

William Parker lecture at Visual Studies Workshop, April 1971 reel 5

Parker comments made during the reading of texts are set in ().

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Transcribed by Bob Martin

...Almost the cynicism in those is profound. And when you get to the Mickey Mouse one, this becomes a very blatant commentary if you want to carry it one step further for at least whoever receives it. But it is a peculiar thing about Les, I am not so sure we can say it is his intention, it is more or less again, it is our response, and they are variable. And then of course there is the maternal figure again with the Mickey Mouse head.

Student: When I look at that print, the first thing I am struck by is that it is unreal, it is not a visualization, it isn't in reality. Some pictures have that back and forth between real/unreal because of the visual illusion that resolves quickly into a set of...and because of that, I look at that, the symbols seem to be so basic that when you look at that, what you are looking for and examining is the way in which is expressed some subtleties that go on in it. It seems to me that the cross, the woman, is on such a basic ambiguous kind of symbolic level that I can't take that really too seriously. I mean not that he hasn't done it subtly. He can set up all these loaded symbols and that is not saying too much, and that is not what I am thinking about when I look at that print in terms of how that is expressed.

Give me a little bit more, I hear what you are saying, but what do you mean when you say you are not interested in that but you are looking at how it is expressed, what do you mean by that?

Student: Well because the symbols in the way that you are talking about them in terms of Jung, etc. etc., those things don't interest me too much in that he is not a scholar and whatever connections might be there I am sure he is not aware of...

He wasn't.

Student: In that sense I can't take the symbols too seriously.

Student: But that is no argument against his hypothesis, which is that this is an inevitable force that seizes someone to find its expression. One could be an idiot I suppose and... the life-force will seize the artist and somehow produce what it wanted.

Student: Right, well that says something about the life force but I am not sure what it

says about the photographer which is what I think you are concerned with when looking at it.

Paul, I can't accept that, you know why? Because you imply that a person might have to have an automatic awareness of these particular traditional motifs that I mentioned, and granted it would be better, I am sorry, I apologize...

Student: I'm not saying they would have to have that, I am just saying when I look at it, what I am looking at is the way he put this photograph together, not the way he put these symbols together, what it is as a photographic image.

Well, I don't deny that, and there is a level of my response, but however I can't for the life of me get involved in the photographic nature of Les Krims' work. And I would have to suspend far more, that is in terms of the figures, the constructs, the set ups and so on. It is like the one of the girl in blackface in the motel room, right? Now, I know how that was done, it was a very definite mechanical set up, and it was pre-planned, absolutely, sketched out image: you sit here, he pulls out three streamers...he goes over to the air conditioner set, he attaches the streamers, gives her the makeup, put on the blackface. She is getting all of this ready, then please sit in the chair this way, put your arm here, stretch out your leg there, and so on. He backs up, takes the photograph, here is the greasepaint, take off the...It is definitely a predetermined set up. They remind me of some of the Manneristic charades. Now I don't care whether Les knows about this or not, many of those, again, we would have to look at visual material and, there is a book called *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* that has a whole series of discussions on some of the charade image that appeared in the Mannerist period where you would have very elegant ruins and grand palaces, and often you would have dwarf figures, or figures of gross distortion, coupled with images of great regal beauty. And Les seems to work with this idea of the predetermining of images. He said something very interesting today: I said, Les, therefore you invent these motifs. He said, "Well, but they are real anyway." And I said, what do you mean by real? And he said, "Well they are just as real once I have taken that photograph, that is an actually existing event. Whether I set it up or not makes no difference, there it is." He also admitted that he feels, and I was very careful that this was not my projection. I said, is it possible that you are saying something about private behavior? Is it that you might assume that people do behave that way? He said sure, for example, and I started to giggle at this and Les said, "For example, in Vaudeville, can you imagine a woman who might have played a blackface part, and she came home tired from the show, and she just sat down in her chair to rest." And I said come off it Les, that sounds to me too positivistic. Couldn't it be conceivable that there is right now down at the Treadway, a woman in her hotel room in blackface, sitting in front of her air conditioner, now I know that sounds bizarre and almost perverse, but the problem is that I accept his concept of the fiction being reality.

Even if he accepts it on the basis of even if I set it up what does that have to do with the matter? It is real as long as I set it up and therefore I have made a very straight photograph. The figure is not montaged floating up against the ceiling, he attaches the chair against the wall and sets the figure up there. So as a result I don't know quite how to look at those photographs and dismiss the inventions, or the setting up of the event that he declares. If I were to get involved in just the photographic structure: I can't even get to the composition. What do you do with that table with the rubber cement on it to create the flames. I cannot get involved with that in terms of like the centered image, or why is the arm burning, why the Dollar family... Why the flaming table? And he said, "Well I have been very interested in working with fire as a potential thing to photograph relative to," almost implying the dangers it might imply... Les would be better at explaining all this... he said he wanted to photograph himself seen, watch out for this one, bending over and have flames shooting up out of his back, his spine. And he said he couldn't do it. (laughs) Yes, all I can say now that after a kidnapping, and I can see the exhibition, and here it is, the million dollar family and the flaming arm and then in the middle we will have: "artist conflagrated." But he said that he still thought that, the idea that he did associate the fact that people see the fire on the arm, and they begin to think of definite linkages. I set it up so that people would see the possibilities of destruction, or the possibilities of what is in a room, and he said that he was quite interested in fire when he was young. He gives you reasons but I don't think they are the way to define the potential image functions. And even if we deal with certain traditions that they parallel, that does not still explain why that individual gets involved with this kind of imagery in this particular time... We know of Weston's ladies with the gas-masks and other contrivances, we know their parallels, we know there is a tradition, but we don't have quite the set of imagery unique to this time that has become more and more apparent in Les's work.

Student: Your not getting at what we were talking about, she thinks.

Student: Just say it Lou.

Student: Well because I wanted her to say it.

I don't understand.

{inaudible exchanges, laughter}

Student: The question she is asking is whether he is using the symbols consciously or unconsciously, like the way people make movies relevant now, they put people with long hair in it, or nudes, that kind of use of symbols. How do you distinguish if Les is maybe

just doing that. In order to be relevant, he is using symbols that imply relevancy.

Like shock symbols?

Student: But within the body of work there are as you say, shock symbols, there is a tendency to outrage.

Student: Or couldn't it just be on a literal level, obviously if he is working with fire, fire is dangerous.

That is right.

Student: And it seems to me that electricity is dangerous. To read that she is feeding it rather than being electrocuted or somehow drugged by the charge from the wall seems to me that you are bringing a great deal of baggage to the picture. I regard electricity as a dangerous thing, I guess I have been trained for it. A lot of his pictures have that in it: the Dwarf one... we were told... that the mutant refused to submit himself to it, he was afraid of being electrocuted.

Nathan: ...there were wires there too...

Student: But the guy was so scared that they were really going to be plugged in that he refused to submit to it, do you see what I am...It is a basic physical shock level, we are talking about shock.

Fire being associated with human being...

Student: Fire or burning...I don't want to stop your flow, I really want to hear why you think it happens at this time.

Everything you are saying I have no argument with, and I really feel strongly that that is the case.

Student: Fire and electricity, weapons and things that appear in his work are dangerous. These are things that people are afraid of.

That is right.

Student: On a very basic level: age, physical deformity, whatever, grotesqueness... the work is full of that kind of thing, it is a very physical, what you pull away from. It is a very

gut reaction.

I agree.

Student: That anybody could be driven to rip them off the walls and threaten somebody else with a kidnapping...

That is right, it shows that it obviously has a very powerful effect, at least upon one person, a very powerful effect. They are, the grotesque, the idea of things that we are afraid of, or perhaps certain inadmissible evidences, etc.

Student: He is obviously working with forces, okay?

Yes but Dennis the only thing I...I don't argue with that... I suppose that since his work does constellate a number of dimensions of either reaction or repulsion. Maybe these are the people I have heard, and not to name any, but there are many people who are truly outraged by Les's photographs, and either reduce it to, {laughs} and I when I look at you Lou I am not saying that you are doing this, but they either reduce it to the fact that these are purposely intended to simple shock, just that level. Or they say that there is something disturbing about his interest. They honestly start accusing the man of some kind of perversity. After all, one must have a lot of hang ups running around looking for these deformed figures and so on.

Student: Let's just be very cynical and assume for a minute that what Les has done is after an early period, in early photographs there was a certain amount of unusualness which people came to zero in on, and in terms of a very cynical motive, related to what might be present-day Salon photography, he went along creating outrageous photographs to shock and titillate, this type of thing, okay? Would that matter, if that was his purpose and that is why he did it and that is the reason why the images are now on the wall. Would that matter in terms of what you were talking about before?

Indeed it would matter.

Student: Oh it would?

Because his whole purpose in doing that would matter to me in the sense of it being somewhat against the grain of Salon photography as you mentioned. It obviously expresses a purpose. Les's work is to a degree anti-classical. It is anti-design conscious. It is anti-metamorphic imagery.

Student: ...using kodalith, for example, although he uses it beautifully, it is not the traditional fine print.

Student: There is a question there too, suppose what is in gray terms. Hank said...think of those photographs instead of on that kodalith, which for me becomes very seductive in terms of the surface, and I keep thinking I should run home and print all of my negatives on kodalith, and think of them in gray. Does that do anything for you, changing the image in any way?

Student: Well we have a book that has that...

Student: I think that is all part of his work. I think it is kind of irrelevant.

Nathan: ...it is inherent to the materials. He did print black and white prints which he thought were very unsuccessful...it is a kind of tonal deterioration that comes in, that blackening effect in certain areas...

