Collectivism - Two Forms of Illusory
Self-Confirmation

All forms of individualism and collectivism, Huber
holds, 'however different their causes may be, are essentially
the conclusion or expression of the same human condition,
only at different stages.' (Ibid. p. 200) This condition
is a decline of dialogue either as a result of man's fear
to go out into the world and meet every situation, or as
an outcome of some kind of pseudoreligion which separates
the 'living with God' from the secular life. As a result
of this decline of dialogue, man's basic need for con-
firmation finds no longer a natural satisfaction. Consequently 'man sets out on one of two false ways: he seeks to be confirmed either by himself or by a collective to which he belongs.' In both cases, however, his undertaking is doomed to fail. 'The self-confirmation of him whom no fellow-man confirms cannot stand,' it is illusory. 'With ever more convulsive exertions' he has to struggle to save it, but 'finally he knows himself as inevitably abandoned.' On the other hand, 'confirmation through the collective...is pure fiction.' For although the collective accepts and employs each of its members as particular individuals, it does not 'recognize anyone in his own being...independently of his usefulness for the collective.' (FW p. 225) The self that is to be confirmed is actually lost in the collectivistic submerge. (Herberg, op. cit., p. 21)

Man, thus, says Buber, 'insofar as he has surrendered direct and personal mutuality with his fellows, can only exchange an illusory confirmation for the one that is lost. There is no salvation save through the renewal of the dialogical relation.' (FW p. 225)

**Individualism Leads into Collectivism**

Individualism, Buber holds, when pushed to the extreme, usually leads over into collectivism. For men, when he has become solitary through the lack of courage to live in 'fear of God,' to respond 'ever anew' to the problematic, God-given world, becomes 'alien and uncanny, he can no
longer stand up to the universal forms of present being; he can no longer truly meet them. Consequently he 'seeks a divine form of being with which, solitary as he is, he can communicate; he stretches his hands out beyond the world to meet this form.' He falls victim to a pseudoreligion - either self-created or one taken over - for, the saying of the Thou to 'God' without the saying of the Thou to men and the world is addressing an idol.

Finally, man reaches a condition when he can no longer stretch his hands out from his solitude to meet a divine form. The solitude in which he is has become 'colder and stricter than the preceding' ones; that, says Buber, is the basis of Nietzsche's saying, 'God is dead.' (BMK p. 167) Man abandons even his idol-god, thus falling into atheistic existentialism. He now, in order 'to save himself from the despair with which his solitary state threatens him... plunge[s] into an affirmative reflection' and 'resorts to the expedient of glorifying' his solitary state. This self-glorification, however, since it is, like any self-glorification, illusory, 'is not capable of actually conquering the given situation,' it falls into the severest form of collectivism. In individualism, says Buber, 'which has essentially an imaginary basis,' (Ibid. p. 200)

the person, in consequence of his merely imaginary mastery of his basic situation, is attacked by the ravages of the fictitious, however much he thinks,
or strives to think, that he is asserting himself as a person in being.' (Ibid. p. 202)

Individualism, thus, never has long existence; it has to founder on its very basis.

Here it may seem that the rather persisting existence of groups such as 'beatniks' or 'existentialists' could serve as a disproof of, or at least be an exception to Buber's characterization of 'individualism' as an untenable position. This however, in my eyes, would involve a misunderstanding of the core of these 'individualistic' movements. For, those who call themselves 'existentialists' for example, are not individuals in the sense of atheistic existentialism as Nietzsche or Sartre understood it, but in actuality they are just as much collectivists as all the rest who left the road of individualism and took that of collectivism without pretending to have gone to the very end of individualism before. The last rung of the ladder of individualism, that of atheistic existentialism, is really reached only by few people. 'Existentialists,' 'beatniks,' etc. are only pseudo-individualistic, for although outwardly non-conformists, inwardly they are the greatest conformists since in order to receive the necessary confirmation they do not exercise real self-confirmation, as the truly autonomous individualist does, but they receive confirmation by conforming to the absurdities practiced by all the members of their group as well as through the attention of the masses which they attract by being differ-
ent from the rest of society in absurd ways. What is most
detrimental in this concealed and more subtle conformity
is that it is unknown to the pseudo-individual himself.
He does not realize that instead of being a real indivi-
dualist he is just different from the masses in absurd
and superficial ways - so attracting attention and receiv-
ing pseudo-confirmation - and looking for confirmation
in a different though smaller collective. The modern
individualist does not stand on the last rung of indivi-
dualism (as opposed to, and a step to, collectivism) but
his 'individualism' is only a collectivist reaction of
a conformist against collectivism. The result is an even
extreme conformity and collectivism.
II. The Threat of Collectivism

The Decline of Modern Individualism into Modern Collectivism

The two forms of illusory confirmation have appeared in our age on the individual level, in form of individualism and conformism, as well as to a great extent on the level of social life in form of the dichotomy between capitalism and collectivism. Both personal, as well as social, collectivism have resulted from 'a union of cosmic and social homelessness [as a consequence of the lack of true dialogue and true community], dread of the universe and dread of life, resulting in an existential constitution of solitude such as has probably never existed before to the same extent.' (BMM p. 200)

Since, as was shown above, individualism in the end has to founder on its own basis, modern personal as well as social individualism have to break down sometime. It is now, in this century, Buber feels, that modern individualism is on its decline. 'In spite of all attempts at revival,' he says, 'the time of individualism is over.' (Ibid. p. 202) Although, as will be shown shortly, in the western world modern individualism still exists to a small extent, Buber feels it has played its role. 'Collectivism, on the other hand, is at the height of its development.' (loc. cit.) It is today's greatest danger to the world, for it is the detrimental expression of man's flight
from the exacting 'ever anew' of personal responsibility into the secure 'once for all' of membership in a collective, whether in form of totalitarianism comprising personal as well as social collectivism - as found in Russia, or in form of loyalty to political parties, State policy of defense, or private capitalistic enterprises on the social level, and in form of conformity with respect to social behaviour, religion, art appreciation, spending of leisure time, etc. on the personal level - as found in the West. Modern man with his insecurity and repressions is isolated from his fellows, and clings desperately to the collectivity to which he entrusts his own protection and decisions in life.

Personal individualism, which during the last few generations had manifested itself in the form of an atomized society made up of individuals who had no genuine relation with others in true community, but yet were non-conforming with respect to their Weltanschauung, has been replaced today by individual collectivism, that is, by the conforming of people with respect to taste, values, social behaviour, interests, etc. As a result of this kind of conformity, true personal relationships among people have become extremely difficult, for they require genuine persons. A genuine person, however, (as a pre-supposition for his entering into relation) has to be an individual, that is, must have retained his uniqueness and not have given it up through conforming. Few people today are
true persons, that is, real individuals entering into dialogue. That the existence of groups such as the 'beatniks' or 'existentialists' are more of a proof than a disproof of the predominance of collectivism over individualism in our age, can be seen from what has been said above, in connection with these movements. For one thing, these movements are mere reactions against collectivism, and for that very reason are indicative that collectivism dominates our time. Secondly, the members of these movements themselves are anything but true individuals, but they are, as already mentioned above, people who, in trying to escape conformity, fall into an even worse one by conforming to a new collective, their own movement. They thus conform to their own non-conformity. Moreover, the fact that they try to receive confirmation from the rest of society by attracting its attention also shows that the members of these movements cannot be termed true individuals. For the true individualist seeks confirmation only through himself.

Modern social individualism, in form of centralistic capitalism, is also on its decline. In its place totalitarian collectivism has entered upon the scene. Essentially, Buber holds, collectivism on the social level too follows upon the foundering of capitalistic individualism, just as individualism on the personal level leads over into widespread conformity. Before elaborating on this connection between the decline of individualistic capitalism into
State collectivism, it will be necessary to sketch very briefly the development of society, as seen by Buber:

The essential of all those things which enabled man to emerge from Nature and to assert himself, writes Buber - 'more essential even than the making of a "technical" world out of things expressly formed for this purpose' - was that he banded together with others in social life for 'protection and hunting, food gathering and work.' It was the 'creation of a "social" world out of persons at once mutually dependent and independent.' The line of human evolution up to now has been 'the forming and reforming of communities on the basis of growing personal independence, their mutual recognition and collaboration on that basis.' The most important steps to the development of human society were: the division of labor which 'recognized and utilized [every individual] in his special capacity' resulting in an ever-renewed association of persons. The second step was the banding together of people in quest of food and campaigns, so that 'as once between individuals, so now between communities people discerned and acknowledged differences of nature and function.' Wherever genuine society has developed, Buber writes, it was based on 'functional autonomy, mutual recognition and mutual responsibility, whether individual or collective.' When power centers have split off, then this happened only in order to maintain the security of the community. Against the centralizing tendencies of the State
there was always opposed the organic, functionally organized society as such, a great society built up of various societies, the great society in which men lived and worked, competed with one another and helped one another. (FU pp. 130-131)

This mutual dependence of increasingly independent individuals and communities within a society Buber calls the 'decentralistic social principle.'

Wherever advanced societies have existed, there was the danger that the 'decentralistic social principle' would be subordinated to the 'centralistic political principle' with its emphasis on the necessity and standardization of the world of It in the State. The first real overthrow of the 'decentralistic social principle' meant first the development of centralistic capitalism, that is, individualism in the political sphere. This took place in France. Although in the pre-Revolutionary centralistic State in France there were totalitarian tendencies inherent and the autonomous life of individuals and groups weakened, society was still composed of different societies, 'it was complex and pluralistic in structure.' (Ibid. p. 139) This complexity gave the State vitality and powers of resistance against the totalitarian tendencies of the royalty. This resistance, however, was broken by the French Revolution with its cry for Freedom, and its bitter opposition to 'the special rights of free associations,' (loc. cit.) besides its opposition to the royal centralization. As a consequence, centralization in its
new capitalistic form succeeded by 'atomizing society' and 'dispossessing groups of their autonomy.' (loc. cit.) Everybody now had the same rights and possibilities. The success of the individual was dependent upon his own initiative.

Accordingly as human beings differ in aspiration and ability, it was once more an elite - this time not a royal one but one of capable business men - who appropriated most of the capital again, leaving the majority of the people poor and without a fulfilling type of work. It is at this point where individualism - in form of centralized capitalism (rather than centralized royal government as it was before the revolution, which at least allowed for relatively autonomous small groups) - began to be poisoned by collectivism. The western world today still suffers from it. Capitalism as an idea is only concerned with the individual, but the practical effects of capitalism always lead more into the direction of collectivism. The people owning the capital, the alleged individualists, become richer and fewer at the same time. This means that their organizations attain ever greater dimensions, which in turn, stifle the individual and smaller enterprises. For example, the many little grocery shops are replaced by the big chain stores. The owner of the little store is forced to go out of business since he cannot compete with the big enterprise. He enters a big organization - not any more as an independent owner with individual relation-
ships to people, but as a worker completely dependent on, and deter-
rmined by, the company or corporation. One could sum this up by saying that in the capitalistic systems man becomes insecure since, by virtue of the great irresponsibility in the business world, his success is constantly at stake. Consequently he flees into the big protective collectivity, into a big organization within the State.

This social and economic insecurity resulting from capitalistic individualism (atomized individualism by itself creates insecurity but this insecurity is increased through the rise of capitalism) has found, today also, a more radical and more detrimental reaction than that of collectivism within a society in form of huge private enterprises: this is the completely centralized State as found in the Soviet Union. Needless to say, in Buber's eyes, Soviet collectivism, much less than capitalism in Western democracies (with its own kind of collectivism) can remedy the poverty in organic structure and true community of atomized society. Neither does it solve the problem of capitalism for it lays stress on political centralization which is, to an even greater extent than capitalistic centralization, the arch enemy of multiplicity and freedom, of the life of dialogue. Both Marxism and the Soviet regime have constantly subordinated the social principle to the political principle. Although they have been tolerant of slight de-centralization in form of compulsory co-operatives and producer soviets, and thus have weakened
radical centralization, the social principle has always been subjected to the political one, compulsion and domination have prevailed in place of free fellowship and association in true community.

This existential and social threat of atomized society and its resulting centralistic capitalism which drives man into collectives, is found not only within societies but also on the international level, between whole societies.

As a result of modern industrial development and its ordered chaos, involving the struggle of all against all for access to raw materials and for a larger share in the world-market, there grew up, in place of the old struggles between States, struggles between whole societies. The individual society, feeling itself threatened not only by its neighbors' lust for aggression but also by things in general, knew no way of salvation save in complete submission to the principle of centralized power...In the democratic form of society no less than in its totalitarian forms, it made this its guiding principle. (Ibid. pp. 131-132)

Consequently the important thing in all societies is the 'minute organization of power, the unquestioning observance of slogans, and the saturation of the whole of society with the real or supposed interests of the State.' (loc. cit.) With respect to the democratic capitalistic forms of government in the west, this means thus, that the collectivism found within them is not only one resulting from non-governmental private capitalistic enterprises, but also one resulting from the centralizing tendency of the State. Here we find the link between the western and
Soviet centralization.

Now the parallelism between personal individualism and collectivism, and social individualism and collectivism can be seen with respect to their causes, nature, and inter-relationships. Just as the individual - when without dialogical relationship to other people and to God falls into solitariness, and when this state becomes unbearable for lack of confirmation - seeks relief in the collectivity, so capitalism - the correlate of individualism on the political level - comes about when true community is destroyed (because of people's not having true relation with one another) and then falls into collectivism on account of lack of social and economic security of the individual.  

