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A Buberian Analysis of the Education of Artists:
Student-Teacher Relationships in the Undergraduate Studio

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University
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ABSTRACT

A Buberian Analysis of the Education of Artists: Student-Teacher Relationships in the Undergraduate Studio

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Concordia University, 1999

This study has two purposes: The first is to understand what takes place in the relationships between undergraduate studio teachers and students that often results in preventing authentic artistic existence. The second purpose is to understand the underlying assumptions of subjectivist and objectivist types of studio instructors and the potential for the attainment of authenticity in the relationships they have with their students. Martin Buber's concept of the dialogical I-Thou relationship is the basis for both his critique of subjectivist and objectivist educational traditions and his concept of authentic artistic existence. Buber's concept of dialogue is used first to analyze the relationships between teachers and students, then between artists and their artwork, and finally between studio instructors and their students. For the latter, the analysis utilizes examples from the author's own experiences as a student and also a studio teacher.

Art education literature that presumably has had some impact/influence on artists/studio instructors is reviewed. The assumptions found in the literature are compared and contrasted to Buber's concept of the I-Thou relationship between the teacher and the student, and between the artist and the artwork. In contrast to the I-Thou, the literature tends to view the teacher or the artist in an I-It relationship, that is, as an active participant acting on a passive, dependent partner-the student or the artwork, respectively.

Buber's concepts are then applied to the thesis purpose. Two pairs of metaphors are constructed to examine and critique subjectivist and objectivist instructors and students: the Magician-acolyte and the Matchmaker-debutante respectively. It is concluded that both types of relationships are exemplars of Buber's I-It relationship. Instructors who present themselves as subjectivist or objectivist exclusively, prevent dialogue. Consequently, students respond with an I-It, inauthentic existence.

A model for a relationship that would result in authentic artistic existence for both participants is proposed. The metaphor of mentor-protégé, based on Buber's dialogic is presented as an alternative to the I-It experience.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

My earliest artistic adventures can be traced to my early childhood play activities. When I was a young child, although I enjoyed many playthings, clay was my favourite. I felt more fully engaged playing with clay than with my other playthings. I sensed greater satisfaction and deeper, more significant relationships with it.

These more significant relationships I contrast to my relationships with my other playthings, in which I felt compelled to take on predetermined specific roles. I believed I could only play with these things provided I was willing to do so in a conventional manner. There were two types. With the first, I felt the way I played was not usually determined by myself. For example, whenever I decided to play with my colouring book, I tended to pick it up with the intention of filling in the spaces with colours that pleased my parents. I could have coloured outside the lines if I wished, yet more often than not I chose to play the way I believed I ought to. Although I played alone and was free to choose how I coloured, I felt limited by a self-imposed closure to other possibilities. Once I picked up my colouring book, in my mind I would only allow myself to use the colours other people would accept as correct, nothing else.

The second type of playthings involved the participation of others. They further removed me from feeling I could make unconventional choices. For example, when playing chess, it never occurred to me that the object of the game was anything but competing against my opponent. I could not have cheated, nor could I have positioned the

chess pieces so as to give my opponent an advantage, without ignoring the spirit of fair competition. I felt I must consider the interests of others to succeed. Although I enjoyed playing with these things, I never felt free to choose to play with them in any other way than what was determined by others.

In comparison with the range of possible roles offered by my other things, the clay provided far more possibilities. Whereas I accepted my role as a rational participant while playing with my colouring book or my chessboard, playing with my clay required more from me. It was not enough to encounter it solely as a rational participant. Instead of relying on a predetermined role from past experience, as I did with my colouring book or my chessboard, I felt provoked to encounter the clay with an open mind so as to discover an identity for both the clay and myself in the present. The only way I could be satisfied in playing with it was to interact with it rather than limiting myself by a rational acceptance of a role determined by an external reality. In contrast to the way I felt when I played with my colouring book or my chessboard, I never knew what I might become while playing with my clay. In this sense, my personality as a player was individualized in the encounter with the clay. As a result, I derived more pleasure out of relating to the clay, because I experienced emotional participation in the process of self-discovery, rather than a primarily rational response to what I perceived as a fixed product. I found it more satisfying to experience the dynamic between my inner need to be an emotional participant and my outer need to rationally discover some new insight about an object, rather than limiting myself to a solely rational, non-participatory role, predetermined for me by how the object presented itself to me. With my clay, it was as though I was fully engaged in a

conversation with another living thing, wherein we were both made complete through our interaction with each other. In coming to terms with the clay, it was as if I felt the need to listen to it speaking to me about its limitations and possibilities. In doing so I became fully engaged within the tension that lay between the limitations and possibilities of the clay and myself. Rather than simply encountering a toy with a predetermined role in mind based on convention, I felt free to allow the object to suggest itself to me and thereby engage me fully in the immediacy of the present moment.

The value I placed on my playthings depended on the potential I saw for a personal investment as an emotional and rational participant in interactive processes, rather than their potential as objects to be used by me in a predetermined manner. On one hand, there were those playthings that I related to as objects. I viewed them as an actor might view props on the stage. They were objects to be used to help assure me that I was presenting a convincing portrayal of what I was pretending to be. On the other hand, there was my clay, which I related to as an emotional/rational participant. Although I initially encountered it as an object, I was compelled to take it one step farther. I felt the need to relate to it as an individual in an emotional/rational dynamic as well. I viewed it as an actor might view a fellow actor; our emotional and rational postures to each other were essential to the identity of each character. We were individuals who needed each other to become what we needed to be at that specific moment.

As I reflect further on the this childhood play experience, I distinguish between two ways of relating to playthings: in an unconditional encounter or in a conditional stance. I had unconditional encounters with my clay. This occurred when I sensed the need to play with it as an emotional and rational participant, fully engaged in uncovering

individual characteristics of both the clay and myself. This process of self-discovery was dependent on my willingness to encounter the clay not only as an object but as fellow subject as well. On the other hand, I took conditional stances with my other playthings. For me, the value of these playthings lay in their utilitarian purpose. I adopted a conditional stance with them by limiting myself to playing with them from the perspective of a rational, predetermined role which the toy would assist in defining. From this perspective, I was not interested in relationships in which I discovered open-ended possibilities for roles that I and the object might assume. In the interests of closure, I limited the relationship, taking a conditional stance and perceiving the plaything as an object to be used. As I was not interested in discovering new things about the object or myself, I tended to see myself as an object also.

From my perspective as an adult artist, what is significant about the unconditional relationship I encountered while playing with the clay is that it was one of my formative artistic experiences. For me as a child, the essential pleasure of these encounters lay in the process of manipulating materials such as clay to remake it and myself into something new. As I did not then consider myself to be an artist, I did not consider the entities the clay became to be art objects: they only existed in relation to my involvement in the present. The clay was valuable to me because of its potential to engage me with it in an unconditional relationship, in which the clay and I took on new roles in the process of discovering new things about myself and the clay at that moment. This encounter did not depend on my own role or what I perceived as the role of the object. It was an interaction that went beyond my expectations as a solely rational participant. I felt compelled to seek new possibilities. In looking back on my childhood,

I consider these encounters as my formative artistic experiences. They played a key role in what eventually led me to consider a career as a professional artist.

By my late teens I began to imagine myself in the role of a professional artist. Whereas many of my friends were unsure of their career goals, I was becoming increasingly preoccupied with acquiring the accoutrements of a successful professional artist. I would imagine myself making paintings in a large, well lit, fully equipped studio. From this studio, works of art would emerge that would in some manner constitute an extension of my early formative artistic experiences. I imagined these works of art being exhibited in galleries and museums. In short, I imagined myself as a successful professional artist, one who carves out a niche for himself in the art world. With these visions of grandeur, I gradually convinced myself that becoming a professional artist in the eyes of the art world was the only way to ensure that those formative experiences at the core of my being could continue. In my mind, I assumed professional recognition was the socially accepted basis of personal artistic growth as a professional artist. From this perspective, I concluded that all that I required to achieve such recognition was proper training and sufficient will power. I therefore began to make plans to study art at university. As I felt that so much of my future life as an artist depended on my efforts, I was prepared to sacrifice much on the altar of professional recognition.

As I began my undergraduate studies in art, I was secure in the belief that the artistic goals I had set for myself were clearly defined. In my mind, achieving success required that I be created in the image my instructors considered appropriate. After all (I reasoned), if they were recognized as professional artists, then they must know how

to make their students into artists also. However, the nature of the relationships I had with two of my instructors, Derrick and Louise (not their real names), posed a dilemma which led me to begin questioning my goals as an emerging artist.

One of the courses in my first semester was a painting course taught by Derrick, a well known professional artist. Derrick's reputation for being somewhat aloof with his students preceded him. At the first meeting, he emphatically stated that only a select few succeed in becoming professional artists. As he explained, very few individuals possessed the genius required to assume the role of professional artist. In his view, painters were gifted individuals who focus on their individual emotional needs. After all, artists are primarily born, not made. Although he did not state it explicitly, at this first class I concluded that his job entailed separating out the few individuals who had, in his mind, what it took to become professional artists from the many who, despite their best efforts, did not have it, and then nurturing the chosen ones. As artistic activity had been a central focus of my life, I naturally assumed that those few students who were destined to become professional artists should include me. Much to my surprise, this assumption was quickly challenged.

Trusting Derrick as an authority figure, I accepted his concept that being an artist involved using tools I was born with to express my individual emotional identity. As I understood him, artistic existence was founded on aggressive, self-centered urges, a class of emotions in which the ego is a self-contained whole and is the ultimate value. For our first assignment, Derrick asked us to bring in a painting that was representative of our artistic interests. As I had a number of paintings to choose from, I decided to bring to class a portrait of a friend I had recently done. As we presented our

work in class, I began to notice that my painting was one of the few that was representational. Most of the other students presented work that they called "expressionist". After spending a few minutes critiquing the work of several students, Derrick came to my painting. As he approached me and my painting, I could see by his facial expression that my painting was not pleasing to him. My feeling was confirmed when he said, "...not this stuff again." With no further explanation, he dismissed it as a waste of a time for both him and I, and moved on to the next student.

While this was an initial shock to me, I was not discouraged. In order to avoid dwelling on its negative implications, I immediately rationalized his response to my painting. I assumed that my work, however it may have satisfied the standards for representational portraits, was not the type of work he was personally interested in. I concluded that he must be using his own artwork as a standard against which he assessed the artwork of his students. As I was determined to succeed, I decided to throw myself into becoming the artist that I believed Derrick would accept and value. After all, I had convinced myself that I was destined to become a professional artist. Accordingly, I was convinced that I had the ability to paint in a manner acceptable to Derrick. I only needed to prove it to him and thus gain his recognition. After a few months of hard work I produced a painting that Derrick viewed as an exemplar of successful expressionist painting. In doing so I believe I succeeded in convincing Derrick that I was capable of becoming the professional artist he saw in me.

On my successful completion of Derrick's course, he encouraged me to continue studying under him for another term. In addition, he advised me to enroll in a drawing course, as my drawing skills needed further refinement. Acting on his advice, I enrolled

in a drawing class. In order to bolster my growing confidence, I decided to show some examples of the best work I had done in Derrick's class to the drawing instructor, Louise. I didn't tell her the paintings were done for Derrick's class, because I wanted her opinion not as another instructor in the program but as another artist. Much to my surprise, she reacted to them with disdain. For her, these paintings were of no significance. They were the products of misguided individuals who saw themselves as artists. To her, true artists were individuals focused primarily on the rational demands of adapting their artwork to the audience and their identity to the social structure of the professional art world. As I understood her, artistic existence was based on tendencies towards a state in which the artist needs to behave as part of some real or imaginary group which transcends the individual self. Artists in this sense had to be primarily made, not born. As such, artists in and of themselves were of no consequence. Rather, the relevance of art depended on the artwork's positive impact on society. Her reaction to my painting, after I had redirected my artwork towards expressionism in response to Derrick's view of me, took me by surprise. I was reminded of Derrick's initial reaction to my representational portrait. The only difference was that I felt I was being pushed in the opposite direction from the one I had taken under Derrick's guidance.

Both of these instructors promised to guide me towards a career as a professional artist. Yet as I understood them, and to my bewilderment, they seemed to point me in opposite directions: Derrick, towards a notion that artists should focus on the expression of their emotional needs; Louise, towards a notion that artists should adjust their individual needs in order to adapt to the social structures of the art world. As I was determined to become a professional artist, I first assumed that I had mistakenly read

their comments about my work as contradicting each other. While I was unable to reconcile their views, I hoped that somehow I would discover elements of truth in what they were both saying. I imagined that I had simply failed to see the "bigger picture" wherein these two views would in some manner complement each other. After a week of reflecting, I decided to return to Derrick to ask him his thoughts on the notion that, in addition to focusing on their individual emotional selves, artists had a responsibility to be of benefit to society, as Louise had suggested. For Derrick, the only responsibility the artist had to society was to give expression to his or her emotional needs. When I asked Louise a similar question, she stated that artists like Derrick need to realize that the significance of artwork rests in its capacity to alter people's behavior in positive ways. Individually, neither was willing to concede that their perspective on being an artist was, as it seemed to me, one-sided. As they appeared to me unwilling or unable to consider the validity of other viewpoints, to confront their beliefs with those of others, I felt they could not relate to my dilemma. They didn't seem to understand that I saw the difference in their approaches as a contradiction. From my perspective as a student, I did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable about art to choose one approach or the other. As I thought over my predicament, it seemed to me Derrick and Louise each claimed a "true" perspective. Did they simply view me as a student who must be compelled to reflect back to them their belief about what constituted an artist?

For a while I persisted in seeking to reconcile Derrick's and Louise's notions of the artist. As I hadn't been able to resolve the contradiction under Derrick's or Louise's guidance, and as it appeared to me to be jeopardizing the view Derrick had of my abilities, I decided the only solution for the time being was to put the dilemma aside. I

thought, "Why should I rock the boat when Derrick was so supportive of my efforts to express myself in terms he valued? Did he honestly think I was expressing myself? In any case, I'm only a student. What if he's right? So I might as well play it safe and conform as I usually do in my other courses. The other students don't seem to be bothered by these issues. As far as I'm concerned, maybe this is a mystery best left unresolved." During the remainder of the course, as I "played the role" of an artist whose primary concern was for my individual emotional growth, resolving this dilemma became less important to me.

In a manner similar to the way I made a rational decision to respond to Derrick, I began to respond to Louise. Louise appeared to me to possess keen survival skills as an artist and social activist. I was impressed by her ability to blend together a commitment to her survival as a professional artist and to issues of social justice in the university community. I concluded that, for her, these two commitments were one and the same.

In class, she often addressed issues that seemed to me to have little relevance to my personal individual artistic development. While I saw the relevance of her position that artists must learn to survive so their artwork can be a powerful tool for social change, I did not yet know who I was as an artist. While I was still trying to come to understand my identity as an emerging artist, she expected me, for example, to use my abilities to raise issues concerning the rights of traditionally marginalized groups. When I had raised my dilemma with her, I suspected she had seen me as a member of the privileged, male, white ruling class. As I had done in Derrick's class, I was reluctant to challenge her: she was the authority figure. In order to assuage what I suspected were her suspicions about me, I decided to develop strategies to support my own development

and support some of the social concerns that she had been advocating. I thought, "What if she is right? If I commit myself wholeheartedly to these causes perhaps I will come to resolve my personal dilemma."

I began to notice that others in the course were caught up with finding ways to "make it" as professional artists so that they too could be of benefit to society. Perhaps they knew something I did not know about being an artist in the world. For the remainder of the course, I used Louise as a source of this knowledge. I rationally permitted her to begin to mold me so I might make myself valuable to the world outside of the university. By the time I finished my second semester, I had grown accustomed to adapting to the social reality of Louise's notion of the artist. As I had done in Derrick's class, I performed convincingly for Louise. By this time, the dilemma of attempting to reconcile what I believed to be mutually exclusive notions of artists no longer concerned me. Indeed, I was used to playing the roles that were prescribed for me. As I was so successful, I had come to expect that being a professional artist was a type of role one played in order to gain the approval of others.

In the semesters that followed there were many other instructors like Derrick and Louise who, in one way or another, seemed to encourage me to reflect back to them what they themselves were. Each time I encountered a variation of either one, I adapted myself to the role they prescribed for me. As time passed, I succeeded in gaining the recognition I felt one needed to be a professional artist. Indeed, as I began my final undergraduate year, no instructor needed to persuade me to become what he or she expected me to be. I had learned to anticipate what was expected and performed accordingly. As I was no longer troubled by my dilemma, playing the predetermined role

was not difficult. No instructor needed to answer my unresolved questions concerning incompatibility of different notions of art. In my last year, those questions had little significance for me. Indeed, I felt it was not in my best interests to confront them or the paradoxes they emerged from.

As I began that final year, I expected to continue employing strategies of rational cooperation so as to produce successful portrayals in each of my studio classes. I had learned to be quite selective about the people with whom I studied. For the most part, my experience as a studio student could be characterized as variations of the encounters I had with Derrick and Louise. Accordingly, I tended to seek out instructors whose expectations I knew beforehand. From such a perspective, I could usually "size up the situation" early on regarding what was expected of me in almost every course I enrolled in.

This worked well for some time, however, I became increasingly tired of playing a role that I perceived was expected of me. Gradually, I came to see that for me, being an artist is an on-going process of striving to confront myself about who I am becoming. I came to believe that being an artist implies that an aesthetic experience is not solely rational or emotional. Being an artist has both rational and emotional components. The emotional/rational paradox presented to me by Derrick and Louise might have been of benefit to me had I discerned either of them modeling it for me. While Derrick and Louise might have existed genuinely as artists, in their role as teachers I was unable or unwilling to accept the emotional or rational artist I perceived in them. Eventually I too became a teacher of studio art. As I began to teach I assumed, somewhat naively, that

modeling the experiences I had as an artist was in itself sufficient to encourage my students to join with me in confronting ourselves about who we were becoming.

In spite of my best intentions to model my instructors, my first attempts at teaching studio art at the undergraduate level were discouraging. I realized that, while I had not yet taught, I had found it all too easy to criticize my former teachers as insensitive to their students. While it is true the teacher initiates the nature of the relationship with a student, I came to see that the freedom to confront oneself requires the type of relationship characterized as a "two-way street," in which both participants must be prepared to confront and reveal their self-doubts in the face of the other. Disturbingly, despite what I considered my best efforts to engage students in the process of taking on the responsibility to confront themselves, I found most of my students appeared to me mirroring what they thought I wanted to see in them. I began to feel increasingly uncomfortable in my role as an authority figure, for despite all my efforts to the contrary, my students seemed to be taking the "safer" path in their drive to emulate characteristics and produce work that they felt would achieve closure, that is, work acceptable to me. Whether they chose not to hear my voice, or I somehow failed to communicate the right messages, I do not know. Since I wished to improve my teaching practice, these difficulties prompted a quest to understand how my encounters with students resulted in their responding as I had with Derrick and Louise, in spite of my intentions to the contrary.

The Purpose of the Study

This study has two purposes: The first is to understand what takes place in the relationships between undergraduate studio teachers and students that often results in preventing *authentic* artistic existence. The second purpose is to understand the underlying assumptions of subjectivist and objectivist types of studio instructors and the potential for the attainment of *authenticity* in the relationships they have with their students. The goal of this thesis is to arrive at an understanding of the problem of *inauthentic* relationships in undergraduate studio courses, from which a model for more effective practice can emerge to be applied in my own studio teaching and possibly that of other studio instructors. In the examination of the dynamic of *inauthentic* relationships, a model for a relationship that would result in *authentic* artistic existence for both participants is presented.

As I understand it, existentialist philosophy entails the construction of one or more ontological models that can serve to illuminate practice. I am interested in understanding what it means for individuals to be isolated from themselves, and I believe existentialist philosophy is an appropriate starting point for such an investigation. In my inquiry into the nature of human existence, I consider the existentialism of Martin Buber as a lens through which I might come to understand the nature of the relationships I am engaged in with my students and the ways in which *authentic* artistic existence might result from these relationships. Buber's approach offers a theoretical framework that lays bare the multidimensional nature of existential encounters. His ideas have helped me understand the reasons why *authentic* artistic existence cannot emerge out of

the conventional relationships between studio instructors and students. I use these ideas to come to an understanding of what conditions are necessary to engender the type of relationship between teachers and students that could lead to *authentic* artistic existence.

