# The Possibility of Interpersonal Understanding

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**Abstract** The aim of the present paper is twofold. The first task which we proposed is to offer an alternative interpretation of Winnicott's concept of the subjective object. This interpretation will be not psychoanalytical, but hermeneutical or even dialogical and it will approach the possibility of human understanding. The second task will concern the possibility of an interpersonal hermeneutics, drawing from the work of Martin Buber and Alfred Schutz. Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer will also be interrogated so that we can establish the possibility of the authentic listening to the other.

**Keywords** Understanding, subjective object, hermeneutics, dialogical, relation, listening.

## Introduction

The present paper posits the question of how human or even interhuman understanding is made possible. We are going to start from the presupposition of the fundamental asymmetry between the perspectives of two human beings and then we are going to consider, whether or not, human understanding, under the guise of the interpersonal dialogue, might be considered a form of "negotiation". We are going to start our discussion from the term coined by Joona Taipale, namely from the "illusion of contact,"[1] a concept which Taipale borrows from Winnicott's letters, letters collected under the title of *The Spontaneous Gesture*.[2] This "illusion of contact" implies the concept which we are going to use in our first division of the paper, namely the "subjective object."

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[1] Joona Taipale, "The illusion of contact: Insights from Winnicott's 1952 letter to Klein," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* 102-1 (March 2021): 31-50.
[2] Donald Woods Winnicott, *The Spontaneous Gesture* ( Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1987), 43.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, we are going to offer our own interpretation of Winnicott's concept of the "subjective object," following the line proposed by Joona Taipale, and at the same time underlining the fact that this "subjective object" is a hindrance to human understanding. Anticipating, for Winnicott the subjective object defines the child's state of being merged with the mother. Only after the transitional phase, which comes along with good-enough mothering, does the child arrive at the perception of the mother as an objectively perceived object. Secondly, starting with Buber's philosophical anthropology, with Schutz's phenomenological sociology and with Gadamer's hermeneutics, we wish to prove that the nature of interpersonal understanding requires the I and the Thou to form the specific I-Thou relation, or in the language of Schutz, the We-relation. All of this leads to the possibility of the fusion of horizons, which we will consider as the final point of interhuman or interpersonal understanding. We have to remember of course that understanding, as Gadamer points out, can never end.

With all of this mentioned, we wish to present the structure of our paper. Firstly, we wish to offer a new interpretation of Winnicott's concept of the "subjective object", underlining the specific hermeneutical dimension of it. As stated above, the "subjective object" is seen as a hindrance to genuine dialog, because as we are going to see, this subjective object implies an idiosyncratic way of seeing the world, that is, the world is seen only through ones lenses, and this is a hindrance to genuine listening and also a hindrance to the unfolding feature of dialogue, to the playful nature of dialogue, as Gadamer would point out.[3] Regarding the other person as a subjective object means that I impose my own idiosyncratic view about reality upon his being, thus not allowing the other to manifest his own view of the world, and this is a real threat to the possibility of interhuman understanding. We are well aware that the term "subjective object" may not be the best choice that we have taken, but we considered that the term "pre-judice" or "pre-supposition", used by Gadamer has another meaning, in the sense that it is easier to make conscious my personal arbitrary presuppositions, that to escape the world of the subjective object, because often enough we are not aware of the fact that we impose our own view upon the other's world, and often enough this happens unconsciously.

Here some insight coming from Buber's I and Thou may be useful for us. As Buber states in a letter from his personal correspondence, the I-Thou and I-It relations are ontological ones[4], not psychological, whereas the difference between the subjective object and the objectively perceived object is a psychological one. In the case of the subjective object I impose unconsciously my own idiosyncratic view of the world upon the other, not letting him be, namely not letting him manifest, whereas when I objectively perceive the other, I let him be and focus my dialogical attention upon what he really wants to say. This means that we are not going to talk so much about the I-Thou and I-It distinction concerning human understanding, but we will talk about the subjective object and the objectively perceived object, as it is

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[3] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke: Band 2* (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1993), 131.
[4] Judith Buber Agassi, *Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy* (United States of America, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 204.

emphasized by the psychoanalytical school of the so-called object-relations. Want we want to establish from the beginning is that the Thou does not correspond to the objectively perceived object and the It does not correspond to the subjective object. We will use both pairs of words, but we are going to be careful not to mix ideas or paradigms between.

