

#4

WOODY: It's not on the map that it's visible. We know about it. The people that in a way promote you the most as teaching you as a particular school, because I teach you as a particular school... Now I don't mean a particular school, but a school of images. I'm not sure if the rest of the world knows about it in that way.

PHIL: Well, they don't. I think that's real clear, they don't! And we're in the process of becoming more worldly. But at the same time as we're becoming more worldly, in a sense it's almost like becoming more remote, increasingly still more remote. If we go to the southwest, for example, then we put ourselves in a more invisible place unless we have some kind of ^{real} communication connectivity with the aspects of the ~~real~~ world that we still want to be visible in. And effectively the only conduit for that to happen in that I can see is cable television. Cable television, not broadcast, ~~cable~~

JANE: There are other things that we're working on that might support us. We call the Electronic Visualization Center a television research satellite to the School of the Art Institute. In terms of that self-definition, we see possible potential ways of being supported to orbit that institution, and do things so that we can go on long-remote expeditions. There's a new television station - UHF station - that's going to be starting up in mid 1979, called channel 20 which was the UHF station that the PBS station owned but was not using. So that's been taken over by a consortium of colleges - five or six universities and colleges in the Chicago area. So their thing is to do educational television - experimental cultural programming stuff - that could ^{be} loosely defined as educational material to reach people that are not within a specific - that don't have access to the usual modes of educational information distribution. They are interested in showing our stuff. So...

WOODY: Could I turn you back a little bit? I don't understand now what's your relationship to the institute. Because as I

recall, or I have vague ideas now it's working with Don, what's your position, what's your relationship to the school. Could you just give us some kind of short rundown on what really has happened in the last three years or so.

PHIL: Well the habit had been, up until about, well, two years ago, where there was a budget that we were able to play with. It was anywhere between ten and twenty thousand dollars, sometimes up toward thirty thousand dollars, along with the economics of being able to provide three or four staff or assistant positions which are exquisite learning-collaborative kinds of trips. So it was possible to support a human community and a learning environment - a video tool system learning environment - because of having ^{that} economic support.

JANE: It was also a production environment, too, at that point.

PHIL: Now, the monies aren't there any longer.

WOODY: What happened? The same thing that happens ^{ed} here?

PHIL: We built a new physical building. The energy crisis is costing...it costs them three times as much now to power the whole building. And so we have an incredible financial bind all of a sudden.

JANE: And the building ended up costing almost twice as much as it was supposed to.

WOODY: You mean it's totally an institutional crisis you're talking about.

PHIL: Right. So, now prior to that, in the early phases of building the video phenomenon there, there was lots of economics in both money and people slots, etcetera. The recent evolution is very very clear, that there is no more viable economic connection there. I read that as effectively signalling, along with the thing of being tenured, signalling that on the other side of ^{it,} my tenure thing now there is ^{some} a-let very ~~of~~ serious work to be done and that work has to do with designing a new kind of connectivity. Having to do with

realizing an extended new generation of electronic visualization intelligence. So that means, effectively, that we're looking for economic support ^{of some sort} outside the institution as compared ~~expressed~~ to living off its internal support. And that means that effectively we've got to establish some practical connections there.

WOODY: Now "we", who's we?

PHIL: Jane and I.

WOODY: So you want to be independent unit, team, which still would be part of the overall operation...

PHIL: We want to be an interdependent unit as compared to previously only a dependent aspect.

WOODY: Right, so how is it pedagogically linked? Is there any kind of teaching obligatory relationships ^{still} in this new model that exists? I don't know, does it exist? You've established that?

PHIL: Well, we're very much - in fact the check that we take ^{with us,} back, ^v from doing this thing, establishes us an account in the budget of that institution which has already been okayed as a way to use it for this development, which we've just defined as being the Electronic Visualization Center.

WOODY: I see. And then...

PHIL: So we have an account there. And we also... Jane is doing a whole lot of work in terms of getting in some other kinds of funding through potential grants. Now the one grant that will come right back through that conduit, through that account. So, if we can use it as ^{essentially} a place to siphon the economics through - the economics come back through the institution, however we don't exist there. We exist around the institution. [^]And that effectively is the only kind of connection that's there, except that tenure description which I have as a professor. So that can be lost at any point. It can be redefined at any point and also the economics could also be lost ^{and} ~~or~~ redefined, if something out here proves out to be a viable enough support system that we could become solely dependent on it.

WOODY: What's the practical relationship now in the sense of teaching - Why do you set up such a narrow... It must be vice versa service or reason. You will teach? in exchange for some space?

PHIL: Presently I teach classes.

WOODY: Right. What is the reason for associating your Electronic Visualization Center as a concept. I still don't understand why you need a school to do that.

PHIL: You don't.

JANE: In one sense we see ourselves as attempting to do research in the area of redefining the ^{at} institution in terms of a media program...which I think as institutions are increasingly unable to support themselves financially, especially schools, The different aspects of those institutions are starting to look ~~toward~~ the outside world to get their own special-interested support - financial support. And the institutions are serving as kind of an umbrella for all the different facets to do that. So in a sense the institution as a whole is being redefined into these various media programs. So we see ourselves doing that in a sense. And we also apply, some of our funding proposals go through the not-for-profit corporation aspect of the school. For instance we have one to the NEA right now which is application for funding for a pilot production. And we are applying ^{under} the aegis of the school, and so they ~~then~~ would be one of the sponsors of this program which would be broadcast probably ~~only~~ channel 20.

WOODY: Since we live in a similar situation here. We are kind of somehow associated with the university, but in fact it's only half-time now, and then we have almost our own institution. But the only dilemma that I see in it, if there is ^{justification} any for being associated with an institution, is some sort of a return in the sense of teaching. For example our facility and your facility would be much more powerful so to speak than any facility you could find at a school. Now

then there's a whole different economy involved because in order to maintain such a powerful facility you have to invest a lot of time and a lot of money in maintenance and you have to spend time on your own work. I see ~~this~~ it as very difficult, in fact impossible to be still in kind of a real relationship. If I understand, you take it as³ symbolic, rather. But do you see any curriculum, direct curricular exchange between ~~the~~ your facility and the school facility? Or do you see it ~~as~~ only as exchange of knowledge, that you gain something by your private research and then you go to school and just unload it?