The Tragedy of Collectivism

In Buber's eyes the rise of modern collectivism upon the foundering of individualism - on the personal as well as social level - constitutes the greatest danger to mankind today. 'The last generation's intoxication with freedom,' Buber writes, 'has been followed by the present generation's craze for bondage; the untruth of intoxication with freedom has been followed by the untruth of hysteria.' (BBF p. 70)

The human being tries to escape his destiny of solitude by becoming completely embedded in one of the massive modern group formations. The more massive, unbroken and powerful in its achievements this is,
the more that man is able to feel that he is saved from both forms of homelessness, the social and the cosmic. There is obviously no further reason for the dread of life, since one needs only to fit oneself into the "general will" and let one's own responsibility for an existence which has become all too complicated be absorbed in collective responsibility, which proves itself able to meet all complications. Likewise, there is obviously no further reason for the dread of the universe, since technicized nature - with which society as such manages well, or seems to - takes the place of the universe which has become uncanny and with which, go to speak, no further agreement can be reached. The collective pledges itself to provide total security. There is nothing imaginary here, a dense reality rules, and the "general" itself appears to have become real. (Ibid. p. 201)

But this security offered in the collectivity is a pseudo-security. 'Modern collectivism,' says Eubel, 'is essentially illusory.' (loc. cit.) Today it is mankind's greatest danger, it imperils 'the immeasurable value which constitutes man,' for it destroys the dialogue between man and God and man and the world. (Ibid, p. 80) 'The collectivity,' writes Eubel, 'cannot enter instead of the person into the dialogue of the ages which the Godhead conducts with mankind.' (loc. cit.) On the contrary,

the modern zeal for collectivity is a flight from community's testing and consecration of the person, a flight from the vital dialogic, demanding the staking of the self, which is in the heart of the world. (Ibid. pp. 31-32)

The 'false paths of subjectivism' (modern individualism), writes Eubel, 'have been left behind on the road of objectivism' (modern collectivism). (Ibid. p. 32)
But as there existed a pseudo-subjectivity with the former, since the elementary force of being a subject was lacking, so with the latter there exists a pseudo-objectivism, since one is here fitted not into a world but into a worldless faction. As in the former all songs in praise of freedom were sung into the void, because only freeing from bonds was known, but not freeing to responsibility, so in the latter even the noblest hymns on authority are a misunderstanding. (Ibid. p. 32)

Collectivity is not a real 'binding' but a 'bundling together.' (Ibid. p. 31)

Man in a collective is not man with man. Here the person is not freed from his isolation, by communing with living beings which hence forth lives with him; "the whole," with its claim on the wholeness of every man, aims logically and successfully at reducing, neutralizing, devaluing, and desecrating every bond with living beings. That tender surface of personal life which longs for contact with other life is progressively deadened or desensitized. Man's isolation is not overcome here, but overpowered and numbed. Knowledge of it is suppressed, but the actual condition of solitude has its insuperable effect in the depths, and rises secretly to a cruelty which will become manifest with the scattering of the illusion. Modern collectivism is the last barrier raised by man against a meeting with himself. (Ibid. p. 201)

'Based on an organized atrophy of personal existence'
collectivism marches 'without Thou and without I' into the 'abyss.' (Ibid. pp. 31,33)

'Existential Mistrust' - A Source of Ever Greater Collectivity

In our age, social homelessness and the collectivism resulting from it, are intensified by what Buber terms 'existential mistrust.' This 'mistrust' is of a new quality - it is no longer simply the age old mistrust which men
have always felt towards one another

such as that directed against those with strange ways, those who are unsettled, and those without tradition - the mistrust that the farmer in his isolated farmstead feels for the tramp who suddenly appears before him. (FW p. 222)

There have always been countless situations in which a man in intercourse with a fellow-man is seized with the doubt whether he may trust him; that is, whether the other really means what he says and whether he will do what he says. There have always been countless situations in which a man believes his life-interest demands that he suspect the other of making it his object to appear otherwise than he is. The first man must then be on his guard to protect himself against this threatening false appearance. (Ibid. p. 223)

Today, however, this mistrust, has been replaced or been overridden by a more detrimental mistrust resulting from the disintegration of true community in our age. Formerly, Buber writes, societies have - like our society - been subject to cosmic insecurity, but there has always been some kind of social security resulting from 'the living in real togetherness' in 'a small organic community.' (BMM p. 196) And where this social security existed, confidence also reigned among people, and man did not have to repress his wishes 'to such an extent that the repressions acquire a dominating significance for his life,' although at times he had to subject his wishes to the demands of the community. (Ibid. pp. 96-97) But for the most part they coalesced with the needs of the community which were 'expressed in its commands.' (Ibid. p. 197)

Today however, where true organic community has decay-
ed and been replaced by collectivism, the 'agreement between one's own and the other's desire ceases, for there is no true coalescence or reconciliation with what is necessary to a sustaining community, and the dulled wishes creep hopelessly into the recesses of the soul.' (loc. cit.)

As a result we find ourselves in a community where frustration, repression, and sublimation rule, in which the instinct is divorced from the spirit. 'The divorce between instinct and spirit,' feels Buber, is in the end 'the consequence of the divorce between man and man.' (loc. cit.)

With this decay of true society and its pathological effects the former social security and confidence in one's fellow-man got lost. Today 'the demonry of basic mistrust' rules over the world. 'The abysses between man and man threaten ever more pitilessly to become unbridgeable.' (PW p. 222)

Today man no longer simply suspects that the other one is consciously being dishonest, but he suspects the very being of the other. He

no longer merely fears that the other will voluntarily dissemble, but one simply takes it for granted that he cannot do otherwise. The presumed difference between his opinion and his statement, between his statement and his action, is here no longer understood as his intention, but essential necessity...It is no longer only the uprightness, the honesty of the other which is in question, but the inner integrity of his existence itself. (Ibid. pp. 223-224)

The mask which one's fellow-man has on and which one tries
to take off, is not one which the other has put on knowingly with the attempt to deceive, but instead is 'a mask that has, without his knowing it, been put on him, indeed positively imprinted on him \( \text{by his own frustrations and its effects} \) so that what is really deceived is his own consciousness.' (Ibid. p. 223) Consequently, man does not accept what the other one says - in fact he hardly listens to the words of the other. Rather, he devotes himself to 'seeing through' and 'unmasking' the other. He looks for the 'behind' of outward expression, for its concealed causes.

This attempt, on the part of modern man, to 'see through' those with whom he comes in contact results in part from the ideas of those philosophers and psychologists such as Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, and Jung who have given the 'scientific rationalization' (FW p. 224) for the disease of our time, putting forth the theories that man is not what he thinks himself to be, that he has little control over what he is in reality, but that he is a product of his environment and his own subconscious psychic condition. People today grab onto these 'scientific rationalizations' of psychology and the mistrust among men is pushed to extremes.

Man, thus, in this pathological condition where the 'immediacy of togetherness of man and man is destroyed' (Ibid. p. 224) has lost confidence in existence in general.

The existential mistrust is indeed basically no longer,
like the old kind, a mistrust of my fellow-man. It is rather the destruction of confidence in general. That we can no longer carry on a genuine dialogue from one camp to the other is the severest symptom of the sickness of present-day man. Existential mistrust is this sickness itself. But the destruction of trust in human existence is the inner poisoning of the total human organism from which this sickness stems. (loc. cit.)

As a consequence of today's basic mistrust people feel more lonely and more insecure than ever before - the flight into collectivism has become hysterical. The life of dialogue is threatened ever more. This existential mistrust in human beings ultimately leads to a loss of trust in God. The amount of atheism today is enormous. If there still exists the belief in God in many individuals then, in most cases, this is a belief in a pseudo-god, in an idol, for no collectivist, since by definition he has no true relation to his fellow-men, can have a true relation to God. The atheistic psychological theories which reduce God to a mere projection of the psyche are a fatal aid on man's way toward complete alienation from God. The human race today has arrived at a stage where it can "no longer stretch out [its] hands from [its solitude] to [its] divine Thou." Nothing is left to man but his 'intimate communication with himself.' (BMM p. 167) Yet man cannot remain with himself, especially today when he cannot even trust himself since he too is a member of a frustrated, repressed, and sublimating aggregation of people - so he steeps himself in the collective.
The Necessity of the Re-Structuring of Society

The alternative to collectivism, for Buber, is not individualism, for this would mean regression rather than progression. Buber refuses to accept the 'either/or' proposition of our age - the demand that one accepts either collectivism in form of the centralized socialized State, on account of the defects of capitalism, or that one accepts the capitalistic system, because of the drawbacks of collectivism. The false alternatives of our age, that of individualism and collectivism, have to be smashed all together. 'Man,' says Buber, 'is truly saved from the "one" [the collective] not by separation but only by being bound up in genuine communion.' (BMM p. 177) Genuine realization is found only in a third alternative - in the relationship of man to man with his whole being.

Man's salvation from the illusion of modern collectivism, thus, is a question of the rescue of man's personal self, of the rebirth of dialogue, and lastly, of the re-structuring of society into a true community since only in it is true dialogical life fully possible.

True community, however, cannot be brought about through abstract ideas, political force, or new institutions, but the re-structuring of society has to begin with the change of the basis of every true community - the
relations between man and man. The remedy for the complete elimination of true dialogue in collectivistic States, and for the indirect and perverted relation between men based on a desire for exploitation rather than true togetherness — as found in the capitalistic States — is not a super-society, but simply the strengthening of the will for genuine relationships among people. (Fried p. 47) The lack of true dialogue among men cannot be overcome by anything else but by the concrete individuals through their responding to the concrete situations which confront them, by men who have the courage to live in 'fear of God,' and who accept every situation with all its danger and mystery with an open heart. The rebirth of true dialogue can come only through individuals 'who mean community in their innermost heart and establish it in their natural sphere of relations,' (Fried p. 146) through individuals who are willing to stake their life in the meeting with people and who deny no answer to the world. 'The erection of new institutions,' Friedman well summarizes Buber,

can only have a genuinely liberating effect when it is accompanied by a transformation of the actual life between man and man. This life between man and man does not take place in the abstraction of the state but rather there where a reality of spatial, functional, emotional, or spiritual togetherness exists — in the village and city community, in the workers' fellowship, in comradeship, in religious union. (Fried p. 46)
The 'Political Principle' Must be Subordinated to the 'Social Principle'  

One of the greatest obstructions in our day against the rebirth of dialogue and the development of true community is the confusion of the political principle with the social principle, and the domination of the latter by the former. It is this subordination of the 'social de-centralistic principle' meaning free fellowship and association to the 'centralistic political principle' meaning compulsion and control, which constitutes what was called above social-political collectivism, and the overcoming of which will be an important initial step on the way to the establishment of a fertile ground for the growth of true dialogue. Although the actual rebirth of dialogue, as was said above, can start only from the actual entering into relation with one another, the first step in the direction of true community will have to be the breakdown of social-political collectivism, especially in totalitarian States, since the presupposition for man's entering into dialogue is the destruction of any outward control which would choke every attempt to dialogue at its very beginning. In other words, the presupposition for the rebirth of dialogue - man's outward freedom to have relations - must be fulfilled first. In totalitarian States, where the whole life of people is controlled, true dialogue cannot develop, even if certain individuals wanted true community.
The reconstruction of society, writes Buber, can only begin with

a radical alteration of the relationship between the social and the political order. It can no longer be a matter of substituting one political regime for another, but of the emergence, in place of a political regime grafted upon society, of a regime expressive of society itself. (Pu p. 27)

While socialism, based on the political principle, starts with an abstract idea and a uniform and rigid political system, true community based on the social principle must start with the concrete persons with their problems and their potentiality of forming a true community. True socialism must grow from the urge in the concrete human beings to form a community based on common needs, interests, language, tradition, etc.; it must come from beneath the hardened mechanism of the State. The State must stop being a 'machina machinarum that turns everything belonging to it into the components of some mechanism' and that 'strangles the individuality of small associations,' but it has to become a 'communitas communitatum, the union of the communities in community,' within which the proper and autonomous life of each community and all their members can unfold.' (Ibid. p. 39) Free associations must replace the centralistic State in which nothing organic can 'resist "the rigidly centralized directive mechanism"' which 'devours everything living;' (loc. cit.) organic communities which have sprung from common possessions, morals, beliefs, interests, have to be exchanged for the
mechanical association of isolated self-seeking individuals 'held together by force, compromise, convention, and public opinion.' (Fried p. 45) Unless the freeing of society from 'the pressure of the political principle' through a 'de-centralization of political power' is effected, the social spontaneity of a people will be endangered and diminished and with it its social vitality. For, writes Buber,

the social vitality of a nation, and its cultural unity and independence as well, depend very largely upon the degree of social spontaneity to be found there...The larger the measure of autonomy granted to the local and regional and also to the functional societies, the more room is left for the free unfolding of social energy. (FW p. 175)

The radical abolition of the centralized State in favor of true community, which Buber advocates, does not, however, mean that any kind of State has to be destroyed, that the political principle has to be substituted by the social principle completely. In true community, although it is based on free association, there has to be a certain amount of compulsion by the State, the amount of this legitimate compulsion being determined by the degree of incapacity for voluntary right order in the community.

This difference between the strength of the social and political principles Buber calls 'political surplus,' and is defined by him in terms of the difference between 'Administration' and 'Government.'
By Administration we mean a capacity for making dispositions which is limited by the available technical facilities and recognized in theory and practice within those limits; when it oversteps its limits, it seals its own doom. By Government we understand a non-technical, but "constitutionally" limited body; this signifies that, in the event of certain changes in the situation, the limits are extended and even, at times, wiped out altogether. (Ibid. p. 174)

The 'excess in the capacity for making dispositions' beyond that needed by the given condition is what is called 'political power.' 'The measure of this excess...represents the exact difference between Administration and Government.' (loc. cit.) This 'political surplus' derives its justification from the external and internal instability, from the latent state of crisis between the nations and within every nation, which may at any moment become an active crisis requiring more immediate and far-reaching measures. (loc. cit.)

The constant danger, however, in every State is that the 'political surplus' becomes much bigger than any latent crisis would require. Today, especially in collectivistic States, the political principle is in complete domination of the social principle. It is therefore necessary today - despite all internal and external latent crises - that 'efforts are renewed again and again to determine in what spheres it is possible to alter the ratio between Governmental and Administrative control in favor of the latter.' (Ibid. p. 175) The demarcation line 'between the spheres which must of necessity be centralized and those
which can operate in freedom, between the degree of
Government and the degree of autonomy' has to be revised
and improved continually 'in accordance with changing
historical circumstances.' (loc. cit.; PU p. 134) In the
end, the change in the 'apparition of power,' which
should always be accompanied by 'a continuous change in
the nature of power,' should be a transformation of 'Govern-
ment into Administration as far as the general and par-
ticular conditions permit.'

Although this task is a difficult, strenuous, and
risky one, it is unconditionally necessary, for rather 'a
re-structuring of society as a League of Leagues, and a
reduction of the State to its proper function, which is
to maintain unity, than a devouring of an amorphous
society by an omnipotent State; better 'the right proportion,
tested anew every day according to changing conditions,
between group-freedom and collective order,' than 'an
absolute order imposed indefinitely for the sake of an era
of freedom alleged to follow "of its own accord."' (PU p.
148)

The Overcoming of 'Existential Mistrust'

The elimination of centralistic collectivism, however,
is only one of the two most important presuppositions for
the development of true dialogue and the development of
true community in which there is the right balance between
the powers of the political and social principle. The second
one—concerned not primarily with conditions outside
the individual person, as was the first one with the rigid
order of the centralistic State, but with man himself —
is the overcoming of the 'existential mistrust' which domi-
nates the relationship among people today.

The successful removal of the centralistic State is
not possible unless there are truly responsible persons
who become bearers of the true alternative — true community.
Otherwise, if the centralistic State is destroyed in a revo-
lution by individuals who are basically irresponsible,
the outcome will be an anarchistic, atomized society
which finally will again develop into centralized collecti-

vism. Individualism is the false alternative. The pre-
dominance of the social principle over the political one
cannot be achieved by any devices of political re-organiza-
tion, (since community starts from the bottom, with
concrete relations, and not from the top with ideas), nor
by the radical destruction of political power by 'irrespon-
sible' people, (which would bring chaos), but only through
basically changed relations between men and between
communities, that is, by the concurrence of the abdi-
cation by the State of some of its power with the 're-
sponsible' activity of individuals who want genuine
community and who transform the political principle into
the social one. Since the political surplus is, in a way,
the expression of the extent to which there is lack of
true community in a society, the destruction of the political
principle in a revolution would result in a chaotic atomized society (which formerly was held together by political power) which, in order to escape this chaos, would have to set up a political principle stronger than the one destroyed by the revolution. The mechanistic political principle, therefore, must not be destroyed any faster than true organic community is actually developing. The creation of real organic society itself will eventually destroy the 'political surplus,' since it will make it unnecessary. (In practice, the abdication of power by the State - even if it would be replaced by true community and not by chaos as in revolutionary destruction - will naturally rarely be voluntary, but usually requires the vigorous pressure of groups of people capable of voluntary order which can force the State to relinquish some of its 'political surplus.' While this is thinkable in the western world, it is difficult to imagine how this would be possible in Russia, where a 'vigorous pressure' of a group of people who want voluntary order is very unlikely, since any formation of such a group would be stifled in its very beginning in the first place.)

