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Robert: One thing which we could all do in these talks, because we all have maybe a specific point of view that we specialize in and to maybe get the best from all of us, is, I'm not here to say what it is. There's certain things I think maybe are, but I want to find out. I'm here to acquire more than to give. One of the questions which I asked Woody earlier ~~which~~ is whether one of the lysts in the digital arts, ~~are~~ ^{is} the digital arts at all interested in the way that human cognition takes meaning in something. Is the digital arts interested in meaning, in transferring meaning? So there's a little quote here and after this I don't have much more to say. It says that "neither our thoughts nor passions nor ideas formed by the imagination exists without the mind is what everybody will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations, or the ideas important on our sense, however blended or combined together, that is, like objects they compose, cannot exist otherwise than in a ~~mere~~ mind perceiving them. I say "The table I write on exists", that is, I see it and feel it. And if I were out of my study I would say it existed, meaning thereby if I was in my study I might perceive it or that some others ^{actually} does perceive it for as to what it says of the ^{absolute} unthinking existence of unthinking things without any relation to ~~they're~~ ^{their} being perceived, ~~it~~ that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their essay is persipi - that's latin I guess - ~~they're~~ ^{their} being is their perception. Nor is it possible that they should have any existence outside of the mind's and thinking things which perceive them. "But" say you, "surely there is nothing easier than for me to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet and nobody by to perceive them. I answer, "you may say so. There is no difficulty in it. But what is all this, ^{I beseech you,} more than framing in your mind into certain ideas which you call books and trees, and at the same time omitting

the frame or the idea of any one that might perceive them. But do not you yourself see ~~them~~ or think of them all the while? This, then is nothing to the purpose. It only shows you you have the power of imagining and forming ideas in your ~~own~~ mind. But it does not show that you can conceive it possible the objects of your thoughts may exist without the mind.

JON: Their being is to be perceived.

ROBERT: Right. Their being is predicated on their perception.

JON: No, no. Their being is in the act of ^{their} being perceived. It's different.

ROBERT: Yes, okay.

WOODY: But then what is the subject that is being perceived?

ROBERT: Any phenomena.

WOODY: So a recent phenomena is the scientists looking at the surface of ~~Mars~~, that's the most recent phenomena.

JON: May I interject another quote? Eisenberg said that "the transition from the ~~actual~~ possible to the actual lies in the act of observation." And what he was referring to was a very specific ~~posi~~t~~ie~~ condition existing within quantum physics which stated the range of possibilities based upon the uncertainty principle. And the actuality of the situation was only that which was observed within the limits of ~~the~~ ^{that} ~~that~~ observation. ~~¶~~ And I think that this and the Eisenberg statement are completely relevant to certain issues that were dealing with here. And equally ~~implie~~i~~t~~ to certain things that are implicit in what we're doing, about us and our personal outlooks and so on. So, just to spin off from this, which at least strikes me, is that we're dealing ~~with~~ ^{both} consistently in digital art and ^{even} analog video of a certain framework with matters and processes and observations and operations which are inaccessible in any other way. And we're building constructs which are by implication inaccessible, if only because they haven't been built until this moment. And I, to put a paren-

thesis here, I have been struggling in my mind with these conversations, to find a rationalization for the fact that we're working with these media and these constructs. And this is the basis of our discussion on ~~Woody~~^{Monday}, actually. It seems at some point these constructs approach a self-containment ~~that~~^{which} isolates them from anything we ~~might~~^{can possibly} call real. That was the basis of the conversation and some other conversations.

WOODY: I would approach it differently. When we meditated with Hollis Frampton about what actually is the craft of video art. That eventually had to come, because ^{also} people asked us, "On what level is it important to understand binary system?" And for me and Hollis this wasn't discussed, because we understood the video art begins on the primary level... understanding binary numbers...

ROBERT: Which is a grammar? Is it code?

WOODY: If you understand the basic code, ~~there~~^{that} is the craft. Other people have a whole different idea about video craft. Maybe they have a language which they exercise or they use to form an idea. And then it becomes a different level of craft and a different level of art. But of course until ~~today~~^{now} most of what we call video art, computer art, has been conceived through an intermediary in which artist was always treated as kind of a ^{half}-wit that could come and after a while could pick up some of the higher language codes and apply them to his or her fantasy. That was valuable to the technologists to the extent that they would even serve ~~the~~^{the} artist to perform that function. But of course that's totally degrading to Hollis Frampton and totally degrading to me. So we have decided ~~to~~ that we would start just from this basic equality. Equal understanding of the code for the scientists and for the artists, for arts. Even if our personal ~~idea~~^{method} is different, because Hollis ^{idea}is, he cannot understand the structure unless he understands the elements.

My idea is to approach it from the outside. Get a system, and then spiral slowly into the center. We have found that ~~there are~~ ^{we have} many paths ~~we~~ ^{that} have ^{been} crossed in this particular introverted or extroverted viewpoint. And it's very interesting to us how differently we construct this notion of computer as craft. How similar ^{is} it at the same time how many paths we had to cross to appreciate each others' kind of...

JON: Let me ask you this. Hollis' purpose in approaching computers is particularly ~~fantasies~~ ^{fantasies that} ^{you've got} ~~(fantasies)~~ That ^{would} Hollis ~~uses~~ it as a tool as he uses a camera to deal with matters ~~that~~ ^{which} are not specific to the computer, as he is dealing with matters in film which are not specific to the material of the film and to the material of the computer. You ~~have~~ however seem to be taking an approach which is very different. And ~~which is~~ ^{maybe} paradoxical given your two separate approaches which is that you were seeking to deal with matters that are specific and pertinent to the computer, as you were with video, and seemingly there must be some higher object to that as well.

WOODY: I wouldn't _____ this because computer is in fact everything. It is a synthetic tool in which every ^{claims} ^{application} approach ~~has~~ its ~~operation~~. So far I detected Hollis approaches the computer from his hobby, which is the languages. Or linguistics. That's an a priori claim to a computer, that it was a system based on the model of linguistic syntaxes. Or it's one of the major ones. Generically it's one branch. We cannot say that before the split or ^{the} branching, the center from which all these branches have grown, generically agree with his concept. On the other hand since he supported, in a way, the existence of my concept, I said of course, indeed it is maybe closer to a certain understanding of the system as a hardware, as a material arrangement. Because as I agree with Hollis, language is bio-supported. It has to exist on

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biological matter. If it's deprived of that biological matter it becomes extⁱⁿinct. It can only exist^{an} and ~~ex~~ permutate and develop and evolve through living biological systems. Compared to the universe which can evolve totally regardless of the bio-support. So there is this further concept.

ROBERT: It comes to mind for me that notions ~~are~~ as/symbolic index iconic or lexical codes. I see the computer relates most to verbal language in that it's a symbolic code. Take an iconic code, like if you have a picture of a horse. Those kinds of codes are not as intra-contextually divisible as language. For example, if you have a picture of a horse the least thing you can say about it is that here stands a white horse in profile. And since iconic signs or indexic^{al} signs are referential, once you've seen a horse, either been told of a horse. It's in your memory, you know what it is. But if you don't speak English, the sound of the word horse, in a way suggests to you a horse. That's a symbolic code. And I feel that the digital arts or the computer seems to me to be a symbolic code, like language.

WOODY: I see. So what you're saying, that there's no outward manifestation of ^{the} substance at all.

ROBERT: Well, the outward manifestations are...it's a behavior that's plugged into some sort of output device. Sometimes it's visualized, sometimes it's sonicalized - made to be a sonic phenomena - or many other types of phenomena, so I'm getting again back to how we perceive it, how we perceive its intelligibility. But I see that, in a sense, the computer is even more empirical than perhaps verbal language.

JON: Let me ask you this, then, knowing relatively little about computers. Which is ^{that} the primary code of the computer is machine language, which exists in bits, whatever. This seems to be ~~with~~ in the range of this somewhat questionable to me comparison of two linguistic sets - to be ^{completely} equivalent in a way to our more logical information. That is to say it is that which exists, not as arbitrary frameworks, but

as purely utilitarian^{and} in that sense necessary communications in order for these higher levels which are signficatory or symbolic, such^{as} the word, of course - becomes in fact ^{the} a level ^{perhaps} of a higher machine language, of a rather high machine language, not a higher machine language, a rather high language, for the machine. So in this way I see it, not at all. I mean this kind of similarity that exists. That what ^{you} we are concerned with in the computer are not in fact questions of languages, Hollis isn't here, there's no way to discuss this, but instead questions of functioning, of necessity, of a skeletal ^{kind of} perceptive on certain things, processes conceivably, power operations that go on ^{with-} in the computer that seem to me to exist on a much more fundamental and much more basic...

WOODY: Let me just put it on a totally demythified basis.

In Systems, like our system, maybe video, we deal with dividing time sequences and then utilizing them to perform a display, or processing. That means we take a master clock and we divide that into all the useful ⁺ time sequences. And these are the carriers of all our logic functions. Because they're the organizing principle of the frame, and since that is the cognitive unit we're working towards, we use that whatever mechanism around us that provides. In computer we have the analog to this. We have the master clock which generates binary code from zero to whatever the length of our binary train depending on what it is. But the ⁺ basis is as primitive as generating from a master clock, time divisions. It just counts. It's a counter which starts from zero, by incrementing it increments binary numbers. Now these binary numbers are utilized as a utility throughout the system. Like addressing, or certain codes to compare. These are the secondary decoding elements which have put against this very ⁺ mechanistic generation of the code.

JON: The master clock operates at the speed of the computer.

Is that correct?

WOODY: The master speed is the speed of the computer. But it usually...the utility starts much lower than the absolute frequently because it first divides certain utilities. And only when it manufactures all the utilities it can actually start synchronously ... or engage the system into operation. A typical system which is put into the middle of the utility - the division and counting - is Arithmetic Logic Unit which is the heart of the Central Processor. And what it does, it has the ability to ~~prea~~ provide all the logic or arithmetic ~~epop~~ operations. So it's a system which then organizes further, it's simply a binary utility. And then, eventually, you encounter or you build against this machine performance a man-assembled or ~~a~~ ^{suggested} man-assembled code, like, let's say, alpha-numperical codes which then the system interacts with through schemes like programming, eventually produces a secondary product. And that product then is usually used as a human or other utility. The computer is very much self-constructed binary system, and that's why it's multi-purpose so to speak. Because any input from the human side turns this general utility into a particular purpose, a ^{special} ~~specific~~ purpose.

ROBERT: The other thing that comes to mind now is that ^{the} fact that it uses...that it's primal guts is mathematical would seem to me to be already ~~there's-a~~ to be an externalization of the human mind. They have made the components behave in a way that we have no mathe~~x~~mat~~ics~~ to behave.

WOODY: It is actually, mathematics is ^{just} based on logic. And since it's boolean algebra or boolean logic, it's generically that kind of mathematics. So it is not the algorithmical ease of already complex code. If you take true mathematics they are already above the level of an element. If you take a formula or I guess it's a system already. Binary, you know, the basis of ~~a~~ ^{the} computer is much more primitive. The logic operations are much more simple. You have to use those logic operations to build in fact high mathematical functions. Like

adding is relatively easy. Once you start multiplying and exponentiations these have to be ^{primitively} ~~permutatively~~ simulated by let's say adding, and so all the functions have to be built from a primitive basis. And so far today computers still have access to this quite primitive what's called instruction set which is ^{with-} in the computer which then helps to simulate higher functions. Only higher languages which can demand entry into the computer brings, already assembled, binary experience which expresses higher functions. That's why Fortran, which means formula ~~translation~~, contains all the utilities for mathematicians for example. But it's already a man-assembled kind of program which is external to the computer.

ROBERT: It's a routing ~~pattern~~.

WOODY: Again, the routing patterns, there are a few terms there that are ~~kind-of~~ interesting but are kind of inconclusive - like data structures, which provide certain organization of data which then produces more systematic interaction... See conceptually ^{there} ~~it's~~ not a limitation. If you start thinking about computer as a sort of system then you can build it higher and higher and you can play it as we have played with the notions of systems now for many many years.

JON: May I change the subject? In the last conversation we had with Robert, we got onto a discussion of the subject of formalism. And what you had said ^{during that} ~~there in the~~ discussion, which is something which has been on my mind in a number of ways since then, is that you said that, "What you do is that you look and you watch and you think" Tell me if I'm misinterpreting you, "that you look and you watch and you think and you try to understand and then you pose a question to your looking and watching and thinking and you structure something which is this relation of the elements of how you see the work. Is this correct?"

ROBERT: Yes, basically.

JON: All right. The second part of this is that you were ^e ~~than~~, and now and in other conversations as Woody does, and ^{to a degree} ~~I~~ do, and other people - is viewing the system in this case as a computer.

As something which needs to be justified as an object of investigation, in making specific analogues to the functioning of the human system, the mind in this particular case. And in fact you drew a line ~~en-the~~ of direct correspondence between the machina of the computer and the machina of the brain - the construction of the computer and the machina of the brain. Is this correct?

ROBERT: I don't stand steadfastly to this correlation ~~that~~ but it's a correlation that I hold at this time, yes.

JON: Why do you feel it necessary to have this correlation?

ROBERT: Because ~~the~~ I see the computer basically as an empirical model of organization of processes - of logical processes. And I'm curious how they relate to our mind. Like what meaning they hold, number one. ^{What meaning they hold.}

JON: All right. Fine. So this is good. ^{what} So you were saying is ~~this~~ then that the meaning I can derive from examining the computer is in two directions: and tell me which one it is or both, I think it's both - is that A it is because it is analogous to the functioning of the human mind and ~~that~~ B is that it is ~~identical~~ not analogous but identical of the substance of certain abstractive organizational processes.

ROBERT: Right. It shares certain properties.

JON: All right, ~~A~~ we're doing branching operations here. Let me just write this down. All right. Point A... Question A, is that given the process of formalism, which is one of viewing and watching and extrapolating which is inherently empirical, ^{when} you have a machine which prescribes an abstractive process which cannot be viewed or experienced or deduced, but only prescribed. And described from that prescription. Where does that exist, A within formalism and what specific relationship does it have A to any kind of art-making - since this is ultimately our concern whatever we think - and B what direct relevance does it have ^{to} either yourself except as an intellectual fascination or to any representative?

ROBERT: In answer to question B one, That's why I keep bringing

up exactly how the computer is best interfaced with our perceptual capacities. That's why I keep bringing that up because I want to really plug into it.

JON: I'm asking a different question. You are using it as a model of abstractive process...