PHIL: Well, there are a couple of practical aspects to it. One is, for example, in the location of Molab (?), if the culture there^{is} receptive to the idea of taking on the kind of video stuffs that we are about. The idea would be to effectively start that there, and to integrate folks in that community potentially also provide this remote condition to the population back at the Art Institute, i.e. my students - if they want to do ~~that~~^{their} graduate year, that graduate year or two years ~~that~~^{the entire} thing could possibly be done at this location. So part of the idea potentially, given that institution to justify the economic use and connection that's there is to say that it's possible to develop these other kinds of involvements which have a local culture that is not as severe and is not as politically difficult to deal with as the city of Chicago. And namely (mainly 7) we're looking at places that have cable television.

WOODY: I see. Now that leads me to a different question. What do you see as your work? You see, so far I've not been even able to approach teaching ~~as~~^{on} a craft level, because I find the work I'm interested in so particular, that I have no way of conveying or sharing the ^{work in} process because it's so introverted by now. So you probably look at your work differently. You must see it as ~~more~~^{rather} open.

PHIL: Well, I look particularly in the form of, one of the things Jane and I are trying to do now which is to bring out a publication issue ~~of~~ videotape probably once a month which

would be the output and a kind of ongoing diary record or what have you, of this journey.

WOODY: Are you in total synchronicity with esthetic...
 Did you both ^{a priori} agree that that's ~~the~~ what you're going to do...
 Do you have ~~any~~ private work so to speak, or is your work participatory? Are you a team that has agreed on sharing all the problems of that particular project? Is the project your work? Or do you have ^{your} a personal work?

JANE: It's the outlet for everything, if it's not it, if it's not all of it, it's the outlet.

WOODY: It puts you both in a position of producer. Not only ~~as a~~ producer but as an educator, not only as an educator as pioneering a satellite, ~~new-kind of~~ educational form - or satellite community or satellite territory or whatever you want. So I think that must be the content of your work.

PHIL: Well, I think the content of what we're about is effectively in the handle that we're going by - the Electronic Visualization Center. And the closer we could get effectively to just exploring electronic visualization, the happier we would be, But at very real ways, right now in order to modify what we have as a kind of social political economic context it's necessary for us to incorporate such things as cable systems and airstream trailers and other kinds of things in order to expand this interest of electronic visualization right now. Because within the institution there is no more economics and in order to search and research electronic visualization. In other words, my behavior as a tenure professor is one that is expected to be incredibly redundant. Teach classes. Every two years it's a new slug of people. It's the same classes. And that is an existence that is utterly boring to me.

Then
 WOODY: You must believe that people, like living in Morab (?) that watch the cable station will in some way be interested in what you're doing or that you would be interested in persuading them that what you are doing is that they should be interested

in. Did you ever consider in fact that people are not interested? in electronic visualization generally? You see, my dilemma with what you say is you believe that there is a true outlet ~~that~~ ^{which} is not artificial, ~~but~~ ^{which} is based on community...or access to cable which is community. ^{distributed.} My experience ^{is} ~~has been~~ that whatever I'm ^{ve been ever} interested in can only exist on a scale like New York City or the United States or the Earth, in a sense of interests. ^{Distribution possibilities.} Again, I may be totally wrong. If I want to go to the community like Bethlehem Steel Company in Buffalo, I may be found there very exclusive or totally remote from their needs, which is jobs, for example. So I'm just curious if you ^{truly} ~~really~~ believe that there is a possibility that you can do something within a community that will be still recognized and appreciated and supported by the community?

PHIL: I think that's part of the desire, sure. I'm not confirmed, ~~certainly~~ one way or the other, that's certainly the desire to in some way or other integrate with that culture and that would mean it's going to have two effects: we're going to be modified by going to that cultural environment and that cultural environment will in some degree be modified by our presence. The confluence of that is effectively the only thing that I can identify as where it's going, and that's relatively unpredictable.

WOODY: You are a believer of the original doctrine. This is the video doctrine as it has been established ~~very-early-on~~ in early video, which like video freaks practiced, or tried to practice. There is truly no proof on a scale. I ~~mean~~ mean there's a proof on a small scale which I would link to ^{other} any experiment in art or even in investigating ^{ion of the} materials. The scale truly is only still a concept. I haven't ^{really} seen this proven that it exists. Even ^{organizations} like alternate media center or Media Study. All those concepts that have been based on the original doctrine of the community and media didn't bring a single proof to me that ^y ~~there~~ are in fact non-intellectual. That they are a real part of popular...or populist views. I

think they are purely as intellectual as the other, which are maybe exclusive domain of art. So I'm still having this problem ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ accepting this as a possibility.

JANE: I see us as being sort of oddly in between. I mean I don't see our work as fitting in particularly with video art in terms of goals or manner^{of}operation. But on the other hand we're not portapak community workers either. We're more...in a sense we're talking about going ~~into~~ this community' but not being community workers. In a sense being sort of in an eccentric limbo - ⁱⁿ between. And it almost refers to some kind of vision that we share about a kind of a future - not just of television - but a lifestyle. And so we're working...the things that we're doing refer more to that than to specific existence structures. And I think that's what makes it seem impractical, in a sense, or not in touch with reality or something like that. Do you feel that way too?

PHIL: Yeah, I heard you saying desire, and a specific desire that I have would be to effectively be able^{to} - both visually and accoustically - communicate with you whenever I want^{ed} to. I really want to do that Woody, not only with you but^{probably} with everybody else in the world.

WOODY: But you still...

PHIL: And the geographic separation...I mean it's a real hassle to have to do that truck stuff all the time. A real hassle to feed myself, to physically transport all this stuff here in order to have three days of stuff that goes on. I mean that's the stuff...if the ^{en} cumbering aspects of that can be etherialized a bit...and that's where^{the} cable ~~comes~~ connection seems to feed...

JANE: And also having remote relationships with...I mean we can be out on remote completely and send programming materials to a variety of places.

PHIL: This is the in-between...

JANE: Yeah, it's an in between. It's not that totally etherialized access to communication, but in a sense we're trying to get ourselves out there and deal with the fairly clumsy ways of doing it that are now accessible to us. But the important thing is to get out there.