From my experience, there appears to be little consensus amongst studio educators at the undergraduate level concerning what it means to be an artist. I see my personal dilemma as a widespread problem for studio art educators at universities. I believe that most university level art educators see themselves primarily as professional artists whose first concern is to create artistic knowledge, rather than to examine the difficulties encountered in teaching their students. Since this is a problem for the teaching of art in general, one means by which I investigate it is to examine the art education literature that addresses it. It is my hope that my study will serve to broaden the understanding of studio students' experiences at the university level.

Method

The method I employ consists of the following:

Chapters II through IV include a presentation of Buber's concept of the *dialogical relation* as applied to teacher-student relationships.

I analyze the artistic and social practices of the teacher by applying Martin Buber's concept of the *dialogical relation*. This concept is central to his theories of ontology, epistemology, effective education, the nature of art, and, therefore, the *authentic* artist.

Several of Buber's concepts are introduced in this thesis. In Chapter II, I discuss Buber's ontology, his concept that *authentic* human existence occurs in dialogical relationships. This discussion includes an explanation of Buber's theory of knowledge as *dialogical relation*. In Chapter III, I examine Buber's philosophy of education, which is based on a *dialogical relationship* between teachers and students. This discussion is set against an examination of Buber's critique of two major traditions in educational thought. In doing so his conceptions of the teacher-student relationship and of what constitutes the educated person can be located in the context of the broader issues informing his philosophy. To indicate the significance of Buber's influence I include a discussion of some other educational theorists particularly indebted to him. In Chapter IV, I discuss the nature of the *authentic* artist in conjunction with Buber's notion of dialogical relation.

In Chapter V, I present an analysis of how Buber's concepts can be related to the specific context of art education and particularly to studio instruction, so that his ideas can be applied to the thesis problem itself. Before turning to the specifics of the problem in undergraduate studio art education, I show how Buber's ideas compare and contrast with thinking in the field of art education. This I do by reviewing some art education literature that addresses similar issues.

Chapter VI serves to re-frame the thesis problem from the perspective of Buber's concepts. I connect key ideas from Buber's writings to the specifics of the thesis problem, namely, the two most typical relationships of the many that can arise between studio instructors and their artwork and between studio instructors and their students, as I see them in current undergraduate programs.

In Chapter VI an analysis of the thesis problem using Buber's concepts is presented. This analysis consists of five steps. First, I frame the problem of the two types of studio teacher-student relationships that have been described. Second, I establish links between the attitudes of teachers as described in Buber's critique of two educational traditions and those I have observed in my own and other studio instructors' practice. Third, while recognizing their limitations, I construct two sets of metaphors to name and describe the two specified tendencies in studio instructor-student relationships: a) the relationship which emphasizes the importance of subjective/emotional individual freedom is termed the "Magician-acolyte" relationship; b) the one which emphasizes objective/rational adaptation to the collective is termed the "Matchmaker-debutante" relationship.

Fourth, I apply Buber's concepts to account for the underlying assumptions of the "Magician-acolyte" relationship and to analyze its existential effects (the potential for *authentic* artistic existence) on those who participate in it. This kind of relationship is focused primarily on the subjective/emotional needs of individual artists and on their artwork as the mysterious product of "magical" talents. Fifth, I use the metaphor of the "matchmaker-debutante" to describe the underlying assumptions and analyze the existential effects (the potential for authentic artistic existence) on the participants in a relationship which is focused primarily on the objective/rational demands on artists to adapt the content of their artwork to the audience and their identity to the social structure of the professional art world.

By using Buber's theories of the *dialogic* inherent within individuals and their relationships, connecting these ideas to the specific art education problem, and restating

and analyzing the thesis question in Buberian terms, I arrive at a new understanding of the question.

I present a proposal of a solution in the form of a model for the ideal teacher-student relationship in the undergraduate studio art classroom setting. Based on the foregoing analysis and the resulting new understanding of the thesis question, I propose an alternative relationship to those which have been analyzed. I propose a teacher-student relationship which is grounded in Buber's concept of the dialogical *I-Thou*. I use the metaphor of the "mentor-protégé" to name and describe this "ideal" teacher-student relationship, in which both participants exist authentically. My aim is to provide an effective framework for my own studio teaching practices, and in so doing offer a model solution to other studio instructors/teachers who face similar teacher-student relationships in the undergraduate studio classroom.

CHAPTER II

The Dialogical Relationship

Before applying Buber's concepts to relationships between undergraduate studio instructors and their students, it is essential to present and discuss his concept of the *dialogical relationship*, which I propose is the basis of his vision of effective teaching practice. In this chapter I present a brief explanation of existentialist thought and how Buber arrives at his theory of the *dialogical relationship*. His definitions of ontology, epistemology, the nature of the *dialogical relationship* between teachers and students, the educated person, and the nature of the *authentic* artist are considered within the context of his general philosophy.

Existentialism

The existentialist's concern with the *being* of human being can be traced to the ontological legacy of the Cartesian split between the internal/subjective reality of the mind and the external/objective reality of the body. This duality replaced the traditional view of a subject's human existence and reality with the notion of human existence as either subjectively or objectively linked to experience. Questions concerning the whole of human existence emerged as it became apparent that individuals who attempt to apprehend their experience in primarily objective terms come to see it as ultimately meaningless. In response to this notion of human existence as linked solely to either subjective or objective experiences, existentialists proposed methods by which individuals could establish ontological truth. Essentially, they proposed that individuals

commit themselves to signifying their existence in a world they see as meaningless (as suggested by objective analysis) through an internal process of self-examination in order to seek self-knowledge. For example, there are many logical and reasonable explanations of what it means to be human. Yet if I try to apply these limited explanations of my experiences in my world, they fail to give significance to my experience as a unique subject. I sense that there must be more to being human than what objective knowledge offers. For existentialists, the significance of being human is in the creation of personally relevant solutions to what one experiences that cannot be explained by logic and reason alone. Rather than accepting an exclusively external/objective rationalization of their experiences of isolation in a meaningless world, individuals are called upon by existentialism to seek meaningful solutions based on their personal experiences, which are at once both subjectively and objectively linked to those experiences (Friedman, 1964; Wood, 1969).

As a consequence of their interest in the individual commitment to seek an individual meaning for existence, existentialists are not considered as having theorized a concise philosophical system of thought. As existentialism calls for individuals to signify their existence from their individual experiences, a systematic and concise philosophical method is inconsistent with its purpose. However, there are several distinct tendencies within existentialist thought that address the problem of human isolation from the self and the world. Some existentialists argue that, because individuals are unable to relate in an impersonal world, they are isolated from themselves, their fellow individuals, and God (Kierkegaard, 1954). Others take the position that individuals are destined to exist in isolation, not because of a God who gives

purpose to existence, but because they are unwilling or unable to take the personal responsibility necessary to create a meaningful existence (Sartre, 1956, 1965). Finally, some existentialists accept that isolation is inherently human. In the face of a meaningless world there are those who seek to exist *authentically* by confronting themselves and thereby rising above their fellow individuals, who, in avoiding self-assessment, exist *inauthentically* (Heidegger, 1968).

Buber's Existentialism

The development of Buber's position can be traced to both philosophical and theological sources he encountered early in his life. While he considered himself a philosophical anthropologist, there are some who consider his position essentially theological rather than purely philosophical (Buber, 1967; Friedman, 1981; Murphy, 1988; Wood, 1969).

Buber was born in 1878 in Vienna. As a child, he was educated by his grandfather, and later his father, within Jewish culture. His leaving home to attend school at fourteen resulted in his turning away from his Orthodox Jewish roots. He later described himself as being at this time under the influence of the post-Enlightenment notion that rational thought alone can provide meaning to human existence. In embracing this notion, he left behind a childhood compliance to Hasidism (Buber, 1947). He began to question his existence in space and time. He began to see himself in isolation, alienated in an absurd, indifferent world. His resolution came from reading Kant's *Prolegomena* and concluding that his experience of isolation sprang from his own being. He concluded that his feelings of isolation emerged from his attempts to construct

rational explanations for his existence, because it was essentially beyond the scope of rational inquiry. His rational conclusions concerning his existence failed to address his felt need to give meaning to his existence.

Buber attributed his philosophical awakening to Kant. However, he was critical of Kant's treatment of metaphysical, ethical, religious, and anthropological questions in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. He believed Kant failed to achieve what was required of a philosophical anthropology and that there was a basic methodological flaw to Kant's logic. To Buber, the study of human existence cannot be grounded on the fragmentation of humanness that the categorical method requires. He believed the assumption that individuals can isolate themselves as rational beings to achieve a rational understanding of other individuals is flawed. Knowers cannot be separated from the object of their knowledge. Individuals must be seen in relation to what they know which has both rational and non-rational aspects to it. It is this that constitutes the problematic nature of human existence (Murphy, 1988, p. 43).

At the age of eighteen, Buber entered the University of Vienna. Here his inquiry into the nature of existence was further influenced by the work of Ludwig Feuerbach. From Feuerbach, Buber derived two concepts concerning human existence. First, in contrast to traditional German philosophy's primary concern with the cognitive in human existence, Feuerbach's interest centers on the whole of human existence. Thus Feuerbach provided the basis for a secure anthropological context lacking in Kant's cognitive hierarchicalism — i.e., it addressed the fullness of each human as a concrete being rather than apprehending each human in abstraction (Friedman, 1964, p. 48). Second, Feuerbach explored the achievement of the fullness of human existence as

occurring within relationships between two individuals, entitled the *I* and the *Thou*. In other words, for Feuerbach, the fullness of human existence is not to be discovered within the individual, but rather in the relationship of individual with individual, in the unity between human and human (Murphy, 1988, p. 46). Feuerbach provided Buber a framework for a philosophy of the *dialogical relationship* which later contributed to his own notion of *encounter*.

At the age of twenty Buber entered the University of Berlin. Two of his professors, Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel, had a significant impact on his interest in existence as relation. Dilthey was concerned with the simultaneous experiencing of viewpoints from various sides, the unity of life which attained multiple expression in various world views (Dilthey, 1957). This concern with the simultaneous perception of a situation from different sides is integral to Buber's philosophy (Buber, 1967; Wood, 1969). Simmel was concerned with the role of religion in the everyday lived experience of individuals (Buber, 1967; Wood, 1969). This concern for unity and multiplicity as well as unity in the encounter with God also became key to Buber's development. Buber came to believe that potential access to God is present in all creatures. God is potentially made manifest in individuals who recognize their uniqueness as distinct from other creatures and then choose to move towards unity with others. By choosing to move toward the others in unity, to commune rather than to conflict, individuals may give birth to God in their souls and thereby actualize their existence. The act of participation in this interactive relationship actualizes the existence of the participants. Buber uses the term *being* to refer to this elevated interactive state (Wood, 1969).

This interest in God led Buber to re-examine his roots and question the essence of Judaism. He began to study the mystical writings of Hasidic masters. Out of this study, Buber came to regard the soul as that which strives to be more by reaching out to others rather than withdrawing from the world and the self. By his late twenties, Buber was focusing increasingly on the *dialogue* between individuals and God. He considered the relation to the community as providing the structure where individuals are enabled to constitute their souls and thereby attain the state of *being*. Although all humans have the potential to achieve *being*, not all do, for achieving it is dependent on the choices individuals make. *Being* can only be achieved by individuals willing to become more than simply physical beings. They seek to act on their potential to exist spiritually by encountering God in others (Buber, 1967).

Buber now began to distinguish between two types of relationships in human existence: the *orienting* and the *realizing* (Friedman, 1960, p. 36). The *orienting* function in experience is determined by the goals of the individual. Individuals who are in an *orienting* state strive to order their experiences for the sake of their own personal needs and desires. On the other hand, the *realizing* function in experience is determined by experience for its own sake. Individuals in a *realizing* state strive to relate to their experience for no other reason than the intensity of the experience itself. This individual experiences an enhanced sense of the reality of existence through the intensity of experience. For Buber, individuals become *authentic* or achieve *authenticity* through the process of *realization* (Schilpp & Friedman, 1967). Buber concludes that it is in everyday experiences that we choose to take responsibility for achieving *authenticity*, for an enhanced reality to existence. In doing so we achieve the state of *being*, which is

inherently spiritual. In choosing to be *authentic* in everyday experiences, we open ourselves to the potential of encountering God in those experiences.

The most significant influence on Buber's concept of *realization* was from Kierkegaard (Friedman, 1960, pp. 35-39). Buber was drawn to Kierkegaard's notion of existential faith, which had as its basis a relational God. For Kierkegaard, God is not a Hegelian idea to be analyzed as He weaves His way through history, but a Person to be encountered in the depths of one's being. Kierkegaard understands the problematic nature of human existence. However, Buber rejects Kierkegaard's view of the solitary nature of the religious relationship, which entails the renunciation of the world and humanity. Buber understands this as a renunciation by Kierkegaard of the otherness of the world and of humanity in favour of a salvation through an unworldly, exclusively solitary relation to God. In contrast, Buber believes a relationship with God could and should be attained through man's encounter with all of God's creation (Murphy, 1988, pp. 50-51). In a sense, the corresponding and dependent relations of the intersubjective human and divine encounters described in his *I and Thou* (1970) are a synthesis of the human anthropology of Feuerbach and the religious anthropology of Kierkegaard.

Thus Buber is distinguished from some existentialists in that, for him, the individual's existence has transcendent purpose. Individual existence is given significance in the act of responsibly striving to find and redefine spiritual existence. This is achieved by individuals choosing to realize personal and communal spiritual goals in their relationships with others (Buber, 1967). Buber's ontology is situated in this perspective.

Ontology

As indicated, Buber confronts the impasse between the internal/subjective reality of the mind and external/objective reality of the body from the perspective of his own personal preoccupation. His struggle to give purpose to his existence is rooted in the problem of striving to unify a life caught up in external/objective rationalizations of experience, with spirit, which transcends the rational. In particular, Buber sees this problem as stemming from the presumption that *authenticity* emerges from the relationship between subjects (as rational beings) and objects, wherein subjects strive to apprehend and thereby constitute objects from the narrow perspective of rationality. Buber's answer to the problem of existence draws together subjects and objects in a collective identity called the *I-Thou* relation, in which actualized existence (which is spiritual), or *being*, is constituted (Wood, 1969, pp. xi-xii).

From Buber's perspective, the purpose of existence is to escape being trapped inside ourselves by relating to others as *authentic* creatures who, like ourselves, long for a spiritual dimension to constitute their existence. Individuals come into the world with the potential to relate to others in this manner. Achieving this type of relation, however, requires individuals to act on this potential. To Buber, the task of achieving the fullness of existence depends on individuals finding and redefining themselves in communal relations with others. For Buber, it would seem however, that while individuals long to relate to others in this manner, they tend to distance themselves from this type of relationship, seeking rational explanations for existence, which limits the possibility of their realizing the full meaning of existence.

According to Buber, humans become conscious of their existence as separate entities in the world as they increasingly *set themselves at a distance from their world* by constructing rational explanations for existence (Buber, 1958, pp. 30-31). Unlike other creatures, such as animals that are incorporated into their environment, humans develop an awareness of themselves in their world. Unlike animals, humans must make rational choices to survive. However, we first must become aware that we are distinct entities that can choose to act on our own behalf. We gain control over our environment by reasoning and by acting on our rational decisions. We as subjects tend to form our world as a construct of objects in order to control it. In doing so, we *set ourselves at a distance from the world*. This rational objectification of our experiences with the world leads us ultimately to see ourselves as distinct subjects. We come to believe that we can rationalize the fullness of what it means to be. But while we can achieve rational explanations for our experiences of the world, we cannot find rational resolutions for the feelings of isolation that accompany these rational objective explanations.

Buber's ontology is centered on his conception of a certain type of relation. In his chief work, *I and Thou* (1923/1970), humans are seen to become most fully themselves in only one type of relation, the subject-to-subject relation of *I-Thou*. Another type of relation, which Buber considers a non-relation, is the subject-to-object experience of *I-/t*. The *I-/t* experience is our usual state. In it, the self-centered *I* sees the other as an *It*, an object to be manipulated for personal benefit; Buber therefore considers the *I - It* experience of existence as without meaning (Buber, 1965, 1970; Friedman, 1981; Wood, 1969).

While the *I-/t*, subject-to-object, experience of relation is our usual state, it comes into being as a choice of our free will. According to Buber, children come into the world with an innate potential to relate as subject to subject (Friedman, 1960, p. 60). While encountering others as subjects, children gradually become aware of their uniqueness in relation to other things apart from themselves. This development causes the child to recognize the existence of things separate from the self. "[In] the drive for contact with another being the innate Thou comes to the fore quite soon, and it becomes ever clearer that the drive aims at reciprocity." Moreover, "The development of the child's soul is connected indissolubly with his craving for the Thou" (Buber, 1970, p. 79).

Thus, while developing physically, the child also develops spiritually by acting on this innate potential to relate as subject to subject. In time, however, this innate drive to relate as subject to subject declines and the child begins to select objects that, from the child's perspective, take the form of other subjects. For example, when children play, they often will speak to their toys as if their toys were not objects but as *Thou*, other subjects like themselves. They will engage in verbal or silent "conversation" (Buber, 1958, p. 28) with their toys. However, as children get older they become increasingly aware of themselves as subjects in the world of objects, as they begin to objectify their experiences with the world. They begin to consider themselves as subjects relating to objects in order to find their place in the world of objects (Friedman, 1960, p. 60). This increasing focus on the similarities rather than the uniqueness of objects in the world causes children to lose sight of themselves and of those objects as unique subjects. Rather than encountering the other, they develop a

tendency to experience the other. In other words, they begin to use or sample for their own benefit, before allowing for the opportunity to encounter the other as a unique entity.

According to Buber, humans know that it is up to them to choose to *encounter* or *experience* people and things as subjects or objects. In acting on this choice humans choose to become one of two types of *I*. The *I* of the *I-It* and *I-Thou* differs (Friedman, 1960, p. 57). The *I* as subject of the *I-Thou* is turned towards the other, without precondition, open to discovering another subject. The *I* as subject of the *I-It* *experiences* the other as object, so that the *experience* may be of benefit to the *I*. What determines a relationship as *I-It* or *I-Thou* is the choice the *I* makes in initiating and developing the relationship. Thus, when, as the *I* of the *I-It*, we choose to *experience* others exclusively as *Its*, we tend to characterize ourselves as *Its* in relation to them.

The *I-It* relationship is necessary to fulfill the needs of survival in the world. Yet this does not constitute *authentic* existence because as humans we cannot be satisfied with fulfilling our needs alone. To exist *authentically* we need more. We need to exist as spiritual beings. We long for *authentic* existence because *I-It* relations cannot relieve our loneliness nor give us a vision of what it is to be human. To exist *authentically* is to reach out to others as subjects and enter into the perfected relation of the *I-Thou* with them. We can only become *authentic* by choosing to reach out as the *I* of the *I-Thou* and enter into a transcendent relation.

To become the *I* of the *I-Thou* one must see oneself as a subject turning out towards a subject other than oneself. Before individuals can turn out towards others,

they must become aware of their own uniqueness in relation to others. In doing so, they become aware of the uniqueness of others, who, like themselves are of transcendent value. This can only be achieved if individuals choose to resist the natural predisposition to confront others with a motive of personal benefit, as objects, to make oneself the *I* of *I-It*. In turning away from the egocentric *I* of the *I-It*, individuals free the other from being considered as objects. As an individual reaches out to another in his or her uniqueness and the other reciprocates, the other becomes the individual's *Thou* (Buber, 1970, p. 62).

Buber uses the terms *encounter* or *meeting* to describe the point where the *I - Thou* relationship is initiated. The action of *I-Thou* is characterized by mutuality: both the *I* and the *Thou* simultaneously enter as participants, each being chosen by and choosing the other (Buber, 1970, pp. 124-125). Buber does not mean that participants lose their individual identities in the act of relating. The *I-Thou* is not a complete blending of identities in which both individual identities are lost. Each participant maintains his or her separate identity within a simultaneous unity. They only put their independent purposes aside for the sake of the relationship.

This contrasts with the *mismatching* that occurs when the *I* chooses to *experience* the other as an *It* for the purpose of satisfying individual desires. It can occur when the *I* views the other to be an extension or likeness of oneself. Rather than meeting a unique presence, these individuals focus only on those characteristics they perceive to be like their own. "He who treats a person as 'another I' does not really see that person but only a projected image of himself. Such a relation... is really I-It" (Friedman, 1960, p. 61). Another kind of *mismatching* occurs when individuals prefer to have others dependent on

them. Relationship as dependence prevents the other from participating in an *encounter*. These individuals seek a sense of security by causing the other to be dependent on them (Buber, 1970, p. 131).

