THE BOOK OF QUESTIONS

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by

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INTRODUCTION

My work, in its largest sense, is about myself; it is my inquiry into the nature of my identity. Through my associations with history and the icon, I am able to bind myself and the viewer to a larger context; because the structure of my prints resembles the forms of film and literature, I am able to join myself to the onlooker through comprehensible forms, inciting active engagement, contemplation and discovery. I can communicate my inner journey while encouraging outside participation. For me, I believe this exchange is important for my continued development; in my art, I try to cultivate a continual practice of self-education, exploring relevant possibilities through different mediums and people. I consider my identity, like my work, to always be involved in the process of becoming, changing and growing, never fixed.

My prints reflect my experiences over the past six years, a time spent learning and evolving, transforming as an individual. It was beneficial for me to come to Ohio State unsure of who I was and what I wanted from printmaking study; my insecurity created the opportunity to remold myself from the beginning. I was not altogether prepared for graduate school because of previous personal and family disruptions. This fact made my transition into the new environment conflicting but eventually provided the impetus which
challenged me, provoking me to attempt new things. I was impelled to see myself as others perceived me, to look at my work as others saw it. Through internalizing and understanding these stimuli, I was able to learn about myself and why I make images the way I do; these interactions and insights taught me how to question myself and how to grow as an artist.
My preliminary efforts were erratic. This occurred because of personal conflicts, my eclectic nature and lack of thematic, stylistic and technical focus. Seldom was all my energy put into a single project which was developed to its conclusion, causing my prints to appear fragmentary. Because I had not settled on a particular form of expression or limited myself in explication and process, my growth was slowed.

I asked myself how I should grasp the imperative aspects of my art, giving my ideas shape so I could speak lucidly through my depictions. Many of my concerns were private, so idiomatic it was difficult for me to portray them without seeming puerile. My beginning visual vocabulary was insufficient to communicate my subjective thoughts and feelings. The components of my prints were stereotypical and maudlin. Stylistically, my iconography looked overwrought and illustrative; my effigies resembled commercial magazine reproductions. My subject matter was traditional and decisively figurative. I favored the notions of antiquity and the idioms of the Renaissance, using unaltered portrait and figure motifs from the classical past.

I realized my work would have to undergo an inclusive change to elucidate my inner symbols and questions; I needed to establish
fabrications to embody and relay my propositions, enunciating my ideology, integrating disparate parts of my imagery. I thought the combination of several techniques would best articulate my host of contentions.

The lithograph, intaglio and collagraph were used because I was most comfortable with these processes; I felt them able to satisfy the expanded aesthetic requirements of my new representations. I increased my knowledge of these mediums through becoming acquainted with their intricacies, particular ingredients and subtle features. I used diverse printing methods, pushing my images through many gradations and degrees of modification; each variation was elaborated then refined, undergoing four to five alterations. This searching, through consecutive versions of each denotation, eventually contrived forms and structures which felt right to me.

For instance, the lithographic xerox transfer method influenced me to consider using facsimiles in my prints; in intaglio, the chine collé procedure gave me insight into the process of assemblage. I responded to these techniques because their linkage of parts imitated the parcel structure of my self-identity, my inclination to order my psyche in portions. Through each incarnation, I tried to enrich content while eliminating superfluous passages, building an explicit impression.

These experiences led me to further investigate the potentialities of assemblage, uniting print segments, creating hierarchies of association through manifold juxtapositions. Assemblage
provoked me to include literary language in my work and to consider making books composed of my prints, incorporating pictures and text, which unfolded into my later novelistic format.

When studying photomechanics, I saw a relationship to assemblage, the way photo representations could be manipulated into an array of shapes and sizes. I made a mental connection between photographs and xerox, seeing how I could use copied reproductions in my prints. This instigated me to mimic some of the shared motion picture characteristics, evoking, in my later images, the cinematic perception.

A problem I had concerned component unity, coalescing these forms within the print composition. I did not want these members to seem jumbled together; these entities had to operate holistically, eliciting harmony, depicting a rational, deliberate organization. To accomplish this, I collagraphics overprinted the images in collaboration with assemblage, synthesizing and fusing the elements. The evolution is: a lithograph or intaglio was manufactured; then icon photocopies and polyglot text were attached; this monograph would then be overprinted, often several times, with a collagraphic matrix. The architecture, therefore, looked inevitable; there was no doubt that the anatomy belonged entwined.

To keep the successive overprintings from muddling the other elements, I used varnish and oil mediums on the surface which penetrated through the strata, increasing translucency and clarity. At first, I covered the entire image but later began applying these
mediums very selectively. Acrylic polymers were brushed over the xerox, verbiage, lithographs and etchings; because this substance is water-based, it formed a transparent protective coating which could withstand many overprintings, saving components from damage.

Through these techniques, I learned how certain representations and symbols could be used. More importantly, I saw why these things functioned in my work, creating an awareness which propelled me to get rid of visual baggage and banal cliches. My art could now exemplify my inner questions, perpetrating the origination of my mature graduate thesis images.
LATE WORK/DEVELOPMENT/CHARACTERISTICS

My later prints were gradually modulated into my cinematic book, a context created to evoke the perceptual associations and experiences of film and literature. Through this form, I explore self-relationships which I present as visual questions for myself; these inquiries supplement my self-knowledge, encouraging the further evolvement and growth of my identity.

In my prints, I study connections between myself, my family, psychology, philosophy, spirituality, transcendence, the icon and history. Through possession of the icon symbols and meanings of mythology, I am able to increase my awareness, yielding purpose and deeper comprehension of myself. These icons function to correspond with and translate my print images, forming an entwined identity through a woven conceptual and visual relationship; this operates as a dynamic, creating levels of interpretation in my representations.

