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### The emerging concept of communication as dialogue

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## THE EMERGING CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION AS DIALOGUE

Richard L. Johannesen

AS with the terms rhetoric, propaganda, and communication, the word "dialogue" apparently means many things to many people, both laymen and scholars. In the political arena we hear the give and take of debate labeled the public dialogue. Religious leaders of divergent faiths exchange views in ecumenical dialogue. Educational experts encourage classroom dialogue through use of group discussion. Classicists elucidate Plato's dialogues and dramatists strive for effective theatrical dialogue. Communication researchers remind us that communication is not a one-way transmission but a two-way dialogic transaction. And race relations experts urge expanded dialogue between blacks and whites.

From such fields as philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, and religion, another view of dialogue is emerging. The outline and details of this view presently are only broadly and flexibly defined. Proponents discuss the concept of communication as dialogue in contrast to communication as monologue. Following

the lead of Martin Buber's notion of the I-Thou dialogic relationship, books such as *The Miracle of Dialogue* and *The Human Dialogue* represent but two attempts to explore the nature of communication as dialogue.

The purpose of this essay is to provide groundwork for further investigation of the concept of communication as dialogue.<sup>1</sup> In doing so three general areas will be examined: (1) the components of the concept of dialogue; (2) the nature of monologue as viewed by the advocates of dialogue; and (3) some questions and issues concerning dialogue to be raised in carrying out communication research.

### I

This description of the characteristics of dialogue stems from a variety of sources. Among contemporary existentialist philosophers, Martin Buber is the primary one who places the concept of

<sup>1</sup> The central elements of dialogic communication are treated by various scholars under such labels as authentic communication, conversation, therapeutic communication, nondirective therapy, presence, participation, existential communication, encounter, supportive climate, helping relationship, and loving relationship.

dialogue at the heart of his view of human communication and existence.<sup>2</sup> His writings have served as a stimulus for the views of others on dialogue.<sup>3</sup> Two other existentialists who find dialogue, or its equivalent, fundamental to our understanding of man are Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars such as

Reuel Howe, Georges Gusdorf, Floyd Matson, and Ashley Montagu also elaborate the concept.<sup>5</sup> And the principle of dialogue appears in the conceptions of effective human communication described by such psychiatrists and psychologists as Carl Rogers, Joost Meerloo, Eric Fromm, Paul Tournier, and Jack Gibb.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Maurice S. Friedman, in Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way*, trans. Friedman (New York, 1963), p. x; Frank E. X. Dance, "Communication and Ecumenism," *Journal of Communication*, XIX (March 1969), 14-21; and *The Human Dialogue*, ed. Floyd W. Matson and Ashley Montagu (New York, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The major works by Buber relevant to communication as dialogue are *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, 2nd ed. (New York, 1958); *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York, 1965), espec. pp. 1-39 and 83-103; *The Knowledge of Man*, ed. Maurice S. Friedman, trans. Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith (London, 1965), espec. pp. 72-88, 110-120, and 166-184; and *Pointing the Way*, espec. pp. 83, 206, and 220-239. The standard analysis of Buber's concept of dialogue is Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* (New York, 1960), espec. pp. 57-97, 123-126, and 176-183. See also Paul E. Pfuetze, *Self, Society, Existence: Human Nature and Dialogue in the Thought of George Herbert Mead and Martin Buber* (New York, 1961), pp. 139-206. For somewhat technical philosophical analyses of Buber's dialogue concept see the following essays in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (La Salle, Ill., 1967): Nathan Rotenstreich, "The Right and the Limitations of Buber's Dialogical Thought," pp. 97-132; Malcolm L. Diamond, "Dialogue and Theology," pp. 235-247; and Helmut Kuhn, "Dialogue in Expectation," pp. 639-664.