In any event, the re-structuring of society into a true community requires the presence and responsibility of true persons. True dialogue among people, however, is possible only if they have confidence in one another. But today the demonry of basic mistrust is ruling the world.
Nothing stands so much in the way of the rise of a Civilization of Dialogue as the demonic power which rules our world, the demonry of basic mistrust. What does it help to induce the other to speak if basically one puts no faith in what he says? The meeting with him already takes place under the perspective of his untrustworthiness. And this perspective is not incorrect, for his meeting with me takes place under a corresponding perspective. (PW p. 222)

What is therefore necessary is that man overcome this basic mistrust which separates him from his fellow-man and which makes true community impossible. This, feels Buber, must begin with a 'criticism of criticism,' with the showing up of the 'fundamental and enormously influential error of all the theories of seeing through and unmasking.' (Ibid. p. 226) This error is that the newly discovered elements in the psychical and spiritual existence of man are identified with the total structure of man instead of being assigned their proper place in the context of a much greater organic whole. Consequently, an 'uncritical acceptance of man's statements' is considered absurd. But man, writes Buber,

is not to be seen through, but to be perceived ever more completely in his openness and his hiddenness and in the relation of the two to each other. (Ibid. p. 227)

This does not mean blind trust but clearsighted trust, so that we wish to perceive the other's
manifestedness and his wholeness, his proper character, without any preconceptions about this or that background, and with the intention of accepting, accrediting and confirming him to the extent that his perception will allow. (loc. cit.)

If this happens, genuine dialogue between men can be re-established. Accordingly then, the rise of true community within States will be possible again, which in turn, will eventually bring about an alteration of the present relationship between the social and the political principle in favor of the former. So can the capitalistic centralization, which virtually forces thousands of people into performing dull jobs for some huge private enterprise, be dissolved and replaced by a more intimate relation between employer and employee and by a more satisfactory work on the part of the employee, a work which will do greater justice to his capacities. There will also be the proper basis for a radical decrease in personal conformity - then partly due to 'responsible' use of mass communication - with respect to social behavior, art appreciation, taste, etc., which is enormous today in the west and presumably also in the east.

The destruction of this basic mistrust is also a necessary condition for dialogical international relation. 'Only if this happens' (the destruction of mistrust), says Buber, can a 'genuine dialogue begin between the two camps into which mankind is split.' (loc. cit.) Only men who have 'overcome in themselves the basic mistrust' and
are 'capable of recognizing in their partner in dialogue the reality of his being,' can be true spokesmen for their countries. This kind of representation is entirely different from today's political representation which has reached 'a state of practically unlimited representation' and with this has brought about 'the reign of practically unlimited centralistic accumulation of power.' (FU p. 133)

It is a representation based on far-sightedness, experience, and responsibility, free from the 'incrustation of catch-words' (Fried p. 221) and 'acquainted with the true needs of its own people' as well as with those of other peoples. (PW p. 223) These true representatives will be able to 'extract the true need from the exaggerations' and they will 'unrelentingly distinguish between truth and propaganda within what is called the opposition of interests.' (loc. cit.) Only when this extracting of the real conflict between genuine needs from the alleged amount of antagonisms is done, will they proceed to a solution of the problems, basing it on the question: What does every man need in order to live as man? For, writes Buber, if the globe is not to burst asunder, every man must be given what he needs for a really human life.' (loc. cit.) Only if men come 'together out of hostile camps' and enter into true dialogue despite their opposing views, guided by 'unreserved honesty' - is there hope for the rescue of man.

Once the mistrust among nations is destroyed, and true dialogue is established, the fear with which every country
today meets other nations and societies will vanish. This, in turn, will make any centralization by the State in the aim of national defense superfluous. It is therefore here, with the establishment of peace among nations, that Buber finds the true start for the establishment of organic societies.

Under rigorous scrutiny, thus, it is the elimination of the basic mistrust among men which is the first step towards true community. Everything else, even the destruction of political power, which above was treated as being a prerequisite for true community, as a simultaneously necessary starting point along with the elimination of existential mistrust, is secondary. Only from the viewpoint of a single totalitarian nation, as for example Russia, the abdication of centralized power is as much a prerequisite for true community as is the overcoming of basic mistrust, since any development of true community is impossible without the State's allowing for it. In this case international peace on account of the elimination of 'basic mistrust' would not mean any de-centralization of the State since the latter has an internal ideological basis, and is only to a smaller part the outcome of international insecurity. From this point of view, the difference between the treatment of the relinquishment of centralized power as of the same importance as the removal of basic mistrust as seen above, and the present treatment of the elimination of basic mistrust as the only first
step towards community must be understood. But from the international viewpoint, as well as from the viewpoint of a nation that is centralized only for its own defense, the destruction of this centralized force is a direct result of peace — a peace which, in turn, can only exist when individual nations have confidence in each other and people no longer fear one another.

Or, this destruction of centralized power is a result of the pressure of organic groups which have developed as far as the State has allowed, and which too are based on true dialogical relationships, whose prerequisite is that basic mistrust be removed.

The most efficient way, Buber feels, for society to eliminate the basic mistrust among human beings and to weaken the power of the political principle, is social education. In contrast to political propaganda which 'seeks to "suggest" a ready-made will to the members of society,' social education attempts 'to arouse and to develop in the minds of its pupils the spontaneity of fellowship which is innate in all unravaged human souls and which harmonizes very well with the development of personal existence and personal thought.' (PW p. 176) This, Buber feels, can only be accomplished by a complete overthrow of the political trend which nowadays dominates education in the world. True education for citizenship in a State is the education for the 'effectuation of society' towards a 'truly social
outlook and a truly social will.' (loc. cit.) In the end, it is the education of people ready to respond with their whole being and with true responsibility to everything they meet in life.
IV. Utopian and Religious Socialism

Ideal Society is a Community of Communities

Buber's trust in the capacities of man leads him to believe that the complete elimination of the existential mistrust among people may ultimately lead to the 'resolute will of all peoples to cultivate the territories and raw materials of our planet and govern its inhabitants, together.' (FU p. 132) This, for Buber, is the only guarantee for prolonged peace. Only if there is cooperation in the control of raw materials, agreement of methods of manufacture of such materials, and regulation of the world market will society be able to constitute itself as such.

At this point, however, Buber clearly realizes man will be 'threatened by a danger greater than all the previous ones: the danger of a gigantic centralization of power covering the whole planet and devouring all free community.' (loc. cit.) Evermore, therefore, is it necessary that with 'unwearying scrutiny' society is given its proper independence and saved from the depredations of the State. (Ibid. p. 134) Everything, says Buber,

depends on whether the collectivity in whose hands the control of the means of production passes will facilitate and promote in its very structure and in all its institutions the genuine common life of the various groups composing it - or whether, in fact, these groups themselves become proper foci of the productive process; therefore on whether the masses are so organized in their separate organizations.
(the various "communities") as to be as powerful as the common economy of man permits; therefore on whether centralist representation only goes as far as the new order of things absolutely demands. (Ibid. pp. 133-134)

On the other hand - while objecting to a regulation of the relation between centralization and de-centralization by general political principles, Buber, in order to prevent the development of society into an aggregate of independent communes or co-operatives, does not undertake to solve the questions as to the degree of economic or political autonomy to be permitted these communes or co-operatives alone, rather, Buber feels, this massive problem must be approached with the 'autonomy of the spirit,' with a constant and tireless weighing and measuring of the right proportion between centralization and de-centralization. The community process and attitude simply have to determine the relations of the communes with each other to a large degree since, says Buber, only a community of communities deserves the title of Commonwealth. For if the various communes fail to co-operate among themselves, the development to real community and to a world-wide commonwealth will be barred. A certain amount of responsible centralization - of course based largely upon the individual nature of each commune - will be necessary to insure true community.

Buber's Utopian Socialism, of which the aim is international co-operation in form of a confederation of commonwealths which, in turn, are composed of communities made up
of communes and co-operatives of all sizes, is thus dependent upon what he calls 'Full Co-operatives' in their various forms, and on various levels. And 'the more,' says Buber, '"Utopianism" clarifies its ideas the more patently does the leading role seem to fall to' the Full Co-operative in form of a 'Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative.' (PU p. 81)

This kind of Full Co-operative (Vollgenossen-schaft) however, must not be confused with the co-operative system as found in capitalistic States in the West. For there, the Consumer and Producer Co-operatives do not, in turn, form an organic co-operation of production and consumption whether on the level of the village, the district, or the State. Rather, the Consumer Co-operatives have become big capitalistic bureaucracies (Ibid. p. 65), and the Producer Co-operatives have succumbed to the fatal desire of getting other people to work for them. The Producer Co-operative, however, is better suited in itself than the Consumer Co-operative to take part in the re-structuring of society since 'production of goods implicates people more profoundly than a common acquisition of goods;...it embraces much more of their powers and their lifetime.' (Ibid. p. 76)

Consumption, on the other hand, brings people together only with a highly impersonal part of their being, yet both - the Consumer Co-operative in a 'technical and managerial sense' and the Producer Co-operative in a 'structural and psychological sense' - adapt themselves to the capitalistic pattern. (loc. cit.) 'The militant capitalistic organizations,'
e.g. labor unions and trade unions 'which the proletariat erected against Capitalism,' since they have 'no access to the life of society itself and its foundations: production and consumption,' fail to solve this capitalistic and non-co-operative trend of production and consumption. (Ibid. p. 139)

The remedy for all these deficiencies, Buber holds, is the 'Full Co-operative' which is a synthesis of a decentralized production (including industry, agriculture, and the handicrafts), and a non-conforming consumption in a confederative community.

If the principle of organic re-structuring is to become a determining factor the influence of the Full Co-operative will be needed, since in it production and consumption are united and industry is complemented by agriculture...A genuine and lasting re-organization of society from within can only prosper in the union of producers and consumers, each of the two partners being composed of independent and homogeneous co-operative units. (Ibid. pp. 76-79)

These Full Co-operatives must not, however, remain isolated experiments but the ultimate aim is an organic confederation of Full Co-operatives, for the vitality of Socialism can only be

guaranteed by a wealth of Full Co-operatives all working together and, in their functional synthesis, exercising a mediatory and unifying influence. (Ibid. p. 79)

Thus, although 'genuine "Utopian" Socialism can be termed "topical" Socialism' in that 'it is not without tograph-
local character' because it seeks to realize itself in a given place and under given conditions, that is, "here and now," and to the greatest degree possible...it regards the local realization...as nothing but a point of departure, a beginning...that must be there if this realization is to fight for its freedom and win universal validity. (Ibid. p. 81)

Then, maybe,

in more than a hundred years of struggle there will emerge a network of Settlements, territorially based and federatively constructed, without dogmatic rigidity, allowing the most diverse social forms to exist side by side, but always aiming at the new organic whole. (Ibid. p. 79)

Most experiments of the establishment of Full Cooperatives up to now have been unsuccessful since they have been based on feelings, or have been started from an abstract dogma or idea without considering the local needs of people, or they have been failures because of their isolation from other communities, that is, because of lack of federation.

The most successful attempts to achieve the Full Cooperative so far, Buber feels, have been the various forms of the Village Communes, for there 'communal living is based on the amalgamation of production in form of an organic union of agriculture, industry, and handicrafts and consumption.' (Ibid. p. 140) The great value of these village communes for society lies in their potential influence to 'transform the town organically in the closest possible alliance with technological developments and to
turn it into an aggregation composed of smaller units.'
(Ibid. p. 141) (If this development of smaller and inde-
pendent communities in big towns is to be possible, then,
Buber feels, besides the de-centralizing influence of the
village communes, it will also be essential that further
technological developments will 'facilitate and actually
require the de-centralization of industry.' (loc. cit.)
For only de-centralized industry can be an ally in the
endeavor of the social re-structuring of society.)

The most successful actualization of Buber's concept
of the Village Commune today is the 'Jewish Village
Commune in its various forms, as found in Palestine.' (loc.
cit.) This 'signal non-failure,' Buber writes, can be
attributed in part, to the unusual approach of the founders
who

did not, as everywhere else in the history of
coop-erative settlements, bring a plan with them,
a plan which the concrete situation could only fill
out, not modify; the ideal gave an impetus but no
dogma, it stimulated but did not dictate. (Ibid.
p. 143)

This Commune is based on the response to a need rather
than being simply the romantic attempt to fulfill a
doctrine or ideal. Its movements, aims, and activities
never 'hardened into a cut-and-dried programme.' (loc.
cit.) Its process is one of differentiation which is yet
'intent on preserving the principle of integration.' (Ibid.
p. 145) And while the men who make up these communities
have exercised remorseless 'clear-sighted collective self-observation and self-criticism' and established an 'amazingly positive relationship - amounting to a regular faith - ...to the inmost being of their commune,' (loc. cit.) they have at the same time, exercised a 'formative structural effect on the social periphery.' (Ibid. p. 143) They have also left freedom for the branching off of new forms of communes. Each one of these new forms grew out of the particular social and spiritual needs as these came to light - in complete freedom, and each one acquired, even in the initial stages, its own ideology - in complete freedom, each struggling to propagate itself and spread and establish its proper sphere - all in complete freedom. (Ibid. p. 145)

These men realized that each Village Commune with its special mode of being demanded its particular sort of realization. According to the peculiarities of local needs the Village Commune had its particular form which, in turn, was molded with a change of internal or external conditions.

With the influx of refugees, the original character of the founders of the Jewish Village Communes was altered. As a consequence, real problems arose which had their basis not in the alteration of the outward structure of the communities - idea, work, etc. - but rather in the fundamental aspect of inter-human relationships. 'Where people are apt to slip,' says Buber in this connection, is in their relationship to their fellows.../This/ is
not a matter of intimacy at all... The question is rather one of openness. A real community need not consist of people who are perpetually together; but it must consist of people who, precisely because they are comrades, have mutual access to one another and are ready for one another. A real community is one which in every point of its being possesses, potentially at least, the whole character of community. The internal questions of a community are thus in reality questions relating to its own genuineness, hence to its inner strength and stability. (Ibid. p. 144-145)

Again we see from this special case that, in the end, the base of any true community is the genuineness of the relationship between men, based on mutual confidence and responsibility.

**True Socialism is also Religious Socialism**

If men, as today, have turned away from God, and have caused the hardening of Him, the only way back to Him will be through a renewal of the immediacy between man and man through genuine relations in true community. When man has become solitary and 'can no longer say "Thou" to the "dead" known God, everything depends on whether he can still say it to the living unknown God by saying "thou" with all his being to another living and known man.' (BHM p. 168) 'Then after long silence and stammering, we shall have addressed our eternal "Thou" anew.' (FW p. 229)

'At its core,' says Buber, 'the conflict between the mistrust and trust of man conceals the conflict between the mistrust and trust of eternity.' (loc. cit.) Religion and true community, feels Buber, are closely bound
up with each other; ultimately, true socialism is really religious socialism. Genuine 'Utopian Socialism' is the latter's most mature expression. Religious socialism, therefore, does not imply the gathering of people for the worship of God according to rigid rituals. It is not an organized world church; neither does it mean that the kingdom of God is to be equated with true community; nor must it be confused with the

joining of religion and socialism in such a manner that each of the constituents could achieve, apart from the other, independence if not fulfilment; it cannot mean merely that the two have concluded an agreement to unite their autonomies in a common being and working. (Ibid. 112)

Religious socialism can only mean that religion and socialism are essentially directed to each other, that each of them needs the covenant with the other for the fulfilment of its own essence. (loc. cit.)

