

William E. Parker: RISD or Rochester side A (From the collection of Nevil Parker)

Comments made by Parker while quoting other texts set in ().

Additional information set in { }. Transcription by Bob Martin.

...And you look back at either one and you get very disturbed...or something very comical, because it postulates that those females, except for a few examples by Rembrandt...those females are seen from the perspective of a male viewer outside the frame...and they therefore can be obtained, visually or perceptually, and bought as property or object: and where does all of this stuff come from, woman as a sex object? I mean that didn't come out of a discussion about art or what have you...talking about male chauvinism or macho-ism...or a woman being associated with territory ... conquering...the idea that she is something to be possessed, obtained and bridled. After all, it's only possible that at one point in human consciousness women may be thought of as supremely magical and presented with all the hallmarks of tubers and beehive heads and the buttocks and the child-bearing parts and the breasts with full amplification while arms and legs are like little spidery appendages, like in Paleolithic figures...In one culture she may be the robust, buxom-ous creature like in Rubens, or in another period she might be the idealized image that includes some element of attraction, in a physical form. And it's interesting how, certainly into the 19th century forward, increasingly women are represented as the destructive force. The last flowering of it was in DeKooning's *Woman* Series, and that is not the last, not that there aren't other examples of it, but that is where it became a cultural insight. He even said, he dealt with it more in terms of without analytical intent, you know as the archetype and the image of nature...and woman as vulture and monster... composites bird/human, the Sumerian figure: that kind of total polyglot complex but he was picking that up from the Neolithic figures at the Metropolitan. And it isn't like we are saying well now it's time for man to have his turn to be the victim. What happens if the masculine psyche is forced in the position that it must give up its logos role in order to re-engage matter. In reality that is a paradigmatic expression reminding me of my need to re-engage sensation...It's my problem, but I suggest, that my personal imagery, in the fabric of my early green life, and my early sense of the only way I could get to materiality was to be in an altered state of consciousness, and I did dangerous things. Therefore what I did was, in essence, to project in my own work a series of concerns over the years, which I never did bottle up, whether anyone looked or not, it was not my therapy, but my form of extension. And then perhaps what we might say is that it is conceivable with your work, hang around for a while and then someone says would you show it, or will you talk about it. And then you might find out that it's entered into the mainstream, into a collective consciousness...well I was hoping all this would happen before (laughter) I then will change the world (laughs)...The point is it becomes cultural imagery, you

understand what I mean? And yet it also serves me as well whoever looks, I hope...that a photographer may deal with, certainly one of the great mysteries that we have to deal with is the fact that Minor White, you know, when he asked eight or nine hundred people to blow on each other's backs. Remember we were living out the sensation that he didn't have access to. He convinces us to do that, and while he is talking about the act that we're performing, to deliver us to a level of unspoken, non-analytical consciousness which was to be at the service of spiritual revelation and transcendent consciousness above the fourth octave: what are we really doing? We are really proving that someone in front of us is there, in relation to the photograph. It is proving by our gesture by an act of body consciousness. He thought we were approaching the first threshold of the spirit, whereas we're all letting him attain the position, to Minor, collectively, and it took eight or nine hundred people. He never got the picture, he never understood it. But it took eight or nine hundred people to deliver the power of the complex which he never had access to. You understand what I mean? And that's why we all believed in the form...see a few smirks...You see the sensation function that he did not have direct access to, because when he did, life went crazy. Or it didn't allow him to stay at an institution...he behaved in a destructive manner to himself. He wasn't blowing up buildings, but it was the principle that in time the power of his own unconscious complex became the medium through which he talked about breathing through contemplation, and yet always referenced back to the realm of breathing, touching, but particularly, remember the... when I wrote that article on Jerry Uelsmann, there was a report on the Portland workshop, and I'll never when forget my wife sent that issue to my father in law...It was very inevitable that my father-in-law was not going to read my essay...but he opened up that book to that Portland workshop report, have you ever looked at it? Do you have that issue here? I want to show you something...Here in that issue you have, I won't say anything other than, in that issue, well my father-in-law gets this and he was so outraged and immediately put it in a plain brown wrapper, and shoved it in his desk and wouldn't show it to anyone. Now why? I'll read you a few quotes, ok? You'll see that every referent, the idea of conquering your intrapsychic state refers back generally to a sexual mode: highly amplified remembrances of physical acts. Or of things that are associated with what I call wallowing in the earth. You know of sensuality, or sexuality. And yet Minor had them remember those things, or read them in terms of references, purportedly as a revelation to free the spirit...which eventually would transcend into the need for the camera, or the camera/film, throw the world away, and use...the great chain of being, ascend to the next level, the next octave...which means that we deny matter in order to enter a spiritual stage. You see I went through all of that to imply that, the importance is that we performed for him...

Student: ...by sweat and tears...

