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CREATING HOLY SPACES IN HOSPITAL ROOMS: HOW MARTIN BUBER'S PHILOSOPHIES MIGHT INFORM AND IMPACT PEDIATRIC CHAPLAINCY

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Abstract

CREATING HOLY SPACES IN HOSPITAL ROOMS:
HOW MARTIN BUBER'S PHILOSOPHIES MIGHT INFORM AND IMPACT PEDIATRIC CHAPLAINCY

AMANDA KATHERINE WEISS

Relationship-building is at the core of healthcare chaplaincy. Chaplains provide spiritual care through moments of loss of identity or direction, while forging relationships through the creation of questions and conversations. In pediatric settings, chaplains hold space for the expression of hurt and of hope, and may transform a hospital room into a holy space of healing.

Martin Buber's relational philosophy teaches that there are two ways of being in relationship: either directly ("I-Thou") or indirectly (I-It). In this thesis, I analyze how Martin Buber's relational, dialogical, and educational philosophies might both inform and impact pediatric chaplaincy, providing a strong framework for understanding how these deep relationships with pediatric patients can potentially transform a hospital room into a holy space. There has been very little written on Martin Buber's influence on pediatric chaplaincy. While there have been works completed on Martin Buber's philosophy and its potential influence on spiritual care, pastoral counseling, and hospital chaplaincy, the focus is assumed to be on general (read: adult) patient spiritual care and pastoral counseling.

Given the wide range of topics that Buber addressed, the goal of this thesis is to utilize Buber's works on relationship, dialogue, and education to find ways that chaplains might be able to read or extrapolate from his texts a way of forging direct "I-Thou" relationships with their pediatric patients.

This thesis is written in eight chapters. In the Introduction, I lay out the structure of the thesis itself, introducing each component. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 introduce readers to Buber's central influences and early philosophy. In Chapter 4 explores and clarifies the profession of chaplaincy and the subspecialty of pediatric chaplaincy in a healthcare setting. Chapter 5 covers my personal experience and experiment with pediatric chaplaincy at the New York Presbyterian hospitals. Chapter 6 presents Martin Buber's educational philosophy, demonstrating how it intersects beautifully with his philosophies on relationship and dialogue philosophies. In the Conclusion, I discuss the efficacy of the NYP experiment, the merits of my thesis and the research therein, and areas for additional study and focus.

My research included Martin Buber's writings, scientific articles on the specific needs of pediatric chaplaincy and Buberian influences on chaplaincy, Israeli resources on Martin Buber and chaplaincy, firsthand experience at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital, and further research on Martin Buber's relational, dialogical, and educational philosophies.

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Acknowledgements

"In doing so, one does, thank God, have one's faith on one's right, but one could not get along without humor on one's left." —Martin Buber[1]

Writing a thesis as a first-time endeavor has been an incredibly challenging and rewarding experience and one that I certainly could not — and did not — complete on my own. The people who are mentioned in this section have had an exceptional influence on my lived experience and I thank them greatly for *their* faith and humor that have supported me and given me direction during my rabbinical school journey.

I would like to thank Rabbi Nancy H. Wiener, D.Min., for supporting me personally and professionally during my tenure at HUC-JIR. Rabbi Wiener's patience, guidance, humor, and candor has touched every facet of my time here. Rabbi Wiener has helped me develop professionally, guided me through placement, advised me through several unique service-leading experiments, supervised me through transitions, teamed up with me on Kallah preparations, held space for me during difficult personal moments, engaged my love of clinical pastoral education and pediatric chaplaincy, and now has lovingly, kindly, firmly, and painstakingly made her way through every one of my marathon sentences. Her insights and inquiries have truly changed me for the better and I am eternally grateful.

Buber's works and areas of thoughts are not always easy to understand. Luckily for me, I have had numerous supporters who shared their time, knowledge, and resources. Thank you to Yoram Bitton and Eli Lieberman for their tireless efforts in helping me locate sources in English and in Hebrew across campuses (or purchasing them online for me!). Thank you

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[1] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. p. 303

Linda Aristondo) who helped shape me as a chaplain and who assisted me in wrestling with and reforming my NYP experiences and experiment.

My compelling love of both learning and relationship have been buoyed and inspired by many of my HUC-JIR teachers and mentors. Thank you to Dean David Adelson and Rabbi Lisa Grant for ensuring that I was in an excellent academic position (read: auditing classes) to complete this thesis in a timely manner. Thank you to my Year-in-Israel academic inspirations: Zohara Pardes-Feinstein, Ph.D. who set incredibly high standards and then did everything in her power to ensure that we met them; Jeremy Leigh who handled everything with faith, humor, and a willingness to always ask "Is everybody happy?"; and Dr. Yehoyada (Yoki) Amir who believed in the significance of one-on-one dialogical encounters. Thank you to Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman, Cantor Claire Franco, Rabbi Jerry Davidson, Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, and Dr. Sharon Koren who have promised me that multiple drafts lead to better writing. Thank you to Dr. Evie Rotstein who believes that I can do and learn anything if I put my mind to it—and that, when encouraged, I can also teach it to others. Thank you to Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, Cantor Richard Cohn, Rabbi Andrew Goodman, Rabbi Rachel Gross-Prinz and Cantor Erin Frankel who believe that, when encouraged, I can be confident in everything I do and use that confidence to inspire others.

Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: "Make for yourself a rav…[2]

My professional work has undoubtedly shaped my rabbinate in countless ways. Thank you to the Oregon Hillel Foundation and Andy Gitelson and Sharon Rudnick for believing that I could do great things and then turning me out into the world to go and do them. I am incredibly grateful for my time at Temple Sinai in Summit (working under Rabbi

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[2] Pirkei Avot 1:6

Dennis Ross) and for Jen Sinoway and Ian Singer who enabled me to fall in love with a job in the midst of a pandemic. Thank you to Rabbi David Wilfond who supported my growth for two years with kindness and grace and an attitude of gratitude and to the Temple Shaaray Tefila staff—who make me smile whenever I "come back," be it by email, phone, or in person. Thank you to Cantor Harriet Dunkerley and Rabbi Ellie Steinman who represent two of my biggest cheering sections as I manifest my rabbinate and slowly find my comfort levels with rabbinic authority. Thank you to Rabbi Howard (Howie) Goldsmith who, without question, has challenged me with his wit and wisdom, his comedy and candor, and who reminds me every day that every encounter, each moment of presence, and every second of dialogue, can be long-lasting and impactful—and a huge hug to the rest of the Congregation of Emanu-El of Westchester staff and community.

…*and acquire for yourself a friend…"*

I have been incredibly lucky to have an extraordinary group of friends who have read drafts, forced meal breaks, brought me countless Diet Cokes from the vending machine, laughed with me, cried with me, and have reminded me that the small moments are some of the most memorable. Thank you to everyone in Rabbi Mehlman's *Buber and the Way of Man Class* (Jacob Leizman, Gabe Snyder, Ariel Tovlev, Ze'evi Tovlev, and Sasha Baken) for being my teachers. Thank you to the rabbinical and cantorial class of 2023 for being in the trenches with me always. Thank you to my room 508/510 crew for supporting me and distracting me in equal measure (Gabe Snyder, Emily H. Short, Jordan Goldstein, Gabi Cohn, Ze'evi Tovlev). Thank you to Edon Valdman for his infinite patience in managing timelines for our podcast passion project while my mind has often been elsewhere. Thank you to Jessica Herrmann who has always believed that I can learn anything and then gives me ample

opportunity to teach it to her. Thank you to Edie Yakutis who will always support me in anything I write, but especially if it involves chaplaincy.

Faith and humor are two components which were instilled in me from a very young age—and are most likely the foundation of the Weiss family. I'd like to thank my legal advisors (my mother and father) Laura G. Weiss and Barry F. Weiss who have not only been endlessly patient with my detailing section by section progress reports ("Are you behind? On time? Ahead?"), but also who are my biggest cheerleaders (and who will most likely read this thesis just because their daughter wrote it). Thank you to my older brother Adam B. Weiss, my sister-in-law Rachel Weiss, and the best niece Hudson Charlotte Weiss who delighted and distracted me with FaceTime calls (whether or not I actually answered the phone). To my roommate and chosen family—Gabe Snyder, Rosh Morale extraordinaire—thank you for every car ride, West Wing marathon, dinner, concert, conversation, argument, reminder, moving opportunity (picking things up to put them down), podcast episode, website build, and for always believing, no matter what, that I have the ability to cross any finish line with confidence, charisma, and just a little bit of chaos. Abounding gratitude to my incredible comfort animals, Tekiah—the sweetest therapy dog failure; Ellie z"l—the best worst labradoofus; and Homer, who is, of course, a very good bear.

And finally, a thank you to Martin Buber, for believing and teaching, for encountering and meeting, for believing that even between a struggling rabbinical student and her thesis, that there too, could exist a powerful and memorable "I-Thou" relationship.

Introduction

"Existence will remain meaningless for you if you yourself do not penetrate into it with active love and if you do not in this way discover its meaning for yourself. Everything is waiting to be hallowed by you; it is waiting to be disclosed in its meaning and to be realized in it by you." [1]—Martin Buber

Martin Buber's revered relational philosophy as seen in *I and Thou*,[2] and *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching,*[3] presents his unique way to successfully approach the world around us through relationship. In *I and Thou*, Buber explains that there are two ways to situate our own connections to the world: through relationship ("I-Thou") or through utility ("I-It"). In *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching,* Buber breaks down our interactions into intrapersonal and interpersonal components which allow for the creation of sacred spaces via human encounters.

This is clearly evidenced in situations where stress and/or grief are not only present, but also active, and where spiritual involvement has been sought. Chaplains who provide spiritual and pastoral care, accompanying their patients during harrowing hospital moments, often recognize that relationship-building is core to spiritual growth in a liminal space where patients often lose their independence, individuality, and identity.

Through my limited work in pediatric chaplaincy in the summer of 2021, I had been struck by the ways in which the relationship-building that is at the heart of this work seems to relate to the central aspects of Martin Buber's philosophy. In order to see if this sense was more than a hunch, I set out to engage with a multi-pronged methodology: a review of

[1] Buber, M. (1967). The Silent Question. In *On Judaism* (pp. 202–213). essay, Schocken Books.
[2] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone.
[3] Buber, M., Mehlman, B. H., & Padawer, G. E. (2012). *The way of man according to Hasidic teaching*.

Buber's philosophy, a review of literature on pediatric chaplaincy, a limited practical study

and analysis of the experiences of those offering pediatric chaplaincy in a hospital setting,

and a limited exploration of Jewish texts related to the pastoral relationship.

Martin Buber's Writings

Through a close reading of Martin Buber's most seminal works on relational

philosophy (*I and Thou* and *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching*), I sought to

determine if there might be a reasonable link between Buber's major philosophical tenets to

the practice of pediatric chaplaincy. My research began with a primary exploration of his

writings on spiritual, psychological, and physical care. Buber's additional written works on

philosophy, education, discourse, psychotherapy, national organizing, and more deepened my

understanding of how Buber's relational philosophies were formed and how they might be

translated into the arena of pediatric chaplaincy. **Chapters 1, 2, and 3** introduce readers to

Buber's central influences and early philosophy.

Scientific Articles on the Specific Needs of Pediatric Chaplaincy and Buberian Influences on Chaplaincy

There is a dearth of scholarly writing on pediatric chaplaincy. In light of this reality,

there is also a paucity of material on Martin Buber's direct influence on pediatric

chaplaincy.[4] Thus, in order to understand the specific goals and objectives of pediatric

chaplaincy more clearly, I explored the distinctive needs of pediatric patients (compared to

the general patient population) through the review of the few textbooks, manuals, and

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[4] There is, however, some literature on Buber's thought and pastoral care.

scholarly articles which provided a powerful comprehension of how pediatric patients are served differently than their adult counterparts.

My thesis advisor Rabbi Nancy H. Wiener, D.Min, Director, Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling,[5] Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor and educator Rev. Jose Maria Collazo, Chaplain and ACPE Certified Educator,[6] and CPE preceptor Rev. Daniel H. Yang, MDiv, BCC, Coordinator, Pastoral Care & Education at New York-Presbyterian-Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital,[7] encouraged me to become familiar with general chaplaincy literature in order to better understand the information and insights offered in the limited literature on pediatric chaplaincy. Only then could I gain clarity about how relevant Buber's teachings might be for those working with a pediatric population.

They also led me to literature on Jewish values and doctor-patient relationships, Buberian influences on educating for relationship, pastoral care assessments for pediatric patients, and family dynamics as they manifest around pediatric patients to see if they spoke in a meaningful way to Buber's writings. **Chapter 4** explores and clarifies the profession of chaplaincy and the subspecialty of pediatric chaplaincy in a healthcare setting.

Israeli Resources on Martin Buber and Chaplaincy

With a limited scope, I explored and revied a number of contemporary Israeli resources to gauge if and how Buber's philosophy relates to pediatric chaplaincy. As I noted universal themes, I also assessed if and how a Buberian impact on pediatric chaplaincy might

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[5] To read more about Rabbi Nancy Wiener, http://huc.edu/directory/nancy-h-wiener
[6] To read more about the Reverend Jose Maria Collazo, https://www.nyp.org/pastoral-care/staff-bios/allen-pastoral-care
[7] To read more about the Reverend Daniel H. Yang, https://www.nyp.org/pastoral-care/staff-bios/mschony-pastoral-care

be globally scaled and understood. This material is included, in translation, in relevant sections throughout this thesis, with the direct Hebrew quotation in a corresponding footnote.

Firsthand Experience at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital:

Chapter 5 covers my personal experience and experiment with pediatric chaplaincy at the New York Presbyterian hospitals. During the summer of 2021, I worked as a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) intern at New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell under the Reverend Daniel H. Yang (preceptor) and the Reverend CB Stewart (certified educator candidate). [8] During the summer of 2022, I engaged in my second unit of CPE as an intern at New York Presbyterian-Columbia and Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York (MSCHONY). Working with educator and supervisor, the Reverend Jose Maria Collazo and preceptor, the Reverend Daniel H. Yang (again), I focused primarily on pediatric patients during my full-time summer internship (400+ hours).

During this internship, I was assigned to cover four pediatric units in MS-CHONY, including the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the NICU Nursery Stepdown, a pediatric step-down unit, and the pediatric emergency room, serving patients aged 0-22 during my time there. For the first half of my [eleven-week] internship, I concentrated on relationship-building and strengthening my chaplaincy skills. During the last five weeks, with guidance and collaboration from my CPE mentors and intern cohort, I designed an experiment utilizing the framework of Martin Buber's *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching* to create two questionnaires for chaplains to fill out before and after meeting with pediatric patients.

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[8] To read more about Rev CB Stewart, https://www.nyp.org/pastoral-care/clinical-pastoral-education

For the purpose of this thesis, I reviewed the responses to the questionnaires (see

Chapter 5 for further details), and determined whether or not the data corroborated my thesis

that the relationship-building between chaplains with patients and their families on pediatric

units embody the relationships as delineated by Buber.[9]

Further Research on Martin Buber's Relational, Dialogical, and Educational Philosophies

In the fall of 2022, I met semi-regularly with HUC-JIR faculty member Rabbi

Bernard Mehlman—a past student and translator of Martin Buber's—who acted both as a

guide to further resources and as a teacher of the Buberian tradition.[10] As I continued reading

Buber's works, Rabbi Mehlman confirmed that I correctly understood and extrapolated the

main points of Buber's work, his writing on education in particular. As I continued to explore

Buber's educational philosophy, Rabbi Mehlman affirmed my position that the Buberian

educator could be mapped onto the pediatric chaplain as a compassionate guide. **Chapter 6**

presents Martin Buber's educational philosophy, demonstrating how it intersects beautifully

with his philosophies on relationship (Chapter 2) and dialogue (Chapter 3) philosophies.

Conclusion

Following the summer's practical experience, I continued to deepen my

understanding of Buber's thinking, collated the findings from the limited study, and

familiarized myself with contemporary Israeli materials on pediatric care and contemporary

thought in order to consider the merits of my thesis, its utility, applications and challenges. In

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[9] See Chapter 5 for more details.
[10] To read more about Rabbi Bernard Mehlman, http://huc.edu/directory/bernard-h-mehlman

the **Conclusion,** I discuss the efficacy of the NYP experiment, the merits of my thesis and the

research therein, and areas for additional study and focus.

Chapter 1
Martin Buber: Early Life & Intellectual Influences on His Early Writing

*"I want to influence the world, but I do not want it to feel itself influenced by 'Me.'…
I do not even want to explain myself to myself."* [0]—Martin Buber

Early Life

Martin Buber was born in 1878 in Vienna to two assimilated Jewish parents. Buber's early childhood was troublesome; at three, his parents separated and his mother ran off to live with a lover (without saying goodbye to Martin). His father, Carl Buber, a secular agronomist,[0] left Buber to the care of his grandparents Solomon and Adele Buber in Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine),[0] who raised him until the age of 14 when he returned to his father's house.[0] Solomon Buber, a learned and observant Jew, well versed in Hebrew and classical Judaism, homeschooled Buber until the age of ten. However, it was Solomon's younger brother (Buber's great-uncle) Rabbi Zev Wolf (Wilhelm) Buber, a Talmudic scholar "renowned for his novel interpretations of rabbinic law" who conferred Buber's education in rabbinic literature.[0] Buber's grandmother, Adele Buber—a product of the Enlightenment movement—inspired Martin's love of linguistics and literature.[0]

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. xiii-xiv)
[0] Simon, A. E. (2001, March 30). Martin Buber. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Buber-German-religious-philosopher
[0] There are differing spellings of Martin Buber's grandfather's first name: Solomon v. Salomon. In order to maintain a coherent reading, I have chosen to use "Solomon" unless the name is used in a direct quote.
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 2)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 4-5)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 5)

Hasidism and Mysticism

Buber would receive a respite from his familial turbulence and his grandfather's traditional Jewish observance during the summers, when he would spend a week or so with his great-uncle in Delatyn, "a bucolic town at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, along the Pruth River, and a favorite summer destination of East Galician Jewry, especially of many leading Hasidic rabbis."[0] Buber later wrote, "In the most impressionable period of my boyhood, a Hasidic atmosphere had a deep influence on me…the foundations of my life are there, and my impulses are akin to its."[0] Hasidism, often antithetical to the academic rigor of traditional rabbinic Judaism and the Enlightenment instilled in its disciples a yearning for a direct relationship with God.[0]

Buber's engagement with Hasidism and its mysticism was strengthened through his grandfather's investment in the study of Midrash, ancient commentaries on the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*).[0] As Buber grew older, he expanded his education to include the German milieu, as he wrote:

> Since 1900 I had first been under the influence of German mysticism from Meister Eckhart to Angelus Silesiu, [0, 0] according to which the primal ground (Urgrund) of being, the nameless, impersonal godhead, comes to 'birth' in the human soul; then I had been under the influence of the later Kabbalah and of Hasidism, [0] according to which man has the power to unite the God who is over the world with his *Shekhinah* dwelling in the world. In this way there arose in me the thought of a realization of

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 5)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 231)
[0] To read more about Hasidism: https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hasidic-movement-a-history/
[0] To read more about Midrash: https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/midrash-101/
[0] To read more about Meister Eckhart: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/meister-eckhart/
[0] To read more about Angelus Silesiu: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Angelus-Silesius
[0] Kabbalah, an ancient tradition of Jewish biblical interpretation through mysticism

God through man [sic];[0] man appeared to me as the being through whose existence the Absolute, resting in its truth, can gain the character of reality.[0]

Three of Buber's friends strongly supported his exploration of Hasidic sources:

Gustav Landauer, German philosopher and writer (1870-1919),[0] met Martin Buber in the Neue Gemeinschaft, an "anarchist commune," which he cofounded in 1900.[0] Landauer claimed that a "universal, unitive community (*Gemeinschaft*) of being" empowered human beings to be in relationship, affirmed, and sought at all levels.[0] Landauer introduced Buber to the mystical conception of community which sparked in him a stronger interest in the realm of mysticism as a whole.