WOODY: Honestly, we all understand the mechanism of video or bable or transmission. And sort of, there has been - especially in the states - has been exercised for many years. For Europe it's still new in a way. But what you suggested is this: that in fact your medium is the communication itself. That you're using television because it's close to you, you like to work in television...it has a lot of components of that. But as I have been watching you for years, you've been paying equal attention to every other gesture, like dressing, speaking, the way you live, the way you construct your environment like the truck, the way you travel, the way you make tapes. So I understand that this ~~is~~ in a way is the content of your personal work. But still, I'm interested how much the ~~medium~~ medium can in fact accommodate such a model. How much the medium - like television or video - how much it is in fact communication itself. Because even what you said - I haven't seen everything, I'm just a superficial observer - it was kind of suggesting that there are many modes of communication within this television system. Yet of course, beyond that you have the popular mythology which you practice or create. There's a whole other...many layers of what I have found are equally or more important in fact than this exercise which is always - hardware is always the minimum exercise. You cannot expand to the dreams directly - you have to tape them in your own head. But of course the system can suggest that. I'm just asking if this...someone has to...some society has to agree. There has to be ^{an} ~~some~~ agreement between you and the society. And if you want to ask them to support you, you have to offer this model and that model has to be accepted and then I guess you can exercise it. I guess you've answered that.

PHIL: Well that's what we're trying...we're making an offering. And that offering comes at many many different levels. And you identified... I know there are some disturbing aspects about it. I feel that the video component of everything we're about has been honed on alot and has been received and

is dealt with quite effectively, but there are other involvements that aren't, such as my personal image...the truck, my speaking. All those kinds of things are in many cases barriers, so I am aware in very real ways that it's very easy to - that it's necessary to allow those kinds of things to radically change depending on the time, and I see those constantly in change but that constant the video stuff's going on, is something that seems to be the thing that's leading - what's going all the time, it definitely is the constant that's operating there. That's sort of the constant referent to the thing, which is the intelligence that we all shared in helping come along and all ^{of} that stuff in the beginning. And as you identified the video freaks central kind of religious aspect about it being the...

WOODY: But also the...what I found out more and more...like we would have to go into the ~~credit-system~~ criticism where I don't want to go because in some way what video freaks do now represents a whole different dilemma. Now it's the preserving of the alternate culture. If you would know what's going on in the State Council on the Arts in New York State you'd understand that eventually video freaks became the last dinosaurs of the ordinary culture model and in fact they are perpetuating in this self-imprisonment. What I think is that they are a bunch of intelligent people that on their own in fact they would do better. But since they keep on this mythological, or they are supported to be that model still, they indeed became totally inefficient. So in a way I trust two individuals much more than any established group or single individual is even probably more...can even be more active. The question is either as an economical unit a team has a great advantage. I see it in our own way. I could never physically do alone as we could do a team. But then there's a trade-off because eventually it goes to a single idea or single execution, single unit. An individual is extremely powerful. Do you have any questions?

JON: Well, I find it really interesting, this conversation. Because you're both coming from such completely different areas - ideas and directions and all of these things. And your questions, the last five minutes of questions have always been what is the framework, I mean implicitly, in which you're working and where does the substance of your work lie? And what is it that is actually your work? And so what seems so interesting to me is that you have this absolute divergence: concerns Phil and Jan's work is cultural and sociological and bound up with lifestyle, and your work and the prevailing work is concerned with product and with ideas on an extremely abstract level. And it's thrown out there and if it is to be accepted, it is accepted again on an extremely abstract level which then [↖] might have relevance to somebody's experience. What stunned me most when I spoke to you that night at the restaurant was that you said that you had made a conscious decision not to move to New York. And so you went on the road to go west. So whatever the relationships ^{at} here to New York are, I've always felt very American but now I feel completely European. Because we're concerned on the levels which the ideas which are self-contained that we're working on, all the presuppositions are still completely traditional. That it is the work ^{which} that is supposed to be in some sense clear and self-contained. That it is there for people to understand within a certain kind of experiential ^m framework which is that it is looked at and it is experienced and is evaluated and understood and all of these things, but has a unit of _____ almost. And so that to me...and yours of course does not. Yours ^{just} points to little bits and things on the monitor then of course there are other elements.

END OF SIDE ONE

JON: And there's the other thing which struck me ~~so~~ much in this whole exercise, because the product is so completely abstract...

PHIL: You've had great problems trying to find it.

JON: Well, I think ~~that~~ I've found it, I'm not sure if it's satisfying to me. But you have the visual texture which is traditionally far out - blatant colors and lots of things happening and so forth and so on - so that which is going on is for the process and the experience, but not so much for the experience of tweaking the dials in an especially sensitive or insightful way, but much more for the communication that goes on, experience of that group communication. And that, also interestingly is I'm not sure ~~again~~ satisfyingly, is taken as kind of a hit of a whole range of other ideas and issues and commentaries and so forth which you see as being important and basically technologically imperative. And so ~~there's~~ ^{it's like} these two methodologies and they're so completely divergent and yet they exist in the same room, which is another factor, and here I see two people I respect and they're doing these things and yet I'm not sure if it's ...where the rationalization of all these things that you're doing is, and whether they have real viability outside of a particularly kind of personal involvement with these things.

PHIL: Tribe, you mean.

JON: Tribe. So that's sort of my question about this whole thing.

PHIL: Okay. A simple response. One, on the conscious choice of going west as compared to going to New York. The process of going west, one of the things I discovered was that geographically in that direction you are...you frequently become very very aware of the sun as a source. That's like the farthest out kind of natural model of source. So I never had such a presence of understanding source as compared to resource which I looked at New York effectively being this incredible resource of information, being information pro-

cessing capital probably of the whole planet. Being an incredible resource environment. Now in the process of going west it was not necessary for me to deal with the rationale of exchanging and dealing in resources, but to deal ~~with~~ so frequently ^{essentially} sensually (?) just with source. And so the business of trying to develop a rationale all of a sudden began to increasingly not become necessary. So the hunting for a rationale and something that I feel to a high degree is blundering and wandering based upon a few coordinates and one of them being the source, is guide enough. And I translate that kind of personal myth right over to the cathode ray tube as being a source. And any kind of pattern ^{it's} ~~that's~~ generated upon there is essentially being a temporary perceptual filter that one can take as the first service of the outside reality and develop as many other levels of complexity ~~as~~ and pseudo-realities that one wants to. So it's like sit there and contemplate the sun or sit there and contemplate the cathode ray/tube.