It means that man can truly realize himself only in the true community, since only through his genuine relationship to his fellow-men can he have true relationship to God; and man is not fully man, unless he can say 'Thou' to Him. It means that only through men's being open to one another, helping each other, and being responsible to one another, is God - who is in all things - actually realized and met in all his mystery. Only in between, in the genuine dialogical relation between man and his fellow-men and the world, only in true community, does the Absolute manifest itself, only there is He realized.
Religious socialism, therefore, is based on community built out of direct relationships among men and communities, on men who go out in the world and meet it with courage and responsibility and in 'fear of God.' It means that the center of community must be the common relation of all individuals to God. Although, says Buber, the Single One 'cannot win to a legitimate relation with God without a legitimate relation to the body politic,' the relation to God is the 'defining force' of all relations. (BMW p. 70) Community and Religion, thus, although not to be equated with each other, cannot find true realization without one another.

Beginning with Leonhard Ragaz's words, 'Any socialism whose limits are narrower than God and man is too narrow for us,' Buber writes in the first thesis of his short essay on 'Three Theses of Religious Socialism,' stressing the necessity of the covenant of Religion and community:

Religio, that is the human person's binding of himself to God, can only attain its full reality in the will for a community of the human race, out of which alone God can prepare His kingdom. Socialitas, that is mankind's becoming a fellowship, man's becoming a fellow to man, cannot develop otherwise than out of a common relation to the divine centre, even if this be again and still nameless. Unity with God and community among the creatures belong together. Religion without socialism is disembodied spirit, therefore not genuine spirit; socialism without religion is body emptied of spirit, hence also not genuine body. (Pw p. 112)

With respect to the gross confusion between true and fictitious religion and society, Buber says:
All "religious" forms, institutions, and societies are real...only if they serve as expression, as shape and bearer of real religio - a real self-binding of the human person to God...So, too, all "socialist" tendencies, programmes, and parties are real...only insofar as they serve as strength, direction, and instrument of real socialitas - mankind's really becoming a fellowship...At present the prevailing religious forms, institutions, and societies have entered into the realm of the fictitious; the prevailing socialist tendencies, programmes, and parties have not yet emerged from the fictitious. (Ibid, p. 113)

Finally, emphasizing that the point where religion and socialism can meet is the 'concrete personal life,' Buber writes:

As the truth of religion consists not of dogma or prescribed ritual but means standing and withstanding in the abyss of the real reciprocal relation with the mystery of God, so socialism in its truth is not doctrine and tactics but standing and withstanding in the abyss of the real reciprocal relation with the mystery of man...It is presumption to "believe" in something without - however inadequately - living that in which one believes...Religion must know that it is the everyday that sanctifies or desecrates devotion. And socialism must know that the decision as to how similar or dissimilar the end which is attained will be to the end which was previously cherished is dependent upon how similar or dissimilar to the set goal are the means whereby it is pursued. Religious socialism means that man in the concreteness of his personal life takes seriously the fundamentals of this life; the fact that God is, that the world is, and that he, this human person, stands before God and in the world. (Ibid. pp. 113-114)

**Buber's Utopia is not a Romantic Illusion**

In his passion for 'Utopian' Socialism, Buber is in no way a victim of utopian, and romantic illusions, for he is well aware of the difficulties which would be in-
involved in applying his social philosophy to any large-scale economies and societies. Therefore, Buber is not giving only an ideal picture of society but also a realistic suggestion for steps to be taken in the direction of its realization—whether now the ideal state is within the realm of history or not. He emphasizes that he is not suggesting a radical change from the present political system into a commonwealth along the lines of the Jewish Village Commune, but he is presenting merely an ultimate goal toward which man has to work if his authentic existence is to be saved. He is suggesting only a direction of movement toward this goal. Accordingly, he does not speak for revolution which will break down the centralistic State, or for mere rearrangement of political power. Rather, he starts with the relationship between individuals which, Buber feels, can best be achieved through social education directed at the 'effectuation of society.' Buber is not advocating rapid and complete decentralization, but only as much decentralization as is possible in order to remain secure from other societies and to maintain internal unity. He is realistic in that he does not start with a "schematic fiction" which begins with a theory of the nature of man and deduces a social order which shall employ all man's capacities and satisfy all his needs' but he 'undertakes to transform contemporary man and his conditions on the basis of an impartial and undogmatic understanding of both.' (Fried p. 211) Buber tries
to preserve the diversity and contrariety of trends in our age up to the point that they are harmonious with true community.

Buber knows that the state of the 'original rightness' of man is not an historical possibility and that 'in all probability, there will never, so long as man is what he is, be freedom pure and simple, and [that] there will be State, that is compulsion, for just so long.' (FU p. 104) Therefore, although he warns against the using of evil means for good ends, he does not fall into utopian idealism in his social ethics, but he recognizes that living entails suffering and doing injustice. 'In order to preserve the community of men,' writes Buber, 'we are often compelled to accept wrongs in decisions concerning the community.' (IW p. 246) And in a letter to Gandhi, he writes: 'If there is no other way of preventing evil destroying the good, I trust I shall use force and give myself up to God's hands.' (quoted by Fried p. 145)

What matters is that in every hour of decision we are aware of our responsibility and summon our conscience to weigh exactly how much is necessary to preserve the community and accept just so much and no more. (IW p. 246)

However, although Buber's Utopian Socialism is maybe not an historical possibility - and Buber knows this - his ideas must not be discarded as utopian illusions, for what Buber pictures is what man is ultimately intended for - complete personal authenticity and freedom. His true commun-
li ty, therefore, has relevance as an ideal towards which man has to move, whether it can be reached or not. And the ideal has reality insofar as it directs man's response to the concrete situation. Buber's Utopian Socialism has practical validity as a guide to the re-structuring of society - the only thing which will rescue man's authenticity. However impractical and impossible the re-structuring of society into true community may thus be, it is the only means for the saving of our real personal self from the fiery jaws of totalitarian collectivism. It is also the solution to the other alternative, that of capitalism, which along with the centralization in the aim of national defense, has created the mass societies in the west through large scale and highly industrialized centralistic mass production economy, mass consumption, and irresponsible use of mass communication. So is it the only true alternative to the various drawbacks of present day democracy: political centralization in the aim of national defense; centralization to the end of the social welfare State; the presence of capitalists in form of single, powerful owners, or members of capitalistic producer and consumer co-operatives - remnants of the alternative of collectivism, i.e. individualism; uniformity of work, brought about by the capitalistic and large scale private enterprises and producer co-operatives which force people out of their own small enterprises, and by a large scale, highly industrialized mass production economy also resulting from
the substitution of handicrafts by huge privately owned
capitalistic industries; mass consumption, made possible
through mass production and intensified by the irresponsi-
ble use of mass communication.

Man, if he wants to escape from de-personalization
in collectivity, and from the empty subjectivism of
individualism, has to enter into relation with his fellow-
men. And this, Buber feels, is possible to a full extent
only in true community. Consequently, the way towards
personal authenticity has to be the way towards true
community, regardless of whether the latter can ever be
perfected in the sense of Buber's Utopian Socialism.
EPISTEMOLOGY
I. The Concept of Truth

Buber's theory of knowledge differs from all the traditional theories essentially. While all the traditional forms of epistemology have been based on the reality of the subject-object relationship, Buber proposes a more humanly realistic account of truth and of the way in which we know, that is, a dialogical theory of knowing, and of truth, based on the reality of genuine dialogue, on the view that reality is not moved into the systematic and abstract, but is to be found in the particular, in the concrete, in the real meeting of the Other.

Truth is in the Meeting with the Other

Human truth, Buber holds, is to be found in man's relationship to God, fellowmen, and nature, in a relationship which is effected with man's whole being. Human truth is the making present (Vergegenwärtigung) of the Other in true dialogue. Although, writes Buber, ultimate truth is one, it is given to human beings only as they enter into true life-relationships with the Other. Human truth springs only from genuine realization (Verwirklichung), that is, from those intensified moments of existence in which the totality of one's being is brought to a single thing or event.
The dialogical concept of truth is naturally incompatible with the traditional theories of truth. Truth, for Buber, is not the conformity or correspondence between a proposition and that to which the proposition refers. It is also not the coherence of an array of propositions, since this is incompatible with the concreteness of life. 'According to the logical conception of truth' (coherence theory), says Buber,

only one of two contraries can be true, but in the reality of life as one lives it they are inseparable. The person who makes a decision knows that his deciding is no self-delusion; the person who has acted knows that he was and is in the hand of God. The unity of the contraries is the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue. (quoted by Fried p. 3)

The pragmatic theory of truth is equally untenable in Buber's eyes, since it is not based on true reality, which is lived reality here and now. Truth, for Buber, is always in the present, and has value in itself here and now; it is not a means to something that is going to occur in the future. The pragmatic theory of truth is based on the categories of 'means,' 'usefulness,' and 'future;' Buber's dialogical theory of Truth is based on the categories of 'presentness,' 'immediacy,' 'ends,' and 'value in itself.'

Truth is not Subjective

Truth, Buber holds, is also not subjective. Stirner -
a German proponent of subjectivism - Buber feels is wrong in claiming that 'Truth...exists only - in your head.' 'You alone are the truth.' 'The truth is a - creature.' 'Truth is what is Mine.' 'Human truth,' says Buber, 'is here bound up with the human person's lack of responsibility,' i.e., his lack of true relation. Truth cannot be subjectivised; it is not a 'creature,' but can only be 'discovered' in true dialogue.

**Truth is Unpossessable**

Although, writes Buber, Stirner is wrong in declaring truth subjective, he is right when - in the aim of making truth subjective - he undertakes 'the dissolution of possessed truth,' of 'truth' as a general good that can be taken into possession and possessed, 'that is once independent of and accessible to the person.' (BMK p. 46)

Possessed truth, \[\text{Buber says}\], is not even a creature, it is a ghost, a succumbus with which a man may succeed in effectively imagining he is living, but with which he cannot live. You cannot devour the truth, it is not served up anywhere in the world, you cannot even gape at it for it is not even an object.

Although truth is 'eternally irremovable' (Ibid. p. 47) it can never be possessed.

**Truth Cannot be Collectivized**

Stirner, thus, as can be seen from the above, was aiming at the right thing - the dissolution of possessed
truth - but he was wrong in making truth 'subjective' instead. And this is so not only because truth is simply not subjective, but because the subjectivization of truth leads to the concept of truth as being psychologically and sociologically relativized. For, says Buber, since Stirner's dissolution of possessed truth is based on 'the demonstration that it is conditioned by the person,' what else does it mean to say that "Truth is what is Mine"..."And what I take as true is defined by what I am,"' than to say that "What I am is conditioned by my complexes"..."And what I am is conditioned by the class I belong to."' (Ibid. pp. 46-47)

The dissolution of possessed truth is right, but its substitution by 'subjectivized truth' is escaping from one trap, falling into another, and falling into a third one - one more vicious than the last - into the psychological and sociological relativization of truth. Here the truth is neither created by the individual, nor possessed in a freely chosen way, but one is virtually possessed by a 'truth' which is in turn determined by, and relative to, a person's complexes and the psyche of the masses. Truth becomes, in the end, collectivized.

To this development of truth Buber is bitterly opposed. he writes,

The sociological doctrine of the age has exercised a relativizing effect, heavy with consequences, on the concept of truth, in that it has, in thedependence of the thought processes on social processes,
proved the connection of thought with existence. This relativization was justified in that it bound the "truth" of a man to his conditioning reality. But its justification was perverted into the opposite when its authors omitted to draw the basic boundary line between what can and what cannot be understood as conditioned in this way. That is, they did not comprehend the person in his total reality...If we begin with the Single One as a whole being, who wishes to recognize with his total being, we find that the force of his desire for the truth can at decisive points burst the "ideological" bonds of his social being. The man who thinks "existentially," that is, who stakes his life in his thinking, brings into his real relation to the truth not merely his conditioned qualities but also the unconditioned nature, transcending them, of his quest, of his grasp, of his indomitable will for the truth, which also carries along with it the whole personal power of standing his test. (Ibid. p. 81)

It is of course impossible, says Buber, time and again to determine whether a discovered truth can or cannot be derived from the social factor.

But it is an ineluctable duty to accept what cannot be so derived as a border concept and thus to point out, as the unattainable horizon of the distinction made by the sociology of knowledge, what takes place between the underivable in the recognizing person and the underivable in the object of his recognition. (loc. cit.)

Truth is Existentially Realized in True Dialogue

Again we can see Buber's philosophy of the 'narrow ridge.' Truth, for him, is neither subjective, nor collectivistic, nor is it an independent good that can be possessed—but it is dialogical. It is found in the meeting of man with the Other. Although, says Buber, truth cannot be possessed, or created,
there does exist a participation in the being of inaccessible truth - for the man who stands its test. There exists a real relation of the whole human person to the unpossessed, unpossessable truth, and it is completed only in standing its test. This real relation, whatever it is called, is the relation to the Present Being. (Ibid. p. 47)

Although truth cannot be possessed, it 'can be served... by perceiving and standing test.' (loc. cit.)

Here Buber is closely related to Kierkegaard who says:

He who communicates it \( \text{the Truth} \) is only a Single One. And then its communication is again only for the Single One; for this view of life, "the Single One" is the very truth. (loc. cit.)

Buber points out that it is not that the Single One exists or should exist which is described as the truth, but "this view of life" which consists in the Single One's existing, and which is hence also simply identified with him. To be the Single One is the communication of the Truth, that is, the human Truth. (loc. cit.)

Stirner's 'You alone are the truth' and Kierkegaard's 'The Single One is the truth' thus mean completely different things. The Single One is the truth, not because he thinks it, but because he existentially stands the test of the appearing truth by the personal existence expressing 'what is unsaid.' (Ibid. p. 48)

God is the truth because he is, the Single One is the truth because he reaches his existence. (loc. cit.)
The 'human side of truth,' says Buber, 'is in human existence.' (loc. cit.) Human truth is, therefore, not a having - but a becoming, it is vital rather than conceptual. It can be confirmed only in the life of man, in the life of a community. It loses its meaning if it is cut loose from its connection with the life in true dialogue. It has to become life if it is to remain real truth. Buber agrees with Kierkegaard's claim that 'the truth for the Single One only exists in his producing it himself in action.' 'human truth,' Buber says, 'is bound up with the responsibility of the person...Man finds the truth to be true only when he stands its test.' (Ibid. p. 82)

'Whatever the word "truth" may mean in other spheres,' Friedman well summarizes Buber, 'in the realm between man and man it means that one imparts oneself to the other as what one is.' It means avoiding all appearance, but 'allowing the person with whom one communicates to partake of one's being.' (Fried p. 86) It means affirming and confirming the other one's full being, by making him fully present, by becoming aware of him as a whole, single, and unique person.

Living with one's whole being, to be sure, is dangerous and strenuous - it always threatens the stability of the thinker. It does not allow for complete security through the possession of a solid general truth. Yet only the man who experiences with his whole being, using the powers of true realization, will gain underived truth which
he himself has discovered. The realizing man is unprotected, without security, yet only he is able to 'meet' with reality and truth.

Man, for this reason, must have faith in the truth 'as that which is independent of him...which he cannot acquire for himself, but with which he can enter into a real relation of his very life.' (Barnes p. 82) He must have faith in truth as in 'itself inaccessible but disclosing itself, in the fact of true responsibility which awaits the test', (loc. cit.) as that which can neither be possessed nor expressed, but which can only 'be existentially realized' in true dialogue. (Ibid. p. 48)

Any genuine life-relationship to Divine Being - that is, any such relationship effected with the man's whole being - is a human truth, and man has no other truth. To realize this does not mean to relativize truth. The ultimate truth is one, but it is given to man only as it enters, reflected as in a prism, into the true-life-relationships of the human persons. We have it, and yet we have it not, in its multi-colored reflection. 'The True, which is identical with the Divine, can never be perceived by us directly; we only contemplate it in its reflection, in the example, the symbol.' ...(Human truth) is participation in Being. It cannot claim universal validity, but it is lived, and it can be lived exemplary, symbolically. (PW pp. 79-80)

Human truth and the way of achieving it seem to merge into one.
II. The Way of Knowing

In the following section I shall attempt to describe in more detail the 'dialogical' way of knowing, and its relationship to the traditional views of knowledge.