Student: And apparently if these are going to be published in something that won't be in color, he will make a black and white print for it.

Nathan: Well no that is not true because he talked about that today. He said it wouldn't essentially give the effect and he talked about some other possibilities. Because you can't print them, the only way to be successful on his terms would be to make a black and white copy-negative of the black and white print.

Nathan, he also mentioned today the fact that he, he was asked the question, he said there was a change of tonality even in the kodalith sepia kind of tonality and said, do you think it makes any difference, well it didn't to me, for whatever, I don't know how other people responded, but obviously his concern to a degree with the kind of color/value tonality that occurs in the print. What I am getting at is the fact that between the dimensions of Les's subject matter and his printing techniques or the kinds of structures that he uses to set up the photographic image, I simply, personally, cannot dismiss the imagistic foundations. But I do not necessarily think to find the parallels that answer the question of why does Les present us these images today. I don't think I have any concrete answer, and I am just wondering, it could be, maybe the shock effect. I have the feeling, as Dennis has pointed out, if that can cause a response in individuals of such radical proportions, it may well be it. And since I have heard other people that might not go out and kidnap somebody but seem to feel the same level of outrage. At the winter symposium, I will never forget as long as I live, that group of people who became really very upset after witnessing some of the images, and began to talk about,

where do we have a moral responsibility, and they certainly weren't being Puritanical. They were talking about how does this impinge upon pornography, etc., etc. At least the questions arising were, where does a photographic image become so believable, as a revelation of human identity on some level, that it then enters into a moral question. And I think that maybe Les is revealing certain, we are cultivated to look at certain modes of human behavior as being unacceptable, immoral: repressed desires, god, even school kids know the image of, the idea of the hidden dimensions of one's mind, the unacceptable behavior forms... Even though we act as if we are enlightened and are finally able to accept any number of dimensions, we have yet to have a real positive voyeurism, now I don't say that Les is a voyeur. A positive voyeurism that says you are not peeking through the keyhole, there it is, in fact, and as a result we are startled more by the revelation of potential or possible identity or event or association of figures and so on. But rips away the idea that this is a sort of dirty dustbin of secretive desire... I find that maybe Les is revealing certain, as Jung would call them, shadow functions. Many of you may say, that is your projection, you are putting that kind of label on these images, maybe.

Nathan: It is very interesting that in the 40s there was a cartoonist by the name of Aberdeen that accommodated many similar motifs, not necessarily in terms of specific objects or figures, nudes were drawn. And it is almost that same parallel that occurs about the nude, very early: the nude photograph. I wonder what we may be avoiding is the fact of the service that he is providing, again, on environmental terms. He creates enough of an environment, then maybe those specific connotations about the subject matter may not be there, maybe we can accept the figure...

Absolutely, that is a very important, in fact that would come closer to, there is a didactic function. I really honestly believe that some of those images teach. There is a humanistic function, maybe it is amplifying it too far, but I really do honestly feel that they set up a kind of, there is a point in which the imagery that is unacceptable can become acceptable, therefore we then get involved in looking at it on entirely different terms, and it may well be that we will start analyzing relative to the formal structures...

Student: I don't understand how the environment plays into...

Student: The argument for pornography is kind of the same thing. If it is open and above board and out in the street where everyone can get it, then we'll all get used to it and it won't be such a big deal.

Yes and of course there are counter arguments to that, too, ala the *New York Times Magazine* last Sunday, which is an interesting kind of resurgence of the moral opinion

coming back in.

Student: I don't understand how the photograph of an environment relates to what we originally started talking about, is there really archetypal...

Nathan: I wasn't here.

Student: The question is, are there archetypal energies being expressed through Les's work, or is it only a shade above pornography, or different, I wouldn't say above, from pornography.

Nathan: I probably tend to agree that there were, because I think the energy of conflict that he is facing is not unlike the energy of conflict that other people have faced. And I think that is rare, historically.

Student: Because he if is not immediately acceptable that must mean...

Nathan: ...Selection beyond choice. That under certain kinds of circumstances the individual will relate in selecting something beyond choice to represent a feeling state. And it is very consistent that we seem to gravitate to certain forms to express these ideas.

Student: You say that it is archetypal because there is an energy of conflict?

Student: As opposed to the motif?

Nathan: I wouldn't exclude it. It becomes an important thing in a pattern. One of the dominant things that seem to progress in Les's work is a conflict with the idea of reality. It is a very early stage. If you know his early work, if you go back to the *Aperture* issue, very little of this is demonstrated on these terms, but much of it is there.

Absolutely.

Student: And the value, the value is because of this event occurring?

Nathan: ...but it raises no questions of the maker.

Exactly! And I think this is an extremely important factor...Let's say against the grain of a lot of arguments that do turn back to the photographer and speak about the identity of the person, I find they are strangely neutral in terms of the idea of identifying a person

with this particular image. They become highly collective...and I can't name the archetype but I can say the energy level has to do with a kind of collective concern with the idea of accepting certain identities that are not necessarily overt, that are not individual. That is not on the plane of the individual hang up or personality difficulty or the neurotic form of behavior or what have you. They are presented as extremely viable events, no matter what we may think of the various distortions, they are presented with a kind of a presence that requires us to accept them as real. And then as a result, just by virtue of the idea of the photograph, they become acceptable as records of human behavior.

Student: But it was suggested that the photograph almost by the way it had been constructed drove you out of it and into its construction, the fact that it is set up.

Yes, you do think of preliminaries, you think of prior to, and after the fact. Which I think is even more revealing of our action with it: our identity with it not only in relation to the photograph but also the setting up of the event and the futurity of the event.

Student: But there is a setter-upper first, or a director.

Nathan: Forget about the traditional objection of setting up something, because Les is doing more than setting up something, he is engaging in a very definite kind of ritual. He phoned Disneyland, ordered the balloons, there is an ordering thing, a sending out, a coming back, there is a whole preparation he seems to go through, it is not...

Student: But how is the biography of that image important to the image when it finally exists as an image? It doesn't matter...

Nathan: But look, the concept of Earth Works has recurred in a discussion of Les's work by him: the idea of what is implicit there seems to be of interest to him. The way it is important is the context, an awareness of the individual maker and an awareness of the work.

Student: You can no longer just get it from dealing with the work?

Student: Do you feel that has always been the case or is it recent, like with the fireworks things. Obviously the fireworks are structured so that the real event is when they blow up, the photographs are records of the blow up.

Nathan: That is a...the minute Les said I want to do a pyrotechnic sculpture. He came in with a layout, all drawn to scale, he ordered the materials, he stayed up there until 12

o'clock at night...

Student: But what does that matter to the image?

Student: It doesn't matter to me if he had on green shoes when he did it.

Nathan: They were sort of red and green as a matter of fact.

But Hank I think it matters a great deal in the sense that, wait a minute, it matters in as much as the planning aspect does not seem to require a high degree of emotive involvement in the photograph itself. So obviously, if there are emotional connections, biographic fact makes a difference: he plans, he sets up, it is almost like a stage director setting things into focus. Well that is what I meant about we do get a certain intimation that we are in the photograph, not only in it seeing it but we are there prior to the photograph.

Student: Someone was.

Or that someone was.

Nathan: Hank, the point is, if this idea is important to him he will find a way to establish that in the process. Remember, there have been changes, there have been transitions in his work, and if that linked back, and the link back is very important because he announces it in the one of the family. That is the first time you really have the sense of the extent of a labored involvement of an element within the picture. And that was made, that wasn't just something he put there. And I think you will find connecting links in a lot of his photographs that probably begin to announce the process. Because right now we are very interested in not only the priority of object, but process, and what we do with the object. This is why the whole Earth Works commitment intrigues him because it seems to provide him with some justification for his own responses.

Student: My feeling is generally, all that is very true, it is also on a certain level which is a very didactic level, and is somewhat aside from the actual material of the photograph existing as an image. That is my feeling about it.

Nathan: ...hardly because the evidence is there within the picture, you know...

Student: Just like the evidence is there that it is a kodolith...

Nathan: Yes but he has also described that what that picture becomes is evidence of

the activity.

Right and not only that when he says it is reality...and it is reality once I set it up. So the reality is in the event. This is a document, basically of that event.

Student: My point is that is all very true, but that doesn't have to do with what the real value of the image can be,

Why don't we deal with the question of, why in the world does he set up *those* particular events, or fictions? That is my interest. {laughs} Honestly, it is there, but out of the range of choices, he mentioned today about the photograph he showed about the artificial snow machine, he said my god, I told Nathan about this and I've got a plan for photographing, so he is going to go ahead with it where there this woman, is seated, and there is a machine, and I don't know what she does, he didn't describe it, but I imagine her pulling a cord that makes artificial snow drift down on her. I said, Les, why do you decide on that particular image? He can give you certain, like the one of the woman with the false teeth today, remember that image? He said that when I was little I read a story about a man who lived in the wilds of the North, and that his gums began to rot and he pulled out his teeth one by one. And I said, oh and that is why you did that image? And he said no, (laughter) but you said was there anything that ever reminded me of it, honestly, that is the only connection I can think of. Now what I am saying is that many of those images are not traceable according to Les's intentions, of saying well I have this notion or that notion or what have you. He is just as surprised by the fact that for the first time he saw a series of carte de visits to which he suddenly said my god I wished I could have done that, or I would have liked to have set something up like that. I am interested in why does he choose out of the multiple range of identities he could constellate, why those. And they do follow...I come back to something that centers around the idea that even if it were to shock or to offend or to portray the unacceptable event...or to make a pun on societal interests, the spraying of the wife, advertisements, etc.