ROBERT: Right, but as you said there's no way ^{to basically} ~~we-can-designate~~, we can only prescribe, we have no way to basically experience it. Yes. That's a problem for me.

JON: That is to say ^{that} these things exist although they are not perceived - to go back to the quote - except ^{through} ~~in~~ the medium of computer. Right? And that...how to continue with this...

This is ^{getting} complex because it relates to about five or six different things we've ~~been~~ ^{ed} touching on. So that there are these abstractive processes that are not generic to the higher levels of experiencing available to us. I do not deal with them as I walk through life. Is this correct? *This is a question.*

ROBERT: I don't know enough to say that. I would say sometimes yes and sometimes no. I don't think that I know enough to say absolutely no.

JON: Have you experienced it?

ROBERT: Well all I can say is that when I look back ^{at} ~~on~~ a program which is visually displayed, I do not key into the rationale with which was its intent to formulation.

JON: You mean simply ^{the task} ~~to test~~?

ROBERT: Right. I perceive sometimes moving patters which sometimes looks like images.

JON: So you're saying that you don't know what's ⁱ going on. Sure.

WOODY: If I could maybe help you a little. ^{bit} You see, the computer does not provide those functions like image a priori.

The computer ~~It~~ has no capacity. The image itself is a reconstruction of a code. And the code is the only property of the computer. The decoding process - like to decbde certain information into image - is in fact external to the computer. It has to be specifically built. And that code, let's say of an image...

which we ~~see~~^{say} the territory of image in the sense of the
 frame - that may be totally external to the computer. The
 computer is not even aware of that being in existence. The
 same applies to any sound or linguistic perception. We're
 talking now about perception. We have to go to the great
 extent to convert this code ^{in- a} to the product. Again it's
 external to the computer. It has no relationship to its func-
 tion. The only linkage there is, usually a major time lin-
 kage ~~which is~~^{called} the interrupt which somehow vaguely symbolizes
 that there is an external relationship. ^{But} It's ^{very} extremely crude.
 It doesn't mean that the computer ~~didn't~~^{wouldn't} ever lead it into a
 different direction. But so far I haven't found any justifica-
 tion to imagining, sound-making, or any other except as it's
 used. Mostly it's ^{used} innumerical processing which is ^{used} in banking
 and then the artificial duty which is the defense of any coun-
 try, which then engages computer into these far-fetched schemes
 like watching the navigating missile or detecting the heat in
 the jungle or smells. But these are very distant concepts from
 the computer called a processor. You see the thing about the
 computer and perception, because you, your perception or your
 mind is based on a single task: to make you to survive prob-
 ably - it's the duty of your system to protect you - and to multiply,
 or propagate. And these two we may say are supreme codes to our -
 these are duties to our system. Even if there are similarities
 in processing, they are different tasks I think, specialized
 tasks. And that is my dilemma. I understand that there is
 no other relationship except if the ^{same} scheme is applied to us
 as units, then we had better think about them ~~as~~ being univer-
 sal - or more universal than just computer-based, and in fact
 as you suggested there is some similarity ^{to} with the neural-physio-
 logical communication schemes. That probably we learned from
 the computers and will learn more and more from the computers.
 But eventually if computers are based on distribution of light
 then our nervous system will become vastly slow towards...as
 a comparison. And the decoding density of electronic systems

will increase and we can eventually look back on our system as being deficient. We still have the mystique about our system being superior in the sense of processing. Of course it may always be. But we seem to long for the mechanistic disclosure and I think we have the rights to it and you will _____ live to experience that. Because there's nothing particularly mystical about the mechanism in which we live called the body and the senses. They are finite secrets. They can be disclosed. In fact they can be surpassed by existing knowledge and technology. But then the bare fact will still remain. What is the state of ~~the~~ living or bio-system, that's the internal. And the external, what is the DNA. Because these *2 elements* seem to be very much parallel. One contains the future, the DNA, the other does not, because it extinguishes itself, which we call life. And I think these two relationships, in fact Jon brought very much...the notion of DNA being in fact a separate entity from life is fascinating, I got from your hint. Because I tried to link these two. But since I don't have the natural feedback, you see I don't plan like children which is a wierd^{subconscious} participation in the DNA chain. I^{then} must find myself totally isolated and in fact extinguishing my own speed with no way of feeding back into the chain. It's like when we say the line scanner the line is triggered at the beginning. But how it's performed, it's totally arbitrary. It's the performance of the system. So we are performing the system task, living, yet besides us there is design and I think this... I don't know how to analyze that yet.

JON: What kind of design?

WOODY: If there is an evolution which there seems to be an evolution which is coded or is traceable to the DNA, then ~~the~~ also there is an evolution to the future.

JON: But the DNA is a conservative function - a preservative function.

WOODY: It may not. You see it may be a dynamic system which in fact moves within its own coding structure and in fact

cannot be stopped. It may be too long chain, even if it's only four meters, ^{by molecule,} it's an enormous amount of coincidences which cannot be coincidences.

JON: This is a particularly mechanistic view here ^{that I find} and very hard to realize. The reason for this is that you're attributing ^{it} to it, the ultimate absolute bottom level of biological coding which is DNA. And I find this very unpersuasive way to see it because it's too random. And in fact of course the DNA is involved in ??, but it's ~~seemingly~~ seemingly through mechanisms that are very hard-to very far removed as a causitive factor, from this very _____ biological encoding. It may exist first of all through randomness, through random mutation.

WOODY: No it's protected against random mutation.

JON: But there are random mutations some of which survive and some of which die out immediately. But seemingly the mechanism for the evolution of the DNA is one that involves usually _____, social for others and so forth. But to attribute it to this level seems to me to be....

WOODY: I admit, of course, all these ^{thoughts} ~~things~~ about these relationships are very unscientific and they are not even in a way ^{probably} rational, and they are not even possible to answer. Yet, I still think ...

JON: Hold it. This is the most interesting part of all because here since we are for the first time meeting since the industrial age, we for the first time have access to the elements. It's an absolutely new development that we have access to these things. The steam engine is still ^a fairly a non-elemental machine in its operation you've only got to - on electronics ^{and} in it's now present highest state of refinement which is the computer, and equally devices that are the products of electronics that allow us to observe certain things like the electron microscope and the spectrospope and so on, ^{that} ~~then~~ we have access to the absolute bottom - not the absolute but ~~the~~ one of the bottom levels...

ROBERT: higher objectivity

JON: Well, let's stay away from that. But a low level of operation, a low level of construction. The elements of coding in DNA we know, the determinants of the DNA molecule. We now know, not the structure of the nervous system ~~itself~~ *and its functioning,* but we have constructed computers. And we can develop extremely high levels of efficiency through very simple codes, which are just on-off, machine language. So I mean the viewpoint itself is very interesting because ~~it's~~ ^{this was} inconceivable to me at an earlier time. It's an astounding thing but it never existed in any way with this urge to prescription and description and observation to define the nature of matter, but it did not seek then to unify the various fields _____

WOODY: I think there's no doubt ^{that} we head right to the knowing of elements. We have the right to it, and we have the means now, we have the technology that, ...in fact if you look at electronic systems they are based on a molecular layer of manufacturing, on molecular level is essential. That means eventually the atomic level will come somehow, even if the difference with the molecule is enormous, it still gives the industrious the level to work. And I'm kind of glad, if you read those articles they say within the existing paradigms of matter they can still find four or five ^{forms of} let's say densities. For industries of course it means the whole commodities, ~~it~~ means millions and billions of dollars is what it means to them. And that is the territory they're talking about. If they were to send in _____ they'd probably gain a marginal amount of territory because it's the smallest Territory they can work in. For them, since it's justifiable through this industrial interpretation it's a legitimate claim in biology, or in bio-engineering it's still a very much disputed area because it's only lately - a couple of centuries or less - the whole idea about the small elements like viruses or bacteria, even this cold. And now we're trying to trace ^{it} ~~th~~ down the elements and eventually we know that eventually we are of the same mat-

ter as the rest of the universe, just differently composed. So we come to the whole conclusion that we can eventually disclose those elements and we have a right to account for that. But suddenly we come to the conclusion that the organization of those elements, the code in which they are organized has something to do with the human, or higher intelligence. This ~~code~~ *code* is a product of intelligence. Because the composition may still be some property of the matter, but the code is not kind of the direct manifestation of the matter. Codes seem to be some different dimension.

ROBERT: But isn't ^{it} the code ~~the~~ that the basic paths which the matter can interact.

WOODY: So, is it? Like biological matter seems to be having a bigamy beginning at a different time. Seem not to be part of the elements of the universe, it seems to be ^{evolving} in much different context and much faster in a way expansion.

ROBERT: Again, I would say that's because certain privileged conditions are needed for certain complex organizations of matter to exist.

WOODY: Yes, but also the active...There's a theory that every high element is synthesized through baking of the stars.

So there is an evolution of the matter which is not biological. Or inorganic first and then we know by compounds of organic ⁱⁿ⁻ we can also produce organic. ^{matter.} But then the element of life seems to be, is usually referred to as false force. And I happen to agree very much.

ROBERT: As force?

WOODY: As a force. It's an activity. Much different grade of evolution. Because of course baking of the materials within stars is the product of heat. And that is a force, of course, because when matter stands alone it may not permutate as much. Maybe it doesn't at all, doesn't ever live, so to ^e speak.

JON: What defines matter as the ability to replicate? ~~What~~ ^{It's} not ~~unconceivable~~ to us that our technology, once it descends, or ascends to a level which - computers are nowhere near the li-

imitations of their science. They will soon be able to deal with the limitations only defined by quantum problems involved in making ~~small~~ things with a relatively small numbers of molecules or atoms because then you get to levels of uncertainty and _____ computer. So it seems that what we're distinguishing here is something unique, conceivably ~~unique~~ ^{only} because the technology hasn't developed there.

WOODY: It did.

JON: We can pin down the ability to replicate in the human body clearly to the molecular level. And to those systems which ~~that~~ allow the molecular level to be replicated. But I'm much interested ~~in~~-computers, like everyone else in the world, ~~in~~ ^{with} computers not ~~as~~ ^{where} they are now necessarily, but where they will be. First of all ~~what~~ ^{the point} they will be able to, given certain types of powers of discrimination possibly, autonomy. Which may not be so far away or so far-fetched. It is conceivable...

ROBERT: Excuse me, does autonomy mean "will of it's own"?

JON: I was thinking of powers of discrimination. And so there is conceivably a state where forms ~~are~~ ^{of} technological products could conceivably have the power to replicate.

WOODY: We have created the Viking orbiter. We have deposited into that capsule a particular program which is, of course it's a computer with a memory. Now we have built a body to this organism which has a physical ~~body~~ skeleton and has certain senses like we have senses. And now we have programmed this and we have released this ^{particular} system from our orbit and all we have is a set of communication, back and forth. This ~~is~~ ^{was} enough to create the systems that live *in some primitive way.*

If you put a skin on it, with no fur on it, there would be absolutely no doubt in anybody's mind, that this is a form of life.

Robert: I'm not so sure about this. Because I think of the remote sensing devices as they're called, as just that.

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They're an extension of our senses, their programs are designed to bridge two codes: one, the way that we perceive and physically built to endure the physical contacts where they will live, or reside. But I don't think that they have any will of their own....

(END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

(Editor's note: on pages 16 & 16a, the tape speed was again irregular, even using the machine the tape was recorded on, I've lost a few phrases & words)

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

JON: Let me ask you about your film.

ROBERT: Yeah, okay. This is off the subject.

JON: ^{No it isn't.} So I saw both of them ^{for} ~~at~~ the ^{second} ~~same~~ time, ^{time} ~~was it~~ last week?

And I shared your opinion. For the first ~~one~~ I liked ~~the~~ cheese one better than the other one.

ROBERT: It was a bad night for the other one.

JON: I'm not so sure that was it, necessarily. But so explain to me within this kind of heavy isolation of certain things and repetition of - seemingly analytical repetition - in some places, - of certain kind of movement shapes. Your actions, like drawing back the camera, ^{and} jump-cutting, things like this - where the formalism lies, as you described it before.

ROBERT: Okay. The first step ^{was} ~~is~~ basically purse observation with no camera. To basically see what goes on since it is a repetitive process which has some variance from day to day but there's certain signposts ^{which} ~~that~~ are always the same. Okay. Through this I had to work out... I wanted to ^{place} ~~put~~ myself in a situation where I would not in any way hamper the...

JON: primary actions...

ROBERT: Right, like I don't want to get in their way. So certain locational strategics had to be worked out. Then it was an analyzation ^(sic) of the process. There are certain repetitions but that's because there are repetitions ^{with} inherent in the process. There's lots of containers of milk which constitute a larger vat of milk. And if I go, like I know one of the things I always used to think about years ago was that, like if I want to communicate the notion of plurality, to go through the same thing twice was sufficient to get that idea across. Sometimes three, but to go five or six becomes uneconomic unless you want to zero in on that phenomena.

JON: I think three is the basic number to primary. You can hear this in Beethoven. It's incredible.

That ~~he~~ will repeat things three times and no more. Because he knows that automatically becomes classical redundancy, which is

interesting.

STEINA: I'd like to talk to you about that later.

ROBERT: So then there was an idea that I always like to get things down to as basic a bit as possible. Not any larger an exposition than is needed. This is maybe more recent concerns of the past few years. Because I've ~~come~~ come to admire efficiency and economics within a system. And I find that any encoded work which is dense in that way, experientially gives a richer experience in that you may need to ^{re-}see it more times and it will keep its engagement with you longer. Like you need to resee it to keep getting more ^{and more} fruits out of it. And that to me gives ^{it} it more value.

JON: All right, but I'm asking a more specific question. What I ~~see~~ saw in your film ^{which} ~~that~~ I liked very much, is that you were manipulating this invariable action, and I appreciate the fact that you took a mechanistic process that ^{is} in its larger sense ^{elements,} ~~is~~ invariable, from day to day. And that you took this and you manipulated it for a certain kind of musical quality, primarily. Musical in really the largest sense of that. It was kind of a fairly an amorphous and ~~purely~~ free structure over time that seemed to me to have no relevance to what you were talking about before in formalism. Where one observes and then extrapolates from that observation certain principles which are extendable. I don't see that there and I'm curious.

ROBERT: I see it there. I try to pick sort of primes. As far as mechanical process, it's a process of transformation, making cheese. But the transformations again are, all that they're doing is necessary, is dictated by the matter itself. I mean, they're not thinking up random things to do to milk. It's things that milk itself, the behavior of milk dictates these processes. So in that it sort of withholds again my whole view of nature and where knowledge comes from. Because there's lots of possible thoughts that you can have but small percentages of them really bear out in truth - bear out in nature. You can have lots of fantasies about how matter can interact, ^e but how matter

interacts is much more specific. And as far as, I think you ^{are} ~~were~~ saying you feel a certain randomness...