Shmuel Yosef "Shai" Agnon, Jewish Nobel-winning poet and storyteller (1888-1970),[0] contacted Martin Buber in 1909 when he asked for assistance in translating and publishing a German version of his acclaimed story "Agunot."[0] Shortly after publishing it in Herzl's weekly *Die Welt*, Agnon became a part of the Buber household, both as a beloved friend and as the Hebrew tutor of Buber's son Rafael.[0] Agnon, born in eastern Galicia, had "been exposed to Hasidic tradition throughout his childhood and youth" from his father's attendance at the services of the Chortkov Hasidim.[0] This exposure proved fruitful to Buber's

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[0] While Martin Buber uses the gendered language of "man," in his written works, the word "man" is mean to represent humans and all of humanity. While I quote Martin Buber directly, please note that the use of "man" in this thesis will thus refer to humankind, thereby I will not use "[sic]" for any future direct quotations.

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. (p. 184-185)

[0] To read more about Gustav Landauer: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/landauer-gustav

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 52)

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 53)

[0] To read more about S.Y. Agnon: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/shmuel-yosef-quot-shai-quot-agnon

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. R., & Laor, D. (2002). Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the "Corpus Hasidicum". In *Martin Buber: A contemporary perspective* (p. 48-49). essay, Syracuse University Press.

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. R., & Laor, D. (2002). Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the "Corpus Hasidicum". In *Martin Buber: A contemporary perspective* (pp. 49-50). essay, Syracuse University Press.

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. R., & Laor, D. (2002). Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the "Corpus Hasidicum". In *Martin Buber: A contemporary perspective* (p. 55). essay, Syracuse University Press.

work, as Agnon would send countless streams of postcards with Hasidic anecdotes, stories,

tales, or bibliographical data that Buber might be able to use in his research and writing.[0]

Buber learned the lore primarily from printed books and shared anecdotes. Agnon saw

Hasidism as a "living oral tradition" from which Agnon was able to be for Buber "a source of

varied, authentic, and vivid information."[0] Through their correspondence, Buber and Agnon

expanded their relationship to and understanding of the Hasidic material.

Franz Rosenzweig, German Jewish philosopher and theologian (1886-1929),[0] came to

visit Buber at his residence in 1914 to share a first draft of his pamphlet *Zeit ists* (It is time)

which "called for a radical reconstruction of Jewish education in Germany."[0] As they spoke,

their conversation turned to Buber's past and current work on Hasidism, when Buber

suggested that he might like to create a study group wherein people could study the original

Hasidic texts together. Rosenzweig agreed, suggesting that they create a group that could

utilize his Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus, the school of Jewish adult education Rosenzweig

founded in 1920.[0]

Judaism & Socialism

While Buber struggled with the traditional Jewish upbringing he received in his

grandparents' household, his work with Franz Rosenzweig provided a new understanding of

Judaism: religion should not deflect one from a dedicated relationship with God.[0] Their

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 234)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. R., & Laor, D. (2002). Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the "Corpus Hasidicum". In *Martin Buber: A contemporary perspective* (p. 57). essay, Syracuse University Press.
[0] To read more about Franz Rosenzweig: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/rosenzweig-franz
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 132-133)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 135)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 163)

pedagogical partnership in the Jewish arena inspired Buber to discover that the spiritual

renewal of Jewry could only come about if the world were redeemed through the daily life of

mankind; each person can hallow the everyday, thereby welcoming God into their lives.[0]

Though Rosenzweig and Buber had differing views on Judaism ("Rosenzweig…became

more and more a practicing Jew, Buber stood his ground as one who embodied his Judaism

in no prescribed, special manner" and Rosenzweig believed that the Torah and law came

from God while Buber disagreed…),[0] their intimate friendship allowed them to embark on an

incredible and monumental project together: a "*Verdeutschung* (Germanification) of the

Hebrew Bible."[0]

Buber's struggle to develop a relationship with an ultimate authority was influenced

greatly by Friedrich Nietzsche's work *Zarathustra,* in which the German philosopher boldly

asserted, "God is dead."[0] Introducing the doctrine of superman and the will to power,

Nietzsche submitted that changes made to the world can only occur through human hands.[0]

Nietzsche "ultimately and decisively inform[ed] Buber's unique brand of religious

anarchism," which contended that a genuine dialectical relationship with God could exist

without doctrine or ritual.[0] Buber's religious anarchism suggested that it is within the

individual's power—a relational power—to create a concrete connection with God.

Moving away from his contemporaries' religious focus on adherence to law and

religious practices, Buber introduced an affiliation with God that was relational and

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 164)
[0] Simon, A. E. (2001, March 30). Martin Buber. *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Retrieved from
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Buber-German-religious-philosopher
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 156-158)
[0] To read more about *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Thus-Spake-Zarathustra
[0] To read more about Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900): https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 18)

dialectical in nature. This affiliation resonated greatly with his friend Gustav Landauer.

When they met in the Neue Gemeinschaft, Buber was trying to define himself outside of a

traditional Jewish lens and Landauer's anarchism enticed Buber with "its unique blend of

individual self-determination, mystical epistemology, and communitarian socialism."[0]

Landauer's aforementioned socialist view of a unitive community shaped Buber's own

understanding of how relational actions can shape spiritual and communal life.[0] Furthermore,

"for Landauer, true socialism…required as well a fundamental spiritual regeneration of the

individual and of the moral quality of interpersonal relations."[0] Perhaps the moral quality of

Landauer and Buber's interpersonal relations grew alongside their conflicts and friendship,

allowing Buber to rethink and reframe his understanding of how societies could be better

built.

Zionist Views

Paul Mendes-Flohr, a biographer of Buber's, argued that Nietzsche's major points

were "reflected in Buber's turn to Zionism and its call for a return to roots and a more

wholesome culture."[0] Buber agreed with Nietzsche's theory that the people could take their

future into their own hands and take responsibility for creating a groundbreaking socialist

society. This thinking aligned with the ideals of Mathias Acher (the penname of Nathan

Birnbaum),[0] who asserted that "Zionism provided a revolutionary, secular alternative for

maintaining a Jewish national consciousness and solidarity."[0] As someone who was not

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 122)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 128)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 120-121)
[0] Simon, A. E. (2001, March 30). Martin Buber. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Buber-German-religious-philosopher
[0] To read more about Mathias Acher/Nathan Birnbaum: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/nathan-birnbaum
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 22)

tethered to traditional Jewish theology, this secular alternative inspired Buber to take up the cultural Zionist cause, one that would "reintroduce contemporary Jews to the 'Jewish spirit' (*judische Geist*) and to Judaism's own spiritual and cultural resources."[0] Buber, with his socialist views, considered himself to be just one of the people, strongly aligning with his Zionist mentor, Asher Ginsberg (whose penname was "Ahad ha-Am," literally "one of the people").[0] Both believed that it was the culture and spirit of Zionism that would bring renewal to the Jewish people—rather than the ideal of nationalism.[0]

Buber's role as a Zionist leader grew when Theodor Herzl, the father of modern and nationalist Zionism,[0] appointed him as writer for and editor of Theodor Herzl's German-Zionist weekly *Die Welt* in 1901. However, Buber resigned a year later when the clash between cultural and nationalist Zionism quickly proved too much for him. Buber extracted himself from the nationalist Zionist movement by 1905, though he claimed that his original work with Zionism had cemented his connection to Judaism: "The first impetus toward my liberation [that is, from the adolescent ambivalence toward the Judaism of my youth] came from Zionism."[0]

Despite his departure from the nationalist faction, Buber's work with powerful and passionate Zionist thinkers kept him connected to the movement. Literary collaborations with authors such as Shai Agnon became "an integral aspect of the projected nationalist-Zionist renaissance."[0] From 1916-1924, Buber established and edited the monthly journal *Der Jude*,

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 32-33)

[0] To read more about Ahad ha-Am/Asher Ginsberg: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ahad-ha-rsquo-am

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 207)

[0] To read more about Theodor Herzl: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/theodor-binyamin-ze-rsquo-ev-herzl

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 40)

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. R., & Laor, D. (2002). Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the "Corpus Hasidicum". In *Martin Buber: A contemporary perspective* (p. 63-64). essay, Syracuse University Press.

a journal which advocated for Jewish-Arab cooperation in a binational state in Palestine. Eventually, Buber found himself frustrated by the entire Zionist endeavor, realizing that it "could not guarantee a renewal of Judaism," even when settling in the land of Israel itself.[0]

It was not until after the end of World War I, that Buber reemerged in the Zionist movement as an appointed delegate of *Hashomer Hatzair*, the socialist movement that aimed to create a "community of communities" within Israel.[0] Buber's beliefs, however, were unpopular within his social circles. He was opposed to the Balfour Declaration,[0] instead favoring a bi-national state where Jews and Arabs could "engage in constructive *dialogue,* share power, and live in peace…"[0] Perhaps this is why Agnon wrote, "Buber…was among the remaining few who still upheld a belief, inherited from the cosmopolitan spirit of the Enlightenment, that in the first instance, we are to regard ourselves as citizens of the world dedicated to *tikkun olam* [repair of the world]."[0]

Buber's greatest partner in "repairing the world" was Judah Magnes, the founding chancellor of Hebrew University.[0] Together, Buber and Magnes conceived of and originated a religiocultural institution—Ha-'Ol (The Yoke)—to resolve the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Though Ha-'Ol was short lived, virtually all of its members "participated in the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation—founded in 1939—which opposed the policy of the Yishuv's leadership to pursue Zionist priorities while ignoring Arabs' needs and political rights."[0] Their shared beliefs not only cemented their positions as

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 88)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 7)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 113)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 7)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 113-114)
[0] To read more about Judah Magnes: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/judah-magnes
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p. 208-213)

political outsiders, but also inspired Buber to utilize civil disobedience in a Jewish context.

Together, they created an independent political association which was affiliated with the

League, called the *Ichud* (Unity) party.[0] The *Ichud*'s mission clearly aligned with Buber's

personal vision , as he wrote: "Only when each people speaks from its innermost essence is

the collective treasure [of humanity] enhanced."[0]

Cross-Cultural Cohort Building

The trauma of German anti-Semitism influenced Buber's increased efforts in

coordinating cross-cultural relations. Similar to his partnership with Judah Magnes to

improve Jewish-Arab relationships through dialogue, Buber worked with Franz Rosenzweig

to create opportunities for Jews and Christians to meet at the Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus in

Frankfurt. Buber and Rosenzweig organized a series of theological meetings that they hoped

would encourage both Jews and non-Jews to engage in dialogue with "the Other," showing

an "appreciation of the spiritual and existential realty of the other faith community."

Unfortunately, such meetings of the mind could only take place in the writing of the pages of

Buber's weekly magazine *Der Jude*.[0] They never were able to take place in person.

The dialogical connections Buber formed with non-Jewish colleagues through the

Forte Circle continued into the post-war period. He remained in close contact with his friend

Florens Christian Rang (1864-1924), the Protestant theologian who created the weekly *Die*

Kreatur: "a forum for Jews and Christians to affirm what they have in common as God's

creatures."[0] After Rang died in 1924, Buber ensured the publication of *Die Kreatur*, staying

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 210-213)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 24)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p 168-169)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 172-173)
There is very little to be found in English on Florens Christian Rang aside from an article about his work with

true to Rang's vision that genuine dialogue would unite people of differing religious affinities as they struggled "against theological prejudice and metaphysical anti-Semitism."[0]

Influences on Buber's Relational Philosophy

The hope for unity and genuine encounter was core to Buber's groundbreaking work, *I and Thou,* published in 1923.[0] Inspired by Gustav Landauer's theories on a universal, unitive community (*Gemeinschaft*), Buber found that as each person genuinely encounters another, a sacred moment appears, "…endow[ing] all of life with new meaning and direction."[0] After Landauer's brutal assassination by counter-revolutionary soldiers who rejected his push for libertarian socialism in May of 1919, Buber continued to further contemplate and craft his philosophies on how relationships shape our personal and communal understanding and experience of the world. His thoughts on life through a relational lens emphasized the significance of our connections.

Buber credited one such connection, his teacher, German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918),[0] with teaching him "how to think."[0] As Buber continued his shift from religion to relation, Simmel's monograph, "Religion" (1906),[0] helped Buber better understand the dialectical relationship between an objective religion and a subjective religiosity.[0] Echoes of Simmel's central focus on relation—the relationships between man and nature, man and man, and man and God—can be found in Buber's *I and Thou,* as can Simmel's ultimate belief that

theater.
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 174-176)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 106-108)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 54)
[0] To read more about Georg Simmel: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Georg-Simmel
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 51)
[0] *Die Gesellschaft* ("Society) was a collection of forty written pieces by the leading minds of the German sociopsychological sciences. Buber edited these monographs from 1905-1912.
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 51)

one could find "in the concept of the divine the substantial and ideal expression of the

relationships between human beings."[0]

Influences on Buber's Dialogical Philosophy

Martin Buber's most venerated teacher—one who aimed to understand how to speak

to the lived experience of others—was the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-

1911),[0] "whom Buber would refer to until the very end of his life as 'my teacher.'"[0] Buber

studied with Dilthey at the University of Berlin in the summer of 1898 and the fall of 1899

and was influenced by Dilthey's hermeneutic theory which explained that we aim to

understand each other's life-experience through empathy (*Hineinversetzen*), re-creation

(*Nachbilden*), and re-living (*Nacherleben*),[0] in an effort to enter into the mental state of the

one who originally experienced it.[0]

While Buber utilized Dilthey's theory in his translations of Hasidic texts, it was in

writing *I and Thou* that he applied this theory to one's relationship to texts. He suggested that

in translating, retelling, and reliving experiences or stories, we are, in fact, creating

interpretations, not translations. In doing so, we become more involved in "developing a

dialogic relationship with the text."[0] Just as we are able to truly meet the environment around

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[0] Friedman, M. (1999). The interhuman and what is common to all: Martin Buber and sociology. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 29(4), p.403-405. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00110

[0] To read more about Wilhelm Dilthey: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dilthey/

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 44)

[0] Dilthey's theory could be likened to sympathetic mirroring, wherein when we hear someone tell a story, we are able to imagine ourselves within it. This can include how we imagine we might have felt (empathy), how we interpret the story (re-creation) and how we see ourselves through the lens of the narrator telling the story. For example, if someone tells of a fall on ice, we automatically replace ourselves as the person who fell, feeling the cold of the ground, the accelerated heartbeat, and even the pain or embarrassment felt by the original storyteller.

[0] Kepnes, S. D. (1988). Buber as Hermeneut: Relations to Dilthey and Gadamer. *Harvard Theological Review*, 81(2), p. 195-196. https://doi.org/10.1017/s001781600001004x

[0] Kepnes, S. D. (1988). Buber as Hermeneut: Relations to Dilthey and Gadamer. *Harvard Theological Review*, 81(2), p. 200-201. https://doi.org/10.1017/s001781600001004x

us (including inanimate objects), Buber believed that we experience genuine encounters with humankind when each party is willing to turn to and recognize each other.

The impending first World War also inspired Buber's dialogical tendencies. In 1914, prior to the outbreak of World War I, Buber joined the Forte Circle, a council of eight prominent intellectual leaders whose goal it was to prevent the war. Hans Kohn, a biographer of Martin Buber, claimed that this meeting of the minds transformed Buber's intellectual theories, and led to "Buber's 'breakthrough' to the philosophy of dialogue…a seminal moment in shaping his understanding of dialogue as a spontaneous 'inter-human' encounter."[0]

Buber taught that throughout our lives, we can experience genuine encounters. At an early age, after his mother abandoned him, he asked his neighbor's daughter if his mother would return. She replied, "No, your mother is not coming back anymore," stunning Buber into accepting that his mother had truly deserted him. This was a meeting that forever influenced Buber's dialogical philosophies; as he wrote, "Whatever I have learned in the course of my life about the meaning of meeting and dialogue between people springs from that moment when I was four."[0] As this illustrates, even negative encounters or "mismeetings" helped Buber realize the immense power of dialogue and lived experience.

A powerful and positive lifechanging genuine encounter occurred for Martin Buber when he was twenty-one years old. During a seminar on German literature in the spring of 1899, he encountered Paula Winkler (1877-1958).[0] An educated woman who had been making her living as a translator of literary works, Paula impressed Buber with her intellect,

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 93)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 2)
[0] To read more about Paula Buber: https://www.nli.org.il/en/archives/NNL_ARCHIVE_AL002649907/NLI

ambition, and skill. Buber "immediately deemed her academic influence to be of decisive

importance for him" and they became collaborators.[0] Martin and Paula began a romantic

relationship in which they buoyed and collaborated on each other's work, bringing their

children Rafael and Eva into the world, and then marrying several years later after Paula

converted to Judaism.

Paula was a critical component of Buber's success, supporting him in every area of

his life, adopting and promoting cultural Zionism, translating and embellishing his

manuscripts, and allowing others minimal access to him in order for him to work and write

successfully. Paula's work was immeasurable, for without it, Buber would have lacked the

linguistic finesse to reach his German audience (for he was not a native speaker) and she,

"Buber's most trusted critic and intellectual collaborator," ensured that their relationship was

based in dialogue (both in person and in publication).[0]

Influences on Buber's Educational/Pedagogical Philosophy

After Gustav Landauer's assassination in 1919, Buber's relationship with Franz

Rosenzweig was one of the only things that drew Buber back out into the public community.