Student: Can that by any stretch of the imagination be interpreted as an extension of the medieval holy ghost breath image?

Students: {laughter}

Well that is not unacceptable as a possibility, there is a parallel.

Student: We are reducing it to absurdity... {inaudible} {laughter}

Student: The holy breath deodorizer.

It has parallels in the sense of as the advertisement suggests, making something supposedly unacceptable, acceptable, with all this ridiculous...

Student: It almost has the quality of an annunciation.

It does.

Student: The male figure... supported on the bed... floating in...

Right, right, an announcement... What I am saying, Dennis, in that particular case I wouldn't necessarily make a direct parallelism but I would say that if I looked at that in a field of a number of images I might start beginning to do so, see certain connecting principles in that manner. But I find that there is a very definite imagistic identity that runs through Les's work that says that certain impulses toward expression have been highly individual. He becomes very offended when someone asked him today which photographs were the ones the man saw that caused the kidnapping, he said I don't know, I just have no idea. He doesn't seem to get interested on the level of the response factor.

Student: He pointed them out.

He pointed them out, he did?

Student: He pointed them out because I asked him myself and he said these two images were in the show.

Oh he said which ones were in the show but he doesn't know...remember the article said that there were two that particularly offended this person, he didn't know. The catalog is sitting right over there, he knows which ones were in the show, he would point those out but he doesn't know, there was this big thing about two of the photographs were so unacceptable that the man went out and kidnapped the professor's son, but he just said he didn't know which ones those were.

Student: I wanted to ask you if he has a sense of humor.

Sure.

Student: I'd like to... {laughter}

That is not permitted, John, do not ask that question. He said is there a sense of humor in these, I think they are hilarious in some cases, and some are very frightening.

Student: I used to have him as a teacher and we used to set up these situations where we would make pornographic gingerbread cookies. And have a good time and see how far we could take those...

Joan?

Joan Lyons: I think an essential difference between Les's and Jerry's work...in Jerry's work, these Ox herd images may be apparent but they really aren't commented on. They are just present in a very classic sense. What is essential to Les's work, it is a kind of breakthrough. It is the repressed image... a timeliness to, in a certain sense, another repression that is important at this point in time, that something comes up to break through.

Become overtly visible.

Joan: Right, so he is dealing with something that is out there now. The timing of it is very essential. And another thing is that he is taking something that exists...but here there is a photograph of it...it is totally different if there is a drawing or a manipulation of it in the way Jerry creates it.

I completely agree. In fact there is more evidence that certain grotesqueries were quite acceptable in the form of graphic media, painting...but for the photograph to deal with images, call it what you will, I don't know if you will be convinced by this, I am, that many of the images seem to be a revelation of things that were normally held on individual levels. You know the whole concept of neurosis: we get to a collective level eventually but we generally talk about individual neurosis. And Les has the tendency to objectify that which has been repressed or called to be a private experience. And by doing so...

Joan: inaudible

Yes, and then they affect us collectively, and then each individual has his own response...I want to return just a moment to Nathan's concept that yes, he is creating a kind of environment in the series of images that at a certain point in time we may find that imagery totally acceptable. It will not strike groups, individuals, as something negative or private or covert or confessional. And I think in that sense that is the archetypal level. That there may well be now a kind of energy constellating where the

human mind is not subjected to these divisional levels. And that it is not private, we don't have individual hang-ups. We don't even have collective ones. Basically we find all things, boy now this sounds dangerous but I'll say it, all things become acceptable so that we can then differentiate by choice rather than by compulsion... Les is accused of being often compulsive about some of these images, and ironically, to me it is a curative, almost therapeutic imagery, because... he presents us images that reduce the effect of compulsion and as a result, then we can make differentiated choices between types of behavior. Did you read the commentary on *Little Big Man*? Have you read that book or Dustin Hoffman in the film? You know the backwards process? Riding backwards, talking backwards, jumping into the sand to bathe and drying off in the water.

Student: Saying no when you mean yes.

There are innumerable identities where certain cultures accept as relevant, peculiar forms of behavior, even as a ritual form. There are innumerable cultures that are quite liberal about what maybe one collective group would find a distortion, an individual neurosis. They see that as part of the field of their total tribal concern... The shaman is often the person or the individual who has a series of very apparent peculiarities, but he becomes an integral and active part of the collective concern. And generally he supplies revelational awareness to the community. It is as if Les's works are, to me, in visual form, the first examples of the potential for being able to see, to literally see anything, and well beyond the banality of typical pornography. Constellating something that does not necessarily reveal any kind of the overt, after a period of time, the boredom of typical pornography but that begins to show a kind of interaction, particularly people engaged in events. And that is why I say that I cannot deny that the event also takes, we get to a degree involved in the prelude to the photograph and then we also think of the futurity of it. How it might apply to groups, individuals, partners, whatever it may be. In a way it suggests that any image has the potential for not being categorized. I know it is ironic that we talk about... not necessarily today, but there has been a definite categorization of what is acceptable, what is not acceptable, what is classical, what is anti-classical, and so on. I said Les has a certain anti-classical strain, but they are simply balancing, it is like the other side of the coin, going against the grain of the controlled organization of the picture plane, the controlled technique and so on. He presents us with a counterpoint that says here is the other field that has been left out. But it isn't like replacing the other field, it is simply another sector of it. And this then becomes part of the field of imagery that we can then make choices from on less categorical levels. We can begin to say, I can look at this, and enjoy or not enjoy and start evaluating on a highly individual basis, the photograph, rather than the imagery. At least that is what I see as a possibility and I think it is certainly a rather unique

dimension. I don't know any other period in visual ideas where we've had generally the idea of the concept of style, individual or collective, has concentrated upon the idea of period, or cultural interest, cultural style, or formal interest that always lop off the relevance of other possible images. Look at Goya, a completely unique individual, it is not until a century later that we become interested in all of those grotesque images that he developed, the black images and so on. But they were totally unacceptable in his period of time. What we find is that he stands alone, not within any Romantic idiom. We put him in these categories but we can't suddenly classify him as belonging to a period. He stands as a unique individual. There was just not enough body of visual information to balance that to say that was part of a total field. Les's images may well be because they are photographic, they can be disseminated with more immediacy, etc., but they are performing a balancing act again, completing a field of imagistic possibilities.

Student: Do you see it as a therapeutic function?

I would say there is indeed that potential for it becoming collectively therapeutic.

Student: That is exactly what Morse Peckham says.

Does he? That is interesting. Morse Peckham, *Man's Rage for Chaos*. I mentioned biological adaptation through the arts. Jung seemed to think that it was extremely important, going back to the subject that we do tend to create closures as far as the kind of experiences we accept. I mentioned this earlier with Heineken, is there an amount of control of the individual, can he control the negative or positive aspects of the archetypal impulse. And of course Jung's concept was that indeed one can...I will simply sum it up by saying he felt that we tend to categorize experiences in the broader sense of acceptable or unacceptable, and perhaps we are not making an honest choice there. We are simply not dealing with all data as both neutralized, as coequal, and therefore we can only make a choice when we have the widest range of visual information or verbal information or experiential information available to us. Then only can we decide who we are, what we are, what we will become, etc. Otherwise we are simply following either collective strains or dogmas or canons or laws or jurisdictions over behavior or what have you. So in that sense, the artworks are indeed therapeutic. If they are doing something that balances the potential for people to see and even to a degree see their own fantasies lived out. And I use that word lived out, in the image as well as prior to it and after it. Unless there is some other comment on that, that is simply where that question was earlier.

Nathan: Just the fact that it is occurring in a varied strained sense. In Japan and Italy,

an incredible response to Les's work, because the advent of the kind of imagery that Les is involved with existed in Japan probably as early as 1960. And the direction was there in the work of a lot of young Japanese photographers. And this is almost as if the various strains are cycling back. It might also be that certain events within the culture necessitated the advent of that kind of image coming forward, especially in that culture.

Student: A repressive culture that would respond to...

Did any of you notice this peculiar fact that all of the pudendas were airbrushed out?

Students: Yes.

And I asked Les, was he was offended by this and he said absolutely not, which to me was a confirmation of the fact that he is much more interested in the observation...

Nathan: I got a strange letter from Okposo (?). I showed Okposo some of Les's work when he was here...a series of letters to arrange to send his portfolio, and there is an interesting letter from Okposo on that whole problem, even to the point of getting them into Customs. You have to promise, when picking up those photographs up at Customs, that they will be airbrushed.

Isn't that remarkable? I think it reconfirms that the event and the set up...and not whether or not there is an exposure of the female figure...

Nathan: ...and pornographic art.

Student: Any images of this sort will evoke this kind of response, internationally. Think back to that one photograph that Sommer did of the decapitated foot. Christ, the stuff that came into *Aperture* after that was put in was just, people were outraged at that image. If you decide on your subject matter, you can put out images that are going to cause that kind of outrage...

Nathan: Yes but that foot was actual.

Studnet: Fine, OK. I am saying that you can take subject matter...

Nathan: ...Go back in another direction totally in terms of Sommer. That was a kind of very real event that he felt he transformed someplace else. These are like a beginning fiction...

Student: What happens with the image is not increased or decreased by the amount of public response to the image.

Multiple voices talking over each other, {inaudible}

Student: I haven't been able to figure out how you make the distinction between pornography, where you have overt crotch shots with two crosses branded into the thighs...

Because I am telling you that...