(Laughs) That is very good. It's the meeting of a Portland interim workshop...so my father-in-law looked at the whole at the whole issue...Les Krims' early work: I'll never forget him...and I was working in the department of Graphic Art and Design while Les was getting his degree in printmaking, and he used to come to the print shop, most of you have never seen those images and it was inevitable, he had this whole series of chickens climbing ladders up into the sky. Has anyone seen those early prints of Les Krims? So it was inevitable that certain motifs...a more objective presentation and then we do have his mother, I mean other subjects, not the nudes and so on...and finally things like this, this is rather conservative for Les wouldn't you agree? And yet this introduced him to us, you see, Les, and his wife at that point, or if not his wife, it doesn't look like her but I think it is, his first wife. Or this, and then, *that*. Now Fred Sommer had these chicken innards and posteriors and put architect's notes and maps...and yet to do this, see, and this publication got letter after letter about the offensive nature of that, you know. That's announcing the idea of the way things look in just the two coming together causes people to project upon as something they think of as perverse. There's nothing inherently perverse about a woman sitting on the side of the bed holding a plucked chicken. Perhaps as he would say, like about the minstrels...well, she was in the kitchen, and it was an extremely warm day and she decides she should be cooler (laughter) She had to take a break, she forgot something in the bedroom. She had the chicken, she was carrying it through the room, and she sat down on the edge of the bed. And since it was like, my wife, my sister, my friend, I said may I take your picture? You see what I mean? That's as legitimate a statement about this as the possibility of offense. He knew that the offense was within us, and therefore we project it onto the picture, and said pictures are offensive, when in reality he just reminds us how offensive we are. That's Les's position...{reads from Exposure 13:3} "During a meeting of Portland, Oregon interim workshop in the fall of 1965, member Harlan Reed brought a word and photographic sequence for viewing and discussion. Both the sequence and the discussion have been condensed so as to indicate a method of conducting meetings held for the purpose of discussing photographs and to show simply what happened at a certain meeting. The importance of this happening lies in the involvement of everyone present. Neither the sequence of pictures and words nor the content of what was said is nearly as important as the mutual encounters with pictures and each other." (You see not just specific events but what happened when we then all collectively encounter what you wrote about your image, along with a memory trace involving something actual: not literature, not something you make up, a fiction. And then as well, how we then encounter these collectively and then leave the photograph, you see, leave the picture, leave the world, and enter into a new dialogue, which in essence elevates into a... consciousness, an early consciousness raising as people call it today. And then we eventually transcend the picture itself). "The workshop formed itself in 1961 in order to keep alive during the rainy season in Portland the stimulation of the summer workshops

guided by Minor White." (By the way, in the Harlan Reed report, and also Minor still being the editor and very active, a lot of times you see those references to conditions of climate and so on as though the sensation function is being suggested by the condition of the workshop). "The format is simple: five or six assignments are given in the fall. At irregular intervals the group meets with their assigned photographs. For the first two years only pictures were sent for critiques to the guide on the other side of the continent. His reviews were returned on tape." (The guide is Minor, you know...I've had the experience with Minor...or the idea of going from the realm of using sensation as a justification for spiritual revelation. The idea is, this principle of guide, and transfer of information and response, you see, was extremely important. And notice how often instrumentation is used). "After that the group began to learn how to talk about assignments into a microphone." (Amplifying voice, ok?) "That learning process is still going on." (It's amazing to me because you know in the 60s, and it is that specific, learning how to talk into a microphone: how to deliver the content and learning how to do it into an instrument, see). "Therefore critiques from the east included comments on both the pictures and the discussion. The attempt to learn to talk meaningfully and insightfully about pictures is a slow process which has been invariably hindered by too little time and too many pictures. As can be seen from the comments, as excitement mounts, talk bounces off the images. That seems to be the way it is." (Notice that, as excitement mounts, *talk* bounces off the images, doesn't mean it enters it and amplifies it, it means it is deflected, reflected or what have you) "Overtones of therapy can be caught in the interactions of the talk content. In our day and in our society, therapy is inevitable," (is it?) "So if it gets in somehow, it does not seem to interfere with the kind of improvement that increases our enjoyment of life. The more important matter is to observe that the presence of the photographer affects the experience of his pictures favorably. Following this introduction, Harlan Reed's photographs and verbal traces are presented. One should not look for a direct relationship between any single photograph" (this has got a page stuck to it) "and the accompanying phrase but rather absorb all of the images and words as a totality. As is the custom of the workshop, the reader should view these images and then proceed to the commentary of the participants." (Well, I just find this interesting. And we got priests, and we got Edward, and Dr. William, Eugene, you've got to read how everyone responds, just listen to what accompanies these pictures and this is what my father-in-law...he put in a plain brown wrapper and shoved it into the desk drawer. We have an image that might be some sort of rock concretion, or ice flow that's cracking, 'When I was in the first grade a bunch of the older kids used to go down to the woods and corn-hole each other. Sometimes some of us little kids watched, but we were scared. I knew a kid who had a horse who used to eat hot horse biscuits, he loved that horse his name was George.'" (You understand what I mean? Look at that picture, and remember the intent was to arrive at a somewhat transcendent state. Starting with the individual, then to the group, and then, in essence, to enter a