In response to Rosenzweig's request, Buber took an active teaching role in the Freie Jüdische

Lehrhaus. While Buber considered himself "entirely free of academicism," in truth, he was

not a particularly good educator. Rosenzweig was "determined to teach him to 'speak

properly' and be an effective teacher" and encouraged Buber to polish his pedagogical

practice at the Lehrhaus.[0] Rosenzweig supported a dialogical mode of teaching where

[0] Stair, R. (2018). The Woman's Voice in Zionism: Disentangling Paula Winkler from Martin Buber. *Religions*, 9(12), 401–423. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9120401
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 164, 287)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p. 137-138,148)

students could be in conversation with Buber (rather than suffering through one of his slow

and disorganized lectures).[0]

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. (p 137-139)

Chapter 2
Martin Buber's Relational Philosophy

"Real existence, that is, real man in his relation to his being, is comprehensible only in connexion with the nature of the being to which he stands in relation." [0]—Martin Buber

Buber is perhaps best known for his work *I and Thou*, a publication which speaks to the relationships between man and nature, his fellow man, and God.[0] While the categories of "I-Thou" and "I-It" appear clear-cut and dichotomous, *I and Thou* asserts that there is a more complicated layout for the "I-Thou" mode of relation. Buber identified three forms of relationship: (1) an abstract dialogue, (2) an asymmetrical relationship, and (3) the "I-Thou" relationship (the ultimate goal).[0] Through any or all of these relationships, Buber believed that man could become whole, with both parties lending mutual contributions to a growing sense of relationship and identity.[0]

"I-Thou"/"I-It" Relationships: Finding Ourselves with "the Other"

In *I and Thou*, Buber asserted three prerequisite aspects of entering into relationship: first, people may be in relationship with nature, with other humans, and with God; second, people must enter that relationship willingly; and third, humans establish these relationships that can only be categorized and experienced in two ways, best described with: "the *basic words* I-It (*Ich-Es*) and I-Thou (*Ich-Du*)."[0] Buber believed that every relationship always

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[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 164

[0] While Buber often uses the word "man," it is clear that he is referring to all of humanity, regardless of age or gender. I use the term "man" in a manner akin to Buber's.

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 300. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 168, 205

[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2016). Martin Buber, Hasidism, and Jewish spirituality: The implications for education and for pastoral care. *Pastoral Care in Education*, p.135. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2016.1167233

starts with two entities and that the primary subject—"I"—experiences transformation in its

method of relating based on its subject—the "Thou" or "It."[0] "I-Thou" is a relationship where

people meet in a sphere of mutuality, inclusivity, and acceptance. In contrast, "I-It" pertains

to an unequal relationship of utility and separation.

Recognizing that there is often an urge to encounter "the Other" in a meaningful way,

Buber wrote,

> "Man has a great desire to enter into personal relation with things and to imprint on
> them his relation to them. To use them, even to possess them, is not enough, they
> must become his in another way, by imparting to them in the picture-sign his relation
> to them."[0]

This emphasis on relationship depicts human beings as active participants in a significant

social reality, who live in a world of relation and separation, but who also aim to find the true

balance between "dwelling in both the realm of necessity (the "I-It" world) and that of

freedom (the realm of "I-Thou" relations)."[0]

"I-Thou"

In Part One of *I and Thou,* Buber introduces the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relations,

emphasizing that "I-Thou" encounters establish a world of both relation and connection.[0]

Buber contends that because mankind "lives a solitary existence in a spiritually fragmented

world," humans have an impetus to reach out to each other in order "to discover [their]

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[0]   Sadeh, L. (2019, June 26). ‏קולות של הרוח-פילוסופיה דיאלוגית: מרטין בובר‏ [Voice of the spirit: Dialogical philosophy: Martin Buber]. https://www.kolot.info/podcast/episode/c24ad381/

"‏בהתחלה כחלק מהמהפכה של הפילוסופיה הדיאלוגית אין אני לבד...מתחיל משניים‏."
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue*. Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 10
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. p. 263
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 56, 76

humanity in the midst of [their] sufferings."[0] Our need for a genuine meeting with "the Other" empowers us to bring our full selves to these "I-Thou" encounters, in search of an anchoring natural, human, or theological relationship.[0] It is through these encounters and relationships that we as humans may find ourselves.

"I-Thou": With Nature

Buber realized that a true "I-Thou" relationship with nature might perplex his readers. He wrote in *I and Thou* "the centrality of human relationships in this book is so plain that critics have actually noted with surprise and protested with complete incomprehension that there should be any mention at all of a tree and of a cat."[0] Regardless, Buber noted that both our relationships and social concepts are influenced by multiple connections to and perceptions of the natural world. Hasidic teachings inspired Buber's belief that humans "relate genuinely to one another and to the natural world as they relate to God" which enabled them to encounter an animal or plant as they might another person.[0]

Perhaps this belief led Buber to share two powerful encounters with nature that underline man's durable relationship with the natural world. In the first, Buber writes about how a tree can introduce a moment of connection. At first, when Buber is experiencing the tree ("I contemplate a tree…"), he is able to pick apart its sections and to identify how each segment might satisfy a need—an "I-It" experience—but, at a given moment, when he turns toward the tree—" if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into

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[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 133
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 54
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 28
[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2016). Martin Buber, Hasidism, and Jewish spirituality: The implications for education and for pastoral care. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 34(3), p. 136
https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2016.1167233

a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It."[0] Buber, while not using the language of "I-Thou"

in *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching*, illustrated both man's service and

nature's service to God, based upon Rabbi Zusya's interpretation of the Genesis verse "…and

he stood over them under the tree as they ate."[0] In contemplating Abraham's treatment of the

divine messengers (Genesis 18:8), Buber noted Zusya's observation that "humans stand

above divine messengers" because Abraham gifted these beings with the sacred act of

eating.[0] Buber expounded further that "every natural action, if sanctified, leads to God.

Nature needs the existence of humans to accomplish what divine beings cannot accomplish,

namely, that it may become sanctified."[0] For Buber, "I-Thou" relationships are all-

encompassing, enabling both man and nature to manifest God's will. As his biographer, Paul

Mendes-Flohr wrote, this "integration of soul and nature, of the transcendent and the

everyday, would be the overarching theme of Buber's lifework."[0]

"I-Thou": With Humanity

Martin Buber's relational philosophy primarily focuses on the interactions between

man and man. Buber believed that we are engaged in an "I-Thou" relationship in utero,

before we even enter the world.[0] This concept is strongly based in duality, the concept that

each "I-Thou" relationship requires two active partners, with an indispensable "I" (e.g. the

fetus, myself) and a "Thou" (e.g. the mother, "the Other") that is ready to be seen and

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[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 57-58

[0] Genesis 18:8 "וְהֽוּא־עֹמֵ֧ד עֲלֵיהֶ֛ם תַּ֥חַת הָעֵ֖ץ וַיֹּאכֵֽלוּ"

[0] In the Babylonian Talmud (Chagigah 16a), it is explained that one difference between humans and angels is that humans can eat and drink, while angels cannot.

[0] Buber, M., Mehlman, B. H., & Padawer, G. E. (2012). *The way of man according to Hasidic teaching*. p. 16

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. p. 14

[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 73. Buber writes that "even in the original relational event, the primitive man speaks the basic word I-You in a natural, as it were still unformed manner, not yet having recognized himself as an I…"—he is referring to a fetus in the womb, where the Thou precedes the I in this particular "I-Thou" relationship.

realized.[0] As the two parties become aware of each other, recognizing and accepting "the Other" in relation, they break down the barriers of the self, empowering them to create "a *great* relation" which "exists only between real persons."[0] These connections create our social milieu, Buber explained, "because man exists, and the *I*, moreover, exists only through the relation to the *Thou*."[0] As Buber suggested in his earlier work, *The Way of Man,* we must begin with ourselves (the "I"). We may also not become preoccupied by egocentrism, which can block a true "I-Thou" relationship.[0] When we enter into an encounter in the spirit of real relationship, our love and partnership bind the "I-Thou" relationship ever more closely.[0] This love can not only make a stronger encounter in the moment, but also increase our responsibility and responsiveness to each other.[0]

"I-Thou": With God/"The Eternal Thou"

Buber asserted that the interhuman relationship was an excellent prototype for the relationship between man and God. One's encounter with God is strongly influenced by one's interpersonal relationships, as Buber considered "the human person to be the irremovable central place of the struggle between the world's movement away from God and its movement towards God."[0] In order to prepare for this meeting, Buber suggested in *The Way of Man,* that people needed to choose their own paths with a whole heart, allowing each

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (pp. 75). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 175

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 205

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 161-163

[0] Buber, M. (1967). The Silent Question. *In On Judaism* (p. 210). essay, Schocken Books.

[0] Sadeh, L. (2019, June 26). קולות של הרוח-פילוסופיה דיאלוגית: מרטין בובר [Voice of the spirit: Dialogical philosophy: Martin Buber]. https://www.kolot.info/podcast/episode/c24ad381/

"...אהבה נמצאת בינינו היא שרויה בין אני לבין אתה והדבר הזה מייצר איזה סוג של אחריות של כל אחד מאיתנו על רעהו באהבה בעומק אהבה יש אחריות של אני על אתה."

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 70

person to "make sacred in his own place and condition" their personal relationship with God.[0] Buber's interpretation of the Hasidic teachings (as reflected in *The Way of Man*) clarified that "whenever human beings *genuinely* relate to one another, and to other entities, they relate to God."[0] Therefore, each "I-Thou" relationship enables genuine encounter, which, when people come with their authentic selves, establishes the relationship between man and God. Buber wrote in his third section of *I and Thou,* "The relation to a human being is the proper metaphor for the relation to God—as genuine address is here accorded a genuine answer."[0]

"I-It": A Relationship of Utility & Distancing

In contrast to the "I-Thou" relationship, "I-It" is never experienced with the full self, as "I-It" relationships exemplify "the word of separation."[0] Buber believed that much of our lives were spent in a two-step movement, wherein the primary movement was distancing (moving away) and the secondary movement was entering into relationship (moving toward).[0] While children are automatically relational in utero, once born they begin to engage in the practice of distancing themselves from the world. They operate within an "I-It" world of utility—everything is something that they can use to fulfil a need.[0] As children grow, they experience and process this "I-It" world of utility as separate from themselves, then use this

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[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 161-163

[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532

[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 151.

[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 54, 75.

[0] Rofrano, F. J. (2007). I/Thou-I/Spirit: Martin Buber and the spiritual life of the infant. *Journal of Pastoral Counseling*, 42, p. 57.

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 294-295. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

new relational perspective to gather and store knowledge about the experience.[0] Buber

believed that by experiencing the world through the "I-It" lens, this stored knowledge helps

human beings navigate and reflect on the world's reality.[0]

As mentioned above, the "I-It" and "I-Thou" relationships are not strictly

dichotomous, but rather exist on a continuum. Buber explains that "every [Thou] must

become an It in our world…doomed by its nature to become a thing…again and again."[0]

Humanity cannot simply live in a world of constant genuine and mutual relationship, and

humans are often satisfied to relieve themselves of such high expectations. However, it is

important to note that "I-It" relationships can have negative transformational impacts when

the "Other" is racially profiled, treated indifferently, used, or abused.[0] In these moments of

being "Othered," whether for useful purposes (like a double blind study) or harmful

intentions (such as exclusion), Buber reminded us that we cannot live solely within an "I-It"

world, lest it dehumanizes us.[0]

Buber acknowledged that we *do* need both the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships in

order to help us better understand and strengthen the world in which we want to live. This

means that our interhuman relationships need to go "far beyond that of sympathy;"[0] we must

truly connect with the sparks of humanity that help us acknowledge "the Other" as partners

in humanity.

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment,* 8(3), p. 299. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. p. 262-263
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 68-69.
[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* p. 12 https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 85.
[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 74). essay, Harper & Row(tb135).

"I-Thou"/"I-It": Betweenness

Buber has also explained that true relationship—be it one of connection or separation —appears in the hyphen between the "I" and the "Thou" or the "It." The hyphen of "I-Thou" signifies an inclusive relationship, one open to dialogue, connection, and equality, while the hyphen of the "I-It" indicates a non-inclusive attempt to distance the primary relator to the entity that they are objectifying.[0] Just as we switch regularly between "I-Thou" and "I-It," Buber explained, "Between…does not exhibit a smooth continuity, but is ever and again re-constituted in accordance with men's meetings with one another…"[0] This hyphen, when used to further develop a stronger relation with another, "is a space, a sacred space, of meeting and encounter."[0]

"Between Man and Man": Finding One's Direction

Buber's relational philosophy—especially as his thoughts matured with age and experience—deals primarily with man's relationship to the rest of humanity, with a genuine "I-Thou" connection created as the ultimate goal. This section acts as a guide, delineating the path to creating those powerful relationships.

Orientation and Realization

Buber's categorization of the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships might lead to a mistaken egocentrism—with people orienting the "I" as the center of the world.[0] Relationship

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[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education*. p. 10 https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 203
[0] Rofrano, F. J. (2007). I/Thou-I/Spirit: Martin Buber and the spiritual life of the infant. *Journal of Pastoral Counseling*, 42, p. 59.
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. p. 153

building requires a reorientation—from being unconcerned about the environment or milieu around the "I" and moving toward realization of "the Other," ensuring that an individual "experiences it with all his senses, indeed lives it."[0] Beginning with ourselves is the first step towards that realization. When we complete a self-examination, we recognize our humanity and our flaws; it is only then that we are able to stop orientating and begin to realize the humanity in others.[0] By engaging with the world through realization, Buber meant that we aim to imagine and understand what another person is "sensing, feeling, or thinking at that very moment."[0] Realization requires the entirety of our persons, as we transform "the Other" into a "human life as one true to creation, without wishing to impose on the other anything" other than a sense of presence.[0] With a thorough struggle for realization, human beings make the effort to truly know their fellow man.[0]

Turning, Transformation, and Conversion

When one realizes "the Other," they build a foundation for an "I-Thou" relationship. However, this "I-Thou" mode of living is unsustainable in the long-term, and thereby requires an intentional and repeated turning and returning to "the Other" in order to truly encounter them.[0] In the article "Martin Buber: Educating for Relationship," this powerful phase is analogized to the Jewish concept of *teshuvah*: a person who "through self-awareness, understanding, effort and commitment, transforms a hitherto pointless existence

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[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 203-204

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 162

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 31

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. In *Knowledge of man* (p. 85). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 19

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. p. 152

into a life directed to a meaningful goal. This transformation Buber call[ed] 'turning.'"[0] This

"turning" is essential to the formation of the "I-Thou" relationship. Buber explains in *I and*

Thou that just as we are created together, so too should we be directed to a life *with* each

other, turning towards "the Other" and opening ourselves to them in turn.[0]

Transformation comes to those who reorient, realize, and return to their fellow,

enabling them both to be fully present and participatory in building towards the "I-Thou"

relationship. In doing so, these encounters are now transformed into meetings with meaning,

breaking through solitude and self-made barriers.[0] As each turns to "the Other" and

progresses towards transformation, Buber identified conversion as the next step, which

"signified a total reorientation of one's existence that is not instantaneous, but is an ongoing

process involving hard, thoughtful work," which allows for stronger dialogue and a truer "I-

Thou" relationship.[0]

Acceptance and Confirmation

Acceptance—being able to accept how a person actually is in the moment—is the

next phase of Buber's path toward the genuine "I-Thou" relationship."[0] Moving through

ambivalence (the liminal space of what the person is and what they *could* be) is the only way

to progress from acceptance to confirmation.

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment,* 8(3), 285–307. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 28, 30, 52
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 201-202
[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment,* 8(3), 285–307. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 266

For Buber, confirmation is the last internal stage, in which "it is possible to see in the other his God-given *potential*…seeing the potential is a movement beyond acceptance, and it implies the need to *act* with the other."[0] Through confirmation, we not only "accept the whole potentiality of the other," but also make "even a decisive difference in his potentiality."[0] Buber expounded: "I confirm him, in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that is *meant* by him and it now can be developed, it can evolve, it can enter a reality of life."[0] All human beings are in constant need of both realization and confirmation through their fellow man—confirmation of one's potential, which is expressed through the affirmation of one's present reality, authentic encounters, and dialogue.

Encountering Ourselves In Genuine Meeting

Acknowledging "the necessity of genuine personal meetings in the abyss of human existence," Buber also clarified many areas of the interpersonal expectations that contribute to building an authentic "I-Thou" relationship.[0] This section begins with a brief description of a meaningful meeting and then delves into the various emotional and intellectual elements needed to successfully enter into an "I-Thou" encounter.

Encounters and Empathy

We learn from our encounters in and with the world around us. While we may oscillate between distancing ourselves from our experiences (for our education and

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[0] Pembroke, N. (2011). Space in the Trinity and in pastoral care. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 65(2), p.5. https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501106500203

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 266

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 267

[0] Buber, M. (1957). Healing Through Meeting. In *Pointing the way: Collected essays* (p. 95). essay, Harper.

reflection) and drawing ourselves nearer toward relation (for our connection and continued growth), it is through genuine meetings that we come to understand and grapple with the world as we know it. Buber contended that "everything is changed in real meeting," and that the world can become ours through authentic encounters, if we are willing to embrace their impact.[0] From intention to interaction, Buber's goal of meeting is not only "just to change if possible something in the other, *but also* to let me be changed by him."[0]

In order to ensure the success of these encounters, both parties must enter with empathy, which Buber breaks down into discrete elements as summarized below:

- Bringing one's own feelings into the encounter with the entity,

- Embodying the structure and movements of "the Other,"[0]

- Nullifying your own perceptions and experiences,[0]

- Understanding "the Other's" "expression in language, gestures, or artistic production,"[0]

- Accepting the risk of vulnerability in confrontation

Reciprocity and Mutuality

The crux of Buber's *I and Thou* can be summarized in three words: "Relation is reciprocity."[0] While reciprocity does not always occur equally between each relational partner, the concept that each person might gain something valuable from an encounter

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[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 175, 242
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 248
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 97
[0] Cohen, A. (1979). Martin Buber and changes in modern education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 5(1), p. 91. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498790050108
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. p. 44
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 58

encourages human beings to withdraw from their isolation to meet another who is turning

towards them as well.[0]

Mutual relationships require both equal intention and interaction; it is understood that

both parties have turned to each other and confirmed each other, building towards dialogue.

This mutuality of the "I-Thou" relationship allows each person to thrive temporarily, but it

too—like the "I-It" relationship—is not a permanent state. Rather, Buber submitted that

"complete mutuality does not inhere in men's life with one another. It is a form of grace for

which one must always be prepared but on which one can never count."[0] There are also such

relationships wherein mutuality should be limited; relationships where one party greatly

depends on another (e.g. teacher-student, doctor-patient) can never be fully mutual, but lean

more towards the area of inclusion, a threshold between the "I-It" and "I-Thou" taxonomies.

Inclusion and Confrontation

Inclusion occurs when empathy and mutuality are not possible—generally in areas of

large power differentials or when one party is strongly dependent on the other. Buber

asserted that inclusion is the opposite of empathy, in that one extends their experience and

perceptions (rather than nullifying them) and that only one of the two parties is able to see

both sides of the encounter, while the other cannot.[0] This asymmetrical relationship allows

one to both realize "the Other," and to build a relationship in which one shares knowledge

and exerts influence without losing oneself.[0] For those in helping professions (teachers,

doctors, psychologists, etc.), there must be an ability to behave in the best interest of the

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[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. In *Knowledge of man* (p. 84). essay, Harper & Row.
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 144
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 97
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 97

"other side: [they] must, as it were, face [themselves] as if standing on the side opposite, exist within the other's soul."[0]

While the "I-It" relation is generally identified as being one of opposition and objectification, inclusion allows for deep and meaningful confrontation.[0] In being aware of "the Other", one chooses to move toward the genuine "I-Thou" relationship by establishing a dialogue and drawing near, even when in disagreement.[0] Buber also acknowledged that "I-Thou" relationships are open to constructive conflict: "The You confronts me. But I enter into a direct relationship to it. Thus the relationship is at once being chosen and choosing, passive and active."[0] With each interaction, we are able to make a choice of mutuality and reciprocity, connection and confrontation.