Now we will move forward so that we can analyze Winnicott's conception of the subjective object, so that we can propose our own interpretation of this concept. As stated above, our interpretation of the subjective object is not so much psychoanalytical, as in Winnicott's sense, but rather dialogical, as in Buber's sense.

Jan Abram tells us that the term subjective object was used by Winnicott increasingly in the last decade of his life. With the term subjective object, Winnicott wanted to emphasize the infant's subjective experience (idiosyncratic we state, after Taipale[5]), of the external object and the primary merged state (with the mother).[6] We want to explain this last feature in the following manner: Winnicott starts with the presupposition, as in Margaret Mahler's work,[7] that the child is, first of all, merged with the mother, namely between the baby and the mother there is a fusion, which allows the child to be omnipotent and the mother to be in the state of the primary maternal preoccupation.[8]

**The Subjective Object**

The baby is living the illusion of omnipotence in the sense that if he or she cries and the mother quickly brings him or her food, the child "arrives at the conclusion" that he or she created that specific food. This is also available with the unconscious phantasies, projected unto reality, and with hallucinations. Jan Abram tells us more on this subject, namely that the mother who is able to be in the state of primary maternal preoccupation will facilitate the baby's illusion of omnipotence and because of this, the mother is for the baby a subjective object. In Winnicott's words, this is a kind of madness that the mother permits. This illusion of omnipotence is also linked with the primary creativity, namely with the fact that the child creates (in his or her unconscious phantasy) the object of his or her need, food for example, as shown above.

As the transition takes places, the one from the subjective object to the object objectively perceived (the real mother), the child starts to distinguish between Me and Not-Me, in Buber's words, the child sets a being at a distance and regards it as independent of him or herself.[9] But this is not all that happens, as Jan Abram tells us, the internalized illusion of the

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[5] Taipale, "The illusion of contact," 33.

[6] Jan Abram, *The Language of Winnicott* (United Kingdom: Karnac, 2007), 212.

[7] Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation* (United Kingdom: Karnac, 2002), 3.

[8] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Collected Papers: Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1958), 301-302.

[9] Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man* (New York: Harper&Row Publishers, 1965), 60.

mother that made the baby feel omnipotent becomes a new subjective object.[10] Winnicott introduces here the notion of a benign destruction that must be survived by the object, so that the child can continue to develop, in Heidegger's words, to facilitate the unfolding essence of the human being.[11] This feature of Winnicott's theory, the survival of the object can be traced back to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, where desire-consciousness attains its own truth (and the truth of the object) by destroying it. In other words, by destroying the independent object, the desire-consciousness arrives at certainty of itself.[12]

This destruction and survival of the object follows naturally from Winnicott's analysis of the transitional object and transitional phenomena,[13] in the sense that the destruction and the survival of the object facilitates the way in which child moves from the area of subjective omnipotent control to the shared reality. In this specific sense, this primal destructiveness is a kind of world-disclosure, we might speculate. Finally, potential space exists between the subjective and the objective objects and only by virtue of this potential space there is the possibility that the human capacity for play might emerge.