state where words bounce off images that we would have an intra-psychic response that we would call spiritual. And look at the referent! It's about sodomy, and even shit, see?) Next one: "When you dig lint from your navel you're left with a hole and some puckered skin and sometimes you bleed a little." (Wouldn't you call that a rather sensation statement? It's like, when you slash your wrists you bleed and die, unless someone gets there first, you know it's like, to let the matter lose its energy, that kind of thing). Here's the next one: "'Hey, there's garbage floating down the river, some people dump it in there at night when no one can see them, and some people dump it in broad daylight.'" (Garbage, filth, the negredo: the blackness, the vermin. All those signs of matter gone wrong, or matter in its primal state out of which something that can be regenerated: the butterfly, you know, a posit of eggs and the resurrection...it can mean...a flower... as a sign of potential revelation). This is a delightful one: "'I know a kid by the name of Clarence who was visiting with his Uncle and Aunt when we got in the woods he said let's jack each other off.'" (That's the picture, with the spiritualized identity. Can you see my father-in-law, he was a Colonel in the Air Force, "What is this porno rag my son-in-law is publishing." (Laughs). "Hey, I used to be great, I played halfback on my high school football team, everybody loved me. I knew everybody in town and they all said that I was great...They said ``Hey Jim, Kill those bastards from Franklin this Saturday.Hey I went with a girl once who'd gone with a guy who had a big penis and she said she liked it better with me.'" (Folks, the editors at this magazine choose the images by Harlan Reed. I know that, I worked for this company for a long time and I spent a lot of time with that man... and even this guy... watch this... the directive is, you read it, and the reference to sensation is being articulated and the whole point of the conference is to rise above it. You know even at a certain point, leave the photograph and enter into a psychic state. But it says) "One should not look for a direct relationship between any single photograph and the accompanying phrase but absorbed by all the photographs." (You see that's like saying, no matter what you think of this sensation function, you're not to think of that, you are to transcend those references. And finally, no next to final) "'Life is little triumphs and little despairs, there's nothing like knowing yourself, anytime you know yourself you know your failures. You know what you could've done and what you didn't do and that's when you know hatred. Hatred is when you know yourself.'" (That's the only one that might imply some kind of speculation or potentiality. And then) "'He said there must be a god or there wouldn't be evil and I said, that's the spirit Mac, that's the spirit.'" You see the final two start changing that around from the corn-holing, and horse shit and all that stuff, and into the realm of something that implies transcendence. So what I was getting at is a reference that, sensation, see, is acted out, the idea of unused sensation is acted out by other people, in order, he thinks that the persons would reach spirit, you know. And Jerry Uelsmann used to say I just didn' have the right film to catch the spirit. And Minor would laugh and say, "Someday Jerry you will understand." And the truth is, the idea that he

was then obviously engaging the spirit through us. And yet we were engaging in sensation which he didn't have. So that sometimes the personal concerns and issues of an individual may well manifest themselves as meaningful from the cultural level and in the systems in which we live. That would be like, you see on this little chart...runs it from level three and starts with that as a personal, as a kind of first level of starting to analyze what's going on in a work of art. It's like level one and level three in Panofsky's system have been joined together, ok? Well level two and level three. Psychological intentions, individual attentions, collective attentions, historical circumstances, your circumstances, and your cultural collective circumstances, so that chart is perfectly understandable as you just look at in that context, but as you go on he talks about, say for example, in every art form there are manifest what he calls cultural images. For example, he uses some types, and you read them across and down... for example...the Mass River Indians of British Columbia...like an anthropologist...all these systems...the squirrels of the mythology of these Mass Indians and what does that mean? He goes on to say collective psychic tensions, it means terror, they sponsor terror, and then motivating historical circumstances that cause those squirrels to be associated with the terrifying. A volcanic eruption of 1780 was the remote cultural circumstances, and you might wonder how you get from a volcanic eruption that destroyed virtually the entire society and how that got with annoying squirrels. Well read that in the book without going through this now. Let's take one that you might be more collectively familiar with: the painting, *Guernica*, by Picasso. You all know the work in the Museum of Modern Art, ok? Collective psychic tensions: horror and insecurity. The first example in the 20th century of total obliteration of a territoried-area. You know in other words the deliberate attack upon that Basque town, you know, as an example to the power, and of course using Nazi, using German planes, German air power. In other words, the idea of mass murder from the air...He says horror is not only the horror of what those people suffered, it's the horror at the horror of such an act. Just like we might be looking at the horror of those who dissented in Russia and now must live the rest of their lives at hard labor. You see the horror of the injustice, and insecurity potentiality. Being insecure as such they might feel it might occur again...so it's not just the horror of insecurity of the people, but the collective psychic tensions that emerge from the event and are also sponsored by the painting, and you know the motifs that he uses: the disemboweled horse, the bull, the light that becomes an eye, and the woman with the child, the dismembered man, all those things, the newspaper headline, the horror and insecurity of all the reports that he felt...an incredible way of getting all those things into that black and white tabloid-like mural. And what is the motivating historical circumstance? Obviously the bombing of Guernica in 1937 and related conflicts in 20th century Europe. The other examples where you have, the invasion of the Americas, or proof that power becomes more important than the idea of bartering...So we sometimes might ask ourselves, I build nests this way...active at the present time, we'll start in Rochester, in the Middle East, in