Nathan: ...the effect of television, with its recurrence of certain kinds of images, it neutralizes the senses. Well, why in a time when that is occurring, where we can be highly neutralized by many real events, does this strange collection of photographs activate the kind of response that it does. Is it the question that somewhere we have to alter a perspective and this has been inherently the function of the artist, to change the perspective and put in different conditions...

Student: Maybe it is the presentation and not the images. I think that perhaps if those were dirty prints that someone came up to me ten years ago with their overcoat, like this, I used to get similar things, you know instead of chickens they were using horses...

That is right.

Students: {laughter}

Student: The difficulty that I am still having is working from the image and the types of things you have described so far, like being therapeutic, opening up things like *Screw Magazine* serves many of the same functions.

But it is still covert, that is covert.

Nathan: No, no,

Student: It is open on the streets, it is just not in museums.

Student: Unless you don't mind letting your friendly newsstand idiot know that you want to buy it. You have to give him your fifty cents.

They are right in the subways, I agree with that. All of the various underground...

Student: You can subscribe and get it in a plain brown wrapper...

That is what I mean by covert, I don't mean that it is hidden, but take it out of New York City and 42nd Street and you won't find it in the community neighborhood newsstand necessarily, or you don't find it certainly in regional areas, in some cases that would be outlawed. Again, that recent article. But I was thinking of the image he had today of the facsimile murder with the chalk lines around the figure and the paper towels soaking up the blood, and the cafeteria: put your quarter in and get a ham sandwich and a Coca-Cola. Now to me, Les takes the banality of murder, as a fact, now that is again is a dangerous statement, but we find we have social levels as far as the interest in *True Detective*, famous crime cases, and the tabloid journal that appeals to, there is a certain segment of humanity that finds those things appealing: the *National Inquirer*, child born with three heads... People look at the images and do get caught up not so much in the reality but the potential morbidity factor... And there have been a number of tests, there is a fellow at Yale, a criminologist who has dealt with three studies: one, how crime-protective devices have prompted crime in New York City: put on a television that watches the back door, you have clever people that prompts their imagination of how they are going to get in and it is not just because it was a wealthier building, at least that was his thesis. He also pointed out that the interest in certain tabloid journals was not so much to see the visual image but to fantasize, at least in the case studies that he did, that people got a tremendous vicarious experience in reading these things.

Student: That is the point of pornography, isn't it?

Indeed, indeed. But Les tends to take this out of the context of the journal, the tabloid, and literally presents it as fact, collective fact, not necessarily accessible only to a small segment, that is through personal selection. He imposes it upon the field of vision, and in some rather unusual areas: the exhibition of contemporary photography. And suddenly what we at one time expected to only reside on the tabloid page, or to be in the journal that could be purchased in certain regions with not even having to be secretive about it, like give me the copy of *Screw* under the counter if you are in Gainsborough, Florida, that is the only way you will get it. You would be able to walk into the University of Florida Museum and see Les Krims' shot of that woman lying on the ground with the blood, etc., etc. There is a different level of the visual affect and a different level of the service of the forms upon society. Maybe it really touches a sector of society that is normally disposed to a very hyper-imaginative series of fantasies, as opposed to those who have immediate access to more direct images.

Student: Why not put *Screw Magazine* into a museum?

Why not?

Student: Cut a picture out and put that into the museum.

I think you could do it. I think you absolutely could.

Student: Would it be functioning on the same basis that Les's work is functioning on?

Well, (laughs) that is when I start discussing the photography....well the half-tone is not quite unique.

{indistinct chatter}

Nathan: ...you know the specific references to his cartoons, when they appeared, the nature of the time, the kind of anxiety that existed.

Whose cartoons?

Nathan: Abner Dean, *A Long Way To Heaven*. Well, a wide range of comparable things, I haven't had the heart to show Velasquez, the last lecture I gave, there were recurrences of specific motifs in the range of slides that I showed and that was not intentional. This was a range of pictures that I put together out of the past, and in the middle of it I showing the slides, and Les was sitting there, and I said, my god, just as simple as that...the pedestal image, the figure on the pedestal, there are a wide range of occurrences, of kinds of events...

There are also enlargements of body parts and fragments and the black and white drawings that would suggest similar kinds of constructs.

Nathan: Those are out of another time which is interestingly not unlike our time. Abner Dean I am quite sure shocked as many people, strangely enough, I bet if you went digging you will find editorial comments about these 'pornographic' cartoons, because everyone was nude. Well making everyone nude is almost the same as putting everyone in the same uniform.

Indeed, in fact you mentioned a moment ago about the fact that Les's photographs are not, to most people are not provocatively erotic, they are neutralized.

Nathan: Because I think the energy is, I think people tend to hide behind that because

what it is about them seems to be very difficult to articulate. One thing that can be articulated is maybe a misdirected obviousness and maybe not what the pictures are touching on. I don't think it has anything to do, in my mind, with perversity, except maybe as play. Not as intention. I think that is secondary. A perverse kind of play is equally perverse, is a perverse kind of awareness of paradox.

Well yes in the sense of not implying that it is the photographer's perversity. But I would not accept the fact that others might not view these as perverse.

Nathan: Well how can an apple take a photograph?

Students: {laughter}

Student: Given the fact, and I agree totally that what is present when I look at them is a prior 'then' and a future quality of the image, it does have that expansiveness, it is not unique, however much we may want it to be and discuss it on that level, which maybe we should, because they are interesting on that level, too, but there is that expansiveness. I don't know, for me, I was just thinking about pornography and in which sense: it is not sexual in an overt kind of healthy 'do it to her' kind of quality (laughter). What is there is power in a way. There is this directorial thing, that he got these people, mostly female, to do this, and this is the kind of essence that I don't know and I don't want to label it because then I might talk about a neurosis and I don't want to say that it is neurotic, but there is this power and sex is united and the sexual element is really turned off and to me the power element, because of this before, and then, and future.

Well I accept that, and I also found the fact that there is that quality of the people completely being willing, to the point that they are thrilled, if we are to believe some of the reports, and Alan's statements...

Student: They look it, they look very pleased to appear in this way. They are riding their bicycles...

Did you read that thing that Alan Coleman wrote about those?

Nathan: That is where he got apple cheek (?).

That is right, I know. He told me he was asked the question how do you get these people to do it and Les said I have no problem at all and evidently he doesn't all...what would I do... it would be a different response if someone asked me to be in a photograph, if Les Krims did I might have a strange feeling that was completely

neutralized. I wouldn't necessarily think that I was being distorted, or altered. {laughs}

{laughter}

Student: Is there an appeal of his power? That somehow there is a power in this that is either enviable or touches really very closely on a fantasy life.

Yes, and the power may be because many people would, and forgive this but this is just an aside, but I really am amazed at the number of people who are disarmed when they meet Les. You said biography, you follow me?...There was this great concern in this discussion with Les at the winter symposium...was the idea of how can this man just act so and tell these stories and look at what he is doing! It was like a very severe outrage, saying that they expected some manifest peculiarity.

Student: Like drool or something?

{laughter}

Or pulling out the string of dirty pictures, now I know I am being very fictitious, but there were those levels of people expecting that. They were put aback by his, and I spoke up, is it conceivable that certain individuals, and I said please do not accept this in its traditional connotation, we talk about something being atypical, can a person suspend morality, be amoral, and I said please don't say that I am saying Les Krims is amoral, in the sense of the word meaning he does not get involved in whether this is a moral, ethical dimension. It is presented as an event. And as a result, he is willing to suggest to our eye that *you* have the problem if you think this is such and such: I don't. And evidently confirms it. It would be just as interesting to trace back, I'll never forget watching Les at Pratt when he was doing nothing but lithography and etching, long before he ever started working in the photography area, and they were extremely surreal images. There would be little towers that went up like little steps that went up into the sky (laughs) Very Abner Dean-ish in many ways. And there would be a chicken walking up the top and it would reach the top and you would have this horrifying feeling that this chicken will never get back down, it will fall off. (laughter) He calculated these images. He set up for you exquisite...these event situations and you were seldom left with just exploring the print, you thought of the event that was described in the print. And there were a whole series of chicken images. I know that sounds silly but there were: ask him to show them to you some time. What strikes me and what is part of it is the fact that there is a kind of neutrality, a neutralness in Les, that does not suddenly decide that I am doing this for this reason or what have you. And insofar as biography is concerned this becomes very disturbing to people. They begin to ask, well do we have

an ethical or moral responsibility and so on.

Student: But whether we know Les or not, I want to quibble a teeny bit with what you said about it. {laughter}...I am quite willing to grant that they may well have this thing that we see something acted out. And that may in some way open up areas, I think I understood you, that may have been suppressed. In other words, the picture is a representation of an acting out of something, a shadow area. To me, the things are so freaky and so bizarre that they do not correspond or come into contact to any fantasies that I could ever have. But what is informing them centrally, every single one of those disturbing images is the idea of power. Namely that he had the power to get the people to do this thing, to create this situation, this set up, this event, and get them to do it willingly, and with pleasure, and record it in a very off-hand way. That he had power, and I think it is...

I think you certainly have one dimension that to me I think is astounding. I agree with you, it is an aspect of his work that has to be reckoned with and I don't really know how to, I wouldn't personally know how to understand the convictions that obviously Les seems to be able to purvey or sponsor.

Student: But it is power over others, and if you want to list with sexual...

Joan: Now look, people have been using their friends and family as models forever, what is so unusual about that?

{multiple voices, inaudible}

Student: ...So that is ok that the guy made two dollars an hour... the guy with no legs for one, who was terrified to be up on the pedestal.

Student: I don't care how they came about, what is manifest in them is that he got them to do that. Whether because they loved him or they trusted him or he paid them money, it is immaterial.