After this brief analysis of Winnicott's theory of the subjective object, we want to move forward and propose a dialogical interpretation of this subjective object. We saw that in Winnicott, the subjective object means that the psychic contents of my own inner life are projected upon reality, whereas in the dialogical sense, the subjective object is the attitude we take towards the other when trying to initiate a dialogue in which we remain closed in our own subjective world(as in Kierkegaard's sense[14]). By remaining or dwelling in our world we don't want to state that we are not capable of any sort of dialogue, but that dialogue is threatened from its natural unfolding by the fact that the other is invested with our own idiosyncratic view of the world. In other words, we don't let the other be, as in Heidegger's letting be.[15] Here Taipale's analysis of the "illusion of contact" is very meaningful. We want to give an example, following the directions proposed by Taipale in this sense.[16] The example will be concerning a child playing with a stick. The child projects his own mental contents upon the stick and then he or she sees it, the stick, as a magical wand. If we consider the fact that another child enters the playworld, which for Fink, as well as for Winnicott, contains subjective and objective elements,[17] there exists the possibility that the second child names that specific stick a sword. What happens in the children's play next? We want to propose that what happens with the two children playing, each having its own subjective object, is that the they negotiate, so they enter what Martin Buber might call a technical dialogue.[18] This technical dialogue is the

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[10] Abram, *Language of Winnicott*, 214.

[11] Martin Heidegger*, Zollikon Seminars* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 153.

[12] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology Of Spirit* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1977), 109.

[13] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

[14] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 123.

[15] Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, 224.

[16] Taipale, "The illusion of contact," 42-43.

[17] Eugen Fink, *Play as Symbol of the World* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016), 28.

[18] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 22.

inauthentic form of interhuman conversation, but nevertheless, it may transform itself into authentic dialogue when the two children (in our case) exchange their perspectives and agree with each other. The authentic dialogue would be then the very moment when the two children stop negotiate and more on with playing with each other, thus forgetting of themselves in this specific game of the unfolding of the dialogical.[19]

Our subjective object might also bear similarities with what Martin Buber has called unconscious imposition.[20] Talking about the situation of psychoanalytical transference, Buber warned us about the possibility of the unconscious imposition of the mental contents of the analyst upon the analyzed. If this unconscious imposition continues to take place in the psychoanalytical set-up then we would not have the possibility to talk about the healing through meeting,[21] but only of the subjective object. In other words, by unconsciously imposing himself or herself upon the analyzed, the analyst transforms the client into a subjective object. The cure for this situation of psychoanalytical misencounter is the possibility that the analyst recognizes the distance between himself or herself and the client, namely he or she recognizes the other as a radical alterity. Recognizing the radical alterity of the other means the possibility that I can make him present, confirm[22] him or her in his actuality and possibility, and finally play along the game of the dialogical encounter, as in Gadamer's idea of being played by the game itself,[23] this is what Martin Buber would call the unfolding of the dialogical.

Joona Taipale coined the expression "illusion of contact" after one of Winnicott's letters to Klein, a letter in which it is stated by Winnicott that the individual communicates only with a self-created world. We could suppose that Winnicott was already planning a theory of this illusion of contact, since we can find occurrences of this concept in one of his last writings, namely in Human Nature.[24] From this statement concerning the asymmetrical nature of interpersonal understanding, Taipale deduced in a correct manner that, at the beginning, our possibility of mutual or interpersonal understanding is utterly asymmetrical.[25] In the following division of our paper we wish to propose a way in which dialogue or human conversation, could be re-imagined as a symmetrical encounter between two undivided existences.

**Symmetry and Asymmetry**

We are now going to make steps further into our analysis of the possibility of interhuman understanding. Now that we emphasized the main hindrance to it, which is the subjective

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[19] Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, 82.

[20] Ibid., 82.

[21] Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way* (New York: Harper&Brothers, 1957), 93.

[22] Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 71.

[23] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1* (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1990), 107.

[24] Donald Woods Winnicott, *Human Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 115.