WOODY: Your description is based on formal poetic principle. But I would say it is also very much our unconscious resentment of what New York ^{represents} and many people that don't live in New York, or culturally... You see in my culture I come from a small town, not small, second-largest town, and I always had to go to Prague to exercise any culture. That was the duty of every generation. Now here, New York is the only place that exercises cultural politics, see? In America it's usually _____, or somewhere suddenly there's a sense of like Chicago had expressionists or whatever. But usually New York has been created by all the artists that represent some establishment. Like film has its Hollywood, art has its New York now. It used to be Paris. So in a way, I found that living in New York and working out of that particular cultural field...I found out it's not true. New York cultural politics, of course they exist as any business organization, but the culture that is made in New York ^{City} is very much arbitrary

trary. It's a set of coincidences because again ~~it's~~ ^{there's} an alternate culture. There's an established culture and there's an alternate culture. And that model is very local. It's not international. It doesn't go to the boundary of this nation. It's very local and it develops its own habits. In some times, it becomes a statement. Other times it's an oddity. So it doesn't mean any more that whatever New York represents is the absolute. The de-centralization of New York after 1970 ~~is~~ became totally obvious. That's why I would deal with certain phenomena, like Chicago I ~~would~~ call Chicago phenomenon since I don't have a better name. In a sense of video, electronic arts, again the tribe it's of, there is such a thing because we know each other, probably the others don't know us, that's the only tribal thing. But after all we belong to some sort of a family of electronic activities which now slowly go through electronic music, video and ^{to} computers. Even ~~now~~ the reunification is on sight, or whatever. But still, it permitted... like west coast in video so to speak had ^{its} significance which New York had in a different way, or never had ⁱⁿ that way. Chicago again represents a particular style by now and I wanted to go to the original of that what I call Chicago phenomenon - if it was, of course it's centered around you and Sandine and some way with DeFanti. Now I think it's a cultural construct - I don't know how much ~~is~~ ^{ly in} actual body count such phenomena exists. But if you look at video as what it is, or other electronic arts, starts taking its place of course, or did take some role a few years ago. I would like you to see from your viewpoint, what ^{is} the viewpoint, or how do you see that phenomenon there? Is it yours, or is it more people or is it... I don't know. Would you be able to characterize it? Because I can ~~fi~~ have my fantasies about it but I maybe see it totally differently.

PHIL: Well, I can say that one scenario I could carve with would be the evolution of the video area within the School of the Art Institute which is effectively the most seeable public construct that has a history. That in some way or other was guided more or less by myself.

And at various intervals, three or four other people. And effectively it started out as being kind of "what do we do with video in the context of an art school" and I took that on as the challenge. Within the first year of that there was a personal connection with Dan and Dan says "I'm making this instrument that is going to do wonderful things on the tv set" and I'm going, well that's not like anything I've ^{that} ever heard of as video art, i.e. from the information resources of New York etc. primarily New York. And so at that point I had to make a decision in terms of investing this twenty or thirty thousand dollars every year. Do I want to support this kind of evolution of the image processor being a tool system ~~to~~ for people to begin to deal with visual processed realities etcetera, all of that, both at ^{the} a personal level and a thing to bring back ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ the institution to give public access to. That's the route that was chosen in terms of encouraging tool systems to be ^{directly} available for people within that institution and so as a result ^{it went in} ~~of~~ that direction. So it first started out as the general video stuff, see. In a couple of years it became very clearly centralized around the image processor/video synthesis/electronic visualization tool systems, whatever the jargon might be. And now there's a kind of cut. And that cut has to do with, one: I've been saying that the initial experiment ^{for seven years} at the Art Institute, the failure component in it is that too much of the resources that we had were directed toward ~~supporting~~ the record reality or the record domain of electronic visualization. And that literally means tape recorders. What effectively ~~now~~ I am saying and re-directing things ~~to go~~ in that direction is ~~a closed-circuit~~ the development of a closed-circuit system within the school that is literally interconnecting this department with this department with this department ...and that's how many places we have now. So we've got all of these places, now, interconnected and we find out very quickly that tape recorders aren't necessarily that useable in ~~that~~ this kind of a construct'

in that local environment. But the live terminal aspects... where this being the photography department, they need interfaces with the kind of visualization that they do...this being performance people they need interface^{tool systems} for the kinds of actuality they're about ... So all of a sudden, this is ~~the~~ a kind of direction it is now going. The video area is essentially a place that has a huge investment in the more... not interfaces with other media realities, but essentially is a self-referential kind of place, where it's looking at itself.

WOODY: This actually happened, or you're just conceptualizing it?

PHIL: NO, this ^{actually} has happened.

WOODY: Over how many years?

PHIL: A year and a half. So we're really directing it.

Effectively Jane mounted the electronic activity under arts surveillance. As a kind of public pronouncement of, there's a new ~~kind of~~ game going on here.

JANE: So that all the various other disciplines within the school that want to deal with video can do so in their own terms. And they don't have to...all those photography students don't have to deal with the video area. I don't see any point in why they should, particularly. So that the video area can deal with electronic visualization in terms of the image processor and it has the close relationship with the sound area which is electronic visualization and that facility is built around the _____. So that that can be a more in-depth sort of thing within that very native area, and through the closed-circuit systems so that other people can develop their ~~own~~ interfaces with it on their own terms.

PHIL: See, that's exactly the model that we have effectively ^{something like} for Molet Uah. Is that we ~~could~~ go there and we ^{stay} here.

The issue then is that everyone there, if they want to, to interface with this kind of reality they way in which they want to. And we operate at whatever support level that we can, but we don't do it for them. We are simply one aspect in this other kind of thing.

WOODY: Now, what was there before? What was the phenomenon, I mean, as I understand, this is being ~~is~~ practiced now in some way. What was the phenomenon before? What would I call Chicago phenomenon, a few individuals? Was it graduating classes, or what kind of environment was that? How would you characterize it?

PHIL: You mean prior to...

WOODY: Right, before you started to structure this particular environment in this way.

PHIL: People ~~is~~ ^{and} the technology. Those are the two blatantly obvious and I can't find anything else as being terribly formative other than that. Four or five of us had been doing it for a number of years there locally and there's been various regular technologies and some technologies invented and lots of people ^{have} tacked on for short periods and dropped off, branched out and now are...