JON: I'm not saying that it's disorganized. I'm asking you to correlate it to a statement you made the last time ^{these} things occurred.

ROBERT: I can only deal specifically, all right? Say the part when he puts down that wire tool, to cut. Now I'm dealing with notions of syntagmic order. Syntagm means basically what you'd call a flow chart. You know, what comes before what and why. Okay. So there's like a closeup on one of the vats. From that reference frame you don't know which of the two it is. Then there's a closeup on that, and then I ^{'ve} cut to in back of the second vat and ^{you} see him continuing his stirring but not seeing the milk which is a referent ^{ce} to that yes, it's the one back there. But you sort of feel... your expectations taken away from you because you want to look at that. Everybody goes "Aw". Everybody loves to be inside that ^{of} sensuous material, and I've taken them away. I'm holding them back. And then he puts it down, he goes to another machine for a few seconds and then he comes to the front one and that cuts that. In my first ~~one~~ cut when I change my point of view it was already foreshadowing where he was going to come next. Now one of the great pleasures that I get out of filming is like doing educated guesses on what will come next. And I have ^{maybe} two or three plans, well if he does this, then I'll get involved. It's like I have to think on the moment where the action will go next and I basically use the zoom ^{as} a contextual frame. It's like saying well we're only paying attention ^{now} to this part of the phenomena, or now in this larger whole.

JON: I guess I don't ^{feel} get that any of these things are actually operative ~~in~~ upon viewing the film.

WOODY: It reminds me of ~~the~~ Niblock, of Niblock's framing, it was a kind of a strange description what you said, yet it looks differ^ent from this. Totally different.

JON: Well, the film is very still. Rep~~etti~~ Repetitive but

WOODY: But there's some prediction of action or...

JON: Not prediction but...

ROBERT: I will say this. There's no way, I don't like to make films, or like ^{any} programmed music, anything which is predictable, which has a circular structure. I prefer the open-ended spiral. I'm thinking of how Antonioni structures events, that he will ~~big~~ build up a certain expectation ^{which} ~~that~~ you think, that's going to be it, but then that's not what happens but what does happen retroactively fits and makes you reevaluate in memory all ~~that's~~ the passed ^{scenes}.

JON: Sure. I like that ~~when-it's-predictable~~ much more in fact when it's predictable. When you can predict the end but yet it restructures completely the experience as it reaches the end. And what I think this conversation.....

WOODY: We came here so excited and now we're ^{so} sad. We came here so high and we're sinking lower and slower.

ROBERT: I'm thinking ^{how} ~~that~~ life is not supreme after all?

STEINA: I was thinking that none of this description will be even readable back on the cassette because it was absolutely gesticular, it was nothing in the words ^{of} you were saying. And I find it interesting because you have a very good way with words. And you will usually ~~go and~~ sit down and not move a muscle and go on this incredible word trip. And then suddenly you were describing your film and you totally changed your style, you ^{just} said this and ~~that~~ then that, and that will happen before this and then I will draw back so that this will be come before that and that's being recorded on the cassette. But all your real communication was in moving forward and saying I pulled the people back and then it's this action on the side, and you know, things like that. That was amazing to me.

ROBERT: Yes. Because I'm interested in the visual ^{language-} ~~image~~. A lot of images cannot be that well transferred into a verbal code.

WOODY: What; you described so far is very much like literature.

Especially referring to Antonioni about the spirals and all those things. Very much complex literatures.

JON: The Not only that they're all metaphors from literature. The spiral is from Yeats. The gyre for instance. I see it as ^{symbolism} in fact of culture.

WOODY: Yes but how much can you justify, construct, ^{even} believeably construct a system that is known.

JON: codified.

WOODY: If you look at LeGrice' effort you see how futile this idea is, that something that can't be performed should perform. Or a dutiful fulfilment of system vacuum. If there isn't such a construct let's fill it, let's make it complete, or let's make it obsolete. So I don't think you could ^{any} ever have made a film with such a notion of structure which is so possible. I think you have just made a movie which was quite an experience for you and eventually you edited it. I saw also the same movie. I was only, I mean the most interested ~~we~~ after the surface of information and problems of hygiene and negligence of the workers and all those social elements, I found most interesting and most personal ^{is} ~~in~~ the way you edited it, because then you imposed your thought on your structuralism or your formalism.

ROBERT: But that was a performance ^{which} ~~that~~ I actually did on the spot. Like editing is ^{basically} for me done eighty percent on the spot and maybe twenty percent after the fact. It's a mental activity which I exercise as I'm taking in the data.

WOODY: That's how it escaped ^{that} literature. Because you probably are much more afraid than we ^{that} by sitting down and cutting on the film you would eventually create literature. This happened to me in film continuously. That's why I could never understand...

ROBERT: It's not so much that for me as a fear for violating the primal event.

WOODY: Aha. That's good. But you see in documentary branch of image-making this perpetual innocence ^c exists forever from the beginning to ^t the end. You can structure like the day. That was my kind of bag. I started from the morning and ended

in the evening, total^{ly} excuse. Didn't have to face any artificialities. But of course it was a lazy man's approach. Total formalistic cop-out. But at the same time I was quite happy because I was looking for something else. I was looking for a certain reality, you know, for a certain photographic truth. Also for a certain poetic truth that happened in the morning and noon and ^{the} evening as well. So there is no problem. But the continuity was such a literary or such a natural model. ~~That~~ ^{But} of course maybe you don't ~~fear~~ ^{fear literature.} ~~too much.~~ But I think you do ^{was} ~~fear~~ ^{also}, everybody, not fear but... My mind ~~is~~ ^{was} just totally literary. This is the only way I can avoid ~~that~~ contact with literature by doing totally unrelated things like imaging.

ROBERT: That's interesting because I think I said once here; I don't enjoy the act of reading because of the process of subvocalization, and ^{When} you go from the symbolic letters I read, here, "real" and I know how to put together these basic phonemes I guess they're called, and then, I prefer either visual, sonic or tactile stimulus because...

JON: Is that because words are secondary to reality?

ROBERT: Yeah, one.

JON: That's my problem with poetry. Which is that the sonic event is essentially irrelevant to the meaning or the experience of the poem.... and I find that..

WOODY: Oh, the sonic event is such a disgusting event.

JON: Well, it's meaningless, the sonic event.

WOODY: It's bombastic.

JON: All right, if it's used that way, yes. Frequently it's not.

ROBERT: So that's why I've never read much literature. The only books I read I guess would be classed as, they're descriptive books on organization of knowledge. How this works. How something works. I read books to get ~~me~~ data, I don't read books for pleasure. Because there's a certain experience... I don't feel it's a mutual enough observer. That's sort of interesting because it gets back to what Woody was ^{of} trusting a machine over

another human being. Because if you read a book you're trusting another person. But if you watch a film, like whatever the visual input is as materialized through the intercession of a human being. But there's a certain... I know what the ^{para}~~parameters~~ meters of the cinematic codification process is. So I know the perimeter there and I can come to my own evaluation of that phenomena which may be different than someone else.

JON: What I find is that I ^{really} distrust imagination, and I find it implicit in all of this. And that it's the reason that I have problems with certain types of - contemporary only, of course. It's different if it's perceived after a period of time. So I like Beethoven. It's different. I mean the ^{than liking...} imagination that would expect us to be revelled not by the forms of his imagination, but by the significations of this imagination. ^{And} ~~But~~ I distrust it completely. I find it absolutely artificial right now. Completely meaningless to me in every way. And it's interesting to me in two ways. What you're saying and what's implicit again in all of this, is that we're giving ourselves up to ~~some~~ things that have some kind of objectification. Or objective corroboration.

STEINA: Objectivification?

JON: Objectification or objective corroboration such as the performance of the system or the structuring of the human mind, or formalism as you defined it last ^{time} here which is that which ~~is~~ looks at and then extrapolates from the looking ^{from} the experience of the viewing. ^{of seeing...} And so I think I would like to ask a question of all of us here right now, that I think I'd also like to try to answer, why it is that we must always find these analogues, which I'm now today hung up on. Why it is that we must justify the computer. And this again relates to your initial reading of that paragraph from the book, as ^{analogous} analogous to mind, or the performance of the system as ~~something that is~~ ^{analogous} something that exists independently outside of the system. All right, let's leave it at that. Let me write this down. And then I have a question for Woody which we've dis-

cussed before ~~which~~ that has to do with the camera obscura principle. So what I want to ask all of us, is why ~~it's~~ that we ~~would discuss-the-machination~~ distrust the imagination. Why it is now that we seek to extrapolate principles from things that are completely independent of this. Why it is that we are not making narrative stories that are exempla of cultural or iconic or whatever kind of ideas that we might fabricate. So who wants to answer first?

WOODY: I have a certain opinion about ^why I stopped for example, writing, because I used to write...

JON: This is new information.

WOODY:...like fiction. First poetry then fidtion. And of course in every^ymedium there is this automatic process in which you step away from the preconceived ideas. Because it seemed to us that all the ideas ~~from~~ ⁱⁿ the past, let's say ~~from~~ nineteenth century novel, were preconceived. It looks like, if you look at Balzac or especially before, look at Victor Hugo, seem to be too easy to trace. But if you look at Dostoevski, you know that he had ^s violated this preconceived idea even if it's sometimes pointed out as the classic of the novel, I think his writing is beyond that, I think it reaches the autonomous models within the mind.

JON: Did you read it in Russian?

WOODY: In Czech which is quite close. It's an experience, ^{which} it's probably hard to... Again I would like to point out that looking at literature from my culture, ^{Anglo-Saxon} ~~hundred-percent~~ literature means absolutely ~~takes~~ ^{takes a secondary} place in the appreciation of a novel. For me like Russian and French and probably German, in that conglomerate, that is the attention of my cultural group, where I come from. Especially the Russian novel. Not because, it may not be because of the language, but it may be because of the language. It's extremely powerful, ~~in~~ ^{writers} that group of Russian novels, especially short story of that time, like Chekhov and others. They are extremely powerful. So anyway. ^{through} ~~From~~ that background, suddenly the thoughts are the

most obvious thoughts becomes the most banal. Eventually, even if modern poetry has concentrated a lot on automatic or autonomous processes in which it separated itself truly from the subject of narrativities and so on, and the modern novel in many cases would do that as well. It's still the detachment, or the belief in the story, not only of the audience but of the authors, became more and more critical. Eventually it ~~became more and more~~ ^{is} ~~more and more~~ ^{very} difficult to find an author that believes in his own ideas unless they are justifiable through like Hollywood...

STEINA: ...own ideas?

WOODY: ...about what the story, what the form is. About...

STEINA: Wait a minute, is it story or the form?

The content.

JON: The message.

WOODY: Yeah, okay. Let me put it this way. The message is just something ^{that} I think does not exist.

JON: Right. but a lot of people do.

WOODY: I think it's a conspiracy of course. I just don't think there's a twentieth century man that believes that there is a message. I think the message today is a biological function. Like it must come on you and you must accept it. But it has nothing to do with man-to-man thought transmission.

ROBERT: You don't think that?

WOODY: Absolutely not. It's a phenomenon. Today to believe in a thought is to believe in a phenomena of it. It's not the thought that is interesting.

JON: Is to believe in abstraction.

WOODY: Maybe the unique manifestation. I don't want to go into calling this neo-Christian and all kinds of things. I'm talking about also like video, ^{which} belongs to the same category of a biological phenomena. In that way I think the only possibility now is that an author believes in ^{his} the form, in the form in which he presents this banal subject. Because he can be fooled. An author can be fooled only ^{into} to a certain degree. Like to get enthusiastic. Next day, if the author is truly thoughtful, must

come to the conclusion^{that} indeed the euphoria of yesterday is not the euphoria of today. In fact this is the principle of surviving of any intellectual thought..it's impossible to live in... Except again there may be exceptions. People that are never touched by this rational process but I don't know people like that. So eventually we come to the appreciation of the form. And some forms^{can} survive the appreciation, or I would say dignity within its presentation, like within the people and dignity within the author himself. Like movies, some of the movies still could in a ~~case~~ way carry on certain literat^{ry} or, maybe I shouldn't go into these details, of course. By now, I just believe that there isn't a possibility of encoding a thought, because the thought will always abstract the more interesting level of experience which is the - see I don't even have the word for what it is. I know what it is not.

STEINA: What do you mean by thought?

JON: This is really important. You were on the verge. What is this word, or words?

WOODY: You see, I don't want to say that there is ...

JON: Is it in the action? In the realization?

WOODY: No. It is particular. It is an activity which is supported by an individual. But it is not specified. It's in a way not controlled. It's like a utility of a person. That's a bad word.

JON: But there are also things^t that are significant in it. We feel things to be significant in it.

WOODY: Of course there are all hierarchies of beauty in it, could be negotiated, it's a resource in a way. So that's what I would say. We are a resource to ourselves. We are not living to serve to anything. We are here to utilize our resource.

STEINA: Aren't you talking about conscious thought versus unconscious thought, or^{just} being or something like that? Because it's funny to eliminate thought.

JON: What I think Woody's saying is that thought is ultimately trivial. Once it is it becomes trivial

WOODY: Yes, you have to reject the thought continuously.

~~John~~

WOODY: You have to continuously abstract the process of creation.

STEINA: I would say the conscious thought. Because whatever we do in literature, in art in anything, is somehow manifest of who we are or who we have been - which is also thought. I mean, what are we expressing then?

ROBERT: I don't know if I agree with this. So much is said ^{that} I don't even know if I ~~understand~~ agree with it or even understand it but the implication that... I think we are here to basically serve nature which we're a part of. We may have a dominant role, that's like questionable. I guess ^{that} I would say that human beings now have a certain supremacy or are coming to ~~have~~ ^{certain} a supremacy of over matter. I think that in nature - which relates to what you were saying earlier, more and more we are getting to the control of our condition. Being able to maybe even make life from raw materials. But I think we are here to ^e ~~serve~~ nature, or to improve upon it at the very best. As far as thoughts standing in the way of the experience, I think that can be true ^{at} certain times but that once the experience has occurred, all ^{that} we're left with are thoughts.

