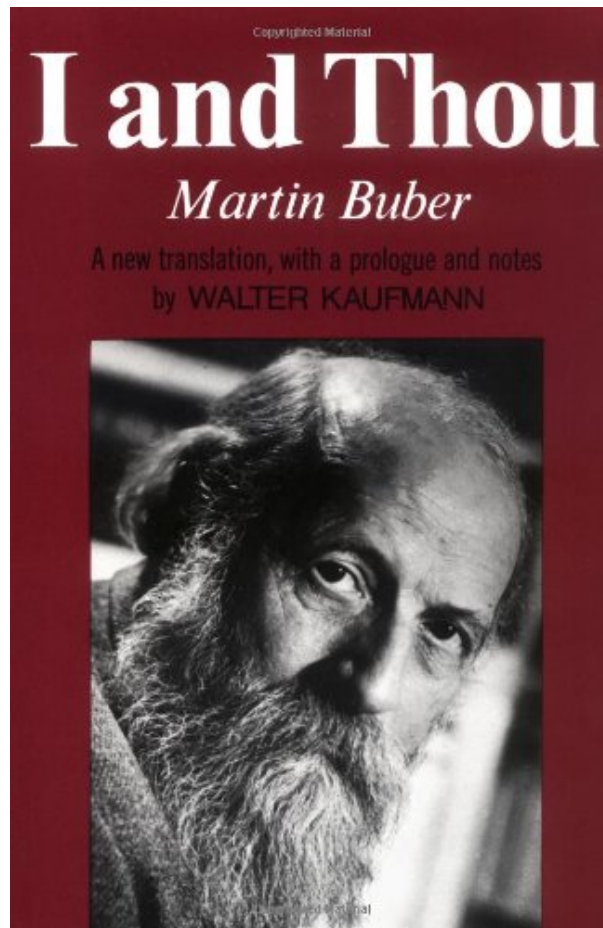


# I AND THOU BY MARTIN BUBER



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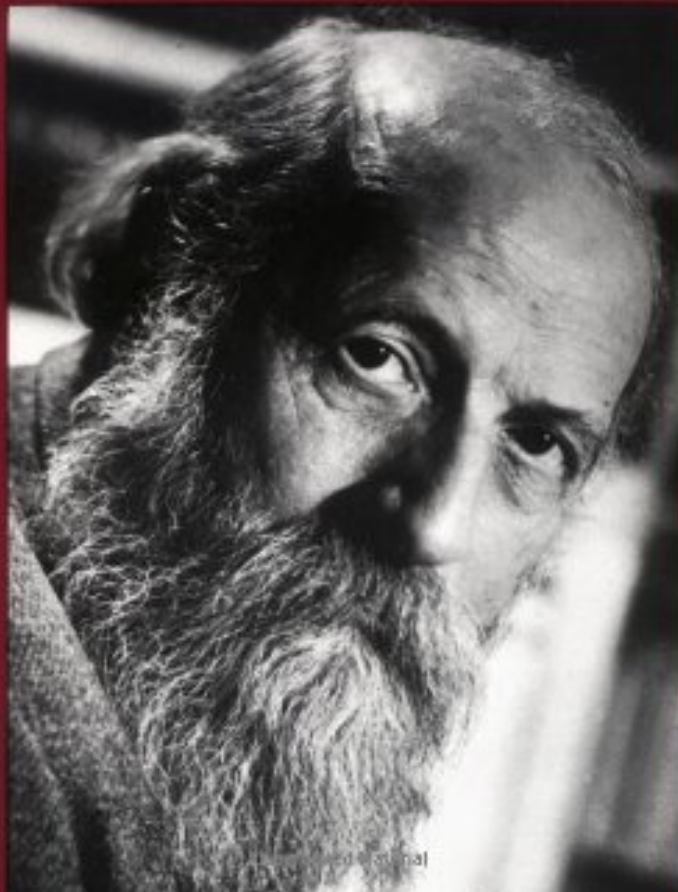