My work is composed of mixed-media prints which are assembled like sections of film and pages of a book. In addition to intaglio, lithography and the collagraph, I paint on my images and use xerox assemblage to depict text, symbols and icons; through the use of collagraphs, I have created types of language which function in relation to my depictions and icons, operating on many branches of evaluation through repeated overprintings. I decided upon a layered
approach in constructing my work because of the perceptual difficulties experienced when attempting to depict a considerable amount of information within a print composition. I found the format and context required structures to relay or transmit the type of images and concepts used in the work. This led me to begin testing techniques and ideas to bind the various elements together.

A problem initially encountered was successfully integrating the text with an image. When literary words were used in association with a picture, a hierarchy was perceptually and cognitively established; visually the print did not harmonize because of this interpretative separation. The experience is: the text is analyzed; then the image is viewed; the print serves as a sort of illustration for the words. No real unity existed. Since my work was already chaotic, the addition of verbiage was a further disruption, a type of optical dissolution which caused the work to appear aesthetically divided.

To counter this disparateness, I began to experiment with using texts in unison with the intaglio-relief method called the collagraph; with glue, I was able to write on the matrix, creating my own forms of literary language. This technique was visually successful because the vocabulary presented was not immediately perceived as writing. The words were viewed as an entity, as a visual form. Only after later examination did the verbiage components seem to materialize. Since there was no cognitive separation and no conceptual hierarchy established, the collagraphic
vernacular worked perceptually, united with little detachment, allowing varying levels of information to be ascertained and interpreted.

The collagraphic components themselves did not solve all visual and aesthetic conflicts; it did allow the use of language in league with images but tended to undermine the formal structure of my prints, causing chaos. This turbulence became a visual overload. The eye ended up lost in the images, unable to fluidly move through the work in a comfortable progression. Part of the disarray in my prints was created purposefully, depicting internal disorder; I did not want to eliminate the turmoil, rather, I wanted to enhance it. This quality of chaos is an important part of my work because it is an essential constituent of my personality, a segment I wish to fully understand; its study is conceptually linked to the evolution of my identity. This incoherence is known as entropy, a randomness relating to the increasing disorganization of a complex, growing system.

To structure and contain the confusion of my prints, I devised spine sections, these bindings connect the images, the film positives, the opened print-pages. These black seam segments use icon images that serve as visual names for the depictions in the same manner language titles appear on the backs of novels, and movie credits identify the director of a film. Thus, each complete work represents a sequence of frames to be viewed or leaves to be read; the images are still, meant to be watched and translated.
Using text, collagraphic elements, print images and spinal icons within my coherent visual arrangement, I fabricated a dynamic; this structure provides tension, a beat, an iambic pulse which coordinates the procession of the eye through the image, similar to the rhythm in music or the meter in poetry. This pattern is fashioned to sustain a strict formal frame despite the presence of chaotic components; I use it because of my subconscious desire to nearly destroy the methodical architectures I design. This adherence and disruption of the nominal skeleton creates tautness; the push and pull activity of my animating system allows diverse layers to perform simultaneously, thus bestowing various levels of discrimination.

The circle, square and triangle are used throughout my cinematic book; these forms are key parts of my structural dynamic, reinforcing, organizing and binding my prints, symbolizing the many interconnected psychological, philosophical and literary meanings present in my work.

The square depicts my contrary thoughts and emotions; it indicates formal and informal structure; it represents ontological opposites such as reality and nonreality, being and nonbeing. The square illustrates hierarchies, indicating my strata of critical discernment and emotional deduction. The circle within the square depicts my union of opposing natures such as man and God, male and female, physical body and the transcendent spirit.
The triangle, like the square, symbolizes my joining of certain opposites such as consciousness and unconsciousness, subjective and objective experience, and other psychological unions; it also functions as my semantic symbol, representing my use of language and my joining of words and images.

The circle personifies my complete self, the totality of my psyche; it signifies the reciprocal qualities of analytic consciousness and perceptual intuition, bringing together disparate elements. The circle is my archetypal symbol, depicting genesis, finality, perpetuity and enlightenment; it is my connection to the earth and cosmos.

I have always been drawn to literature. For me, books are self-contained artworks which provide me with insight into my identity and the human condition. The language components of novels create visual representations within my thoughts which I seek to express in my images; the metaphors and analogies of literature can be seen, felt and read in all my work, saturating the folio leaves with implicit layers of writing; my oversize pages are spread out, flattened, inviting perusement through their enticing arrangements. Some type is barely legible, buried in the image through my collagraphic relief, looking palpably like a congealing idea; other verbiage can be plainly spotted, intact on the print surface, hazy, misty and mysterious, alluding to depths of thought.

Film is another important interest of mine which has had an impact upon my development. The sensations of my cinema experience
are evoked through my prints, which I treat as filmatic vignettes, psychological scenes flowing in cerebral time and space; a caught sequence like a motion picture frozen in the projector. This stasis forces a confrontation with my designated series of impressions; the viewer is compelled to look at my imitation of black and white film, comprised of various shades and tones of grey and ebony, feeling my fascination with interior areas. My work is propagated from the womb of the theatre, symbolizing the interior of the matinee, the inside of my psyche; my depictions mimic the way cinematic images emerged from void into flickering twilight, suggesting a psychological, temporal landscape. Through my unconscious internal lens, my ideas are reflected and magnified into conscious visual realization.

My collagraphic elements operate with my filmatic structure similar to a type of translating device; the language functions within my prints like subtitles appearing transposed along with the visible images of a foreign-language movie. One can appreciate the images without the subtitles but with this reference another level of content and dimension is erected; this is a synthesis of picture and word, united in a perceptual and cognitive vehicle which can be readily absorbed and comprehended by the viewer.