Mismeetings

Moments of confrontation and miscommunication may lead to a "mismeeting," such as the one that Buber experienced with his neighbor's daughter when he was four years old.[0] Biographer Mendes-Flohr wrote of mismeetings, that "the failure to truly meet another who signals, even if only indirectly, their need for a response of real presence (that is, an "I-Thou" encounter) was, for Buber, a civilized crime."[0]

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[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 93
[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* p. 10-11 https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Holm, N. (2009). Practising the Ministry of Presence in Chaplaincy. *Journal of Christian Education*, os-52(3), p. 41. https://doi.org/10.1177/002196570905200305
[0] Buber, M. (1971). *I and thou; a new translation by Walter Kaufmann*. Touchstone. p. 124-125
[0] This story can be found in Ch. 1 on p. 22.
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent. Yale University Press. p. 4

Translating "I-Thou" From the Individual to the Communal

As Buber wrote in *I and Thou*, the original relationship—that which occurs in the womb—is an "I-Thou" relationship, with the parental "Thou" preceding the "I" of the infant. For Buber, children are thus born relational, with an instinct for communion (forming and sharing relational memories in our encounters) with both their caregivers and the natural world.[0] Our ability to seek out and speak the basic word "Thou" comes from that innate instinct for communion, which empowers us to branch out and build stronger relational communities.[0] Communion thereby acts as a common and deep yearning which is associated with the deepest search for an "I-Thou" relationship.[0]

Members of a Buberian community aim to actualize this desire for communion by creating opportunities for people to participate in "active love, in the guise of mutual help," living *with* one another in relationship, allowing for everyone to still remain their individual selves.[0] While Buberian communities are not uniform, they are unified in expressing the moral and social expectations for their societal situations, building a shared home in a genuine community. [0]

Conclusion:

Buber's relational theories supported his work with dialogue, education, psychoanalysis, biblical humanism, politics, and philosophy. The constant oscillation and balance of "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships define our ability to encounter the world as we

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[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 298, 304. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 88
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). Martin Buber: *The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 177.
[0] Buber, M. (1967). The Silent Question. *In On Judaism* (pp. 211-212). essay, Schocken Books.
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 67

know it, be it natural, human, or eternal. Through a mix of intention and authenticity alongside a decision to structure our relationships in varying degrees of mutuality and reciprocity, we find ways to confirm others and ourselves, turning communion into community.

Chapter 3
Martin Buber's Dialogical Philosophy

"It was a certain inclination to meet people, and as far as possible to, just to change if possible something in the other, but also to let me be changed by him." [0]—Martin Buber

Martin Buber believed that dialogue played a part in every aspect of our relational lives; even "in contemporaneity at rest you make and you experience dialogue."[0] Buber acknowledged that while reciprocity should always exist between dialogical partners (as it does in relationship), it is only within an atmosphere of mutual trust that dialogue enables man to engage in both interhuman relations and conflict resolution.[0]

Dialogue is fundamental to understanding the "I-Thou" relationship. Buber posited that dialogue enhances learning between dialogical partners who can then educate society from their unique shared experience.[0] Authentic dialogue—in which partners create an atmosphere of genuine confrontation and confirmation—engenders a revelation of "relationships that would enable others to reach full self-realization."[0]

The Development of Dialogue

Between 1914 and 1923, Buber exchanged his focus on mystical thinking and lived experience for thoughts on relationship and dialogue culminating in the publication of *I and Thou* in 1923.[0] In his publication, Buber emphasized that the presence of the "I" is

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[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. p. 297
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 29
[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* p. 6
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 94
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). Martin Buber: *The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. pp. 177-178
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 34

inseparable from the presence of "the Other," and that "I" exists in constant flux between an "I-Thou" and an "I-It" relationship.[0] Buber wrote, "…what interests me more than anything: [is the] human effect of dialogue."[0] Dialogue is the vehicle through which humans move toward the ultimate "I-Thou" relationship, one of genuine meeting and exchange.

As Buber's thinking about dialogue matured, he went through a second "dialogical period" (1938-1945) in which he focused on dialogue's impact on modern humanity.[0] In this phase, Buber asserted that "the life of dialogue…begins no higher than where humanity begins."[0] He imagined that dialogue was rooted in the origin of humanity; as we evolve alongside one another, we learn to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other. Dialogue is the foundation for humanity as we know it today. Buber believed that both the "I-Thou" and "I-It" modes of relation facilitate the fullness of the human person, allowing us to navigate reality (via knowledge) and relationship (via fellowship) at the same time.[0]

Later in life, Buber entered a "new epoch" of dialogue which aligned with his greater understanding of the significant role that silence plays in authentic dialogue.[0] Silence can be a symbol of connection ("I-Thou") and a signal for disconnection ("I-It"), depending on the context of the "conversation." This is how Buber redefined dialogue as "…not just talking. Dialogue can be silent…We could sit together, or walk together in silence and that could be a dialogue."[0]

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). Martin Buber: *The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 40
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 258
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). Martin Buber: *The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 33
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 35
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. pp. 262-263
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). Martin Buber: *The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 33
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 258

Building Language/"Basic Words"

Just as Buber began *I and Thou* with the basic words "I-Thou" and "I-It," so too is

language itself a basic building block for communication. Buber believed that language—

even when nonverbal—is an attempt for man to speak and to be truly heard by "the Other,"

when "what is within strives over and over again toward becoming language, thought

language, conceiving language."[0] Words create worlds; in Genesis God brought the world

into being by speaking it into existence. The words that we speak signal to our fellow that we

are ready to be heard, to encounter, and to be encountered. Buber explains that only we, as

humans, are able to speak to each other in an effort to "enter into relationship."[0]

Buber acknowledged that language is a skill that we gain as we grow, but shared that

children still find innovative ways to communicate their ideas:

> Consider a child, especially at the age when it has absorbed speech but not yet the
> accumulated wealth of tradition in the language…And suddenly the child begins to
> speak, it tells its story, falls silent, again something bursts out. How does the child tell
> what it tells? The only correct designation is mythically… Of course the spirit was in
> the child before it tells its story; but not as such, not for itself, but bound up with
> 'instinct'—and with things. Now the spirit steps forth itself, independently—in the
> word. The child 'has spirit' for the first time when it speaks; it has spirit because it
> wants to speak…Only because the child now has the spiritual instinct to the word do
> these images come forward now, and at the same time become independent; they
> exist and can be spoken.[0]

Buber believed that our ability to play with language enables us to share our spirit;

this is true for children, and this ability grows progressively as we age. As we develop

psychologically, language helps with "the transition from *perception* of reality to

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 149
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 154
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 193

communication of perception" as we strive to embody and express our language to each other.[0]

Types of Dialogue

Buber divided human communication into three types of dialogue:

1) Monologue, erroneously perceived as dialogue, occurs when two people speak with each other, but not in an attempt to commune or communicate with their fellow.[0] Instead, they are speaking to themselves, turning away from their fellow and not actually interested if either person is listening or responding.

2) Technical dialogue occurs when there is a need to exchange information in order to reach a common understanding of a shared subject.[0] This type of dialogue deals more with giving and receiving tactical information in order to achieve a stronger partnership, agreement, or compromise.

3) Genuine dialogue (verbal or nonverbal) occurs when a person truly meets their fellow human, creating a transformative spiritual and dialogical connection.[0] Genuine dialogue is the ultimate ideal for human discourse. Buber's ideas about this type of dialogue may have been influenced by the rabbinic category of "*sichah na'eh*"—"worthy conversation"—which uplifted sensitivity, modesty, and empathy.[0] In genuine dialogue, participants are both aware of their fellow human being and

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 129
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 19
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 19
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 42
[0]   Rosenheim, E. (2008). *פסיכולוגיה בהוויית היהדות*. [Psychology of the Jewish Experience]. Moshav Ben-Shemen: Modan Publishing House, Ltd.

"ה'כשרות' של הדיבור תלוי גם באיכותו הרוחנית...חכמים דיברו גם בשבחה של 'שיחה נאה', כלומר דיבור שהוא רגיש, צנוע, דיסקרטי, ואמפתי."

intentionally turn toward them "with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between [them]."[0]

Dialogue Without Words

Presence and Awareness

Buber supported the idea that presence is the essential foundation for authentic dialogue. Both parties need to mindfully enter the encounter, providing "presence to the other without negating presence of self, presence to the inner voice(s) without excluding the voice(s) that are addressed from without."[0] With an increased awareness of what is shared—verbally and nonverbally—we are able to meet each other in the moment, "encountering the other in [their] wholeness" which enables us to both present and receive genuine dialogue.[0] Thereby awareness—the ability to see and understand "the Other" as they truly are—is key to not only a "dialogical presence," but also to dialogue in and of itself.[0] To that end, Buber wrote: "the limits of the possibility of dialogue are the limits of awareness."[0] We are only able to engage in dialogue as long as we can see and understand "the Other."

Attention and Active Listening

As we maintain and/or increase our presence, we continue attuning our attention to nonverbal cues, awakening an active listening that allows us to attend to our dialogical partner. For Buber, this attention should be directed to "the voice of silence that precedes

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 19
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 139
[0] Rofrano, F. J. (2007). I/Thou-I/Spirit: Martin Buber and the spiritual life of the infant. *Journal of Pastoral Counseling*, 42, p. 58.
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 139
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 10

thought and speech," that emulates the origin of language, "where the movement of attention is wordless."[0] This silent attention and active listening empower us to experience a more authentic dialogical relationship and to better comprehend the reality of our dialogical partner.[0]

Silence

Buber clarified silence's active role in dialogue in his essay "*Elements of the Interhuman"* (1957): "Of course it is not necessary for all who are joined in a genuine dialogue actually to speak; those who keep silent can on occasion be especially important."[0] Buber was open to silence—provided that it is not used as an avenue to withdraw from dialogue. He expounded, "for a conversation, no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech."[0] Psychological findings that the majority of our communication is nonverbal (somewhere over 50%, though others claim as high as 93%) appear to align with Buber's emphasis on the significance of silence.[0] For many, silence is a powerful emotional outlet; silence enables them to express themselves when they simply do not have the words.[0] Buber acknowledged that dialogue needs both speech and silence to achieve a genuine "I-Thou" relationship, for without signaling, the dialogue might not be "objectively comprehensible."[0]

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 119, 128
[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue.* Rowman and Littlefield. p. 139
[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 87). essay, Harper & Row.
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 3
[0] Thompson, J. (2011, September 20). Is nonverbal communication a numbers game? *Psychology Today*. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/beyond-words/201109/is-nonverbal-communication-numbers-game
[0]   Rosenheim, E. (2008)*פסיכולוגיה בהוויית היהדות*.. [Psychology of the Jewish Experience]. Moshav Ben-Shemen: Modan Publishing House, Ltd.

"...גם לשתיקה יש כוח ביטוי ממשי, ולעיתים דווקא השתיקה היא הדרך הרצוני, אפילו ההכרחית, לתקשור. מבחינה זו אפשר לתאר חלק משתיקותינו כ'דיבור-בוא-א-דיבור."

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 4

Dialogical Relationships

Types of Dialogical Relationships

Buber identified three categories of dialogical relationships—awareness, inclusion, and friendship—which increase in reciprocity and mutuality as the relationships grow in intensity or intimacy.

Awareness occurs when each person is suddenly able to both see and understand the conversation from the point of view of their counterpart, and begins to understand their position. This type of dialogical awareness is strictly utilized as an intellectual exercise and thereby Buber considered this relationship to be partially incomplete.[0] On the "I-Thou"/"I-It" continuum, this might be the moment in which the "I-It" relationship is just beginning to transform into an "I-Thou" relationship.

Inclusion is a slightly more complicated asymmetrical relationship, in which both parties come to the relationship in earnest, but one party has the ability to understand the side of their fellow, without losing their own perspective in the process. Buber understood that in inclusive relationships, both sides are receptive to having a sincere and confirming conversation, sustained by trust.[0] These relationships are experienced in helping professions where one of the parties relies heavily on the other party and in which the helper (doctor, teacher) is able to both confirm and affirm the capacity of those they are helping (patient, pupil).[0]

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[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 36-37

[0] Cohen, A. (1979). Martin Buber and changes in modern education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 5(1), p. 100.

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 93

Friendship manifests when both dialogical partners are able to "throw [themselves] across and experience from 'over there,' when each person is able to see and understand the presence and exchange of "the Other."[0] It is in friendship that reciprocity and mutuality are at their highest shared levels.

Mutuality and Unity

Genuine dialogue transpires when both parties mutually engage in a living partnership wherein each person is able to contribute an unmitigated part of their soul with "the Other." Such mutuality occurs only when two people intentionally turn toward each other with their full attention.[0] While Buber acknowledged that constant mutuality for all relationships is infeasible, nevertheless, he also asserted that it is impossible for a person not to have some reaction, "however imperceptible, however quickly smothered," when someone turns toward them and directs their attention and intention to beginning a dialogue.[0] Consequently, mutuality, even in small doses, is the greatest indicator that an authentic dialogical relationship might occur, for "if mutuality stirs, then the interhuman blossoms into genuine dialogue."[0]

Buber wrote "the truth of the word that is genuinely spoken is, in its highest form… unity."[0] The ultimate goal of these dialogical dealings is to create a genuine "I-Thou" relationship which enables both partners to benefit from its "presentness, mutuality, directness, familiarity, and ineffability."[0] Thus, the ability to engage in a genuine dialogical

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 39
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. pp. 8, 22
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 22
[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. In *Knowledge of man* (p. 81). essay, Harper & Row.
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 147
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. pp. 20-21

encounter empowers humanity to emulate God, bringing us closer to the "I-Eternal Thou" relationship with God. As long as both parties are willing to come together internally and externally, mutually, and reciprocally, they achieve a unity in which the presence of God can be felt.[0] Humans are constantly seeking unity, which can be partially recreated with every genuine dialogue. Buber explained that these repeated efforts to achieve genuine dialogue can be fruitful, for "to speak is both nature and work, something that grows and something that is made, and where it appears dialogically, in the climate of great faithfulness, it has to fulfill ever anew the unity of the two."[0]

Betweenness[0]

In the relational sense, Buber defined betweenness as the hyphen between "I-Thou" and between "I-It," the point in which man is able to identify if they are turning towards relation ("I-Thou") or separation ("I-It"). In a genuine dialogical relationship, we aim for an authentic interhuman encounter, where people communicate themselves to their fellow.[0] In these encounters, when both parties turn to "the Other," they attempt to construct a dialogical moment of in-betweenness that is recognized when it transpires yet cannot be recreated in thought or written word."[0] It is within these hyphenated relationships that people can evaluate if or how they might change as a result of meeting each other.[0] Buber suggested that betweenness can be perceived via our understanding of love. He wrote, "Love is not a

[0] Buber, M., Mehlman, B. H., & Padawer, G. E. (2012). *The way of man according to Hasidic teaching*. p. 27

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. In *Knowledge of man* (p. 86). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Betweenness is also briefly discussed in Chapter 2 (Martin Buber's Relational Philosophy) on p. 33

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 77). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. pp. 145-146.

[0]   Sadeh, L. (2019, June 26). קולות של הרוח-פילוסופיה דיאלוגית: מרטין בובר [Voice of the spirit: Dialogical philosophy: Martin Buber]. https://www.kolot.info/podcast/episode/c24ad381/

"כ�כה אני אעשה את זה מצב שאני נבנס לתוכו בכל כולי קיומי כל מי שאני בטוח."

subjective feeling which lies within people but between them."[0] Genuine encounters that are

happening *between* people produce a similar shared feeling.

Such experiences have the potential to emulate man's relationship with God (Buber's

"Eternal Thou"), the exemplary "I-Thou" relationship.[0] It is possible to understand Buber's

presentation of "I-Thou" as paralleling the Biblical injunction, "Love your neighbor as

yourself," and his treatment of "I-Eternal Thou" as corresponding to the Biblical

commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all

your might."[0]

Dialogue as Surprise and Responsibility

The largest difference between talking to oneself and conversing with someone else

lies in the sheer element of surprise, which requires us to be open to the unknown. Buber

explained that this dialogical characteristic has a playful element akin to chess: "the whole

charm of chess is that I do not know and cannot know what my partner will do."[0]

Furthermore, Buber explained that much of dialogue, while unforeseen, requires a

"surprising mutuality," which allows dialogical partners to be both real questioners and real

answerers, maintaining a cautious balance during a dialogical encounter.[0]

So too did Buber contend that we engage in a balancing act as humans, forging a

responsibility for each other within a free society; this "responsibility invests freedom with

both content and direction…therefore the man who is 'responsive' to the situation which he

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[0]Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education.* Philosophical Library. p. 25

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. p. 149.

[0] Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 6:5

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 262

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. pp. 150, 190

confronts may be described as responsible."[0] Our ability to respond enables us to build trust

with our dialogical partners, ensuring that each partner feels seen and heard.[0] With each

conversation, humans are faced with both the possibility and opportunity to answer. In

responding, we remind ourselves of our responsibility to "the Other," to engage in dialogue

through active listening, silence, thought, trust, loyalty, and speech.[0] Our dialogical partners

demand a response, and we must turn towards them to answer, "respond[ing] to the moment"

and to the person with whom we wish to build relationship.[0]

Creation, Confirmation, and Confrontation

In order for genuine dialogue to occur, both dialogical partners must be able to see, to

perceive, to understand, and to respond to each other. Buber wrote, "There is no ordering of

dialogue. It is not that you *are* to answer but that you are *able*."[0] Participants' capacity for

what Buber identifies as creation, confirmation, and confrontation enable an authentic

dialogue to be built.

Our ability to create worlds of dialogue and relationship from words emulates God's

creation of the world. Buber explained, "Dialogue is not an affair of spiritual luxury and

spiritual luxuriousness, it is a matter of creation, of the creature, and he is that, the man of

whom I speak, he is a creature, trivial and irreplaceable."[0] Language and speech empower

each person to define themselves in relationship to the rest of humanity. While Buber

asserted that "man is made man by himself,"[0] this can only happen "in virtue of a relation to

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[0] Cohen, A. (1979). Martin Buber and changes in modern education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 5(1), 89. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498790050108
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 16
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 45, 92
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 14
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 35
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 35
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 83

another self."[0] It is the man who directs his attention to his fellow that sees "creation as it happens. It happens as speech…directed precisely at him."[0] Creation, as Buber taught, is based in dialogical partnership between God and humanity, with a holy spark released when one encounters "the Other," embracing dialogue as a "moment of insight and connection."[0] This genesis of dialogue highlights the works of creation and the creation of the self in relation to "the Other," which leads us to strive to create the dialogical relationship in itself.