<sup>4</sup> *The Worlds of Existentialism*, ed. Maurice Friedman (New York, 1964), p. 543; Edmund F. Byrne and Edward A. Maziarz, *Human Being and Being Human* (New York, 1969), pp. 262-294; and Matson and Montagu, pp. 6-7. In Friedman's *The Worlds of Existentialism*, pp. 202-213, selections on dialogue by Jaspers and Marcel are presented. Among the works of Karl Jaspers see *Philosophy*, trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago, 1969), II, 56-69, 76-77, 97, and 101; *The Future of Mankind* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 219-233 and 267; *Reason and Existenz*, trans. William Earle (New York, 1955); and *The Way to Wisdom*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, Conn., 1951), pp. 25-27, 106-108, and 120-131. On Jaspers see Fritz Kaufman, "Karl Jaspers and a Philosophy of Communication," in *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York, 1957), pp. 211-295. Among Marcel's works see *The Mystery of Being*, trans. G. S. Fraser (Chicago, 1952), I, 210-224; II, 7-17; *Metaphysical Journal*, trans. Bernard Wall (Chicago, 1952), pp. 137, 145-147, 154-163, 202, and 291; and "I and Thou," in Schilpp and Fried-

man, pp. 41-48. On Marcel see Seymour Cain, *Gabriel Marcel* (New York, 1963), pp. 35-48.

<sup>5</sup> Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (New York, 1963), espec. pp. 6 and 36-83; Georges Gusdorf, *Speaking (La Parole)*, trans. Paul T. Brockelman (Evanston, Ill., 1965), espec. pp. 57, 84-85, and 101-104; and Matson and Montagu, pp. 1-11.

Martin Buber's concept of two primary human attitudes and relationships, I-Thou and I-It, is seminal in influ-

man, pp. 41-48. On Marcel see Seymour Cain, *Gabriel Marcel* (New York, 1963), pp. 35-48.

<sup>5</sup> Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (New York, 1963), espec. pp. 6 and 36-83; Georges Gusdorf, *Speaking (La Parole)*, trans. Paul T. Brockelman (Evanston, Ill., 1965), espec. pp. 57, 84-85, and 101-104; and Matson and Montagu, pp. 1-11.

<sup>6</sup> Among the works of Carl R. Rogers see *Client-Centered Therapy* (Boston, 1951), espec. pp. 19-64; *On Becoming a Person* (Boston, 1961), espec. pp. 16-22, 31-69, 126-158, and 338-346; *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston, 1942); *The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning* (Columbus, Ohio, 1968); "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, XXI (February 1957), 95-103; Rogers and Barry Stevens, *Person to Person* (Lafayette, Calif., 1967), espec. pp. 89-103; and Rogers and Charles B. Truax, "The Therapeutic Conditions Antecedent to Change: A Theoretical View," in *The Therapeutic Relationship and Its Impact*, ed. Carl R. Rogers (Madison, Wis., 1967), pp. 97-108. See also Joost Abraham Maurits Meerloo, *Conversation and Communication* (New York, 1952), espec. pp. 192-239; Eric Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956), espec. pp. 7-31; Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons*, trans. Edwin Hudson (New York, 1957), espec. pp. 123-159, 191, 196, 203, and 209; and Jack R. Gibb, "Defensive Communication," *Journal of Communication*, XI (September 1961), 141-148.

<sup>7</sup> Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," *College Composition and Communication*, XIV (October 1963), 139-145.

encing the emerging concept of communication as dialogue. The I-It relation will be discussed in the next section on monologue. According to Buber, the fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. Interaction between men through dialogue promotes development of personality and knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

In the I-Thou or dialogic relationship between men, the attitudes and behavior of each communication participant are characterized by such qualities as mutuality, open-heartedness, directness, honesty, spontaneity, frankness, lack of pretense, nonmanipulative intent, communion, intensity, and love in the sense of responsibility of one human for another. In dialogue, although interested in being understood, and perhaps in influencing, a speaker does not attempt to impose his own truth or view on another and he is not interested in bolstering his own ego or self-image. Each person in a dialogic relation is accepted for what he is as a unique individual. One becomes totally aware of the other rather than functioning as an observer or onlooker. The essential movement in dialogue is turning toward, outgoing to, and reaching for the other. And a basic element in dialogue is "seeing the other" or "experiencing the other side." One also does not forego his own convictions or views, but he strives to understand those of the other and avoids imposing his own on the other. For Buber the increasing difficulty of achieving genuine dialogue between men of divergent natures and beliefs represents the central problem for the fate of mankind; the future of man, he feels, depends on a rebirth of dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Friedman, *Martin Buber*, pp. 57, 59, 62, 64, and 85-86; Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 6, 11, 34, 46, and 48; and Buber, *Between Man and Man*, p. 203.