JON: No, but you see, it's a kind of mapping function. And when somebody is ^{so} self-assured? - there's a word, but in any case - when somebody has gotten enough to write a book and a story, what is important and significant in this is not whether - the process by which the guy in the story ends up getting the girl ^{at} ~~in~~ the end, but that in fact there are aspects of that exercise - both in the fact that it is done, and the way it's done, the way it's presented and very very subtle things and gross things _____, that map ^a the consciousness and assist (??) in the thoughts that are implicit and not explicit. It is those things that are... ^{if} the guy has a good mind and is imaginative, so much that the forms that he uses to express these things are imaginative - not that it is about dragons

or ghosts, so forth. Then it is important. And what it is that is critical to us, to me, is in fact the kind of formalism in which those broad maps of thought that encompass these ultimately very trivial ideas that are^{at} the substance, the matter, the message of the story, are in fact a real message. And these are equally a map of our culture, as well as a map of our brain, and a map of our observations and a ~~map~~^{map} of our world and a map of a few other things. And so this is not trivial. This is to me fascinating, A, and absolutely central to everything I want to find out. They are the higher issues. These are the higher level languages.

ROBERT: My view on this is^{that} what you're referring to here is what used to be called classical rhetoric - the notion of elocution. And I think that's an important function... but I think...

JON: Define this...

ROBERT: ...of elocution, is basically how you go about it. Your delivery style - not maybe style, ~~but~~ manner - form of delivery. And I think that you're succumbing to a certain micro-cultural bias of the last decade or perhaps twenty years which places a higher order function on the notion of elocution. I think of it as equal to all the others.

JON: Well, all right, except I don't know what else to listen to.

ROBERT: I have just one more thing, then, and then it's open. That I think, however, certain subjects, content - whatever you want to call it - has more importance than others...

JON: ~~We~~^I might disagree with that...

ROBERT: ...all right. And I think that our love for form and elocution should not blind us from taking the more important primal materials. ^{though} Maybe not all the important materials are primal - you may have some very complex materials which are not so primal but are of a high importance. You can even come back here to the subconscious. There are certain types of subconscious events or sub^sconscious images which somehow are more important to human beings than others. There must be a reason for this. That they have to be dealt with.

JON: It seems to me that...I think you're limiting this unnecessarily. And what it strikes me is that there are two alternatives - one of which is imaginative, that is to say one can make imaginative works like Thomas Mann...do you know him?

ROBERT: How about Castenada?

JON: I've never read him. I think there may be other problems in that. And the other is recognitional in which the fundamental object of the work - and ~~then~~ I mean you can^{then} argue for specific work^{on} both sides of this, of course - but the other one seeks to recognize things. What can be recognized^{can be} of course ~~can be~~ the content, you know, what is depicted. More interesting to me are in fact, A, these things that I just mentioned that you just accused me of being involved with, elocution, and B is that the way that the works sets up conditions for us to then penetrate ~~it, and that this~~ ^{it, and that this} is equally important. And that's another concept that's much in the art side of things and I don't know if I really want to deal with this. What it strikes me is that I'm listening to say Beethoven now, I don't really give much of a shit if Napoleon won the war and if he was a great guy. I do not care about that message, to take it on a very low level. What I do care about in fact, are the modes of thought and of course the execution in certain places...

ROBERT: All right. But here again I have an interjection. That music to me is not a referential sign. There's a piece of music ^b based on Napoleon winning the war, this is like a certain kind of metaphorical nomenclature. To me it's not the same form of signification as a book about Napoleon winning the war.

JON: All right. Let me put it in a different way. Let's also deal with something visual to eliminate that. So when I grew up I grew up in Manhattan, and I would go every day to either the Museum of Modern Art or the Metropolitan. Virtually every day for like five years. And I would look at Cézanne, and it was amazing to me. Because Cézanne presented something to me which absolutely fascinated me. And it occupied huge amounts

of my attention ^{for five of} ~~during~~ the most formative years of my life - intellectually. And so I looked at it and looked at it and I looked at it and finally I worked out how Cézanne was telling me something. I learned to read his paintings. I equally learned to read painting during that time. So that I can look at somebody who communicates through the modes of Cézanne and now I can say what he's trying to say. At least I can realize it whether I can say it. Once I learned to do that, I was left with nothing but Cézanne's subjectivity. I was left... Once I had learned the process of reading this language, I was left ^{only} with reading what this guy had to say to me. I was left reading only this guy Cézanne. And at that point I became completely uninterested in that kind of painting. Because what was critical and challenging and fascinating to me, were in fact the modes of thought. First, that he would express it to me, ^{what,} the way that he communicated his concerns, and secondly the modes of thought ^{and} the operations that I had to develop to have to communicate with that work to receive the meaning of it. And once I ^{managed to} ~~worked~~ that out, I lost complete interest.

STEINA: Were you painting at that time?

JON: No.

STEINA: Why did you lose interest?

JON: Because those things that were most challenging to me were not the content of the painting or Cézanne's subjectivity, but ^{the} broad modes of thought that were implicit in his presenting it to me in this way and my trying to participate with it. So that those are to me the ^{really} only critical issues now. I'm not interested in reading or listening or seeing anything else ^s.

WOODY: That's interesting. I guess what we are...

STEINA: ...anything else?

JON: The anything else refers to anything else but these very large ideas of communication. Not the specific ones that are contained within an individual work or the individual ^{of} his most alone, individual level. Does this make sense to you?

STEINA: No. Not really, but go ahead.

WOODY: What we seem to be referring to something like external, which is experienced without. ^{art (?)} And something internal, which in Jon's case he says I don't read any more, or I don't appreciate ^{the} any more. I guess I've been describing in fact only that internal mode before, which I tried to specify what it is. And I must agree, if we deal with culture and with art as we did deal and still do, it is a phenomenon. These people that we appreciate are totally unique within the society, by a wierd coincidence they have become as prominent as influencing the whole generation of the thought. I was very interested in everybody now here on this earth being a total independent unit of thought, intelligence, behavior - it's the only resource in fact on hand. That fascinates me. We can also disregard the external culture. We can concentrate on what is the content of us. In that moment I must have admitted to myself, ^{that} there is nothing original in my own thought. That it's structured, or focussed, as you were describing. You were describing something in you being immaterial, which you approach almost daily. You sit by the table and you craft art out of it. Which reminds me very much ^o how I used to like Hemingway and ^o how bizarre I find that now. Because by now, if I look at myself as content of my own ~~a~~ entertainment which is maybe on a higher level than _____ entertainment, why would I even search in myself. I found the most obscure modes - not most, but the obscure modes - suddenly thought passing or coincidence of two tendencies produce suddenly the brilliant flash and I say "that's it". But it cannot be captured. It cannot be brought to the table and crafted into a book or into a videotape or into anything. Eventually I can produce unconsciously a speech that suddenly is coincidental with certain provoked emotions like I ~~have~~ had in the class the other day. And suddenly the other person reacts to it and there's an instant conspiracy in which we appreciate, but cannot be brought or written about because it is ~~truly~~ banal. But as it happens, and as it's distant

same way

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from your true mode of control, that's ^{when} it becomes extremely powerful, fascinating. It is the only resource I have. Because when I want to speak it out, like now I'm doing it, eventually once written down it will become very average thought. It will lose the excitement of those accidental thoughts which make myself respect ^{my} myself.

STEINA: But isn't what the artists do, they conscientiously sit down and say I will make art, I will make those divine moments and I...

JON: Well, ~~except~~ that those moments really aren't so divine. That's the problem.

STEINA: But in our own perception they are.

JON: Except that if I thought that....Let me put it a different way. If I knew what I wanted to do, I would never ~~do~~ it. And I will never do the same thing ^{twice}. And I will never do the same thing twice because it seems to me ~~that~~ to be dishonest.

WOODY: Right. It's beyond your own dignity.

JON: Exactly. To not challenge myself to ask myself to make only a product. And not to challenge myself to find new things.

STEINA: But you never do the same thing ^Ctwice.

JON: There are a ~~whole~~ lot of people that spend a whole lot of time painting

ROBERT:...the same thing.

STEINA: That's not true. To you they're the same thing. To them they are....

JON: That's exactly it. No, no. I think ^{it's} somewhat different than that. There are some variations, ^{subtleties,} on a theme that to them become distinctive, but these distinctivenesses to me are only...

ROBERT:...cataloguing...

JON: Then there are ~~feaks~~ ^{who} folks ~~that~~ enjoy the process of making, but that's not a concern here.

ROBERT: I'd like to say one thing here to refer back to what you said earlier about we're all individual entities. I wrote this thing..."While being a student in a civics class in the seventh grade, was expected to write a paper delineating the shortcomings of communist political and economic dogma. My

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essay centered on the ideal conditions where the will of one was synonymous with the will of the whole society. Imagine a network," I wrote, "whose internal design permitted the neurological conscious state of every individual to be perceived by all the others. No one would punch another in the face," I explained, "since all the others, including the aggressor, would feel the pain of the attack equally. In this context," I wrote, "truly all subjective states would be shared in an admission of fashion (?)."

WOODY: That's exactly what unconsciously I'm totally against. There was a movement in France called unanims, how do you say it in French, single-soul?

ROBERT: Un [^]ame

WOODY: Unanimism which had this utopian notion of us being in fact equal or identical...

END OF TAPE ONE

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

WOODY: I think what is negotiable in your position and in fact in my position, is the position of the dignity. How far, in fact, you insist that the dignity is dictating your formal expression. Something which you said, you would never look inside.

JON: All right, now I'll change it slightly. I have some real problems. One of which is ~~that~~ that I must be individuated from society. I must in some way not blend in with the mass. And this does not come through more obvious forms of alternative expressions, like I was never a hippie in the sixties and all of this stuff. I would never throw bombs at cathedrals or government offices. It's not like that. What, but I must in some way to myself preserve that dignity, now that I've admitted that in fact this is operative, by perhaps thinking more or better or farther. And seeing more and better and farther. This is ~~single~~ probably my single most primary drive. With the exception of a few others. And so this is absolutely critical. What I distrust ^{in this,} is me drawing on my

subjectivity as a means of doing that. As me individual^{ing}~~izing~~ ~~in~~ myself through projection of myself to products. I cannot do that. I must not do that.

STEINA: Why ~~can't~~^{might} you do it?

JON: Because then what I would be left with are two things: One is to glorify processes that I know I already have, thoughts ~~that~~ I have; and secondly it would relegate it to the world of the absolutely trivial. I want not at all to express this individually through this Jon Burris to the world because Jon Burris is only one guy ~~in the world~~ who makes may live to be seventy years old in the mid-twentieth century. What is that to anyone? Because it's not enough. It's trivial because the same kind of dissatisfaction...

ROBERT: Hon Burris has something to say which gives me something new. He's automatically individuated for me.

JON: All right. But what I found in looking at Cézanne^{is that} in fact no matter how wonderful what Cézanne had to say, it could not measure up in importance to me with how Cézanne said what Cézanne was saying. Its only...

ROBERT: That's for you. But still for you that ~~had~~^{was} a meaningful...

JON: Well, but. Who else am I going to use to pick my models?

WOODY: It's very simple. You have associated yourself with a single entity. You're unable to make any extension, like any duplication. You are not able to be schizophrenic.

JON: Sure. I am not able to be schizophrenic.

WOODY: I find this extremely obvious, that ^{if} you don't allow your personality to be dislocated or dissolved, in fact, as multi-layered with almost Jungian anima, animus and the shadow or the ego, then you of course you have no resource for your own self. You are the only self that you know. ^{then} ~~and~~ you are vulnerable of course, because once you expose that, you have no territory to retrieve. You could be beaten to death and you would continuously be accused of being Jon Burris. In my case I ^{have} solved that quite early. I've been always observing myself as a whole different entity from myself. That came to the whole conclusion of obser-

ving media, see? Media which exists like film projected on a screen exists on a screen, when in fact it exists ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ your retina in fact exists in your cortex and in fact is being observed by you. How? There always is an entity of a distance between the subject. All right. And of course the observer of myself. There's just no way I can be me. And in that stage so to speak I can accommodate many of the activities of me.

JON: All right, I disagree with your fundamental analysis, though. Because what I feel is that it is precisely that ability to have this double entity - of looking at yourself in your absolute wholeness that makes these exercises especially trivial to me. That is to say to put your subjectivity out on the screen - it is precisely that which makes it trivial. If I did not have that capability then these things would be genuinely new and important to me, but it's only because I have that capability - to look at myself with some completeness and uncoloredness - that in fact they become to me absolutely uninteresting.

ROBERT: I'm for both, simultaneously. I'm for both because I think it's the only honest way you can go about it. To get back to the example of the photographs which you were mentioning. The fact is, is that you are the person who's making the choice. It is your choice and your subjectivity there cannot be ruled out. It's a matter of an indexical truth.

JON: Of course.

ROBERT: It's an indexical fact and to hide that or to deny it goes against the very objectivity which you're trying to propose.

JON: Sure, but what I am not doing in any of this is denying my will.

STEINA: You are.

JON: No I am not. And let's make that absolutely clear. What I'm saying is that I'm making those choices and I'm using these particular instruments whether they be video, which always oddly enough I always at this point used to look inside the system. In photography which I only now use to look outside the system, as willful eyes for me to try to determine certain

things, try to reveal certain things and question certain things. I'm not questioning my will nor am I questioning that I am making certain decisions, but I am making those decisions on a basis which minimizes certain kind of overt manifestations of my subjectivity.

ROBERT: Well, you don't have to juice it up any more than is necessary. I mean ~~I think~~ I agree with that, but the subjectivity will always be in there. You cannot get rid of it.

JON: Of course.

WOODY: Let me put it differently. Again, in order to live you need resources like other people regularly, normally, in order to live spiritually some people claim the only condition for mental hygiene is the society, is friendship, is love. So what you have said, that if you look at you, Jon Burris, you find ~~that~~ yourself ^{did} - "you use the term uninteresting or boring? What did you use?"

JON: Trivial.

WOODY: Trivial. Now that confines you to total loneliness, you see. You can only be with other people because if you cannot find yourself amusing to the caricature of a comic strip, then you can never be alone.

JON: No, but I find myself very interesting.

WOODY: Very good. So now you have admitted that you have at least one schism which is call^{ed} self-appreciation on the level of an interest. But what about the other levels? Like, are you a clown?

JON: Am I a clown?

WOODY: Yes. To yourself.

JON: No.

WOODY: You mean you never clown? You never say "Oh fuck, how could I ever pull this trick?"

JON: You mean, how could I allow myself to do this incredibly stupid thing?

WOODY: No. The incredibly entertaining kind of amusing trick.

STEINA: Don't you sometimes look at them and say "How I can fool them all? I'm just a clown."