Confirmation occurs when the "I" is discovered in true dialogue and is able to "act as a mirror, a supporter, and a challenger" in asking "Where are *Thou*?" to his partner.[0] In these meetings, we perceive "the Other" as ourselves, accepting our dialogical partner in their own thoughts and convictions, affirming and confirming them where they stand.[0] As aforementioned, according to Buber, humans are the only species that require confirmation and affirmation from their dialogical partners.

Confrontation occurs when others are at odds with one's points of view. In Buber's own words: "The sphere of the interhuman is one in which a person is confronted by the other. We call it unfolding the dialogical."[0] In encountering "the Other," we realize that we need not and cannot always be in constant agreement, even when we are both turned towards each other with full presence. Rather, we can accept "the Other" while still challenged by what they have to say.[0] Confirmation can occur even when people are in direct confrontation.

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[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 167-168

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 16

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 295. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 79). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 75). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Holm, N. (2009). Practising the Ministry of Presence in Chaplaincy. *Journal of Christian Education*, os-52(3), p. 31. https://doi.org/10.1177/002196570905200305

Confrontation is most meaningful when both participants are truly able to hear and understand each other, regardless of whether or not they agree.

Conclusion

Over half a century ago, Buber noted humans often lack the ability to engage in the art of dialogue and that there is a "growing desire among people to engage in sincere, direct, and unrhetorical dialogue."[0] Buber contended that human beings need assistance and guidance to gain dialogical skills, and that even teachers of dialogue are consistently learning themselves. Even now, we are still attempting to engage in authentic dialogue with our fellow humans, despite distractions, distance, and disillusionment.

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[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. pp. 254-255

Chapter 4
An Overview of Chaplaincy

"Certainly the lawyer, the teacher, the priest, no less the doctor of the body, each comes also to feel, as far as conscience genuinely infuses his vocation, what it means to be concerned with the needs and anxieties of men…"[0]—Martin Buber

Understanding Chaplaincy

In a variety of settings, those who are concerned with the needs and anxieties of men serve populations that are living with unusual stressors (e.g. hospitals, the battlefield, college campuses, etc.). The individuals who serve in these arenas are known as chaplains. The nature of their work (and even the words used to describe their care) are not uniform or easily understood. While engaging in research, the Boolean phrase search offered up to me four seemingly interchangeable possibilities: "chaplaincy OR spiritual care OR pastoral care OR pastoral counseling." In order to comprehend chaplaincy more fully as a whole, it was first important to become familiar with these other areas, while recognizing they weren't quite equivalent to "chaplaincy" as a whole. However, each of these Boolean search terms help clarify the "vocation" of chaplaincy.

Spiritual Care

With an increased emphasis on individual and/or personal expression, there has been a trend of turning away from formal institutional life. This shift has included religion, identified with religious institutions, sacramental rituals, and theological ideals. In contrast, the word "spirituality" has gained popularity in describing an individual's practice or claimed

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. (p. 17)

identity, as opposed to the word "religion." Ironically, the word "spirituality" originated from

the Hebrew word *ruach* (a word created in relation to God) as seen in the religious text of

Genesis 1:2[0]—"…*V'ruach Elohim m'rachefet al-p'nei hamayim,*" "… and the spirit of God

God sweeping over the water."[0]

Spirituality has been defined as "the search for meaning, transcendence, and

connectedness."[0] Those who deem themselves "spiritual" are interested in creating a

relationship with someone or something greater than themselves, be it "transcendent" or

"imminent."[0] Spirituality can also manifest as an intrapersonal confrontation wherein

"people may encounter fundamental issues of existence" when engaging in personal

reflection about their spiritual beliefs.[0] Inherently, spirituality and spiritual care seem

concerned with questions of connectedness, identification, and both intrapersonal (within

oneself) and interpersonal (between people) relationships.[0]

"Spiritual care"—as a term in itself—has been so widely used that its meaning has

become difficult to define. Anyone who identifies as spiritual—from doctor to debutante,

priest to street peddler—can function as a spiritual care provider, which has taken on the

[0] "וְר֣וּחַ אֱלֹהִ֔ים מְרַחֶ֖פֶת עַל־פְּנֵ֥י הַמָּֽיִם"

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 101. https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 100, 112. https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 100, 112. https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Nash, P., Bartel, M., & Nash, S. (2018). *Paediatric chaplaincy: Principles, practices and skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. p. 30

[0] Nash, P., Bartel, M., & Nash, S. (2018). *Paediatric chaplaincy: Principles, practices and skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. p. 15-16

broad definition of "an individual offering care that is not affiliated with a specific system of religious belief [that is] based on a set of organizing principles."[0]

Pastoral Care

Founded on religious and spiritual principles, pastoral care was initially understood as care that could only be provided by clergy. While the vast majority of people in this role are clerics, pastoral care has now been expanded to include laypeople from an array of backgrounds who bear the title of spiritual caregiver. Whereas in spiritual care, non-clerical practitioners may "express their care 'indirectly, casually, and [for] most unconsciously," clergy members practice pastoral care with intentionality, resulting in reflection, growth, and a responsibility to their own religious communities and organizations.[0] These religious obligations (claimed through religious ordination or community commission) place clergy pastoral care on the "continuum of 'spiritual care'—imbuing pastoral care providers with very clear responsibilities, authority, power, and accountability to the institution[s] and to God" in a variety of settings.[0]

The Reverend Dr. Daniel H. Grossoehme,[0] Staff Chaplain at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center submits that "pastoral care is many things to many people," yet he defines it as "the formation of relationships with persons of all ages that communicate (both with and without words)… so that all persons are enabled to live through

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[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 112. https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Patton, J. (1993). *Pastoral care in context: An introduction to pastoral care*. Westminster/John Knox Press. (p. 77)

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 115.

[0] To read more on The Rev. Dr. Daniel H. Grossoehme, BCC: https://stthomasepiscopal.org/about-us/the-reverend-dr-daniel-h-grossoehme-bcc/

their life experiences and to understand them in terms of their faith."[0] Providers of pastoral

care engage in a plethora of activities including, but not limited to: religious or spiritual

counsel, caring for the sick, dealing with crisis management, facilitating sacramental rites,

and engaging in theological discussions.

Through active listening, storytelling, and empathetic responses, pastoral caregivers

concern themselves with the needs and lives of the people with whom they build

relationships, under the guiding principle of "care, not cure."[0] Many caregivers provide a

theological or cultural framework which provides scaffolding for the uneven structure of

life's major obstacles.[0] Additionally, the clergy who provide this care maintain strong

boundaries, "managing the interpersonal space" between themselves and those who seek

their help: be it closing the distance through confirmation, empathy, recognition and

acceptance, or through distancing themselves through confrontation and challenge.[0]

Pastoral Counseling

Rooted in psychology, rather than religion, pastoral counseling helps guide

counselees to find solutions to specific crises, conflicts, and conundrums as presented by the

counselee. Pastoral counselors are expected to have a breadth and depth of knowledge of

their own religious backgrounds, and to be well versed in the wide scope of the historical and

contemporary religious and cultural influences of the people whom they serve.[0]

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 112-113.
[0] Patton, J. (1993). *Pastoral care in context: An introduction to pastoral care*. Westminster/John Knox Press. p. 50, 77
[0] Browning, D. S. (1976). *The moral context of pastoral care*. The Westminster Press. p. 103
[0] Pembroke, N. (2011). Space in the Trinity and in pastoral care. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 65(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501106500203 (p. 1, 9)
[0] Oates, W. E. (1974). *Pastoral counseling*. Westminster Press. p. 17

Licensed pastoral counselors provide care differently than their congregational clergy counterparts. When seeking pastoral counseling from a licensed practitioner, clients participate in sessions akin to psychotherapy. Clergy who provide congregational pastoral counseling invite congregants into their offices as they prepare families for lifecycle moments or shepherd people through ethical decision making. Pastoral counselors help their counselees through difficult interpersonal and intrapersonal dilemmas within a theological framework.[0] They are willing to bring God into the conversation and into ethical decision-making.[0] By doing so, these pastoral counselors also "attach religious objectives, resources, and patterns of meaning to the counseling process."[0]

Utilizing a religious framework and steering those seeking care toward action, pastoral counseling also "brackets moral issues and focuses more specifically on emotional-dynamic issues that block persons from living the kind of life they hope for and believe in."[0] Pastoral counselors focus on helping people grow, not by advising them, but by guiding them and pointing out the potential options available within a larger religious framework. While these caregivers do not consider themselves change agents, they are able to highlight areas of need and social injustices that their counselees may relate to.[0]

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab explains that chaplaincy appears in a variety of venues, including but not limited to: military settings, healthcare, prisons, higher education, airports, seaports, police and fire departments, government settings, disaster zones, sports

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[0] Browning, D. S. (1976). *The moral context of pastoral care*. The Westminster Press. p. 20
[0] Oates, W. E. (1974). *Pastoral counseling*. Westminster Press. p. 11-13
[0] Oates, W. E. (1974). *Pastoral counseling*. Westminster Press. p. 19
[0] Browning, D. S. (1976). *The moral context of pastoral care*. The Westminster Press. p. 106
[0] Oates, W. E. (1974). *Pastoral counseling*. Westminster Press. p. 21

teams, NASCAR pits, the National Science Foundation's base in Antarctica, and the

Olympics.[0] In high-stakes environments where tensions can abound, chaplains are expected

and empowered to "provide compassionate presence to vulnerable people in need of spiritual

care."[0] This definition has inspired chaplains to reconsider their titles, with some feeling the

need to identify their work as "spiritual care" in order to "better fit in with the current

climate" and to respond to the needs of the people and organizations that they serve.[0] Still

others cling to the separation of religion and spirituality, allowing chaplains to provide

pastoral care only in the form of sacramental rites and rituals.[0]

    Chaplains are an amalgamation of all of the aforementioned approaches, providing

spiritual care, pastoral care, and pastoral counseling "within a theological framework… [that]

not only informs, but forms the foundation of their patient interventions."[0] Chaplains

generally have a graduate level of theological education and are endorsed by their religious

organizations, empowering them as a fully qualified religious leader who has some form of

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[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy*. https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf, p. 3

[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy*. https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf, p. 4

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 111 https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0]Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 101 https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 111 https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

training in pastoral education.[0] This religious ordination and endorsement lends an additional level of authority and accountability to the institutions and the people that they serve.[0]

A study by Fitchett et. al (2000) found that those with fewer religious resources are less likely to ask for spiritual care, and that patients who are more closely connected to religious or spiritual practice are likely to ask for and receive pastoral care.[0] Chaplains who are working in a variety of settings appear to approach their pastoral care in two ways. First, they begin with themselves, grounding their own theology of suffering and care to support their own practices and then using those theologies as an anchor to better support the people who need their care.[0] Second, chaplains spiritually screen and/or assess the people that they meet, evaluating stress levels and religious/spiritual resources in order to determine the urgency and significance of the help required. Chaplains who are able to identify people who are at high risk—multiple stressors, challenges, and difficulties coping—with low resources are able to set priorities that will help serve the people who need pastoral and/or spiritual care most.[0]

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[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy*. https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf, p. 2-3, 9

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 114 https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Fitchett, G., Meyer, P. M., & Burton, L. A. (2000). Spiritual care in the hospital: Who requests it? Who needs it? *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 54(2), p. 180-182. https://doi.org/10.1177/002234090005400207

[0] Harding, S. R., Flannelly, K. J., Galek, K., & Tannenbaum, H. P. (2008). Spiritual care, pastoral care, and chaplains: Trends in the Health Care Literature. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 14(2), p. 116 https://doi.org/10.1080/08854720802129067

[0] Fitchett, G., Meyer, P. M., & Burton, L. A. (2000). Spiritual care in the hospital: Who requests it? Who needs it? *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 54(2), (p. 173). https://doi.org/10.1177/002234090005400207

Healthcare and Hospital Chaplaincy

A subset of chaplaincy occurs in healthcare and hospital settings. Most of the chaplains in these settings have (or are working toward) a graduate degree, have completed (or are working toward) four full units of clinical pastoral education, and have been endorsed by their religious organizations.[0] Healthcare chaplains, similar to pastoral counselors, have the ability to assist patients of any (or no) faith traditions, enabling them to play a broader role in a hospital setting. Clinical Pastoral Educator and New York Presbyterian Chaplain The Reverend José Maria Collazo explains, "Each member of the [patient's care] team needs to understand the unique expertise contributed by each profession represented. One of those areas where, in particular, the chaplain can provide a unique contribution is as a cultural ambassador."[0] Collazo adds,

> Chaplains as ambassadors in the multi-disciplinary team are diplomats and advocates for patients and family. They must also be concerned for cultural literacy and the people of the medical staff and patient population. For example, those who are culturally literate in a given culture understand the underlying values, verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, cultural taboos and forms of civility, rites of passage, power dynamics, pecking orders, and how best to call for honoring confrontation, affirmation, and transformation. Chaplains need to be culturally literate in a variety of cultures, as reflected in the various accounts in the sacred and non-sacred texts of non-secular and secular worlds. The chaplain's fundamental aim is relational flexibility, an intentionally proactive dialogue with all issues concerning culture (be they race, gender, religious, etc.) are to be conveyed in the claim that as chaplains we can become effective bridge builders within the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary team in the delivery of health care.[0]

Harding & Koenig (2004) assert that the chaplain's role is significant; they act as "the spiritual and religious specialist on the treatment team," sharing their insights and expertise

[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy*. https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf p. 3. *A note: Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is written about in more detail in the next section.
[0] Collazo, J. M. (2022, September 22). *Re: Definition of Chaplaincy*.
[0] Collazo, J. M. (2022, September 22). *Re: Definition of Chaplaincy*.

with the rest of the multidisciplinary peers.[0] In fact, fostering a healthy spirituality can be a

positive addition to and influence on the treatment team.[0] In addition to serving a wide swath

of patients, the professional healthcare chaplain also is able to screen and/or assess their

patients for a spiritual care plan that best works for their patients, modalities that "center on

relationship building and reflective listening, as well as on theological counseling and

judicious use of prayer and ritual."[0] Patients, who are constantly facing challenges and crises

deal with an array of issues within the liminal spaces of the hospital—"they must deal with

anxiety, depression, pain, boredom, disorientation, dependency, a loss of dignity, and more."[0]

Hospital chaplains acknowledge and accompany their patients through these predicaments,

helping patients find their way to spiritual relationships through dialogue, trust-building,

empathy, challenge, confrontation, support, and questioning.

Clinical Pastoral Education

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is defined by Chaplaincy Innovation Lab as "a

reflective model, a kind of hands-on clinical training in healthcare…through which you learn

to do this work…most CPE takes place in multi-faith groups and includes interactions with

patients and staff as well as other CPE students."[0] Seminarians or professionals can

participate in units (250-400 hours) which include a combination of classroom and clinical

[0] Handzo, G., & Koenig, H. G. (2004). Spiritual care: Whose job is it anyway? *Southern Medical Journal*, 97(12), p. 1244. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.smj.0000146490.49723.ae

[0] Grossoehme, D. H. (2008). Development of a spiritual screening tool for children and adolescents. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, p. 71. https://doi.org/10.1177/154230500806200108

[0] Handzo, G., & Koenig, H. G. (2004). Spiritual care: Whose job is it anyway? *Southern Medical Journal*, 97(12), p. 1244. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.smj.0000146490.49723.ae

[0] Pembroke, N. (2011). Space in the Trinity and in pastoral care. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 65(2), p. 8 https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501106500203

[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy*. https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf p. 2

experience in a variety of settings. CPE students engage in small educative cohorts which focus on theological reflection, theory and application, interfaith dialogue, supervised encounters, professional feedback, and time spent with patients and staff. Through this experience, students of all faiths aim to "develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister."[0]

After completing four units of CPE, one may apply for a full-time hospital chaplaincy position. Board certified chaplains have gone through extensive training and are vetted and certified by a national chaplaincy organization. Healthcare chaplains screen and/or assess each patient's religious or spiritual beliefs offer care honoring that framework with the aim of heling their patients maximize their coping resources during their time in the healthcare facility.[0]

Pediatric Chaplaincy

A significant subdivision of healthcare chaplaincy is pediatric chaplaincy.[0] Like other hospital chaplains, pediatric chaplains maintain all of the same roles and responsibilities (as well as the same authority and accountability). Pediatric chaplains focus on a specific, critical subset of the patient population: those aged 0-25 who are admitted (or in the process of being admitted) to a healthcare facility. Because children's hospitalizations particularly "represent a threatened future," pediatric chaplains help family systems cope with crisis.[0] Chaplains in a

[0] Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, (Ed.). (n.d.). *Beginner's Guide to chaplaincy - chaplaincyinnovation.org. Beginner's Guide to Chaplaincy.* https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Beginners-Guide-to-Chaplaincy.pdf p. 8

[0] Handzo, G., & Koenig, H. G. (2004). Spiritual care: Whose job is it anyway? *Southern Medical Journal*, 97(12), p. 1244. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.smj.0000146490.49723.ae

[0] The words pediatric and paediatric are interchangeable. I have chosen to use the "pediatric" spelling unless it is used in a direct quote.

[0] Grossoehme, D. H., Jacobson, C. J., Cotton, S., Ragsdale, J. R., VanDyke, R., & Seid, M. (2011). Written prayers and religious coping in a paediatric hospital setting. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 14(5), 423–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674671003762693

pediatric setting take into account the psychological development of their patients (age, accountability, accessibility) and accompany children through challenging moments.[0]

What makes pediatric chaplaincy different from general healthcare chaplaincy?

Pediatric chaplains must understand how that which they offer as chaplains changes in a pediatric setting. The ability to view spirituality from a child's perspective or to understand how childhood faith develops is integral to serving pediatric patients.[0] Significant relationships can be built with pediatric patients, whether they are premature neonates to late-blooming emerging adults. In order to build these relationships, chaplains in the pediatric wards must be well-versed in silence and its utilization. They also must become aware of and engage with a child's developmental capacity for language, play modalities, and family systems.

While research in the field of pediatric chaplaincy is underdeveloped, Nash & McSherry (2017) claim that there is a fourfold distinction between general healthcare chaplains and pediatric chaplains who have become experts in the areas of:

- "relating to and supporting families including palliative, end of life and bereavement care;

- supporting children including spiritual and religious care;

- working as part of a multidisciplinary/professional team;

- staff support and self-care." [0]

[0] Nash, P., Bartel, M., & Nash, S. (2018). *Paediatric chaplaincy: Principles, practices and skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. p. 15-16
[0] Nash, P., Bartel, M., & Nash, S. (2018). *Paediatric chaplaincy: Principles, practices and skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. p. 23, 30
[0] Nash, P., & McSherry, W. (2017). What is the distinctiveness of paediatric chaplaincy? *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*, 5(1), p. 20-21. https://doi.org/10.1558/hscc.31816

Pediatric chaplains often (but do not always) work with family systems, highlighting the significance of connectedness for both children and parents during the period of hospitalization. Fostering relationships with both children and their caregivers is crucial, as problems may evolve in a family due to "their inability to adapt to or mourn their losses."[0] Caregivers are often present and influence the patient's stay in the pediatric wards. Parents and patients alike may use triangulation as a way to avoid processing discomfort and difficult emotions or familial conflicts when making decisions.[0] Forging a trusting relationship with them may enable a pediatric chaplain to "build a direct relationship with the patient without the mediation of the parent," and thereby diminish the effects of triangulation.[0] Deconstructing these triangles enables chaplains to assist families dealing with unanswered questions, moral injury, emotionally draining situations, or even a child's tears. Rabbi Stephen Roberts wrote:

> No one can stand idly by and just watch as a child suffers…Everyone is affected, touched, influenced by the sadness and sorrow that occur when a child is in pain or is afraid of what is happening. The primal mechanism of a child crying is designed to set everyone in motion to bring comfort and reassurance.[0]

Pediatric chaplains are able to support staff, family systems, and patients through the tears, affirming and confirming the efforts being made with a calm presence and a conscientious practice of self-care.