<sup>9</sup> This description of Buber's conception is based on Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 5-10, 20-21, and 96-101; Buber, *Knowledge of*

Carl Rogers provides a second major impetus for the developing concept of communication as dialogue. The communication process characteristic of Rogers' client-centered or nondirective approach to psychotherapy is very similar to dialogic communication.<sup>10</sup> Nondirective therapy involves active acceptance of the patient as a worthy individual for whom the counselor has genuine respect. It puts fundamental stress on the therapist's assuming of the internal frame of reference of the client and on perceiving both the world and the client through the client's own eyes. The therapist must be genuine and avoid front or facade. He exhibits a non-possessive caring and prizes the client's feelings and opinions. He trusts the client and sees him as a separate person having worth in his own right, even though he differs with the patient's views. The therapist assumes a nonevaluative orientation. Clearly the nondirective approach and Buber's dialogue concept share much in common.<sup>11</sup>

We are now in a position to describe the characteristics of dialogue fundamental to the emerging concept. These are the major components virtually all scholars writing on dialogue, under whatever label, identify as essential for

*Man*, pp. 76-77 and 86; Buber, *Pointing the Way*, p. 222; and Friedman, *Martin Buber*, pp. 57, 81-82, 85-89, 97, and 180-181.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, pp. 19-64; Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, pp. 16-22, 31-69, 126-158, and 338-346; and Rogers and Stevens, pp. 89-103. On several occasions Rogers specified questions the therapist, or any communicator in a "helping relationship," should use to guide his behavior. See *Client-Centered Therapy*, p. 20 and *On Becoming a Person*, pp. 50-55.

<sup>11</sup> For explorations of similarities, and some differences, between the notions of Rogers and Buber see the public discussion held by these men reprinted in Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, pp. 166-184. See also Friedman, *Martin Buber*, pp. 191-193; Friedman in Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, pp. 29-33; and Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, pp. 55 and 202.

dialogic communication.<sup>12</sup> (1) *Genuineness*. One is direct, honest, and straightforward. One imparts himself as he really is and avoids facade, stratagem, or projecting an image. The communication filters formed by roles, conventions, and artifice must be overcome. Openness to all relevant information and feeling is encouraged. (2) *Accurate Empathic Understanding*. Things are seen from the other's viewpoint. One feels an event from the side of the other as well as from one's own side. Feelings should be accurately reflected and clarified. (3) *Unconditional Positive Regard*. One expresses nonpossessive warmth for the other. The other is valued for his worth and integrity as a human. A partner in dialogue is affirmed, not merely tolerated, even though one opposes him. The other is confirmed in his right to his individuality. And confirmation, or unconditional positive regard, implies a desire to assist the other to maximize his potential, to help him become what he can become. The spirit of mutual trust is promoted. One affirms the other as a unique individual without necessarily approving of his behavior. (4) *Presentness*. Participants in a dialogue must give full concentration to bringing their total and authentic beings to the encounter. They must demonstrate willingness to become fully involved with each other by taking time, avoiding distraction, being communicatively accessible, and risking attachment. One avoids being an onlooker who simply takes in what is presented to him or an observer who analyzes. Rather what is said to one enters

meaningfully into his life; one sets aside the armor used to thwart the signs of personal address. The dialogic person listens receptively and attentively and responds readily and totally. One is willing to reveal himself to others and to receive their revelation. (5) *Spirit of Mutual Equality*. Although society may rank participants in dialogue as of unequal status or accomplishment, the participants themselves view each other as persons, not as objects to be manipulated or exploited. The exercise of power or superiority is avoided. Participants do not impose their opinion, cause, or will. In dialogic communication, agreement of the listener with the speaker's aim is secondary to independent, self-deciding participation. Participants aid each other in making responsible decisions regardless whether the decision be favorable or unfavorable to the particular view presented. (6) *Supportive Psychological Climate*. One encourages the other to communicate. One allows free expression, seeks understanding, and avoids value judgments that stifle. One shows desire and capacity to listen without anticipating, interfering, competing, refuting, or warping meanings into preconceived interpretations. Assumptions and prejudices are minimized.