[25] Taipale, "The illusion of contact," 44.

object, we could imagine a way in which human encounter might seem symmetrical. This second part of our essay will be structured in the following manner: An analysis of Buber's I-Thou relation, an analysis which will be in a permanent dialogue with Schutz's notion of the We-Relation. We consider that these two types of relations bear many similarities, of which we are going to talk. The second division of this second part will be about Buber's philosophical anthropology as a possible prolegomena to any interpersonal hermeneutics, so Hans-Georg Gadamer will be interrogated too. After discussing about the fundamental asymmetry (Taipale and Levinas) of the technical dialogue, which implies, as we had shown, some sort of negotiation, we will consider Buber's I-Thou relation and Schutz's We-Relation, in order that we can establish that there might exist in fact symmetrical interhuman relations, which we are going to call the genuine form of dialogue, opposed to the inauthentic technical dialogue. Furthermore, Buber's philosophical anthropology will be studied in conjunction with Gadamer's hermeneutics, so that we can show that the premise to a possible interpersonal hermeneutics resides in what Buber had to say about human relations and human encounters. Gadamer pays homage to Buber in some way or another, and this is seen more clearly in the second division of *Truth and Method.*[26] As we have stated in the introduction, this second division will be linked to the first division, in the sense that the second division is the "cure" for the first one, namely for the problem of the subjective object, a "cure" which as we are going to show, is the possible condition to any genuine listening and even of genuine dialogue. Heidegger will be briefly interrogated here, and we will concern ourselves with the chapter on language from *Being and Time*. After Buber's statement of the fundamental symmetry of the I-Thou relation, Levinas proposed, in his ethical philosophy, that human relations are fundamentally asymmetrical,[27] not in Hegel's sense, as in the Master and Slave dialectics,[28] but concerning the role played by the face of the other. Here we find Levinas' metaphor of motherhood, from *Otherwise than Being or beyond Essence* very useful.[29] Moreover, we could insist on a particular aspect, stating alongside Buber and even Husserl that the infant-mother relation is the prototype to every I-Thou relation which might follow.[30] Heidegger's insight from the Zollikon Seminars is also very powerful, meaning that, for Heidegger, in order that full reciprocity may be attained, one will speak not of I-Thou relations, but of Thou-Thou relations.[31] Finally, Heidegger's critique of Buber from the

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[26] Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke: Band 2*, 10.

[27] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 197.

[28] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111.

[29] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 75.

[30] Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 20.

[31] Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, 210.

*Basic Concepts of Phenomenology* will be very telling about the possibility of human understanding.

**The Face to Face Relation**

We will now consider Schutz's and Buber's views of the face-to-face interaction, noticing that the two conceptions bear many similarities, but the paradigm of the two authors is quite different. We consider that a synthesis is possible, which will not be the purpose of our current investigation. Schutz is the founder of phenomenological sociology, while Buber introduced the concept of the interhuman between, underlying the differences between the social and the interhuman in one of his papers on psychology.[32]

Schutz considers that my fellow man can be experienced in his whole being only when I share with him or her a common sector of space and time. This sharing of a common sector of time implies the notion of simultaneity, closer to Buber's description of the I-Thou relation from the first section of I and Thou. Schutz's major contribution consists in his statement that after this simultaneity, we somehow grow older together,[33] whereas in Buber's theory, I and Thou were present to each other in an instant.

For this face-to-face interaction to take place, one must, firstly, pay attention to the other as he or she appears to me, namely what Buber would have called the turning to the other.[34] Schutz calls this dialogical attentiveness Thou-orientation. We will now offer an example. The I encounters the Thou and they both turn towards the other, they both make use of this Thou-orientation, so the mere encounter becomes a face to face situation/relation. Buber's contribution is that he talks about a synthetizing apperception, by virtue of which the other becomes whole to me, a unity and a uniqueness.[35] Only after the I perceives the Thou as a totality and vice versa one could talk about the possibility of exploring the unconscious, Buber would say. This aspect will not be analyzed in more detail here. Furthermore, the I-Thou relation or the We-relation is made possible by virtue of the mutual turning to the other, namely through the Thou-orientation.