In a pediatric setting, patients range in age from 0-25 years. All may be facing physical, psychological or spiritual crises within the hospital walls. While chaplains must

[0] McGoldrick, M., & Boundy, D. (n.d.). The legacy of unresolved loss: A family systems approach. *PsycEXTRA Dataset*. p. 15 https://doi.org/10.1037/e643612007-001
[0] Guerin, P. J., & Fogarty, T. (1996). Triangles. In *Working with relationship triangles: The one-two-three of psychotherapy* (p. 12-13). Guilford Press.
[0] Nash, P., & McSherry, W. (2017). What is the distinctiveness of paediatric chaplaincy? *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*, 5(1), p. 26. https://doi.org/10.1558/hscc.31816
[0] Roberts, S. B., & Sommer, D. R. (2014). Pediatric Chaplaincy. In *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and chaplain's handbook* (p. 260). essay, SkyLight Paths Pub.

screen and/or assess the spiritual needs of children, adolescents, and emerging adults (and at times their families as well), developing an overarching standardized spiritual screening for pediatric patients has been relatively neglected.[0]

As pediatric chaplains work one-one with young people, they learn how to best connect with them based on age and capacity: speaking with patients on their eye level, engaging in play, or asking them to share a story. Pediatric chaplains, as Rabbi Roberts remarks, have "a unique role of listening to the narratives of children."[0] This is significant because the language capacities and expectations of pediatric patients differ greatly from their adult counterparts; pediatric chaplains are most successful when they are able to shape their care to the age and developmental level of the patient. As pediatric patients age, their spirituality and faith development go through phases of growth; toddler and preschoolers need different approaches than teenagers and emerging adults. Adolescents are more willing to ask for spiritual care when their caregivers are not present. A study by Grossoehme (2008) showed that "religion and spirituality are important issues in their lives;" with 85+% of teens believing in God and/or religion and with over 50% engaging in religious ritual or a private prayer practice.[0]

One could argue that a healthcare chaplain's role is similar whether they serve the adult or pediatric populations in a healthcare setting (especially in the areas of working as part of a multidisciplinary team and staff support). However, one primary distinction in

[0] Grossoehme, D. H. (2008). Development of a spiritual screening tool for children and adolescents. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 62(1-2), p. 71. https://doi.org/10.1177/154230500806200108

[0] Roberts, S. B., & Sommer, D. R. (2014). Pediatric Chaplaincy. In *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and chaplain's handbook* (p. 262). essay, SkyLight Paths Pub.

[0] Grossoehme, D. H. (2008). Development of a spiritual screening tool for children and adolescents. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 62(1-2), p. 71. https://doi.org/10.1177/154230500806200108

pediatric chaplaincy is that the pediatric chaplain is a specialist in the faith and spirituality of

children and young people. Other areas in which the pediatric chaplain "specializes" include

Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU), support for mothers in Labor & Delivery, advance

care planning, palliative care, withdrawal of treatment, and supporting staff and their team in

preparation for death and bereavement.[0] Acknowledging "the heightened feelings involved in

child illness and death," healthcare pediatric chaplains accompany hospital staff and their

teams through those increased tensions, in addition to the children and their families.[0]

Pediatric chaplains are able to provide additional training and expertise to the

multidisciplinary teams with whom they work and to the staff who work directly with the

children. In a research survey of pediatricians (VandeCreek, Grossoehme, Ragsdale,

McHenry, & Thurston, 2007), 67% of respondents stated that the "spiritual resources of

patients and families played an important role" in end of life decisions, coping with severe

injuries, or dealing with a critically ill child.[0] Furthermore, a great number of respondents

"wished to learn the skills, related to talking about spiritual resources, how to approach it in a

sensitive manner, how to address it without offending patients or families and 'how to kindly

and safely bring up the issue.'"[0] Pediatric chaplains can provide specialized resources for

healthcare staff that can improve the overall care for patients in need.

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[0] Nash, P., & McSherry, W. (2017). What is the distinctiveness of paediatric chaplaincy? *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*, 5(1), p. 23. https://doi.org/10.1558/hscc.31816
[0] Nash, P., & McSherry, W. (2017). What is the distinctiveness of paediatric chaplaincy? *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*, 5(1), p. 27. https://doi.org/10.1558/hscc.31816
[0] VandeCreek, L., Grossoehme, D. H., Ragsdale, J. R., McHenry, C. L., & Thurston, C. (2007). Attention to spiritual/religious concerns in pediatric practice: What clinical situations? what educational preparation? *Chaplaincy Today*, 23(2), p .5. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999183.2007.10767331
[0] VandeCreek, L., Grossoehme, D. H., Ragsdale, J. R., McHenry, C. L., & Thurston, C. (2007). Attention to spiritual/religious concerns in pediatric practice: What clinical situations? what educational preparation? *Chaplaincy Today*, 23(2), p .6. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999183.2007.10767331

Conclusion

Chaplains who choose to work in a healthcare setting as part of a pediatric multidisciplinary team are able to support both their team and the hospital staff. Their expertise in matters of faith and spirituality has a broad reach across patient populations. Pediatric chaplains have an additional subspeciality—dealing with young people and their specific needs and views on spirituality while offering support to the systems of caregivers involved in an emotionally heightened and physically tenuous healthcare situation.

Chapter 5
New York Presbyterian: Experience and Experiment

"Man has always had his experiences as I, his experiences with others, and with himself; but it is as We, ever again as We, that he has constructed and developed a world out of his experiences." [0] —Martin Buber

The Experience

During the summer of 2021, I completed my first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at New York Presbyterian (NYP) Weill-Cornell. For 400 hours over an eleven-week span, I engaged in experiential education and reflection as a hospital chaplaincy student guided by Certified Educator Candidate Rev. CB Stewart and my preceptor, Rev. Daniel H. Yang.[0] Spending three quarters of my time in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), I found both a love of and talent for pediatric chaplaincy. At the same time, I was spending my commute time to and from the hospital reading Paul Mendes-Flohr's biography of Martin Buber in preparation for the fall semester.[0] As I concluded my time at Weill-Cornell, I realized that there seemed to be a connection between Buber's philosophies and the information that I had been learning and implementing as a pediatric chaplaincy student. After speaking with CB and Daniel, we agreed that I might have the start of a thesis proposal and they encouraged me to return for a second 400-hour unit of CPE at NYP, with a focus on how Buber's philosophy could influence and/or inform pediatric chaplaincy.

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[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 107

[0] Rev. CB Stewart was both my educator and direct supervisor during my first unit of CPE, helping me create and gauge my personal, educational, clinical, and spiritual goals and facilitating our 100 educational hours of the 400 hour experience. Rev. Daniel H. Yang, as preceptor, helped me navigate the clinical part of my experience, meeting with me weekly to strengthen my professional skills on the hospital floors. As the pediatric chaplain at NYP Weill-Cornell, Daniel was especially helpful in my experiences with the Cohen Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press.

In Fall 2021, I participated in a 3.0-credit class entitled "The Way of Man," taught by Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, DHL, a past student and translator of Martin Buber and current Lecturer in Midrash and Homiletics at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York. Throughout the semester, Rabbi Mehlman guided us through the history and his English translation of *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching,*[0] which enabled us to understand Buber's thoughts on Hasidism, relationships, dialogue, and holy encounters. As I learned more about both Martin Buber and *The Way of Man,* it became clear to me that Buber's philosophies seemed to apply to the work of pediatric chaplaincy.

In late October 2021, I was informed that both CB and Daniel had left NYP Weill-Cornell for different NYP hospital positions; CB moved to serve as a Certified Educator Candidate at NYP Brooklyn Methodist Hospital and Daniel moved to become the Coordinator of Pastoral Care & Education at NYP Columbia—Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York (MS-CHONY). After a quick online reunion and review of my proposed thesis idea with Daniel, he suggested that I also apply to work at NYP Columbia/MS-CHONY during Summer 2022 and directed me toward Rabbi Mychal Springer, Manager of CPE at all of the NYP locations. By the end of October, I met with Mychal and proposed my plan—which included writing my thesis proposal on Buber's philosophies and pediatric chaplaincy, interning at MS-CHONY during the summer of 2022, creating a protocol to test my thesis, working with Daniel as a preceptor, and focusing primarily on pediatric units. After subsequent meetings with Linda S. Golding, MA BCC, the Coordinator of Pastoral Services at NYP Columbia Milstein Hospital to explore how to create and execute a proper protocol in a New York Presbyterian hospital, and with Rev. José

[0] Buber, M., Mehlman, B. H., & Padawer, G. E. (2012). *The way of man according to Hasidic teaching*.

Maria Collazo, the ACPE Certified Educator, all of the pieces of my proposed second unit were approved.

During this second unit of CPE, I was one of eight full-time CPE interns representing different faith traditions who spent 100 hours in education and 300 hours in the hospital wards completing clinical work. In late May 2022, I met with José Maria and Daniel to discuss how best to set up my unit assignments to ensure success as I set out to do work directly related to my thesis. José Maria assigned me to work primarily in MS-CHONY, focusing on pediatric patients. My four MS-CHONY units included the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (the NICU), a NICU nursery (a step-down unit), a pediatric step-down unit (where patients stayed after being discharged from critical care), and the pediatric emergency room. During the span of eleven weeks, I saw 300 pediatric patients.

The Experiment

For the first five weeks, I learned from José Maria alongside my intern cohort and interacted with my patients in an unadulterated manner. On a weekly basis, I utilized the skills and knowledge gained from experience on the floor and our educational time as a cohort in the classroom, In my regular meetings with José Maria and Daniel, we concluded that the best instrument to gather information would be questionnaires. Together we crafted the goals of a pre- and post- pediatric patient visit questionnaires.

Goals of The Pre- & Post- Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaires

The goals of these questionnaire were:

1) to increase the chaplains' potential for creating relationships with pediatric patients

2) to enable chaplains to review their personal status before entering into the patients'
   rooms

3) to help the chaplains conceptualize the sacred moments that are created in the room

4) to provide the chaplains with the ability to focus their attention on the particular needs
   of the pediatric patients in question

5) to encourage chaplains to consider how taking moments of reflection before and after
   visits can allow for more powerful opportunities for relationship-building

6) to empower chaplains to engage in dialogue and relationship comprehensively with
   their pediatric patients and to be fully present in their patient visits

7) to gauge if and how Buber's framework as presented through *The Way of Man*
   According to Hasidic Teaching may inform and impact the practice of pediatric
   chaplaincy

While I articulated these goals with Rev. Jose Maria Collazo and Rev. Daniel Yang, I

did not share these goals with the other chaplains who were invited to participate in the

experiment.

Forming The Pre- & Post- Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaires

Inspired by the six divisions of *The Way of Man*, I noted that the first half of Buber's

book focused on internal preparation for genuine encounters, while the second half of the

book focused on the actual encounter itself. I decided to split the questionnaire in two as

well: the first survey, drawing on Buber's preliminary three sections, involved the chaplain's

self-preparation before a pediatric visit; the second survey drawing on Buber's latter three

sections, focused on the pediatric visit and the actions and emotions that occurred for the chaplain in the room itself.[0]

Pre-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire		
Heart Searching	The Particular Way	Resolution

Focused on the Chaplain's Self-Preparation

Post-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire		
Beginning with Oneself	Not to be Preoccupied with Oneself	Here Where One Stands

Focused on the Chaplain's Self-Examination & Reflection

During weeks four through six, I developed an experiment based on Buber's relational and dialogical philosophies under José Maria and Daniel's supervision and guidance. Both José Maria and Daniel helped me craft two questionnaires and increased my understanding of how best to include open-ended questions, Likert scales, Yes/No questions, and short-answers. They also helped me ensure that the questions connected to Buber's philosophy and were appropriate for the cohort to utilize. The summer CPE intern cohort also helped me better phrase some of the questions.

After the questionnaires were completed and approved, I sent an email to my cohort (and other pediatric chaplains in the office), explaining the experimental questionnaire and inviting them to participate if they wished. The email contained the following instructions:

Hey everyone,

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[0] A copy of these questionnaires can be found in the Appendices section on p. 113.

If you're receiving this email, it's because you've expressed an interest in filling out surveys before/after meeting with **pediatric patients** (when convenient for you!). This data helps me understand my thesis a little bit further and I may ask you some follow up questions at the end of our summer experience. I know that the first time (maybe even the second) that it may take you some extra time to fill these out, but I hope that doesn't discourage you, because with practice--it'll get faster! You do not need to do this with every pediatric patient you meet (I don't want this to feel too fatiguing!), and of course, the more data I have, the better for thesis writing.

PRE-VISIT SURVEY LINK CAN BE FOUND HERE (please fill this in right before entering the room)

POST-VISIT SURVEY LINK CAN BE FOUND HERE (if possible, please fill this in right after exiting the room, or as soon after the visit as you can to maintain accuracy).

For anyone who is interested in further understanding either my thesis or this particular experiment/experience, let me know and I am happy to either write up a short blurb or to meet with you in person and to discuss! ☺

With admiration and appreciation for you all,
AKW

The Results

Volunteers Who Utilized the Questionnaire

I sent my request to eleven members of the NYP Columbia/MS-CHONY pastoral care department: four full-time staff chaplains (including Rev. Daniel Yang and Rev. José Maria Collazo), two full-time CPE residents, and the seven members of my Summer 2022 CPE Intern cohort. Of the thirteen potential respondents, the seven interns were the only ones who responded affirmatively. The intern cohort had a mix of CPE experience: 50% of the interns were participating in their first unit, 25% were in their second, and the remaining 25% were in their third or fourth unit. Of the eight interns, I was the only one with a personal history of pediatric chaplaincy.

The interns provided 32 responses to the surveys, spanning 50 visits in various MS-CHONY hospital wards. Within my intern cohort, 62.5% filled out one survey response giving data for 9 visits (18%), and 25% filled out either two or three surveys, giving data for 5 visits (10%). I completed 68.75% of the surveys myself, collecting data for 36 visits (72%). It is significant to note that the seven other members of my Summer 2022 CPE Intern cohort were also responsible for multiple general (adult population) patient visits at NYP Columbia Milstein and/or NYP Allen Hospital. Out of the eight interns, I was the only one with multiple pediatric units to cover; all other interns were assigned only one pediatric unit or less.[0]

Pre-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

As we began our surveys with "**Heart-searching**" it appeared that many of us entered pediatric settings with downward-trending energy levels (59.7% < 3 on the Likert scale) and neutral/upward-trending stress levels (75% ≥ 3 on the Likert scale). By refocusing on our roles, goals, and contexts going into our encounters, responses illustrated that participants were going in as a "chaplain," as a "calming presence," "to provide spiritual care," "to assess," "to introduce the chaplaincy program," "to check in [before a procedure]," and "to provide calm, non-anxious pastoral/spiritual presence in a stressful medical environment such as is [the] Ped[iatric] ED." In my own experiences, I often found myself feeling nervous before entering a room, especially with new patients and families in the pediatric emergency room. After taking the survey, one strategy I utilized to counter that nervousness was to focus primarily on the patient upon entering, introducing myself later in the visit. This delayed

[0] Those interns who worked primarily at NYP Allen were not assigned a pediatric unit at MS-CHONY.

preamble permitted me to further engage with the patient and their story before presenting my own.

"**The Particular Way**" section of the questionnaire aimed to encourage chaplains to reflect on how their past experiences and unique strengths might impact their visits, and specifically asked the chaplain how they would ensure that their approaches were developmentally appropriate (an attribute that differs from chaplaincy for the adult patient population). 62% of respondents were meeting with a patient and their families for the first time or responded that it was their first visit of the day, and that they were coming in open-minded about their visit—"The only unique thing about this visit is that I have not seen this patient before," "This is my first visit with this patient," "Not the first visit of the day, but first visit with patient." The unique strengths the chaplaincy interns identified were internal including "love and positivity," "active listening," knowledge of my pediatric ward," and "curiosity and an eagerness to learn." When ensuring that the visit was developmentally appropriate, 56% of the respondents said they would include the patient's parents in the conversation, others discussed using nonverbal communication (eye contact and touch), speaking English, Spanish, or "tween talk" in order to offer greater accessibility, and using powers of observation to see what the patient had in the room (e.g. toys, phone, religious paraphernalia) to gauge the interests of the pediatric patient.

In the last section of the pre-pediatric patient visit questionnaire, chaplains focused on Buber's notion of "**Resolution**"—ensuring that they were identifying and limiting their distractions, focusing on increasing their presence, and reaffirming their main aims, goals, and purpose of their visits. Those serving as chaplains identified the following distractions that they themselves experienced during their encounters: bodily sensations (43.8% had pain,

discomfort, or temperature issues, etc.) mental/cognitive distractions (28.1% had thoughts/daydreams outside of the visit), anxiety/fear (15.6% were nervous about being on the edge of the unknown), and fatigue (27.9% listed some level of exhaustion as an additional distraction). Chaplains aimed to amplify their ability to be fully present by taking a moment of reflection, filling out the survey, taking deep breaths, or reminding themselves of their patients' needs. Similar to the goal, role, and context question in the "Heart Searching" section, the final question in "Resolution" ensured that 34.3% of respondents were entering the encounter as a "non-anxious calming spiritual presence," who were going in to assess, support, and connect with their patients.

Post-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

After the visits were completed, chaplains reflected on their experience of their encounters with their pediatric patients. "**Beginning with Oneself**" is how the chaplains focused on their influences and introductions upon entering the room as well as how they gauged their emotions upon exiting the room. While some chaplains entered their visits with calm and curiosity, 28% of respondents noted anxiety, overwhelm, or exhaustion upon entering the room. One chaplain noted that they were "a little 'off today. Tired, foggy brained, and feel like I can't bring my full energy to this patient so I am trying to do what I can for him without being hard on myself for not doing 'enough.'" Post-visit, most chaplains reported some sort of emotional reaction, be it positive (40.6%)— "feeling positive with interactions," "calm and pleased with the patient and her parent's reaction," "joy about the progress and growth;" or negative (41.9%)—"I feel a little disappointed," "I feel sad," "Pride and pain—feeling some countertransference," "frustrated for patient and parent."