America, and you aren't even looking at art, or thinking about art, say, in the world, and you, at a political science seminar on the governmental conflicts in the last decade... You read your newspaper everyday, or the weekly reader, whatever it is, I don't know how you'll know that but the point is you can construct a systemic or a broad analysis, you can make a chronology of the events of the last two days, in the world, which will tell you as much about things as perhaps the last ten years, it'll probably tell you more, as long as you know a little about what happened in the period before. You can start with the matrix, the nest, and start dropping eggs into it: ah-ha! *this* work reflects *that* syndrome, at least it looks like it might. Particularly of a man walking through a field holding two severed heads in front of, over a portrait of Ali McGraw in the service of cosmetic ads. You remember what I was saying about Heineken? See, in other words you might be able to see the irony of that as not propagandistic, and it's a very gratuitous form of social protest. But the point is you could say that's a reaction to the irony of a time where we have the movie star in a cosmetic ad appealing to one state of consciousness and then perhaps if we just turn the page, in that issue, or over a couple of pages we find the Cambodian soldier walking with the severed heads that then becomes a major pictorial form of the late 60s and the protest movements and so on. So the irony of it is, is like what John Berger says in *Ways of Seeing*, showing you how the irony of advertisements and pictorial forms that lie side by side that show you the horror and insecurity or the indifference of a culture: the very images it's presenting in tandem, which if you thought about the relationship, it's frightening. That's why with Bob Heineken, to me the greatest things he ever did were the books, you know when he takes a *Time* magazine...and sometimes just by cutting pages and repositioning them, to show what's in the same issue and you'll be reading along and see a discussion of some event, and as I said, he's got the new set of pages, and he shifts the location, he puts those things that are dispersed through the magazine and places them next to one another. And you read with horror what's been happening to your mind after you've gone through the whole issue. Because you know that your mind is being ingrammed with those various images...of definition...Like a report on the problem of teenage venereal disease, and what he does, he takes the saran wrap ad from another locale in the magazine which shows a slice of cake covered up with saran wrap fitting into the slot like a big box in the slice, remember we were talking about it the other day, and all he has to do is shift two pages to the contraception discussion, and the problem matches the picture. And in the article we read that saran wrap is being used today popularly by youth as a form of contraception. His implication would be, and the food industry and the saran wrap industry knows that and they are appealing the use of that medium and used in an erotic overtone. Now whether they are or not we can't accuse them always. We have...and others talk about subliminal advertising and things like that. You know, the cookie runs across the screen and you run out and buy Oreos, you know, and you never even liked chocolate, that kind of thing. But those strange

juxtapositions by shifting the magazine without even putting anything on it: he would just cut the pages into different configurations, so that you see something...And then he would subtly imprint, the only time he ever became somewhat frank was in the pornographic series when he would take the issue of *Time* and open it up, take out the center sheet, remove the staples, and run about twenty issues through the offset press and show some spread-eagle beaver shot. Or if you ever saw that *Esquire*, when I use those terms I don't mean any offense I use the popular...they are called beaver shots and things of that nature, they're all distinctive. The point is like the *World According to Garp*, a remarkable analysis in the Esquire Magazine about what ends up in men's magazines, and the references that are being used, pink stuff, and things of that nature. But the idea was Bob Heineken took the most radically obscene image he could find, of just the woman, interesting enough, and offset printed on the center page, the image. And then re-stapled it, and closed them all up. And his intent was, and it would have been the only time he ever became involved with social action, he bought the magazines to put them back on the newsstand and to have people have a new kind of centerfold, you know, and picture the possibility that someone is holding it on the subway. You could do it in New York you wouldn't in California, and they look and say this page is dirty. And now granted, someone might say thank god for small blessings. (laughter) Or perhaps someone might have a heart attack, (laughs). Or he could put them into more conservative magazines like *Good Housekeeping*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. You name it, the Gideon Bible, you see, they could be left in hotel rooms. As far as I know, Chuck and I were talking and laughing about it...I don't think he ever did anything like that...there were a number of us who might appear in a trial in case he got involved in that way because he predicted that the public would react negatively and he would be subject to a trial. Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is the idea of, the sense of starting with the historical condition, and then working back to see whether the art fits into that tradition, see? So you have a principle here that might work backwards. Some people, I think that...let's say the contribution of people in the field of American Studies and History or what have you, who are really entering into the history of photography and making far more important contributions than the historians of photography. Because they are able to see perhaps the larger matrix into which the images may fit. And the idea of paradox and the idea of the mores of a culture and how the art reflects that psychic interest. So that's another way of saying that's a paradigm, to work backwards. Starting with a psychological attitude that might be expressed in literary documents and finding out what are the themes of contemporary novels, or music, or poetry, or what seems to be the concentrations: is it more of a concern with individualism or the confusion of a life, or grand historical periods and how one family evolves from another or what have you, or tracing roots, things of that nature. Those popular, and it has to be pretty much, you can start there or with more specialized identifications, or the torpor and despair and so on, that one senses in the characters