Elimination of Traditional Epistemological Problems on the Basis of Epistemological Priority of I-Thou over I-It

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, traditional epistemology rested exclusively on the reality of the object-subject relationship and, consequently, had to wrestle with the problems connected with this dichotomy. 'how does the subject know the object?' 'What is more real: the subject or the object?' 'What is the nature of the object, of the subject?' 'What is the relationship between the subject and the object?' These are the constant problems.

Buber's dialogical philosophy of I-Thou cuts beneath all these distinctions of the I-It epistemologies, establishing an entirely different way of knowing, one which avoids all the pitfalls of traditional epistemological theories and nullifies the traditional epistemological problems in general.

This elimination of traditional epistemological problems Buber bases - in addition to the view of the ontological priority of I-Thou over I-It - on his anthropological belief that the I-Thou relation between men is
from a developmental point of view, prior to the I-It relationship among them. Consequently the I-It or subject-object way of knowing must be based on and derived from the dialogical way of knowing. The problems arising in connection with the former become secondary. This marks a complete reversal of the traditional view according to which the relation between persons is derived from the relation of the knowing subject to the external world.

'As I become I, I say Thou,' says Buber. From this, feels Friedman, it follows that our belief in the reality of the external world is based on our relationship with other selves. Consequently, Buber is opposed to the view that we know the external world of the senses directly and other selves only indirectly by analogy, that the child first knows the material objects through his senses and only afterwards, through the behavior of other persons, comes to know them as persons. Buber believes that the child first comes to know persons as persons, and then arrives at a knowledge of the external world. A child has the innate potentiality of becoming a person. Its first meeting with persons is prior to the knowledge of the outer world, even prior to the child's awareness of himself as I.

From this initial I-Thou relationship, Buber holds, the child's knowledge of the external world is derived. The child, through the social relationship with others gradually takes over the I-It relationship to people and
things of the adult. Through a constant comparison and
imitation of the perceptions of others and their way of
dealing with their environment, with its own perceptions
and ways of action, this transition from the I-Thou to
an I-It relation with the external things is brought
about. Thus, on account of the derivatory and secondary
character of the I-It relation, dialogue in later life
which is often purely technical, thus no genuine dialogue,
and itself belonging to the world of It, may yet produce
the strong belief in a reality 'outside.' It can do this,
however, only because it is based on the prior meeting
with the Thou.

**Dialogical Knowing is a Response to and a Becoming Aware
of 'Signs' Which Address Us**

The knowledge yielded through the reality of the
I-Thou relationship is not a knowledge of the other one or
myself as an objective entity, rather, it consists in a
genuinely reciprocal meeting in which two beings enter into
relation with the fulness of their being. Dialogical
knowing is, in the end, a response to what Buber calls
the 'signs' which address us, it is a 'becoming aware'
of these 'signs,' Signs are simply everything we meet. 'The
signs of address,' Says Buber,

are not something extraordinary, something that
steps out of the order of things, they are just
what goes on time and again, just what goes on in
any case, nothing is added by the address...What
occurs to me addresses me. (BMM p. 11)
**Dialogical Knowing is Direct, Yet Mediated**

The directness of the dialogical meeting, writes Friedman on Buber, is mediated by the senses but also by the 'word,' i.e., all those symbolic forms of communication such as language, music, art, ritual, etc. Here, it seems to me, Friedman makes a distinction which is at the same time right and wrong. It is right insofar as there are these two types of mediation, but it is incorrect to the extent that it somehow puts these two types of mediators on the same level. There is a difference not within one category, but there are, somehow, two categories on two different levels. Mediation through the senses is necessary in all responding to signs, mediation through the 'word' is not. For example, in the direct meeting of a person, the dialogue need not necessarily be mediated by the 'word,' say, in our case, by language. I would call the mediation through the senses a 'direct mediation.' The mediation through 'words,' through 'symbols' a 'secondary mediation.' Take for example, a painting. It mediates between the concrete reality, i.e., the creative act of the artist and his experience, and the man who watches or 'meets' the work of art. The senses, in turn mediate between the 'symbol,' i.e., the picture, and the person. This way one can speak of the senses as a 'primary' mediator, and of 'symbols' as 'secondary' mediators. The senses somehow have the priority over 'symbols' as mediators.
"'Symbol,'" it seems to me, for Buber can mean three different things, and accordingly serve three different purposes:

'Symbols' in the world of I-It may be identified with subject-object knowledge of the world. There they are taken to be entities independent of the dialogue between man and the world, expressing either universal ideas or denoting objective empirical reality. The latter way of seeing 'symbols' separates the object from the knowing subject, discarding any connotations and everything that is not empirically verifiable. The former points indirectly to objects instead of the dialogue between two beings. (Even these symbols, Buber holds, which are taken to be completely independent of dialogue have been derived sometime from actual dialogic meeting. I-It knowledge thus is really nothing but the socially objectified meetings which have been forced into the categories of I-It. (Fried p. 166))

A 'symbol' in the dialogical sense, as Buber understands it, is not a conventional sign, a concrete manifestation of a universal. Rather it is 'a mythical or conceptual representation of a concrete reality. It is the product of the real meeting in the actual present of two separate beings,' (Fried p. 167) which always points back to the reality of dialogical knowing.

The third kind of a 'symbol,' also a 'symbol' in the dialogical sense, yet different from the second kind, is a
conjunction of a 'sign,' i.e., something addressing us, and a 'symbol' of the first or second kind. It is subject-object knowledge or dialogical symbol (first and second type of symbol) - what I have termed 'secondary mediator' - and a 'sign' that addresses us directly through the senses - I have termed it 'primary mediator' - at the same time.

For example, a painting that I have painted some time ago and am looking at may point back to the concrete act of creating the painting (second type of symbol) while it may also, though probably not at the same time, become a Thou for me with which I enter into a completely new relation. This third type of 'symbol' is thus really a 'sign' that happens to have the form of a symbol (the actual function of which is at the time of its becoming a 'sign' only potential, and prevented from actualization through the predominant function of becoming a 'sign').

The Address Through 'Signs' Cannot be Expressed and Communicated

Man is addressed all the time, yet he often does not know it. 'The waves of the aether roar on always,' says Buber, 'but for most of the time we have turned off our receivers.' The reason for our insensitivity is that we do not consider these 'signs' as something really addressing us, but only as objective phenomena.

Only by sterilizing it (the 'sign'), removing the seed of address from it, can I take what occurs to me as a part of the world-happening which does not refer
to me. The interlocking sterilized system into which all this needs only to be dovetailed is man's titanic work. (EMK p. 11)

As was seen above, for Buber, 'signs' are not just conventionally defined symbols from which everybody may derive the same meaning. Rather, a 'sign' in Buber's sense is something that does not speak to everybody, but only to the one who sees it 'say' something to him. Neither need it say the same thing to different people. To the 'observer' or 'onlooker' the 'signs' won't 'say' anything, but only to a person whose 'way of perception' is 'becoming aware.' In other words, only to the man who stands in an I-Thou relation, whether in a reciprocal one with other persons or a non-reciprocal one with nature and works of art, etc., will the 'signs' 'say' something. (Ibid. pp. 8-10)

It is difficult for us to let 'signs' 'say' something to us by 'becoming aware' of them in true 'present-ness.' For we are conditioned to apply to all the 'signs' the categories of space and time or to interpret them in terms of physics, biology, or sociology, etc. We feel we can 'look up in a dictionary...even if not necessarily a written one,' since we believe that 'things remain the same' and 'are discovered once for all,' and that 'rules, laws, and analogical conclusions may be employed throughout.' (Ibid. p. 12)

Dialogical perception, however, says Buber,
began when the dictionary is put down... What occurs to me says something to me, but what it says to me cannot be revealed by any esoteric information; for it has never been said before nor is it composed of sounds that have ever been said. It can neither be interpreted nor translated, I can have it neither explained nor displayed; it is not a what at all, it is said into my very life; it is no experience that can be remembered independently of the situation, it remains the address of that moment and cannot be isolated, it remains the question of the questioner and will have its answer. (loc. cit.)

**Symbols are Obstructions to True Dialogue If They Cease to Point Back to the Reality of Dialogical Knowing, and If They are Applied to All Future Experience**

Similarly, as 'signs' cannot be looked up in a dictionary, so 'symbols' - the objectification of our true meeting with the 'signs' - must not become completely abstract. For if they do become abstract and universalized, the original meeting is forgotten, the symbols cease pointing back to the reality of dialogical knowing. This, Buber feels, is a great danger. If 'words' do not retain their symbolical character in the dialogical sense, they become an obstruction to true dialogue. Of course, subject-object knowledge, along with the life of dialogue is necessary for human existence, yet this knowledge should, even if only to a very slight degree, retain the symbolical character of dialogue. The dependent and mediate reality of the I-It knowledge must not be forgotten completely. If symbols are exhausted by their technical function, the world of It is, as a result of this, set up as the final reality. Here lies the danger of our day. If the fact that the social
and categorized world of I-It is derived from the world of I-Thou, is forgotten, the abstract symbols will not only not point back to concrete reality, but they will be applied to all future experience. Sociality then degenerates into purely 'technical dialogue' in which human beings deal with each other and with nature as mere its, and the categories of I-It are taken to be reality, instead of being understood as the symbolic representations of what has become. The present is being judged by the past 'as if there were no present reality until that reality had become past and therefore capable of being dealt with in our thought categories.' (Fried p. 169) The knowing subject is abstracted from his relations with the Other and becomes an 'objective,' impersonal observer, who automatically presses his encounter with 'signs' into the I-It categories of language, (the dialogic-symbolical character of which has been forgotten completely).

**Dialogical Experience is Characterized by Uniqueness and Presentness**

The alternative to this pressing of our encounter with the Other, with the 'signs,' into the I-It categories of the past is not a mystical union with the Other. Buber's assertion of the reality of the I-Thou relation even with nature must not be understood this way. It retains the distinction between the knowing subject and the object, the betweenness of dialogue, but in distinction to the
scientific approach to nature, the I-Thou relationship to nature is characterized by uniqueness and presentness. Nature ceases to be the passive object of our thought categories of the past, but is made present so that it may 'say' something to us, and in this way has an I-Thou relationship with us. We realize that we know objects only indirectly and conceptually through the categories of I-It, and therefore see things in their uniqueness and presentness and not already filtered through our categories of knowledge and use. We then can feel the 'impact' of the relation in the present moment between us and the non-human, but active, reality which has become a Thou for us, an 'impact' which we cannot describe apart from this relationship. (Fried pp. 169-170)

The presentness of the Thou is most important in man's dealing with other persons. In our modern time the awareness of one's fellow as a whole, single and unique person has become extremely rare. Rather, an analytic, reductive, and derivative glance predominates between man and man. The whole body-soul being is treated as something composite and thus dissectible. The mystery between man and man is undergoing a radical dissolution. Personality, once a mystery and motive ground for stillest inspiration is levelled out. (Fried p. 125)

But, the psychic stream, Buber feels, can never be dealt with as an object, and reduced to a generally describable and repetitive mechanism. The individual,
central, dynamic principle of a person can not be replaced by a general one.

Man, in distinction to things, defies complete objectification. He can, naturally, also become an object of observation and scientific investigation, but in his existing wholeness he can be experienced only as a partner in dialogue. It is man's 'person defining' spirit that sets up this insurmountable limit to objectification. Only through personale Vergegenwärtigung, through the awareness of the dynamic wholeness of other persons, can man be understood as man. (Ibid. p. 171) Of course, psychology, for example, has shown that many human relations are simply neurotic projections of relations in the past and thus belong to the world of I-It. Nevertheless, Buber feels, this does not disprove the ontological reality of the I-Thou. Since psychological knowledge belongs to the categorized knowledge of the past it cannot possibly disprove the reality of the I-Thou which is always in the present. Insofar as it is scientific, and thus 'objective,' it excludes the present knowing of the I-Thou, it judges the present by the past 'as if there were no present reality until that reality had become past and therefore capable of being dealt with in our thought categories.' (Ibid. p. 169) Since the I-Thou knowing is prior to the I-It knowing, a criticism of the I-Thou on the basis of I-It is a logical impossibility. The I-Thou in its uniqueness, and presentness can never be disproved,
it can only be proved by actually entering into it.

The Categories of I-It are Indispensable, but They Must Not Dominate So Strongly as to Eliminate I-Thou Experience in its Ineffability

The acceptance of the I-Thou epistemology does of course not imply a rejection of science, its techniques, and its findings. Science, even the social sciences, will always have to objectify. Buber recognizes the indispensability of the 'emergency structures of analogy and typology' for the work of the human mind. However, holds Buber, 'to step on them when the question of the questioner steps up to you,' that is, when the sign addresses you, 'seems to me, would be running away.' Buber also shows great deference to the 'world continuum of space and time.' But he also writes: 'I know as a living truth only concrete world reality which is constantly, in every moment, reached out to me.' Concrete 'world reality' is 'inseparable, incomparable, irreducible, now, happening once only.' (BMM p. 12)

What has to be recognized, therefore, is that the I-It relation is itself based on 'confrontations' and is thus not the primary reality. The I-Thou and the I-It types of knowing have to be integrated. This means the recognition that I-It knowledge has to retain its symbolical quality of pointing back to the dialogical knowing from which it derives, if it is to fulfil its true function. It also implies the realization that the essence of the
Other, especially of man, cannot be discovered as a scientific observer, who is as distant from the object he observes as possible, but only by somebody participating in the Thou, who gains the distance from the object only afterwards so that he can formulate the insights he has attained. For man is an integrated whole and not a sum of parts, and therefore cannot be understood by science whose method is to investigate its subject matter not as a whole, but in selective aspects. The essence of man can be discovered only by entering into a relation with him, a relation which is more than just 'a poor combination of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in which subjective emotion corrupts the otherwise objective power of reason.' (Fried p. 173) Lastly, this acceptance of the I-Thou way of knowing means that man should try to gain or regain the courage and the ability to respond, at least now and then, to nature, man, and God as a genuine Thou in relation, and to listen to a 'saying' from this Thou, a saying that cannot be put into the language of I-It knowledge. It means that man in his experience allows for uniqueness, for something outside the categories of the I-It - even if this threatened his security and stability - something beyond repetition, typology, categorization, objectivication, etc. For example, writes Buber, such an experience can occur when in a receptive hour of my personal life a man meets me about whom there is something, which I
cannot grasp in any objective way at all, that "says something" to me. That does not mean, says to me what manner of man this is, what is going on in him, and the like. But it means, says something to me, addresses something to me, speaks something that enters my own life. It can be something about this man, for instance that he needs me. But it can also be something about myself. The man himself in his relation to me has nothing to do with what is said. He has no relation to me, he has indeed not noticed me at all. It is not he who says it to me, as that solitary man silently confessed his secret to his neighbour on the seat but it says it... The effect of having said this to me is completely different from that of looking on and observing. I cannot depict or denote or describe the man in whom, through whom, something has been said to me. Were I to attempt it, that would be the end of saying. (EME pp. 9-10)
ONTOCLOGY
Buber's ontology is the least developed of all the four fields I am dealing with. In fact, the 'ontological statements' in Buber's writings are very few. Yet on the basis of these few statements, and by implication from the rest of his I-Thou philosophy, an ontology in Buber's sense might be inferred, an ontology, however, to be sure, that is altogether secondary to the immediacy of the I-Thou meeting.