For me, there is a natural and inevitable connection between books and films. Literature provides a framework, like the cinema screenplay; motion pictures combine the conceptions of the novel-script into tangible images. The actors, characters, events,
times and places of movies, as in books, become symbols and icons; I identify with these persons and things because they reflect my experiences, desires and longings. I see myself mirrored in these metaphorical entities; I melt my psyche with them, seeking to possess them, their many attributes, their magic and power. These symbols and icons develop a mythology, a history which defines me; these things interact with culture and myself, reinterpreting my identity. For me, books and films become ceremonial rituals; through them, I find philosophical significance, psychological meaning and spiritual catharsis; motion pictures and novels shape me, joining me into the past, present and future. My prints, by mimesis of literature and cinema, construct my viewing screen; they emanate from myself onto the paper.

I have been influenced, in particular, by the films of Ingmar Bergman, who studies the development of individual identity, the relationship we have with ourselves, others and spirituality. Bergman studies what he feels to be our modern dilemma, consisting of alienation and a lack of religious, moral and social human guidance; he depicts his doubt through the visual and literary questions embodied in his films, symbolized by subconscious associations, hidden and exposed meanings, conflict with the self, and others. There is a correlation between my encounter with his films, the discourse of my work and the realization of my identity.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORK
AND THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

I believe the pivotal connections between myself, my graduate work, and the function of my art in the present are: my conceptions of the relationship between my prints and the sources I have used; why I have made certain decisions; and how I think my particular choices operate, for me, in the contemporary age. I feel the issues that are most important are my appropriation of sources, and my use of literary language in my work.

Appropriation is intriguing to me, as a method of making pictures, because it allows me to construct a comprehensive understanding of my place within the modern artistic continuum. It is a tool that I wield to investigate the subtle mechanisms of history and the timely ramifications of mythology. Through my appropriation of images, icons and philosophies, my work personifies the relevance of the past, while fermenting with my contemporary applications, such as my excerpts from literary texts and my allusions to film and theatre. By doing this, I juxtapose the ancient with the recent, transposing the old upon the new, introducing a wider scope, a larger spectrum of modern interest and interpretation. Thus, I eliminate cultural barriers, a key concept
for my work, by depicting the synthesis of myself with all depths and levels of global society.

My philosophy, my use of icons, and my appropriation of literary and filmatic elements within my cinematic book is Postmodern, complementing the intellectual and philosophical trend of my time. I seek to promote multifarious viewpoints, symbolizing my internalization and explication of divergent cultural components. In virtually all the arts of the twentieth century, and especially in the last decade, there has been an effort to recognize previously marginalized peoples and colonialized communities. Postmodernism is an academic and artistic movement which imbricates the humanities with multicultural awareness, reflecting the inherent universal values common to all, regardless of race or creed. Through my use of icons and other sources derived from multitudinous societies, a symbiosis occurs. In this fusion, I believe I act as observer and recorder for my time, an era composed of a multimedia, consumerist, advertising, appropriating culture. In a world where undeveloped countries exist beside technological nations, I see a great importance in my selective use of significant symbols gathered from many peoples. I sort through the overwhelming sensory barrage of media-generated images, depicting what I feel to be the ritually pregnant, ceremonially poignant icon connections between us all. I believe this is my decisive contribution to my age.

As an artist, I see my relation to my era to be a storyteller relaying my concerns with the accumulated lessons and experiences
from the past, which I reinterpret for the present. This is my way of joining with others; I am the visual voice, permutating and relating the poetic tribal tales struggling to exist within a commercially-gutted, often soulless civilization, ruled by television, radio, magazines and newspapers. My work is a recital; through it I visually verbalize our shared ancestry, handing down the memories past while providing insight into the days ahead for my generation. Through my art, I am christened with agency; I become the visual chronicler for my contemporary period.

Thus, my prints unite Postmodern constituents with storytelling elements, achieving an effect similar to the modern modes of communication, but my work is not a mimesis of the media. I distill a very particular educative meaning, a distinct view, geared to a succinct set of assumptions; I see the media as conflicting in its values and standards, expressing countless aberrations. My work, however, does mirror my perception of the electronic environment, depicting the impact of the media upon myself, culture and society; this can be seen in the layering of my prints and the inclusion of literary texts and cinematic references which exemplify the suffuse, modulated sensory depth of broadcasting and advertising. My work seeks to portray universal issues and cultural cohesiveness, enabling me to establish a new form of communication, a dialogue I feel the media lacks. I portray these forms as visual philosophies delineating a deeper existence, featuring the epistemologies of variegated peoples, providing a multi-ethnic insight into the fabric
of life. My quest for ritual depth is what separates my work from the mass dilution of modern communication systems. I appeal to the inner core, the essence of society, through appropriating the very medium with which the public is thoroughly familiar and is conditioned to perceive, joining me to multiple layers of the contemporary audience.

The two major modern visual artists who have influenced me and my work are the painters Pablo Picasso and Francis Bacon. Both gave me ideas about issues of appropriation which appear in my prints. I see Picasso as extremely important in the present, and I feel he exhibits the tenants and discourses of Postmodernism. Picasso's vicissitudes, his incredible ability to constantly mutate, to metamorphosize himself into new incarnations, fascinated me. As I studied his work, I noticed the different styles and diverse methodologies he assimilated, how he made these various elements operate for him. Picasso saw no boundaries, no barricades; he took whatever he thought significant and made it function in his paintings. I thus saw how he, and myself, could absorb the knowledge and aesthetic practices of many cultures; through him, I saw the effects of an enriched ability to portray meaningful universal truths. Picasso was able to touch the interior of existence, transforming the substance of modern art.