Schutz did in fact anticipate some contemporary discussions about the nature of the intersubjective process when he stated that we come to know the other not through some sort of empathy, by virtue of which we could penetrate the being of the other, but by virtue of the expression of the other's comportment.[36] Buber would call that imagining the real, which implies the distance vis-à-vis the other.[37] Imagining the real also implies the work of language,

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[32] Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 72.

[33] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1976), 24.

[34] Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 26.

[35] Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 62.

[36] Dan Zahavi, Shaun Gallagher, *The Phenomenological Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 167.

[37] Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 81.

in the guise of authentic dialogue. For Schutz, the We-relation is opposed to the presence of mere contemporaries, by virtue of the fact that in the We-relation we are talking about a face to face situation.

We will now make a few steps backwards towards the Thou-orientation, and contrast it with Buber's philosophy of the interhuman. When a person does orient himself or herself towards other person and it turns towards the other there one may speak about dialogical attentiveness, but that is not enough to have an authentic dialogue, in the case in which we try to understand each other. The fundamental movement, so to say, which is lacking in Schutz theory is the personal making present, of which Buber was talking about. By virtue of this personal making present I take the person as he or she is or may become, namely in its wholeness.[38] The opposite of this personal making present would be let's say the It-orientation, by which I take the other person in its particular features, but not in its wholeness, so I may interrogate some particular features of the other's being, let's say the way in which he or she is dressed, but not the whole being. Probably this is what Buber's wanted to say by the fact that the I-It relation was a thickening of the distance.[39] Only by regarding the other as a wholeness, a unity and a uniqueness do I initiate the authentic interpersonal relation, namely the authentic dialogue. This mutuality, between the I and the Thou implies some sort of self-forgetfulness, we may add. This mutual self-forgetfulness is perhaps what Schutz had to say about the simultaneity of the streams of consciousness.[40]

**Buber's Philosophical Anthropology**

We now may more forward towards the discussion of Buber's philosophical anthropology as the starting point of an interpersonal hermeneutics. We will start with man's twofold attitude towards the other, and this duality is that between being and seeming. More exactly, being represents the way we truly are, regardless of any mask which we might use so that we seem as something different what we really are. Seeming is exactly that mask, this meaning that we might wear not only a mask, but multiple ones by virtue of our encounter with other people. Being demands continuity, while seeming requires the swapping of masks. Being thus constitutes the first step which must be taken in order that could have a talk about openness to the other, letting all our masks away and arriving at the truth of our being.[41] We already mentioned the personal making present, at the time when we were talking about Schutz's Thou-orientation, nevertheless, the personal making present is the condition without which there could be neither authentic dialogue, nor authentic listening. Gadamer made a step forward than Buber in considering the nature of the dialogue to be somehow connected to the nature

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[38] Ibid., 78.
[39] Ibid., 22.
[40] Schutz, *Collected Papers II*, 26.
[41] Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 75.

of play. Buber, in some way or another, anticipated this specific type of play of the dialogue, when he was talking about the unfolding of the dialogical, unfolding which is opposed to the idiosyncratic imposing (the imposition of the subjective object), by virtue of which we brutally impose our own view of reality upon the other person, virtually blocking every way of authentic listening and conversation. This imposition is thought by Buber as some sort of propaganda.[42] This unfolding of the dialogical is quite similar with what Buber also called the conscious liberating, a kind of letting be as in Heidegger. Gadamer also was speaking of different types of conversation, which could be treated in conjunction with Buber's categorization of the different types of dialogue. For Gadamer, the universal hermeneutic medium by virtue of which dialogue is possible is language. Buber also anticipated this reasoning when he stated that dialogue must always come before monologue. Here we could speak about the dialogical mind, because both Gadamer and Buber state that conversation with the other, whether is the child babbling or an explicit conversation between two grown-ups precedes the interiorization of that speech, which might be thought in terms of dialogue.