JON: But I've reached a level of honesty with myself that doesn't allow me to do that. Except, sure, there is a question of picking the image. There is always the question of picking the image.

WOODY: So that after a while we would find^{out} that indeed you are a multi-layered personality which exercises and enjoys almost all the modes except maybe a few of them. That you don't want to be fat again. Or something. There are forbidden areas ~~where~~ which we definitely don't want to be and don't want to admit that we are, I agree. But most of the time, again, going to the resource of an individual for survival, as long as we are bound to a need of the society - especially through the description you had made - if we are going to be ~~individuated~~ ^{integrated interpreted} in that system then we could never in fact survive as individuals, and maybe not as a race. Unless we can be entities which can depart into the universe in any direction and survive there, then we can claim that we are true individuals and we are strong, we are ~~in~~ fact - we are the units of survival and culture as well.

ROBERT: I think that what I described in this small example, there would still be a process of sub-differentiation which would occur because that's based on experience. None of us we might share the total societal mind but our position as dots in space, like our immediate condition is different for all of us. That we would all have different parts of the total code. And that's why to me it's ^{so} important that we merge them. Because they always say two people together can reap more product than two working individually. All of economics is based on this, and it's worked.

WOODY: ^{So}. You are kind of saying that ⁱⁿ any way you ^{think you} are part of the humanity of course as indivisible unit, but yet through your art, for example, you maintain your individuality. And that probably is the only concept in which you can separate yourself, make yourself...

But not just in my art,
ROBERT: ~~in~~ But my whole life...every part of my life there's a

I ~~can~~ ^{one} ~~manit-~~ maintain my individuality. At times ~~you~~ ^{you} may choose not to, to get something you ^{think that} ~~might~~ need from someone else. I can't make all the products that I need for myself. But I take pleasure in fact from being able to take from others, I get further along and so does everyone else.

WOODY: You know, we have to speak on what level. I mean, of course you don't make your own shoes as people used to. And you don't print your own books as people used to. Write your own books. So there is still a commodity ⁱⁿ which you would like to be independent.

STEINA: You cannot share...

WOODY: You cannot share. But I think that is the dilemma of today because everybody's now speculating about the role of the state. In this country there is ~~even~~ a very interesting concept which you could almost call possibilities of socialism or even beyond that of course. It may have a different form. So this kind of legend of a colonizer, the man of the West who was totally independent, or just _____ I don't know, is slowly being changed, rejected. It's being rejected as an American possibility.

STEINA: We are all being brought back into slavery, into bondage. Like every working person has to give so much of the money for the possibility that sometime in the future ^{that right need it because you} you are too old to work and have to get it back. And it's absolutely anti-human what's happening to us. We are not going to be dependent on our resources and we are not going to die of cold or ^{of} hunger or of old age, we are going to be taken care of. And the price we pay is that we are not free to go and earn any money. ^{We} You have to ~~go and~~ report it to the government, ^{we} have to fill out all ~~the~~ ^{those} forms. And we are being conned very slowly ^{a whole} into slavery again.

JON: Yes, but ^{at least} ~~are-~~ three of the four people around this table are being supported by the State.

STEINA: We are all being supported.

JON: I ~~mean~~ ^{we} we are all very directed being supported by the State.

STEINA: But at the same time since I've become an employer I have seen the other side of the coin. I have to fill out endless ^{how}

reports for all kinds of imaginary governments and pay money here and pay money there.

WOODY: I still have this naive idea that this technology is to make individuals out of us. To be totally dependent on resources, like energy companies - like Mohawk or Con Edison - *that we will* and eventually ~~we will~~ have our own generators. And not only, that, we will maintain our own health.

STEINA: But we will always be a society.

WOODY: Wait a minute. Now, the tools, eventually *that* we will rationalize the tools, then we can eventually develop the tools for ourselves. And that we as individuals will be full resource for ourselves. That we will, of course I have to admit that there will be a resource called ^{the} a ^h machine which is at your service or whatever. But that we can disregard this model of common living totally. I think it's the most obscene concept that has been always strengthened by ~~questions~~ concepts like Christianity and Communism. Communism ^{is} the name ^{TOOLS} commune, you know. These are the most survival ~~meas~~ for certain periods probably. Again, I don't know if it's planned, ^{or} programmed. It seemed to me a very definite scheme.

STEINA: But if you're going to be alone with your machine, what are you going to do?

WOODY: So that is the question. Are we able even to...
The culture is usually the past. You can take, ...

STEINA: That's a wonderful statement. "Culture is usually the past." *I want it quoted on both ends.*

WOODY: Certainly. It's like going west with the Bible. Again it was a resource, it was the only cultural resource for some people. So it was the book. We can manage that. ^{It doesn't matter.} What I'm trying to say is, that this is the only possibility for me to think about myself as being a free person. To rely on a set of inner resources. I'm separated from the society by not having the knowledge, for example. Not being able to produce components. That's my dependence. It's not the food any more. It's totally metaphysical, the way I get the food. I don't know

how it's done. I know how difficult it is to build a circuit. Because that is the experience I'm having with survival.

ROBERT: You trade time for your food.

WOODY: Oh. That's how it's done.

ROBERT: I think so. I like the notion of decentralization.

That's what economic power is, is being self-sufficient.

To me, economic revolutions of the past mean the working of the metal first, ^{the} agriculture^{-al}, and then the industrial revolution has given more and more independence to those societies that have mastered it. ~~As~~ as far as, ... in America that's what the industrial complex does. It makes you be independent. What you say will stick. Simply because you have the...

JON: No but you're bound into a system that has extensions ^{an} hugely beyond you in industrial society. You are bonded to the electronics industry.

WOODY: Let's straighten it up. Let's take it to the end. So far I'm not bonded only to the electronic industry but to the most advanced part of it. That needs resources of billions of dollars by now, by hundreds of thousands of people...

JON: That is absolutely dependent upon the government at this point as well.

WOODY: For example just the military ~~is~~ hysteria in a certain age. I'm talking about a possibility that eventually the organizing principle of those systems on the basis of the matter, ^t That you have the ability of working with the matter on the level of organization of it. To the level in which it frees you from this huge resource. Like sending a man to the moon ^{too just} is the most unbelievable paradox of time in which millions of people have evolved for millions of years to produce this body of two... I'm talking about a totally inverted process in which none of that will require the external part ^{icipation} ~~of space~~ - but the internal knowledge would simply be self-sufficient. I just believe that the inversion must come one day ~~in~~ in which the dilemma of the society as the only ^{form} way of living, an individual has to be waited. It must come in which people either give up

as individuals because they will not be able to have even oxygen. Or I don't know, anything. Or people that ^{will} just depart from this earth in a single cell spacecraft and they will never return. I believe that these modes will be possible. And that eventually both forms...

JON: ~~That's~~ ^{I see,} because I cannot in any way reconcile myself to that. That I must know that what I do has the chance of being ~~relevant~~ ^a relevant. A. So if I am jettisoned in~~the~~ spacecraft with everything that can support me for seven years perhaps, that this is to me, well it's hell. That's ^{is} hell.

ROBERT: Which reminds me, speaking of 2001, there's a Russian Solaris made for an American audience.'

JON: Did you see the full version of that by the way?

ROBERT: No. I saw the American version. But basically it dealt with the real problem, the human problem ⁱⁿ of space, of coping in space - which is psychological isolation. The technological means are developing but...

WOODY: Yes, but let me put it totally on a primitive base. I've seen my mind performing for myself and I've not seen a better show since. It's the drug experience. It's the ~~an~~ ⁱⁿ hallucinatory process. And I'm totally sure, I was certain, I am still certain that ~~in~~ I'm the content of my own entertainment ^{on} at every level. In fact, the most hilarious, from grotesque to very intriguing, and so-called serious. I have seen those boundaries and I have never lived that until then. You see I thought also I was culturally dependent. But I understood I ^{can} ~~could~~ generate the ~~whole~~ culture within my own cortex. And that totally overthrew my idea about the culture. Because if you can generate a culture which you have never experienced before, and possess it as a code, as a new comparative code to the rest of the culture, then I tell you there's nothing stronger and you can never con me into going back to the culture as a resource, as it is with the rest of the people. I think that culture is totally secondary to what I have seen. So that is my ^S security. I know the brain is a great synthesizer. We haven't even touched through

living, we haven't ~~even~~ experienced our mind through living. It's just a kind of permanent state of interested living, ~~you~~ know otherwise we would kill ourselves, you see. We have something to enjoy, of course. But I've suddenly sprung role (?) and I have seen this performance was just inside. And it advanced ~~my~~ esthetic era of...It advanced myself into the next esthetic era. For some it ^must come through art. Like my first era might have been because I have encountered art as you mentioned Eézanne. For you it was a frist esthetic era. But I found out ~~that~~ there's another one, that's not outside, it's inside. It's more powerful than ^{than} ~~than~~ the outside.. You know, I don't say we have to go to space. Hollis _____ crazy. I think there is enough for us to ^{be kept} ~~keep~~ busy for centuries. If not then ~~we~~ cannot survive.

STEINA: Can I go back to you, Jon? I have to question very much what you say about not turning the camera on yourself. Because you were glorifying it. You were excusing it for the wrong reasons I think, why you don't turn the camera on yourself.

JON: So what are the ~~wrong~~ reasons?

STEINA: That you cannot. Plain and simple.

JON: But I have. But I don't show it. *To anyone.*

STEINA: But you were talking about the Jon Burris you couldn't share with the world. You ~~couldn't~~ couldn't share with the audience? *That* is what I think you said.

JON: I think that there are two ^{ranges} ~~dangers~~ to subjectivity, and range one is those things that are immediately accessible to us and unabidable in every way. Which is _____ frustration, anxiety, pleasure, so forth and so on there are all these things, ^A and, equally all those things take place in virtually everything we see. So it is strange to me, it is bizarre to me ~~that~~ everything in Western art up until very very recently has ~~been~~ - and this is implicit in Western thought and expression at the same time - has been that the artist was a person who was able to look at a scene, see his emotions ~~within~~ that scene and then delineate it as clearly

as possible for communication to other people. So what is happening of course is that they speak of the artist's vision, both in terms of the eyes and in terms of sensation, feeling, all these internalized things, and I find this to be ^{for me} completely suspect. Completely dishonest. I have absolutely no desire...

ROBERT: Why is it dishonest?

JON: It's dishonest because it seems to be asking ^rright now questions that are solipsistic, questions that are settled and questions that have no currency in the way that I look at art, in interesting me as a viewer, as ^{me} someone ^{body} who is reading it. It is very interesting to me as a mode of thought, but I've conquered that already. I know those things. I know how to read it. I am not at all interested in presenting to ^msomeone my personal completely subjective and immediate emotional response to the world. Because I find that that asks them to look - that I am giving them nothing except for my subjectivity. And this is just me who lives now ~~and~~ who sees this and I live in America and it's all like that. It's equally, by the way, there is no validity to that. I mean that there is...

STEINA: But why ^sshould there be?

JON: Because I crave validity. Because I, there must be something substantive to be said. I do not find that to be substantive.

STEINA: But are you comparing maybe to other artists who ~~maybe~~ do turn the camera on themselves? In this time and age?

JON: Sure.

STEINA: Like who?

JON: Who. I've seen an awful lot of bad tapes. Let's name some people.

ROBERT: How about Tony's tape? That Tony Conrad tape when he speaks to the camera in his office.

JON: Concord Ultimatum? *Is that the name?*

Steina: There he's talking in an office, and sitting in a window...

JON: That's another place. It's ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ a hotel. So, well Tony isn't turning the camera on himself to show himself, he's... ^{but}

ROBERT: He's talking about internal states...

JON: Yeah, but he's....I do not like that tape so much, by the way. It's maybe one of the products of Tony⁵ that I like least. But what Tony is doing then is, it's a cute gesture, he's personalizing the camera. He's asking and telling the camera things that asks us to transform our subjectivity and ~~to~~ project it onto the camera. Which is an amusing kind of concept. I don't find that particular tape to be ~~as~~^{so} satisfying or ~~as~~^{so} interesting as earlier tapes are to me.

STEINA: Who else would you say?

JON: Vito Acconci. For one. He has a really interesting mind and again, whenever he turns the camera on himself he invariably abstracts that vision and carries it to something quite outside of himself.

ROBERT: I don't like his work. I find it offensive.

JON: Why?^{Because of} the power aspect?

ROBERT: No, I like power. It's totally solipsistic^{as} you would say, or completely turned inward so here I think that we would agree. I found Tony's tape interesting, because it placed me in another space.

JON: If his mind had been ~~a little~~ more together that day I think I would have liked it much better.

ROBERT: But I think the quality...He sort of has a diffused mind. He's making a style.

JON: Let me say something. I don't...

STEINA: Except the fantastic thing ~~is~~ his mind had been more together that day...you know you can say that about every art piece, really. Either if it had been or that particular day, his _____ mind was all together.

JON: But I know Tony's capabilities, though~~4~~, so it's not the same thing. I'm also thinking of like, Rita Meyers? Who turns sometimes literally the camera on herself but it's always this, it's always some kind of personal...there is this conviction of personal anxiety^{which} is what the tape is built upon. Longo's tape, on Longo's confusion at the art world,^{the one} that he showed at

I would like the names excised, by the way, in the transcript.

the Anthology last year.

STEINA: I didn't see that. He didn't turn the camera on himself.

JON: He was in it, but that's not the point. It was a view of his internal state expressed primarily through views of the outside. I found this completely uninteresting because I cannot say that I find anyone's subjectivity interesting.

ROBERT: Yes, but me I would probably find that tape uninteresting...

JON: It's also well-done.

ROBERT: because of the questions - I take those questions for granted. And to me no matter ^o how well it's done if, like if I don't like the fruit I don't care how unbruised it is.

JON: Let me say something else though is that, what I find this may be the only thing that really drives me in any way, is a kind of common denominator of conceptualization. In which I want, the only thing that I find important is a new way of looking at the world. Is a framework that accounts for a range of phenomena which we have already experienced and rationalized, yet puts it into a framework which is substantively different - a new perspective. A new cognition.

STEINA: You are as much a part...like when you say the world you are apparently referring to everybody except yourself...

JON: No, I mean especially me. The drive for it is ^{to ask} for me to find new ways of looking at the world. And not to be satisfied by this. And that's... *a satisfaction...*

STEINA: But from the outside. From you looking out.