A Personalistic Ontology

Will Herberg suggests that Buber's hidden ontology might be called 'a personalistic ontology.' "The Thou does not help to sustain you in life," Buber says, "it only helps you to glimpse eternity," from which one might infer... that whereas the I-It attitude gives access only to the world of appearance, the I-Thou gives access to the world of reality... It is in the I-Thou relation that man in his authentic personality emerges. "Through the Thou a man becomes an I." The primal reality in which man receives his being is the Zwischen-menschliche, the "between man and man," (Will Herberg, op. cit., p. 15) and the 'between God and man.'

Access to reality cannot be obtained except by entering into relation with the Other. For only 'between' the I and the Thou, in the meeting of two persons, is true reality. Only the person, one taking stand in relation, can share in true reality and thus become authentic. True being is always primarily personal being, it emerges in the dialogical rela-
tion of man with man, in the I-Thou. 'The I,' says Buber, 'is real in virtue of its sharing (that is, entering into true relation) in reality. The fuller its sharing the more real it becomes.' (ITh p. 63)

Reality, for Buber, is therefore neither in the I nor in the Thou, but somehow it is in between, it is something 'that neither merely belongs to him (the person) nor merely lies outside him.' (loc. cit.) 'All reality,' says Buber, 'is an activity in which I share without being able to appropriate for myself. Where there is no sharing there is no reality. Where there is self-appropriation there is no reality. The more direct the contact with the Thou, the fuller is the sharing.' (loc. cit.)

Reality, thus, is really the meeting of two persons itself. But since, by definition, the meeting consists in the 'sharing' of two persons, by virtue of this sharing activity, the I or the Thou can never appropriate reality for themselves. For if they try to do so, then, by necessity, they cannot share any longer. Consequently there is no reality which can be appropriated, since the sharing activity constitutes reality. The meeting of the I with the Thou brings about true reality, and as it brings it about, the I and the Thou themselves, in a reciprocal process, obtain reality by sharing in the reality which they have created through their meeting. (This is really tautological, since the meeting is sharing. 'Sharing' (which brings about true reality, better, is true reality), is identical with
'sharing in reality.' Clarity of exposition is here prevented by the limitations of our language.)*

Individuality is Devoid of True Reality

Accordingly as only a person, that is, one in dialogue, shares in true reality, the individual, that is, someone who does not enter into true relations where he can share, does not have access to reality. In separation, that is, in an I-It relation, man is devoid of true being.

However, says Buber, 'the I that steps out of the relational event into separation and consciousness of separation, does not lose its reality. Its sharing is preserved in it in a living way..."the seed remains in it."' (IITH p. 63) This state of a person, not being in relation but willing to enter into it, Buber calls the state of 'subjectivity.' In it, the person is still connected to reality although the sharing is not very full; yet he is not completely remote from reality as is the man in the state of pure individuality. In complete individuality there is complete separation from other persons, while in subjectivity there is only lack of actual relation; nevertheless in it 'the I is aware with a single awareness of its solidarity of connection and of its separation...[and] the desire formed and heightened for ever higher, more unconditioned relation, for the full sharing in being.' (loc. cit.) Genuine subjectivity is the state of a person, of an I, conscious of itself as partner in a relation, or as a potential partner of a Thou. It is only pure
'individuality in differentiating itself from others is rendered remote from true being... Only individuality neither shares in nor obtains any reality.' (Ibid. p. 64)

However, because individuality is remote from 'true' being, so remote that it does not have any 'true' being at all, (this never really happens because of the eternal presence of the Divine Thou), it need not necessarily have no being at all. From Buber's constant qualification of dialogical reality as 'true' reality it can be seen that for him also other modes of being exist, besides that of 'true' reality, that is, that individualities too have some kind of being, that objects of perception - even if they are not in dialogue - have some sort of being. This being which individualities have, for Buber, is that of ontological (not only epistemological) abstractions, derivatives from the original dialogical meeting with the Thou. All I-It, Buber holds, is derived from I-Thou.

In reality, of course, there is no simple split in God's creation between I-Thou and I-It, but there are indefinite amounts of degrees of participation in true being, just as many as there are beings in the universe. Buber's philosophy thus - although Buber never expressed this himself - seems to imply the notion of 'degrees of true reality,' the degree being determined by the amount of sharing of the individual being in true dialogue. Pure individuality, accordingly, since it lacks dialogue
completely, would (if it could exist) have no true reality at all. However, I feel, despite its complete lack of true reality, Buber would not deny its plain being as it, that is, the being of an ontological derivative from I-Thou that has cut all its bonds to the latter.

**True reality is not Unity of Being**

Just as true reality cannot be found in separateness, there is no true reality where there is 'unity of being.' This unity of being can be twofold: first, that of man with himself, second, that of man with God, fellow-men, or nature, in mystical union.

Man's unity with himself, Buber feels, is a colossal illusion of the human spirit bent back on itself. In it man reduces God and the world to functions of the human soul, whereas, in reality, the world and God have separate existence. The image of the world may be in man, but not its reality. 'All modern attempts,' writes Buber, 'to interpret this primal reality of dialogue as a relation of the I to the Self, or the like - as an event that is contained within the self-sufficient interior of man - are futile: they take their place in the abysmal history of destruction of reality.' (Ibid. p. 85)

Similarly, a mystical union between man and God, other men and nature is an illusion. Unity between the I and the Thou does not exist.

That the ecstatic man calls union is the
enrapturing dynamic of relation...the relation itself in its vital unity is felt so forcibly that its parts seem to fade before it, and in the force of its life, the I and the Thou, between which it is established, are forgotten. (Ibid. p. 87)

Even if mystical union, union of being, could exist, reality could not be found in it. To be sure, 'in lived reality there is...the becoming one of the soul,' the concentration of all one's powers and urges, 'but this does not involve, like absorption, disregard of the real person.' True reality, even inner reality, 'exists only in effective [mutual] action,' and 'the most powerful and deepest reality exists where everything enters into the effective action, without reserve the whole man and God the all-embracing - the united I and the boundless Thou.' (Ibid. p. 89)

Is God Self-Sufficient?

Ultimately God is a mystery, consequently no statements about his nature, his self-sufficiency, can be made. All we know about Him is that He is the Eternal Thou of His creation.

From this it would follow, that the question as to whether the absence of man's relation to God or vice versa would render God imperfect or not, that is, not 'truly' real or not, cannot be determined by man.

Buber, though, makes a statement which at first glance seems to imply that he holds that God's perfection depends upon the reality of His relation to us.
He writes:

God needs you - in the fulness of His eternity....
\( \text{He} \) needs you, for the very meaning of your
life. (Ibid. p. 82)

Yet, this sentence may be interpreted in such a way that
God's perfection apart from a relationship to us is not
questioned. For God, according to the above quote, does
not need us for the very meaning of His life, but only for
the very meaning of our life. This is like saying, 'I need
a dog so that the dog can run.'

However, there definitely is illogicality involved,
since the word 'need' has no connection to the consecutive
sentence, 'for the very meaning of your life.' Consequently,
even if Buber really wanted to express that God needs us,
God, according to the above quote, would not need us. The
qualifying consecutive sentence, 'for the very meaning of
your life,' renders the first one, 'God needs you,' mean-
ingless.

The question remains unresolved.

Traditional Categories such as 'Matter,' 'Spirit,' etc.,
are Abstractions from the Primary Meeting of the I with
the Thou

It is difficult to say what Buber's view is with
respect to traditional categories such as matter, spirit,
substance, process, etc. Buber simply isn't concerned with
these traditional ontological problems. This unconcern, it
seems to me, though, is not due to unjustified indifference,
but to the fact that Buber meant to cut beneath all these
traditional distinctions with his I-Thou philosophy, which doesn't fall into any of these traditional categories. Thus Buber is not unconcerned with traditional ontological problems, rather, he somehow overcomes them.

According to Friedman, Buber agrees with Kant that we cannot know the world in itself apart from its relation to the knowing subject. This way Buber avoids removing reality into the knowing subject as the idealists have done, but he does not agree with Kant's assertion that we cannot know reality but only the categories of our thought. (Fried pp. 163-64) Buber believes that we do actually get in contact with reality - not by way of scientific investigation, however, but by entering into genuine relation with God, men, and the world. 'Matter,' and similar categories, for Buber, seem to be abstractions of encounters with the Other, abstractions which are acquired in early childhood when the child moves from its initial I-Thou relation to its environment, to an I-It relation. Later in life, the abstraction is intensified through education or active scientific investigation, (which is always I-It). One could thus say, that categories such as 'matter' are epistemological derivatives from man's truly dialogical relationship with people and the world.

Whether, however, these categories are also abstractions, derivatives, in the ontological sense, Buber never states. For example, he never expresses his opinion as to whether he believes that there are atoms or not, as he
would claim that there are trees, which do have some kind of being, even if man does not enter into relation with them, the being of an ontological derivative from I-Thou. Buber neither affirms nor denies the plain being of 'matter,' 'spirit,' etc. One thing seems to be certain: if they do have some kind of being, it is not 'true reality' in the dialogical sense.
PART THREE
Buber Compared
Buber's philosophy shows great similarities with the philosophies of modern existentialist thinkers - (although none of them anticipated or repeated him, or defined the I-Thou relation with his precision) - especially with the philosophies of the other three outstanding existentialist thinkers of our time: Maritain, Tillich, and Berdyaev. The similarities here concern especially the social, existential, personalistic, and ontological aspects of the respective philosophies.

Despite the affinities between Buber and these other three thinkers, I have decided to attempt a comparison of Buber with Kierkegaard, Bergson, Whitehead, and Buddhism and Hinduism. The main reason for this choice was that I believe a comparison with these philosophies to be more illuminating, especially since the latter philosophies are somewhat closer to traditional philosophy than those of the three religious existentialists mentioned above. Consequently, Buber's philosophy will be set better into the context of traditional philosophy and the relative novelty of his thought will become clearer than if compared with the religious existentialists.

The other reason for this choice of philosophies for comparison is the fact that Buber himself has contrasted his philosophy with those of Kierkegaard, Bergson, Hinduism and Buddhism (although not with Whitehead's). As a result, the following comparisons will allow for greater authenticity than would a comparison of Buber
with other philosophies chosen at random.
I. **Kierkegaard's Category of the Single One**

Kierkegaard was probably the greatest single influence on Buber's thought. It is virtually on Kierkegaard's category of the Single One, that Buber bases and develops his personalistic philosophy. But although Buber was influenced so strongly by Kierkegaard, and despite the strong affinities of his philosophy with the one of Kierkegaard, one would do injustice to both men if one were to lump together their philosophies. The differences between the two philosophies are essential - and the point where these essential differences lie is exactly where there are the strongest affinities - the category of the Single One. Buber took over Kierkegaard's category of the Single One, but transformed the concept essentially; better, he expanded it, thus giving it an essentially different meaning.

According to his own interpretation of Kierkegaard's philosophy, Buber himself, in *Between Man and Man*, distinguishes his philosophy very sharply from the one of Kierkegaard.

Buber agrees with Kierkegaard that in order to be able to enter into an I-Thou relationship with God - which for both men, although in an essentially different way, is the ultimate aim - man has to become a Single One, a unified whole. 'A man,' says Buber, 'can have dealings with God only as a Single One.' (BMM p. 43) Consequently Buber stands with Kierkegaard in the latter's insistence on re-
fusing to be swallowed up in the 'crowd.' 'Only [as] a self, [as] a real person,' he says, 'is [man] able to have a complete relation of his life to the other self.' (Ibid. p. 175) Buber, as Kierkegaard, knows that without being and remaining oneself there is no love, no genuine relation. Lastly, both men also agree that being a Single One 'means to let oneself be helped by God.' (Kierkegaard)

Buber goes along with Kierkegaard in these respects. However, he disagrees with him insofar as he thinks that being a Single One in Kierkegaard's sense is not enough for being a full person in a truly dialogical relationship with God. 'And yet,' says Buber in this context, being a Single One in Kierkegaard's sense 'is not the way,' (Ibid. p. 50) for becoming a Single One in Kierkegaard's sense means to be made ready for the one relation which can be entered into only as the Single One, the one, the relation for whose sake man exists. This relation is an exclusive one, and this...means that it is the exclusive relation, excluding all others; more precisely, that it is the relation which in virtue of its unique, essential life expels all other relations into the realm of the unessential. (loc. cit.)

Thus, 'the Single One has to do essentially - is' to be "chary" - only with God,' and with himself. (Ibid. p. 51; underlining mine)

To this interpretation of Kierkegaard's category of the Single One Buber is radically opposed. He refuses to limit the interpersonal relation simply to relations between God and man, to the exclusion of other human beings. As against Kierkegaard's assertion that 'everyone should be
chary about having to do with the "others" and should essentially speak only with God and with himself,' Buber claims that true relationship is triadic, including the self, God, and God's creation, that is, fellow-men and the world. 'This joining of the "with God,"' he says,

with the 'with himself' is a serious incompatibility that nothing can mitigate...Speaking with God is something totally different from 'speaking with oneself,' whereas, remarkably enough, it is not something totally different from speaking with another human being. For in the latter case, there is in common the fact of being approached, grasped, addressed, which cannot be anticipated in any depth of the soul; but in the former, there is no such common fact in spite of all the soul's adventures in doubling roles...Only when I have to do with another essentially - that is, in such a way that he is no longer a phenomenon of my I - but instead is my Thou - do I experience...the irrefragable uniqueness of mutuality. (Ibid. pp. 50-51)

'Real relationship with God cannot be achieved on earth if real relationship to the world and mankind is lacking,' (AT p. 39) just as real relationships with other human beings are possible only through a relationship to God.

'Kierkegaard,' says Buber, 'the Christian concerned with "contemporaneity" with Jesus...contradicts his master.' (BMM p. 51) For he misunderstood the Great Commandment: 'Love God with all your might' and 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself,' 'God and man,' says Buber

are not rivals. Exclusive love of God ('with all your heart') is, because He is God, inclusive love, ready to accept and include all love.../God/ limits Himself in all His limitlessness; He makes room for creatures, and so, in the love of Him, He makes room for love to creatures. (Ibid. pp. 51-52)
Buber disagrees violently with Kierkegaard's statement about his renunciation of Regina Olsen: 'In order to come to love, I had to remove the object.' Kierkegaard, Buber feels, here sublimely misunderstood God. 'Creation,' he writes,

is not a hurdle on the road to God; it is the road itself. We are created along with one another and directed to a life with one another. Creatures are placed in my way so that I, their fellow creature, by means of them and with them, may find the way to God. A God reached by excluding them would not be the God of all beings in whom all being is fulfilled. A God in whom only the parallel lines of single approaches intersect is more akin to the 'God of the philosophers' than to the 'God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' God wants us to come to him by means of the Reginas he has created, and not by renunciation of them. If we remove the object, then - we have removed the object altogether. Without an object, artificially producing the object from the abundance of the human spirit and calling it God, this love has its being in the void. (Ibid. p. 52)

Man cannot reach God unless he embraces the world that is given to him, unless he serves in God's plan of creation and redemption. In this embracing of the world it is not essential

that we should see things as standing out from God, nor as being absorbed in him, but that we should "see things in God," the things themselves...Only when all relations, uncurtailed, are taken into the one relation, do we set the circle of our life's world round the sun of our being. (Ibid. p. 54)

The Single One 'corresponds' to God only when he,

in his human way, embraces the bit of the world
offered to him, as God embraces his creation in his divine way...God is not an object besides objects, and hence cannot be reached by renunciation of objects. God, indeed, is not the cosmos, but far less is he Being minus cosmos. He is not to be found by subtraction and not to be loved by reduction. (Ibid. pp. 56,58)

The 'ethical,' that is, man's relation to fellow-men and the world, for Buber is not, as it is for Kierkegaard, a 'morality belonging to a realm of relativity, time and again overtaken and invalidated by the religious;' it is not 'a "stage" from which a "leap" leads to the religious,' but 'it means essential acting and suffering in relation to men, coordinated with the essential relation to God.' Neither religion nor ethics, writes Buber, is autark, neither can be freed from the other 'without ceasing to do justice to the present truth.' (Ibid. p. 56)

Accordingly, as man can have a true relation to God only if he embraces the bit of the world given to him, Buber disagrees with Kierkegaard also on the latter's view on marriage and the 'body politic.' While, in Buber's opinion, Kierkegaard thinks of marriage as of a symbol, and while he considers marriage to be an impediment for a true relation with God, Buber believes that marriage is not only symbolical - thus essentially impersonal, but essential. Although the woman, says Buber, stands 'in a dangerous rapport to finitude,' (Kierkegaard)

and finitude certainly is a danger...our hope of
salvation is forged on this very danger, for our human way to the infinite leads only through fulfilled finitude. (Ibid. p. 61)

And while Kierkegaard is sharply opposed to the 'body politic,' Buber believes that the 'body politic,' however degenerate it may be, should not be rejected.