WOODY: As an experience or as a phenomenon, how many, or how great impact do you think this had on some structure like a school or city or scene or arts, or I don't know. What is it, do you see it as a minimum, are you disappointed with amount of people that would...

PHIL: Extremely. I think it's that young man's aspirations to change the world thing that was part of the motivation to do it. But a lot was learned in that process including the past year and a half of great disappointment in some specific aspects of it. Because the evolution didn't go the way I wanted it to go. Plus, in the process....but that disappointment has been resolved from realizing that I did not provide a wide enough avenue for negative feedback in that whole evolution because of the structure of the organization that was there. Effectively, the control that was there was myself and one other person, the dean, who had the purse strings. It was a personal relationship, and like the dean just signed pieces of paper and that gave me a whole lot of money. And all along I have tried to maintain at least the

illusion and the practical ~~reality~~ reality of making it be a democratic decision on the basis of where do we spend our monies? And all that stuff has always been out right on top of the board with everybody, but people don't want to participate, particularly students don't want to make that and that's one of the frequent negative criticisms, that "We're not interested in that. That's your job, you're supposed to decide that." Yet full-time knowing that that's foolish. It's foolish for people to completely...including my superiors and those who were supposedly my inferiors, to place all of this dependence upon one person or a couple of persons, to maintain the operation. It was completely foolish. And I think that the evolution could have been modified if more people chose to define their relationship to it in more than just a single role, but in a multiple-role way.

JON: ~~Do you have any spe~~ What are the specific disappointments?

PHIL: The ^{video} data bank which is a collection of tape, one: has not been understood by the administration and it has been picked up on by a couple of aggressive people who wanted to get...I'm not sure what the motivation is, except that, what has happened is that we effectively ^{have} decentralized that which should be centralized in the overall video evolution from my perspective, and centralized that which should be decentralized. The dean, who is pulling the strings and organizing, he's the control intelligence of the situation has taken the technology in the form of, instead of...what he's done is put money over here, put money over here, put money over here and said "these places buy equipment etcetera, these people." Now all of a sudden, because they bought, and made decisions based upon learning, ^{buying} trying to find out ~~what~~ which is effectively the work I've been doing all along, everyone ends up buying incompatible equipment. Our maintenance costs are impossible. Because instead of having one or two cameras of a similar specie, we've got 15 or 20 cameras of different species. So we can't maintain our system because of a lack of centralized purchase

control. Now, with respect to the data bank, previously the data bank was something that was simply a resource of raw tape and a collection of whatever got put on that raw tape, defined by the people who asked for the tape, used the tape, and returned the tape. Now the data bank is an archive in the sense that two people are hired to make all the tape. So it all comes through their filter of what it is that is valuable to put in the data bank as compared to that being a raw resource and the whole community having equal access to the tape. Also, to take out from the data bank. The rules of the game was whatever relationship an individual wanted to have to it was the responsibility of that individual. But now there are dictates as to how you shall relate to it.

JANE: Also it was the video area and you and some other people there had the function of dealing with the visiting artist program which is pretty elaborate at the School of the Art Institute. And so the video area was an ongoing production facility because that's where visiting artists would come to relate to the school. So that for a period of two or three years most of these visiting artist presentations happened in the video area and were videotaped in a very regular way. That isn't happening any longer. And then that was kept in the data bank. But now, the vision of the two people who are dealing with it now seems to be more relating to the outside world rather than within. Rather than taking advantage of the resources that occur, are generated, or come to the school, they are ^{dealing with} going out and interviewing primarily famous artists, regular artists, regular art makers...and trying to distribute out to the world.

PHIL: So the support is effectively for one view of what is out there to be brought in to the school. Now previously the situation was to say like here is the school. And it has different kinds of ^{input} informations constantly...visiting artists, visiting thinkers, visiting lecturers, a new student population - most crucial. Always that which I held

up first. So you have all this input coming in in the form of alien intelligences. The idea was to net whatever one could from ~~that~~ that and to make the fruits of that immediately ^{back out} available to those in the institution because the population changes all the time. Now the physical form of the data bank ^{right} now is that there are two recorders in there with the tapes, but literally ~~only~~ one or two people can ~~be~~ physically be in the same space, and so it's completely inaccessible as compared... It's sitting in the library, now right on the other side of the door, is all the books lined up, and lots of places to sit down, ^{to} browse, books, periodicals etc etc. There's also audio cassette recorders lined up and people are plugged in all the time. But the video stuff, because of the...

JANE: Literally no more than four or five people can fit in the room, physically.

PHIL: So ~~there's~~ all ~~the~~ this information stored and completely inaccessible instead of there being lined up a number of terminals to play back-tapes. So the whole redefinition that was pulled off by the higher-up control intelligence has completely negated that evolution that previously was attempted to be...

JANE: And also the aspect of...

PHIL: It's been contained.

JANE: It seemed to me, the way I read it is that this activity went on, this ~~thing~~ was fed money and attention. And ^{then} at one point it was decided that this was a valuable thing. So they attempted to normalize it. In a ~~sense~~ sense, it's kind of an odd compliment to Phil's efforts in that they went, "Phil has made this thing that is very important, very powerful and now we need to normalize it." This can no longer be. I mean, they are subscribers to an illusion of there being an objective reality and they found Phil's way of dealing with it too eccentric, too subjective. So they thought ^{that} they had access to contouring it along more objective lines. So they attempted to normalized it, but they jst traded one subjective reality for another which ^{of course} is ~~all~~ that ever happens.

PHIL: Their description of it in the form of two people,

that these two people are more documentary video intelligence.

WOODY: So they turn it into a utility?

PHIL: yes.

WOODY: So, is it that you are at the mercy of the ~~eans~~ economics? Any time there is a crisis the technological activities cease? That basically is the question. If what happened in video, in your personal work was...

PHIL: I wouldn't say it's the economics, I would say it's the control intelligence of that human institution...

JANE: Which does effect the economics.