## 2

In elaborating their view of communication as dialogue, most writers discuss the concept of communication as monologue. To illuminate dialogue they contrast it with monologue as an undesirable, although often unavoidable, type of human communication. Monologue frequently is equated with persuasion or with propaganda. Matson and Montagu contend that "the field of communication is today more than ever a battleground contested by two opposing con-

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Raymond E. Anderson, "Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue," paper read at 1969 SAA convention; Pfuetze, pp. 153-157 and 166-186; Dean C. Barnlund, *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies* (Boston, 1968), pp. 637-640; and Charles B. Truax and Robert R. Carkhuff, *Toward Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 23-43, 46-47, 58-60, 68-69, and 141.

ceptual forces—those of *monologue* and *dialogue*.”<sup>13</sup>

Much of the writing on monologue stems from Buber's conception of the I-It relation which often manifests itself in monologue, propaganda, or pseudo-dialogue. Buber believes that I-It relations are often unavoidable in human life and only become evil when they master one's life and shut out dialogue. In contrast, Howe contends that any monologue, or nondialogue, relation is inherently evil because it exploits and seeks to “appropriate.”<sup>14</sup>

An I-It relation, according to Buber, is characterized by self-centeredness, deception, pretense, display, appearance, artifice, using, profit, unapproachability, seduction, domination, exploitation, and manipulation.<sup>15</sup> The user of monologue or propaganda manipulates others for his own selfish ends. He aims at power over another and views the other as an object of enjoyment or as something through which to profit. The propagandist is only concerned with the personal attributes of the other to the extent that he can capitalize on them to achieve persuasion. In monologue one is concerned with what others think of him, with prestige and authority, with display of one's own feelings, with display of power, and with moulding others in one's own image.

Buber describes typical examples of monologue disguised as dialogue.

A *debate* in which the thoughts are not expressed in the way in which they existed in the mind but in the speaking are so pointed that they may strike home in the sharpest way, and moreover without the men that are spoken to

being regarded in any way present as persons; a *conversation* characterized by the need neither to communicate something, nor to learn something, nor to influence someone, nor to come into connexion with someone, but solely by the desire to have one's own self-reliance confirmed by marking the impression that is made, or if it has become unsteady to have it strengthened; a *friendly chat* in which each regards himself as absolute and legitimate and the other as relativized and questionable; a *lovers' talk* in which both partners alike enjoy their own glorious soul and their precious experience—what an underworld of faceless spectres of dialogue!<sup>16</sup>

Writers such as Matson and Montagu, Howe, Gusdorf, and Greenagel use much the same vocabulary as Buber to explain monologue.<sup>17</sup> A person employing monologue seeks to command, coerce, manipulate, conquer, dazzle, deceive, or exploit. Others are viewed as things to be exploited for the speaker's self-serving purpose; they are not taken seriously as persons. Choices are narrowed and consequences are obscured. Focus is on the speaker's message, not on the audience's real needs. The core values, goals, and policies espoused by the speaker are impervious to influence exerted by listeners. Audience feedback is used only to further the speaker's purpose. An honest response from a listener is not wanted or is precluded. The purpose of monologue is to get audience consensus with the speaker's view, to get others to do what he wants, and to impose his truth on someone else. The speaker has the superior attitude that he must tell people what they ought to know; he gives his answers to other people's questions. Monologue lacks mutual trust and it dis-

<sup>16</sup> Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> Matson and Montagu, pp. 3-10; Howe, pp. 18-56 and 84-88; Gusdorf, pp. 106-108; and Frank Greenagel, “Manipulation and the Cult of Communication in Contemporary Industry,” in *Communication-Spectrum* 7, proceedings of the 1968 conference of the National Society for the Study of Communication, ed. Lee Thayer, pp. 237-245. See also Jaspers, *Philosophy*, II, 49, 60, 80-84, and 90 and Meerloo, pp. 94-97 and 133-143.