that might give voice in Beckett. Whatever it may be, you see, starting with that, and then identifying things, and start putting the eggs in the basket. It's like what I did with Les Krims, egg one, and then something else, and then you start finding out whether they do work. Then you might go backwards from that to that personal level, you name things and that person goes to see their art expert and says how would I describe this, you know, formally. Or I can go back to biographical intention and say well it seems to fit the relationship of the person or not. The point is you work backwards, instead of forwards, and that's like reversing, going from level three to level two to level one. Abel gives a really wonderful series of analysis of various periods of time in which he deals with the formal, collective, conscious and unconscious, with the issue of archetypal and semiotic...content. But often he starts with just basically the motivating social circumstances, the motivating political circumstances and then shows you how the art does reflect that. And you might have a better grasp about one thing, that someone like Michael Lesy, who's quite a.. influence...thesis, he's one of the first ones to show us how to make it work. *Wisconsin Death Trip* takes the reports from newspapers, from hospitals and asylums, and a group of work from one photographer, what was his name? The photographer in Wisconsin, Charlie? I want to spell it, S-C-H-E-N-K? Or maybe it was different. But anyway he takes that work as a kind of one person definition, you know, of energies, and then he just presents the two in relationship, and then he goes through a discussion of various depressions and crises in the smaller town communities in the 1880s through whatever it was, 1910, and then shows how all three come together, and they really do come together. And you see the connections: that the asylum reports, the reports of suicides were all excoriating types like swallowing carbolic acid, chopping one's arm off, you know, cabin fever...or the guilt people felt because they outlived their children because they were dying of diphtheria, chicken pox, or something else. This whole system of insecurity and terror, you see it's as though he started not necessarily concerned with pictorial forms, worked backward from the bowels of history from the concerns with social psychological tensions of their history and then of course became involved with the import of images that might reflect that. Some disagree, some agree. That's not the point. The point is he made the Abel theory work rather beautifully, this kind of, instead of working forward from the form to the content, working from the condition back to what those conditions reflect in terms of content and backing up and finding forms that might relate. He talks in this next chapter, Abel, about fields of human experience. Some of this is a little bit laughable, and there are little diagrams, say, the difference between, I forgot the term...direct history, lineage, and what you might call spiraling historical relationships. You know you've got the things that spiral around a central core and he's got these lines and he shows these little springs that look like one of those slinky things, you know, and that diagram is supposed to give you a real kick. Well after all, in 57 people needed to look at diagrams sometimes in order to understand very complex ideas. So when he says, you've got