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# I and Thou

*Martin Buber*

A new translation, with a prologue and notes  
by WALTER KAUFMANN



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## Amazon.com Review

I and Thou, Martin Buber's classic philosophical work, is among the 20th century's foundational documents of religious ethics. "The close association of the relation to God with the relation to one's fellow-men ... is my most essential concern," Buber explains in the Afterword. Before discussing that relationship, in the book's final chapter, Buber explains at length the range and ramifications of the ways people treat one another, and the ways they bear themselves in the natural world. "One should beware altogether of understanding the conversation with God ... as something that occurs merely apart from or above the everyday," Buber explains. "God's address to man penetrates the events in all our lives and all the events in the world around us, everything biographical and everything historical, and turns it into instruction, into demands for you and me." Throughout I and Thou, Buber argues for an ethic that does not use other people (or books, or trees, or God), and does not consider them objects of one's own personal experience. Instead, Buber writes, we must learn to consider everything around us as "You" speaking to "me," and requiring a response. Buber's dense arguments can be rough going at times, but Walter Kaufmann's definitive 1970 translation contains hundreds of helpful footnotes providing Buber's own explanations of the book's most difficult passages. --Michael Joseph Gross

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Martin Buber's *I and Thou* has long been acclaimed as a classic. Many prominent writers have acknowledged its influence on their work; students of intellectual history consider it a landmark; and the generation born since World War II considers Buber as one of its prophets.

The need for a new English translation has been felt for many years. The old version was marred by many inaccuracies and misunderstandings, and its recurrent use of the archaic "thou" was seriously misleading. Now Professor Walter Kaufmann, a distinguished writer and philosopher in his own right who was close to Buber, has retranslated the work at the request of Buber's family. He has added a wealth of informative footnotes to clarify obscurities and bring the reader closer to the original, and he has written a long "Prologue" that opens up new perspectives on the book and on Buber's thought. This volume should provide a new basis for all future discussions of Buber.

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## Features

- I And Thou

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7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Illuminary Jewish Philosopher.

By S. Lee

As an existential, Jewish philosopher, Buber takes the seriousness of the 'eternal Thou.' Only through the 'Thou' can a person be an 'I.' In other words, the 'supreme meeting' in the pure relation of I-Thou, which demands the whole person, is a revelation that completely changes the person. However, in the aftermath, the contemptuous habit of the person is to warp the 'Thou' into an 'It'—understandable, manageable, and conquerable. Buber likens this deplorable act as replacing God for an idol. So, what can be done? Buber exhorts two exercises: (1) treat the world and others as 'Thou' than 'It' and (2) prayer. With a sacramental view, Buber affirms that the world and everything in it are 'Thou' pointing to the 'eternal Thou.' If we cannot treat worldly 'Thou' rightly, how can we possibly respect the 'eternal Thou'? Next, prayer is accepting the meeting with a 'Thou,' which climactically breaks the I-It cycle.

cf. [...]

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

I and Thou review

By Carl Cleveland

I love Martin Buber's language in describing relationships as either "I-Thou" or "I-It". I find this very helpful when working with groups to help them understand how subtle differences can quickly change the relationship and damage communications. While the concept is simple, the nuances and subtle issues in practice are certainly not and like all good human relations, requires a great deal of study, practice and more practice. With that in mind, this translation of the poetic original I-Thou by Buber needed more for me to understand and embrace it more fully. To that end, I found Kenneth Paul Kramer's "Martin Buber's I and Thou; Practicing Living Dialogue" to be a very good companion resource.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Finding personality

By Amazon Customer

My daughter, a teacher, has her degree in Philosophy, and I picked this up at her urging.

I think that I understand more now, about why people teach. The subject of learning is just the "It" in Buber's notation. What is important is the "Ich / Du" moment, which is not the "It", and which must be experienced. Buber connects the Ich/Du with a primordial drawing together of personality. Extrapolating from Buber, in my own "nachgedanken", that foundation of personality forms some basis for our crude understanding of The Eternal, of Love and of Nature.

I approach the subject of Philosophy most humbly, confessing my ignorance. But Buber defines his terms from the outset and builds from there. Reading, I felt myself in the presence of a thoughtful, universally kind instructor. Perhaps he was hedged in a bit by the Judeo-Christian pre-war culture, but he was fighting to understand the "other", and I don't think he was talking down with respect Asian or African cultures, but was constrained by mere "book learning" of cultures which were both spacially and temporally displaced from his own.

My daughter thinks this isn't the best translation. If you know a little German, I recommend also getting a copy of "Ich und Du", which I am using to shed additional light on some passages.

If you are new to Philosophy, as I am, take a look at Buber as a great first read.

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