<sup>13</sup> Matson and Montagu, p. viii.

<sup>14</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 34, 46, and 48; and Howe, pp. 38-39.

<sup>15</sup> The following description of the I-It relation is based on Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 34, 38, 43, 60, 105, and 107; Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, pp. 82-83; Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 19-20, 23, 29-30, and 95; and Friedman, *Martin Buber*, pp. 57-58, 63, 82, 123-124, and 180.

plays a defensive spirit of self-justification. Monologue is seen, then, as unilateral persuasion aiming at the gaining of power by one person over another.

## 3

If future research on the human communication process is to be undertaken in light of the concept of communication as dialogue, what are some basic considerations and issues? A crucial issue is, in fact, whether dialogue can be subjected to empirical research. Tournier maintains that the study of the dialogic relationship "eludes the objective scientific study of man."<sup>18</sup> The subjective, spontaneous nature of the dialogic spirit may hinder objective scrutiny. But despite the unplanned nature of dialogue, Buber believes that "one can hold oneself free and open for it."<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this is what Thomas Nilsen means by choosing to open oneself to dialogue. "I can choose whether I will consider the other's self-determining choice more important than his acceptance of mine; I can choose whether I will turn to the other and seek to meet him; to perceive him in his wholeness and uniqueness; I can choose whether I will value him as a person above all else. I can choose to try to relate to him as honestly as I can rather than put on a front so that he cannot relate to me."<sup>20</sup>

Might not the very process and techniques of empirical research and objective observation destroy the dialogue atmosphere and relation? The intervention of observers and apparatus may dis-

pel the dialogue spirit. If research were undertaken, what overt indexes would be used to identify and describe the dialogue process? Because dialogue is largely unplanned, how in advance can the researchers know it will occur? Perhaps all a researcher could do is to combine a conducive atmosphere with dialogue-prone participants and hope that dialogue will happen.

Kenneth Williams argues that viable research in speech communication must turn its attention away from viewing communication as control and manipulation and as "something substantive, a linear processlike *thing*, governed by the postulates of mechanism and determinism." Instead Williams urges that researchers view communication as a relational category in which the "facts of communicating would present themselves only through the experience of transactional participants."<sup>21</sup> Williams advocates experiential rather than experimental investigation of communication variables that are strikingly dialogic in nature: congruence, acceptant prizing, and empathic understanding.

If empirical research on dialogue is undertaken, what methods might be employed? The use of one-way mirrors, hidden microphones, and video tape may be feasible. Content analysis of written transcriptions are a possibility. Rogers presents self-reports of participants in effective nondirective therapy.<sup>22</sup> Barrett-Lennard reports the use of a "Relationship Inventory" to measure the basic attitudinal qualities necessary for an effective therapeutic relationship.<sup>23</sup> Truax

<sup>18</sup> Tournier, p. 129. Jaspers, too, doubts that dialogue can be subjected to empirical research; see *Philosophy*, II, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Buber feels that although "genuine dialogue cannot be arranged beforehand," one can nevertheless be "at its disposal." Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, p. 87 and *Pointing the Way*, p. 206.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas R. Nilsen, "Dialogue and Group Process," paper read at 1969 SAA convention.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth R. Williams, "Speech Communication Research: One World or Two?" *Central States Speech Journal*, XXI (Fall 1970), 176 and 178.

<sup>22</sup> Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, pp. 36-40 and 65-129.

<sup>23</sup> G. T. Barrett-Lennard, "Dimensions of Therapist Response as Causal Factors in Therapeutic Change," *Psychological Monographs*, LXXVI (1962), Whole No. 562.

and Carkhuff discuss the client's use of a "Depth of Self-Exploration Scale" to assess his perception of the therapeutic encounter. Truax and Carkhuff also have developed observer-employed scales to assess accurate empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness.<sup>24</sup>

An issue related to the feasibility of empirical research is whether people can be taught to engage in dialogue. Can dialogue be taught in formal courses? Can sensitivity-training sessions foster dialogue? Can textbooks instruct in the attitudes and principles of dialogue? In their recent textbook on fundamentals of interpersonal communication, Kim Giffin and Bobby Patton attempt instruction for undergraduates in principles of dialogic communication.<sup>25</sup>