WOODY: See, the very same happens in New York State in educational system, when a few years ago it was decided that it's no more valid tool of education. That television brings minimum enhancement of educational process. So they simply put a freeze...of course it was the pre-economic ~~situation~~ trench decision. This economic situation only strengthened it, and even if that was too crippling, they eventually wanted to lift this ban, they ~~q~~ couldn't because of economic necessity. So there are two concerns, I think. One is the disillusionment of the whole society with the role of television. In fact, if you recall television or video was sponsored as an alternate medium which was supposed to fulfill social change. More and more if I look at original video, I see it as a social commission. And other people that have^d no interest in media so to say, they were interested in social change in the sixties and they would promote this idea. And video got this fantastic boost, because it suddenly was a tool that was commissioned to do the change. Of course, it did not happen that way, so now there's a great disillusionment.

PHIL: Well, the disillusionment's there for sure, but for me I feel that there is an incredible gain in intelligence. I feel that I ^{'ve learned} ~~know~~ an incredible amount. It's very clear to me what the major ^{business} ~~vision~~ is going on now and that's retrovision as compared to television. Television, in my personal' ^{ized} jargon of

it simply is defined as being tele - far away, far off, distant - vision. And for me that's a way of defining the future.

WOODY: We all have experienced this change.

PHIL: When I define the future of television, it's two-way television. Now what we've got is one-way television, broadcast television, and that ain't gonna do it. It hasn't done it. And that's educators standing up and going "look, this television thing didn't do it." But all of the experience that I have with my definition of television is quite clear. That it is a very very radical thing, but it's a structural change, it's a huge structural change at many many levels. It's just not a very simple issue of making folks do their own videotapes and play them back through the existing distribution structure.

WOODY: _____ A certain amount of people have experienced let's say video or ~~the~~ other systems of perception that ended in many cases in alteration of life styles or total alternate purposes, like in my case, a total victim of it or self-selected victim. But then you go through this metaphysical area in which you believe that ~~is~~ a change that occurred ^{to} ~~in~~ you can in fact be communicated or could be passed on - maybe through the genes if you plan to have a child - I don't. So, what do you do with such an experience? How valid is this experience to the rest of society?

PHIL: I think only as an offering.

WOODY: Okay. And if it's not taken...

PHIL: If it's not taken, in a very real way it's not a concern of mine whether it is taken or not. I think of my complete responsibility in that I have made my offering. And that's it. The other stuff is us sitting in the desert doing whatever we want if we choose.

WOODY: I feel very mixed feelings...

END OF TAPE ONE

WOODY... This striking similarity. That we all have an offer. A standing offer, but yet nobody asks us to exercise those... nobody invites ^{us} you to....unless you're ^{of} the need of the society which continually changes.

PHIL: Okay, you're right. That's true. That's very accurate. And the way that I see to deal with that is to shorten the duration of time that is there between when you make an offering and when you see the effects of that offering. And the only way to find out quicker what the disillusionments are ahead of us is to get ourselves closer and closer to real time connections with our desires or with our goals. So that you can get that feedback quicker.

WOODY: Yes, but still then you bring another metaphysical point which is ~~that~~ some sort of ^a synchronicity which you believe there is and need as an offering, a need which can be immediately filled. If you look at the life of Stan Brakhage. He has made a stand^{ing}~~ard~~ offering for many many years now. And there was a time, you know he goes back and tell us that he used to lecture to 800, 1200 people in the hall. They don't come any more, to listen to Stan Brakhage.

PHIL: JANE: That's right.

WOODY: In a way, what happened in video, it was very intense in the first period. In fact, I recall we all were sought, in a way. Even when we did the Kitchen, whatever. It was a direct commission and it was a direct exchange, there was a need and we could fill this gap. I see less and less valid, in fact society's moving in a different way. We are not synchronous to the time as we ~~I~~ think used to be. And I wonder very much, to try to teach people video as a curriculum, because I think it is impossible to find any ^{of} particular placement with people working with video now within the ideals or values of the society. And I don't know what the values are and who is going to find them. We can see them on the surface as a fashion. Each season has its fashion. You know, the whole _____ skepticism about technology, now, is greater

in fact than it was. The knowledge that is necessary now to deal with technological systems is becoming more and more exclusive. Of course, what you are doing is extremely exclusive to the community. But you saw people at Media Study ^{yesterday} ~~and~~ before, these are the people that have been around ^{or} so many years, so intimately knowing things, yet they haven't done ^{even} the commitment even you have done, of course. You are the committed, they are ^{still} the bystanders. So it's ~~the~~ possible that we only work for some history - we don't even work for the contemporary generation, we don't work for contemporary needs, and that we may all slip into ~~even~~ oblivions. So that is also a possibility that I think we all have to consider. I see, in this computer business, going closer and closer to it, leads me inevitably into more and more confinement. I used to ^{dislike} ~~decide~~ things that I couldn't understand like the computer I thought was too exclusive, too great a barrier between me and them. Now I've become them to a certain degree. I still hope to maintain some bridge, because I am not... I have certain mental conditions like non-mathematical approaches because I cannot master mathematics. So I'm still on that other side which I defined populist. But that's my fantasy, because I maybe already recognized as technocrat, but also academian, all those labels, and not be able to deal freely with what I want to do ~~and not be able to~~ unless I would carry on the consequences. And I feel it in your case it may be exactly the same.

PHIL: Well I certainly think it is very parallel, sure.

WOODY: Like, the student population. I don't know how are your experiences in teaching, but I've found them not the direct ones. There's a lot of indirect which means the criticism of the medium, even ~~the~~ rejection. What I consider my most involved students would not touch the stuff that I was interested in, for example. In fact, most of them would be in totally remote directions, even though they are still associated with the general theme. So I couldn't pass on the

craft, and I thought I knew the craft. But of course I could only teach it one semester because I was totally ~~distracted~~ ^{destroyed} by teaching it, I lost the respect for the craft by just teaching it.

PHIL: I think it is possible to do that. Maybe this is way back, an hour, when you asked about the phenomenon. Maybe this is another way to say it that I think was very effective and that was the creating of - See to begin with I never ^{er} thought I had anything to say that was of any more importance than anyone else. But I knew I had ^{some} ~~certain~~ kinds of skills and abilities to make certain kinds of things happen, like building motorcycles, cars. And then it became the challenge of building an environment that other people could play in. That no one else was, in that particular in-between niche of the money and the power and the institution and the population there. So I built an environment that effectively carried on the teaching itself. And so because one is effectively controlling the technologies in the environment, making those choices, and contouring access etc.etc. then it was possible for that whole ^{of} environment ~~and~~ people and instrumentation and so on to teach itself. So the teaching thing to me was not so much of a personal concern of communication in the conventional role of myself and a body of students, but it was more ~~of a thing of~~ ^{at least} attempting to contact them in obtuse ways/individually and over-all ways of providing an environment there. So it's sort of coming in two directions.