these fields of experiences, you've got positive, neutral and negative: Neumann does this too by the way in his published material very similarly, and they above all, that their thesis will be understood. So the text is readable, it certainly doesn't deliver you from complexity, the diagrams can tell you, look folks, we should use this or understand it might not be so simple, so positive would be things like achievements, victory, fulfillment. And then negative would be depression, privation, defeat, failure. Neutral would be routine, lack of challenge, existence without effort. And like Mamas and their apple pies, some are going to disagree...What he's trying to suggest is when you get to that upper level you've got demons, mythical monsters, protective deities, mythical heroes, saints and angels, reduction of mythical activity, tendency toward rationalism. And we talk about the cabinet photograph which includes a figure and an activity of pose that seems totally out of keeping with the background and we talk about entering into sacred time and some people will say, for God's sakes, that person may have been a Christian but I don't think he thought about sacred time. No he didn't, but in so far as we seek a way of trying to understand a field of human experience it might have been totally devoid of what you might call the differentiating function, the rational choice, the appropriateness of a relationship. So we use the metaphor that the person entered into a state of photographic experience which would remove one from existential time or empirical time. We call it sacred time from Mircea Eliade. You get the idea? In order to put a name to or at least a way of describing the condition of the potential possibility of what that man might have thought or felt. He then talks about, he lets you know something that sounds rather obvious but disciplines relative to the psycho-historical frame of reference. If you want to deal with manifest cultural imagery on some analytical level, these would be the relevant disciplines. It's like a career chart. Then you would want to become involved with the history and criticism of: take one from group A, you know it's the Chinese dinner approach to... the visual arts, folklore, music, myth, dance, religion, philosophy, you know, choose your field. Psycho-social tensions: you need to understand psychology in all its relevant concentrations in psychoanalysis. Notice that he uses the term psychoanalysis and that means reductive psychology, and social psychology, which he would use as a term for depth psychology. Remember, never call Jung a psychoanalyst, you know he was called a depth psychologist, because really the psyche is embedded in the collective field, your psyche, you know, and there's a collective unconscious, which is far more powerful than the personal unconscious. And it's a consciousness that is a far more powerful expression than even your ego individual, "I" consciousness: I, personal, so therefore that becomes social psychology. So he wants both. And then of course if you're dealing with the historical and social circumstances then you certainly want to be aware of the social sciences: history of sociology, economics and ethnology and anthropology. How many of you realize that in 57, even at that time a number of these fields had not become distinguished as separate disciplines...So that if you look at the time it is rather amazing. Now I don't

know about your campus but the fight between the bio-behavioral groups and those who would trace it back to genetic structures trying... On our campus they fought so much... they divided the island and said look we're sick and tired of all this why are you having this argument, you're now two separate entities, let's see which one lives out their role and therefore the money will go equally until such time that we see what production comes out of this, what proofs, what recognitions, because all you're doing is making the students bear witness to your conflict. It's a wonderful way of letting people live out their myths. It's one of the most enlightened things our administration has ever done, you know, by saying I'll put you in competition, you're separately funded, separately laboreried, separately enrolled, but we tend to say departments that do their work and gain their prizes and awards and recognitions survive and others get flushed down the drain and that's how most academic institutions work. Like departments in philosophy that beg people to come, take my course, you do a PHD in philosophy because we need you to survive and that happens in many schools. Or the same thing about how people are prostylatized in their field, and then they get there and they're punished because they are told, you will be given the possibility of innovation, but in reality... they are to pretend toward innovation and they are really stepping up to a cross, nail one, nail two, nail three, nail four: we've got the program and you're the victim (laughter). It's true... You have the potential of becoming a person to be sacrificed to an idea which could not be realized by the boobs who are forming the idea, so it's a compliment rather than a... I say those things only to imply that the idea that we deal with, even as I suggest that Abel deals with, the idea of identification of fields. Understanding the disciplines that you need, and as specialization increased he's not asking that you know all these things, what he would rather have you do is synthesize them all, you see, bring them together. And then he talks about analytical levels and that's when he goes into things like the middle ages, the dark ages, and the book includes some wonderful examples where he analyzes, so each chart gets a little more difficult... so you keep going to the next one... the psycho-historical concept of culture, cultural dynamics, economic, social, political, military, geographical... Some might say that first chart represents the working backwards paradigm which you might have pictured that you could have gone from level three back to level one, agreed? But my stress was to start with one, see that level three is also in relation to the formal elements. I would suggest to you it's just as much fun, much more on the excitement of discovery to not start with the art, but to start with the historical circumstance of a social condition, the psychological milieu, and find out what hand fits the glove. And then he goes on to, the one I want to really stress, is this one on, the last page, 319: it says, *Toward a Unified Field*. Here's where he would hope that Freudianism, Jungianism, Marxism, Social Democratism, or Democracy per se, or all the various systems of psychology, sociology, anthropology, behavioral sciences, social sciences, would come together as informing in a unified sense exactly what *we're* about. And particularly, still

with the belief that the art, the pictures, the literature, music, the sounds, the concepts are couched in forms that best express what we are about. And he gives you a wonderful, in this chapter, *Toward a Unified Field*, summary of the various systems that you heard me mention...if you never had an opportunity to explore those things, you can start with a very trustworthy summary and then go read the book. But it's like Jung said, most people never read Plato, and as he told an interviewer, you haven't either... and the truth is so ironic because it's so easy to read...One can read Plato, obviously in translation and realize that the idea is communicated, because Plato wished to get his theory across. And when you read *The Republic* you can also decide that you terribly dislike Plato, despite whether you agree with his theory on Absolutism. Why would you dislike him? Why would you feel horror and insecurity about Platonic thought? Why would you feel nervous about Platonic thought?

Student: Is it the denial of matter?

Not only the denial of matter, but the denial of you, because guess what happened to the artist and the representator?