One conceptual issue in research centers on whether monologue and dialogue should be viewed as mutually exclusive opposites. Certainly Matson and Montagu describe them as polar phenomena. Buber, however, sees any human relationship as involving greater or lesser degrees of the dialogic attitude. He rejects a conception of communication as either all monologue or all dialogue, and he realizes that "pure" dialogue seldom occurs.<sup>26</sup> Probably dialogue and monologue fruitfully can be viewed as extremes on a continuum. If so, what kinds of communication occurrences represent typical intervening positions on the continuum? Informative speaking? Small group discussion? Sensitivity-training or encounter-group sessions?

<sup>24</sup> Truax and Carkhuff, pp. 43-79.

<sup>25</sup> Kim Giffin and Bobby R. Patton, *Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication* (New York, 1971), pp. 159-176, 190-196, and 210-217. For a report of an actual classroom experience in teaching principles of dialogic communication, see Theodore F. Nelson, "Recapturing Enthusiasm for the Fundamentals Course," *Speech Teacher*, XIX (November 1970), 289-295.

<sup>26</sup> Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 36 and 97.

Another conceptual issue is whether monologue should be equated with persuasion and propaganda. More properly, monologue is only one, although undesirable, species of persuasion. Rhetoric viewed in its advisory function illustrates another species of persuasion.<sup>27</sup> Advisory rhetoric offers good reasons, logical and psychological, for a specific audience choice among probable alternatives. It advises rather than coerces or commands.

To equate monologue with propaganda likewise fosters confusion. Although in the minds of many persons propaganda has a negative, inherently unethical meaning (e.g., the conscious use of suggestion, emotional appeal, and pseudologic to circumvent man's rational thought process),<sup>28</sup> a more neutral definition simply views propaganda as another species of persuasion, namely a *campaign of mass persuasion*. According to this view propaganda represents an organized, continuous effort to persuade a mass audience utilizing the mass media.<sup>29</sup> And just as persuasion may be sound or unsound, ethical or unethical, so too may propaganda.

Thus, while monologue may be an undesirable and often unethical mode of persuasion, it must not be seen as constituting the whole of either persuasion or propaganda. Persuasion is a genus and monologue is but one of its species.

What ethical issues are inherent in the

<sup>27</sup> On the advisory function of rhetoric see Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," reprinted in *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T. Eubanks (Baton Rouge, La., 1970), pp. 201-225; Walter R. Fisher, "Advisory Rhetoric: Implications for Forensic Debate," *Western Speech*, XXIX (Spring 1965), 114-119; and Karl R. Wallace, "Rhetoric and Advising," *Southern Speech Journal*, XXIX (Summer 1964), 279-287.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see W. H. Werkmeister, *An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, rev. ed. (Lincoln, Neb., 1957), pp. 77-79 and Wayne C. Minnick, *The Art of Persuasion* (Boston, 1957), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> For example, see Terrence H. Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (New York, 1962), pp. 27-31.



concept of dialogue? Is it inherently unethical to attempt to persuade another, to ask him to adopt your viewpoint? Some of those writing on dialogue, by equating monologue and persuasion, urge that all attempts at persuasion are unethical. Buber, however, contends that even in dialogue one may express disagreement with another, may seek to influence him, or may attempt to show him the wrongness of his ways. But always, according to Buber, the influence must be exerted in a noncoercive, non-manipulative manner that respects the free choice and individuality of the listener.<sup>30</sup> Richard M. Weaver argues that men are "born rhetoricians" who by nature desire to persuade and be persuaded. "We all need," he says, "to have things pointed out to us, things stressed in our interest." The exercise of persuasion, Weaver insists, may be justified by "superior virtue, knowledge, or personal insight."<sup>31</sup>

Paul Keller and Charles T. Brown have attempted to formulate an ethic for dialogue.<sup>32</sup> In dialogic communication prime concern should be for the needs of the participants rather than for some ideal cosmic truth or standard of rationality. They believe that the attitude of the sender and receiver toward each other is more crucial than the elements of message or channel. A series of questions underscore the central focus of the ethic urged by Keller and Brown. How does the sender react to the receiver's reaction? Can the sender psychologically accept a reaction in the receiver

that is contrary to the sender's intent? Can the sender accept such a negative reaction without rancor or without the determination to correct the receiver? Always, according to Keller and Brown, in attempting to persuade another person that person's ultimate and genuine freedom of choice must be preserved.