The Single One is not the man who has to do with God essentially, and only unessentially with others, who is unconditionally concerned with God and conditionally with the body politic. The Single One is the man for whom the reality of relation with God as an exclusive relation includes and encompasses the possibility of relation with all otherness, and for whom the body politic, the reservoir of otherness, offers just enough otherness for him to pass his life with it. (Ibid. p. 65)

To be sure, Buber too rejects the 'crowd' as it is, since it prevents many people from being true persons. But his rejection differs from Kierkegaard's. While Kierkegaard simply does not want to have anything to do with the crowd—except maybe where it is useful in daily life, Buber rejects the crowd in the sense that he does not want the crowd to remain a crowd. That is, he does want to have something essential to do with the crowd, namely, to change it into a community in which the life of dialogue can prosper. Thus he rejects the crowd, if I may say so, in a positive way, while Kierkegaard does it in a negative way, rejecting the crowd completely, or dealing with it only if it offers itself as a suitable means for something higher.
Certainly, Buber admits, 'monastic' solitude is necessary from time to time, so that our relationships with human beings will not become 'incapsulated.' However, solitude must not for ever be exchanged for the life of dialogue. After a while we have to leave solitude and participate again in 'Present Being.'

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Buber stresses that he is not criticizing Kierkegaard as a person. 'I do not say,' writes Buber, 'that it is forbidden to Kierkegaard on his rock, alone with the mercy of the Merciful. I say only that it is forbidden to you and to me.' (Ibid. p. 56) In Buber's eyes Kierkegaard is wrong only in saying 'Let everyone do so,' in his trying to 'win over the beloved individual into "his" world as if it were the true one.' (Ibid. p. 55) Kierkegaard's view of the Single One, Buber says, 'is based only on personal nature and destiny,' (loc. cit.) and must not be extended to all other human beings.

Buber also feels that Kierkegaard, although wanting to 'let every one do so,' was at the same time 'deeply conscious of the dubiousness which arises from the negativizing extension of the category of the Single One.' (Ibid. p. 52) So, for example, feels Buber, does Kierkegaard refute his own idea of the category of the Single One by describing the 'ethical' as 'the only means by which God communicates with "man."' (Kierkegaard) This, says Buber,
does of course not mean that Kierkegaard absolutizes the 'ethical,' but it means that the 'religious' cannot be autark, and that the 'ethical' is no longer a 'stage from which a leap leads to the religious.' It means that man 'is forbidden to speak essentially only with God and himself.' (Ibid. p. 56)

At another occasion too, Buber remarks, Kierkegaard brilliantly refutes himself. In 1843 he confessed in a journal: 'Had I had faith I would have remained with Regina.' Buber translates this into his own language: 'Had I really believed that "with God all things are possible," hence also the resolution of this - my melancholy, my powerlessness, my fear, my fateful alienation from woman and from the world - then I would have remained with Regina.' (Ibid. p. 57)
II. Bergson's Concept of Intuition

Buber's I-Thou relation, involving a participation of the knower in the situation which he knows, must not be confused with Bergson's concept of absolute intuition which yields to man a sympathetic knowledge of the world without any separation from it.

Bergson, unlike Buber, does not differentiate between the subject and the object in the act of knowing, he fails to see the difference between the I and the Thou, postulating an act of intuition by which one transposes oneself into the interior of the object. He abolishes the duality of observer and observed first by plunging into the immediate process of the experienced happening, there, 'where we no longer see ourselves act, but where we act.' (Bergson) The act of knowledge must coincide with the act that produces reality. Once this is accomplished within a person - that is, that acting and knowing fall together - then also intuitive and absolute knowledge of the world around him can be obtained.

Bergson, writes Buber, attempts to bridge the cleft between being and knowing through showing that intuition develops out of instinct. In its relation to the environment and to itself the life principle has split into instinct and intellect. But the intellect yields only an image arising under the influence of utilitarian aspirations. Instinct gives no image at all. Consequently, the intellect has to liberate itself from the mastery of utilitarian
aims. In doing so, however, it will find that it cannot find a better alternative except by taking refuge in instinct. Now 'the task devolves upon it of making instinct self conscious, of bringing it to the point where it "internalizes itself in knowledge instead of externalizing itself in action;"' (PW pp. 84-85) where it reflects on its objects and upon itself. The instinctive and absolute knowledge of one being of another is given through the unity of Life itself.

Buber, in opposition to Bergson, holds that 'life can only know itself through the act of knowledge of living individuals' and that 'no way leads from instinct to intuition.' (Ibid. p. 86) Consequently, the identity of observer and that which is observed is impossible. Any kind of knowledge, whether it is a 'seeing oneself act' or whether it is 'intuitive' will influence the act. Thus it is something outside the act, it cannot be identical with it. Similar is it with man's experience of beings other than himself. Intuition of, say, other people does not overpass the duality between the beholder and the one beheld. The beholder transposes himself into the position of the beheld and experiences his particular life, his sensations and impulses from within. 'That he can do so is explicable only through a deep community between the two.' (Ibid. p. 81) But this does not mean that the fact of duality is thereby weakened. On the contrary, feels Buber, it is exactly this cleavage of the primal
community that is the foundation of the act of intuition. The intuitive way of knowing is, like all other ways of knowing, based on the undiminished dual presence of the observer and the observed. The being that is perceived and 'known' is never identical with the actual existing being. Intuition may diminish the difference, but it cannot abolish it.

This tension between the image of the person whom we have in mind in our contact and the actual existing person is, however, not to be understood merely negatively. Rather, it often makes an essential contribution to the dynamic life among men. Just as, for example, the tension between the meaning of a word as I see it and the meaning it has for my companion can prove fruitful and lead to a deeper personal agreement, so a genuine understanding between two people can spring forth from the tension between the image of the person and the existing person. The fruitful meeting of two persons issues in a break-through from image to being.

The Thou whom I thus meet is no longer a sum of conceptions nor an object of knowledge, but a substance experienced in giving and receiving. (Ibid. p. 83)

Intellect, writes Buber, operates where we know in order to act with some purpose; instinct rules where we act purposefully without requiring knowledge; intuition, however, prevails where man's whole being becomes one in the act of knowing.

The intellect, which divides the self, holds us
apart from the world that it assists us in utilizing. Instinct joins us to the world, but not as persons. Intuition, through vision, binds us as persons with the world which is over against us, binds us to it without being able to make us one with it, through a vision that cannot be absolute. This vision is a limited one, like all our perceptions, our universal-human ones and our personal ones. Yet it affords us a glimpse in unspeakable intimacy into hidden depths. (Ibid. p. 86)

Buber, thus, considers intuition an invaluable aid in life, in the life of dialogue; but he does not - in distinction from Bergson - ascribe to it the powers of effecting unity between the observer and the observed. He emphatically denies that intuition yields absolute knowledge, for all knowing is subject to the duality of the knower and the known. Bergson, Buber writes, definitely 'raised a claim for intuition that cannot be due it nor any mortal knowledge whatever.' (loc. cit.)
III. Whitehead's Process Philosophy

It has been attempted to assimilate Buber's ontology to Whitehead's process philosophy. This, I feel, and here I go along with a remark made by Will Herberg, has been done on utterly inadequate grounds. Buber's ontology simply cannot be classified as a substance or process philosophy, for it cuts beneath these ontological distinctions.

Whitehead is concerned in his writings with the substitution of the traditional and classical categories of substance and mass by the more adequate concepts, (so Whitehead feels), of process and field. 'Material substance' as well as 'spiritual substance' for Whitehead become mere abstractions which have only practical value. In reality, the world around us cannot be defined in terms of certain constitutions of matter and spirit, but only in terms of successions of events. The latter are exemplifications of non-existing eternal essences, and come into existence through God, the principle of concretion. Everything is a process (with the exception of God and the eternal essences), trees, atoms, etc. Consequently, the universe, at a given moment, has no reality. What is perceived by man, here and now, is an epistemological abstraction which depends in its existence upon the activity of our minds, and which, consequently, ceases to exist as soon as our minds cease
to produce it.

Buber, on the other hand, is not concerned with the elimination of the traditional substance-process dichotomy. He is in no way arguing against the traditional concept of the 'atom' (matter), against the existence of a concrete independent reality, here and now, in favor of a process philosophy. He does not think of man and of the world in terms of processes, in terms of successions of events.

Certainly Buber, like Whitehead, considers the categories of 'matter' and 'spirit' as being abstractions of the human mind, only necessary for man's practical life. Yet Buber cannot be lumped together with Whitehead as far as their proposed alternatives to the traditional substance philosophy is concerned.

Whitehead replaces substance-philosophy by process-philosophy, thus remaining within a traditional dichotomy, namely the division between substance and flux. He merely switches sides, excluding substance, that is, concrete reality, here and now, as unreal, and declaring process as real. Buber, on the other hand, never commits himself to a substance-process dichotomy, or to a substance or a process philosophy, although, maybe, a modified substance-process dichotomy is implied in his philosophy. But if so, then it is epistemologically and, if it has any ontological status at all, also ontologically derived from the primal reality of the I-Thou. Like all dichotomies, so also the substance-process dichotomy, Buber overpasses,
yet retains, by a third principle - the dialogical principle. (If the elimination of dichotomies were an aim in the philosophies of both Buber and Whitehead (it is not for Buber), then Buber's philosophy, in my eyes, would be superior to Whitehead's, insofar as Buber does not fall from one side of a dichotomy to the other. For a dichotomy, in my opinion, cannot be overcome by the exclusion of one component of the dichotomy, but only by a third factor, one that combines the two under a wider principle. I am not concerned here, however, with the question as to how satisfactorily Buber eliminates the substance-process dichotomy, but only with showing that Buber's philosophy cannot be lumped together with Whitehead's process philosophy.)

Buber differs from Whitehead also with respect to the latter's views on the ontological status of the world as perceived here and now.

Accordingly, as for Whitehead there exists only one reality - process, events - the world as seen at a given moment has no reality. It is an abstraction of the human mind, and vanishes as soon as our mind ceases to generate it. So, for example, a tree, for Whitehead, as given at a certain moment is only an epistemological abstraction. For Buber, on the other hand, entities other than dialogical ones are not all mere abstractions in the sense that they are only creations of the mind and will cease to exist if the mind ceases to exist. To be sure,
a tree, for Buber, is an abstraction from dialogical reality, as a tree is an abstraction from process for Whitehead. But for Buber a tree has some kind of being in itself, apart from our minds, here and now; it is more than just an appearance (although it is also not dialogical reality). While for Whitehead a tree is only an epistemological abstraction of the primal reality, that is process, for Buber a tree is an epistemological abstraction of the dialogical reality of our meeting with the tree, and also a being apart from our mind, here and now, as an ontological derivative from the I-Thou.

Moreover, a tree, for Buber, has — besides the ontological status of its own which it has in addition to being an epistemological abstraction as granted by Whitehead — also the potentiality of becoming truly real by virtue of becoming a Thou. For Whitehead this is an impossibility, since reality, he believes, cannot be found in the isolated present. A tree remains an abstraction whether one responds to it or not. For Buber, however, ultimate reality is in the lived concrete, here and now. For Whitehead, whose process cannot be divorced from prehension, the lived moment in its isolation is an epistemological abstraction.

Whitehead's philosophy of process as the only and highest existing reality cannot be treated with Buber's philosophy of dialogue not only because (according to the latter's belief) everything, so also process, is an abstraction, a derivative, from the reality of the dialogical
meeting, but because in Buber's philosophy the static element in the I-Thou relation must not be forgotten. Consequently the exclusive status of 'process' is abandoned. This static element is not the 'true reality,' however, it is a necessary element for the 'true reality' to emerge. For Buber, it seems, there has to be something that is in dialogue, in process. Process is relational and thus cannot exist by itself, but requires a counterpart. In exclusive process (if this were possible) the I and the Thou could not be kept apart from each other, that is, the I and the Thou could not exist (at least I do not know how they could), and dialogue and dialogical reality would be made impossible. What, for Buber, this 'static' element is, he never explained. It probably differs in different dialogical relations, depending who constitutes the I and the Thou, God, men, or the world.

Although process and a static element seem to be required in human dialogue, it would be wrong to conclude that dialogical reality is 'static element in process.' Dialogical reality cannot be reduced to traditional categories. Rather, it comprises all of them, at the same time going beyond them. It gives all of them their derivative ontological status.
Both Hinduism and Buddhism deny the reality of material substance, the reality of the material world. Buddhism, in addition, denies the reality of spiritual substance. As far as this denial of substance goes, Hinduism and Buddhism are very akin to Whitehead's philosophy. But, like Buber, they differ from Whitehead with respect to their alternative to this denial of substance. Therefore, I do not think it appropriate to assimilate Buddhism or Hinduism to a kind of process philosophy like the one of Whitehead. Rather, these Oriental philosophies, like Buber's philosophy, cut beneath the substance-process dichotomy. The unifying principle, however, is altogether different in Buber's philosophy from that in Buddhism or Hinduism. While for Buber the primal reality is dialogical reality, requiring the meeting of an I and a Thou, the ultimate reality for Hinduism is Brahman, the One besides which nothing exists, and for Buddhism Sunyata, Nothingness. Ultimate reality in Buddhism and Hinduism means all-embracing unity, while for Buber it implies duality. (In this respect Whitehead is closer to Buber than the two Oriental philosophies, since for Whitehead there is still a distance between God and man, thus duality, although the Whiteheadian God-man relationship is not quite an I-Thou relationship in Buber's sense.)

