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I-Thou Relation

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I-Thou Relation, an intimate, loving union, usually between persons, human or divine, who view each other as free, self-directed individuals possessing intrinsic value and dignity. (The English "thou" is a translation of the familiar form of "you" in French [*tu*], German [*du*], and other languages). It is contrasted with an I-him/her relation between persons who view each other as separate things or objects whose value lies in their particular features and functions. The loving bond between I and thou enhances each party, for it entails a sharing of lives and experiences while respecting the mysterious uniqueness of each.

See also BUBER, MARTIN; MARCEL, GABRIEL; LEVINAS, EMMANUEL; HETERONOMY; RELATIONALITY.

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