Oh, John, I agree I find that extremely unusual in the sense of what is purveyed in the photographic image. They just do not get caught up, there is just no inhibition: body gestures begin to reveal this. You know those two women come into the room with that, whatever it is, deodorizer or vacuum-cleaner and there is the figure seated behind the desk, and whether we know the person or not it is strange, like Paul Diamond, he is a pretty far out figure, but I don't even think that Paul Diamond, I just said it, but I don't really. There is suddenly a neutralization of their identity and they suddenly behave in a

very uninhibited and unpretentious manner. And I think this has to do with his ability to constellate a kind of, I don't know what else to call it...

Nathan: They are highly scripted.

They are scripted and it is a dramatic act. It is a production but...

Nathan: inaudible

Joan: It is like people participating in theater.

All I can do is sit here and protest and say I cannot imagine, prove me wrong, there are too many possible variables, in physical position, etc. ...Les has the capacity to create such a state of comfortableness, that that to me is the power of the photograph. But there is not a single tell-tale sign of inhibition whatsoever.

Nathan: You are using power on different terms than he was using.

Am I? He was talking about the power to make these people to respond in a certain way.

Student: I don't know how he does it, charm them or whatever, but they seem to be in someone's power, and were I a borderline schizophrenic, which I may well be, (laughter) delusions of power, that might put me over...do you understand?

I get what you are saying, but you might be placing it all in Les's power. I was just saying that he has the capacity to create a production.

Nathan: But don't discount the level of matter-of-factness that Les introduces into the whole process.

I agree with you.

Nathan: It would be very different if someone says, well I am thinking about doing a series of photographs...He knows most of the people who are involved in the photographs. There is an inherent trust in what he is doing...If he walked into this room and said, okay, I want to do a photograph...

Nathan we touched upon this earlier and I did say there is a pre-planning stage where nothing is discussed, he simply says do this, do that.

Nathan: It is very matter of fact.

Absolutely.

Nathan:...the level of visualization, many people don't know what is involved in the making of the picture... even though he may describe aspects of it, he probably has his little storyboard that he is referring to...

That is right and I find that a remarkable dimension of objectivity...and maybe it is my own field of vision.

Nathan: I think the objectivity is important, a kind of matter of factness...

Absolutely.

{a loud cooing of pigeons begins to fill the room}

Nathan: ...working with this power thing, maybe we can shift it over...

{laughter}

Nathan: We've got some pigeons in the roof.

Is that what that is?

Nathan: ...up in the rafters.

{inaudible chatter and laughter}

Student: Les Krims is up there photographing. {laughter}

{inaudible chatter}

Nathan: I'll swing it back. Suppose...

I want to go upstairs. {laughter}

Nathan: You can't bring them down because you'll ruin it. So you want to go up, we'll wait.

No, no.

Nathan: You can ride the bicycle up the stairs.

I'll wait, go ahead.

Nathan: If it is a question of bringing forward in the direction of consciousness, there are many of Les's pictures that have a wide range of associations that have not been discussed, and that do come out of kind of, maybe almost rites, releasing rites, out of the past, confusion totality of the past, combined meanings of past. But I think the important thing about Les is that he doesn't complete his work. Too often in bringing it forward has meant an act of naming. We did speak about his aversion, he doesn't see them essentially as surrealistic, but it is a very ready trap for people to believe in it as surrealism. So I think there may be many many more terms, many very specific terms, that he will take you to and stop. He will take you in the direction of, he won't bring you there. I think that is probably a lot of the relevance of his work. If you compare Les's work with Rejlander's *Two Ways of Life*, as an absurd extreme but yet worked out, pieced together, scripted, but so knowable, and that is not the case, we did talk about the sense of...

{pigeons cooing louder, laughter}

Nathan: ...the inherent sense of the mystery of the event. The feeling that you know the ritual but you don't, that seems to recur and recur. Even in terms of, I was really surprised at the specifics of the one you referred to, the atypical murder victim, or accident corpse-victim, but the context of those machines: there is another very subtle metaphor in a lot of these that has to do with the existence of machines. They recur.

Student: How about the dental...

Yes, the contrivance or the instrument or what have you: an association of the mechanical instrument with the figure.

Nathan: Well, you could start discussing maybe that paradox, that ambiguity between that figure and that object. This TV is minuscule, a very small television set.

Oh absolutely.

Student: Nathan, maybe you could look through the prints and see maybe that is a

reason, if you get away from the surreal and shock image of it, and you deal with how strange people look against plastic couches with their clothes off, makes that environment just seem even more artificial, even more odd that it should contain people.

Nathan: What is more odd...that is his wife and his mother in the double-page spread and if that is...

But that in itself is not, wait a minute though...In a way Larry Rivers does the portrait of his mother-in-law, double nude portrait of Birdie, after his wife has left him and he stays and lives with his mother-in-law, {laughs} while his wife goes elsewhere. I don't know why I put in that gossip column information but there it is.

Nathan: I just meant the experience of time, that that represented itself when you were holding it up, because when you speak with him, I don't think he titles them. But when you talk to him, he says, oh that is my wife, and that is my mother and that is my...

Student: Well his mother said the same thing at the...gallery when I met her.

Student: ...Informed in some way, with pornography you would say, that is my mother, well what are you implying, as if that were a defense, and yet I would say, I don't know we could play the tape, 40 minutes talking about its relationship to the pornographic image and the suggestion possibly it might have the same kind of therapy and if one could put one in a museum then why not the other, it is somehow there, I don't think we got at it but...

Well we approached it.

Student: The fact that it is his mother does not mean that it is not informed in some way by pornography or an interest in it...

Well of course Dennis I don't know if that was his connection...

Student: Biography doesn't answer anything.

Nathan: Biography doesn't answer what?

Student: It doesn't talk about the picture. The picture is. And to say, well there is his mother is like saying the reason why Les took the picture is, well I have the bill of sale he bought a lens that day, that is why he made that picture. He bought a new lens and it had a certain focal length and that is how he could do it. It doesn't talk about the picture.

Student: Aren't you supposed to deal with the work and what is presented in the images or have I failed for the past six months?

{laughter}

Nathan: Oh if someone asked me that right now I think I am going to lose my mind.

{laughter}

Wait a minute, what I am saying, now look, this isn't a defense, and speak for yourself, but I am getting a different train of thought.

Student: Whether it is a mother or, what is important is that it is a female figure I should think. That is what you get from the picture.

Student: Not necessarily.

Student: What might be important is the time factor involved, a young woman, an old woman.

Not only that Dennis but going back to your statement, I am still amazed by the fact that it is the mother and the wife. I don't care, I don't have to know that necessarily to get involved with the picture.

Nathan: You don't have to know that in looking at those two pictures.

{multiple voices competing, laughter}

Student: ...whether it is his wife or not.

But you brought up the question originally.

Nathan: It is important to him.

But the question arose, Nathan you seem to be returning to the idea, when you started talking about the small size of the television set, the machines, the contraptions in association with the figures, again going back to these signals that you were speaking of, that maybe we get involved with those as reductive. We say this means such and such: figure in the dentist's office, head is replaced by whatever that instrument is, the

figure is on the bicycle and snared by balloons, I liked Miles' suggestion that it's a 20th century *Laocoon*: a nice, little parallelism. {laughter}...We only begin to skirt around the issue and I think it is perfectly valid to say that if we spent another 40 minutes on pornography and whether biography is important or not, that may be asking a lot of questions that are only typical of this time, rather than typical of another period. There are great periods where the anonymity of the artist is extremely important: he will not be revealed, it emerges, or the tribal craftsman, or the fact that we don't know the provenance, the source, origins of the artist.

Student: But did you not suggest yesterday...with Ueslmann there was a tendency when you saw them all that it did gain a kind of anonymity, and that might be the case with this too.

I said that maybe we reach a point in which the work of art in any medium needs to dismiss biography and become involved with the image effect as a unit idea, visual ideas.

Student: But to explain the Christ on the cross image or the Mickey Mouse with the balloons by suggesting that Lesley Krims happens to be Jewish, I just can't buy it.

But I didn't say that.

Student: I know you didn't, but one might well if one were to rigorously apply biography.

Nathan: Oh I see.

I see exactly, I agree...

Student: I just can't buy it.

Nathan: The reference to biography is not to his biography, but to our biography.

Student: Oh, ours? Yours and mine.

Nathan: This is an aspect of what you have been talking about for two days.

Student: We have been talking about his mother and his wife, now is that our biography? How is that?

Nathan: You better believe it is. Unless you work it out another way.

Student: You mean we are supposed to be shocked?

Nathan: No.

Student: Oh, I don't know, I am sorry.

I gather what you are saying, I really do, I am thinking now when you said that, that is very true in this sense: the fact that the figure in the photograph is Les's mother or wife is not necessarily available to us in the first place. We don't have an RB Kitaj painting with a bibliography, this came from this source or what have you.

Student: Nor is it titled such.

Nor is it titled such. But it is inevitable, if we inquire further, into the development of those photographic images, we will inevitably meet the artist. How did he get these people to pose? We are inevitably going to intersect certain identifications, and most of us know that, even if it just emerges by realizing that is Les on the bed and that is his wife. He brought this up himself today. See if this is what you are saying and I don't know: he said, "You identified that figure as being Paul Diamond"--and I mean so what, I just know the guy from some years past-- "But you know Bill it makes no difference whether it is Paul or not," and I said I think you are quite right. "But on the other hand, I know it is Paul, and as a result, that becomes my concern, it is my biography, it is my experience with Paul Diamond." The identification, once I know that is Les's wife or his mother, then that thrusts his biography upon me. It becomes my association with the potential of using family members or what have you. I had been asked the question would I indeed be able to use my mother-in-law, or mother, or my wife.