In the *I-Thou* relationship, the other affects the unique reality of the individual. Buber uses the term *dialogue* to describe this interaction (Friedman, 1960). *Dialogue* refers to a type of verbal or silent spiritual movement of subjects in turning towards others. It is a rare and infrequent form of interaction which occurs between two individuals when each one strives to *encounter* the other, and both in their uniqueness have the hope of achieving a mutual spiritual relationship. The *I-I t* relation is necessary, as individuals objectify their world so that it can serve to fulfill the needs of personal survival. Thus, when *I-Thou encounters* take place, they occur in rare moments when individuals resist the usual attitude to their world as serving their personal goals, and choose an attitude to their world as an opportunity for a spiritual *encounter* with another. Buber uses the term *dialogical relationship* to refer to the living mutual relation of those engaged in *dialogue*.

Buber contrasts the *life of dialogue* with the *life of monologue* (Buber, 1965, pp. 19-21), the life dominated by the *I-Thou* and the life dominated by the *I-I t* respectively. The predominant choices individuals make in their attitude towards their world determines a *life of dialogue* or a *life of monologue*. The *life of dialogue* is a life in which individuals recognize and decide to act on their unique potential to relate as subject to subject. Though the tendency is prevalent to objectify others, these individuals make themselves available to turn towards the other as subject, given the opportunity. Buber does not suggest the *I-Thou encounter* can be maintained

perpetually. While recognizing the inevitable necessity of the *I-It experience*, the *life of dialogue* strives to give meaning to existence by also relating as subject to subject. Thus the *life of dialogue* entails a basic attitude to the world that is prepared for the alternative to the *I-It*, the *I- Thou*.

The attitude of *dialogue* turns one towards the other, while the attitude of *monologue* turns one in towards oneself. Buber uses the term *reflexion* to describe this turning inward. *Reflexion* occurs when the *I* of the *I-It* denies the uniqueness of the other or attempts to define that uniqueness in terms that profit the *I*. Individuals in *reflexion* strive to avoid being confronted by the uniqueness of the other because uniqueness threatens the ability of the *I* of the *I-It* to maintain a necessary *distance* from the other (Buber, 1965, p. 23; 1958, p. 116). Whereas the *life of dialogue* seeks a *dialogical relation* to others as unique beings, the *life of monologue* ignores such encounters so as to maintain the *I-It experience*.

The *I-It experience* must not be understood to be inherently wrong (Schilpp & Friedman, 1967). It only has the potential to become evil when individuals strive to live by it exclusively. In this *life of monologue*, there is no possibility for *dialogue* because as individuals turn inward in *reflexion* they cut themselves off from the *spiritual encounter of dialogical relationship*. As they strive to avoid *dialogue*, they do not exist in the fullness of *being*.

Being can only be found in the *dialogical relation*. Humans and things are seen to be most fully themselves when in *dialogical relation* with other individuals or things. Buber uses the term *between* to describe the essence of this relation (Buber, 1969;

Friedman, 1960; Wood, 1969). The *dialogical relationship* occurs when individuals choose to be the *I* of the *I-Thou* and turn towards the other individual or thing as the *Thou*, another subject, and that person or thing as *Thou* reciprocates in the same *spirit*. When this *encounter of dialogical relation* between the *I* and *Thou* takes place, individuals come into *being* (Buber, 1970). In this sense, *spirit* as a state of existence does not refer to a withdrawal from the world of others so as to escape from the needs of others. Rather it means that individuals exist in the fullest sense of existence when they are turned towards the needs and concerns of others as their *Thou*. Individuals who choose to participate in the *between of dialogical relationships* enlarge their existence to become complete. They come into the world as creatures who, as they get older, become aware of their potential to choose to relate to other individuals and things as being either subjects or objects. Insofar as they choose to *encounter* the other as *Thou* in the *between of* relationship, that is, to create a *dialogical* bond between themselves and the other, and the other reciprocates, then they both exist as *spiritual* beings, and this is the essence of *authenticity* (Buber, 1970).

Epistemology

The significance of Buber's epistemology, or theory of knowledge, is that it answers the felt need of individuals seeking a way of knowing that takes into account the full range of their experiences. In a world that values external/objective rationalizations of human experience, Buber's epistemology provides an alternative to the subject/object dichotomy.

Epistemology has always wrestled with the issue of how the subject knows the object. There are differences in emphasis on which is more real, the subject or the object. There are differences as to the nature of the subject and the nature of the object. There are differences concerning the relationship between the two (Friedman, 1960). In aesthetics too, discussions concerning the primacy of the subjective or the objective views of reality are on-going. Some view knowledge as subjectivist, "art as expression" others as objectivist, "significant form"(Bell, 1958; Collingwood, 1958, as cited in Winwright, 1991, pp. 27-28). Kant laid the groundwork for an understanding of how a subject comes to know. A subject's knowledge of an object is limited by the capacity of his or her mind, mediated through the senses. Buber recognizes that, while the subject sustains the relationship with an object by way of the subject's senses, an object is not known in its reality unless it is called into actualized existence, unless it achieves a state of *being*, the status of another subject. This can only occur in the between of *dialogical relation* and not in the traditional subject/object dichotomy of *I-I t* knowledge (Friedman, 1960).

According to Buber, there are three ways of knowing: objectively (externally and physically), subjectively (internally and mentally), and in the *between* of the *dialogical relation*. Individuals adopting objective or subjective postures towards reality orient themselves from within the biased stance of a presumption about the other. These two ways of knowing reality are, in essence, *I-I t* relationships because in each case the other is experienced as the *I t*, in that it serves to conform to the specific perspective of the *I*.

Our knowledge about the external world emerges from our relationships with others. From social relationships, individuals set up systems of organizing their

experiences so that they are able to order and, to a certain extent, control their world. Buber describes the movement of children from *I-Thou* to a gradual objectification of experiences of other people and things of the world of *I-It*. Through continual comparison of their perceptions with those of others, children establish an objective reality. Objective knowledge about the world is essential for survival. *I-It* knowledge provides ordered categories of thought that are essential for human life. Yet, as discussed above, for individuals to achieve *authenticity*, such knowledge must be enlightened by *dialogical* knowing, or *I-Thou* knowledge. When *I-It* knowledge dominates and does not permit the return of *I-Thou*, it asserts that the nature of reality is abstract reason and that it must be understood primarily as external and objective (Friedman, 1960).

Buber uses the term *sharing* to describe the action of the *between* of relationship. This is the third way of knowing reality (1965, p. 180). *Sharing* in this sense means a reciprocal action, participation in a give and take between subjective and objective realities. This is the *dialogical* way of knowing. Reality is encountered from the unbiased perspective of the *between* of subject and subject. Knowledge in this sense is all those things we perceive in their uniqueness and for their own selves in *dialogical* relation, unfiltered through the *I-It* mental constructs we have established for the purpose of our own use. It is the *between* that allows for a way of knowing that is distinct from the subject/object dichotomy.

CHAPTER III

Buber on Education

The separate spheres of knowledge constituted by the subject/object dichotomy are embodied in two major traditions in educational thought. Buber's rejection of both traditions is key to his position on education. For this reason, while the central focus of this chapter will be on Buber's philosophy of education, I will first examine his critique of these two major traditions. Thus his concept of the *dialogical relationship* between teachers and students and what constitutes the educated person can be considered in the context of the broader issues informing his philosophy.

Buber identifies the conflicting epistemologies that inform educational philosophies. Buber (1947) distinguishes between educators informed by objective and subjective epistemologies, referring to the "old theory of education which is characterized by the habit of authority... (and the) ...modern theory which is characterized by tendencies to freedom" (p. 115). The former emphasize the importance of "objective" education gleaned from examining great classic works of the past, as well as developing technical knowledge in order for individuals to find a place in society. The latter are those who emphasize "subjective" knowledge, who look on education as the development of creative empowerment in accordance with subjective need or interest. According to Buber, these two approaches represent different, incomplete aspects of a whole picture. In viewing education in terms exclusively of the dominance of the subject/object relationship between the teacher and the student (with the teacher as the *I* of the *I-/t*), these approaches regard it as either the transfer of

objective tradition poured in from above and passively received (Buber's analogy is to a funnel) by the student as the *It*, or as drawing forth the subjective powers of the self (the pump) of the student, again as the *It* (Friedman, 1960, p. 177). In either case the result is the same, the dominance of the subject/object relationship results in student growth being stifled because the opportunity for *dialogue* is not present.

According to Buber, an entity is not known in its reality unless it is called into *being*. This can only occur in the *between* of *dialogical relation*, rather than in either pole of the traditional subject/object dichotomy of *I-It* knowledge (Friedman, 1960). The objective pole of the *I-It* knowledge asserts that the nature of reality is abstract and unrelated to the individual's experience. Students initially perceive something abstract and unrelated to their experience prior to *dialogical relationship*. But according to Buber, no real learning takes place without the full participation of students. This takes place when objective knowledge is transformed through a personal *encounter* with it by an active subject, the student.

Buber's critique of the subjective tradition is centered on three issues: the notion of individual *creative potentiality* as the basis of fulfilled existence, the purpose of individual freedom, and the nature of authority (Buber, 1947, pp. 115-121). Buber argues that the subjective tradition's tendency is to characterize *creative potentialities* as specific energies and abilities and to specify creativity as an expression of the individual's self. To Buber, *creative potentiality* is based on the wholeness of human consciousness, its subjective and objective aspects. *Creative potentiality*, like all human *potentialities*, is fostered and fulfilled by a relational experience rather than the free expression of an individual's self. Individuals grow and are fulfilled through their

relationships rather than through acts based on subjective need or interest. The function of education needs to be aimed towards the nurturing of relational capacities rather than towards the provision of opportunities for self-expression external to the relational contexts. Buber argues that, far from being motivated by self-interest alone, humans and/or things are most fully themselves when in *dialogical relation* with other individuals and/or things.

This line of thought is developed in his second criticism of the subjective tradition, his discussion of nature and purpose of individual freedom. According to Buber, the subjective position is rooted in the romantic notion of the child-centered ideal in which freedom is identified as a negation, a freedom from all constraint rather than a means to an end. For Buber, freedom is of two kinds. The first is freedom of choice within a moral context. This provides room for the second freedom, which is freedom for self-development and growth. His main criticism of the subjective tradition lies in its ordering of these two kinds of freedom. The first kind, responsible, morally directed freedom, a means to an end, has been subsumed by the second kind, that of uninhibited growth. It is assumed within the subjective tradition that the second freedom, freedom for self-development and growth, is the only morally directed free choice. In contrast, Buber asserts his concept of freedom as affording the possibility for personal, relational fulfillment. To him, freedom is not an end in itself; rather it is a means to a higher end, the attainment of fulfillment through communion and love (Murphy, 1988, p. 93).

As regards the third basis for his critique of the subjective tradition, while he rejects the excessive use of authority and discipline of the objective tradition, Buber

nonetheless sees the need for the teacher to exercise control and discipline for the purpose of affirming the lives of students. The *dialogical* way of knowing is contingent upon students *meeting* something other than themselves in *dialogical* relation. There must be a reciprocal action, a *sharing* between subjective and objective realities. Objective reality cannot be apprehended without self-control and self-discipline.

Buber's notion of authority and discipline is one that serves to affirm the lives of students, rather than serve the desire on the part of teachers to control them. He views authority and discipline as an ascetic/erotic dichotomy. To Buber, the term *ascetic* signifies self-discipline and self-control. In his essay "Education" (Buber, 1947), he condemns the "degenerative eroticism" of the "modern" teacher's approach. The notion of the erotic in this context derives from the Platonist distinction between a "soul directed Eros", signifying a regenerative dynamism in the world of material existence, and the more profane "Eros" having to do with sensual desire. He calls for a vital need for a life-affirming attitude by the teacher, without the sentimental indulgences of the "child-centered" view. There must be a synthesis in approach between the ascetic principles of authority and discipline and the life-affirming principles within the realm of the soul-directed Eros. This the only way teachers can affirm the individuality of their students (pp. 121-122).

Buber's criticism of the objective tradition is centered on its excessive authoritarianism and its notion of an objectivist epistemology. In "Education" (Buber, 1947), he condemns the "will-to-power" approach embodied by the authoritarian teacher. Buber sees both the "degenerative eroticism" of the modern approach and the "will to power" of the objective tradition as extremes which threaten the conditions of

openness between the teacher and the student that are vital to a fruitful teaching/learning *encounter* (pp. 121-122).

Buber is also critical of the objective tradition's justification of its authority on the basis of objective criteria outside the relational domain of the individual. He opposes any notion of an objective body of knowledge. Buber's epistemology is based on the reality discovered in relationships. There are truths which can only be disclosed through *dialogical relationships* and not through any objective criteria. Unlike classical philosophers who would justify truths on the basis of objective moral authority, Buber justifies truth on the basis of criteria grounded in the integrity and truth of the relation between the teacher and the student. In her application of Buber's *I-Thou* to education, Majorie Reeves indicates that the concept of "objectivity" in education is open to question, as our knowledge is to a large extent mediated through the thoughts of others. Thus genuine growth takes place only "through the impact of person on person" (Reeves, 1946, as cited in Friedman, 1960, p. 178).

Buber also opposes the impersonal, formalistic and highly didactic approaches of the classical tradition. In his essay "Education" (Buber, 1947), he compares the classical and the modern approaches by illustrating an example from practice. In a drawing class the classical-approach teacher adheres to an objective set of rules. In contrast, the teacher using the modern approach stresses spontaneity and individual expression. While denouncing the aimless individualism of the modern approach, Buber criticizes the classical approach as severely limiting personal freedom, denying the potential for *dialogue*, and thereby hindering creativity.

In a comprehensive review of Buber's work, Friedman (1960) cites two British scholars, Frederick Clarke and Herbert Read, who make Buber's essay on "Education" (Buber, 1947), a central component of their books. Both Clarke and Read endorse Buber's philosophical position on education. Whereas Clarke, in *Freedom in the Educative Society* (1946), takes the position on the side of tradition, with its emphasis on absolute values, Read, in *Education Through Art* (1948), sides with the innovative approach, with its emphasis on freedom and the relativity of values (pp. 178-179).

Reporting on British education, Clarke (1946) observes that educational theorists advocating individual freedom as the goal of education have taken an overly-optimistic view of practice. While these theorists expound on the process of the development of the individual in schools, a free and smooth development of inner potentialities from within, an unfolding from the inside out, Clarke views popular practice as conforming to an imposed code. While endorsing individual freedom as the goal, Clarke questions the means by which it is assumed to be achieved. Clarke argues that freedom is a continuing conquest achieved through tension and responsibility, rather than simply by providing a nurturing environment for the child. The educated person is a morally informed individual held in balance by his or her own internal tensions. Discipline is the means by which freedom is achieved. According to Clarke, Buber outlines the role of discipline in the relationship between teachers and students and sees the teacher as a living concentration of the effective world. Teachers present themselves to their students as a *living embodiment of a world*, rather than offering an abstract social code of behaviors. This is not a technique to be mastered; rather it

requires a specific disinterested artistry on the part of the teacher. According to Clarke (1946), Buber's doctrine...

offers a balancing force... which is not merely consistent with freedom, but is also the necessary condition for... freedom.... [H]e appears to find the secret in a peculiar and paradoxical blend of self-suppression and self-assertion in the teacher. Only the suppression is of the teacher's empirical self, while the assertion is of the teacher not as a self-seeking dominator, but as 'the living concentration of an effective world' (pp. 55-68).

This quality of artistry by the teacher is also emphasized by Read (1948). For Read, effective teaching emerges in the right atmosphere, which is created by teachers "enveloping" the pupils. This process requires not only that teachers be *living embodiments of the world*, but also that they experience the teaching process from both their own and their students' perspectives. For Read, learning does not take place unless there is an atmosphere of restraint towards individualistic impulses. Buber's conception of the teacher is, for Read, the right blend of opposing forces that creates the right atmosphere for the "psychic weaning" of the child (Read, 1948, pp. 279-289).

Although Buber resisted clear systematic epistemologies, his position provides an underpinning for *dialogue* between teachers and students. In the remainder of this chapter I present Buber's approach to the relations between teachers and students and describe his vision of what constitutes an educated person.

Dialogical Relations Between Teachers and Students

Buber does not offer a technique to employ. The value of his pedagogy lies more in the area of attitude towards the practice of teaching. Buber invites teachers to reflect on the unique relationships with their students, rather than turning to specific

methodologies. The challenge for teachers is to *encounter* their students in their uniqueness and to encourage them to confront themselves in their particular situation. Teachers must create an atmosphere that encourages students' unique responses.

Buber makes an important distinction between individualism and uniqueness, endorsing the latter. It would be a mistake to assume that Buber's alternative to the individualistic and authoritarian approaches in education leaves no place for the personal uniqueness of the participants. It is individualism that Buber rejects, while simultaneously affirming human uniqueness as a vital counterbalance against the spirit of the collective. The dangers of individualism and collectivism are kept in check by the uniqueness of the subject answering the call of the historical moment.

Buber argues that unique subjects discover the fullness of their humanity in their unique response to the needs of the particular moment. He rejects the view that teachers are to seek only an appropriate response from students. Rather, teachers should seek unique responses. The unique response is the result of a transaction between the person and the situation. The situation is affected by the person as the person affects what is appropriate to the situation. Thus a unique response cannot be analyzed outside the context of both the person and the historical situation.

In educational *encounters*, Buber advocates fostering opportunities for unique responses arising from the particular situation, educational concepts, and the person (the student). Inevitably, unique interpretations will develop between teachers and their students. In order to allow for the possibility of *dialogue*, teachers must create an

atmosphere in which uniqueness of interpretation is affirmed. For Buber, this is a fundamental condition for *dialogue*.

The Narrow Ridge

Buber uses the term *the narrow ridge* in relation to his philosophy of education. In *Education*, the concept of *the narrow ridge* provides the basis for Buber's alternative to the extremes of pedagogical theory (Buber, 1947). Buber's position does not

rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed. (Friedman, 1960, p. 3).

His position refers to the *between of dialogical relation* between teachers and students. It is

... no "happy middle" which ignores the reality of the paradox and contradiction in order to escape from the suffering they produce. It is rather a paradoxical unity of what one usually understands only as alternatives — I and Thou, love and justice, dependence and freedom, ... good and evil, unity and duality. (Friedman, 1960, p. 3)

According to Buber, while there can only be one truth between two contraries, to live as a human means that they are inseparable. This mystery of the unity of duality is at the core of *dialogue* and is central to Buber's ontology and epistemology (1948, p. 17).

Buber's notion of freedom as a freedom within limits tallies with his concept of *the narrow ridge*. While he has great enthusiasm for freedom he simultaneously mistrusts it (Glatzer, 1966, p. 166). He maintains that individuals are bound by

historical circumstance, yet they are always in a position to exercise their free will within the limitations of those circumstances. Buber argues that the ultimate freedom is the freedom to choose in the face of seemingly unchangeable circumstances.

In considering practice between teachers and students, Buber applies his concept of freedom within constraints to the circumstances where teachers and students disagree. Buber does not trust freedom unless it is counter-balanced by resistance. Students must meet resistance in their *encounter* with their teacher when the disagreement is genuine. This does not mean that Buber advocates that teachers impose their ideas on their students. Students only need to *encounter* teachers' ideas. Teachers should not force their opinions on their students, for doing so compromises *dialogue*, as the unique response of the student is then not given the opportunity to flower.

According to Buber, teachers can take one of two approaches towards their students: that of the *propagandist* or that of the *educator* (1965, pp. 72-88). *Propagandists* impose their opinion on their students in a way that requires the latter's responses to conform to teachers' perceptions, without regard for the students' insights. *Propagandists* are not genuinely concerned about the uniqueness of the individual before them. Individual students are viewed not as unique, but as typical of a class; that is, as entities that cannot be trusted to find truth by themselves. The nature of this relationship is based on a presumption about the other. *Propagandists* do not trust the impact of their own experience to engender a desire in their students to seek unique solutions in their own lives. Rather, they believe they must depend on coercion to instill their ideas into their students. In response, students are compelled to reflect back to *propagandists* those ideas that the students sense are of value to the *propagandist*.

In contrast, *educators* choose to present themselves as a *living embodiment of the world*, as another *being walking the narrow ridge* on which there is no certainty, only the mystery of the unity of duality. They seek to *encounter* the other as another human like themselves, struggling to find fulfilled existence in communion with others. These teachers discover and nourish the soul of their students, who, like themselves, seek to achieve *being*. They recognize that before them are others whose potential to relate only needs to be unlocked, "not through instruction but through meeting, through existential communication between one who has found direction and one who is finding it" (Friedman, 1960, p. 180).