JON: Me looking out. Because I want it to be equally transferable to everybody's vision. I want it to be ~~like~~ something which - it's like the transition between the Newtonian and the new physics. Einstein and the quantum physicists is that they looked at the range of phenomenon and Newton came up with a series of rationalizations which worked for a number of hundred years, ^{a number} or of centuries. And then some other people looked at it again and it didn't work that way. It worked in a different way. And so they came up with a new range of conceptualizations. This is ~~what~~ - why I think Land's article in the Scientific

American is so primary because it looks at something we had assumed. He took things that are now, since he wrote this, if he's right, which he probably is, that here were contradictions which we had seen...

ROBERT: Which article is this?

JON: It's called "The Retinex Theory of Color Perception or Vision."

ROBERT: That's in the current issue. Yes, I bought that.

JON: And so he looked at these things and he made the point.

He said "Look, I don't understand why... How did he put it?"

"Why A we can still perceive brightness contrasts with uneven lighting, accurately. That was one thing. We all know this, we all experience this all the time. And he says "I don't know how we can explain this. It doesn't make any sense with our current models." Likewise he said I don't understand why it is that when we go from tungsten light to ^{sun} ~~real~~ light we still realize the colors the same. These are things that we ^{have} assumed and the psychologists gave us a somewhat cloudy answer that we ~~adjust~~ adjust for it in experience. And Land took this and he said, "well maybe it isn't like this," and he designed a set of experiments to ~~provide~~ provide an alternate model. This is to me, first of all amazingly beautiful - that he has seen so clearly as to question these things we've all accepted, and secondly so important. Because he's taken precisely that range of phenomena, and if ^{he} ~~it's~~ right, explained it in a way that's entirely new that then brings up all sorts of questions. which we have to ask ourselves at our level, as well as the psychologists have to ask themselves ^{on} ~~at~~ their level. Plus, he provides a kind of modelling of the... he doesn't have a specific model, he has a hypothetical model in the article - but a kind of modelling of the ^{function of the...} of something along the visual pathway to the cortex, somewhere, which could explain these things. So ~~this is~~ ^{this is} an absolutely primary kind of research. It's this kind of stuff transposed to the kind of issues we're dealing with ^{that are} to me ~~are~~ the only really important issues right now.

WOODY: Yes, but you touched something which is interesting now. That we are surrounded by these new events. And they come from all the directions. They come from smashing of... analyzing of matter. We have DNA, now we have color vision theories, we have continuously new conditions. Now what is our function here? Is it, we pay attention to them because they entertain us, probably. Or because we think they are relevant. I think absolutely we are the consumers of it. I wouldn't glorify it. You simply consume it as other people consume other things like entertainment. I would not say ^{that} it's a different principle.

~~JON: Well I would though.~~

STAY

WOODY: You would say it is a duty? Your higher duty?

ROBERT: It's quest for truth, right?

Well,

JON: Well, let's put it a different way. I wouldn't necessarily deny that, without defining the word truth...

WOODY: So you would have to put yourself then into more conscious world.

JON: No, no.

STEINA: *Except for divinity*

JON: ~~Let's definitely not say that.~~ Let's say that I see that there are certain contradictions. Because I don't feel this is suspect at all. I see that quantum physics has raised some *fairly* ~~very~~ basic questions about the nature of certain kinds of operations which begs me to answer them in some kind of whole way. Their answering us at a very *little way*. I see that there are certain...we tend to view the world as very static of course. And yet we know that there are all these things happening. And it occurs to me that instead of seeing it as like maybe paintings or still photographs or static images or as matter, A, that there are perhaps completely equivalent. I mean this is all...a little far out of course. That there are perhaps completely equivalent ways of looking at the world that in fact do not view the world. Do not understand the world. As static, spatial images or matter, as we've learned to deal with that. And here I'm living at this time, I came of age

the year essentially that video became disseminated. And video places at my disposal certain ~~quan~~ quantities and qualities which perhaps might be used to ask certain questions ~~and~~ about these modes of visualization as a computer might be able to. I have some doubts about that. I have no doubts that it might be able to, I don't know how, know enough. And so here I have these tools that I can use to ask questions, that can lead me to ask questions about these ^{basic} modes of understanding that are ^{completely} very very general and ~~are~~ shared by our society. I'm in a situation where it would be impossible for me to ~~try to~~ turn it down, this quest. Because it's perfect. I'm the right age, I'm the right class, I have the right education, I have certain interests anyway. I've always been interested in certain things and here video - possibilities.

WOODY: Everything that you say is just perfect. The question is now what are you going to do with it? Or are you going to separate yourself as a non-applied person? Are you going to maintain this as your hobby or are you going to legalize it as a profession? Or do you have an urge to disseminate, ^{it,} to preach, ^{or} to eventually publish? Or do you have an urge of making this as art or from this milieu to produce pieces of art.

JON: All right. I would never see it as hobby or profession. These are categories that have no meaning to me. It is my primary activity aside from ^{the} things that I enjoy doing. I enjoy doing this. I find it, that if I did not have this, that I would either find something else that is as interesting and as challenging to me or I would jump off some building somewhere. That's that category. There are other questions you implicitly raised about art. I know of no more efficient way of dealing with these modes on the level that I want to deal with them, than that. Aside from philosophy which I find too hermetically ^{now} sealed...

STEINA: You find art the most efficient? *way?*

JON: The most efficient.

WOODY: But then how do you view the other things? How do you *view*

the madman like O'Grady? How do you view that? Who throws himself into the midst of society what we call, this institutional ways... We have to also deal with a certain kind of competition. You can be happy or satisfied with certain conditions of your own exploration or your own lifestyle, but eventually the questions may come to you.

JON: I do not need to be self-sufficient. O'Grady is a man who exists in a somewhat different framework. He's concerned with culture.

ROBERT: The producer.

JON: No, I mean his conceptual interests are those problems that ^{from} ~~which~~ exist within the individual, he's very much interested in Freud, and also with manifestations of culture. And so he, being an immensely creative guy, ^{O'Grady,} has decided to make ~~institutions~~ ^{institutions,} his works, ^{institutions,} cultural institutions. Frameworks that exist as matter within culture, that operate within culture, and then that develop that culture hopefully within ways that he would like to see happen.

WOODY: So you think everybody has it's place.

JON: Well I think some people have their place.

WOODY: You don't allow this ambiguity of existence which suddenly grows from one mode to the opposite ones. Which rebel against their own conditions which they accepted one time...

JON: I'm missing your point.

WOODY: Don't you understand that eventually you will maybe rebel against yourself? Kind of throwing away totally these ~~kind of~~ secure conditions which you have described now. And you will ^{just} be only using your ego as a resource, just exposing totally embarrassing dimensions of yourself and finding them only valid after all the years of research?

JON: In fact this is frequently a problem, of course. Here I am just a naked beast who is here and why the hell don't I just go and pick bananas off the trees?

WOODY: You may one day.

JON: Sure. It's a possibility.

ROBERT: I felt that the way you answered Woody's question - he mentioned the polarity of being a professional in a competitive discipline, or being I guess a passive hobbyist on the other. And you said you don't really give credibility to either category...

JON: Well, no, I just have this conviction that if you have something to say and it has anything at all de-q to do with what people are interested in, they're going to listen. So that's not a problem.

ROBERT: Yes, but what has to enter the arena for them to listen?

JON: Well, you put yourself in a ... I have no fear that should I ever have anything important to say that I would not be able to support myself with it. If it has anything to do with what people have to listen to and I'm convinced that's true, too. So I'm not worried about that. That's why that distinction isn't important. I don't feel we have to ~~Ab~~ ^{Ab}ssle. I wouldn't.

WOODY: But it will be beyond your control once you start doing, like if you publish a single book in your life, ~~It~~ it will throw you just in the middle of the ^{total} dilemma. In a way you are shielded because you don't, you are not provoked yet to go into what they call that arena. I don't think also it's important. But after all it is.

JON: I'm also not going to say anything I don't believe. Of course.

WOODY: Yes. But then what do you believe? To say that you have something that you believe in and you examine it very carefully, it drops into banality again, see. It's very difficult to maintain any respect for ^{any of} our own thoughts because these are not ~~permanent~~ ^{permanent} qualities. They change with time very rapidly. There is only something I always refer to...

JON: I don't understand, though. Because I sense that there is a very fundamental difference ~~between~~ in the way we're visualizing this. ~~Because~~ Which is that you are assuming that it is the grand ^{virtually} unfulfillable but possibly accomplishable task to come out with a single new thought. And that you're saying

that you're going to do this maybe and then you are confronted with your thought the next morning and it becomes trivial. I'm not convinced it ends like that. There are an awful lot of new thoughts to be thought. It's a hugely difficult task to keep it up. I feel a kind of.... *silly and....*

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ~~TWO~~ ONE

(Tape two, side two was not recorded)

~~TAPETWOXXXXXXXXXX~~

TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE

ROBERT: Well, I was getting, I wanted just to come back to the idea that you were mentioning earlier^{find} about the new idea or ~~the~~ unique idea. And I ~~thought~~ that ~~it~~ there was a period in my life when that was important to me. And after a certain point I realized ~~that~~ it was very ego-based. And that I gave it up as a goal to shoot for. Wanting to subsume my direction just in analyzing things properly and maybe I would get a new idea. But I certainly wouldn't kill myself if I didn't get a new idea. A new unique idea. Life ⁱⁿitself is so unique. Like every day presents new things. Though I don't think, conversely, that a person should spend a thrust of their energy on things that have already been done just to duplicate or re-duplicate. But I don't know, why is that so important? I ~~do~~ think that ^{this} gets us back to a certain subjectivity.

JON: First of all I don't understand why you call it ego-based.

ROBERT: One could say yes, I'm being purist. I'm doing this for the good of mankind, but you're going it for your own fun and you're doing it also, once you share the new idea with the culture there's extreme gratifications involved. And ...

JON: I've often wondered what it's like to have been a baroque.

ROBERT: A brook?

JON: A baroque. So here you have a period of time in which it was at the ~~big~~ height of a fairly long development in European music, which is what I know and like most about it. And where there was a highly formalized structure of making which - I've heard an awful lot of pretty good conventional

baroque music and some of it I find very very beautiful and some of it I find not so interesting and there are only a very very few really interesting musical minds in it. Oddly, by the way, they were not the best-known of their time like Bach was clearly not the ~~world's~~ ^{most} favorite composer at that point. And he yet is clearly the most interesting musical mind. Also I would include Couperin for instance, ^{who's a little earlier,} as a very interesting person. So I was thinking ^{of} ~~about~~ this and here was a time when not even the finest mind advanced it. The finest mind who was Bach only elaborated certain conventions with much more depth and substance than say Telemann who is a much better-known composer at that time. And I think, how would I have functioned in a society if I were in fact completely satisfied with my constructs and had only to elaborate them as constructs as skilfully as I could, as an exercise.

STEINA: Did you study harmony ever? So you know how it was done? You didn't even have to write it, just put numbers. You didn't have to write the fourth...

JON: You didn't even have to write that most of the time.

STEINA: It is so wonderful because you are working within very strict law. So it almost seems, I have done some composition because I had to in school. And you can ^{shun} them out endlessly. You put down Roman numbers, and then latin numbers.

JON: With certain signs that indicate... *certain things*...

STEINA: And then smmebody can fill it out for you.

JON: But they don't have to because the performer should be ^{ed} ~~versatile~~ enough to improvise upon those numbers.

STEINA: Right. And then there are certain ^{hidden} ^{like} traps which are called parallel fifths and parallel octaves and things like that. Even so they were traps that, ^{it} ~~there~~ was a knowledge. But within this very rigid structure that seemed to be almost auto-creative, you know, you didn't seem to have to do anything - comes somebody, like you say, like Bach, and works totally within the system because he didn't break any rules. He didn't make any new...

JON: He did a few new things.

STEINA: No. He was very conventional and uninventive.

JON: What I'm thinking of are things like

ROBERT: Tempered clavicle...

JON: Even-tempered clavichord...No, that's part of it but ^{what} I'm thinking ^{of} more is like the violin and flute sonatas with an obligato harpsichord part where in fact it was not figured it was written out, ^{as an} ~~it was an~~ equal instrument which presages classical sonata, chamber-music writing. So this was new. I don't think anyone had ever done that before. To use the accompanying instrument not as following a figured base line but as an extremely intricate and virtually equal part - at the point of in one violin sonata - do you know that one where in fact the whole movement of the sonata the violin is silent and it's only harpsichord?

STEINA: I don't ~~that~~ think so.

JON: So those are new, but on the whole...

STEINA: I'm afraid though that Handel also had his sonatas, I think so. I'd have to find it in the library. I seem to remember...

JON: Well, but those are minor refinements, though. Those are *just* things where he thought apparently that the ideas that he had that were still within the framework had best be expressed with this additional intricacy.

STEINA: If you had been a baroque person, having all this law, having to work within this very structural frame, what...

JON: Well, I wouldn't express it quite like that. What I would say is that I see ^{that} the whole culture, at least the musical culture which is the part I know best, was in fact satisfied with its' law. And Bach was a little dissatisfied, but not much. And his work extends it in some directions, but not so much. And yet I'm not in that situation because I find myself in this culture and I am not satisfied...

STEINA: Nobody seems to be satisfied.

JON: Nobody seems to be satisfied. I'm-I And I'm not very sure

because it's very difficult to pin yourself down. What exactly are the frameworks that I'm dissatisfied with, A, and then am I really so, is it really in it's manifestation so different? These are questions that you really can't answer until you're beyond it, of course. But on the whole, the paradigms that I see and the questions that I find myself asking inevitably, are ones that lead me to conclude that I have for myself no choice. I'm not living in simply the elaboration of the system right now, I'm living in the fact of questioning and maybe extension *and* maybe violation *and* maybe ~~objectivity~~ ^{subject} failure of all these *aims* ~~aims~~. But that ~~is~~ ^{that} dilemma I would have is not a dilemma, because my situation doesn't give it to me.

STEINA: But at the same time you're a ^{typical} ~~different~~ product of our time. I mean you are working within the framework or the lack of framework that's around right now.

JON: Sure. Except that I know ~~about~~ an awful lot of filmmakers who are making narrative films. Or Brakhagian films, to take something a little more recent. Brakhage is still very strong in the film departments of the world. He dominates people's esthetics. What Brakhage did of course was to give an immediate ~~kind of~~ subjective kind of gestural impact to certain kinds of filmmaking - which are for me now trivial and *settled* ~~silent~~ issues. But for a lot of people they're not.

STEINA: And weren't for you then? When you say they're for you now?