Nathan: That room is biography. Take the nude figure off the couch and that room is biography. It is a room that a lot of people have experienced.

Friedlander's self portraits constellate that same kind of...

Student: What about when you are reading *The Daybooks* and Weston says that he ate the pepper he photographed, does that change...?

Nathan: I see it in his stomach half the time. {laughter}

Now Nathan that is not... {laughter} you are copping out on that...

Nathan: Follow the image.

Follow the image. Well, that deals with the idea of what happens to your responses by having information about something. I really do believe that.

Student: But in many cases you have to dismiss it if you are going to experience it on an aesthetic level.

Nathan: But Dennis, for the same reasons, the pictures as a group reveal enough evidence to make a discussion about pornography, in relation to those pictures, very meaningless.

Student: Meaning-less?

Nathan: Meaningless.

I disagree. Nathan, now wait a minute, I will not permit you to stop there. You've got to give me a further explication of what you mean by pornography as associated with these images is meaningless, or I am still going to argue the point that it does...

Nathan: Very few of Les's pictures have to do with the suggestivity of act that pornography inherently provides.

We all agree, we know this. But wait a minute Nathan, we were talking about the fact, or at least some of were, I know I was: I was talking about the fact that Les removes it from what we associate the covert level of pornography, and many people seem to have thought that I meant by covert was that is was under the counter always.

Nathan: You are the person who brought up Heineken...

inaudible chatter.

Nathan: That is the comparison you gave us.

I gave the comparison, that we have in Heineken's juxtapositions, that what we think is pornography becomes pure, what we think is American advertising imagery...becomes obscene. You follow me? So he transfers our value constructs and makes us see one thing as highly objective and neutralized. Les takes the image that is often reflective of what we might expect, even the kind of paper pornography is often printed on, the kind of size, format, etc.

Nathan: Then you might have to analyze the perversity as a kind of seduction into the picture.

Oh yes.

Nathan: And not into the pornographic act.

That is right.

Student: He is using the baggage that one associates around pornography to make something entirely different.

Nathan: No, I was talking about seduction.

I can see your point, but you missed that unit...because I think we did deal with the idea that we are not speaking of them as pornography. And we are not speaking of them as reflective of pornography in some suggestive way, we are talking about the fact that they still have an association in response-levels with the idea of pornography. And the disturbing factor to me is not so much the imagery but the fact that they have been lifted out of context, by association, and they appear to us in an entirely different format, presentation. Have we arrived at this? {laughs} Can we take a three minute break?

Nathan: Did you want to go upstairs?

No, that is not what I want, let's just say this part is over, {laughs}) I don't know for what reason, it doesn't have to be.

(Break)

Some of the ideas relative to this Arnheim article... this came from... a catalog publication, International Contributions to the New Art, SYN is the name of the magazine, and I have received a number of issues and as I understand, the funny thing is I haven't received an issue this year, so I don't know if this means it folded or what but at any rate this magazine does carry some very interesting material. This has since appeared in Arnheim's recent study, not *Psychology of Perception*, what is the other one, not *Visual Thinking*, maybe it is the revised edition of *Psychology of Vision* or *Psychology of Perception*, I am not sure. I know this, I saw the other article...there is a slight difference, there is much more reduction in the articles. There are two things that I will have to read because he presents the argument better. This is called, *Perceptual*

Analysis of a Cosmological Symbol. And of course the cosmological symbol he is going to discuss is the basic yin-yang motif which you see printed on this page. It may surprise you to realize, as fascinating as maybe some of these motifs are, he has very simple ways to describe what is happening in each diagrammatic unit. And here is what he says, and I think it is necessary that we turn to an alternative in order to even take another viewpoint in terms of archetypal effect. He says, "Anthropological and psychological observations indicate that basic visual patterns or kinds of pattern appear in surprising uniformity in different cultures." Different periods, different individuals, which implies what we were talking about on the very first day about that it is not surprising to find parallels, even in mythology from culture to culture, and we may make, what is that sound?

Student: Hamlet's ghost, they are rehearsing upstairs. {Referring to pigeons cooing above}

This is incredible, this is marvelous {laughter} Oh you're putting me on. I really thought there was a theater group. {laughter} Well anyway...yesterday we did touch upon this idea of is the problem the fact of finding the parallel or this surprising uniformity, or is it to find out that we accept the uniformity and we try to find out the motivating factors within the socio-cultural fabric, or psychological fabric of the culture that might prompt these ideas that have such astonishing similarities from culture to culture. He says, "Attempts to explain these similarities by migration, or other social contacts, often fail to fit the facts." (So at least we know from the beginning that Arnheim is not going to settle upon the idea of migrational theories, or cultural transfers, which would always imply a linear development of certain not only image structures relative to subject matter but would also imply a lineal theory relative to formal structures that were passed from one culture to another, or *Kon Tiki* or what have you) "The evidence suggests that similar visual conceptions emerge independently of one another. How then are we to explain these correspondences?" So obviously we have the first notion that Arnheim became interested in the idea that we do have these, call them what you will, these occurrences. And they seem to arise in cultures who have had no contact, no possible identification with one another, they are not migratory in nature, they are basically, as he says, "The evidence suggests that they emerge independent of one another, how are we then to explain these correspondences." Now this is the thrust of the essay...But to turn to his reasoning, he deals with the person who articulates the most direct theory, and again Arnheim also deals with this premise that we do not have a clue as to where it comes from, so even he confirms that. He basically wants to argue with Jung, and it is a very good argument, except that what he does, he essentially emphasizes the formal aspect as opposed to the content factors that are poured upon the form. And the only thing that I am left with is that, yes, it is an argument, it is an interesting debate, but perhaps we

have to ask ourselves as we reach the conclusion, what is it that really differentiates the formal structure from the content, or the content from the formal structure? And of course this is left unanswered in Arnheim's argument. So this first thing is just an introduction and then we'll discuss it relative to this diagram: he says, "CG Jung in many of his writings has suggested that such motifs and formal elements of identical or analogous shape may be derived from what he calls primordial images." (That is one word Jung used to describe the archetype. Psychic dominance or archetypes, as the principle traits of these motifs he mentions) "Chaotic complexity in order, duality, the opposition of light and darkness, above and below, right and left, the unification of the opposites. In the third, the quaternary, the square cross, the rotation, the circle-sphere, and finally centricity and radial arrangements organized according to a quaternary system." And of course he is talking about the mandala as a central expression of the self and particularly central to the image of the collective unconscious. You know Jung's essay on unidentified flying objects, he connects this as a, the phenomenon of things seen in the sky that has been consistently present since Paleolithic times, and we know it as a very overt expression of concern in our own time. Jung leads his essay with a commentary that it isn't a question of real or not real, that is not the point, they are still affecting the psyche. Mandalas, circular forms, platter-like forms that appear in the celestial sphere, normally seen by people of a super developed intellect requiring discrete acts, like airplane pilots, or people working with instruments, or he said normally visited upon the naive and untutored mind. Often subject to a tremendous amount of imaginative potential, you know, I climbed into the saucer and was carried to Venus and returned, {laughs} I am not laughing at the phenomenon I am just laughing at the way I am describing it, there is a richness to some of these stories. I am pausing it just for a moment, when he says, finding in centricity and radial arrangements organized as a rule according to a quaternary system, Jung says that in times of crisis, man generally projects a quaternary motif. And he often projects the idea of circularity upon objects or in his images that he cultivates and as I explained the other day, often the center is the point out of which something will be revealed. We mentioned the swastika as a typical mandala: the center with four radial units or arms, and then of course there are radial units extending off of those arms, and then the center becomes a point of great force. Again, the evidence of these images is extraordinary...Some of the very earliest motifs concerned with circularity, how many of you know this book, *The Eternal Present*, by Giedion, *The Beginnings of Art*, you might really be fascinated with it because it has a beautiful introductory, Bollingen series...35:6:1 published by Pantheon Books...It is by the architectural historian Giedion...He has a marvelous introductory discussion...and this is a book that uses the theory of the archetype but never mentions Jung, it mentions his pupil Neumann, because of that conflict with Jung and Giedion's association with James Joyce and his offense. He talks about art as fundamental experience, the framework, the symbol, the animal, the human figure, space

conception, constancy and change. A really fascinating survey and background information concerning our interest in symbolism, what is it, what are signs, what are signals, semiotic systems and so on. And then he moves into the means of expression in primeval art: abstraction, abstraction throughout prehistoric art, abstraction today. Transparency, simultaneity, movement, symbolization, hands as magic symbols. There is this one chapter, the manifold meanings of circular forms. He talks about the stone balls of the Mousterian period, the cupules of La Ferrassie, cupules in the Aurignacian and Magdalenian periods. Cupules are little depressions, even the hand motif, it really is an exhaustive survey of the passage of the hand motif from earliest art right through to the present day.

Student: What is that particular hand right there?