Hinduism, with its doctrine of true being and
of absorption, has nothing in common with Buber's doctrine of lived reality, since it reduces lived reality to a world of appearances. Consequently, since only dialogical being is true being, Hinduism, Buber feels, 'leads...to "annihilation," where no consciousness reigns and whence no memory leads.' (ITn p. 88)

One might possibly argue that Hinduism is not altogether different from Buber's philosophy, since it puts emphasis on the realization of one's self, which, for Buber, is the presupposition for genuine relation. This argument, however, would be overlooking the difference between Hinduism and Buber's philosophy with respect to the motivation for the endeavor to realize one's self. While for Buber the unity of the self is necessary for true dialogue, necessary for the saying of the Thou, the realization of one's self for the Hindu is, paradoxically enough, necessary for the realization that one does not have an individual self, but that the self, atman, is identical with the World Soul, Brahman. This doctrine of self-being as being identical with universal being, Buber says, makes impossible the genuine saying of the Thou, and by that denies that dialogical reality exists and is identical with ultimate reality. Consequently, Hinduism stands in radical opposition to Buber's views exactly where a superficial look might detect similarities - in the demand for one's self-realization. In opposition to Hinduism, Buber says: 'I bear within me the sense of Self that cannot be included in the world,' or in a
World Soul, 'a sense of Self \( \text{that} \) is not a "knowing subject" but simply the total status of the I as I. Here no further "reduction" is possible.' (ITh p. 94) The doctrine of absorption, he says, demands refuge into the One Thinking Essence, refuge into pure subject. 'But in lived reality there is not something thinking without something thought, rather is the thinking no less dependent on the thing thought than the latter on the former.' (Ibid. pp. 89-90)

Buber is somewhat more sympathetic towards Buddhism than towards Hinduism. For, Buber feels, Buddhism contains at least a few, although weak, dialogical elements. In distinction to Hinduism, Buddhism does not propound a withdrawal from the world, a monkish life that is turned inside, but it affirms life and the world. 'Loyal to the truth of our meeting,' says Buber, 'we can follow the Buddha as far as this, but a step further would be disloyalty to the reality of our life.' (Ibid. p. 91) For, for Buddhism the living of one's role in the world is only a means to an end, it is a means for leading man 'apart from the "illusion of forms" - which for us,' says Buber, 'is no illusion but rather the reliable world (and this in spite of all subjective paradoxes in observation connected with it for us.)' (Ibid. p. 92) The involvement of the Buddhist in the world is superficial, that is, the self is not bound up with the world but remains as detached
from it as possible. And this can be achieved only by perfectly living one's given role, since this will yield complete mastery over one's desires, rather, it will bring about the elimination of all desires. The self then, after the complete liberation from all desires, dissolves into nothingness. (This appears so from the standpoint of the illusioned mind; in reality the self never existed at all.) Buddhism too, thus, contains wrong disregard for the world and for lived reality.

To this disregard of the world, and especially to the doctrine of the dissolution of the self, Buber is, naturally, bitterly opposed. For the latter would mean the death of any relation, since 'the real self appears only when it enters into relation with the Other. Where this relation is rejected, the real self withers away. (EG p. 97) The annihilation of the self would necessarily remove any possibility of true dialogue.

Buber, however, feels sympathetic to Buddha for another reason, namely, for the latter's refusal 'to assert that unity exists or that it does not exist, that he who passed all the tests of absorption exists after death in unity or that he does not exist in unity.' (ITH p. 90) The Buddha does not commit himself to a precarious doctrine of absorption, he does not fall into the traps of a false gnosis. This 'noble silence' can be explained, Buber feels, in terms of Buddha's belief that fulfilment is beyond the categories of thought and
expression, and that one would, if one tried to describe it, 'pull it into division, into the antithetics of the world of It, where there is no life of salvation.' (loc. cit.) Here the Buddha is very similar to Buber, in his respect for the mystery of God and of Being. It is with this in mind, I feel, that Buber's relatively undeveloped ontology can be accounted for. 'The primal condition of salvation,' writes Buber, 'is undivided confrontation of the undivided mystery.' (Ibid. p. 91) Buddha makes only one assertion: that there is an Unborn, neither become, nor created, nor formed. And 'in the silent death of his being,' Buber feels, the Buddha knew the 'saying of the Thou to this primal cause,' (Ibid. pp. 92-93) and stood 'related to it with his whole being,' (EG p. 28) although he preserved silence about it. The Buddha, Buber holds, also knew the saying of the Thou to men, although he didn't teach it, although his 'innermost decision seemed to rest on the extinction of the ability to say Thou.' (ITh p. 92)
CONCLUSION
Martin Buber, I feel, can be considered one of the most profound and penetrating thinkers of our time. He has introduced a completely novel way of thinking - novel not in the sense of 'modified' and 'extended' - but a radically new perspective on life, its problems and contradictions. One might most successfully sum up this novel conception of thought and life as the philosophy of the 'narrow ridge,' a philosophy which puts emphasis on those phases of human thought and life which cannot be defined completely, where 'there is no sureness of expressible knowledge,' where undivided mystery confronts man, where solutions are beyond man's reach - there, where there is only 'the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed.' (BM M p. 134)

This attitude of the 'narrow ridge' is not one that looks for a happy middle, but rather, one that holds the life in a 'holy insecurity' to be the essential life of man; a life of dialogue, in which man meets unreduced reality, and in which he courageously responds to whatever he meets, despite the paradoxes and contradictions that may be involved. The life on the 'narrow ridge' means man's unquestioned acceptance as paradoxical unities what are usually considered irreconcilable alternatives and dichotomies. It means a defiance of the either-or way of thought and life predominating in our age.

Accordingly, as for Buber good and evil are not
opposites, but are essentially related to one another, and accordingly, as reality and truth are only found in the full meeting of man with fellow-men and the world in all their otherness, mystery, and concreteness, all dichotomies and either-or's of our age are integrated in life - even if this implied the acceptance of paradox. Some of these dichotomies are: I versus Thou, selfishness versus altruism, love versus justice, dependence versus freedom, emotion and passion versus reason, moral autonomy versus moral heteronomy, morality versus religion, love of God versus fear of God, transcendence of God versus immanence of God, subjectivism versus objectivism, personal and poetic truth versus scientific truth, individualism versus collectivism, unity versus duality.

Almost all fields of human enterprise today are poisoned by some kind of either-or proposition. Buber poses his all-inclusive philosophy of the life of dialogue - in which man, although walking on the 'narrow ridge' between all dichotomies, combines the two alternatives of the dichotomy - as a remedy for all the detrimental and disrupting either-or's; he poses it as a safeguard for man's authentic existence with all its concreteness, complexity, and problems; as a safeguard of human truth, which is neither subjective nor objective, but which is existentially realized in dialogue.

Buber's writings are wide in their scope. They
are directed at the totality of human life. Despite the variety of thought, which is necessary if one deals with so many aspects of human existence as Buber has, Buber's writings are pervaded by a remarkable unity. It is a unity which can be achieved only by a man who, like Buber, has combined his own way of life with his thought, who has been as great as a person as as a thinker. Buber has honestly shared a life in dialogue himself; he has lived with the responsibility of a true Thou. And as such he addresses his reader in his books. For that reason Buber cannot be understood only by logical reformulation of his ideas, but through the full acceptance of his writings, by an approach as a Thou. To really understand Buber, one must be ready to accept his sharing, and to enter into relation as often as possible in one's own life.
1. In each of the three spheres man has at the same time a relation to God. Man, thus, is really capable of having relations with four kinds of Thou.

2. This distinction is very similar to Maritain's distinction between 'individual' and 'person.'

3. For Plato it would be vice versa; the eternal idea of the Good, the source of all goodness would do the bestowing and the religious (the concrete), the receiving.

4. A rigorous distinction between individualism and collectivism on the personal and on the social-political level is very difficult, since they usually go along together, imply each other and overlap. Consequently neither can be thought of without the other in many respects. Yet, they cannot be said to be equivalent; some kind of distinction can be made between them. Buber himself never explicitly distinguished between the two types of illusory confirmation on the personal and social level; however, a distinction, it seems, is implied in his writings.

According to my understanding, and I think also in agreement with Buber's writings, the distinction between personal and social individualism and between personal and social-political collectivism is roughly as follows:

While individualism on the personal level refers to people who are cut off from the relations with their fellow-men on account of lack of courage to face the realities of the world, thus showing little positive concern for the world around them, individualism on the social level refers to capitalists who actually use the world on a large scale in order to appropriate as much as possible. Their individualism is not only a lack of concern for the world like that of the Single One in Kierkegaard's sense, but it involves the using and possessing of great parts of society. Social individualism, thus, comes to be a personal individualism in an extreme form and on a large scale, characterized by the actual using and affecting of a host of individuals in a detrimental manner.

Accordingly as collectivism is, in my opinion, a more complex concept than individualism, a distinction between personal and social collectivism is more difficult. Collectivism on the personal level, in my eyes, refers to single individuals who conform
completely to some outward standards, be this another person or another group, be it with respect to his whole life or only one aspect of it, for example, art appreciation. Personal collectivism is thus what one usually understands by 'conformism' to social behaviour, art appreciation, values pertaining to everyday life, etc. It is of course possible that personal conformism becomes collective - as it has to a large extent in this country - (this has come about especially because of modern means of mass communication). But even in this case one would not talk in terms of 'collectivism' but rather, in terms of 'conformity'.

If one uses the term 'collectivism', one usually refers to what was termed 'social collectivism' above. It refers not to the conformity described before, but to the controlling of a whole society by the State. This control can be total or partial. If it is total, as seems to be the case in the Soviet Union, where people are determined in all phases of life, personal collectivism on the large scale - what I called 'conformity' - is necessarily included in the totalitarian political collectivism - better, it is turned into totalitarian social collectivism. Here society is amalgamated into the State completely. But, as already mentioned, this political collectivism need not be total and reaching into all spheres of life. The United States is an example for partial social collectivism. While there is freedom with respect to social behaviour, art appreciation, and the like, (that the freedom with respect to these aspects of life is not taken advantage of, but replaced by conformity on a large scale is sad; however, - although from a pragmatic viewpoint much alike to the collectivism in Russia with respect to these aspects of life - the conformity in this country is essentially different from that of Russia, since it is 'voluntary' from the viewpoint of the State [although maybe, forced upon people in another vicious way - by mass communication], with respect to work (although from a pragmatic point of view the freedom is often more or less theoretical because of the huge capitalistic enterprises which virtually force many 'little' individualists into a 'collective' job which is dull and without fulfilment), and with respect to political opinion, (at least within the domain of democracy), etc., there is, feels Buber, collectivization and centralization to a certain extent - and this with respect to the measures that have been taken in order to maintain national security. The collectivist tendencies are shown with respect to service in the army, guidance of many scientists as to their field of work, amount of money that is used for armament rather than social welfare, control of
political opinion to the extent that Communist tendencies are exterminated, etc. This collectivization is of course necessary. The fact of its necessity, however, remains a sad point.

While the personal collectivism, that is conformism, involves some kind of freedom to conform, (and thus can occur on a small or large scale both with respect to the number of conformists and the number of aspects of life that are conformed to by the single individual), social collectivism means domination by the State, leaving no (as in Russia) or partial (as in the West) freedom to be a person, or a true individualist, (in Buber's sense), or a personal conformist. With respect to work, to mass-production, as found in this country, I am not sure what kind of collectivism to ascribe to it. The control is not political, yet it is rather strong - though not absolute - by virtue of the centralizing tendency of the big enterprises.

Personal and social collectivism, thus, can occur in various forms, depending upon how many aspects of life are affected by it. They cannot be separated completely, (at least not insofar as every social collectivism must be originated by some persons, thus being in part, with respect to these originators, personal collectivism), and usually go together on the social scale, although this latter concurrence is not necessary.

One more difference between individualism and collectivism on the personal level and individualism and collectivism on the social level seems to exist with respect to the people concerned in the change from individualism to collectivism. While in personal individualism the individualist himself finally becomes a collectivist (conformist), on the social level the capitalists do not, at least in most cases, become collectivists themselves. Rather, collectivism arises either as a reaction (like Marxism or Soviet totalitarianism, where the bearer of collectivism is not the former capitalist but the personal individualist in atomized society threatened by capitalism), or collectivism arises as a consequence insofar as capitalism forces many people - by threatening their vital and social security - into collectives (especially with respect to work). There are, to be sure, cases in which capitalists, on account of the insecurity resulting from too powerful competition, also quit business and end up in the collective.

5. In the following exposition of Buber's theory of know-
ledge I shall in part heavily rely on Maurice Friedman's interpretation of Buber's epistemology as presented in *The Life of Dialogue*, pp. 161 - 175.

6. The I-Thou relationship with nature, similar to our relationship to works of art, is not as complete as the dialogue between two persons, since it lacks the conscious reciprocity of the latter. Nature can 'say' something to me, and can thus consciously become a Thou for me, but because it doesn't have the consciousness of a self, I cannot become a Thou for nature in the same manner.

Buber does not hold, however, that there is no reciprocity in man's relation with nature at all. Even in inanimate nature - although there, most likely, is no mutuality in consciousness - 'there is a reciprocity of the being itself, a reciprocity which is nothing but being in its course (Seiend)' The reciprocity is 'that of the pre-threshold' of consciousness. (ITh p. 126)

7. Although Buber puts great emphasis, in his dialogical life, on the immediate sense experience, it would be wrong to classify him as an empiricist after the order of William James. It is true that for Buber all true relation must start with sense experience, and, if it is to be perfect, must fully include it. But it would be misleading to think that the relation is exhausted by sense-experience. Rather, true relation is 'the vital contact with a being, an ever-renewed vital contact with it in which the experience of the senses only fits in as a factor.' (PW p. 84)

The I-Thou relation cannot be complete, if the sense-experience I have of my Thou is being curtailed, but it is not made up of sense-experiences alone. Consequently, Buber holds that the dialogical life can continue - although not with full intensity - 'even when the I and the Thou are separated in space, as the continual potential presence of the one to the other, as an unexpressed intercourse.' (BMM p. 97) For William James, on the other hand, who holds that reality is immediate sense-experience, separation in space from any person or object would make impossible the emergence of reality in connection with them.

8. A difficulty arises especially with respect to the question as to who creates the dialogical reality. It was said earlier that two human beings, by entering into a relation, create true reality. This is right insofar as by virtue of their meeting dialogical
reality emerges. Yet it is wrong insofar as dialogical reality emerges only by virtue of the inclusion of God in true dialogue. However, it would be wrong to say that the dialogical reality is part of the Divine Being. Yet, according to Buber, in dialogue man participates in Divine Being. The situation seems to be paradoxical - the meeting is partially a realization of Divine Being, yet it is not part of the Divine Being.

9. See chapter on 'Epistemology': 'The Way of Knowing': 'Elimination of Traditional Epistemological Problems on the Basis of Epistemological Priority of I-Thou over I-It'.

10. The closest affinities between Buber and Whitehead are probably to be found in their doctrine of the relationship between God and man. Both men believe in the concrete meeting of man and God, and that redemption of evil results from the mutual love and relation of God and the world. Yet even here, Whitehead differs from Buber in that he is relatively unconcerned with man's relation to God, and more concerned with the generic relation of God to man. Consequently, Whitehead's God-man relationship is I-It more than I-Thou. It lacks the tension of Buber's 'meeting' and 'over-againstness.' (Fried p. 227)

11. Here one might object that only Buddhism, but not Hinduism, cuts beneath this substance-process dichotomy, since Hinduism postulates as ultimate reality a World Soul, and thus seems to cling to the belief in the reality of 'spiritual substance'. However, whether this equating of Brahman with 'spiritual substance' is correct, I do not know. To the extent, thus, as I am uncertain in this respect, the statement about Hinduism as cutting beneath the substance-process dichotomy is uncertain too.
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>At the Turning</td>
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<td>BMM</td>
<td>Between Man and Man</td>
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<td>EG</td>
<td>Eclipse of God</td>
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APPROVED

Hans C. Daus

Joe W. Leuven

Chairman

DATE: Oct 14, 1960