Picasso provoked me to try doing the same things in my graduate work, influencing me to adopt the conceptual and perceptual content of unfamiliar societies, thereby increasing my artistic repertoire,
enabling me to consider visual tactics which hitherto had been unknown and alien to me. This led me to begin altering my images, searching for fresh formulations, instilling me with the desire to visualize expanded possibilities for my prints; my journey brought me to the essence of the icon and my study of film and literature, presented in the light of my own time.

My relationship to Francis Bacon is similar to my connection with Picasso. I regard Bacon to be Postmodern; he explored the ontological dilemma of individuals questing for meaning in a shallow, media-sitcom era. For me, Bacon's contribution was his visual examination of modern existential philosophies and literatures; he embodied his studies in his twisted and distorted figures, depicted torn and convoluted by exterior powers, visceral forces causing a state of transformation. I saw his effigies to be the same as the icons I was using, expounding a similar treatise; these entities protected and preserved the psyche during Dionysian rituals performed to probe the uncharted regions of life and death. Through Bacon, I appropriated a manner of symbolizing my interests in icons, literature and philosophy; my treatment of my images reflected Bacon's process of transfiguration. The effigies I used represented the knowledge and spirituality of the past, a bridging element, relating to the swirling, undulating, transitional language components of my visceral, perceptual collagraphs. By doing this, I could visually personify what I felt to be the conditions of chaos.
and entropy functioning in my life and the contemporary era through my reinterpretation of Bacon's work.

I was not actually inspired by any particular artist to use language in my work. As I noted in the previous section, literature had long been a consuming avocation of mine. I feel my use of literary texts naturally spilled into my prints, that this was an inevitability. Through my use of the collagraph to personify literary vernacular, I feel I am aesthetically expressing a dimension of language not normally seen, not typically represented visually, making my utilization of verbiage more unique. Because of this quality, I believe my use of language in my work is of consequence in the modern era because I can address my concerns in an original way, unfolding penetrating insights into life.

A comparison can be made between my use of words and Jenny Holzer's articulation of vocabulary. In Holzer's language-art, she presents declarations which illustrate truisms and slogan-like statements; I focus upon longer passages of text which usually philosophically or psychologically support the apprehension and comprehension of images. She rarely uses representations analogously to her vocabulary, to supplement or compete with her words; I have visually joined both, and they work together and separately, simultaneously. Holzer's language itself becomes a visual form, whereas mine has both a perceptual and linguistic structure. She obviously questions the content and effects of the media in culture, inquiring into the social, moral, ethical and
political ideologies it reflects; I also mirror the presence of the broadcast mediums, but my purpose is to offer universal, multicultural values from the past and present. Holzer depicts the fallout of advertising, the propagation of opinions and beliefs which are served to the public like fast-food, mindlessly consumed.

I am not interested in scrutinizing the stereotypical notions of society, or contemplating the cliches of the business world. One will not find this type of conceptual irony towards the commercial, capitalistic establishment entrenched in my work; nor would one encounter Holzer's sarcastic and humorous depictions of partiality, marginalization, and prejudice which are applied to minorities, genders and political groups. Her artistic investigations involve the problems of ideological ignorance, deception, categorization and labelling which exist within a certain period of time. My concerns, as I have said, operate in the expanse of time and space. I deal with issues and states of being which transverse the restrictive boundaries of cultural fashion and political correctness. I believe the ideas and concepts of my literary language will remain vital, not becoming trivial and dated.

Is my use of literature meaningful today? What is its relationship to the present moment? I believe the value of my use of verbiage lies in my interpolation, my visual intermeshing of pictures and vocabulary. I see this entwining to consciously precipitate a new direction for purposeful aesthetics, relevant to
the appropriating media age. I believe most artistic disciplines will become increasingly involved with one another, not remain isolated. I envision a greater intercorrelation between previously separated aesthetic components in all fields. I view my use of literary texts in association with images to be a possible part of the future and pertinent to the contemporary Postmodern era.
Number One of the cinematic book (figure 1), reflects my experiences, attitudes and questions regarding the female-maternal quintessence; I am equating connections between the maternal, creation, conception, birth and death. The female-maternal symbolizes woman, the Madonna and the mother figure; it represents an icon essence which is traditional, classical and spiritual. The female embodiment is depicted as a goddess of fertility and propagation; of natural productivity; of love and beauty (the Aphrodite/Venus); as a nymph of temptation; as original sin (Eve) and as the Madonna/mother apotheosis.

I study these feminine personifications in order to fathom my thoughts and feelings toward the maternal being. Psychologically, I was affected by the deaths of my Father and both Grandfathers, as these losses all occurred within a few years; the male figures of my family were supplanted by female entities, my Mother and Grandmothers. The patriarchal hierarchy of my family was replaced by a matriarchal structure; the divestment of my father symbols, their substitution through maternal figures, affected my subconscious apprehension of the female essence. Instead of an innocent nurturing perception of the maternal, as I had previously
held, I began to unconsciously relate the incarnation of woman with the fatality of death.

Representations of figures for works Number One, Two and Three will each be split into three sections, A, B and C, to facilitate my descriptions. Since the works composing the cinematic book are large, the segmentation of Numbers 1-3 will make my initial and later correlations easier to see.

In figure 1A, the Madonna and child image metaphorically represents my female-maternal symbolic iconography, and my Mother and myself. I show the subtle psychological discord between the mother and child, and the mortality that bonds them. I treat the couple classically, stressing their link to the meanings of mythic and historical tradition. I then disrupt the conventional connotations of the Madonna and child through my use of the collagraph, permeated with literary language, forcibly imbricating the print image. The aggressive nature of my collagraghic penetration changes the notions, the intrinsic implications of the pair; through my relief process verbiage I am violating the chaste relationship between the mother and child icon, suggesting my reinterpretation of the traditional status quo, creating new levels of internal and external evaluation.