That is El Castillo, this is Hopi Indian, and this is in a Spanish cave, the cave at Gargas. What is interesting also is that the hand motif appears with absolutely no evidence of any possible contact: it is a consistent motif. And of course we have it reduced to signals: salute, hello, shake hands...on this manifold meanings of circular forms, Giedion traces back for example these quartzite orbs, balls. He talks about them as war instruments, game, the Paraguayan game...he talks about them as mace heads. But he also suggests that since they surround pits and often become present in groups, in burial mounds, with bear skulls and so on, that they obviously had some other meaning...there aren't really comparative examples, a lot of his commentary is speculative, but when we reach the point of these, this is a tombstone, and it has on its underside these little engraved dot-like patterns, these little circular depressions, and it is possible to find an immediate linkage or a kind of transformation of the image of this cupule, this little depression, gradually evolving into the configuration of the female breast, or in association with the female figure then adding cupules imposed upon it, in association with the fertility motif. But it also appears...he discusses the organizing principle of the circular motif, how certain images evolve from this fundamental structure. And then of course it is equally fascinating to see his discussion of tectiforms, these things that late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropologists and archeologists thought of as huts or territorial ground plans or maps, or they thought of them positivistically as traps for animals, and much of that has been totally dismissed. There has been a lot of writing since Giedion that discusses, here is a color picture of one these, where these units appear side by side with these serial dot forms, or circular forms...He shows how the circular form gradually evolved into a series of units that constellate an image as you can see here: bison form with red dots, this is prior to contour definition, where the dot becomes a unit structure and constellates to form a shape, a silhouetting effect. Then he mentions the gradual evolution in the Neolithic period, into Egypt, where for example in the Amarna period, a very late...a nineteenth

nineteenth dynasty manifestation, late eighteenth and extending into the nineteenth, of the use of the cupule, the circular motif, and then it becomes a hieroglyph representing Ra and life, not just the Ankh, but representing the sun, where there is a depression, a circular motif, and then there is a slight convexity. The idea of the unit projecting from this depression, this concave area. He mentions parallels to its re-manifestation in Greek art, and Roman art, and in particular medieval art...there is a consistent background in which we can review this circular motif and discuss its symbology...At one point it had a fertility association, at another point, the idea of becoming a sacred precinct...from its center something would be defined, almost as though it is a motif that will enable one to discover rather than to make manifest a form. Giedion even mentions that in times of crisis, as I started to say a moment ago, circular motifs become quite rampant, quite apparent in a collective culture as a way of forcing them to concentrate upon some potential. And in our time it takes a scientific or pseudoscientific association, the idea of seeing things in the sky, the flying saucer, extra-terrestrial intelligence, something revealed from above, it is sort of medieval if you think of it, why aren't there things emerging from the earth rather than floating through the atmosphere? The reason I am going through this is that Arnheim...chooses, not accidentally...the concept of the circular motif. Rather than discuss the mandala he will discuss the yin-yang association but it still has the same potential, a very magical kind of motif and one which is not necessarily exclusive to Oriental cultures, it has its own variations in our culture etc., and does represent the union of opposites, does represent the idea of energy, movement, the idea of becoming something that is uniquely structured to the point where we can say it is not based upon invention. It seems to be autonomous, self-governing, it emerges directly from the psyche itself...Many of you know the Tantric motifs...they are basically mandalas, the sri-yantra motifs in Heinrich Zimmer's *Myths and Symbols in Indian Civilization*, that is not the title... where he discusses the mandala form as a tool, a hoe to dig up. You contemplate the mandala and as a result supposedly something is revealed. You either project upon the mandala or something emerges out of it. That is at least a statement of the fact that Arnheim is quite conscious of the history of the circular motif. He is also quite conscious of Jung's emphasis upon it as one of the major archetypal images, expressive of the self, or expressive of revelation, potential revelation. For what it's worth, that is the background of why he chooses to emphasize Jung and then eventually discuss this motif that we are going to look at. He says, "Much of the time Jung states clearly that he considers the unconscious dispositions for the production of particular types of shape," (And remember shape for Arnheim means form, not two-dimensionality) "shape as inherited. It is true that his descriptions of the biological mechanisms he has in mind are limited to curiously Lamarckian hints at a, quote, sort of readiness" (You remember we talked about the provocative nature of the archetype? Its operation is to have a pre-forming potential, and when he quotes a sort of readiness, that implies it is formless but it is

something simply on the threshold of form) Created by, quote, deposits of repeated experiences of humanity, unquote. By, quote, imprints, unquote, in-grams, precipitants, condensations, recapitulations, heaped up or pooled experiences. And of course Arnheim is a little unfair because he is taking every one of those sources from the collected works of CG Jung, and it is a little bit unfair to use terms like imprints and ingrams because Jung admittedly states over and over again there is not a singular word to imply this: we talk about an ingram as being an imprint upon the mind. We talk about an imprint being an ingram: often these words are interchangeable. We talk about pooled-up experiences born out of inheritance: this is where Jung was terribly confused of the idea as though there were certain races that had a special way of transferring that information...and people did not like Jung's concept of racial memory. He meant evolutionary development in which certain instinct patterns became more developed. In other words there were secondary instinct patterns, not just hunger, love, etc. And he says, "But he explicitly refers to heredity and is willing to count his archetypes among such patterns of behavior as that...the constitutionally predetermined way in which the chick gets out of the egg, the bird builds its nest. Since inheritance occurs only through the body, Jung's theory amounts to saying that the germ-plasm of every human being carries the mechanisms responsible for the spontaneous production of the visual shapes in question." (Well ironically since Arnheim wrote this that has been the big attention...This was written prior to the announcement and manifestation of the real concreteness of DNA RNA activity, and as a result that is a unit source and in essence confirms that there is something hereditary about the nature of the archetype. And that there is something operative in the germ-plasm so to speak that implies the psychological activity as well as a physical presence, thus Sinnott and others). He says, "The theory has two characteristic implications: first it assumes the existence of specific hereditary mechanisms geared to furnishing the organism with the appropriate archetypal dispositions for say the production of a centric mandala figure. Secondly, the theory need not assume that the organism producing archetypal figures be aware of their symbolic significance any more than a bird knows why it is building a nest." (In other words there is something neutral about the effect, that one need not understand the image, it has its effect in almost a spontaneous way. Which again reflects back upon this concept that, do we need to understand our forms, this debate that is continuous, are we automatically affected by something or do we understand the effect of something. Does it immediately visit itself upon our field of vision and become significant for us as far as meaning, which perhaps we do not even become involved with on an intellectual plane, we may feel it, sense it on some physical level). He says, "Inherited forms of activity do not require understanding, in fact the theory need not assume there exist any kind of kinship, any isomorphism, as the Gestalt psychologists would say between the perceptual characteristics of the visual patterns and the symbolic meaning attributable to them." (Actually Jung does believe that the archetypal

patterns are intrinsically related to the medium for which they stand. And Arnheim quite adequately indicates, this is the crux of the argument) "Jung at one point says that archetypal images can have an effect upon an individual without necessarily understanding." That is their force, it is prior to understanding, prior to ego consciousness. But he also says that ultimately meaning, the image itself in association with the archetypal force, they are definitely interconnected... They are connected by the sets of concerns that a culture or an individual has that gives the content to the archetypal constellation. He says, "symbols are pregnant with meaning, and image and meaning are identical, indeed he might argue that the survival value of the archetypes consist precisely in giving directly perceivable expression to the basic patterns of human existence. What he does not seem to realize is that once he admits the perceptual self-evidence of such symbolism, there is no need to enlist the services of hypothetical hereditary mechanisms at all." And thus one might say do we really need all this baggage at all, maybe it is simply a matter that different cultures produce, and these are my words, not Arnheim's... there are spontaneous productions of motifs, even on the formal level, that are consistent not by virtue of a need for some kind of collective or individual archetypal theory. But they are so fundamentally innate to the gestalt formation process and to the functioning of the human mind at large that it is inevitable that they will appear from culture to culture. They are part of the fabric of the human perceptual system. He says, "If every human being's unconscious or conscious mind is capable of spontaneously perceiving certain elementary shapes as images of significant life situations, then no genetics is required to explain why these shapes turn up independently in many cases." Thus if Jung's theory were followed through and every human being would be affected either by just the force of the archetype... or if an archetypal image occurs within a culture, that is having been married with the contents of their collective concerns or conscious concerns, then it should apply to all men. So all men should be able to experience this and we don't need any explanation of it, we simply say they are, and they are based upon certain configurations of line, shape, coloration, whatever it may be. He says, "Since the assumptions of spontaneously perceivable symbolism agree with psychological findings, scientific... bids us to discard as redundant a theory based on inherited perceptual matrices." Well ok, that is the hypothesis of the argument... He goes on to present a case for his situation. In other words, let's not talk about genetics, or intra-psychic archetypal forces, or self fields, or those that are shared collectively, or manifested in an individual, but let's talk about something that is basically in itself structurally provocative, and thus the reason for the sheet that I passed around... He then says, "Gestalt psychologists have shown to what large extent the structure of a simple line drawing determines the way that it is perceived. On the whole they have limited their demonstrations to such senseless figures, although they have also pointed out the intrinsic similarity of facial expression and the corresponding state of mind. No concrete analysis of any but the most