JON: They are to me now trivial and settled issues at one point, the question was how do you supercede Brakhage? For every filmmaker friend that I knew. I don't know if it was that for you as well.

ROBERT: Brakhage, I was never a big fan of Brakhage. Too much out of focus.

STEINA: Do you want that stricken from the record?

ROBERT: No, I stand by what I say.

JON: So I'm not in that situation of having to simply elaborate. My situation has given me these questions and it gives it to

me in very personalized and direct ways. Does that answer your question at all?

ROBERT: It wasn't so much a question I was trying to needle you back into the subjectivity thing. It's interesting you brought up Brakhage because Brakhage to me is a person who is too much into subjectivity and he lacks an objectivity. I don't take him seriously therefore.

JON: Sure. But it's funny though, that Brakhage has now moved into making super-8 films. They're now, at least on some level, concerned ~~to~~ with light. They're no longer that - remember these? They're now based on optical interferences.

WOODY: Between the lens and the lights.

And the source.
JON: ~~Same~~. And the object as well.

WOODY: No, I would never simplify Brakhage. I would never simplify anybody. Like what I said at the beginning about ideas of Frampton, it's totally irrelevant because we like to simplify things by putting people into a ^{different} category and ~~that's~~ then it's clear. I think Brakhage is very complicated and has all the aspects of every technique that film has been dealing with lately. From what I have seen, I have seen un~~believable~~ ^{films} different ~~things~~ of his - early work to ~~his~~ very much - his film of panning camera. Very much formal and very much rigid, very cold to totally as you said, out of focus, or the mythical...

STEINA: The lens art

WOODY: He is all kinds of...he is multi-layered. The same sometimes about Paul's work, that it's that way. Paul is also more complicated, so we simplify to our own needs.

STEINA: ~~It's~~ It's called reference system. It's actually the same with what you were complaining about before, ^{that} we always had to compare the computer to the mind or to some biological system... We had ^{no} other way. We have to have some reference, and it's the only reference you can have so ~~it's~~ Brakhage is again just a reference.

JON: But I think it's different here.

WOODY: In a way, of course. We can say after all it ^{that} assembles

our needs into categories...

JON: Which has some validity...

WOODY:...for our referential system. We use it, ~~as a resource~~ ^{immediately} as a resource.

STEINA: Because we are like talking the same language.

JON: Plus we're looking at the problems of this culture at the same time, it's convenient...

WOODY:...the culture we know.

STEINA: But it's very exclusive language, though.

WOODY: In a way. Probably other people that haven't seen these works would not probably be at ease ^{with} listening to such a conversation, that is possible. What I would like to say, what you have stated. You stated your case. But you have stated it the way that...you haven't been in a way asked ^{yet} to state your case publicly so to speak. You have certain things, ~~it seems~~ you have gained a certain position within our society ~~within~~ here in Buffalo, you see. We can usually exercise or like each others' way of talking or thinking. We even gain friends. I know Alphons had a great appreciation of you being there at Media Study that time. For him it was very important that he could talk to you. In ~~a~~ ^{Polidori} a way ~~that~~ ^{is} a different time. He goes and shows his films with you know _____ to Brakhage. Immediately, if he likes it or not, becomes this competitive American twentieth century artist, if he likes it or not. So you see it is possible that you will have to go from this personal position into a public position. That has happened to everybody that ^{got} stuck with some sort of a masterpiece. Or some sort of activity ^{which} ~~that~~ was elected to represent something. And then you will have to defend continuously ~~like~~ the rest of the people having done art, that's what you get stuck with.

JON: I have heard no defense that ever goes beyond the level of my defense ~~right~~ ^{just} now. I have heard no defense that is any ^{way} ~~more~~ more integral or convincing than that. It always relies on a personal reaction or ~~position~~ ^{that} position. So ~~that~~ I think there is no

reason to change it or compromise it in any way.

WOODY: Absolutely. I'm just thinking about how much valid would such a stand be to me, that's all I can say. ¶ And I would probably.. I mean a way to do it the same as you do, except time to time I compromise by going outside with this idea - someplace - and then I try to maybe justify it...I'm interested ^{if} that idea lives - it's not ^{even} an idea - if that product lives outside the same way that it lives in me. So I have more confrontation, that's about the difference. But I don't think I'm too much modified by those things, either. ~~I don't think they are in a way irrelevant.~~ Because our processes...we are in a way privileged that we can do things that we think about. That are not twisted too far from the original kind of reasonings. So I think we have in a way the conditions in which we can control our own processes in our own homes.

JON: I also think that ^{if} anyone finds this unconvincing they will simply find it irrelevant. So that's not a dangerous confrontation in any sense.

WOODY: We all are more sensitive to that. Your statement of your personal security, because we have been living slightly different lifestyles, that's all. And the state I was inquisitive and I guess we all were inquisitive from those kind of *personal reasons.*

STEINA: I was just not going to let him get away with it. Because he was so smart. Because he was feeling so secure there. Like saying "I would never..."

WOODY: You want to ask me something about camera obscura?

JON: Yes, I do. So this is what I visualize as the heart of the ^{is} evening which we haven't gotten to until now. I had mentioned this to you before. So You have ~~been~~ ^t spending some time trying to violate the camera obscura, to extend beyond the camera obscura. To find alternate modes of encoding which are not based - of representation and encoding which are not based upon the particular properties that exist ~~within~~ the camera obscura. And then I had to ask you, saying that

these things are not arbitrary. That we are born with, in fact, two camera obscuras in our head. We perceive the world through certain physical principles - some of them which are derived from that fact, from this ^{born} ~~foreign~~ property. That our modes of representation are based ultimately ^{up} upon these systems that we perceive. And we're now talking only about the absolute physical bottom level of these systems. And so I have to ask you then what is the purpose of extending or violating the camera obscura principles? Because I see that anything that is not this, is at an arbitrary level that ^{really} has nothing to do with media.

ROBERT: Can I try and answer that just a little bit? Are we speaking in reference to the digital arts?

JON: Not inherently. Partially.

ROBERT: Okay. Because to me the camera obscura is a process for iconic signs. We are dealing here with processes of appearances. But I think the digital arts is a symbolic sign. And doesn't have inherent need for what I would call representative appearances. It's symbolic, not iconic.

JON: All right, sure. ^{Except that} What Woody was talking about was something different...

STEINA: He was actually talking about beam scanning... *at that time.*

JON: ~~Be~~ Beam-scanning of real matter ^{Materials in some sense.}

WOODY: What I did, I abstracted, I put our consciousness into space and there was no up, there was no down, there was no horizon, there was no significance. There was no forward, there was no backward. There was no up, there was no down. So then to look forward was a bizarre possibility, or to walk forward.

You couldn't walk backward...it would be about the same importance.

Now how ~~space~~ such presence in space can be made visual to your consciousness was the reason I started to think about how would you accommodate the space as a visual concept. And I thought about it, I found out there's a missing space behind my front realization. I could realize space slightly ahead, slightly down, left and right, but I have no idea how to visualize the

whole space. Seeing in all directions. So this was the first dilemma. That I found out that our camera obscuras are highly selective. They, by scanning the space, eventually provide us with information about the space. We can recreate^{to} a certain degree the information about the space. But we are totally dependent on the narrativity of the eye. That means when we scan that first, then that second, then that third, that will be the sequence. It will develop...these views will probably be accidental. Because we cannot see what is behind us as more important, we don't see back ~~there~~. And if you translate^{it} into camera work, then you see the author, the camera-person, makes total an absolute decision for you as an audience who view the space. So this confinement and selectability and the sequentiality became kind of a subject of that particular discussion. And I was just trying to find out what would happen if you could monitor the whole space or see the whole space at the same time. What would be the narrativity of such a space? What would be the significance of such an event? And I found out that there is a realization, ~~that-we-can~~ ^{because if you} see the whole space, you are not any more guided by these accidental scans of your eyes which are compulsive anyway. But suddenly, you would suddenly point your attention, since you would see it anyway, you would point attention to certain events - movements, dangers, change. So your perception of such a space would have totally different narrativities. The story of them would be different, the perception of them would be different. And then I was, from this concept of this vector that points^{from} the realization or actual, ^{if} the realization is the center of this visual field, then the vector which points from that in certain directions is the only narrativity. And their sequence again, I was hoping ^{that} I could eventually assemble a parallel, or I would say synchronous, perception. But then I realized that it still may be very much sequential because our realization seemed to be sequential. We share somehow all the auditory and visual and other senses through a particular time gate. I don't have much proof to it, but I

feel that that is probably the case.

ROBERT: Time itself does that.

WOODY: That was like extending camera obscura into an all-directional concept. But this was the only kind of physiological alternative I could find. That ~~they~~^{we} would share two hemispheres like two~~s~~ eyes, and we would create eventually all vision concept sacrificing binocular capability. And being able, in fact, to monitor the space at the same time. Which we do when we drive. We always look back and front. Of course we ~~can't~~ time-share that view, we use the mirror. What's behind is as important ~~to~~ us as what's in front. ^{the} The demand for that is the survival. You wouldn't do that if you didn't have to survive. Then I found out that the reason for such arrangement of your new visual demands would have to go from these survival conditions. And I found that very much artificial. But maybe, I don't know, if you have to have such an instrument developed in your existence then you probably would develop it, especially if you can engineer it.

ROBERT: Well, the first thing which to me comes to mind, dealing with omniscient view again, is from the top looking down such as the image on the refrigerator there. Because north, south, east west seems to lose it's meaning when you're looking down. If that image wasn't a bit oblique as the view is now, if it was truly down, you could put it at any of the polarities and you would feel equally...like none of them would ~~look~~ look wrong. One wouldn't be favored like over any other view.

STEINA: No I think if your eyes were constantly above your head some distance, and your point of view would always be this, the view down, and the view in all directions from there, and that is a space that you could work in~~and~~ live in and function in totally. And you would have an equal awareness of what is behind and what is in front. It reminds me something like if you just hung a camera with a fisheye lens ^{that's the way you would see, an} above you, the most prominent thing, the one thing that would always be in the middle would be the top of your head. As a survival system it might actually be very interesting. Because then you'd always see

yourself from your own outside.

ROBERT: But our ears do that. Our ears perceive spherically.

WOODY: Yes. That I ^{also} thought about, that this is the only environment which is not directional - is ~~em~~ omni-directional. But then we - only blind people use it as a spacial device, really. And blind people....

STEINA: Use it very efficiently...

WOODY: Yeah, have the survival need. And they in fact live ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ a certain advantage because they truly live in space. ~~They~~ We really live in some sort of assembled space. It's a scanned space. And we ~~attach~~ ^{touch} also, the tactile relationships to the space are extremely probably more important than the visual ones. I think, going to the original question ~~that~~ ^{you} put, what was very interesting at that time to me was ~~the~~ making actual images and objects. At that time I recall I did the stereoscopic work. That fascinated me, that ^{suddenly} ~~something~~ from non-camera obscura principles ^{you can} ~~even~~ produce objects and of course you can model them not towards retina, but towards your mind. Of course ^{through} ~~your~~ retina. But I found out this image of camera obscura is ^{so} strong that even if you had a tool that generates image through non-camera obscura, I couldn't ~~avoid~~ ^{escape} modelling those images as if they would be produced through camera obscura. So then I found out that the dictatorship of the camera obscura is total. It seemed to be what's called natural. Yet that's why the whole generations, at least three generations of film camera - movie camera, that seemed to be extremely suitable to the extension of our own camera obscuras ^{of} eyes. But then that narrative of that kind of a single vector is so highly manipulated by this particular ^{that} medium, there's virtually no space. It's all narratively assembled space. My desire is to go into the world of objects.

JON: You see what I ^{feel} ~~think~~, while you're speaking of this now as something which ~~is~~ very ~~vast~~ past...

WOODY: That was a futile attempt but it was important to me because I understood that the camera obscura is not an instrument, that it's a product of consciousness. Formally ^{has} been accepted as such.

JON: Because what I felt in that exercise ^{of yours,} ~~to search~~ is that you were attempting to formulate equivalent encodings of these things. That were completely equivalent in a sense, but formalistically, and perhaps ~~in~~ other ways, ^{as well,} different from the principle that our culture and our body ^{is} as well, has become accustomed to. And at that point it became interesting to me, except for a fundamental question, which is the one that I asked you at the start of this conversation: given that in every case this thing ^{would} ~~will~~ be mediated by instruments producing images in a particularly kind of mediated fashion that seem to me to have no currency except as feats.

WOODY: I even went into the construction of these instruments. I made a kind of conceptual design with a sphere which would have inside a travelling laser beam, actually it would have a...

JON: A mechanical scan.

WOODY: It could be magnetically guided sensor. I haven't figured exactly ~~how it works~~ ^{the workings.} Either they would draw a continuous line, or rather they would pulse, like activating this sphere which normally would be opaque, into an active hole, like a pinhole.

Q15 a succession of pinholes which was then reflected on the other side of the sphere which was internally coded. So I had this scheme in which I could make it sensitive to rotate or code so fast that it would provide a continuous projection of space. And then I could descend into a ^{second} ~~certain~~ reality in which I thought about a rotating mirror which would continuously sweeping and delivering that into, I could provide and assemble a actual image display. I was not so far from possibility but then I realized I would have to display it on a certain medium. And I was thinking about a spherical image which would be in fact rotated ^{ing} - there would be half the image, then the other half - ^{image} because I couldn't work with the disparity of the left and right eye because if you try hard you can never perceive them, "Is it the retina on the right I want to read?" So I couldn't really do that. Maybe I could learn myself to see this pair of images. But I never went into this. I should have, maybe. But I was very much interested in the modes. But I will return. When

I have the medium, that it's workable. I'll probably try to assemble spherical images again. Because I'm really trying to remember. I was trying one time ^{to make} half-spherical images. But I didn't find that workable. But I was also much ^{more} fascinated by code.

JON: My thing is that I don't understand ~~then~~ why you would attempt to make a spherical image.

WOODY: Because a sphere is the only image that contains whole space at the same time. It's the only parallel surface I can imagine - or parallel it - that has certain equal importance from the center. It was a proto-type of that concept, really.

JON: Well, find. As an archetype of a concept, yes. ^{Whether} ^{it} has other currency, I cannot not see it. B. is that a sphere is an idealization of the situation. If I had a rotated ^{ing} eye up here, which could scan, I would not see a sphere. I would see planes. So what you really need to ^{do}, clearly, to sustain this is not to project ⁱⁿ the sphere, but to project in full space with the invisible limits of this being a sphere.

WOODY: You wouldn't see planes. No, you wouldn't see planes.