In figure 1A, I have slightly subverted the expected portrait of female nurturing, causing a detectable unsteadiness and unease; I have softly undermined the iconographic environment through
estranging elements. Tension and anxiety is created through contradiction; the child appears to be attempting to break free from the Madonna's breast; she does not seem troubled by this activity, wearing an ephemeral but ironic pantomime grin. This image represents my adolescent attachment to my Mother, prior to my Father's death; I emphasize the separation of our intimate interactions, due to outside forces, common but disturbing, affecting relationships. I emphasize the inconclusive nature of the bond through the Francis Bacon icon above, gazing downward upon the couple; this image is not classically beautiful but convoluted and unstable.

In figure 1A, and in all the images of my cinematic book, I have altered the prints through my use of oil mediums which are painted over the surfaces. I often add white rays, emanating from the heads of the figures. This unwinding or unraveling functions analogously to the collagraphic letters; the cranial disentangling mirrors the viscerally sinuous words. This is my way of relating emotional expurgation, ego exposure and subconscious expulsion, becoming a collaboration between images, language and psychological conceptions. For me, this weaving denotes a form of insertion through perceptual and cognitive barriers between depictions, text and other traditionally divided elements.

The text of figure 1A comes from Shakespeare's Hamlet, denoting the affiliation between the mother's actions and the fate of the child, (Gertrude and Hamlet).
The Madonna and child image of figure 1B also exemplifies the relationship between the female-maternal iconography and my Mother and myself. In this print, I have eradicated many of the historical components; tokens of the normal, comforting union have been eroded. Figure 1B is darkened and abstracted, reflecting my sense of tragi-comedy; the Madonna's body is harlequin black, her face mask-like, her laugh satiric; I have presented the child geometrically transforming; white rays stream from his head and torso but remain detached from my relief vernacular, a further disjunction. This image reflects my growing unease with my feelings toward death and the maternal figure; it is not meant to be a misogynistic statement, rather, it shows my detachment and self-denial of the family situation we had both shared. At the time, I did not know how to react to the awkward circumstances between my Mother and myself.

The text and collagraphic language of figure 1B is deeply layered but does not impregnate the Madonna and child effigy; my isolation of the image and words fortifies their state of unfortunate division, but also suggests psychological rupture and coalescence, their encounter with contrary states of being. Peter Shaffer's Equus speaks of these antithetical appositions, the lapse of sustaining ritual nurturing and comforting regenerative worship; in the text from The Seventh Seal, Bergman emblematizes these effects through representations of doubt and insecurity.
Figure 1C is my philosophical commentary on the life-conjunction attaching the symbolic iconography of the mother and child, and my Mother and myself. I conclude that these experiences are cyclic, part of an organic scheme which perpetuates itself. Figure 1C is a centerpiece showing a collagraph buried in zones of my hieroglyphic syllables, my subconscious mediating element between figures 1A and 1B; it is grayer, suggesting my blending of their essence; their separation is thus transitory, rendering the couple transgressive. My collagraphic lexicon is framed within a vernacular frame, relating the emergence and regression of the Madonna and child relationship, their unity despite the predicaments and disruptions of living. The center text is from The Odor of Chrysanthemums by D. H. Lawrence, sympathetically espousing the maternal connection with the states of existence.
Number Two (figure 2) is my meditation on religious icons which have shaped part of my life experience, provoking me to examine them, to find out how the development of my identity has been affected by them. Through my idealistic depiction of prominent icons like Christ and Mary, I may institute customary associations of theological purport. Because I have reinterpreted these religious symbols, I can apply my metaphors, adding meaning but also changing their iconographic import; I comment upon their ineffectuality in my life. The allusions of these venerated symbols do not offer me spiritual solace, for their past scope is missing for me.

I began to seriously question my religious beliefs after my Father's death; my inquiries intensified after the loss of other family members.

Biblical personages are often used in my work, representing my iconoclastic tendencies, a demonstration of my lack of personal affiliation with the bearing of these effigies. Through my depictions of their abolition, I am subconsciously stating my need for their resurrection; by destroying these holy representations, I am giving birth to new symbols of spiritual intent. This is ironic, because though I doubt the divinity of these symbols, I desire to possess them; I mock these revered images, yet I attempt to recreate
them, seeking their personal spiritual guidance. Because of this paradox, my depiction of these icons relates my inner uncertainty.

Figure 2A represents the symbolic iconography of Jesus's crucifixion, and my Father as a crucified man. The visage is faceless, echoing my privation of the religious attributes of antiquity; my portrayal of the image offers silence. My family, the crowd, is an indistinguishable, nameless, anonymous mass, shorn of individual identity, reflecting my troubled personal ideology; this has resulted due to my Father's departure. For me, he has become a spiritual icon that I feel compelled to understand, and somehow come to terms with, in order to comprehend my feelings and self-identity.

Figure 2B depicts a Madonna and child, typifying the iconography of the female-maternal and my Mother and myself. I have represented the irrational forces affecting their relationship through the absence of all conventional and sentimental elements. I depict the Madonna and child shrouded by human spiritual division and loss, suggesting somber, vulnerable, ambiguous and anomalous emotions. The ironic, tragically comical nature of their experience is also seen through their countenance; her face resembles a Halloween disguise, her laugh looks clownish; the child she cradles has become an array of assorted geometric planes and nonsensical shapes. This image describes how I feel about my Mother; the empathy I have for the extremity of her melancholy; the sense of utter absurdity concerning the impossibility of repairing her bereavement.
Figure 2C depicts collagraphic text spines and icon image seams functioning as transitional components between figures 2A and 2B; they also attach the parts, operating to clarify their combined meanings. The text layered on the collagraphs of figure 2C is composed diagonally, activating my structural dynamic. From Bergman's film Winter Light, a passage relating irresolution and abandonment; from The Seventh Seal, a dialogue speaking of the pursuit of knowledge, for evidence of purpose; and from Bergman's movie Cries and Whispers, an exposition on finality, an inquiry into the substance of suffering and the enigma of the unknown. All these motion pictures deal with issues which I reflect in Number Two, having a powerful effect upon how I see the content of these moral and spiritual questions.