Student: inaudible

Yes, that whole theme. That art is no more than the further reflection of that which is artificial. It's not the pie on the plate by Wayne Thiebaud, or Andy Warhol. It's not the pie that you eat, because that's but one reflection of the very great idea of the big piece of "pie in the sky," see, which in itself is ideal, which makes itself manifest most perfectly as an idea. That *stuff*, that's the prelude to what Descartes will deliver us. You see what I'm saying. The idea is, in *The Republic*, you would be put to death, not just put in a little concentration camp for a while for you fools who try to deliver the world. You're not to enjoy this new order, that's what I meant about, some people are killers, and they have to find out a way to get their thesis into a form that becomes manageable and influential without really destroying people. And you read it for yourself, it is very easy to see, there is no possible other motive for misinterpretation. The vagaries of embellishing the thought, important or not of how it might well be argued, like the allegory of the cave is constantly brought up, it's a wonderful photographic paradigm. Hollis Frampton has done a job with that, Max Kozloff has, Susan Sontag entitles a section in her book, what's it called, you know the thing about the cave. I know what it is but I can't remember it, if I say it (laughs)... It is something from the cave, you all know what I'm talking about, in her book where she uses the Platonic reference...It's Abel's thesis that if you look through, let's say, the legal theory, of will to form, or if you look through the various stages of empathy or what have you, or we dealt with biographical emphasis on the individual creative personality, or we can talk about racial determinism, and by the

way please don't...genetic in that sense, that had not arrived yet as a concern. He's talking about culturally determined ethnic groups that might have evolved an art form that we speak of as racially determined, you see that is traditional, or historical... determinist and then the psycho-historical equivalence. He goes into aspects of culture where we create the potential collective psychic state, all which seems very much similar to what we've discussed...and certainly you can start with something like Panofsky and know how these things will operate but he does in the unified field is that the art and the culture, and the art and the psyche, the form and its content are not separate. It's so inclusive that it is not even a separate object from you, see, so he would disagree with someone like Szarkowski who really approaches that whole unified field in which the thing in the photograph, grant you he opens it up a little bit more than that, but that is his essential thesis. You see the form and the substance are one therefore it's a different form of art, you see what I mean. And they may be delivered to the point of selection, choice of subject matter, then we might even talk about the uniqueness of that eye, or the uniqueness of that individual attitude towards the way he frames, but ultimately it's not the object that might bristle me. Whereas Abel would like to say that it is the artist, it's like making it diagrammatically: an interlocking relationship between the artist, picture-maker and...Steiglitz says art or not art, still it is, photography *is*...It affects the art, ok, and that is to say there is a reciprocal relationship. Because painters often speak of and what John brings us about what Tolstoy says, that I begin with one intention and then I was always surprised that what I ended up with was not expected, see, because perhaps the word, the phrase, the character, the person the place the thing the event or often one stroke in a series of intentions...that speaks the next decision. Now if we start with best laid plans we find out they don't necessarily happen to arrive but also start directing us, so the art affects the artist, all right? Eventually, most people stop there, you know, they might talk about the intentionalist aspect of the relationship and leave you with a reflection of simply biography or peculiar stylistic disposition or contribution on the part of a name, like there's a Garry Winogrand, there's an Edward Weston or what have you. That's a full sign that we've come full around to think that we don't want to go any further. Of course let's read the literature... and miss the point, but what I always say is to read the literature and know what you're seeing has nothing to do with what you're seeing in the work and what you are seeing in the intention and you forgot that your good idea about interpreting that work, like what the artist would have never known. So therefore you have to include the audience. There's a reciprocal relationship there. Ok? That is to say that the audience, you know: A1, A2, A3, mind my little 50's diagram...You see that the audience then reciprocally interrelates with the art, and the art affects the audience, and then in essence you might say if the audience tends to want to know who did the art, and then there's a kind of encounter backwards, a reciprocal interrelationship between the audience and the artist, ok? And then you find out you might as well just say that because everything is so

interrelated that we deal with on our diagram with just the symbol A. You see it's all one and the same, you don't differentiate the stages. That the art is as much a part of the fabric of the total consciousness as the audience, as the artist, and that the artist can't be guaranteed to differentiate sufficiently from his art or from his audience to ever count as singularly more important than the person who is standing there before it and *seeing* or *interpreting*. You see, it gives credence to all three in a reciprocal, interrelating condition. And as wonderful and utopian as that might sound, it is possible. You know, to view and see by one's work and one's seeing and one's appreciation and one's analysis and one's interpretation as interlocking and yet ironically because that really becomes such a measure of confirming that things aren't different from us. That we can say, as some noble savage did, in a state of mysterious participation, "I and the tree are one." We were taught you're not supposed to do that. Well we know I and the tree *aren't* the same, but it is as if we understood the tree and ourselves and the interrelationship between them we enter into a conscious decision to say *it is*. You remember we went through that problem about the wall, remember, and then, what was that question, Joe?...

Student: How do we know that the wall is here...

Well how do we know the wall is here but then I'd carry it further, why do we...what was it? It wasn't that...