**The Forgetfulness of Listening**

Already in the Eclipse of God, Buber was proclaiming an era which was characterized by the forgetfulness of listening.[43] Now we will turn towards the analysis of authentic listening from Heidegger's *Being and Time* in order to make steps forward towards the possibility of authentic human understanding. To speech there belongs listening and keeping silent, Heidegger informs us. We must never forget that interhuman speech in made possible only by way of particular structures of being, namely by being in the world and being with. Regarding the possibility of authentic listening, Heidegger links this possibility with understanding and intelligibility, all of this being subordinated to discourse. When we don't hear something clearly, we quickly affirm that we didn't understand, and from this Heidegger states that listening is constitutive of the act of discourse. Speech has its home in discourse and hearing in listening. Authentic listening now becomes Dasein's possibility of being open towards the other. Listening now becomes primordial. We, first of all, do not hear a sound qua sound, for example a noise, we hear something as something, namely an engine starting etc. Dasein listens because it is one of his utmost possibilities to understand. We, first of all, do not hear the sounds raised by the other, but understand its discourse as intelligible, in some sense or another. Discourse and listening have their foundation in understanding. Only the one who understands can also hear.[44] Here Gadamer's idea might be very useful to us. Gadamer tells us that authentic listening means that we let the other say what he or

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[42] Ibid., 82.

[43] Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God* (Princeton&Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 2.

[44] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 153-154.

she has to say and only then we make an interpretation. If the make an interpretation of what the other has to say during his or her discourse, then authentic listening becomes an impossibility. This idea of holding to our interpretation until the other has said everything that he or she had to say might be useful even in psychoanalysis. We could consider that Winnicott, later in his life, would agree with Gadamer's perspective.

**Heidegger on Buber's I-Thou**

Nevertheless, we will concern ourselves with Heidegger's critique of Buber from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. At the end of this book, Heidegger states that the I-Thou and I-It relations still bear similarities to the Cartesian distinction between subject and object, whereas Heidegger's approach of the human being as being in the world concerns both the existence of Thou-Beings and It-Beings at the same time.

  If for Buber our attitude towards the world is twofold, in the sense that we encounter either a Thou or an It, for Heidegger, our being in the world is essentially a being with the Thou and the It at the same time. We don't meet a Thou or an It in some sort of succession, but our being in the world is already and always being with others and being with beings ready at hand. What Heidegger wants to emphasize is that we don't meet a Thou, then meet and It, but we are already present in the presence of Thou-Beings and It-Beings, from the start. Here we want to defend Buber.[45] Despite the fact, that Buber's approach of the I-Thou and I-It relation is an ontological one, as he states in a letter cited above, this distinction may also be the basis of an interpersonal ethics, because this distinction implies fundamentally our ethical attitude towards reality. For example, I can see a particular being as a Thou or as an It, corresponding to the relation I have towards the world. I can turn to the other, either in the case of the Thou-orientation, or in the case of the It-orientation, that is, by virtue of my attitude, I can see the other as a person or as an object, whereas the person is recognized as independent and autonomous of myself, or as an object ready to be used. The fundamental difference between the view of Heidegger and of that of Buber would be that ontologically speaking we are always already in the presence of persons and object, whereas in Buber's thinking we always have the responsibility of treating and regarding the other as a person or as an object.

**By Way of Conclusion**

The purpose of this article was twofold. The two main aims of this paper were somehow connected. We began our discussion by wondering about a new hermeneutical interpretation concerning the concept of Winnicott's "subjective object". After our

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[45] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington&Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), 298.

discussion of the subjective object, seen as a hindrance to authentic dialogue, we sketched a path by virtue of one could arrive at an authentic understanding of otherness. In this sense, we saw how Schutz's face to face situation and Buber I-Thou relation might be treated in conjunction. Furthermore, we insisted upon Buber's philosophical anthropology, in order to see that it could be the basis of an interpersonal hermeneutics. Finally, we turned ourselves towards Heidegger, in order to see how one could listen to the other in an authentic manner.