Chaplains focused on how "**Not to Be Preoccupied With Oneself**" in the second section of this questionnaire, avoiding self-focused tendencies primarily by listening, "focusing solely on what I saw in the room," "maintaining a calm presence," and "asking the patient and parents personal questions." As noted above, the majority of chaplain interns were spending the majority of their time providing care to an adult general population. Noting that a distinction of pediatric chaplaincy is to focus on the patient and the family system, chaplains were asked who held the majority of their focus in the room. 87.5% of the chaplains noted that their attention was split between the patient and their patient's caregivers. Unique to my experience, I found that utilizing these surveys expanded my focus exponentially on my patients; this was a positive personal and professional outcome during the second half of my CPE experience. In order to maintain a stronger focus on the pediatric patient, chaplains were asked to creatively tell a story about their patient's "main character energy,"[0] which allowed for reflection on the patient's story outside of their hospital settings. Some of the most creative answers included:

- "This kid is already a medical miracle, as is his father. It feels like this is the sad origin story to a happy-go-lucky family comedy."
- "I can see this patient as an epic tale of seizures and survivals and surgeries, a padded-in princess warrior."
- "There once was a boy we call M/Who came a bit earlier then/Mom or dad had expected/But good news is projected/That soon he may go home too with them!"

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[0] "Main character energy" is a trending popular term that refers to someone who embodies their lived experiences as if they were the protagonist in a fictional narrative.

- "She'd be Persephone before she goes down to the underworld. Innocent and
happy."

The last section of the questionnaire, "**Here Where One Stands**" focused on the
encounter itself and on the efficacy of the survey. Chaplains were asked how they maintained
a presence in the present with their patients. 32.2% of respondents engaged verbally, 9.7%
utilized play and touch, and 25.8% focused on positive news, celebrations, or fun family
anecdotes. Chaplains then were asked what their patients and they related on during the visit:
29% included passions, pets, and projects (both inside and outside the hospital), 19.3%
discussed hopes and plans for the future, and 12.9% focused on the fears that occurred during
the hospital stay. The third question in this section asked if and how chaplains felt holiness in
their encounters with their pediatric patients; 90.3% of participants responded in the
affirmative. Chaplains further explained that they experienced holiness through prayer
(25.8%); through play (9.6%); or through experiencing the relationship between their patient
and their patient's parents (32.2%).

The last question on the survey asked "Did this process inform or improve your
chaplaincy experience?" There was a 78.6% response rate of "Yes" and a 21.4% response
rate of "Maybe." There were no negative responses.

Inconclusive Conclusions from the Experiment

The sample size for this experiment was decidedly small, with 32 responses spanning
approximately 50 pediatric visits. While I, myself, found that I was "turning" toward my
patients more thoroughly and regularly than I had in my visits during the first half of the

summer, I cannot say with certainty that the same occurred for the other interns in my CPE cohort.

The pre-pediatric patient visit survey empowered me to set intentions and truly prepare to thoughtfully encounter my patients. The post-pediatric patient visit survey helped me check the efficacy of the visits and to reflect on the connections made within the hospital room. Follow-up conversations with cohort members also indicated that they found the surveys meaningful. They expressed this by writing that they found holiness in the suffering, play, prayer, healing, celebration and conversations that occurred during their visits.

If I were to assess the success of this experiment based on its goals, I would conclude that it successfully enabled chaplains to review their personal status before entering their patients' rooms, conceptualize the sacred moments that were occurring in the room (at least from their point of view), feel empowered to focus on pediatric needs and encouraged to take moments of reflection before and after visits. Overwhelmingly, it appears that the Buberian framework was indeed successful for informing and impacting our practice of pediatric chaplaincy.

However, the experiment remained inconclusive about whether or not Buber's relational theories contributed to the increase of the chaplains' potential to comprehensively engage in dialogue and relationships with their patients (especially without their parents). While the Buberian framework seemed to work as an inspirational tool for preparation and reflection, the focus on relational philosophy did not quite speak to how best a chaplain could engage in a genuine encounter with their pediatric patients.

This inconclusive result inspired me to keep reading Buber's works far after my summer internship was over. A few months later, I realized that it was Buber's educational philosophy (even more so than his relational and dialogical philosophies) and the Buberian educator that truly aligned with the role and goals of the pediatric chaplain.

Chapter 6:
Martin Buber's Educational Philosophy

"This is where the educator can begin and should begin. He can help the feeling that something is lacking to grow into the clarity of consciousness and into the force of desire. He can awaken in young people the courage to shoulder life again." [0] —Martin Buber

Developing his educational craft in Germany, Israel, and the United States, Martin Buber became known as "one of the greatest teachers of his generation."[0] Buber forged his philosophy of education from his well-established views on our individual relationships with nature, society, and God. The Buberian educator aims to help his pupils to deepen their connection to and understanding of the world, thereby encouraging them to participate in a daily act of creation and relation.[0]

Buber defined educators as those who influenced their students to turn toward each other, which would give rise to a new spirit and action, confirming and affirming their existence and experiences. He explained that genuine education had both far-reaching effects and deep individual significance, so that "the life of the spirit of a people is renewed whenever a teaching generation transmits it to a learning generation which, in turn, growing into teachers, transmits the spirit through the lips of new teachers to the ears of new pupils; yet this process of education involves the person as a whole."[0]

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[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 115
[0] Kaufmann, W. (1961). BUBER: The Way of Man according to the Teachings of Hasidism. *In Religion from Tolstoy to Camus* (p. 425). essay, Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York.
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 14
[0] Buber, M. (1963). Teaching and Deed. *In Israel and the world: Essays in a time of crisis* (pp. 137-138). essay, Schocken Books.

Martin Buber: Where Education, Relationship, and Dialogue Meet

Creating Buber as Educator

The cultural milieu in which Buber developed his educational philosophy was a blend of light and darkness. Hasidism played a large role in Buber's early understanding of the world. Informed by a Lurianic account of creation.[0] Hasidism taught that God had contracted in order to make room for the world to be created. Through this contraction, divine light–contained in holy vessels which shattered—was scattered, and humanity was expected to collect and restore those shards to the divine realm. Those shards could be found in each human as well as each part of creation. Buber believed that our turning towards each other was an act of restoration, and that each time a teacher reached out to a pupil, they enacted this search for the light within.[0]

In his later life, one of Buber's responses to the Nazi rise to power in Germany was an increased emphasis on the significance of Jewish education. Buber's focus on adult education led to his being appointed by Franz Rosenzweig as the head of the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in 1933.[0] Buber and Rosenzweig were both influenced by the teachings of Danish pastor and educator Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1982) who was known as the father of adult education and the creator of "Folk Schools."[0] Learning, Grundtvig proposed, should be "a spiritual process that enhances community" and prepares adults for life. Buber believed that this form of learning would prepare German Jewry to care for themselves and

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[0] Lurianic Kabbalah is a school of mysticism named for and developed by Isaac Luria (1534-1572).

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), pp. 289-290. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Simon, A. E. (2001, March 30). Martin Buber. *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Buber-German-religious-philosopher

[0] To read more about Nicolai Grundtvig: https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Nikolaj_Frederik_Severin_Grundtvig

their inner spiritual reserves while the world collapsed around them with the looming threat

of World War II and the spread of the Third Reich.[0] Buber created educational retreats in

rural areas (similar to *kallot* or *shabbaton* weekends now) for young Jewish adults who had

been prohibited from attending German academic institutions, aiming to create a "great

community," which would include a plethora of political, religious, societal, and economic

positions.[0] Based on Grundtvig's work, Buber and Rosenzweig "envisioned a true people's

academy of higher learning, a *Volkschochschule,* which would 'infuse a new spirit and lead

to the building of a new life.'"[0]

Buber believed that education is a medium that can create better worlds for future

generations. His focus on youth education arose as a response to the antisemitic treatment of

his granddaughters in Germany. Writing in *Die Kinder,* he stated, "it is up to us to make the

world reliable again for the children."[0] Thus Buber's philosophy of education and dialogue,

especially for youth, developed more fully as a response to the climate of crisis in which he

lived.[0]

While Buber remained engaged in many intellectual pursuits in his life—Zionism,

philosophy, psychology, theology, education, and peace—he never considered himself to be

a professional pedagogue.[0] Rather, Buber "saw himself as a member of the nonacademic

literati," an educated individual without loyalty to the rigorous demands of academia.[0] Buber

contended that students were born with creative tendencies and that education came down to

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p 184-185)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p 186-188)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. (p 207)
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. pp. 183-184
[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* p. 9
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 14
[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent.* Yale University Press. p. 43

the daily interactions between teacher and student. His job as an educator was as one who "pointed the way" for his students, helping guide them among an array of options for learning.[0]

The Instinct for Communion and the Reality of Relation

Buber asserted that education, as relationship, is anchored in our instinct for communion, our capacity and willingness to see our fellow and refer to them as "Thou."[0] Buber simplified educational communion as "being opened up and drawn in" through a mutuality between students and educator.[0] Students and teachers begin to create a dialogical relationship as they become aware of each other and of the world around them. It is up to the educator to inspire this instinct for communion and to encourage it to thrive.[0]

The educative relationship is a mixture of mutual realization and asymmetrical inclusion. Educators and their pupils are able to recognize each other as they stand, perceiving each other's presence which allows both parties to engage in a meaningful "I-Thou" relationship.[0] Mutuality engenders a stronger learning environment, enabling students to become more trusting of (and thereby accessible to) their educators.[0] Buber characterized this type of mutual realization as "embracing," an essential action which would allow both pupil and educator to affirm and confirm each other.[0] Buber consensus was that genuine

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[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education.* Philosophical Library. pp. xiii, 30
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 34
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. pp. 91, 98-99
[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 287. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 145
[0] Cohen, A. (1979). *Martin Buber and changes in modern education*. *Oxford Review of Education*, 5(1), p. 94. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498790050108
[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. p. 145

education occurs when both students and educators come to this moment of meeting with presence, intention, and awareness.[0]

That said, while the "I-Thou" relationship can genuinely exist within the pupil-educator relationship, these relationships are never meant to achieve complete mutuality. While the learning experience oscillates between "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships, the primary educative relationship is that of inclusion. Inclusion is the asymmetrical dialogical relationship which allows the teacher to experience the relationship from both the educator's point of view and from the pupil's point of view. The student, on the other hand, is not capable of experiencing the teacher's perspective.[0] Buber explains that in the educator's experience of the student, they are "led to an ever deeper recognition of what the human being needs in order to grow."[0] It is this one-sided recognition that allows the educator to then open the world to their students, pointing out options that engender their educative potential.

Constructing the Classroom: The Educator and The Student

The Role and Goal of the Educator

Buber's educator plays a significant role in creating a relationship of purpose, pointing out options to students who can then make their own best choices.[0] Believing that each child is born with creative powers intact, educators are expected to help highlight the

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[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 292. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Buber, M., & Agassi, J. B. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy essays, letters, and dialogue.* Syracuse Univ. Press. pp. 244-245

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 100-101

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. pp. 32-33

educational potential for each student, assisting them in the project of becoming.[0] Through

the asymmetrical relationship of inclusion, the educator is able to understand the student's

side of the educative process, including their strengths and struggles. This understanding

enables the educator "to give decisive effective power to a selection of the world which is

concentrated and manifested in the educator," who thereby designs and facilitates the

learning environment that best supports their students' learning. [0]

Buber asserted that this facilitation is the educator's way of making the world more

manageable for their students. [0] Educators act as an awakening force that galvanizes their

students to become aware of and navigate the truth of their realities.[0] Each student's potential

is confirmed and cultivated by the educator, as one who "sees every personal life as engaged

in such a process of actualization…involved in a microcosmic struggle with counterforces."[0]

It is also the Buberian educator who acts as a compassionate guide and witness for these

students who encounter and confront the environment around them. Educators inspire and

influence their students without interference.

Qualities of the Educator

Buber contended that the educator is the essential component to the educative

relationship; a quality teacher stimulates and builds genuine relationships and dialogue with

their students. The quality educator is one who humbly turns towards their students and

engages them in "the dialogue of query and reply in which both sides ask and both sides

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 297. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man*. Martino. p. 89

[0] In particular, the focus for the Buberian educator in this section is on children and adolescents, rather than on their adult counterparts.

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. xiii

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 83). essay, Harper & Row.

answer; the dialogue of the joint study by teacher and pupil of man, nature, art, and society."[0]

Though educators may experience initial resistance and mistrust from their pupils, Buber

posited that the educator's effort to unaffectedly meet students engenders trust, "confident

that this growth needs at each moment only that help which is given in meeting" and which

only the educator is able to provide.[0]

Instruction is not meant to be an imposing practice; the Buberian educator should not

use their influence to control or interfere with their students' lives.[0] Instead, the educator

teaches in a reciprocal partnership with their pupils, helping their students through the

process of maturation in areas which are relevant and resonant for them.[0] The authentic

educator is empathetic to their students' needs, guiding and counseling their students within a

framework of "quality, integrity, sincerity, and commitment."[0] Most significantly, a quality

educator truly believes in the potential of their students, and aims to consciously assist them

along their path.[0]

Qualities of the Child/Student

Martin Buber believed that children are born with creative powers, as seen in their

simple actions of construction, destruction, and reconstruction.[0] Buber wrote, "The child, in

putting things together, learns much that he can learn in no other way. In making some thing

he gets to know its possibility, its origin and structure and connexions [sic], in a way he

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[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 67

[0] Buber, M. (1966). Elements of the Interhuman. *In Knowledge of man* (p. 83). essay, Harper & Row.

[0] Cohen, A. (1979). Martin Buber and changes in modern education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 5(1), pp. 91, 96. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498790050108

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. pp. 76, 78

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. pp. 78, 80

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 154

[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), pp. 297-298. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

cannot learn by observation."[0] Children are thereby able to utilize their entire environment

for their education, and to add their own piece to the creation of the world around them.[0] As

active partners in the educative process, students are able to not only build trust and

confidence in their educators, but also to share their talents and potential with them. With a

willingness to develop a genuine dialogical relationship with their teachers, students begin to

discover themselves as a part *of* and apart *from* the world. As preconceptions and

misperceptions are broken or challenged, students face conflict and despair, then look to their

trusted educator for answers, just as they are "learning to *ask*."[0]

As children and students develop through psychological stages, they are open to

external influences and opportunities. Buber believed that pupils look to educators to better

understand their daily realities. Educators, in turn, assist their students with encountering an

"adult relationality through encounters with both individual humans and the larger non-

human world."[0] This can become challenging when they reach adolescence and find a

volatile, unpredictable, and complex world. However, Buber suggested that with a trusted

educator, adolescents feel more knowledgeable about the possibilities for relationship and for

the choices that are within their power to make.[0]

[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 87
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 85
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 106
[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 285.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232
[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 47

The (Buberian) Way of Teaching

The "Why" of Teaching:

Buber's definition of "education" differs from how it is generally perceived in the American milieu. Buber's native language—German—clearly distinguishes between two different educative models: *erziehung* and *bildung*.

Erziehung focuses on tactical instruction—wherein one gathers information or learns a trade or a skill. Buber believed that the task-focused *erziehung* was an easier educational endeavor.[0] In contrast, teachers intent on *bildung* concentrate on core character construction and ethical practices that require a deeper level of relationship and dialogue to achieve.[0] Character education requires the full intention and engagement of both educator and student, with the educator selecting "what he considered to be right and what ideals should be pursued" and the pupil giving their trust and confidence to the educator, which allows for a dialogue to begin.[0]

The "Way" of Teaching

Buber asserted that education was a design for daily living; it was meant to model a genuine encounter between people.[0] Just as we endeavor to meet the "Eternal Thou," Buber proposed that educators emulate God by bringing the world to their pupils, empowering and enabling them to be aware of all available possibilities.[0] Educators are expected to

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[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education.* p. 18
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 46
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. pp. 47-49
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 67
[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 299.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

intentionally work with every student, remembering their individual histories and unique potentialities. By remaining learner-focused, Buber disavowed a dictatorial method for an experiential and dialogical environment which promotes personal choice.[0] All of these options are pointed out during classroom encounters, through a dialogue that attempts to reach the inner recesses of the students' souls.[0]

In these educative moments of meeting, "the turning, the choosing, must come from the student."[0] Students must be willing to trust and affirm their instructors, inasmuch as they are prepared to experience the world through the lens of their teachers. Learners are part of a genuine reciprocal interchange, partnering with their pedagogue in creating dialogue and relationships of connection.[0] Through these relationships and dialogue, students are then able to make decisions more confidently as they create their own paths.

The "What" of Teaching

With a focus on *bildung*, Buberian educators are primarily focused on character education, training students to develop an active spirit and to live ethically within a community.[0] Educators help students understand universal values, accept responsibility for their actions, and foster communal morality. Subject matter is a means for "the attainment of

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[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), pp. 300-304. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0]   Sadeh, L. (2019, June 26). *קולות של הרוח-פילוסופיה דיאלוגית: מרטין בובר* [Voice of the spirit: Dialogical philosophy: Martin Buber]. https://www.kolot.info/podcast/episode/c24ad381/

"שאני מתעסק בחינוך להיות במקום של נפש שאני מביא את כל את הנפש שאני מנסה לפגוש בנפש וזה מאוד קשה"
[0] Blenkinsop, S. (2005). Martin Buber: Educating for relationship. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 8(3), p. 292. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668790500348232

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 66

[0] Cohen, A. (1983). *The educational philosophy of Martin Buber*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. p. 230

an educational goal," which empowers pupils to carefully investigate the world around them,

aiming to arrive at the best available moral option.[0]

For Buber, however, all of these options and moral choices needed to be implemented

in real life, because "…teaching is inseparably bound up with doing. Here, if anywhere, it is

impossible to teach or to learn without living."[0] *Bildung* needs to be embodied if growth is to

be assessed; amassing a wealth of knowledge is not equal to receiving a values-based

education. In actualizing these moral choices, the Buberian educator inspires an increased

awareness within their pupils, making "each student aware of [their] responsibility to search,

research, and become uniquely [them]self."[0]

Limits of Education

For Buber, the parameters of education are limited by the relationship between an

educator and their pupil. As there is no promise of unconditional agreement, conflicts may

arise as "the supreme test of the educator."[0] These conflicts can form barriers between the

educator and student, especially if the students are resistant to learning. However, these

conflicts can also be deconstructed through dialogue which, as Buber wrote, allows us to

"recognize one another and ourselves."[0]

While the creation of the "I-Thou" relationship is an important target for Buber's

educational theory, the relational dynamic of education remains one of mutual realization and

asymmetrical inclusion. As students mature into adulthood, the dialogical relationship with

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. pp. 57-58, 83
[0] Buber, M. (1963). Teaching and Deed. *In Israel and the world: Essays in a time of crisis* (p. 140). essay, Schocken Books.
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education.* Philosophical Library. pp. 43, 88-89
[0] Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2014). *Between man and man.* Martino. p. 107
[0] Buber, M. (1963). Teaching and Deed. *In Israel and the world: Essays in a time of crisis* (p. 144). essay, Schocken Books.

their teachers may increase in mutuality, and the educative dialogue will change depending on the age and capacity of the students.[0] At its most mature, the relationship is more akin to Buber's concept of friendship, wherein the pupil and teacher equally affirm and confirm each other's perspectives, inevitably breaking down the educative aspect of the relationship.[0]

Conclusion

Martin Buber's love of relationship and dialogue is clearly evident in his educational philosophy, encouraging both educators and student to pursue impactful "I-Thou" relationships. An educator's primary educational endeavor is focused on *bildung*, the character education of pupils that could be organically implemented in community.[0] This implementation is "ultimately aimed at igniting the 'holy spark'…[in] participants," allowing for students to engage strongly with the world around them, acting on elements which were thoughtfully selected by their educators for future study.[0] Through "inclusion of the 'genuine educator,'" students are empowered to translate their learnings into practical action.[0] Mutuality and reciprocity create authentic exchanges between pupils and pedagogue.