Student: inaudible

WEP: What we were saying was that the principle was, yes how do we know... why would the mind be interested in the question of wanting the wall to have a sense of confirmation independent of us. Remember, that was it, that was the twist: why is it important to know the wall is there independent of our touching, our sensory confirmation, our thinking it, our feeling it, or anything else. It's a way of asking yourself how do you confirm that *it* has as much import as you as the primary determiner of its designation? And the principle was that we accept that as-if story...It isn't a question of confirmation, it is a question of acquiescence before the possibility that things are *more* than "res extensa." Because otherwise you continue that strange irony, just like those people in Portland who sat around talking about chthonic levels that were then to be posited on the spiritual plane. Where did Descartes get his vision from? Where did "cogito ergo sum" come from? That purportedly highly differentiated system, that thinking gained primacy over any other function, including the sensory, you see, you might need the senses, you might need the intuitive aspect, you might need to value something. But thinking having primacy, certainly over matter, which can be thought of as dismissed or denigrated to the level of things extended, meaning in perpetuity,

molecular structures and so on. That could in essence be used and subjected to control through the processes of analytical reasoning, and mathematics, and laboratory work and so on. Isn't it interesting where that came from. It's like, you know, let's go out in the woods, that chthonic level led Harlan Reed evidently to a high degree of spiritual individuation and he's got memory, that kind of level too, I am talking about the activity. But the point is, Descartes then...he's got writer's block (laughs) What was it, the eighth volume? And he didn't get this system working out right. His own testimony, read it in *The Unconscious Before Freud* but you can also read his own report on it. And good heavens, what happens for the supreme rationalist, to have a dream: shutters whipping at the windows, howling winds, burst of illumination, the book floating in and the candle settling on the table. The leap from the bed and he sees the book almost like a Cecil B. DeMille film where the tablets and the ten commandments {makes a loud sound effect noise} COGITO ERGO SUM! (laughter) He remembers it and writes it down. And that's how he claims he got that revelation...Out of the boundless nature of nature, his mind in its least rational stage, differentiating stage, and also very much couched in the whole attitude of tumultuous events in which climate, wind, like the rainy season when they got together to share their...Out of the realm of the temperature, and the phenomenology of the candle and he describes the candle almost as though it could be potentially blown out, because that was the form of illumination. And that's why I might take something... that statement in that *Exposure* issue where Thierry de Duve says...archetypal criticism, there is only one example of it therefore we will dismiss it. And you turn the page and there is that...Candida Finkel on Heineken, and I wrote a little note that says, now there are two, and I don't agree with the second (laughs). But when I mention something like this, let me find it here, and I have to refer to an issue...I never remember this business, it's so interesting how this essay has received the immersing and baptism in water or whatever, sweat, tears, blood...(laughs)... let me find it...I make a comment right here, I say, "Reality as process preconsciously structured by archetypal provocations." (This is impossible. I can't even read this anymore, now I write real sweet things about...but it makes good sense) "A unitary reality which makes the mundane facts of the usual pale before the possible: reality as a philosophy which sees in man and things the image of continual change and transformation: for Uelsmann, these are awarenesses to be defined in the reality of the photograph." I must admit folks, that I think I told you, I never even met this man, never met him before in my life, and I'd seen the work and I liked it and I went to New York and I was giving lectures to the Jung society (laughs) on Jerry Uelsmann. And then finally, the infinity guide, you know they had that conference up here at Eastman House...one of the very earliest ones, and it's the first time I met Nathan, and Beaumont and all these people. And my subject, deliberately, and I knew better, that the people in the ASMP, they were like commercial photographers. And Alexi Boddage and others were members of their group and they were highly important people in photography...They wanted me to talk about people like Art Kane and Richard

Avedon, you know, who at that time were still thought of very much in the commercial world. Poor Art Kane, and the other guy, the one, you know, New York, he does fashion...

Student: Burt Stern?

Burt Stern, exactly. Poor Burt Stern.

Student: What do you mean?

Well he just slipped out of it and he's still in the asylum.

Student: Really?

I really wanted to go visit him but the last time I saw *Blow Up*, I'll never forget, going to Bert Stern's studio...it was six months before...

Student: Was that Art Kane?

No...there are problems that seemed to extend from the issues of the photographic images and aspects that were involved with the photography that would be inappropriate, although the Bert Stern thing was perfectly open information...

Student: inaudible.

Well, evidently, as most people would describe it, he went insane. You know the extrapolation of that image of involvement with models, people. I am not talking about the personal involvement, but then...selling visual imagery...spare me, spare me, spare me: hundreds of people were living out his complex. I got involved with the group that did his studio, what it was, 2201 and that sort of thing, and they would call it the American Thought Combine, and that was during the period when I told you I was just recovering, I was still typing everything, and they said, "Billy why don't you come by our executive director"

End Side A