JON: This room, my vision, if it's projected on a sphere would be distorted.

STEINA: But everything is distorted in your eye anyhow. You just correct it in the ^{brain} ~~eye~~.

JON: Well that's another question. But if I have this omniscient eye here, for me to take my vision and project it on a sphere would be an inherent distortion. Because I see ^{that} ^{this much} space ^{when I'm} looking this way and this much here and this much here. So that is a disservice as well because you're introducing curvature where no curvature exists.

WOODY: Yes. I was ^{only} ~~was~~ interested in a concept of an equal distance between what I call realization.

ROBERT: Unless you're viewing from inside the sphere.

WOODY: That's what I thought. It, or the realization is in the middle surrounded by ^{an} image. But again, we're talking

about these two vectors. I _____ this vector pointing in and vector pointing out and I found out that cinema operates on these two vectors. One is the camera outside and the other camera looking at the object. I would have to assemble theories ~~fields~~ at a certain point, and I didn't have the fascination for the theories. I had a fascination for a certain possibilities - or just to realize certain possibilities.

JON: What also strikes me about this thing is ^{that} we now have a mode of encoding that isn't based upon camera obscura, which is the holograph^m. And you have again this completely equivalent encoding.

STEINA: What do you mean it's not really the camera obscura?

JON: It is not built upon the camera obscura. It's built on interference patterns, timing.

STEINA: Lots of camera obscuras.

WOODY: ~~is~~ ^{infinite} An amount of camera obscuras. It's slightly different.

JON: Because the ~~encoding~~ encoding is not based upon projection? No, that's not right, there ^{is} was a distinction ^{to be} we made. Let me see if I can verbalize it. The encoding in the camera obscura is based upon projection through a pinhole which is then projected in areas of lightness and darkness which - and color, of course - which we pick up in that manner, as a projection on the back of our retina. The way a hologram operates is to receive two different time views as expressed through the wavelength of light which are then superimposed as it were, which produces an interference pattern which then can be reencoded to give you a view of the scene you are looking at. It's not equivalent. It's not the same kind of projection. The encoding does not exist in areas of lightness, ^{and} brightness, there's a single beam - this has to be written.

WOODY: Yes, of course. You can either use _____ light, or you can also use monochromatic light. You don't have to summarize it...

JON: So you have this system which gives us a way of looking at a scene which is like an experimental distancing. We can look at a scene. We can encode it and lo and behold it looks like real-life three-dimensional stereo space. There is no reason to distance ourselves from the camera obscura as an artificial reality, maybe not as a serviceable, ^{one,} which is one of your points but I find that not so engaging, but as artificial, because in fact we have this independent corroboration that ^{it's} in fact accurate, through an entirely different method.

WOODY: You see I found out ^{that the} with holography is a half-space, we call it. The plate which is in the space is accessed under these conditions. In the sense of the half-space. Of course also it's possible, probably, to record the same plate from the other side as well.

JON: You'd have an additional delay, though.

WOODY: So, but it's a different set of interference, it would not interfere. In a way, such a standing plane in a space, what we call both half-spaces which makes the space. The question is now, in order to view the space - again we have come back to this problem of consciousness. How do you view a space? So even if the solution of the recording problem is solved, through holography, the problem of integrating that or realizing that brings us back to the problem of our consciousness. I was rather interested in how do we accommodate ^a space visually because from that viewpoint ^{you} ~~we~~ could criticize camera obscura as being limiting and as being appreciated as limiting, and as being brutalized by the motion picture industries - even extend it, ^{and} like Brakhage, as an extension of vision. And that, then glorify _____ as the most powerful medium of the twentieth century. These concepts which are very much linked to this efficiency of a small frame, of ^a sequential _____, is just the terror of the success of such a medium, it's fascinating. That's why always the basis of my analysis, that of course we should question these things from a different angle. Like why would we even ^{and} ~~found~~ this improper ^{And many people didn't find it improper. *} ~~And then it was found to be~~

* ~~with the principle of extension and manipulation.~~

illusion and

~~Woody~~. It's the moral principle of certain manipulation.

JON: Mediation.

WOODY: Yeah. Again, going back to your dilemma and mine: how to step out, or step away to the next frontier of the morality. How to step away from manipulation, or saying too much about your own statement. So electronic imaging seemed to me the next moral frontier - to step away from the subject, ~~I mean~~ *or the message literature* as we contemplated it at the beginning. And then suddenly if you enter that non-camera obscura imaging, then you are not any more dependent. You see, I would describe it territorially. I'm like an animal which marks it's ground. If it finds someone else's mark on the ground, I would _____

STEINA: Oh, I thought you would urinate.

WOODY: And that's what, I would maybe urinate in my own territory but if I ~~found~~ ^{find} someone else's I will just move away. Now if I found out that camera obscura imaging in fact depends too much on God-made world, I find that already marked territory, and I step away into this new territory. ~~±~~ And I found out that there is ~~always this~~ new territory continuously so you can step back further and further into unmarked territory.

JON: Let me ask you this: if you had not come upon a new tool,

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

WOODY: Then you see I ~~probably~~ couldn't do anything *I would probably just..*

STEINA: Did you ever think those things before you saw the tool?

WOODY: Of course not. I was very ^{much} interested in why for example I couldn't

believe my own story as a filmmaker. I would create stories from my own need, ⁱⁿ my own imagination. But I would never find ~~e-was~~ the worth of application. So it's getting back to the problem of what ^{to} you say and how much you believe in your unique, original thinking.

JON: Sure. It took you five years? Of playing with the tool?

WOODY: Not really, the switch was instant. But in order to rationalize what happened, because the phenomenon was overpowering, so there was not much you could think about....

JON: You mean the phenomenon of video? Sure.

WOODY: It was instant and overpowering. But of course to rationalize it to the degree that I could even justify to myself came much much later, *like after*

a few ~~two~~ years.

STEINA: Not ^{a few} ~~the~~ years. What are you talking about?

WOODY: I don't know. I don't remember any more.

STEINA: We got the tool in '74...

JON: I'm talking about video. So I'm curious, because you came upon this tool and there was something that challenged, well I assume it challenged your way of making stories in film, because it was so new that it ~~could~~ ^{would} not substantiate stories.

WOODY: First of all, it would not link me into this conspiracy of stories... of story-telling which I think this world is requiring for personal needs and also for monetary needs. Purely ~~just~~ ^{re-} this is a question of the production of..... existence.

STEINA: As a matter of fact, when you were in school ^{and} you had to make a film, you had to apply for a stock, you had to show a script. And in his case he made some photographs and said "this is my script" and he got away with it. But what video really gave us was the freedom ^{not} to justify anything to anybody. And then where ~~can~~ ^{the hell do} you get the story from? It never occurred in video. Did it ever occur to you? Not until you were so far...

WOODY: I had different reasons. I didn't think about that...

STEINA: Did you talk about it? Did you think about it?

WOODY: Because the phenomenon was so overwhelming

JON: _____ portapak

WOODY: _____ ^{totally} free of that.

STEINA: We did some with other people because they wanted to...as a crew.

JON: Sure.

WOODY: We just enjoyed this trivia-making.

JON: Why is it that you never had the desire...that video didn't suggest to you making stories? Why is it that video suggested to you that you investigate its elements and its capabilities?

WOODY: Because it's what I would call the physiological part of image, ^{that} instead of using image, applying image to ^{your} ~~get~~ thought, somehow the image was overwhelming your thought. That you become in fact a student of it, or you become educated.

JON: Now when you're talking about image overwhelming your thought we're talking not about a particular specific image that's on the screen but the fact of the image's existence.

WOODY: That's right. It's existence and its state of being, living ~~being~~ *state* in a sense of input/output, system performance which is a form of being *for me*. That's why I recognize ^{these} systems as living. I don't have a problem calling bio~~t~~-matter living ^{and} or like energy system as non-living. ~~I~~ think it's identical because there's energy input and outputs. If they think of these things as ^{totally} arbitrary that's not what interested me at that time - in particular, ~~like the~~ feedback which was ^{totally} video image unlike any other image I've ever experienced. It was enough for me to postpone all the intellectual decisions - suspend ^{them} indefinitely this cultural ^{limbo} ~~label~~. This was a ready-made ^d subject ^{which} ~~that~~ had all the reasons for me to investigate it. So it was an immediate decision.

JON: So video appeared to you...

(END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

STEINA: If you're going to take a picture of this wall, it's a two-dimensional wall, and make it into a two-dimensional picture that you can hold in your hand, you do that. If you want to take the whole room ^{then} ~~then~~ ^{an} and have ~~that~~ object in your hand that is the picture, it has to be a sphere, right?

JON: *Well, only ideally within the capabilities.*

ROBERT: My way of solving ^a sort-of-related problem ^{to} ~~is~~ that, of having an all-encompassing image - was having no external screens at all, but finding a way to pipe it right into the head, right into the mind. Say "turn off, eyes, just program output into mind so no matter where you look, you can't escape it.

You admitted that ~~there is a~~
WOODY: There is a parallel possibility, which there is, unless you—
how do you image the parallel reception of all vision?

ROBERT: It's not possible now but I do think that it will - in a hundred, ~~to~~ hundred years - come

JON: I think no one would allow it.

ROBERT: Well, I would be the first to volunteer.

JON: No, but I think that no audience would allow themselves to be subjected to this. I think absolutely the sense of distance and otherness is absolutely critical. There must be comparison.

WOODY: Were ^{, really} ~~already~~ talking of something which is the most crucial in the

concept of living - is being in space. I see it as parallel and serial concepts. Even if I say the whole image will stay as data structure in memory IQ~~ee~~.... I can still scan it out as ^a single-train information...

STEINA: Like sequential and parallel.

WOODY: Right.

STEINA: You can only get ^{the information} as stream of....you can only get it one-directionally.

WOODY: How that would access to you parallel way, I would have to separate my realization into many realizations, ~~of separate~~ ^{except} in fact ~~serial~~ ^{spherical} realizations ...

STEINA: Back to the sphere.

WOODY: With infinite amount of myselfs, or ego. That's what they call the god who's omnipotent and omnipresent and sees at the same time everywhere. That's what you are talking about.

ROBERT: Again it gets back to this: that you would have...I also thought about at the same time that the ideal mode of education would be that as you could give to a person a program in this way, so could you record it. Entire lives would be recorded. Entire experiential ~~encodifications~~ ^{and} - you would get it. So you would profit from all those other people. And your education would be sort of a speeded-up program of their life.

WOODY: Again, in the sense of sequentiality, it is very much possible. You don't have to access it at the same time. If you can just retrieve it at a ~~single~~ ^{certain} wish. I think that's no problem whatsoever. Except that the state of being - like living in space and realizing the space at the same time. That is too overwhelming for me to deal, to imagine. I simply can't make this transition. Is that also according to Buddhist concepts of vision? We have the same problems. Seeing is only a referential process. To really see you look in, instead of ^{looking} out, it's a different vector. Looking at something may be the better possibility to imagine than to looking outward. And it seemed ~~the~~ to me a Western way, to look outward, and it seemed to me possible - I call all the Eastern ways possible ^{ways} - or pragmatic ones. It is possible to imagine something as centered ^{looking} looking in, being around it. You have to exercise it. I never really...

STEINA: I remember when I was thinking ^{about} of this vision ~~that appeared~~ ^{in sphere} that was when we had the think in the Kitchen, and I had the turntable, and it kept scanning the room, 360 degrees continuously for twenty-four hours. And then this guy came and invited us over to the Holographic Museum. And

there was a picture of a musician, he was ^{this} inside kind of a cylinder. And they had captured him in time, he was playing the instrument. I mean it ~~was~~ ^{always} on a loop, ~~it would go~~ up and down, but it was cylindrical so it didn't matter, ~~there~~ ^{but in} was no beginning or no end because you ^{loop ended} looked ~~at it~~ for you, and this time if you were standing here, ~~and~~ ^{that} this time if you were standing here - which was actually most interesting about that. But they way they had done it was they had put the guy on a turntable and then they had the camera of course stationary, and then they did it ~~actually~~ on 16 millimeter film so they had the frames, and then they encoded them this way onto the cylinder and ~~then~~ of course it becomes three-dimensional. Because he is turning so there is ^{always} ~~is~~ that calculated difference frame for frame. And I started thinking well, how would it look like if I had the same process done on the turntable - to code the room ⁱⁿ to this and then paste it together. So if it was done because the turntable ^{was} ~~goes~~ this way, going only, it would be again a cylinder. And if I had a way to do the whole room, it would become a sphere. And that's of course the ball, the mirrored ball - the one we have here. It's the whole room. And I wonder why no ^a painter has put this one the canvas, stretched the canvas or made some kind of object that was round and then painted a whole space, whatever space, like maybe inside a church or God knows what and then taken that as an object and put it somewhere else and said "Here is the church." I've never seen it done and I wonder why because it's ^{encoding} ~~taking~~ a space ~~and encoding it~~ into a ball.

ROBERT: Again, this reminds me of two things. One ~~is~~ of the still cameras that the Lumière brothers built was a circular camera. The strip was about that wide and it fit into a ^{circle, you} camera, just made it go around. It has sort of a ^{slit in it,} ~~cut~~. I don't know how he placed his body in relationship to it. They must have had to be above or below and operate it like this. And you'd just turn it one revolution and so all sorts of possibilities came that you could actually place them in a circular wall, though I think they were usually exhibited as a strip.

STEINA: You mean....what preceded the movie cameras.

JON: One of the first horse-race cameras...you know about those? So

what you are doing is photographing time, but ^{the} a single position laid out in a strip of ^{film} ~~time~~. *But always the same point.*

STEINA: Those rotating toys that go in continuous loop. I never connected

that to the Holographic ~~Museum~~. ^{Show.} Zootropes. It's interesting about all of those that they can be either time or space. They go forward and then stop and you have it ~~from~~ ^{out of} a different point of view in regard to it.

WOODY: These are the referential relationships.

STEINA: Then you have also turned the horse race inside out. You have taken a strip that occurred this way - and ~~to your eye~~ ~~it~~ turned it - to your eye it may still occur this way, except then they turn back and go this way and make a loop ^{on they go this way,} and start again and go this way. See it's different because you have a very ^{clear} one point of view when you look at those zootropes - whereas in the holographic thing, you could ~~stand~~ ^{stand} sort of anywhere, the slit was always there.

WOODY: The camera was looking around it, from the behind so to speak because the thing was ~~rotating~~ ^{rotating} — so that's a reference.

JON: Have we reached the end of our energy? I had a train of ^{thought} I wanted to finish, but it would take too long.