The spinal icons of figure 2C solidify and balance my organization and fabric, representing Frances Bacon's "fractured and fouled contemporary condition," and Picasso's belief in a "malevolent and dark universe." The Bacon icons are also metaphorical portraits of myself, my implied identification with his Postmodern philosophical distortions; Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon personifies my perception of the brutal abstraction and corruption of life through his depiction of the female-maternal essence. These icon paintings contrast with my other spinal images of figure 2C, which personify pure and spiritual ritual conceptions, such as creationism, fertility, birth and organic completeness; these symbols are integral, unified and positive, in contrast
to the negated existential liturgies of Bacon and Picasso. My affirmative icons commemorate the birth of the world and the Garden of Eden. The primordial egg of universal fecundity and Leonardo's squared circle delineate life values that provide me with purpose and utility.

I include both sides of the spectrum, examining my feelings and questions of spirituality comprehensively. In the subsequent works of my cinematic book, I investigate these religious, philosophical and transcendental elements further, trying to make connections which I feel to be enlightening. Despite the presence of memento mori images in Number Two, I think the maternal influence is prominent, evident in my effigies of female parturition and maternity, presenting my belief in spiritual reincarnation and perpetuity.
Number Three (figure 3) is my meditation on the interpretation of my identity in relation to my Father. This work emphasizes psychological and philosophical ritual elements and feelings which join me to my Father; these constituents are depicted through symbolic icons and collagraphs which acquire spiritual and ceremonial significance for me. My observance is mythological, historical and ancestral, concerned with personal transcendence, through my possession and preservation of my Father's memory.

Figure 3A represents my dissolving self-portrait, suggesting my identity is not fixed, it is mutable, capable of taking other shapes and assuming other forms; for me, my psyche does not exist solely in the realm of tangible reality. I relate my idea to the Indian ritual belief that the self embodies the ethos of other beings which incorporate the identity into another plane of life. These soul-spirits can be animal, man or god and are considered pure, untainted forms which compose a portion of the spiritual self. Figure 3A is dark, filmatically emerging from blackness; my countenance is chaotic, illustrative of my internal nature. The portrait is convoluted, analogous to the form of the collagraphic language enveloping the print. My image is not recognizable in a classic sense, depicting a type of geometry, symbolic of my transformation of
self, attaining the ability to converse, metaphorically, with the realm beyond my logical experience. This analogy with the Indian ritual is important to me as a way of communicating, through my art, with my Father and those things that I cannot physically see or grasp.

Above figure 3A is an Indian icon of a man-god being devoured by a serpent, a conception I relate to the impermanence of my body, my mortal coil. The text within is from The Book of Questions by the poet Pablo Neruda, speaking of the sustaining fusion between the icon and mind, yielding greater awareness, the structure of emotion underlying transgressive impressions, outside of physical existence.

The spinal icon images of figure 3A depict my Indian soul-sharing conceptions; my shaman in the process of transforming into his internal essence; a totem pole, symbolic of family homologies; my snake, consuming itself, representing perpetuity; The Limits of Understanding by Paul Klee, relating the esoteric nature of reason and rationality; The Dance of Death from Bergman’s film, The Seventh Seal, hinting at my romantic, whimsical and fanciful attraction to transcendence. All of these icons relate to my desire for a junction between different aspects of being.

In figure 3B, the print is centered, surrounded on both sides by unbroken black spinal sections, suggesting my attempt at meditation and my isolation. The bottom portion of the image is my subconscious self existing within a geometric space, inhabited by the square, triangle and circle. I compose these forms classically,
yielding traditional metaphors; for myself, I desire wholeness, completeness, a unity of opposites, and expression of my interests in religion, science, psychology and philosophy. This dissimilation of myself is portrayed by the positioning of the triangle within the circle within the square. Inside the triangle exists my internal passage, an arched and pillared threshold, leading into darkness; above, carved into the pediment, is the symbol of my universal entropy of identity. Below the doorway is a tiered structure composed of squares and triangles exhibiting a mounting instability, representing the fragile balance of my interior self. This framework supports a fertilized egg, symbolic of my psyche yet-to-be, depicted by the snake, uniting my physical and spiritual life while earth-bound. The top portion of figure 3B is another kind of geometric self-portrait; I have reinterpreted the pure forms, redefining their relationships, depicting my reorientation and permutation of self.

Figure 3C depicts my Father's psychological, philosophical and spiritual associations with the square, triangle and circle, in his afterlife. For me, his relation to the implications of these geometric forms is not holistic, remaining fragmented, echoing my irresolve and my inability to spiritually unite with him because of his passing. I show his portrait to be coming apart, reflecting physical disembodiment. My Indian icons duplicate his transfiguration; my metamorphosizing man-wolf chrysalis feeds upon his incorporeal soul; the totemistic symbols mediate his journey to
the next world; Leonardo's *Universal Man* and Klee's *Angel of Death* reflect the ontological states which he has passed through and I must still face.
NUMBER FOUR AND FIVE