WOODY: I could never do that. I can only talk to a person. I have very minimal contact with students because it involves me too much, see. When I teach with Hollis, Hollis has a wonderful way, he simply delivers and there's not much - within a class, there's no personal kind of feedback. But when I have taught my own things, I had to have this total loop - total feedback, person-to-person, and I'm a continuous victim of it here, because I have to learn from people - I've learned something from the books, but eventually I have to bring a living person here and learn that way. So It's a whole

different dilemma. Because I found out, even O'Grady has the same situation ~~here~~. He has set up a different structure, like highly interactive, $\frac{1}{2}$ as an ideal, hierarchal^{ish} structure of educational community and as a system, it had all the components. That was the level he understood at that time. And he was hoping that it could exist, as an environment. But I don't think it can, I guess that's what ~~is~~^{is} maybe happening to...

PHIL: You see, I think it can, Woody. That's what I see ~~this that's~~^{that's} ~~not~~ here, in Buffalo. I don't see that there's a technological support environment that is useable. And I think that's an absolute component that has to be there if we want expansive evolution in communication of this kind of stuff that we're going. And now, what I'm seeing is like, within the first day of Jane and I being there, and at one point we went, "holy fuck Buffalo has cable, they've got this great big building," What should be done is there should be a center, a technological support environment for people of all kinds to come in there and to do their thing with some people around that are constantly supporting that environment and maintaining it with the cable connection out into the community having ~~an~~^{its} entire channel, which is an excellent real-time ongoing outlet - and that whole process being implemented. When I hear the term curriculum, we had lunch with Gerry and I heard him mention the issue of curriculum and I think that's a very big mistake. Attempting to design curriculum, because that's what is driving me crazy as my offering from the Art Institute being a tenured professor. Because that means putting people into conventional categories and roles that ~~at least~~ as far as I can see, at least when I investigate how I have learned, has been always ineffective.

JANE: And what is now trying to happen with our institution and we know with other ones, and ~~we knew~~^{what is} for instance ~~with~~ at Douglas Davis is that Rockefeller finance tour, is to ~~show~~^{to show} help institutions how to expand their curriculum around video. Namely how to design academic, and academic padding around studio courses, around the ~~technical~~^{ological} generative activity that's going on, which I'm sure ^{all} the institutions are very responsive to. The Art Institute is, the school is trying to do that too. It's a very low-expense way ~~of trying~~ to offer

curriculum to students who will then buy it, for instance. And we feel ^{like} that's exactly the wrong way to go.

PHIL: You see, as soon as you get rid of recorders and the whole thing of video as a record medium, and think of video as a live interactive medium - you've immediately got to get cable in there, you immediately ~~have~~ got to get a physical place and immediately got to open the doors and just get this ~~viewpoint~~ happening that keeps cycling things around - out into the community back around, and everybody shares in that process of supporting this live environment.

JANE: And it's a demanding environment. That's something that we try to design for ourselves, ~~where~~ ^{that} we try to see where that could offer us a demanding situation. And one where ~~to~~ there's some kind of live distribution opportunity, whether it's a closed-circuit system within a particular school or a community cable station, something like that, is that - there's demand to it in an ongoing constant way. And there's no demand for producing personal video art pieces. There's no demand for that. Nobody gives a shit whether I make another tape or not. And so we don't sense that from the video art structure, and that is based upon recording. It's based upon precious objects in the form of tapes. And so we don't see that as offering that demanding situation that we're seeking. And I think people learn very slowly in that one, also. I don't think that's a good educational structure.

WOODY: You liken this process of live communication as vital to human activity. I ~~fe~~ haven't found that true. I can foresee live feedback communication system practiced in different conditions like survival - medical monitoring. In that case ~~the~~ if the content of your living is to guard you against disease and perpetuate you to survive, then media will play ^{most} an important role in our lives. But if you think that people are interested in communicating their own images, I think this is your fantasy as it is a fantasy of an artist to produce an artifact in the case of a tape. I think there's no

proof to the theory that a live video situation as self-perpetuating force. It used to have even more since people used video as totally new medium - non-mirror^d medium - to do all kinds of ~~closed-circuit~~ distribution within ~~schools~~ closed-circuit, ~~schools~~ institutions, schools, even the neighbors. I had with Alphons Schilling who lived four houses on 14th Street away towards ^{the} Union Square, we had the first personal cable on Manhattan. We watched each other for two days and then we had to disconnect it. There's something that goes beyond ^d the concept, beyond a wish - it has to be rooted in a much higher duty. Like Christianity probably would have very good closed-circuit ^{association} system which would practice religious need continuously 24 hours a day because that's a higher duty. Media only provides that particular. Telephone has never become an important communication beyond message--sending. Television is more complex, it's not the message-sending any more, it is the state of being. I've transcended my need for process of being image...it means being on, being active, being synchronous. I have just translated that into my own terms in which I can observe a device which is in on state, even if it doesn't manifest externally, for example the computer. ^{It's a} The system that is continually alive, it's a living system. So I share, I think, one of these interests of yours is to perpetuate a living organism - or living system which is all the inputs outputs. But I find it still very intellectual. It's not ^a part of the survival need. Society does not truly need it. In fact today society needs to be relieved...

PHIL: When you say society, what I think is 3 and a half billion people. Are you not meaning that that specifically? Are you meaning a particular shared ideology of 3 ½ billion people? What do you mean when you say what society needs?

WOODY: The enormous popularity of traditional television, it's just too embarrassing to even deal with the need of your neighbor. I think there's no justification in which ^{this} television^s created - You may have a different view, I think television is created by ~~the~~ people. It's not created by the companies. And I think the image of ~~the~~ television is the image of ~~the~~ society.