Educators encourage an idea to unfold in its uniqueness as it emerges from each individual student. Students must feel free to accept or reject their teachers' ideas. Buber cautioned that the notions of imposing and unfolding should not be identified with arrogance and humility respectively. It is possible to be arrogant in the belief that one's views are more developed and yet maintain an atmosphere of unfolding. As long as the teacher is concerned less with answers and more with how the answers were arrived at, then an atmosphere of unfolding will be maintained. The *educator* is concerned with creating an atmosphere that gives full rein to argument from both sides, as long as it is tempered with concern for the personal uniqueness and well-being of students. *Educators'* students feel that they are active participants in coming to terms with the ideas before them. Both participants seek victory based on maintaining welfare for the other as an active subject. The moment the welfare of the other and the process of seeking the best means for both participants take second place to winning the battle, the unfolding of *dialogue* is interrupted and the imposition of an ideology of propaganda takes

over. While the teacher might win an argument with more skill in the presentation, the best solution may still be lost because it has not been achieved through *dialogue*. In spite of their position of authority as teachers, *educators* are willing to admit defeat, to put aside their pride, if their students present positions that they deem to be closer to the truth. *Educators* strive to fully understand the views of their students, even though these positions might not be presented as skillfully as their teachers would be able to. The struggle to find truth while maintaining personhood must continue, however, as long as the *educator* remains unconvinced.

Buber argues that *educators* and their students seek to be responsible so as to avoid seeking correct answers from the outside or for permitting students' desires and interpretation to be imposed on the material. Besides imposing one's ideas on another, one can impose one's impulses on the needs of the moment. Buber calls for responsibility in being sensitive to the extremes of blind obedience to external tradition or to individual impulses. He uses the term *sign sensitivity* to refer to the between of communicative meaning between teachers and students (Buber, 1947, pp. 10-13). His approach rejects both the extreme of viewing meaning as happening inside individuals and that of viewing meaning as imposed from outside. He calls upon teachers to be sensitive to the *signs* that emerge between them and their students in educational situations. These *signs* are those insights that are unique to a particular moment in time and are often ignored. For Buber, every insight within the *dialogic* has significance for the meaning of the *dialogic*. To act on these *signs* indicates a willingness to be open to the demands of the particular moment. This is predicated not only on a knowledge of the tradition, but also on an openness to break with tradition should the situation call for

such action. This requires a willingness to listen before being listened to. It requires not only an insight into the particular moment, but a willingness to speak what is demanded by the situation. This might mean that a comment is needed even though both participants might not like the message. For Buber, responsibility means acting with courage in responding to the call of the particular situation. Tradition is needed, but it alone is insufficient to answer the call of the moment. Tradition must be adapted to the demands of the historical moment. One has to know the rules in order to break them in such a way as to suit the present situation. On the other side, one cannot give liberty to subjective impulses; one must recognize the uniqueness of the individual. One's responsibility to signs is to walk *the narrow ridge*, engage with the tension, between tradition and personal interpretation in answering the call of the moment.

The roles played by the participants in the educational task are, according to Buber, founded on mutual trust and *experiencing the other side of the relationship*. While he recognizes the need for healthy doubting as bequeathed by Descartes, too many relationships between teachers and students are based on the assumption that there are hidden motives in everyone. It is this tendency that has reached such epidemic proportions that the potential for *dialogue* between individuals is severely hampered. Buber calls educators to walk *the narrow ridge* between the tendency to search for hidden motives and belief in the truth of all that is said. The challenge for the *educator* is to recognize the differences between these tendencies and respond to them accordingly. How can this be determined? Buber offers his concept of *experiencing the other side of the relationship*, or what he calls *inclusion* (Buber, 1965).

By *inclusion* Buber does not mean empathy. He argues that empathy means giving up one's own ground in order to experience the other's world. Carl Rogers comes close to Buber's *inclusion* when he describes the effort of experiencing the other's world as if it were one's own, while maintaining an individual identity. However, Rogers' notion is concerned with one's subjective view of getting in touch with the subjective view of an other (Buber, 1965, pp. 166-184). Buber's view of *inclusion* is not founded on either subjective or objective perspectives. Rather, it is affected by the world of the other as well as the interpretation of that world by the subject who seeks to meet the other.

Inclusion is closer in meaning to intentionality, as presented in Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction (Natanson, 1973, pp. 84-104). Experience in this sense is a suspension of all reference to the reality of the thing experienced, leaving nothing but the experiencing itself, which Husserl divided into the *noesis* (act of consciousness) and the *noema* (object of consciousness). Intentionality requires no subjective and objective associations beyond the act of being conscious of the phenomena. *Noesis* and *noema* are interconnected actions that precede our subject-to-object manner of experiencing. As one acts in this way, one becomes aware of how the situation is acting on oneself in the present. Buber calls individuals to respond to existence as it confronts us in the present. For Buber, the goal of education is to answer the call of the present situation. To be fully human is not limited to having an identity; it cannot be separated from the situation. The educated person, then, is one who is sensitive to the present circumstance and courageously answers the call of the moment on *the narrow ridge* between tradition and personal interpretation.

The Education of Character

According to Buber (1947), the essential task of educators is the development of character, that is, guiding students to seek a relationship with God by making them responsible to themselves, rather than being dependent upon any organic or collective unity. For Buber the educated person is the person of great character. Great characters are ethical decision-makers who act out of the fullness of their being and courageously respond in accordance with the uniqueness of each particular situation. Indecision causes individuals to be conditioned and acted upon. According to Buber, indecision blocks the directing of one's power, and failure to direct one's power is the essence of evil (1958, p. 52; Friedman, 1960, p. 32). The forging of great character is achieved by teachers who, with an understanding of the fullness of existence, continually question their students so that they too will develop the courage to question their society's conventions and, if required, act on what they learn from the questioning. Teachers achieve this only by winning students' confidence. This is done through teachers' responsible participation in the lives of their students. This enables students to feel that teachers unconditionally accept them prior to any attempt to influence them. From this *encounter* students learn to ask the difficult questions that are required in the moment. Students need to feel confident that they can assert their views and be engaged. This confidence does not entail agreement, however, and it is in conflict with students that teachers meet their supreme test. Thus the "oppositeness" between teachers and students need not cease, but it is enclosed in relation and so is safeguarded against a degeneration into a battle of wills (Friedman, 1960, p. 180).

In conclusion, educated persons are persons of great character who continually question their assumptions in seeking to answer the call of the moment. This chapter has focused on Buber's philosophy of education. Beginning with his critique of the major traditions, I presented his concept of the *dialogical relationship* between teachers and students and what constitutes the educated person. Before returning to the problem within undergraduate studio art education, I will discuss Buber's concepts of art and the *authentic* artist in conjunction with his concept of the *dialogical relation*.

CHAPTER IV

The Dialogical Relationship Between the Artist and the Artwork

As we have seen, Buber argues that humans and things are most fully themselves when in *dialogical relation* with other humans or things. The *dialogical relationship* occurs when an individual chooses to be the *I* of the *I-Thou* and so turns towards the other individual or thing as the *Thou*, another subject, and that person or thing reciprocates in the same *spirit*. When this encounter of *dialogical relation* between *I* and *Thou* takes place, individuals and things exist *authentically*, as they have attained *being* (Buber, 1970). Artists who continually seek *authenticity* are individuals of great character, ethical decision-makers who continually question their assumptions in seeking to answer the call of the *Thou* in the present moment. This chapter will examine the nature of these individuals and their *dialogical relationships* with their artworks.

In his book *The Knowledge of Man* (1965), Buber spells out his views on art. Buber asks, "What can be said about art [work] as about a being that springs from the nature of man?" (p. 149). There is no assumption in this question that artwork is a physical product. Nevertheless if artwork as a physical product is like "a being that springs from the nature of man," then it can be assumed that it retains some human characteristics. Buber posits a connection between artwork and the nature of the artist. Let us begin by examining the nature of the artist.

What is the nature of the artist? More specifically, what is the human characteristic out of which artwork springs and embodies the peculiarities of its

maker? Humans and things are seen to be most fully themselves when in *dialogical relation* with other humans and things. A characteristic of being human is possessing the potential to turn towards another as *Thou*. *Dialogical relationships* take many forms. Humans have the capacity to relate *dialogically* in four ways. These are according to Buber, the four main relational *potencies* to human existence: the *potencies* of loving, knowing, believing, and creating (1965, pp. 163-165). Throughout one's life there is a striving for a relational balance between them. Although they are interrelated, they are also independent in character. The potency to create, in a unique way, gives rise to the opportunity to *encounter* the other as *Thou*. Rather than seeking to produce an object or idea alone, creation is motivated by a desire for *dialogical relation*. It is grounded in the reality of human nature as essentially a relating, reciprocating, rather than a self-fulfilling individual.

Individuals create because of their desire to commune with others as *Thou*. It is the desire for the pleasure of the *dialogical relationship* that occurs between individuals and their other. Like freedom, creativity is not an end in itself; rather it is a means to a higher end — the possibility for personal, relational fulfillment. This relationship can only be achieved when individuals suspend their autonomy, which embodies preconceived conventions and positions about that which is before them. In seeking to commune with others, these individuals confront themselves from the perspective of their subjective and objective experiences in their *encounter* with another. Thus, one of the characteristics of being fully human is to be creative. Acting on that potency is a manifestation of *dialogical relation*, a condition, for Buber, of being fully human.

Buber defined the capacity for creativity as an aesthetic *potential* that exists to a greater or lesser extent in all individuals. Buber states:

Everyone is elementally endowed with the basic powers of the arts, with that of drawing, for instance, or music; these powers have to be developed and the education of the whole person is to be built up on them as on the natural activity of the self. (Buber, 1947, p. 110).

While the *potency* to create exists in all, it is more developed in the case of the few. Everyone develops their relational capacities uniquely. We all act on our *potency* to create by acting on the universal faculty of responding to artwork. Artists are those who additionally act on their *potency* to create by being engaged in the production of artwork. For Buber, creativity is manifested in artists as origination and in others as response; it occurs as both artistic creation and the more common faculty of aesthetic response. Creativity is presented in both these manifestations throughout his writings on aesthetics (Murphy, 1988, pp. 155-156). Artists, like others, are individuals who long for the activity of a *dialogical relation*. However, in addition to acting on the universal potential of aesthetic response, they also become the *I* of the *I-Thou* in the activity of creating artwork.

Creativity is seen by Buber as needing proper "cultivation" (1965, pp. 84-85) so as to provide opportunity for *dialogue*. How is this achieved for artists? Art as an activity provides opportunity for the cultivation of creativity. It is the activity that engages the artist from the initial perception/conception all the way to the completed visual *form*. Thus, artistic activity is a product of the artist's being, because it serves to cultivate the innate relational capacity for creativity.

Buber writes, "art [as activity] must be regarded as the image-work of man, the peculiar image-work of his peculiarity" (1965, p. 49). To Buber, "image-work" is the artist's perception of his own relation to things and the particular action he takes to bring those things into *being* (Wood, 1969). The artwork that is produced attains a unique status from within the *dialogical* interaction with its maker. Whereas before it was *encountered* by an artist it was an object among objects, in *dialogical relation*, it becomes a unique subject because it is in relation to the artist who brings it into *being*. The artwork inherits some aspects of its maker's own uniqueness through involvement in artistic activity.

For Buber, artistic activity is a mode of revealing the reality of *dialogue*: it is "the realm of the between which has become form" (Murphy, 1988, p. 165). In other words, the artwork is the *between of dialogical relation* made manifest in physical form. Whereas a *dialogical relationship* can occur between an individual and an idea, a *dialogical event* as an artwork is a physical manifestation of the event. The artist is the *I* who *encounters* the artwork as *Thou*. The creator and the created are the *I* and *Thou* of a *dialogical relationship*. The artwork is a physical testimony of that event. Buber describes this activity as:

the eternal origin of art that confronts a form that wants to become a work through him. Not a figment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands[calls for] the soul's creative power. What is required is a deed that a man does with his whole being: if he commits it and speaks with his being the basic word [*I-Thou*] to the form that appears, then the creative power is released and the work comes into being. (1970, p. 60)

The action taking place between the artist and the artwork is the *dialogical relationship* of subject to subject. For Buber "the eternal origin of art" refers to the

point of *meeting* between the artist and material. In recognizing the unique potential of the material, the artist is confronted by it. The word "wants" suggests that the material needs something from the artist to attain the fullness of its existence. Artists who are sensitive in recognizing the potential of materials to attain being allow themselves to be confronted by the uniqueness of the material and seek to answer the call of the material in becoming visual *form*.

Perception is defined by Buber as the initial point where both individual and object encounter each other, in their common goal of achieving visual *form*. It is the intensity of this initial experience that propels artists to respond to the call of the material in becoming *form* through *dialogue*. Artists seek to go beyond mere *perception*, to the deeper fulfillment of *dialogue*.

Buber (1965) uses the term *turning towards the other* to describe the basic movement within *dialogue* (p. 22). This does not refer to a physical turning, but rather to a turning with the soul. This means that the turning occurs with the essence of one's *being*, with undivided attention. In this act, artists set aside all other considerations for the sake of the bringing forth of the other as a unique presence. Rather than viewing the object as a thing/*It* to use, artists recognize the unique potential within the material as *Thou*. The potential for *dialogue*, then, is dependent on the artist's attitude. The artist chooses to go beyond the initial perceptual activity in seeking an *encounter between* oneself and the material. Thus the *dialogical relationship* between the artist and the material leads the artistic activity from the point of *perception* into the object becoming *form*.

For Buber, artists desire to go further than the limitations of their perceptual attention. They go beyond considering the object as something apart from themselves. Creativity is essentially a transcendent activity. Common perception derives from the world that which we need. On the other hand, artists seek to *encounter* the wholeness of the object before them, beyond the realm of their perceived needs. They give the totality of themselves to the object before them, in order for it to become a *Thou*. They become the *I* of the *I-Thou*, as though the object before them were another person. Buber distinguishes between the totality of an entity (its spiritual essence) and what it appears to be (its physical existence). (1965, pp. 8-9) According to Buber, artists seek the *Thou* of the object before them. The *Thou* is its *spiritual* essence.

As discussed above, *being* is *spiritual*, serving to transcend the self. Buber views the soul as that which strives to be more by reaching out to others rather than withdrawing from the world and the self. He considers the relation to the community as providing the structure by which artists constitute their souls and thereby their existence. It can only be achieved by artists striving to become more than simply physical beings. Artists seek to act on their potential to exist *spiritually* by having a potential access to God in the object before them. According to Buber, image-making is a transformative activity in which *encounter* between the artist's being as a subject and the *being* of the other is given meaning and immanent *form*. Buber views artistic creation as a search to *encounter* immanent *forms*. It is an intentional, meaning-conferring activity (Murphy, 1988, p. 159). The response of the object in becoming artwork is a manifestation of a *spiritual encounter*.

By contrast, individuals who block the participation of the object in the *dialogical relationship* limit the object to the world of objects, with no possibility of participating in the attainment of *being*. In doing so, individuals miss the opportunity for a *spiritual* activity; they forfeit the possibility for a *spiritually* transcendent encounter with *form*. They seek to limit their *experience* with an object to its physical appearance. These are *observers*. Buber defines *observers* as those whose intent is to define that which is before them. *Observers* want to possess some aspect of the object before them. They seek to regulate the engagement with the object by evoking closure to all *experiences* that are not germane to their objective expectations. They engage, then, in an *I-/t* relationship.

Buber differentiates *observers* from *onlookers*, who *encounter* objects before them without intent. For Buber, "All great artists have been onlookers" (1965, p. 9). They *encounter* the other from the position of openness to discovery. They move beyond the realm of mere *perception*, for the purpose of classifying and thereby distancing themselves from the other, to the realm of *onlookers*, so as to lose themselves in the *meeting* with the object of their attention. While setting out to *meet* another subject, *onlookers* set aside all other thoughts that would impede the relationship with the other. They seek to *encounter* the totality of that which is before them. They engage, then, in an *I-Thou* relationship.

At the moment of *perception*, artists (as *onlookers*) and artworks are poised to *encounter* each other in *dialogical relation*. Artists are confronted by the uniqueness of the material before them. They recognize the potential of the material in becoming *form*. The material before them is perceived in its uniqueness and for its own self in *dialogical*

relation, unfiltered through the previous *experiences* of *I-I t* knowledge established in the mind of the artist. These artists willingly shift from the *I* of *I-I t*, subject-to-object, to the *I* of *I-Thou*, subject-to-subject, as they meet the material as their *Thou*. There is a *turning towards* this unique potential of the material as *Thou*. All ulterior motives that serve the needs of the artist are set aside. For example, the material is not viewed as something that might make an attractive piece to exhibit, or sell, or in any way benefit the artist. They willingly turn their attention towards the material as *Thou* and willingly join together with it in the common purpose of attaining ideal *form*.

Sharing describes the action of the *between* of relation. *Sharing* in this sense suggests a reciprocal action, participation in a give-and-take between subjective and objective realities. Both artists and artwork alternate in proposing and responding to new directions initiated by their dialogical partner. For example, a sculptor as the *I* of the *I-Thou* might approach a block of stone as the *Thou* with no particular *form* in mind. At some point the sculptor steps back to notice that as a result of the hammering with a mallet a pattern or *form* begins to emerge that suggests a head. In response, the sculptor begins to make choices based on the suggested *form*. Later the sculptor notices that a new possibility in the *form* is revealed, suggesting a new direction. The sculptor reassesses the potential of the material as it presents itself. The sculptor responds *authentically* to this suggestion and the reciprocal cycle continues. This is the action of the *dialogue*. The resulting *forms* are the consequence of the *dialogical relationship* between artist and material.

When the *dialogical relationship* ends, the artwork-as-object and the artist-as-subject return to their states of solitary existence. This does not mean that the

artwork-as-object cannot be encountered once again as a subject in a *dialogical relationship*. The finished sculpture can be encountered *dialogically* by another viewer who chooses to exercise his or her innate potential to be creative. Like the sculptor, the viewer is confronted by the artwork in its uniqueness. Whereas the purpose of the *encounter* between the sculptor and the artwork is to make a physical testimony of the *I - Thou* event, the purpose of the *encounter* between the viewer and the sculpture is the shaping of an idea, an aesthetic response. This idea cannot be the same idea that emerged out of the *dialogue* between the artist and the artwork. Its meaning is particular to the uniqueness of the *dialogical encounter* that takes place between the viewer and the artwork. As with the artist, the viewer's preconceived ideas about the artwork and other artworks can prevent the *I-Thou* encounter from taking place. For example, the viewer's knowledge of the opinions of critics or art historians often set the stage for an *I-It* experience, as the viewer is incapable of *encountering* the artwork in its uniqueness.

Buber considers an artwork, then, as an object becoming an active subject within the *dialogical relationship*. However, this relationship depends upon the participation of the artist. Artists choose to transcend themselves in order to constitute the other in its unique existence. In the *encounter* with the object, the artist chooses to liberate the object from the world of *It*. The object becomes an active subject who, together with the artist, participates in the action of *sharing*. In this manner, objects are seen as seeking to interact with humans so as to achieve the fullness of their existence in becoming subjects. It is as though the object awaits with outstretched arms for an active subject to bring the meaning of its existence to completion.

According to Buber, "form discloses itself to the artist...it looks for the encounter with man in order that he may undo the spell and embrace the form for a timeless moment" (1923/1970, p. 91). The artwork calls for the artist. It "looks for" an *encounter* with an artist so that the artist will break it free from the world of objects and respond to it in its uniqueness. The "timeless moment" is the point when the artist chooses to become the *I* of the *I-Thou* and together with the artwork achieve *being*.

Humans are in the position to create for the object a new existence as an active subject. They can choose to live the *life of monologue*, and thereby limit their *experience* with objects from the perspective of their personal needs. Or they can choose to go beyond that *perception* of the object, to release the object from the world of *It* and *meet* with it in *dialogical relationship*. Buber often refers to the object-as-subject as an *unthing*. It is no longer seen as a typical example of a class of entities belonging to the world of things. It is discovered in its uniqueness, freed from the world of objective reality. The artist's response in becoming the *I* of the *I-Thou* dissolves the barrier between subjective and objective existence by drawing together subjects and objects in a collective identity within *dialogical relation*, wherein *being* is constituted. This communion of artist-as-subject and object-as-subject in *I-Thou* relation is physically manifested in the artwork. Thus the artwork is a subject. It is no longer a separate entity *distanced* from human beings. It exists as an artwork because of its *dialogical relationship* with the artist.

This chapter has presented Buber's notion of the artist and the nature of the *dialogical relationship* between the artist and the artwork. The *authentic* artist is an active subject, a unique individual who seeks to *encounter* an artwork in its uniqueness

and thereby draw it out of the world of objects to become an active subject in *dialogical relation*. Whereas the *dialogical relationship* is commonly embodied in the *between* of human and human, there is also an intersubjectivity between the artist and the artwork. The natural division of existence between human and object is put aside by the mutual participation of both the artist and the artwork in a *dialogical relationship*.

The next chapter addresses how Buber's ideas are situated in relation to the domain of art education. I review some art education literature that addresses issues similar to those raised by Buber, so as to position his notion of the educated artist within that context.

CHAPTER V

Buber and the Domain of Art Education

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast Buber's ideas on education and art to those found in the domain of art education through a review of some relevant art education literature.

The essence of Buber's notion of education is based on intersubjectivity between teachers and students. Likewise, his notion of the *authentic* artist is based on an intersubjectivity between the artist and the artwork. The present literature review is based on the premise that the literature reflects underlying assumptions and widespread acceptance of certain current notions of what takes place between the teacher and the student, and the student artist and the artwork and what role the artwork plays in that relationship. The literature included in this review is intended to illuminate where and how the underlying philosophical assumptions concerning the relationship between the teacher and the student, and the student artist and the artwork during artistic activity are evident within the domain of art education. Several studies by Brown (1982), Fagg (1981), Wells (1982), and particularly Winwright (1991), point to a number of art education authors who touch on issues addressed by Buber. Art education authors commonly cited amongst these include: Chapman, Feldman, and Lowenfeld and Brittain. The literature included in this study represents several well-known approaches to art education by key figures in the field, namely, Laura Chapman (1978), Elliot Eisner (1972), Edmund Feldman (1970), Viktor Lowenfeld and Lambert Brittain (1947/1982), and June K. McFee (1961/1970).

It should be noted that these texts have been used widely in the education of elementary and secondary art educators. Presumably, then, the underlying assumptions of these texts have been instrumental in forming much of the practice of art education at the elementary and secondary level over the past three decades. For the purposes of this document, I assume that the educational philosophies of these art educators have played a role in the formation of notions of how art teachers and their students ought to relate, as well as notions of the artist and the artwork of their students. However, the central question of this thesis is concerned specifically with art educators currently teaching studio courses at the university level. Unfortunately, art education literature does not by and large address issues concerned with the practice of art education at the university level, unlike the elementary and secondary level. From my own experience as a university-level art educator, I would say most studio educators at the university level see themselves as professional artists who are employed as role models for students to emulate. In contrast, elementary and secondary art teachers' concern is more likely to be with their effectiveness as educators. Nevertheless, I assume that the underlying notions of how art teachers and their students ought to relate, and notions of artist and artwork that have been employed by art teachers at the elementary and secondary levels have some effect on students who choose later to become professional artists and art educators at the university level. For example, I presume that my ideas about teaching and art were to some extent influenced by my secondary school art teacher. How I saw myself as a professional artist-to-be was to some extent based on the underlying assumptions of the elementary and secondary art teachers that influenced my artistic and creative work. These and other formative experiences about art are what I brought to my university experience.

Based on the premise that current practice in undergraduate studio education has been influenced, albeit indirectly, by teachers whose practice drew on ideas from the field of art education, then the literature reviewed is limited to texts that were written at the very least a decade ago. If current studio educators have been influenced by the ideas of their secondary level art teachers, then it is safe to assume that those ideas are gleaned from literature that is not current. While there may be a shift in the art education literature of the last decade concerning what takes place between the teacher and the student, and the artist and the artwork and what role the artwork plays in that relationship, most current undergraduate studio educators are not influenced by it because they are not directly exposed to it.

Thus more specifically, the review is intended to illuminate those underlying philosophical assumptions concerning the teacher and the student, and the artist and artwork to be found in the field of art education, which have presumably had some impact on current studio educators at the university level. Presumably, these assumptions have influenced art students, some of whom decided to become artists and art educators themselves and in turn have based their practice on similar assumptions.

The review of each author will focus on several issues: 1) the teacher-student relationship; 2) the definition of art; 3) the task of art education; 4) the definition of the artistic activity; and 5) the role of the artwork in that process, with the goal of identifying 6) underlying assumptions concerning the relationship between the teacher and the student and artist and the artwork.

Buber's concept of the *dialogical relationship* between the teacher and the student, and the artist and artwork is then compared and contrasted with the assumptions of the authors reviewed.

Chapman: Approaches to Art Education

The text *Approaches to Art Education* by Laura Chapman (1978) is intended for art instructors and classroom teachers. In the pragmatic tradition, it primarily addresses issues of art education rather than philosophical discussions on the nature of art. Its focus is "what to teach and why it is worth teaching " (p. v).

The Teacher-Student Relationship

According to Chapman (1978), good teacher-student relationships are fostered by teachers' demonstrating humanistic qualities. Qualities she lists include, "optimism, wit, a willingness to talk about life, and a sensitivity to things that both bother and delight children" (p. 391).

Definition of Art

Chapman (1978) values art as a vehicle of expression of personal and social identity. She does not identify any single definition of art, but rather presents three concerns: "personal fulfillment through art; appreciation of the artistic heritage; [and] awareness of the role of art in society" (pp. 19-20). "Personal fulfillment through art" refers to the use of artistic activity as a vehicle of self-expression in response to life's experiences (p. 19). Perception and expression are viewed as the key components of this creative activity and are thus essential to personal fulfillment. The "artistic

heritage" Chapman (1978) points to is the "organized knowledge about art" (p. 20). The work of others in the past and present is seen to "confirm the authenticity of their own creative heritage" (p. 20). The "awareness of the role of art in society" pertains to an awareness that "visual forms... express... identities as well as membership in groups" (p. 20).

Task of Art Education

For Chapman (1978) the task of art education is based on these three concerns, so as to "develop children's independence in creating art and in fully perceiving the world" (p. 20). Since she links the task of art education to artistic activity, in the following section I examine her definition of artistic activity and how it is linked to her approaches to art education.

Definition of Artistic Activity

Artistic activity as identified by Chapman (1978) consists of at least three major steps. Several approaches to teaching are presented for each step. The first step, inception of an idea, refers to the development of the artist's initial motivation to create (pp. 44-63). The task of art educators is to encourage their students to search for their own unique ideas or experiences to express. Chapman goes on to suggest the artist and student might consider a variety of source material, including the imaginary, experiential, and environmental.

Chapman (1978) assumes that every aspect of an individual's life and experiences can be considered as potential subject matter for artistic expression. In the

selection of subject matter for expression artists are required to draw from their individual experiences, whether real or imaginary. It is this combination of unique individual experiences that constitutes an individual's self-concept and thereby influences the direction of the expression.

For Chapman (1978), the second step in artistic activity is elaboration and refinement of the idea (pp. 44-63). This refers to the artist and student reflecting on the idea, through a process of adding to or subtracting, so as to clarify prior to executing in a final medium. Chapman views this step as problem solving. Varying the approach to their work might help students to develop flexibility by perceiving the problem from different angles.

Chapman (1978) recommends art teachers employ a series of methods to assist students in solving their artistic problem. The first method, observation and visual recall, is a critical-skills acquisition problem. It deals with learning to accurately observe and record visual information in the form of preliminary sketches (pp. 53-54). The next method deals with a change of personal work habits. She describes convergent and divergent methods (Guilford, 1966; Thurstone, 1944, as cited in Chapman, 1978), spontaneous and deliberate approaches (Beittel & Burkhart, 1963, as cited in Chapman, 1978), and visual and haptic orientations (Lowenfeld, 1947, as cited in Chapman, 1978) that students might be encouraged to explore after becoming aware of their individual work habits (p. 55). Exploring meanings and symbolism is another method recommended by Chapman. The artist and student reflect on past experiences that they see as relevant. Students should be encouraged to reflect on the possible subtleties within past experiences that might inform expression. A final method

advocated by Chapman deals with the consideration of purpose for the artwork and the means by which it can be most effectively designed. According to Chapman, "The intended function of a work and the medium it is to be executed in both have a definite influence on how the artist creates the work" (p. 57).

Chapman's (1978) third step in artistic activity, execution in a medium, refers to four different approaches to the teaching of artistic media: control; adaptation; selection; and experimentation (p. 61). Control of artistic media is mastered through practice. Moreover, mastery of one medium is important before moving on to others. The ability to adapt media to idea and vice versa is an essential skill to acquire. Creative flexibility is evidenced by an artist who "may find that an initial idea or feeling must be altered to suit a preferred way of using a medium...[and]...when a medium offers little resistance to being shaped, an artist may allow ideas to develop during the process of work" (p. 59). The artist must also exercise judgment in considering various symbolic connotations when selecting media to express the idea. Finally, experimentation with media can serve two purposes. It can be useful to test ideas for the creation of some desired visual effect. Or it can be useful to develop a set of individual techniques in a medium which might be useful at some later time. In teaching, such experimentation should be encouraged, providing a predetermined goal is envisioned.

Role of Artwork

Chapman (1978) assumes that the artwork is not an inactive participant in its creation. It possesses symbolic qualities corresponding to its physical characteristics. Its meaning is thus not solely determined by the actions of the artist. The symbolic

associations embodied by its physical characteristics participate in creating the artwork.

Underlying Assumptions

The following assumptions found in Chapman (1978) will be used in conducting a comparison of Chapman's approach with Buber's ideas:

- 1) Teachers should model humanistic behaviors (p. 391).
- 2) Every aspect of an individual's life and experiences can be considered as potential subject matter for artistic expression (pp. 46-52).
- 3) Artistic activity is a problem solving process (p. 61).
- 4) The artwork is not an inactive participant in its creation (p. 60).
- 5) Media must be used to fulfill expressive intent. Chapman (1978) considers media as somewhat passive, to be used for personal expression (pp. 128-130).

Eisner: Educating Artistic Vision

Elliot Eisner's book, *Educating Artistic Vision* (1972), is written primarily for elementary-level educators. He presents a discussion of the various functions that art serves, as the basis for its justification as a discipline in school curricula. Eisner presents an attempt to understand "how individuals develop their ability to respond to and create visual form" (p. v).

The Teacher-Student Relationship

Eisner (1978) believes the establishment of a trusting relationship between teachers and students is crucial to the educational process. One way an atmosphere of trust is fostered is by having students observe how teachers function and feel when they do so in the world outside school. Willingness by teachers to present themselves as they function in the world engenders students empathy (pp. 180-183).

Definition of Art

Eisner (1978) attempts to draw together conflicting educational positions by taking a cognitive view of both creating and appreciating. He takes the position that art is a product of intelligence, not just "the work of the hand" (p. v). Eisner cautions his reader not to approach art as solely a rational activity (p. 9). According to Eisner, art provides a public outlet for visual, metaphoric expression of the artist's values; it activates sensibilities and potentialities; and it enlivens ordinary aspects of human experience.

Task of Art Education

Eisner (1972) views the current justifications for art education as stemming from two sources: contextualists whose concern is not only meeting the needs of students but those of society as well; and essentialists whose concern is with "art for its own sake," unalloyed by issues outside of the discipline and as a distinct discipline within education. He views himself as an essentialist, promoting art in education for the

"unique contributions it makes to the individual's experience with and understanding of the world" (p. 9).

Definition of Artistic Activity

According to Eisner, artistic activity is described as "...the task of giving visible aesthetic form to ...inner visions..." (1972, p. 26). The conditions for the production of artwork are assumed to be dependent on the acquisition of specific skills (1972, p. vi, p. 26). Skills in managing materials, perceiving qualitative relationships, inventing forms, and creating spatial and aesthetic order in unity with expression, are acquired at the appropriate developmental stage. Eisner recognizes that there is more to artistic activity than the acquisition of skills.

Artistic activity, as viewed by Eisner, is one that transforms not only material but its maker. The experiences of individuals impact on their subsequent behavior. Artists develop, then, what Eisner (1972) terms, "a certain responsiveness" to artistic qualities (p. 282). These experiences "refine the imaginative and sensible aspects of human consciousness. The work of art remakes the maker" (p. 282). In effect, art making places demands on the artist that subsequently alter attitudes and behaviors.

According to Eisner, there are two types of cognitive operations involved in artistic production. The free association of discovery is the type most often employed by young children. Artists refer to this as accidental, as without forethought. Examples might include scribbling or playing with material. By contrast, the deliberate transposal of an idea to the public domain as an act of the will constitutes intention, the other type of cognitive activity. Artists must assert their will or intent upon a material

as a means of converting an idea to a public form. While artists work in the discovery mode, occasionally intention takes over. This occurs when they discover something to develop further. Thus, while an artwork can have its origins in discovery it is ultimately a result of intention. To produce an artwork, the artist must visually differentiate, invent, organize and skillfully construct. Eisner (1972) views this task as a problem solving activity (p. 191).

Role of the Artwork

The artwork is seen by Eisner (1972) as having two distinct meanings (p. 139). First, it is an object that is seen as possessing certain valued characteristics. Second, it plays a role in affecting change in its maker. In this sense the artwork plays a role in affecting the attitudes and behaviours of the artist. Thus when individuals are engaged with making an artwork, they not only produce an object, but they themselves are altered by the process.

Underlying Assumptions

The following assumptions found in Eisner (1972) will be used in conducting a comparison of Eisner's approach with Buber's ideas:

- 1) Trusting relationships between teachers and students can be fostered by teachers modeling human behaviors (pp. 180-183).
- 2) The production of artwork is the result of the artist's use of specific skills (p. vi, p. 26).

- 3) Artistic activity produces change in the artist (p. 292).
- 4) Artistic activity is a problem solving activity (p. 191).
- 5) The artwork is a product of the artist's intention (p. 101).
- 6) One of the functions of art is to deliver a message (p. 16).

Feldman: Becoming Human Through Art

The aim of Edmund Feldman's *Becoming Human Through Art* (1970), is to provide elementary and secondary school level educators with a broad outline of the nature of art. He presents various steps in artistic activity as well as the associated responsibilities of the art educator.

The Teacher Student Relationship

Feldman (1970) views the teacher-student relationship as special. One way it is established is through dialogue with students (p. 191). "Genuine dialogue... revolves around the search for a real problem" (p.192). For Feldman the relationship between teachers and students is based on finding a problem to solve.

Definition of Art

Feldman (1970) defines art as a "tool for dealing with human situations that call for expression;... all forms of human creativity and communication — the natural expression of Eros" (p. 134). Individuals do not create art to master technique, but to engage in "adventures in extending the self, combining and exchanging with the selves of

others" (p. 134). Art activity fulfills the human need of sharing the meanings derived from the experiences of being human.

Task of Art Education

Feldman proposes a theory of art education based on a philosophy of humanism. The need for communicating human experiences with others is at the foundation of art in education (1970, pp. 131-133). He views the fostering of love between entities as a central task of education.

Feldman (1970) views love as a driving force in human existence. It brings about the fullness of human character. It is the motivation that drives the need to be informed as individuals reach out to other entities to achieve oneness. "The love between persons is the best available model for the unity between learners and knowledge, artists and art, between the individual and the materials of his self" (p. 128). For Feldman, "Learning is joining the self with an other" (p. 131). Feldman makes use of Buber's concept of *I-Thou* as a loving relationship in which artistic learning takes place between the artist and the artwork. He distinguishes between learning through Buber's *I-I* as a "kind of relationship that sets mastery or control of reality" and learning through the *I-Thou* relationship as "a loving relationship" (p. 130).

Education in art is uniquely suited to the task of fostering love between learners and that which they are learning. Feldman calls for teachers to broaden their pupils' concepts of art in order to bring about its integration into all aspects of human existence. This goal is achieved through the development of students' perceptual abilities. The refinement of visual perception is seen to enhance all aspects of life (pp. 21-22).

Definition of Artistic Activity

Feldman (1970) describes both artistic activity and the teaching of art through a series of steps. His notion of artistic activity is based on a number of assumptions. The first is identification. Since the artwork is a by-product of experience (p. 196), students need to be encouraged to identify personal experiences as valid concepts for artistic inquiry. In this sense, both students and artists engaged in artistic activity are solving problems that are relevant to them (pp. 31-36).

The second step, expansion and elaboration, refers to the in-depth individual exploration by artists of the meanings derived from the identified concept. According to Feldman (1970), students "must postpone the impulse to create and display" (p. 197). They should be encouraged to gather more information and spend time planning so as to reflect on the identified concept before proceeding to the next stage. Feldman maintains that impromptu artwork is less relevant than carefully planned and executed artwork. He suggests that teachers restrain students from prematurely moving towards the execution of an artwork.

Feldman's (1970) third stage, execution, occurs when the individual forms and shapes the concept. The teacher's role is both that of a technical advisor and that of helping the student decide when the artwork is complete. Teachers should know when their students have exhausted the expressive possibilities through their artwork (p. 197).

Presentation and public confirmation of the expressive goals is the fourth stage. Feldman contends that artists must both please themselves and transmit humanistic

qualities to society. He believes that students need to explore and expand on concepts that are grounded in their personal experiences (pp. 199-200).

The fifth stage, evaluation, refers to the teacher's appraisal of what the student has learned about the human condition. For Feldman, teachers should base their evaluation on evidence that there is a comprehension of the condition of being human, as evidenced in a willingness to confront one's assumptions, the courage to make decisions from the knowledge gleaned from confronting one's assumptions, and a recognition that to be human means to appreciate the accomplishments of others (pp. 202-204).

Thus Feldman views artistic activity as individuals seeking to identify and expand on their individual concepts, to execute and present their concepts to others, and in so doing, gain humanistic qualities. He assumes that artistic activity is primarily a vehicle for the acquisition of humanistic behaviors and attitudes.

Role of the Artwork

For Feldman (1970) the artwork as "medium is not just a particular material. The ways in which materials are used affects what is expressed through them" (p. 184). While this might imply that the artwork is in some way an active participant in the relationship, he does not elaborate on its role during its production, except to state that its role is based upon "interaction of medium and meaning [i.e., what is expressed]" (p. 184).

Underlying Assumptions

The following assumptions found in Feldman (1970) will be used in conducting a comparison of Feldman's approach with Buber's ideas:

- 1) The relationship between teachers and students revolves around identifying problems to solve (pp. 190-192).
- 2) The love between persons can be used as an effective model for the relationship between an artist and artwork (p. 128).
- 3) Relationships between entities can be either *I-It* or *I-Thou* (p. 130).
- 4) The artwork is a by-product of its maker's encounter with reality (p. 196).
- 5) Artistic activity is problem solving (pp. 31-36).
- 6) Through the artwork, the artist must satisfy himself/herself and effectively communicate with society (pp. 131-133, 196).
- 7) Artistic activity is a vehicle for the acquisition of humanistic attitudes and behaviors (pp. 202-204).

Lowenfeld & Brittain: Creative and Mental Growth

Creative and Mental Growth (7th edition) by Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain (1982) is a text intended for teachers and all those interested in understanding how children grow and develop artistically. Like the earlier edition (Lowenfeld, 1947),

it proposes methods of teaching art based on an examination of the psychological relationships between creators and their creations at different age levels (Lowenfeld & Brittain, p. vii).

The Teacher-Student Relationship

For Lowenfeld (1947), teachers must acquaint themselves with the physical and psychological needs of the child, and be able to subordinate themselves and their desires to those needs (p. 29).

Definition of Art

Lowenfeld (1947) differentiates between the art of children and adult art. For children art is a means of communication. As the child grows and develops, artistic activity becomes "a language of thought" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 7). Children think and feel as they create their images. They are not as concerned with the final product as are adult artists. For the adult artist, art gradually becomes an issue of "aesthetics or external beauty" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 7). Adult artists attend to the aesthetic qualities in addition to thinking and feeling during the creation of their images. Both children and adults develop their abilities without an awareness that the nature of the activity is intuitive. Regardless of developmental levels, the subject matter of artistic expression does not vary, as it is seen as a response to one's environment. However, the nature of the subjective relationship to the environment changes as one gets older. Presumably, children's perceptual and intellectual capacities grow as their relationship to the environment changes. Lowenfeld (1947) explains that

children occasionally produce art that has been influenced by adult expectations of the need to develop skill in accurate visual representation.

Task of Art Education

According to Lowenfeld (1947), the task of art education is to foster the creative experience, that is, the process rather than the product of creation, the artwork. Assuming that children create without concern for aesthetics in their artwork, then it is entirely inappropriate to evaluate children's artistic activity by adult standards of aesthetics. Concern for evaluating the product is in the domain of fine arts, not of art education.

Artistic activity is seen to be uniquely suited for the development of sensory modalities through creative experiences (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). Understanding the various stages of how children relate to their world and develop enables teachers to present their students with age-appropriate art activities (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 9). For Lowenfeld (1947) and Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), the goals of art education are concerned with fostering the mental, emotional, and creative growth of students, rather than preparing students for careers as artists.

Definition of Artistic Activity

Lowenfeld (1947) speaks about artistic activity in general terms, with only two approaches to the specific. Art "can only be understood when the driving forces which lead to its creation are understood" (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 156). He describes these "driving forces" as the impetus to subjectively (emotionally) symbolize one's

experiences in an artwork. The process is valued over the product, which is seen as somewhat incidental to artistic activity.

According to Lowenfeld (1947), these forces are found in two types of creative individuals: the visual and the haptic. Both the visual and the haptic individuals are identified by their attitude towards their personal experiences as well as their artwork (pp. 133-135). The visual types are individuals whose primary approach to the creative task is as observers of appearances, structures, and forms. According to Lowenfeld (1947) the visual type is:

the observer, [who] usually approaches things from their appearance.... [The observer] usually begins with the outlines of objects and enrich the form with details as the visual analysis is able to penetrate deeper into the nature of the object.... [T]he visual approach toward the outside world is an analytic approach of a spectator who finds his problems in the complex observation of the ever-changing appearances of shapes and forms. (pp. 133-134)

The artwork of visual types is evidence of their individual experience with their environment. This personal experience is the stimulus to careful visual observation.

The artwork of the haptic type is also indicative of personal experience of their environment. In contrast to the visual, though, the haptic experience is kinesthetically and subjectively motivated (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 131). Haptic types are individuals whose primary approach to the creative task emerges out of their predominately sensual subjective experiences of their environment.

The main intermediary for the haptic type of individual is the body-self-muscular sensations, kinesthetic experiences, touch impressions, and all experiences which place the self in value relationship to the outside world... The haptic type... is primarily a subjective type... Since tactile impressions are mostly partial only (this is true for all impressions of objects that cannot be embraced with the hands, where the hands have to move) the haptic individual

will arrive at a synthesis of these partial impressions only when he becomes emotionally interested in the object itself... Since the haptic type uses the self as the true projector of his experiences, his pictorial representations are highly subjective; his proportions are proportions of value [i.e., the artist gives particular emphasis in his work to those qualities of experience which he values most]. (pp. 134-135)

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) view artistic activity as a stimulating harmonious experience of interaction between the object and the individual (p. 97). Both cognitive and sensory perceptions play a critical role in these aesthetic experiences as they are the driving forces of artistic activity. Artists begin by selecting forms and colours with a specific intention in mind. In the process of creating they often judge their original intention differently. Their intention takes on a different meaning based on the conscious and unconscious perceptions they have had of their environment. Thus artistic activity is informed by an on-going active relationship with the artist's environment (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 4-5).

Role of Artwork

For Lowenfeld (1947), the artwork is the product resulting from artistic activity. The artwork's value is based on the quality and economy of its organization. As a product of human spirit, the artwork is determined by the artist's intention. Understanding of the artwork is thus dependent on an understanding of the artist intention.

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) indicate the role that artwork plays in the artistic activity of children:

The process of drawing, painting, or constructing is a complex one in which the child brings together diverse elements of his experience to make a new and

meaningful whole. In the process of selecting, interpreting, and reforming these elements, he has given us more than a picture or a sculpture; he has given us a part of himself: how he thinks, how he feels, and how he sees. (p. 3)

The nature of the artistic activity empowers the child to uncover feelings about himself without fear (Lowenfeld, 1947). The artistic activity of the child is described as "meaningful communication with himself" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 33). In this communication, children choose aspects of their experience with which they identify. They go on to rearrange and thereby reconstitute these aspects so as to create meaning. Artistic activity provides children with the means to find solutions to their experiences and the problems with which they identify (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 34). Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1982) concept of self-identification asserts that the artwork plays a crucial role in the shaping of the identity of its maker.

No art expression is possible without self-identification with the experience expressed as well as with the art material by which it is expressed. This is one of the basic factors of any creative expression: it is the true expression of the self. The art materials are controlled and manipulated by one individual, and the completed project is his. This is as true at a very young age as it is for adult artists. It is individuals who use their art materials and their form of expression according to their own personal experiences. (p. 19)

Thus the identities of individuals are seen to be developed by the artwork as the artwork is developed by those individuals. Moreover self-identification leads individuals to identify with others. Artistic activity gives individuals insight into and appreciation of the way others interact with their environment (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982).

According to Lowenfeld & Brittain (1982) art educators should place less importance on the aesthetic value of an artwork than on the creative process. It is the

valuing of the personal involvement of the child rather than the finished product that is the concern of art education. Lowenfeld (1947) states, "Ideal forms disappear when expression dominates" (p. 156). Since expression is seen to be the driving force of artistic activity, understanding the artwork is not dependent on understanding the product, but on understanding the harmonious interaction between the artist and the product. This interaction can be achieved through a variety of methodologies, including the psychoanalytical, behavioral psychology, developmental psychology, and skill mastery approaches (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 24-30).

Underlying Assumptions

The following assumptions found in Lowenfeld (1947) and Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) will be used in conducting a comparison of their approach with Buber's ideas:

1) Teachers must subordinate themselves to the needs of the child (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 29).

2) Art is the by-product of artistic intention and can only be understood as such (Lowenfeld, 1947, p. 156).

3) There is an interaction between artist and artwork during the artistic activity (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, pp. 97-98).

4) Artistic activity provides children with the means to find solutions to their experiences and problems with which they identify (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 34)

5) Artistic expression occurs when the artist identifies with his medium and expressed experience (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 19).

McFee: Preparation for Art

June K. McFee's *Preparation for Art* (1970) is a pragmatic text intended to bridge the gap between research and practice in art education. Her intended audience includes teachers, scholars, and consultants. The text presents art educational methods based on a psychological approach, specifically cognitive and developmental with strong behavioral overtones. McFee asserts that while scientific methods are insufficient for interpreting human behavior, they can develop theories that serve to inform artistic behavior (1970, p. 20).

The Teacher-Student Relationship

The relationship between teacher and student is based on the teacher providing a stimulus by taking the role of catalyst so that students can respond. Students are thus provided with "opportunities and experiences that will enable them to understand, to relate, and interpret new information" (McFee, 1970, pp. 8-9).

Definition of Art

McFee's (1970) notion of art presumes that it is a form of human behavior, and can therefore be understood within the limits of a behavioral perspective. There is a stimulus, experience, which is predictably followed by a response, expression. Art occurs when an individual "attempt[s] to make and organize objects in his environment in order to enhance their visual qualities (aesthetic value)" (p. 317). Moreover, art is

an "individually expressed reaction to a collective cultural experience" (p. 349) and it is "one of man's basic means of communication — sharing the essence of experience from man to man and from generation to generation" (McFee, 1970, p. 30).

Task of Art Education

Art education, in the view of McFee (1970) helps students to:

1) develop understanding of the language of art as it functions in society, 2) understand the range of art in the man-made environment, 3) develop the behaviors to produce creatively and to respond to art, and 4) critically evaluate art through aesthetic judgment. (p. 21)

McFee (1970) stresses the need to develop perceptual readiness so as to prepare students for creative problem solving and thereby enhance their artistic experiences.

McFee sees problem solving as a form of information-handling, a learning theory by which individuals attend to, sort into categories, and mediate or analyze incoming perceptual information. McFee wants art educators to be sensitive to the unique cognitive approaches of their students so as to influence and thereby behaviorally modify "children's responses in and through art" (p. 104). Viewing artistic activity as problem solving is one of several effective methods teachers might employ. In accomplishing these tasks art teachers need to be informed of psychological and social aspects of artistic activity.

Definition of Artistic Activity

McFee (1970) views artistic activity as a sequence of identifiable and alterable human behaviors that do not occur in any specific order. These include: perceiving,

organizing, symbolizing, designing, creating, problem solving, conceptualizing, and expressing. While artistic activity is not presented as a predictable sequence of behaviors, McFee does discuss the state of being prepared for artistic activity, readiness for art. Artistic readiness is defined thus: "The sum of all the factors of growth, learning, and capacity that contribute to an individual's ability to perform a given task" (p. 398). McFee argues for increasing students' readiness for artistic activity and readiness for creative problem solving (p. 5). While students may profit from activities designed to increase their readiness, they are to some extent already inherently prepared for artistic activity of some kind.

McFee considers perception as a significant cognitive operation in artistic activity. Perceiving is the mental/visual act of forming percepts. "Percepts" are "the visual images one develops when one categorizes, relates, describes, and differentiates processes, behaviors, conditions, etc., through visual memory, symbols and icons" (p. 398). Like percepts, the formation of concepts is central to artistic activity. "Concepts" are "the ideas with which we categorize, relate, describe, and differentiate things, processes, behaviors, conditions, etc., through thoughts, written words, or spoken words" (p. 396). Refining perception leads to enhanced aesthetic experiences and can thus be taught through the interaction between percepts and concepts.

McFee (1970) uses the term "transaction" to describe the relationship between two entities. Transaction is "the result of interplay and modification of two or more elements, such as man and nature, man and man, color and form, as they react upon each other"(pp. 398-399). What she seems to suggest is a certain type of reciprocal action

between the entities. Specifically, she uses “transaction” to mean the relationship between a responding viewer, not necessarily a creator and an artwork (pp. 398-399).

Role of Artwork

The role played by art media or artwork in artistic activity is not as important as the experience the child has with the medium (McFee, 1970, p. 313). It is the perceptual/cognitive aspects of artistic activity that are essential for learning. Moreover, McFee argues that the emphasis on the conceptual recognition of the object has had a detrimental effect on developing the child’s perception of visual qualities.

Underlying Assumptions

The following assumptions found in McFee (1970) will be used in conducting a comparison of McFee’s approach with Buber’s ideas:

- 1) Teachers provide a stimulus of enriching experiences that students respond to (pp. 8-9).
- 2) Artwork is an expressed reaction (p. 349) .
- 3) Artwork is a means of communication (p. 30).
- 4) Artistic activity is a problem solving activity (p. 349).
- 5) Readiness is a precondition for artistic activity (p. 398).
- 6) A transaction occurs between an artwork and a viewer (pp. 398-399).

7) Art media or artwork is the sole conduit for a child's artistic experience (p. 313).

Comparison of the Assumptions of the Art Education Authors and Buber

A number of common assumptions are held by all these authors. These are: 1) artistic activity is interactive; 2) artistic activity and artwork are forms of communication; 3) artistic activity is a problem solving activity; and 4) the artwork is the result of the artist's intention to create it. I will discuss these first, and then certain assumptions held by only some of the authors. The latter are: 5) artists must identify with their medium and the experience they want to express; 6) the art object is a by-product; 7) artistic activity is dependent on the acquisition of perceptual skills; 8) all relationships between teachers and students should be based on pre-determined goals; and 9) teachers should model human qualities.

1) The nature of the artistic activity is interactive.

While there are some differences in the terminology used, there is a common assumption amongst all the authors that artistic activity involves some type of interaction between a human and an object. For Chapman (1978), the artwork is not an inactive participant in its creation, (p. 60). Eisner (1972) views artistic activity as producing change in the artist (p. 292); it is a problem solving activity (p. 191). For Feldman (1970), the love between persons can be used as an effective model for the relationship between an artist and artwork (p. 128); relationships between entities can be either *I-It* or *I-Thou* (p. 130). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), attest to an interaction between artist and artwork during the artistic activity (pp. 97-98);

artistic expression occurs when the artist identifies with his medium and expressed experience (p. 19). McFee (1970), uses the term “transaction” to describe the nature of the relationship between the viewer and the artwork (pp. 398-399).

Superficially, Buber's position appears to correspond to the general notion of an interactive relationship. Buber's *dialogical relation* of the *I-Thou* is a type of bipolar relationship, in which the artist seeks to *encounter* an artwork in its uniqueness and thereby draw it out of the world of objects to become an active subject in *dialogical relation*.

What is central to this discussion is the significance of the art object in the interaction between the entities. For Buber, the existence of an art object is determined by the *dialogical relationship* between artists and the object of their attention, their artwork. The *I-It* relation determines that the object remains a thing, an existence without subjective meaning. The art object must participate as an active subject in the *I-Thou* relation for it to be considered as an artwork. Except for Feldman, the authors reviewed above do not elaborate on the activity of the object in artistic activity. Buber would probably argue that the object they identify as the artwork cannot be considered as such because it is not an active subject interacting with an individual. Between Buber and the art education authors there is no precise consensus as to the nature of artistic activity.

2) Artistic activity and artwork is a form of communication.

The art education authors assume that artistic activity and the artwork are forms of communication. For Feldman (1970), the artist must satisfy himself and effectively

communicate with society through the artwork (pp. 131-133, p. 196). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) assume that there is an interaction between artist and artwork during the artistic activity (pp. 97-98). McFee (1970) views an artwork as a means of communication (p. 30). Chapman and Eisner concur, yet in a more indirect manner. For Chapman (1978), media must be used to fulfill expressive intent (pp. 128-130). Presumably expression involves a sender communicating with a receiver. For Eisner (1972), one of the functions of art is to deliver a message (p. 16).

According to Buber, as artistic activity and the artwork are constituted in a *dialogical relationship*, communication occurs. However, there are some significant differences between his view on the nature of that communication and those of the art education authors.

While for Buber, artwork does communicate, it is not created for that purpose. It is of no relevance that thoughts communicated between the artist and the artwork are not the same as the thoughts communicated between the artwork and any subsequent viewer. The value of the artwork is not based on its capacity to be a vehicle for a message to those outside the *dialogical relation* established between two *beings*.

For Buber, the *dialogical relationship* between artists and their artwork is characterized by a *turning towards* the material as a *Thou* and a willingness to join together with it in the common purpose of attaining visual *form*. Individuals intending on entering into *dialogical relation* with an object with the desire to use the object as a conduit for a message do not create an artwork. The *I-Thou encounter* is an exclusive relationship. All ulterior motives must be set aside for the *I-Thou encounter* to take

place. Relationships based on predetermined goals by an active subject commit the object to the status of *I/t*. For example, information about the significance of a work by critics or art historians prior to an individual's *encounter* with it will often result in an *I-I/t* relationship. *Observers* want to possess some aspect of the object before them. They seek to reduce the engagement with the object to an *I-I/t* relation by creating closure to all experiences that are not germane to their objective expectations.

By contrast, the authors reviewed consider the value of art as communication to be universal. For them the goal of communication is to successfully express the thoughts and feelings of the artist to other persons. For Buber, within the *I-I/t* relationship, the same ideas can be communicated universally, but communication within the *I-Thou* is exclusive. The nature of the communication described by the art authors proceeds from an *I-I/t* relationship. Until the creation is *encountered* in its uniqueness by the *I* of the *I-Thou*, it is committed to remain a thing among things, not an artwork. Thus there is no consensus between the art education authors and Buber as to the nature and purpose of communication as a form of artistic activity.

3) Artistic activity is a problem solving activity.

All the art education writers view ideas encountered in the process of artistic activity as problems in need of solutions. Chapman (1978, p. 61), Eisner (1972, p. 191), Feldman (1970, pp. 31-36), and McFee (1970, p. 349) assume artistic activity is a problem solving process. For Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), artistic activity provides children with the means to find solutions to their experiences and problems with which they identify (p. 34).

Buber, on the other hand, does not consider art as a problem solving activity. The nature of *dialogical relation* is such that the artist, rather than seeking to transform the medium, seeks to be mutually transformed in the *encounter* with *form*. While there are occasions of difficulty within the *I-Thou*, individuals who consider the medium as something that is in need of transformation to realize a perceived solution become the *I* of the *I-t*.

The art education authors' view of the nature of the artistic process and the role of the artist in it, differs from Buber's position. To what extent do artists view medium as something opposed to them, something to overcome so as to serve their needs for expression? For Buber, the end result of such an engagement is a product, an *It*. In his approach, artists view medium as an active subject, relating to it in harmony through a reciprocal relationship wherein both participants are *spiritually* transformed by the process. For the art education authors, artistic activity is a problem solving activity. For Buber, artistic activity is a *dialogical relationship*. These positions are mutually exclusive.

4) The artwork is the result of the artist's intention to create it.

The art education authors generally assume that the artist's intention is the determining force in the outcome of the artwork. For Chapman (1978) the artist must use media to fulfill expressive intent (pp. 128-130). Eisner (1972) views the artwork as a product of the artist's intention (p. 101). Feldman (1970) considers artwork as the vehicle through which artists satisfy themselves and effectively communicate with society (pp. 131-133, p. 196). Lowenfeld (1947) considers art as

the by-product of artistic intention and can only be understood as such (p. 156). McFee (1970) gives less emphasis to this assumption than the others. For her, artwork is an expressed reaction (p. 139).

Buber would not disagree that the artwork is the result of the intention of the artist. It is up to the artist to determine the nature of the relationship after initial perception. For Buber, the artist's intentions are limited to the choice to become the *I* of the *I-It* or the *I* of the *I-Thou* in initiating a relationship with a medium. Artists initially perceive an object in the world of *It*. Beyond that point they may choose to consider it as a thing, or seek to *encounter* it in its uniqueness so as to commune with it. However, should they choose the latter, artists' intentions are no longer the determining force. The *encounter* is characterized by the mutual purpose of achieving visual *form*, rather than a desire to achieve a specific predetermined goal.

The difference between the art education authors and Buber is the extent to which artists' will is the determining factor in the outcome of the artwork. The art education authors consider the artist's intent as the determining force in artistic activity. Most recommend the need for students to acquire skills so as to achieve their intention. It is on how those skills are used that Buber would differ. If the skills are used to determine rather than discover an outcome, then only a thing will result. Students need to realize that their abilities are limited in serving as the means to achieve *form*. The attainment of *form* is also dependent on the participation of the uniqueness of the medium. Thus there is no consensus between the art education authors and Buber with regard to determination of the artwork beyond the artist's initial intention to create.

5) Artists must identify with their medium and the experience they want to express.

Three art education authors assume that artists' need to identify with a medium and their experience prior to artistic activity. Chapman (1978) considers the totality of life's experiences as the basis for expression (pp. 46-52). Feldman's (1970) notion of the experience of love between persons is the means of identifying with an idea to express (p. 128). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) use the term "self-identification" to denote identification with artwork (p. 19).

The *dialogical relationship* requires a willingness by artists to *encounter a form* in its uniqueness, with its own identity intact. The necessity to identify with a thought or medium during the *encounter* is not what Buber intends by his concept of the *dialogic*. These art education authors' concept of identification with medium or experience is intended to treat medium as an extension or reflection of oneself, in which case there is no possibility for *dialogue*.

The art education authors assume that, if artists identify with a medium or an experience prior to engaging in artistic activity, they are better prepared for that activity. Feldman uses Buber's *I-Thou* relation as a model of a loving relation between people, assuming that the *I-Thou* relationship is a loving one. Buber does not equate the *I-Thou* with love, however. In some instances, love is one-sided and selfish. When the object of one's love is seen as the object of affection, as an object to possess, the result is a quintessential *I-it* relationship. The *I-Thou* is discovered in seeking to *encounter* the other as another subject struggling to find fulfilled existence in communion with others.

There is consensus between these art education authors and Buber with regard to the necessity for artists to identify with their medium and the experience that they want to express prior to artistic activity taking place. However, identifying alone is insufficient for a *dialogical relationship* to take place. At some point, an occasion for *dialogue* arises wherein the artist discovers the artwork in its uniqueness and decides to encounter it as *Thou*. During this event, two distinct identities do not merge; instead they participate in a common purpose, communing in *dialogical relationship*.

6) The art object is a by-product.

Three authors view the artwork as a by-product. Feldman (1970) considers the artwork incidental to artistic activity, a by-product of experience (p. 196). For Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), art is the by-product of artistic intention and is of secondary importance to the creative process (p. 156). McFee (1970) views the artwork as the vehicle for perceptual/cognitive development. The role art media or artworks play in artistic activity is not as important as the experience the child has with the medium (p. 313).

From Buber's perspective, during artistic activity the artwork is the *Thou* of the *I-Thou* and is thus essential to its creator. It is the *between* of *dialogical relation* made manifest in *physical form*. It is only incidental, no longer an artwork, when it returns to the world of things.

Buber would not be an advocate for an approach to teaching that emphasized process or product, as either approach does not foster conditions for *dialogue*. Buber would probably consider teachers who emphasize process or product as having a plan,

and thus providing the student with a model of an *I-It experience*. A teacher's tendency to objectify the aesthetic experience as either an awareness of the process or evaluation of the product hinders students' potential to *encounter* an artwork as *Thou*. For Buber, both process and product are essential to *dialogical relationships*. There is no consensus between the art education authors and Buber regarding the art object. For the art education authors, it is a by-product; for Buber it is an essential co-participant in artistic activity. These positions are mutually exclusive.

7) Readiness for artistic activity is dependent on the acquisition of perceptual skills.

Developing perceptual behaviors benefits students by sensitizing them to the unique features of their environment. These behaviors are essential for artistic activity. McFee (1970) uses the term readiness to refer to the capacity to perform artistic activity (p. 398). Eisner (1972) views the production of artwork as the result of the artist's use of specific perceptual skills (p. vi, p. 26). Acquisition of these perceptual skills seems to emphasize the importance of perceiving things as objects in the environment.

To Buber, perception refers to the initial point of meeting between entities. Prior to artistic activity, artists are poised to *encounter* the other as *Thou* or *experience* the other as *It*. Developing perceptual awareness, for Buber, would mean that besides learning to perceive things as objects in the world, students must be readied to *encounter* those objects as potential subjects as well. For Buber, McFee, and Eisner developing perceptual awareness is essential. However, how students should be taught to perceive the world is open to question.

8) All relationships between teachers and students should be based on pre-determined goals

While there is no common terminology or goals mentioned, there is an assumption held by some art education authors that teachers should maintain pre-determined goals in all their relationships with their students. For Feldman (1970), the relationship between teachers and students is focused on finding problems to solve (pp. 190-192). According to Lowenfeld (1947), in relation to their students, teachers must subordinate themselves to the needs of the child (p. 29). McFee (1970) considers the teacher's role is to act as a catalyst, providing enriching experiences for their students (pp. 8-9).

Buber encourages teachers to reflect on the unique relationships with their students unconditionally. Teachers must create a fruitful environment that fosters unique responses from their students. For this to occur, teachers must be prepared to become the *I* of the *I-Thou* in *dialogical relation*.

In becoming the *I* of the *I-Thou*, teachers cannot bring any pre-conceived assumptions about the *Thou* to the *encounter*. Maintaining pre-determined goals about the needs of students limits the relationship between teachers and students to *I-I* exclusively, because the occasion for *dialogue* is not present. Some of these authors may assume that other types of relationships, ones without pre-conditions, can also be of benefit to teachers and students. However, they make no mention of them. Thus there is no consensus between Buber and these three art education authors as to the nature of the relationships between teachers and students.

9) Teachers should model human qualities.

Two art education authors assume that teachers ought to present themselves as models of what it is to be human. For Chapman (1978), teachers should model humanistic behaviors. According to Eisner (1972), modeling human behaviors can foster trust (pp. 180-183).

To Buber, *educators* seek to present themselves as a *living embodiment of the world*. They are prepared to confront the assumptions and contradictions that are inherent to being fully human in front of their students. Buber and these art education authors are in agreement.

As we review the comparison and contrast of the assumptions made by these art education authors and Buber's philosophy, we find that artistic activity for the art education authors is to some degree a problem solving activity. It is dependent on the artist, who, as an active participant, exerts his or her will on a passive, dependent partner. Likewise these art education authors tend to emphasize a relationship between teachers and students wherein teachers ought to impact on their students exclusively. For Buber, it is a *dialogical relationship* in which there is a mutual action which is both passive and active on the part of both participants.

In general, the art education literature reviewed tends to emphasize the psychological, practical, and technical nature of artistic activity rather than its potential for a spiritual encounter that serves to enhance one's humanity. If we adopt Buber's perspective, this emphasis does not require teachers to present themselves as a *living embodiment of the world*.

Buber offers no doctrine of education; he only points to the reality of *dialogical relationships*. He does not offer a technique to employ. The value of his pedagogy lies more in the area of attitude towards the practice of teaching. Buber invites teachers to reflect on the unique relationships with their students, rather than turning to specific methodologies. The challenge for teachers is to *encounter* their students in their uniqueness and to encourage them to confront themselves in their particular situation. Teachers must create an atmosphere to encourage students' unique responses.

The attitude Buber points towards is dependent on a willingness by *educators* to present themselves as a *living embodiment of the world*, as another *being walking the narrow ridge* on which there is no certainty, only the mystery of the unity of duality. They seek to *encounter* the other as another human like themselves, struggling to find fulfilled existence in communion with others. From a Buberian perspective, the art education literature's tendency to present artistic activity as problem solving somewhat inhibits the potential for a spiritual *encounter* between the student and artwork, because it does not require the teacher to struggle to find the fullness of existence in communion with the student. Teachers can *set themselves at a distance* and thereby maintain the subject/object relation with their students and their artwork.

The literature reviewed in this chapter has played a role in laying the groundwork for the practice not only of art educators at the elementary and secondary levels, but also their students, some of whom have gone on to become professional artists and art educators at the university level as well.

In the next chapter, key ideas from Buber's writings are connected to the specifics of the thesis problem, namely, the two most typical relationships of the many that can arise between studio instructors and their artwork and between studio instructors and their students, as I see them in current undergraduate programs.

CHAPTER VI

The Thesis Problem Restated in Buberian Terms

The purpose of this study is to come to understand what takes place in the relationships between undergraduate studio teachers and students that often results in preventing *authentic* artistic existence. My goal is to arrive, through philosophical analysis, at an explanation of the problem of *inauthentic* relationships in undergraduate studio courses, from which a model for more effective practice might emerge, one which can apply to my own studio teaching and possibly that of other studio instructors. In coming to understand this problem, I present a model for the basis of a different type of relationship, one that would result in genuine artistic existence for both participants.

More specifically, this inquiry is undertaken for the purpose of understanding the underlying assumptions of two types of studio instructors at the undergraduate level. Buber's concept of *dialogue* is used as a lens to analyze the two most typical relationships of the many that can arise between studio instructors and their artwork and between studio instructors and their students, as I see them in current undergraduate programs. This section will serve to re-frame the thesis question from the perspective of Buber's concepts.

To review, from my experience as a student and as an educator, I would judge there are primarily two types of instructors currently teaching studio courses at the undergraduate level. First, there is the emotional type, a studio instructor who tends to present a notion of artists as individuals using the tools they were born with to express

their individual emotional needs. Artistic existence is centered on the tendency toward aggressive, self-centered urges, a class of emotions in which the ego is perceived as a self-contained whole and of ultimate value. Artists, in this view, are primarily born, not made. Second, there is the rational type, an instructor who tends to present a notion of artists as individuals who are focused primarily on the rational demands to adapt their artwork to the audience and their identity to the social structure of the professional art world. In their perspective, artistic existence is based on rational tendencies flowing from the need to behave as part of some real or imaginary entity which transcends the individual self. Artists, then, in and of themselves are of no consequence. Rather, the relevance of artistic activity depends on the artwork's impact on society. Artists, in this view, are primarily made, not born.

When instructors present themselves exclusively as born or made artists, a dilemma arises for students who are confronted with seemingly mutually exclusive notions of what it is to be an artist. In the way many instructors present themselves as professional artists, they seem to point students in opposite directions: one type of instructor towards the view that artists should focus on their emotional needs; another type towards the view that artists should learn to adapt their artwork to their rational needs for survival in the world. As I myself did as an undergraduate, most students tend to respond with a rational portrayal of what they believe each instructor expects an artist to be; that is, they offer a reflection of themselves as a professional artist instead of striving to be a genuine artist.

My own experience as an artist, however, is that being an artist consists of an ongoing process of striving to confront myself about who I am becoming. I believe that a

state of genuine artistic existence implies that aesthetic experience is not solely emotional or rational. Genuine artistic existence comprises both emotional and rational tendencies. Artists are to some extent both born and made.

Despite this knowledge gleaned from my experience as an artist, when studio instructors like myself teach, there is a tendency to present artistic knowledge as either emotional or rational. While we may engage in our personal artistic activity with both our emotions and reason fully participating, as teachers we are rarely prepared to present ourselves this way. Our students too, who may have genuine artistic encounters, are rarely prepared to present themselves from that perspective. In response to the kind of artist they perceive us to be, they tend to reflect back to us what they think is expected of them — that is, an emotional or rational portrayal of artistic existence. This thesis seeks an answer to why instructors and students relate to each other in a manner that rarely results in genuine artistic existence for either.

In this analysis, the following specific issues will be examined in the light of Buber's concepts. First I outline the problem of the two types of studio teacher-student relationships. I draw links between these two types of studio teacher-student relationships and the *I-/It* type of relationships described by Buber in his critique of the two educational traditions. I then construct two pairs of metaphors to name and describe the individuals in these relationships. I describe and analyze the underlying assumptions of these teachers concerning their respective notions of the artist and the artwork. How are these assumptions manifested in the relationships these teachers have with their students? What existential effects within these relationships do these assumptions have on the potential for *authentic* artistic existence? This process leads to

a new understanding of the thesis question. Finally, I propose a model for the ideal teacher-student relationship in the undergraduate studio.

The Problem of Propagandists

According to Buber, we gain control over our environment by reasoning and acting on our rational decisions. Universities are places that presumably foster conditions for the development of reasoning ability, among other things. We studio instructors, exercising our reasoning as active subjects, tend to construct our students as objects in order to control them. In doing so we *set ourselves at a distance* from them. Accordingly when we, the *I* of the *I - I t*, choose to *experience* our students as *Its*, we tend to characterize ourselves as *Its* in relation to them. In the context of the specific problem within art education, our students often choose to be the *I* of the *I - I t* in response to us. We are engaged in what Buber calls a *mismeeting*.

A *mismeeting* occurs when the *I* chooses to *experience* the other as an *It* for the purpose of satisfying individual desires. It occurs when teachers view students as extensions or likenesses of themselves. Rather than *meeting* a unique presence, these individuals only focus on those characteristics they perceive to be like their own. These studio instructors seek in their students the subjective or objective tendencies that they see in themselves as artists. Rather than seeking an opportunity for *dialogue*, in which they might have occasion to confront themselves about their individual notion of what it is to be an artist, they would rather use the student to affirm an existing stance. These individuals seek a sense of security by causing the other to be dependent on them (Buber, 1970, p. 131).

Rather than turning towards the student as a living *embodiment of the world* of art, they turn inward. *Reflexion* occurs when the *I* of the *I-t* denies the uniqueness of the artist-in-the-making, in terms that profit the *I*. Studio instructors in *reflexion* strive to avoid being confronted by the uniqueness of the studio student because uniqueness threatens the notion of them as the *I* of the *I-t* (Buber, 1965, p. 23). This is not meant to imply that subjective or objective approaches to teaching are inherently bad. These approaches only have the potential for harm when these studio instructors strive to live exclusively by their stance. When they are not prepared from time to time, as the need arises, to confront their personal notion about artistic existence in front of their students, they live the *life of monologue*. There is no possibility for *dialogue*, because as individuals in *reflexion*, these teachers cut themselves and their students off from the *spiritual encounter of dialogical relationship*.

Both the subjective (artist as born) and objective (artist as made) approaches to reality are oriented from within the biased stance of a presumption about the other. These two ways of knowing reality are, in essence, *I-t* relationships because in each case the other is experienced as the *It*, conforming to the specific perspective of the egotistical *I*.

When *I-t* knowledge dominates and does not permit an occasion for *I-Thou*, it asserts that the nature of reality is abstract reason and that reality must be understood primarily as external and objective. Studio students seeking to understand the nature of *being* an artist are compelled to adopt abstract portrayals of either the subjective or objective version of *being* an artist they are presented with. Rather than responding openly to an occasion for *dialogue* when students question the paradoxes of mutually

exclusive stances concerning the nature of *being* an artist, these instructors present themselves as a *living embodiment* of an abstract code of social behaviors.

In contrast, Buber sees the *educator* as a *living embodiment of the effective world*. In his view, *educators* present themselves to their students as a *living embodiment of a world*, rather than offering an abstract code of social behaviors that students are compelled to adopt. For Buber, artistic knowledge does not “rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but a narrow rocky ridge.... [It is] no 'happy middle' which ignores the reality of the paradox and contradiction in order to escape from the suffering they produce" (Friedman, 1960, p. 3). Buber would view both types of studio instructors as *propagandists*. Rather than presenting themselves as a *living embodiment of their world* as artists, as another artist *walking the narrow ridge* on which there is no certainty, within the stance of doubt, *propagandists* prefer to keep the paradox and contradiction of their stance to themselves and escape the threat of having to confront their own notion of themselves as artists.

Subjective and Objective Studio Instructors Critiqued

Buber has critiqued the two educational traditions within which these two types of instructors can be contextualized.

In the subjective tradition, the emotional type of artist I described tends toward aggressive, self-centered urges, a class of emotions in which the ego is perceived as a self-contained whole and of ultimate value. Buber would be critical of the assumption that the *authentic* artistic existence can be achieved from within the self, isolated from

the world. The assumption that artists are born gives the principal status to the artist as the participant in artistic activity.

Buber critiques the subjectivist's notion of *creative potentiality* as the basis of fulfilled existence. Creativity is fostered and fulfilled by a relational *encounter* rather than the free expression of an individual's self. Individuals grow and are fulfilled through their relationships, rather than through acts based on a subjective need or interest, to satisfy the ego. Yet subjectivist instructors call their students to express themselves as if expression could be achieved in a vacuum. How can they expect their students to *authentically* express themselves when the students are looking for guidance? For Buber, the self is not of ultimate value. Creativity is not a function of an individual's emotions. The function of education needs to be aimed towards the nurturing of relational capacities rather than towards the provision of opportunities for self-expression external to the relational contexts.

Subjectivist instructors assume that freedom from all constraints is the means for self-development and growth, an end in itself. Buber's concept of freedom takes place within objective limits. In the absence of explicit objective limits to freedom, students of subjectivist instructors tend to construct an objective representation of what they think is expected of them. Thus they are not free to be themselves. They are only free to reflect back to their instructors a portrayal of the instructor's notion of freedom. For Buber, freedom is a means to a higher end - *authenticity*. Buber's freedom is dependent on exercising a degree of control and discipline for the purpose of affirming the subjective/objective reality of being human. True, control and discipline

exist for the subjectivists, but they are based on a notion of *authentic* artistic existence as emerging from within the instructor's individual notion of the isolated self.

In the objective tradition, artistic existence is based on rational tendencies, the need to behave as part of some real or imaginary entity which transcends the individual self. Buber would be critical of the assumption that the *authentic* artistic existence can be achieved from beyond the self, in the world. The assumption that artists are made gives the principal status to the artwork as the participant in artistic activity.

Buber is critical of the objective tradition's justification of its excessive authority on the basis of objective criteria outside the relational domain of the individual. He opposes any notion of an objective body of knowledge. The objectivist instructors' attitude to their students is based on a concept of an objective body of knowledge about the role artists must be made to play in society through their artwork. For Buber, there are truths which can only be disclosed through *dialogical relationships* and not through any objective criteria. Unlike classical philosophers who justify truths on the basis of objective moral authority, Buber justifies truth on the basis of criteria grounded in the integrity and truth of the relation between the teacher and the student.

Thus Buber would be critical of both the exclusive emphasis on individual expression adopted by the subjectivist studio instructor and the exclusive emphasis on adhering to an objective notion of reality adopted by the objectivist studio instructor, because both fail to provide opportunity for *dialogue*.

The Magician-acolyte and the Matchmaker-debutante

Many concepts that we seek to understand are abstract or not clearly grounded in our personal experience. To remedy this we use tools such as metaphors that help us understand in clearer terms. Metaphors then serve as a conduit for understanding and structuring reality, though they have limitations and cannot reveal the complete truth of reality. There are limits to the terms we use to describe our understanding of reality. The words we use to communicate are abstractions of a reality and that reality must be considered within the context of those limitations. There is no absolute objective way of knowing the truth about anything that is not mediated through our subjective experiences. Nor is truth attainable only through the imagination, regardless of external circumstances. What Buber offers is an alternative account of understanding and truth that is not rooted in either the subjectivist or objectivist views. While recognizing these limitations, metaphors are a useful way of understanding the world because they unite both reason and imagination. They can function as a lens through which we perceive and form concepts, providing we recognize these limitations.

Buber uses several metaphors to describe the exclusive dominance of the subject-object dichotomy in education. Referring to the subjectivists, he uses the metaphor of the pump drawing forth the powers of the self; regarding the approach of the objectivists, he uses the metaphor of the funnel through which tradition is poured into the passive student from above (Friedman, 1960, p. 177). Another metaphor for the subjectivist is the gardener, who nurtures a plant, weeds around it and trusts that growth will take place. The objectivist is the sculptor, seeing the predetermined shape

that must be carved out of the crude form (Murphy, 1988, p. 90). In this tradition, I propose two pairs of metaphors to name and describe subjectivist and objectivist tendencies in studio instructor-student relationships. I call the two typical relationships *Magician-acolyte* and *Matchmaker-debutante*.

The Magician-acolyte

Lanier (1977) names certain types in art education, each of which brings together a cluster of characteristics. The metaphor of the subjectivist artist/teacher as *magician* and the student as *acolyte* is one I borrow from his gallery of types. He writes:

To the Magician the essence of art education is the act of creation and that act is essentially a mystery, an act of magic that cannot be and, in fact, should not be investigated or explained. The teacher should be, at best, an artist who exercises that ancient magical ritual - the creation of a work of art - himself or herself and can serve as mentor for the student as acolyte. For the Magician there are fundamentally two very different kinds of people: (a) the elite who create the magic of art and their devoted servants who worship the ritual and its products, and (b) the "others" who do not for whatever reason participate in this celebration. It is not that the Magician has contempt for those others, he often feels genuine regret that they are being cheated out of that central experience of living. (p. 8)

Before turning to the relationship the *Magician* has with his student, the *acolyte*, at the undergraduate level, I elaborate on the assumptions about the artist and the artwork that underlie how *Magicians* relate to their students. Explanations for *Magicians* derive from aesthetic scholarship and psychoanalytical study. For the *Magician*, the individual identity of the artist takes priority over the artwork.

According to Harold Rosenberg (1972), the "nature of art has become uncertain. No one can say with assurance what a work of art is — or more important — what is not a

work of art" (p. 12). What Rosenberg wrote twenty-five years ago, that still applies today, is that many works offered as art do not reveal in themselves justifiable reasons why they ought to be seen as distinctive and privileged objects. Many people would consider an object to be valuable as an artwork because, as an indication of its status, it is removed from ordinary life. In the subjectivist tradition, however, there is a tendency to justify artwork on the basis of the capricious will of the artist acting on individualistic impulses. Thus what determines the significance of art is no longer based either on the meaning and significance of the object itself or on testimony to the significance of the interaction of the object with the artist, as it was in the past. Rather, it is based solely on the significance of its creator who determines its existence. Thus the artist's name is essential to the significance of the object as an artwork. For example, when Andy Warhol was asked how he would recognize a work of art, he replied that anything created by an artist is a work of art. In the nineteenth century a work of art was separable from its creator in that it could be contextualized and critiqued using specific criteria. In contrast, much of twentieth century artwork created by artists within the subjectivist tradition embodies intentions and gestures to which objective criteria do not apply (Donoghue, 1983, pp. 97-117).

What has replaced the significance of the artwork, then, is the significance of its creator. Using a psychoanalytical perspective, Otto Rank (1968) traces the idea of self-creation of the artist back to a romantic notion of genius that emerged between the Renaissance and the eighteenth century and later led to a cult of personality. Prior to this period, the social conception of genius included both individual and collective elements and had a moral dimension. By contrast, the contemporary notion of artist as

genius is based on the individual artist's assertion of that status in a society that recognizes it and values it. Rank (1968) writes: "creativity begins with the individual himself — that is, with the self-making of the personality of the artist,... as his appointment to the genius-type" (p. 28). Thus the creative work of this type of artist is based on his self-creation as an embodiment of genius. The artist is seen as his own work of genius in the service of the ideology of artistic creation (Rank, 1968, p. 31).

Thus, for the *Magician*, the individual act of creation by the individual artist is a problematic mystery best left unresolved because it embodies a notion of the artist and artwork to which objective criteria do not apply. According to Lanier (1977), the *Magician* adopts a posture of delightful mindlessness as a scholarly position (p. 9).

While *Magicians* would not see themselves as educators influenced by theories in education, the notion that artists and teachers are the active participants exerting their will on a passive, dependent partner, the artwork and students, respectively, is a view that is also espoused in the domain of art education. In general, the art education literature reviewed in Chapter 5 tends to view the artist's significance in artistic activity, rather than the artwork, as the basis of art education practice. Likewise for the most part, the teacher is viewed as the active participant relating to a passive participant, the student.

Magicians see themselves as professional artists who are employed to hold themselves up as models for the few students who also possess the magic of self-creation. For the *Magician* there are only a few students who possess the potential of rising to the

experience of self-creation. As all students are not destined to become artists, the role of the *Magician* is to weed out the many for the sake of the few.

Those who would try to fathom this mystery must choose to embrace it as an act of faith or reject it on the basis of reason. They must choose to become an *acolyte*, a devotee of the magic possessed by the *Magician*, in the hopes that they too might be recognized by the *Magician* as possessing the magic. Those students who do not believe in the magic are compelled to play the role of an *acolyte* in the hopes that the *Magician* will interact with them.

In my view, Derrick (see Chapter 1) was a *Magician*, a believer in the mystery of artistic creation as the paradigm of his teaching. His attitude towards his students was clear when he suggested that his job entailed selecting out and nurturing those few individuals who were born to become professional artists from the many who, despite their best efforts, would never be artists. Rather than taking the opportunity for *dialogue*, to seek to confront his notion of the self-creating artist with his students, Derrick chose to *set himself at a distance* from the students and presented himself as the model to whom one must aspire to. He initially presented himself as the *I* of the *I-I t*. In itself this was not the problem. Initially it is necessary to relate to others as *Its* so as to establish the potential for *dialogue*. However, when I sought to reconcile his living *embodiment of the world* with that of Louise's, he was unable or unwilling to entertain the possibility that his view was incomplete, as I saw it. This was a *mismeeting*. Rather than seeking the opportunity for *dialogue* with me in my dilemma of perceiving mutually exclusive notions of artistic existence, Derrick resisted the opportunity for *dialogue*. In engaging in *dialogue* he would have been unable to continue to use me to affirm himself as

an artist. Rather than *turning towards me as a living embodiment* of a human trying to reconcile subjective and objective views of artistic existence, he turned inward, in *reflexion*. Thus he maintained an *I-I/t* relation to me rather than responding to an occasion for *dialogue*. In response, I decided to put my dilemma aside. I too began to relate to Derrick and those like him as the *I* of the *I-I/t*. I saw my paintings as a stage on which I played out the role of an *acolyte*. I related to my paintings in a manner similar to the way I related to my colouring book when I was a child. In playing with my colouring book I felt somewhat free to choose which colours to fill in the pre-determined shapes. However, I did not feel free enough to break out of those boundaries. I felt limited by a self-imposed closure to other possibilities. I could colour, or later as a student, paint any way I wanted as long as I stayed within the boundaries set the colouring book, or by Derrick respectively. As I felt controlled by the colouring book and later Derrick's notion of what professional artists do, so too I took control of the material so as to conform to the external expectations I found myself faced with. Rather than considering my painting as another subject that could be *encountered* in its uniqueness, I *set myself at a distance* from it and saw it as a thing amongst things, an *It*. Rather than seeking an opportunity for *dialogue*, I saw my painting and by extension Derrick as entities I could use for my benefit. After a time of living the *life of monologue*, unwilling to confront myself in the role I was playing as an *It*, I no longer was confronted by the potential for *dialogue*. While I was in control, I existed *inauthentically*. While for a time we must live in the world of *I-I/t*, we cannot achieve the fullness of *being* without *dialogue*. Both *Magicians* and *acolytes* must be open to the occasion of the *I-Thou* of *dialogical relationship*, wherein they can confront their assumptions and attain *authenticity*.

The Matchmaker-debutante

The metaphor of the artist-teacher as *matchmaker* and the student as *debutante* is the one I employ to describe objectivist tendencies in studio instructor/student relationships. In contrast to the *Magician's* romantic view of the artist as a divinely inspired creator, the *Matchmaker* takes a sociological view of artistic existence. Sociologists tend to focus on artists as role-players and examine the social structures in which they are socially constructed. They are conceived as workers or career strategists not unlike other aspiring professionals.

There is no mystery to artistic creation for the *Matchmaker*. Successful artists are those who have adapted their artwork to their audience and their identity to the social structure of the art world. Individuals who create work in isolation are not artists. Thus the relevance of the artwork in a social dynamic determines the existence of the artist. Artists have a responsibility to be of benefit to society through the artwork produced. Instructors should be exhibiting artists who have found a match for their artwork in the art world. From this perspective they are in a position to match students to an organization consisting of other people in the art world who can work with this aspiring artist. Their role is to prepare students for the role that they must play in order to succeed. The student's role in this relationship not unlike a *debutante* making a formal entrance into society. For the *Matchmaker*, all students have the potential to become professional artists provided they can adapt to the social constraints society imposes on them.

Before turning to the relationship *Matchmakers* have with their students, I elaborate on the assumptions concerning the notions of the artist and the artwork that underlie the way *Matchmakers* relate to their students. *Matchmakers* assume that the identity of artists and their artwork is determined by the role they and others play in a social dynamic.

Becker (1982) has taken a sociological view of the artist and the artwork in artistic activity. He states, "All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number of people. Through their cooperation, the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be." (p. 1). Becker portrays artists as subordinate workers in a collective process. Rather than focusing on individual artists, he elaborates on the social structure of the art worlds within which artists work in cooperation with others. For example, these others may include everyone from the manufacturer of the paint, to the framer, to the gallery owner, to the critic, all of whom play a role in the final outcome of how the artwork is seen. Bourdieu (1980), like Becker, sees the artist as a worker. Artists must be considered in the context of responding to the social constraints of production and consumption, like other aspiring professionals. Artists are not motivated from within, they are only responding to the social conditions provided by the state and their socioeconomic status within it. *Matchmakers* see themselves as artists who must match themselves and their artwork to play a role in the art world.

Like the *Magicians*, *Matchmakers* see themselves as active participants exerting their will on a passive, dependent partner, the artwork. This is a view also found in the literature on art education. True, they play an active part with the artwork, but only

insofar as the artwork needs to be made relevant to the social conventions they choose to be passive towards. In general, the art education literature reviewed earlier does not address the significance of the social conventions that artists work under. However, the notion that the artist is the active participant in the relationship with the artwork is espoused as the basis of art education practice. Moreover, the art education literature on the whole considers the teacher as the active participant in relation with students.

Matchmakers see their role as that of gatekeepers to the doors that separate their students from the art world. They conceive themselves as conduits for the few students who can acquire the abilities necessary to succeed in the art world. Unlike *Magicians*, *Matchmakers* see all students as potential artists. However, they tend to focus on the ones who demonstrate the most potential for success as professional artists. Their role is to shape and alter the creative energies and artwork of those students, so that they and their artwork can make a positive contribution within the current conventions of the art world. In response, the students must allow themselves to be passive participants in the process of being introduced to the society of the art world, not unlike *debutantes* being prepared to enter society. Those students who do not intend to become professional artists are compelled to play the role of a *debutante* in the hopes that the *Matchmaker* will interact with them.

Louise (see Chapter I) was a *Matchmaker*. She saw her role as that of gatekeeper to the art world. She was interested in those few students who presented themselves as malleable to her views that artists must adapt their work to the conventions of the art world. Because she was so focused on the task of making artists, she *set herself at a distance* from the uniqueness of each of her students. To her, students were objects to

manipulate. Rather than presenting herself as a *living embodiment of the world*, *authentically* struggling with the paradoxes of the artist as social construct, she presented herself as the *I* of *I-t*. Artistic activity was thus presented as wholly rational, simply a question of playing a predetermined role in a social construct. One had only to learn to ignore the subjective impulses that did not serve those ends. As with Derrick, her experience as an artist might have been *authentic*, but she failed to communicate that reality to her students from the *I-t* stance she maintained towards them. As with the *experience* with Derrick, for me this was a *mismeeting*. The occasion for *dialogue* with me was missed because she was unable or unwilling to transcend herself to become the *I* of *I-Thou*. I assume she resisted *dialogue* because an *I-Thou encounter* would threaten her continued use of me to affirm herself as a professional artist. She, like Derrick, turned away in *reflexion*. The subject/object stance of *I-t* must be maintained for the purposes of controlling interactions. As with my response to Derrick, I chose to return to the *I* of *I-t* with a portrayal of compliance. I played the role of *debutante*, preparing for my entrance into society. My paintings became the stage on which I played out my role. I saw Louise and my paintings as pawns I could play for my personal benefit. I related to my paintings in manner similar to how I related to playing chess as a child. When playing chess I felt I must consider the needs of others to succeed. In chess and in the art world the rules appear to me to be clear. Unlike the colouring book and Derrick's notion of what an artist is, one must have a participant to measure oneself against and one must play by the rules as determined by others. With both chess and Louise's notion of what artists do, I could choose any number of different strategies to employ, but the goal was always clear, success is determined by winning the game and finding a place in the art world, respectively. Thus, I took control of the

material so as to compete at in the game of chess and later, in the art world as presented to me by Louise. I preferred to set my unique responses *at a distance* so as to control the *experience*. While living the *life of monologue*, I gradually became somewhat immune to occasions for the *I-Thou encounter of dialogue*. Persisting in the *inauthentic* existence of the *I-I t* is a poor substitute for the reality of the fullness of *being* discovered in the brief occasions of *dialogue*. Occasions for the reality of *dialogical relationships* wherein the participants confront their assumptions must be fostered by both *Matchmakers* and their *debutantes* if *authenticity* is to be attained.

This thesis seeks an answer to the question of what takes place between instructors and students in undergraduate studio courses that often results in preventing *authentic* artistic existence: what takes place in the interaction between instructors and students when they prefer to be the *I* of the *I-I t*, rather than seeking to attain the fullness of *being* and *authentic* artistic existence one discovers as the *I* of the *I-Thou* in *dialogical relationship*.

While we may engage in our personal artistic activity *authentically* by *walking the narrow ridge* between subjective and objective realities, as teachers we rarely present ourselves as a *living embodiment of authenticity*. We prefer to maintain the subject-to-object *experience* of the *I-I t* by maintaining exclusively subjective or objective stances, rather than being open for the brief occasions of subject-to-subject *encounters in dialogical relationship* with our students. This *I-I t* stance causes our students to respond with an *I-I t* stance, an *embodiment of inauthenticity*.

Through this philosophical analysis, I aim to arrive at a model for more effective practice which can apply to my own studio teaching and possibly to that of other studio instructor. The next section is a proposal for that model.

The Mentor-Protégé

Based on the understanding of the problem of *inauthenticity* in undergraduate studio courses, I propose an alternative relationship grounded in Buber's concept of *dialogical relationship*. I use the metaphor of the *mentor-protégé* to name and describe this "ideal" teacher-student relationship, in which both participants have the potential for attaining *authenticity*. The *mentor-protégé* relationship is more significant than the conventional relationships teachers have with their students. It is potentially a type of *dialogical relationship*.

Mentors are more than teachers who disseminate information. According to Schein (1978), they serve as trusted councilors, guides, coaches, positive role models. In assuming these roles, they are always more experienced, never an equal. According to Clauson (1980), *mentor-protégé* relationships are built on a mutual desire for the relationship. The relationship involves the life experiences of both partners and not just their common activity. Bravmann (1986) outlines stages in the development of these relationships from a hierarchical dependency on the *mentor* by the *protégé* to the *protégé's* recognition of the human frailties of the *mentor* as an independent peer.

Mentors as studio instructors do not employ any particular technique for teaching based on a specific notion of artist and artwork. As artists, they may see themselves as primarily subjectivists or objectivists. However, in establishing their

relationships with their students, they strive to reflect on the uniqueness of each student and encourage all of them to confront their assumptions about themselves as artists and their artwork in *dialogical relation*. They seek to foster conditions for unique responses, a condition for *dialogue*.

Despite the predominance of studio instructors like Derrick the *Magician* and Louise the *Matchmaker*, during my undergraduate years I did sometimes, if rarely, *encounter* a third type of instructor. Sarah (not her real name) was a *mentor* whose approach compelled me to become the *I* of *I-Thou* by discovering another subject who, like myself, longed for *authenticity* in *dialogical relationship*.

Sarah taught an advanced drawing class. As I could perform quite well in drawing, I decided to enroll in her course. At the beginning of each class she would explain to her students what she expected of us for that class. At first, her approach seemed to be the conventional *I-I t experience* I had with other instructors. Routinely, instructors presented themselves as the *I* of *I-I t* with a subjectivist or objectivist portrayal of a *living embodiment of the world*. This initial presentation by the instructor was usually sufficient to determine the type of *I* of the *I-I t* I would play in response, the *acolyte* or the *debutante*. This could only be accomplished provided I *kept myself at a distance* (as the subjective *I* of *I-I t*) and did not permit myself to be engaged in *dialogue*. With Sarah I felt confident that I knew what was expected of me. Yet as she led the class through the first aesthetic concepts, I found I was unable to proceed with the confidence I had with other instructors.

Unlike most of her colleagues, she made a point of going around from student to student engaging us individually in our struggle to come to terms with the exercise at hand. It was as if she was prepared to go one step further than an aloof authority figure sending us off to seek a solution to her given problem. Rather, she became a guide who presented herself as if she didn't fully know what we both might *encounter* on the way, yet she was willing to lead me on a quest nonetheless. In Buber's terms, she presented herself as a *living embodiment of her world, walking the narrow ridge on which there is no certainty* between the duality of subjectivist and objectivist tendencies. As a *mentor*, she sought to attain *authenticity* for both of us by struggling together with me in *dialogical relation*.

It seemed as if she were trying to get us both to confront our assumptions together as co-participants struggling to come to terms with our identities as artists. To me she was an enigma. In front of her students, she appeared to play a variety of roles; although never completely confident about herself as an artist, yet she seemed always confident about her role as a teacher. I thought, how could she be teaching art if she couldn't settle on what type of artist she was?

Through these journeys with Sarah I began an inner *dialogue* that led me to raise a series of questions about how I ought to define my existence as an artist. I had uncovered something about my existence as the *I* of *I-It* that I was at first reluctant to face. I wondered, did Sarah see me for what I had become, i.e., a "chameleon" who was afraid to confront myself and take responsibility for my own destiny? This question had dangerous implications. Yet I found that I could no longer ignore it. Sarah had invited me on a journey with her to seek confronting each of ourselves in the face of our individual

doubts and to take responsibility for our decisions. To me she lived dangerously. Yet the enigmatic model of artist she embodied was contagious. There was a mysterious quality about this "living dangerously" that, while it was seductive, I could not comprehend. She somehow had seduced me to throw caution to the winds and decide for myself who I was to be. As she had created an atmosphere of free exchange of ideas, I began to voice my feelings of self-doubt with her. Correspondingly I began to experience feelings of self-doubt about how I related to my artwork. I had gotten so used to dictating my intentions to the material before me, not unlike the role I played with my playthings as a child, that I could only vaguely recall the sense of discovery in the *encounter* with *form*, not unlike my *encounter* with clay as a child. The *encounter* with my artwork in Sarah's class was similar to the *encounter* I had in playing with my clay. It was as though I was fully engaged in a conversation with another living thing, wherein we were both made complete through our interaction with each other. In coming to terms with my art work, like the clay, it was as if I felt the need to listen to it speaking to me about its limitations and possibilities. In doing so I became fully engaged within the tension that lay between the limitations and possibilities of the artwork, like the clay, and myself. Rather than simply experiencing a material with a predetermined role in mind based on convention, I felt free to allow the object to become an active subject who suggests itself to me and thereby engages me fully in the immediacy of the present moment. Sarah had created an atmosphere of trust where I sensed that I must allow the material before me to become an active subject. I could only feel this way because Sarah made it known to me that she too struggles to come to terms with the reality of her artwork as well.

It was a struggle to find truth while maintaining personhood. In Buber's terms, she sought my potential "not through instruction but through meeting, through existential communication between one who has found direction and one who is finding it" (Friedman, 1960, p. 180). The roles played by the participants in the educational task are, according to Buber, founded on mutual trust and *experiencing the other side of the relationship*. Because Sarah was sensitive to the present existential moment, she courageously responded with me as well as herself on *the narrow ridge* between the tension of tradition and personal interpretation. I came to see that being an *authentic* artist is an on-going process of striving to continually question my assumptions about how I related to the material before me. Would I choose to merely perceive it as a thing amongst things and engage in an *inauthentic* relationship with it, or would I perceive the material as an occasion for *dialogue* with its potential for *authenticity*?

Some may consider the *mentor-protégé* relationship as virtually unattainable because of the constraints imposed on the relationship. These may include high teacher/pupil ratios, where it is difficult to familiarize the participants with each other and an insufficient incubation period of a single semester to create the necessary conditions for a degree of mutual trust to be established. Gehrke (1988) identifies essential elements for creating conditions for *I-Thou* relationships to be established between teachers and students over a long period of time. These include the freedom of both participants to choose each other, sufficient time to develop conditions of mutual trust, mutual negotiating between participants concerning the focus of the interaction, a gradual independence by the *protégé* to become a peer of the *mentor*, an acknowledgment of the uniqueness of both participants acting reciprocally, the addressing of issues that

deal with the whole life of the participants, and the nourishing of the *I-Thou encounter* (Gehrke, 1988, pp. 44-45). Some might view this degree of involvement to be more than they are prepared to take on. While Buber would agree that these elements are indicative of the potential for *dialogue*, *dialogue* often occurs in the most inauspicious circumstances. We don't need to know a person very long to *encounter* them in their uniqueness. In any circumstance we always have the choice to be the *I* of the *I-Thou* or to turn away in *reflexion* and maintain our *distance from the world*. The *mentor-protégé* relationship described above was unique to that time and place. It is included only as an instance where an *I-Thou encounter* took place. It is not a recipe to be followed. Buber has no doctrine, he only points the way to the potential for *authenticity*. He only proposes that we as teachers should always be reaching out with our subjective and objective *I's*.

For Buber, the essential task of *educators* is the development of character. The educated person is the person of great character. *Educators* are great characters, ethical decision-makers who act out of the fullness of their being. They *authentically* and courageously respond in accordance with the uniqueness of each particular situation.

Conclusion

When I began teaching two decades ago, I realized that I faced a choice regarding what kind of teacher I would be. I could play a role as artist that I was most comfortable with, or present myself as I was: an artist who strives to constantly seek occasion to confront my assumptions about who I am becoming. For the first few years, most often I chose to play the former role. While at first I welcomed the attention and feeling of

control that I had over my students, I began to grow less satisfied with the charade I knew that I and my students were playing with each other in our respective roles.

An example from my own experience illustrates this shift in my teaching approach. Early on in my career as an instructor, in an effort to explain a concept to a student, I stated that ultimately there was no single correct answer to his problem. I could only offer suggestions as to what I might consider if his sculpture were mine. Without considering the threat to my role as the instructor, I went on to relate that I continue to struggle with self-doubt about the advice I am asked to provide to students. My willingness to reveal to him that I didn't have all the answers was a surprise to him. He responded by revealing to me that he too was plagued by self-doubt. Over the next few minutes our relationship changed. I no longer felt I had to play a role in front of him. Likewise he became bolder, and began taking the initiative regarding his artwork. From our perspective of different life experiences we began to struggle to come to terms with the problem he had with his sculpture. There was a freedom in the air, wherein I felt I could take chances with my suggestions. This and other similar *encounters* that followed led me to seek occasions to present myself as the artist I was becoming, that is, increasingly willing to step out of the pre-determined role that I felt was expected of me as an artist and an instructor. As the frequency of these *encounters* increased, I began to seek rational explanation for my feelings that I had discovered something of importance that would have implications for my teaching. While Buber's ideas did not directly refer to the specific problems of studio instruction at the undergraduate level, they did point me in the direction of undertaking a systematic inquiry using his ideas as a lens to examine the relationship between teachers and students in studio settings. What I did not

anticipate at the outset of this inquiry/thesis was the extent to which I had to maintain myself as the *I* of the *I-/t*, so as to effectively communicate with the reader. As a consequence, I have come to understand an aspect of Buber's ideas as they apply to my experience. While the discipline of writing an academic paper can point to the potential of dialogical knowing, it is not dialogical knowledge.

Thus this has been a both an introspective and philosophical inquiry, which has changed me as both an artist and an undergraduate studio instructor. While I am still hesitant to confront my assumptions, this inquiry has at the very least changed me as a person. It has brought me to a point of self-awareness that I would not have reached without it. I am now, more than ever, convinced I am living a fuller life than I would had I not gone through the experience of this inquiry. It has clarified in my mind what I intuitively sensed about how crucial my attitude towards others is in order to be effective in relating to them. Despite the *I-/t* struggle this inquiry entailed, it provides the theoretical framework for what I know intuitively. Buber's notion of dialogical relationships resonates for me as a *being*, in a way that nothing else does.

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