Number Four (figure 4) shares characteristics with Number Five (figure 5) which are slightly different from works Number One, Two, Three and Six; both are arranged in two horizontal rows or parallel sections, ranging in length from 15-20 feet, and width, 4½ to 5½ feet; both are unframed, and are meant to hang flush from the gallery wall. My much larger, unenclosed format directs the work be experienced as an expanded model of my cinematic book. Numbers 4-5 are wall-sized, multi-paged, unfolded manuscripts to be read in parts or in gestalt, enhancing the literary impression; they generate the intensified perception of a motion picture due to their closeness in size and shape to an actual in-house movie viewing screen, coercing my filmatic elements to convincingly mimic cinematic constituents. Both works are primarily about my search for psychological and philosophical insight, and my quest for spiritual transcendence. I built these works in this way because my ideas and issues became more expansive; my desire to understand inner abstractions required a less confining format. Because these works are more complex, each will be discussed through examination of top row print components followed by the bottom section constituents.
**NUMBER FOUR**

*Number Four* is my meditation upon my feelings and thoughts concerning my Father’s death, my attempt to gain insight into the effects that this experience has had for me; through the psychological and philosophical study of myself embodied by my collagraphs, I metaphorically transcend myself, joining him.

The top row prints of figure 4 are all collagraphic; the central image displays a circle, symbolically representing my Father, which is emotionally flooded with indecipherable language. The writing on all these collagraphs is illegible and cryptic, evoking a subconscious link to my Father’s spiritual domain; the images on either side of the circle depict a square and triangle, symbolizing the union of opposite natures and my ontological connection with language; words represent my inner, abstract being, a tie to deeper levels of expression, stretching to bond myself and my Father. Through these collagraphs, I create new structures; I order and control my search into the unknown.

The top section icon images of figure 4 depict ritual masks worn during ceremonies by those seeking to join themselves with a departed soul; these personas, when donned during tribal or family ritual, serve to create protection from evil spirits while unifying the participant with the deceased. These masks and icon images from
different cultures, for me, all operate in this very similar manner, and is the reason that I choose to use them. Wearing these ritual identities enables me to incorporate myself into another being, a transported self, an alter-ego which connects me to my Father, allowing me to metaphorically reveal hidden knowledge; this provides me with an outlet for my creative artworks, a method through which to probe the spiritual regions of my life.

The top row text is the poem *Ash Wednesday* by T. S. Eliot, speaking of transcendence and the longing for spiritual regeneration.

The collagraphic prints of the bottom section are not covered with as many multiple strata of my subliminal verbiage. Through these images, I suggest my surface consciousness, my analytical and critical thoughts and questions. Some of the vernacular is readable, the visible exposition of my inquiry into the essence of the spiritual; though the collagraphic content is organic, watery and dream-like, the language structure is more coherent and concise. But like my images, the words appear to be in a process or stage of transformation; I make sure my literary perception is slightly deceptive, getting closer to what I feel to be an untouchable nature. Four collagraphic image sections function analogous to black icon seams, symbolizing my attempt, through my print structure, to clarify my elusive interior feelings; I sometimes see my emotional pursuit of spirituality as an irrationality that I must deal with, though I cannot decide upon its measurable validity. I
know that I probably will not find the answers for my questions, that I cannot solve the riddles of my searchings. Inquiring into the core of the unknowable, the central collagraphic print is a negative image, my depiction from the inside-out, a black masque portrait of my Father, emphasizing his absence and my inarticulation of his mortality.

The bottom section icons of figure 4 are varying aspects of my physical and spiritual identity; the Bacon, Grunewald and Rouault effigies, like the African, Aztec and Swedish ritual masks, connect me into the corridor of time and space, linking me to a greater cultural consciousness. This magnifies my ability to enlarge my personal narrative, giving it the substantiation of a myth, empowering my fable; Bergman does this in the bottom row text, assimilated from his movie Winter Light, showing the enormous desire for spiritual communion.
**NUMBER FIVE**

**Number Five** is my investigation of what I have examined and encountered during my construction of the cinematic book; this work studies my experiences with cultural philosophies, mythologies and beliefs of creation, birth, life, death and the spirit-world.

The top row prints of figure 5, collagraphs, lithographs and intaglios, all depict aspects of the epistemology of the physical world, what I feel to be natural and organic relationships. My etchings portray the female-maternal entity aligned with earthly and universal life-cycles; the lithographs picture my junction, the merging of the maternal essence with physical, biological oscillations and the spiritual, heavenly suns of outer-space; I join the female into the rhythms of the world at the most basic and elevated levels. My collagraphs of the upper section reflect the cyclic motions of disintegration and rebirth by their composition, which I have made very similar to the textural ingredients of the physical world: they suggest the forms of reproduction and the stages and elements of life. My collagraphs personify water and soil; plants, roots, leaves, trees and foliage; my curving, writhing word components represent bodily elements such as sperm, eggs, nerves, veins and arteries filmatically carrying vernacular DNA within literary tissue and blood; these things are covered by a
visual skin of cinematic image-flesh which is harnessed upon a
collagragphic language-skeleton. The center relief print depicts a
skull and a piece of fruit, symbolic of my organic and philosophical
relationships; my belief in the physicality of nature and the body,
transposed upon the universe, transcended within the cosmos of the
mind, a common experience, binding myself and all cultural
communities.

The apex icon images of figure 5 reflect this organic and
spiritual cycle, illustrating ritual embodiments of creation,
conception, birth, life, death and resurrection. My Chinese, Navajo
and Inca icons reflect the relationship between my physical exis­tence and my own individual consciousness; my Indian and Christian
images of the Madonna and child, annunciation and nativity, relate
what I see to be the religious and maternal nature of birth and
life; my Indian, Egyptian and Buddhist icons depict the governors
of life’s spiritual estate, presiding over the departed during
their pilgrimage into the afterlife. These icons, for me, clearly
bind many thoughts, notions and beliefs together; despite the
labyrinths of individual difference and the intricate, maze-like
organization of our cultures and societies, I am beginning to see
the threads joining myself and other people.