Another issue for research centers on the role of nonverbal communication in dialogue. As long as the dialogic attitude is maintained in a communication situation, Buber feels that the dialogue can be either spoken or silent.<sup>33</sup> If silent, research on the dialogue experience would be difficult, except perhaps via *post hoc* self-reports of participants. Even in spoken dialogue, what function do nonverbal elements play in establishing and maintaining the dialogic relationship? Are the nonverbal elements more or less important in dialogue than in other kinds of communication? One might consider in what ways nonverbal encounter-group or sensitivity-training exercises can foster an atmosphere of dialogue.

A final issue focuses on the various manifestations of dialogue. In what communication contexts and situations can dialogue function most effectively? Buber believes that potentially dialogue to some degree is possible in any realm of human interaction: "in the factory, in the shop, in the office, in the mine, on the tractor, at the printing press."<sup>34</sup> But he realizes that dialogue is an ideal only capable of approximation. Specifically Buber discusses the possibility of dialogue in such fields as politics, education, psychotherapy, and business.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, pp. 69 and 79.

<sup>31</sup> Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," p. 220.

<sup>32</sup> Paul W. Keller and Charles T. Brown, "An Interpersonal Ethic for Communication," *Journal of Communication*, XVIII (March 1968), 73-81. For additional analyses pointing toward an ethic for dialogue see Gusdorf, ch. 12; Anatol Rapoport, *Strategy and Conscience* (New York, 1964), pp. 175-195; and Maurice Friedman, "The Bases of Buber's Ethics," in Schilpp and Friedman, pp. 171-200.

<sup>33</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 39-40 and *Between Man and Man*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>35</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 47-50 and 131-133. Howe, too, explores the role of dialogue in various fields: politics, business and labor, religion, education, and family life. See Howe, *Miracle of Dialogue*, pp. 3-17, 69, and 105-152 and Howe, *Partners in Preaching: Clergy and Laity in Dialogue* (New York, 1967). Rogers and his follow-

One might speculate that dialogue is most likely in private, two-person, face-to-face, oral communication situations that extend, even intermittently, over lengthy periods of time. If this is true, dialogue would most frequently occur in such relationships as husband-wife, parent-child, doctor-patient, therapist-client, clergyman-parishioner, continuing small group discussions, and sensitivity-training sessions.<sup>36</sup>

Several scholars point to the effective psychotherapeutic relationship as a "uniquely modern paradigm of the human dialogue."<sup>37</sup> Others describe the functioning of dialogue as a necessary element in encounter-group sessions.<sup>38</sup>

ers explore applications of nondirective therapy principles in education, organizational leadership, and group psychotherapy. See Nicholas Hobbs, "Group-Centered Psychotherapy," in Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, pp. 278-427; Rogers, *The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning*, pp. 5-14; and Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus, Ohio, 1969). Jaspers discusses the potential for dialogue in situations such as superior-subordinate relations, formal social conversation, debate, negotiation, and political discourse; see *Philosophy*, II, 82-93.

<sup>36</sup> The possibility of dialogue in interpersonal communication in international diplomacy is explored by Donald G. Douglas, "Cordell Hull and the Implementation of the 'Good Neighbor Policy,'" *Western Speech*, XXXIV (Fall 1970), 288-299. Douglas Ehninger's explanation of argumentative communication as contrasted with coercive communication shows major parallels to the distinctions between dialogue and monologue; see "Argument as Method: Its Nature, Its Limitations and Its Uses," *Speech Monographs*, XXXVII (June 1970), 101-110. Although the analog is not perfect, characteristics of a dialogic relationship and characteristics of what Abraham H. Maslow describes as "peak experiences" of "self-actualizing" people are markedly similar; see *Motivation and Personality* (New York, 1954), ch. 12 and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Princeton, N. J., 1962), chs. 6 and 7.