elementary visual properties, that is upward, downward, angled, or curved, has been presented to demonstrate the correspondence of expressive shape in significant life situations." And thus the purpose of the argument is that I am going to take a motif and rather than discuss it as representative of inherited characteristics...that its meaning emerges from its formal construct. He is showing, not in serial order, let's look at the diagram just for a moment: he starts off with the fundamental constellation of these two motifs, these teardrop-like shapes that are in union, and both having a kind of eye center. Now he uses the word eye in quotes, but meaning they have a central point. Before we get into the symbologies, because he does discuss that, it is basically a unit that consists of four singular units combined to form a circle. So in that sense this is where Arnheim is also considering this representative of Jung's quaternary motif. He shows that figure one on your page evolves from certain calligraphic letter forms as well as other insignia motifs, as represented in figures two and three. He then shows in figure four portions of a hexagram representing the heavens and the earth, and the male and the female principles surrounding... the Korean flag uses this basic motif. Then he shows how perhaps in figure five...these are really simple definitions of what each one of these diagrams represents. Figure five, center second row, represents how one constructs through a balancing measure of the two circles and then considering their arc, or their half-circular forms in connection. He talks about in figure six the simultaneity of pressure from within the radial projection out to a circular form but also at the same time we have to consider the idea of the pressure from without in: the manifestation of the border edge, the circular edge is expressing not only the idea of containment, but also the field beyond it, the ground upon which this motif appears also is exerting a pressure upon the forces from within the structure. In figure seven he shows in the first and third row, he indicates the difference in effect that occurs when you show the linear boundary inscribed in the circle as opposed to the figure/ground paradox that occurs in figure one. In figure eight he shows the individual component unit and discusses its structure. In figure nine he shows what happens if you were to have a straight line division across the vertical or horizontal axis of the unit and that it totally loses its dynamic, kinetic aspect. Figure ten he points out the structure of the teardrop shape as evolving from a configuration that is non-kinetic to one that is mobile...In figure eleven he begins to introduce the idea of the circularity, or the implied kineticism and movement around the center. And then of course in figure twelve, which is really not as complicated as it might appear, he is talking about centers of gravity, and axes, and the way these units move their center of gravity, thus we get not only motion in a circular form, but we also have a strange paradox that rather than giving you Arnheim's statement on it, look back at figure one...What are the paradoxes that you notice? We mentioned figure/ground. He points out that as you look at the tail of the unit itself...the teardrop shape is called a magatama, and as you look at where the dot is, you have a tendency to feel that when you are looking at the dot, whether you are looking at the

black unit or the white unit, that this actually overlaps the underlying tail of the other teardrop, in reverse order. And as a result the figure/ground experience is more positive as you see the center of gravity and the dot formation as opposed to looking toward the tail end. Or let your eye pass down the teardrop shape and you find a reversal effect, the black appears over the white, or in reverse, the white appears over the black depending on how you shift your attention from the center of gravity towards the tail of the teardrop shape...Can anyone see something in this that Arnheim discusses? Frankly I've never seen it, {laughs} many of you may have, having seen this motif innumerable times. Do you notice any other strange quality about this, visually? Number one, the very first one.

Student: These are both the same?

Yes, it does that. There is a high degree of, even though we have moving out toward the edge by virtue of location of the center eye itself we have also the indication that the center is obviously important...Well, what he says essentially is that, this is a hint, I just want to see whether it arises or not, he says that this will eventually, for many people, become three-dimensional.

Student: It did for me.

Did it? And how do you see it three-dimensionally?

Student: I see it as a globe, and the white is almost like an ice-cap over the globe, flowing down over it.

Right. You are seeing along the purple edge...receding back as though it is global or... He talks about the idea that if you look along the peripheral edge of the circle and then intersect with the tail of the teardrop unit, yes, it goes in, and almost as if the head of this unit tends to project out so that they are interlocking like this, rather than side by side. I think it is an interesting development because this, he explains, is really the provocative element that creates the dynamic of the union of opposites. It is their interaction pressing into one another in this figure ground ambiguity that creates the kinetic activity. The constant change: as we think one is dominant, the other becomes more dominant. We also find them pushing one another, virtually, in circular motion.

Student: That did not happen for me until you mentioned the two little dots overlapping, and then suddenly it did...

The thing that is interesting also is the fact that evidently Arnheim presented this image

because he had never really subjected to analysis, and he himself said he had to sit down and look and decide...what was happening, and then of course testing it out on other human beings. Now before we go on to another aspect of this discussion, I want to read you what he says about the images that are projected upon this work, and he says this, "In order to provide such a demonstration I am applying the following tools of perceptual analysis to the...a well known ancient emblem symbolizing the yin and yang principle in Chinese philosophy." (figure one on your page) "It is a visual design and the essence of thoughts it stands for are simple enough to make a concrete and fairly complete analysis possible. They are on the other hand sufficiently rich and subtle to be acceptable as an example of a kind of symbolism psychiatrists, anthropologists, and philosophers are concerned with... in order to have a manageable name for this motif I am going to call it the... it means a comma-shaped figure, a whirl, an eddy. It is a name for the kinds of patterns exemplified in figure three popular in Japan as a family crest and also a religious emblem in Buddhist and Shinto sanctuaries. The word is also applied to the Chinese variety on the figure here under discussion...The elements of Taoist cosmology are familiar: unceasing change is said to be the character of the universe. The movement of all existence makes for the eternal return of the same which is understood as periodic repetition and more fundamentally as the immutable constancy provided by the regularity and evenness of the change. This notion of stationary flux is enlivened by the polarity of the yin and the yang, two antagonistic, balanced principles whose interaction constitutes a duality within the unity, the indivisible supreme one. The yang is the male principle, it stands for the light, warmth, and dryness. And above in the hierarchical order. The yin is the female principle, it stands for darkness, cold, and moisture. Below in hierarchical order, but in union neither above or below. By being opposites the two principles generate the phenomenon of nature. They are not separate from each other nor do they simply add up to the whole, they represent the constant interaction of everything with everything, within the one. When there is harmony, the way, the Tao of nature pervades all existence. But harmony is not given automatically, conduct requires active initiative which may be in keeping with the way in which nature is violated." He then discusses a number of manifestations of this particular motif in terms of ritual, and the way it is used, and how it appears as a talisman, the fact that the individual magatama unit, the...shaped unit, like the hole at the center of gravity...it is to be worn as a pendant and often infers, Arnheim does not discuss this but it has been discussed...that according to one's sex, one wears whichever polarity or often the opposite, to show one's union with totality. He says, "Whether a pattern is composed of parts the perceptual effect will depend upon how strong is the unifying power of the whole in relation to the self-containedness of the parts. If the whole is simple and well organized whereas the parts are not, the pattern will appear somewhat subdivided... to the whole. In the inverse case, it will seem as a conglomeration of self-contained units fitting into some sort of whole. In a Taoist symbol

the whole of the parts must be dominant because the supreme one is to be understood as identical with the yin and yang composing it, not as superior or inferior to these two principles." And he discusses this motif as a very adequately balanced unit in which neither the total configuration nor its parts seem to become hierarchically more important than the other. And he discusses the various principles of balance...and how as our eye begins to explore one of the teardrop units, or focuses upon the center of gravity of the dot, or focuses along the outer edge, we are always drawn back into the configuration: as we look into the center we are taken out to the edge, thus the diagram of number 6. As we concentrate upon one unit of the form perceptually we are then taken into another unit as well. There is a constant interaction thus not allowing either the total gestalt of the configuration to become more important than the part, nor allowing the part to become more important than the entire configuration. Let's just look at one example in his explanation of this. He says, "The inverted position characterizes the magatamas, or the teardrop shapes, as antagonists through the opposition of two analogous powers life is created and maintained. The opposition however creates productive tension rather than conflict. The two opposing forces, one directed toward the left, the other toward the right, do not clash, they combine in generating a torque, and thereby a rotation. Furthermore by distinguishing the two from each other, the inverted position also furnishes each magatama with a modicum of individuality. Significantly, however, these individuals, although complete within themselves are at the same time mere complements in the context of the whole. They are whole that need each other to attain wholeness. This coincidence of being whole and part simultaneously is another aspect of interaction accomplished perceptually by the oscillatory alternations of the two views. The magatama is" (and this is his abstract way of expressing it) "the teardrop unit is in its own completeness and the complementarity of the two in the circle revealing the incompleteness of either." So it is both complete in itself, but in union with the other it is incomplete and as a result we have this constant, what is an identifiable total unit and yet when it is juxtaposed with differentiated direction relative to the other unit it automatically becomes incomplete. Ponder that I guess if you will but it fascinates me. Does that make sense to you? It is interesting, isn't it? (laughs) Then he discusses figure and ground factors. We just mentioned the third dimensional aspect, but I wanted to read you one other brief statement here. He says, "In the tomoe the figure/ground situation is most unstable because each magatama possesses convexity and concavity. If one fixates the head of one of them it will assume the figure character and lie on top, but sliding toward the tail one is rapidly to experience an inversion: the tail vanishes in order to become boundless ground overlapped by the intruding head of the other magatama. This internal contradiction induces some observers to see the tomoe three-dimensionally, as pointed out, it is one of the functions of the third dimension, to come to the rescue when things get uncomfortable in the second." I want to ask you, do you find that to be true according to

your visual experience? He is saying that when things two-dimensional become uncomfortable we begin to make them become three dimensional. (laughs) That is the cruder way of putting it. Does that happen to you people?

Students respond at the same time, inaudible.

Student: It is not a matter of exhausting the two dimensional...

Student: I don't know if it is some kind of uncomfortableness.

Well, yesterday we were talking about the idea of when you have in a photographic form the idea of not a total image but you start dealing with fragments, and they are juxtaposed together, there is a peculiar thing that happens with, at least with my eye, I have no evidence, it just happens to me. But there is a spatial effect in terms of position in space according to the simple principle of size. Often there are juncture effects, when your mind more or less, let's say something is seen at a distance, a fragment, and you bring it forward and you reduce something that is large back. There is often a juncture that one sees as joining, even if they are unrelated, as three-dimensional, they are disposed in space rather than seen as two-dimensional units side by side. I think it has to do with the idea of when the graphic plane itself is denied, in terms of what is happening according to a simple factor like size, we automatically constellate the idea of the units being disposed in space: that movement forward, or that intentional dragging it forward visually, or the pushing it back introduces a peculiar sense of constellating the image as surrounded by space...

End reel 5