The summit level text is from Death Shall Have No Dominion by
Dylan Thomas, and from The Book of Questions by Neruda, both
exploring these passions and paradoxes integrating to form the
identity.
The lower section images of figure 5 feature my epistemology of philosophical and psychological spirituality. Whereas my top row prints studied physical and organic phenomena, my bottom layer depictions and collagraphs focus intently on expressing the manifestations of my own psyche; this is my formulation of self-identity upon a metaphysical level. Here, I am not so concerned with logical realities and decisive answers, but the creation of images which speak for me, for my thoughts, feelings, hopes and desires. I realize that these connections are inherently subjective, and that my evaluations are personal, but these visual extensions of my inner self externally concretize my interior sense of purpose and intimate meaning in life. If I am able to transcend myself and know a greater form of spirituality, in touch with a larger realm, I believe my ascension will occur through my study of these things in my artwork.

This idea is symbolically presented through the main lower row text, from Sunday Morning by Wallace Stevens, in which he makes his famous statement "Death is the mother of beauty." For me, there is no end, only a fertile beginning; to find myself, I must seek myself and must have felt true inner knowledge, to know when I have found me.
NUMBER SIX

I originated the idea for Number Six (figure 6), while I was engaged in assembling works Number 4-5; when attaching xerox icons and text, before overprinting these images with my collagraphs, I was looking for appropriate literary or poetic passages to use.

While I was browsing, I came upon this poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, from his book, Translations, which created the impression in my mind:

PIETA

Now is my misery full, and namelessly it fills me. I am stark, as the stone's inside is stark. Hard as I am, I know but one thing:
You grew---...and grew in order to stand forth as too great pain quite beyond my heart's grasping.

Like this poem, Number Six is not meant to sum up my work, rather, as a child born of my last graduate pieces, it reflects my connections between the maternal essence, birth and death; it illuminates my starting point, my beginning source, my fountainhead, Number One. For me, the work grows beyond me, beyond itself, and the interpretative cycle is born anew --- I have not finished it, it has not been completed; in its contradictions, my
work remains open-ended, my inquiries still to be contemplated, my film now has another frame, another section, my book, another opened page.
CONCLUSION

Through the parts of my cinematic book, I have been able to study the psychology and philosophy of myself; my work has striven to inquire into the substance of my psyche and the creation of my identity. I have examined the content of relationships between myself, my family, the icon and history through my context of film and literature; these forms have provoked me to scrutinize the many things that compose me, helping me to understand my experiences, values and beliefs. My book of questions, serving as my perceptual tool, has unlocked the intricate secrets of my inner investigative journey.

Looking through the stages of my early prints, I can now plainly detect how much I have developed, from idiosyncratic portrait and figure caricatures to multimedia inquisitions of my identity, relating my greater cultural and universal concerns. As my work progressed, I found my strictly realistic images incapable of expressing my inner abstractions; my later explorations focused upon the sequential transformation of my prints, wringing out genuine and authentic symbolism. Before, I thought my images should reflect traditional and classical ideals; after, I only wanted to record thoughts and emotions I felt worth preserving. My graduate work has also pulled me away from total subjectivity, connecting me

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into the world, teaching me, through objective analysis, to consider
other people, and how they might see my work; because of this
interchange, I was able to contemplate my actions; I was able to
evaluate the interrogations of my identity, enabling me to evolve
intimately as an artist. Earlier, I had been restrained and
inhibited, but now I have begun to clarify regions of myself and my
work which had lain buried and hidden. This has motivated me to
grasp at personal absolutes, what I think I can accomplish, what I
believe may endure as a positive essence in my art, the spiritual
expression of my transcendent truth.

Like my graduate work, my future endeavors will involve my
queries of the icon, seen through my structures of cinema and
language. I want to take the icons of history and make them my own;
I will create versions of cultural and personal effigies, retaining
the associations of the past, but further changing them and adding
new meanings. By doing this, I can produce a new body of work that
tells my life-tale through the mythology of myself and the stories
of history. For me, this assimilation is significant. If I can
take the icon's visage, I thus wear its form and thereby possess its
substance, reflecting the reinvention of the relationship between
myself and culture.

Elaborating upon my thesis studies of literature, I wish to
further expand the role of language in my future work. For me,
words will continue to be an imperative vehicle of my perceptual
expression. I shall persist in treating verbiage as a visual form but I will investigate the implications of the subtle divisions between pictures and text. I also desire to research the applications of linguistics, the units, natures and structures of language, in collaboration with my images. I feel this combination will lead me to make fresh discoveries in my art.

Like the cinema, through my work I want to create a theatre of myself; in my crusade for knowledge and identity, personified through my prints and paintings, I may communicate my performance; my interpretation of the subtle meanings, the nuanced values, the richness of life, acted out by myself and perceived by the audience. By maintaining this reciprocation through shared sensation, I will be able to see myself anew, finding my spirit and my vision.
FIGURE 1, Number One
FIGURE 1A, Number One, Detail
Fig. 1 (Con't.)

FIGURE 1B, Number One, Detail
Fig. 1 (Con't.)

FIGURE 1C, Number One, Detail
FIGURE 2, Number Two
Fig. 2 (Con't.)

**FIGURE 2A, Number Two, Detail**
Fig. 2 (Con't.)

**FIGURE 2B, Number Two, Detail**
Fig. 2 (Con't.)

FIGURE 2c, Number Two, Detail
FIGURE 3, Number Three
Fig. 3 (Con't.)

FIGURE 3A, Number Three, Detail
Fig. 3 (Con't.)

**FIGURE 3B, Number Three, Detail**
Fig. 3 (Con't.)

**FIGURE 3C, Number Three, Detail**
FIGURE 6, Number Six
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