<sup>37</sup> Matson and Montagu, p. 8. See also Friedman, *Martin Buber*, p. 188; Fred E. Fiedler, "The Concept of an Ideal Therapeutic Relationship," *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, XIV (August 1950), 239-245; Truax and Carkhuff, pp. 23-43; and Hanna Colm, *The Existentialist Approach to Psychotherapy with Adults and Children* (New York, 1966), pp. 157-162, 180-190, and 205-229.

<sup>38</sup> Gerard Egan, *Encounter: Group Processes for Interpersonal Growth* (Belmont, Calif., 1970), pp. 246-286 and Carl R. Rogers, "The Processes of the Basic Encounter Group," in

Still other scholars see the small group discussion context as an ideal potential setting for dialogue. One focus of Jack Gibb's research has been the need for supportive (dialogic) communication in effective small group functioning.<sup>39</sup> And Richard P. Douthit concludes, "It now seems likely that the basic concept of small group communication is 'dialogue,' in the traditions of psychiatry and theology, rather than 'monologue,' based on the Shannon-Weaver model."<sup>40</sup>

Privacy seems desirable for dialogue, but perhaps not absolutely necessary. Carl Rogers and Martin Buber, admittedly dialogue-oriented persons, seem to have carried on a public dialogue in front of an audience.<sup>41</sup> The time factor would appear crucial; a great amount of time usually is necessary for the maturation of dialogue. While dialogue may be more likely when only two people are involved, it would also seem possible for dialogue to occur in small groups.<sup>42</sup> Finally, face-to-face oral communication seems requisite for dialogue. Dialogue is

*Challenges of Humanistic Psychology*, ed. James F. T. Bugenthal (New York, 1967), pp. 261-276.

<sup>39</sup> Gibb, "Defensive Communication"; Gibb, "Dynamics of Leadership," in *Current Issues in Higher Education: In Search of Leaders*, ed. G. Kerry Smith (Washington, D. C., 1967), pp. 55-66; and Gibb, "Climate for Trust Formation," in *T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method*, ed. Leland Powers Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, and Kenneth D. Benne (New York, 1964), pp. 279-309.

<sup>40</sup> Review of Halbert E. Gulley's *Discussion, Conference, and Group Process*, in *Speech Teacher*, XVIII (September 1969), 239. See also Nilsen, "Dialogue and Group Process," and Daniel Fogarty, *Roots for a New Rhetoric* (New York, 1959), pp. 109 and 114-115.

<sup>41</sup> For a transcript of this dialogue and Buber's reaction to it, see Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, pp. 166-184.

<sup>42</sup> Tournier, however, is firm in his conviction: "It is a truism that a dialogue can only take place between two people. As soon as a third is added, however close and intimate, the tone of the conversation becomes less personal" (p. 145).

unlikely to occur in writing or in mass media situations.<sup>43</sup>

## 4

Kenneth Keniston observes that, knowingly or unknowingly, "post-modern youth" demonstrate an affinity for dialogic relations. They condemn the artificial, the nongenuine, the manipulative, and the hypocritical. They seek "direct, personal, I-Thou encounters between two unique individuals." Intimate, open, and trusting relations are the goal. "Manipulation, power relationships, superordination, control, and domina-

tion are at violent odds," notes Keniston, "with the I-Thou mystique."<sup>44</sup>

Clearly the concept of communication as dialogue is one being advocated to play an increasingly central role in contemporary human communication behavior. While some scholars see dialogue only as a *supplement* or *alternative* to traditional theory and practice of persuasion, others advocate dialogue as a necessary and desirable *substitute* for persuasion. In any case, to extend the boundaries of knowledge about human communication and to facilitate improvement of communication between people, further careful empirical and philosophical research on the nature of dialogue is warranted.

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of the possibility of dialogue in a society dominated by mass media technology, see Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven, Conn., 1967), pp. 298-304.

<sup>44</sup> *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (New York, 1968), pp. 279-282.