Regardless ~~of~~ if it's manipulated or not. Because the manipulation can go to a certain degree, but after that it's not enough. And I think people continuously create large mythological structures like nationalism, which television is now some sort~~of~~ of internal chauvinism, nationalism. And I think that is the image that people truly want. That higher state of illusionism that is not related to daily needs or true communication between two people. And I think there's an opposite tendency in this society which goes towards abstract and towards concrete. The only concrete needs are ^{the} survival needs, like defense - I mean national defense, personal, medical, kind of monetary needs, business conglomerates... I ~~think~~ ^{find that} you're trying to elect this metaphysical quality as a real one. You're substituting, you've fantasized this into a stage that reality...this illusion becomes reality.

PHIL: I admit that fully. I guess that's the way ~~is~~ that I see evolution being able to be controlled, at least from my personal viewpoint of it in that I have to have these various kinds of fantasy loops that go out there as possibilities and tomorrow I'm going to wake up and one of those has got to be dominant over the other ones in order to ^{help me} direct perceptually, conceptually, operationally...everything that I do tomorrow. And what I do is very much formed by that.

WOODY: Absolutely. I agree that you are, in a way, ^{an} artist to the _____ and I recognize what you do as art. But any attempt of linking this ^{activity} to reality ^{or curriculum.} ~~is criticism~~. Like your criticism is interesting. I have no respect for any curriculum either and if O'Grady told you there is a curriculum, he was ^{just} fantasizing.

~~WOOD~~ PHIL: He used that word.

WOODY: He has been dreaming of having a curriculum for years, but his instincts are correct, his practice is disastrous. All this curriculum around of course has been based on individuals that are teaching. Curriculum was not a product of a conscious decision of a single persons or two persons.

Always persons that are ^{involved in} teaching here and ~~that~~ bring their piece of ^{the} own curriculum, that's how curriculum is made here. To speak of it being a curriculum, I think it's a fantasy of his. It's just an extension of...

PHIL: I think it is. And I think ^w that Gerry needs to be told ~~that~~ is...I mean what I want to tell him - though we didn't talk at any length at all, really - is that the idea of supporting people is essentially the next ^{level} ~~model~~ past the new model of survival. What I'm saying is that ~~at~~ the survival level you need to have a support environment. And then you can bring people and make various kinds of events and so on happen around the people because they're powerful people.

WOODY: Now what you detected immediately is very important. You found out there's no technological basis to any of the concepts that are being practiced in Buffalo. I happen to agree. It's partly because O'Grady has not incorporated into his model university, community, and consciousness...He did not include any technological structure. He did not find that as important as the rest. So his component - which happened to many other people like that have been trying to do social architecture. Since it's not part of his needs, or instinct, he has failed to build that complete structure. So it hasn't survived that dream. But we know how difficult - because the technological base is a very complicated one which requires a whole set of values. Like even respect. Gerry has great respect for artists as ~~creative~~ individuals. He cannot share this respect for creative technicians. It's ^{simply} not part of his value system.

PHIL: That's amazing.

JANE: We run into that a lot, though.

WOODY: Of course. It's very typical. So...

JANE: It's so notable. In Chicago people are starting to organize a bit and get together proposals for media centers or things like that and that's generally what is left out. Where's the tech salary here? Where's the money to get someone who

can really do that?

WOODY: Even if, eventually he understood the dilemma, like a year and a half ago it became total reality that he cannot survive ^{as media center} without...it was too late, ^{because} all the technicians that have been the creative ones, like Chuck Hoyer or video freaks, they have been already commissioned. They commissioned themselves out, they have been hired, they have been having their own thing. It's too late to catch it. It was the original nucleus or missing component that brought in a way the disaster. That's in other places as well, of course. This is the crisis of the sixties in which the ideas and McLuhanism was based on some kind of a higher intellectual understanding. It wasn't based on a ^{ny} material substance. That happened to the whole generation of the humanists, you see. People that had been working in form that would be dealing with subject of people that suddenly came to video, like open media center - George Stoney who had total misunderstanding of the complexity of half-~~inch~~ production. He thought it was for children and women as he put it at that time. Just amazing, since he is so detached from the reality of production in film because he always had the crew, he was a director. So there's a whole generation of misunderstanding which eventually ended in this disaster. There's no technological basis to any activities of that kind. And now ^{the} part of the curriculum, ~~is~~ based on Hollis and me, is the computers that eventually a single person can engineer. Jeff is the _____ provider of that technological knowledge. It's also a failure of ours ^{because} that we couldn't really maintain a group...We should have never been associated in fact with the university. We should have created an alternate environment right from the beginning. Tried to raise money on our own, have research of a few people that could be totally technologically equipped to deal with these... Binghamton had it for one time. Ralph Hocking was able to exist primary practitioner. He understood this technological basis but he was unable to deal with the others. Like raising the support

for him wasn't so easy. So eventually that as a group disappeared. Now they're just at the beginning. They don't have anybody there that could carry on.

JANE: You ^{said} ~~say~~ it's difficult to raise money to support it, his work. It seems like there's a lot of money available to have artists come and do things etcetera but much more difficult to actually create and maintain a technological support environment. None of the grants want you to buy anything with their money. The funding people seem to be making the same mistake.

PHIL: The constant criticisms that I kept bumping all the time from my superiors was they read me as saying - and I finally had to admit that they were right - don't put money into people put it into technology. And I'm still fighting at the Art Institute. They want to hire more video faculty and make more video classes. And I'm trying to say buy more video equipment and give it to the people that are existing in the community and make sure that equipment is compatible so that people can begin to interrelate with the technology as compared to bringing in people. That, sooner or later means that they're not going to be able to use the technology because none of it works - it's not maintained, it's not compatible. So immediately we're about something else other than dealing with whatever these media problems and issues and realities that we try to actively do are about. That operating principle is real clear to me. If you don't have the tools to do it with then you go back to the other medium that you proficiently can deal with in the communication level.

WOODY: So we at least agree on that. I mean we agree on everything, but this is the basis that we have to study. We have to experience the same level which is the catastrophe of ^{the} technological structures as being maintainable through a society which goes through a crisis, or many crises. But it will get worse. And that brings me to this point of socialistic party. We have this local socialistic party, the only party that ran on platform of technology. Workers being technologists. This

kind of brought me the first time some kind of respect for socialism after ~~all these~~ ^{so many} years. They understood that workers cannot just demand jobs. In fact they have to be technologically equipped, they have to face the crisis, otherwise they're gonna be dismissed as they were before. So there's no power without having tech....

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE ONE