Students and educators are able to engage in a dialogical relationship once both parties accept and trust each other. This trust and acceptance allows for an "I-Thou"

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[0]   Sadeh, L. (2019, June 26). *קולות של הרוח-פילוסופיה דיאלוגית: מרטין בובר* [Voice of the spirit: Dialogical philosophy: Martin Buber]. https://www.kolot.info/podcast/episode/c24ad381/

"אני חושב שזה האתגר הגדול שאנחנו מנסים לעשות בתוך אולם החינוך וכמובן שמי שלא מסוגל לדיאלוג מחוץ לאולם קינוח לא יהיה מסוגל להגן ובטוחה להם קינוח וזה לא הצליח להגיע למצב של חינוך דיאלוגי אגב בכל גיל להשהות שומעת ואופי דיאלוג משתנים בשאלה האם לילד בן חמש רואים זה מבוגר בן 40."

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education.* Philosophical Library. p. 39

[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education.* Philosophical Library. p. 63

[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2016). Martin Buber, Hasidism, and Jewish spirituality: The implications for education and for pastoral care. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 34(3), p. 138. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2016.1167233

[0] Avnon, D. (1998). *Martin Buber: The hidden dialogue*. Rowman and Littlefield. p. 199

educative relationship to arise, wherein students engage in dialogue based on their capacity and comfort while instructors influence the scope of the conversation. [0] These dialogical relationships have a direct and long-lasting effect upon the learning experience, as it is "through dialogue both the teacher and the pupil observe and analyze the realities of life and together contribute from their stores of knowledge and experience to the improvement and progress of their society."[0] Thus it is the meeting of the student and educator—both their relationship and dialogue—that allows for genuine education to occur. In a shared and reciprocal dialogue, both parties are partners in building a strong community and actualizing their own unique selves.

[0] Guilherme, A., & Morgan, W. J. (2017). *Philosophy, dialogue, and education*. pp. 16-17
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736532
[0] Weinstein, J., & Buber, M. (1975). *Buber and Humanistic Education*. Philosophical Library. p. 61

Conclusion

"Above all, it has become painfully evident to me that I must pull myself together with all my strength, and that I must in the next few months, or rather weeks, accomplish something." [0]
—Martin Buber

Concluding Charms, Curiosities, and Connections

I entered this process both believing that Martin Buber's relational philosophy could greatly impact and inform the practice of pediatric chaplaincy and with an openness to see whether that influence would be borne out by practical experience and with a thorough review of Buber's literature. When I began my research during my second unit of CPE, I thought that it would be possible to focus primarily on Buber's relational philosophy— believing that *I and Thou* and *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching* would prove my hypothesis true.

Though I believed that Buber's areas of thought could be neatly distinguished into distinct strands, Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman helped me understand that Buber's works are an exemplary exercise in intersectionality. Each area of Buber's thought greatly influences the others, enabling a holistic pathway into how Buber believed human beings approach and experience life. My reading and research led me to a surprising realization: in addition to Buber's relational philosophy, his dialogical and educational philosophies are also connected to how we can experience and understand pediatric chaplaincy.

From my preliminary reading and research, I had anticipated that Buber's philosophies can indeed inform and impact the practice of pediatric chaplaincy. Throughout

[0] Mendes-Flohr, P. (2019). *Martin Buber: A life of faith and dissent*. Yale University Press. p. 42

my second unit of CPE, I read the entirety of the Nash et al. textbook, *Paediatric*

Chaplaincy: Principles, practices, and skills. As I read, I found that "people begin to want

language that helps them make sense of what they have been through, but may lack

confidence in their own meaning-making; they feel that their faith has been broken. People

look to chaplains to offer spiritual language in order to examine their faith, articulate their

narrative frameworks, and reconstruct their sense of meaning."[0] These constructions appear

to align with Buber's thought on relationship-building, dialogue, and education—ensuring

that both parties are aware of each other through dialogue, even if they are just sitting

together in silence, trying to find the words or interpreting the nonverbal cues.

Therefore, I submit that Buber's dialogical and educational frameworks more directly

map onto the pediatric chaplaincy experience than the relational framework. Though

children's psychological development may limit their language and capacity to converse,

meaningful encounters with pediatric patients often occur through play and non-verbal

communication. As "dialogue is the primary service and activity of chaplains," there is a set

limit to the dialogical relationship between a chaplain and their patient that is based in the

psychological development of the patient and the consent of their caregivers.[0]

While exploring the breadth of Buber's writings, I realized that it is primarily the

Buberian educator who could be neatly and easily mapped on to the pediatric chaplain who,

like the educator, is a "compassionate witness" and "compassionate guide."[0] Pediatric

chaplains, like educators, awaken and motivate their patients to navigate their challenging

[0] Nash, P., Bartel, M., & Nash, S. (2018). *Paediatric chaplaincy: Principles, practices and skills*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. p. 209

[0] Holm, N. (2009). Practising the Ministry of Presence in Chaplaincy. *Journal of Christian Education*, os-52(3), p. 41. https://doi.org/10.1177/002196570905200305

[0] I would like to thank Rev. Daniel H. Yang for the language of "compassionate witness" and "compassionate guide" and his guidance during the brainstorming of this educational exploration.

realities. Educators, according to Buber, were never meant to direct or dictate, but rather to point out all of the possibilities and opportunities—creating a "selection of the world"—from which their students could then cull. Pediatric chaplains also "point the way," empowering their patients to elect a myriad of reflective and dialogical modes: play, aromatherapy, meditation, music, prayer, etc.

I acknowledge that Buber's ultimate "I-Thou" relationship can indeed transform a hospital room into a holy space. The pediatric chaplain's ability to maintain the role of a "compassionate guide" echoes the experience of a Buberian educator, aligning with Buber's asymmetrical relationship of educative inclusion wherein the chaplain can see their own perspective as well as their patients'. Pediatric chaplaincy is a practice that requires constant turning and realization, in the Buberian sense, in order to affirm and confirm pediatric patients. When pediatric chaplains enter into a genuine encounter with their patients, they first must affirm their pediatric patient as the child, adolescent, or emerging adult they are and then to realize the realm of possibilities available to them. In realizing their patient's full potential, pediatric chaplains are then able to confirm the patient's unified existence (as they are and as they could be). This deep acceptance of their patient thereby enables the chaplain to confirm their patient's unique existence and essential being. Holiness is created when both patient and pediatric chaplain are able to realize and confirm each other.

While it is possible that both the chaplain and the patient have an instinct for communion, working with certain subsections of the pediatric population may require a mediated relationship with the patient's support system. As chaplains speak with the families and/or caregivers of pediatric patients, they may also find it challenging to toggle between the "I-Thou" and "I-It" modes of relationship.

The Efficacy of the NYP MS-CHONY Experiment

I designed the questionnaires by dividing them into the pre-encounter and post-encounter sections in Buber's *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching*, believing that Buber's preparations for creating holy moments in authentic meeting could be translated to the liminal space of the hospital ward. The hope was that the Buberian framework of the questionnaire would enable pediatric chaplains to truly "turn" toward their patients, preparing themselves for a meaningful encounter before entering the room, and then what would happen for them if they immediately reflected on the experience for future learning.

For the CPE interns who took part in this experiment (including me!), the pre-pediatric patient visit questionnaire invited us to focus on our presence entering the room, raising awareness of our energy and stress levels, and our intended roles and goals for each visit. Buber's belief that the first step in *The Way* was "Heart Searching" directly related to the questionnaire's focus on our understanding of how we were feeling immediately prior to entering the room. As we continued preparing with the questionnaire, we explored Buber's "The Particular Way," which allowed us to name (and mitigate) our fears, engage and employ our unique strengths, and create a developmentally appropriate visit for each patient and their families. Finally, with the "Resolution" section, we worked toward a centered approach, identifying (and potentially dismissing) distractions, turning our focus toward the patient, and revisiting the aim, goal, and purpose of our visit. All three of these pre-pediatric patient visit questionnaire sections encouraged us to realize how we, as chaplains, were able to come into the room emotionally, professionally, psychologically, and relationally—remembering what it was that we were aiming to do with and for each patient.

The post-pediatric patient visit questionnaire focused on the encounter itself, while simultaneously empowering chaplains to reflect and prepare for their next visits.[0] "Beginning with Oneself" enabled us to challenge assumptions and/or judgments that we were bringing into the visit with us,[0] and often even changed how we introduced ourselves in the visits themselves ("I began differently! Checked in with pt and her breathing tube which she didn't like. Ended up introducing myself mid breathing exercise and after turning neb into a game").[0] We utilized Buber's framework to think beyond ourselves (or "not to be preoccupied with oneself") and attempted to avoid any self-focused tendencies in our chaplaincy experiences ("It starts with listening. If the patient doesn't want to talk, the right response is to accept that, and not try to chaplain them into cooperating").[0] In another attempt to maintain the special pediatric requirements for split focus and play, the second two questions in this section required that we pick a "major focus"—for my own experience, this actually pushed me to focus more on the pediatric patient in each visit, and less on their parents/caregivers. Finally, in "Here Where One Stands," we were able to focus on how the "I-Thou" relationship might have been created: in moments where both chaplain and patient maintained presence ("We smiled and giggled at each other") and on shared relations ("Mom and I related on the joy of having some good news"). Chaplains were able to find holiness in almost every visit, through playing, being in the presence of suffering, providing comfort to a specific faith tradition, observing interactions, celebrating, praying, meditating, observing, and connecting with patients and their caregivers.

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[0] Quotes come directly from chaplain responses to the pre-/post- pediatric patient visit questionnaires.
[0] Checking in with ourselves first also paralleled the "Heart Searching" section in the pre-pediatric patient visit questionnaire—starting with ourselves enabled us to really check in with our own emotional temperatures and assessments of the visit.
[0] "Pt": Patient, "Neb": Nebulizer
[0] "Pt": Patient, "Neb": Nebulizer

These two Buberian-based questionnaires seemed to both impact and inform the pediatric chaplaincy experiences of my intern cohort, my own included. Completing these questionnaires appeared to allow chaplains to enter into their patients' hospital rooms with an increased presence and focus on the particular needs and psychological development of the patients whom they visited. As I attempted to assess my functioning before and after I began to utilize the survey, I noted a direct correlation between my reflecting before and after visits *and* my ability to engage in stronger dialogue with my patients. Reflecting also allowed me to comprehend my standing as a pediatric chaplain and helped me identify and celebrate any and all holy moments within these hospital wards. The Buberian framework produced a key tool for the NYP Columbia/MS-CHONY CPE interns, especially when entering into first-time visits with pediatric patients.

While the mechanism was valuable to the intern population, it is possible that the questionnaires might not be efficient enough for full-time staff chaplains. Professional chaplains are meant to be grappling with these questions on a regular basis (even if they do not exist for them within the Buberian framework), and so it may seem redundant or lack the same impact for chaplains who have been practicing pediatric chaplaincy for some time and who already engage in deliberate reflection. I do believe that this would be a good tool to use for Unit I and Unit II chaplaincy interns, perhaps limiting some of the open-ended questions in order for them to respond to the surveys more efficiently and more often.

Areas for Further Exploration and Study

While I was truly appreciative of the research and experiences that contributed to the preparation of this thesis, their limits have made me realize that there are still a number of areas for further exploration and study.

First and foremost, there is a dearth of peer-reviewed articles written about pediatric chaplaincy and its distinctive demands and opportunities. Additional information on pediatric chaplaincy as a whole can help provide a stronger context from which to determine whether Buber's educator truly aligns with the pediatric chaplain.

The research for this thesis was confined to the Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York, a hospital system solely dedicated to pediatric care (separate from the adult patient population in the NYP Columbia-Milstein hospital). Further areas for research include how pediatric chaplaincy is practiced:

a. within an integrated system (e.g. a smaller hospital without a dedicated pediatric care facility)

b. with a more specific patient sample (e.g. a banded age range, verbal v. nonverbal pediatric patients, patients with specific diagnoses)

c. when limited to a specific religious/faith-based/spiritual tradition

This experiment relied exclusively on responses from the Summer 2022 CPE intern cohort who were experiencing increased stress and burnout in the second half of the summer experience. In the future, I believe that beginning these experiments earlier in the process might lead to more effective (and energetic) responses. It would also be valuable to have

regular assessments with respondents in order to gauge whether or not this questionnaire was impacting the pediatric chaplain experience. Since staff chaplains did not choose to participate in this experiment, might there be a different way of approaching them to encourage their participation?

My experimental questionnaires were formed with a special focus on the pediatric chaplain's experience of the encounter. Another area for exploration would be to redesign the survey in order to receive feedback from the patient and/or caregivers' experience of those same interactions. This would allow for both parties to identify if they feel that were engaged in a meaningful encounter—an "I-Thou" moment. If the answers did not align, then genuine dialogue would not have been achieved.

This leads to the question of whether or not "genuine dialogue" is something that can be quantified. Is it possible to claim through a religious lens what "genuine dialogue" contains and when/how it might be lacking?   There are practical considerations related to the willingness, strength and capacity of children and their accompanying adults to participate in such a study. From my research, I came to believe that the paradigm of the Buberian educator could be mapped onto the pediatric chaplain. Is this mapping as "compassionate guide" still operative when the focus switches from the patient's experiences to the caregivers' experiences? And, if it does, is it worthwhile to explore its efficacy with adult patients? These were things that I was unable to cover in this particular process.

There is also a danger of leaning too closely into the Buberian framework. I believe that in future studies, the ability to check for confirmation bias might restrict participants from labeling and naming experiences in a way that best supported my hypothesis. Is it

realistic that nearly everything could be labeled as "holy" and "I-Thou"-worthy upon post-encounter reflection?

Finally, the conditions that contribute to "successful 'I-Thou' relationships" might be influenced by Western philosophy and thinking. While Buber did have an affinity for Eastern thinking, an area for further study would be to see if Buber's relational, dialogical, and educational philosophies are applicable on a universal scale (as opposed to being culturally or geographically influenced).

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Appendices

Appendix I: Pre-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

Pre-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

Please fill in this form honestly before heading into your patient visit.

Heart Searching

Check in with yourself and answer honestly with your first gut answer.

What is my energy level? *

Base this on your personal baseline energy level. Are you feeling more or less fatigued on average?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Exhausted	○	○	○	○	○	Excited

What is my stress level? *

Base this on your personal baseline stress level. Are you feeling calmer or more stressed than on average?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Cool as a cucumber	○	○	○	○	○	Super stressed

What is my role, goal, and context going into this visit? *

Role: Who are you in this visit? Goal: Why are you there? Context: Where are you? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Back   Next   Clear form

The Particular Way

Each person has a unique way in which they serve.
Use these questions to help you find yours. (1-2 sentences MAX per question)

What past experiences might impact how I am going into this particular visit? *

Is this your first visit of the day? Is this your first visit with this patient? (What might make THIS visit different?) (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

What unique strengths am I bringing in with me? *

Are you a great listener? A good reflector? Have fantastic comedic timing? Love to meditate? What makes your chaplaincy YOURS? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

How will I ensure that my approach to this visit is developmentally appropriate for my patient? *

How will you shape your approach to meet the needs of your patient? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Back   Next   Clear form

Resolution

Are you feeling fully unified in your vision? Or are there distractions pulling your focus before you enter the room? Use these questions to find out (1-2 sentences MAX per question)

What is distracting me? *
Pick any/all that apply.

- ☐ Bodily Sensation (pain, discomfort, temperature issues, etc.)
- ☐ Mental/Cognitive Distraction (thoughts, daydreams, outside of the visit etc.)
- ☐ Being at the Edge of the Unknown (anxiety, fear, etc.)
- ☐ I'm not feeling distracted--I'm totally in it!
- ☐ Other: _____

How can I ensure that I'm going into my visit fully present? *
What's one thing that you can do to increase your focus? (1-2 Sentences MAX)

Your answer

What is the main aim, goal, or purpose of my visit? *
Why are you going into the room? (1-2 Sentences MAX)

Your answer
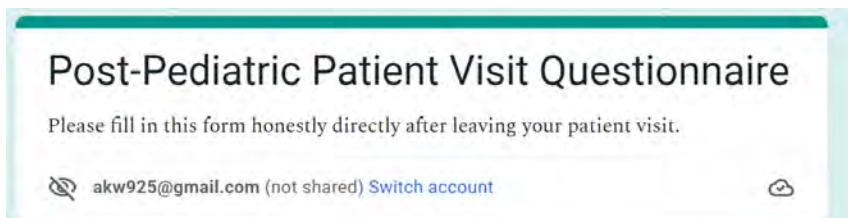
Back   Submit   Clear form

Appendix II: Post-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

Post-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

Please fill in this form honestly directly after leaving your patient visit.

akw925@gmail.com (not shared) Switch account

Post-Pediatric Patient Visit Questionnaire

👁‍🗨 **akw925@gmail.com** (not shared) Switch account ☁

* Required

Beginning with Oneself

Each visit begins with YOUR perspective. What are you bringing into the room with you?
(1-2 sentences MAX per question)

What assumptions and/or judgments did I bring into the room with me? *

What was your emotional temperature when you walked into the room? What obstacles may have stood in the way of making a real connection? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

How did I authentically begin or introduce myself in this visit? *

What was important for your patient to know about YOU? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Post-visit: what am I feeling right now and where is that feeling coming from? *

A different way to read this question: Where are you hurting right now and where is that hurt coming from? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Back   Next   Clear form

Not to Be Preoccupied With Oneself

It starts with you. But it's not about you.
Let's check in on that external perspective. (1-2 sentences MAX per question except for the last)

How did I avoid any "world's greatest chaplain"/"I can fix this" tendencies? *

In your visit, what did you do to move the focus to the patient and family? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Who in the room held the majority of my focus? *

The caregivers? The child? The neonate? The medical staff? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

If my patient had "main character energy," how would I tell their story? *

Be creative! (Disney, allegory, limerick, haiku, comic, Marvel, Broadway, etc.) (As long as you like)

Your answer

Back   Next   Clear form

Here Where One Stands

Each person may find their best selves exactly where the stand. How does your visit help you understand where you and they best stand/sit/lie down?
(1-2 sentences MAX per question)

How did I and my patient maintain a presence in the "here and now?" *

How were you present? How did you help your patient be present? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

On what did I and my patient relate during the visit? *

What was your/their role? What did you find in common? How did their presence impact yours? (1-2 sentences MAX)

Your answer

Where did you find the holiness in this encounter? *

What is staying with you post-visit? What's inspiring you? Troubling you? Where was the major point of connection for you in this visit? (1-2 Sentences MAX)

Your answer

Did this process inform or improve your chaplaincy experience? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Other: