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### Imago

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IMAGO

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

By  
Georgianna Short

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE OF PITTSBURG

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 1974

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"I live on Earth at present,  
and I don't know what I am.  
I know that I am not a category.  
I am not a thing - a noun.  
I seem to be a verb,  
an evolutionary process -  
an integral function of the universe."

Buckminster Fuller

## DEDICATION

This paper is respectfully dedicated to R. Buckminster Fuller for teaching me to think, to Joan Mitchell for teaching me to see, and to the legend of the Worm and the Apple for teaching me that static equilibrium does not exist, only change exists.

## BIOGRAPHY

My home is Denver, Colorado which was chosen as a permanent residence by my father in 1925 when he immigrated to the United States from Germany. My education was in the Denver Public Schools until 1960 when I graduated and began attending the University of Colorado where I obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1964. I then moved to Ft. Scott, Kansas and was employed by the Public Schools as their Junior High Art Teacher where I remained for five years. Since then, I have resumed my schooling at Kansas State College at Pittsburg working toward a Master of Arts Degree in Printmaking.

During the past two years, I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with R. Buckminster Fuller, both personally and through his many writings. He has undoubtedly exerted a tremendous influence on my thinking and conceptioning of myself and the world at large, and so is, to a large extent responsible for the direction of this paper.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In this paper, I have undertaken an introspective examination of myself as subject matter. As an artist, what "I am" or the "essence of Self" is of very critical importance, since creative work must originate from within. However, the inner Self can be very mysterious, often confusing, and many times beyond our comprehension: yet, if we are to lead fulfilling lives as persons, and understand ourselves as artists, it is essential that the quest be undertaken. No one of us will probably ever completely understand the many elements that comprise our being, because we are multi-directional in concept, ever expanding in our experiences, ever growing, and always changing - the essence of a synergistic system. But whatever knowledge can be gained through investigation, contemplation and reflection will aid us toward a greater congruence of outer and inner Self, and thus, more rewarding lives as creative human beings will ensue.

## IMAGO

What is this I see before me  
Perpendicular to the floor?  
"Tis my print and nothing more."

But the image there  
So strange and rare,  
Where is it from, what is it for?  
"Tis my print and nothing more."

The forms and shapes - they did come from me.....  
How did it happen - how can it be?  
When I never saw such things before.  
"Tis my print and nothing more."

Is there a side of me as yet unknown?  
Manifesting itself this way, anon,  
Only here and then gone.....

This mystery self I must uncover,  
Could it be inherited (from my mother)?  
Or is it my real self?  
Hoping here to show itself,  
Hoping here to show to me,  
A side of Self I do not see.

Or is it just a hanging piece,  
With no hidden meanings out of reach,  
But I wonder as I see it there,  
Where the image comes from - where oh where.

Is the image there an open door?  
Or just a print and nothing more.....?

It is summer. The open bigness of the print room feels free and good at seven a.m. - sun shining in. I am set to work. The image comes as a doodle - scratch, scratch - developing slowly.....it feels good as it develops - comfortable - warm - close. I am satisfied and happy, I print. The morning ends.

Rain comes. I examine the proofs. In the half-light, the print appears as an apparition - a now alien object which exhibits a dark strange quality seeming completely foreign to ME. This is confusing. Is this

print really mine? Could it belong to someone else? It is surely mine because I remember printing it, yet why does it seem so unrelated to me? The day ends. The experience remains.

Slowly, realization comes that my anxiety and confusion over the origin of the images was due to the consideration of myself in a singular way - as being a largely physical creature, capable of thought and emotion which could be measured and demonstrated. I had even experienced my thoughts as reducible to an electromagnetic status, showing patterns not unlike short wave radio waves on an oscilloscope. But now, in the print image, some other aspect of my being appears to be represented which seems very mysterious, and not coinciding with any notion I had of myself in the past. This new facet does not appear to be precisely measurable, has no ascertainable weight, occupies no specific location, and has only recently demonstrated itself in a physical way through the print. And, if I accept it as a part of Self along with my previously established notions (and I must, since it came from me), then my thinking about myself must be reoriented. I am evidently not as disposed to pat codification as I thought. No longer can some niche be found to blithely be called mine. This mysteriously ubiquitous facet of me (about whose essential nature, and degree of control over me I know almost nothing) must now be investigated for the first time.

Why has my awareness of this aspect been so lacking until now? Why did such a narrow definition suffice that other possibilities could not be entertained? What caused me to construe Self as a physical, demonstrable, ergo codified being, and then rely completely upon this as a satisfactory, indiscerptible ripost?



I appear to have unwittingly adopted a pragmatic position with regard to Self which has caused this predilection for thinking of ME as a physically demonstrable being. I wanted to experience myself empirically, but found it impossible to do so. There was no way of jumping outside of myself to observe myself, and equally impossible to ascertain that I was indeed the same Self who awakened after sleep.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the only recourse seemed to rest in the assumption that I must be like the physical objects that I perceived outside of Self through sense experience. My senses indicated that these objects, animate or inanimate, were essentially static, occupied space and had weight. Further, my mirrored reflection suggested that I resembled some of these other animate objects and therefore must be like them: physical, concrete and statically measurable. These sensing devices seemed trustworthy because I had no other way of obtaining information about the out-of-Self world, and therefore dependence upon them as a source of absolute accuracy followed.

Yet, somewhere, I had lost sight of two very essential concepts. First, there is no such thing as a static object: physics has demonstrated that all objects are made up of atoms constantly in motion - but since this cannot be observed by the "naked eye", solids are assumed to exist when, in fact, they do not. In addition, it has been shown that only about one per cent of what is outside of Self can actually be perceived unaided.<sup>2</sup> The second is that even this one per cent outside of Self cannot be perceived directly because every sensing device is within. Whatever is

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<sup>1</sup>R. Buckminster Fuller, Intuition, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 38.

experienced in this way is merely stimulated outside....the transferring, cataloging, and assigning of meaning are done through brain function inside.

Since I cannot perceive myself directly at all, and since I can only perceive about one per cent of those objects outside myself (and even that one per cent is not perceived outside, but rather inside), I must now conclude that the conception of Self as some kind of static physical object occupying space and having weight is a fallacy. Plato's observation that "The world of sight is like the habitation of a prison"<sup>3</sup> must have pertinence for our day as well, since perception has now been proven to be very limited and subject to interpretation. Therefore, the only determination that can be made at this time is: (1) when looking in the mirror, only one per cent of the image can actually be seen (and this in itself is only an illusionary reflection); (2) when looking at others, only about one per cent of their being can be discerned; and, (3) if the assumption is then made that Self must be like others perceived outside, it follows that only about one per cent of the information about that Self is possible - and even that is subject to transfer, cataloging and interpretation within.

Therefore, the notion of Self must now take on a completely different orientation - an internal emphasis rather than an external or quasi-external one.

Yet, the internal Self is very difficult to ascertain because subjective consideration always seems to reduce itself to qualitative

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<sup>3</sup>Plato, The Republic, Book VIII.

terms: good or bad, lazy or industrious, aggressive or compliant. But, when the source for these particular qualities is investigated, it does not appear to be within, but rather resides in others outside. In other words, what I think of myself qualitatively has largely been learned - based on what others say about me, which has then been assimilated and with time, assumed as my own.<sup>4</sup> Thus, if others have remarked about my "shyness" all my life, I tend to think of myself in this way.

Realistically, however, I cannot accept the assessment of others in the determination of what I am, because the evaluation was not made by all persons with whom I have been acquainted, and that complete agreement of all could not be achieved because the relationships occurred at different times and under different circumstances. Yet, with time, I have assumed what I perceived to be a majority opinion, as it were, and passively believed it to be what I really, qualitatively am.

Secondly, even if the opinions were unanimous, they exist outside of me, and therefore have the same outside-of-Self problems as were encountered before: the words of others must be interpreted within. What I assume they mean by what they say and what they actually mean may be two different things.

Therefore, these judgments of others made outside of Self must be disregarded, and an examination of myself must be seriously undertaken without these bias' to the greatest extent possible. In reflection, I find that often I have feelings of shyness, but just as often, I tend to feel outgoing. These feelings of shyness or outgoingness appear to depend largely upon my environmental circumstances at a particular time, and are

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<sup>4</sup>Rogers & Stevens, Person to Person, p. 8.

therefore qualitative judgments based upon emotional reactions to specific situations. This must indicate that shyness and outgoingness are both present depending on the circumstances, and since both feelings are equally strong at different times, both must be legitimate. This seems to be true of many other qualities as well: smart-ness/dumb-ness; ugly-ness/beautiful-ness; optimistic-ness/pessimistic-ness. Therefore, I must be a composite of constantly changing qualities rather than any singular phenomenon.

In fact, it is not possible now to conceive of myself in any singular sense - either externally or internally. Change per se seems to be the rule rather than the exception: the physical world with its atomic structure is in flux; my bodily structure with its cellular composition exhibits precession; and now, I find that even my internal nature is in process. Outside and inside, internal and external, everything is in motion.

"In short, physics has discovered  
That there are no solids,  
No continuous surfaces,  
No straight lines;  
Only waves,  
No things,  
Only energy event complexes,  
Only behaviors,  
Only verbs,  
Only relationships,  
Which, once discovered,  
Can be kept track of....."<sup>5</sup>

But, if I am merely a set of constantly changing relationships, and all other things are also nothing but a set of constantly changing

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<sup>5</sup>Fuller, op. cit., p. 39.

relationships; then, there must be no difference between me and the world at large. Everything must be the same as every other thing.

Yet, I know that there are no exactly identical elements in the Universe, since there are no absolutes.<sup>6</sup> This must mean that I possess some pattern or structure that makes me unique - an individual integrity, as it were. This integrity could be descriptively compared with a slip-knot which has been tied in a tri-spliced rope: as it slides along, it is constantly changing in its form, and it moves from one splice to the other - from one end to the other. Yet, it is not the rope per se, it is not the splices per se, but has an integrity of its own.

If I wish to know more about the nature of the knot, then I must first recognize that because of its constantly changing nature, I can only apprehend that part of it which occurs at a certain point in time, because my brain, like that of other human beings, can only operate in terms of special case concepts.<sup>7</sup> Any generalizations or conclusions about its nature as a whole would be purely within the realm of mind speculation.

Nevertheless, the problem involved in pinpointing any aspect of a constantly changing phenomena is a vexata quoestio, especially when the difficulties and limitations of our sensing and emotive devices are considered. In view of this, any investigation into the nature of the Self may have to be made from evidence originating subjectively and manifesting itself to us objectively for our interpretation. Youngblood believes that this is the reason for creative activity: to manifest

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 20.

consciousness outside of ourselves in front of our eyes.<sup>8</sup> The work thus created can then be utilized as a basic instrument of information - valid in the sense that it came from within.<sup>9</sup> Thus we become evermore aware of the many aspects of consciousness.

This awareness represents the first step toward finally getting in touch with Self.<sup>10</sup> But again, any image so manifest could only represent one moment in that consciousness - one aspect of the individual integrity that makes ME. In other words, it would represent a kind of static framing of the integrity which I call Self:

"No single frame either explains  
Nor foretells the whole continuity -  
The picture of the caterpillar  
Does not foretell the butterfly,  
Nor does one picture of a butterfly  
Show that a butterfly flies....."<sup>11</sup>

each frame taking into consideration all aspects of Self at that moment.

I stand:

I pull the print slowly from the stone face  
Backwards  
Sticky  
Black  
Darkness  
Foreboding.

Silence speaks the print:  
What am I?  
Lifeless or living?

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<sup>8</sup>Gene Youngblood, The Expanding Cinema, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>Herbert Read, Icon and Idea, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup>Barry Stevens, Don't Push the River, p. 118.

<sup>11</sup>Fuller, op. cit., p. 51.

What are you?  
Now that you have made me?

What are we?  
Are we?  
Or just me and you,  
A part of each sharing,  
Shared -  
Now gone.

The print then stands solely as a concrete manifestation of a singular situation in a moment now past. That is all. If I choose to observe and contemplate it, I then observe and contemplate ME - perhaps about aspects of myself heretofore unrecognized.<sup>12</sup> But within the framework of this confrontation, I must necessarily assume the role of detached spectator: the work is outside of me now, and has no meaning in and of itself except what I assign to it....the interpretation taking into consideration all that I am at the moment I perceive it.

Even so, it appears that the images thus perceived come closer to representing Self than any other means since they originate internally, and therefore, it might be possible, upon consideration of a number of these images, to tentatively establish a pattern which could then aid in the quest into the nature of my being. This would result in greater congruence of my understanding about Self, and as greater congruence is established, greater fulfillment as a human being occurs.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, I now understand that my comprehension of myself in relationship to both the world at large and the inner Self must be found by going within me; and that the print image was perhaps a more valid

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<sup>12</sup>Youngblood, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>13</sup>Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 282.



reflection of what I was than I realized at the time. My original confusion arose from its apparent disharmony with the ideas I had about myself, which I later found were based on misconceptions.

Realistically, I have just begun to learn about myself, and this quest must be an ongoing process because of the omnipresence of change. I accept the synergistic reality of my being knowing that while I am able to apprehend the special case experiences, I can never comprehend the whole as a multi-directional, ever-expanding, constantly growing phenomenon of Self. Thus I must always be open to learning about new aspects of myself, and recognize that I am not capable of rigid definition. As I learn, my conception of the external world changes; and it, in turn, is also always changing, rearranging and modifying, causing further changes in my conceptioning....i.e., a circular process.

Thus, the reality of my external world is directly related to the point in time when it was apprehended by me, and the extent of my awareness of myself at that time indicating that reality resides internally rather than externally, subjectively rather than objectively, and in a process of becoming rather than become. Whatever knowledge I may obtain must be limited to the situation of now. And a lifetime is composed of an infinite number of nows....at least.



I am a Print  
 I am accepted by some,  
     rejected by some,  
     ignored by some.  
 I hang on the wall.  
     I hang.  
 I am of various colors, sizes, shapes, form.  
 I am reality on many levels:  
     A surface.  
     A fixture.  
     Interaction  
     Symbol of Mind Facet.  
 My reality exists at the moment of conception and perception.  
 I am united with the other prints in the exhibit because  
     we all share a common creator.  
 I am a symbol of the mind consciousness manifesting itself  
     outside of itself in order to understand myself more  
     completely.  
 I am only one episode in the process of becoming and so I  
     represent only the reality of the moment.  
 My companion prints are also statements of that reality.  
     Becoming - Searching  
     Aspect of the Hole  
     Becoming Whole.  
 I represent one frame on the road to becoming.

Before   create,   am man . . . . .	After   create,   am woman
Before   create,   am summer . . . . .	After   create,   am spring
Before   create,   am hair . . . . .	After   create,   am green grass
Before   create,   am hot . . . . .	After   create,   am faint
Before   create,   am earth . . . . .	After   create,   am sun
Before   create,   am mountain . . . . .	After   create,   am wind
Before   create,   am tea leaf . . . . .	After   create,   am warm tea
Before   create,   am mirror . . . . .	After   create,   am sky
Before   create,   am ice . . . . .	After   create,   am rain
Before   create,   am sea . . . . .	After   create,   am dew
Before   create,   am sea . . . . .	After   create,   am sunset
Before   create,   am river . . . . .	After   create,   am waterfall
Before   create,   am shadow . . . . .	After   create,   am morning
Before   create,   am here . . . . .	After   create,   am gone

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