

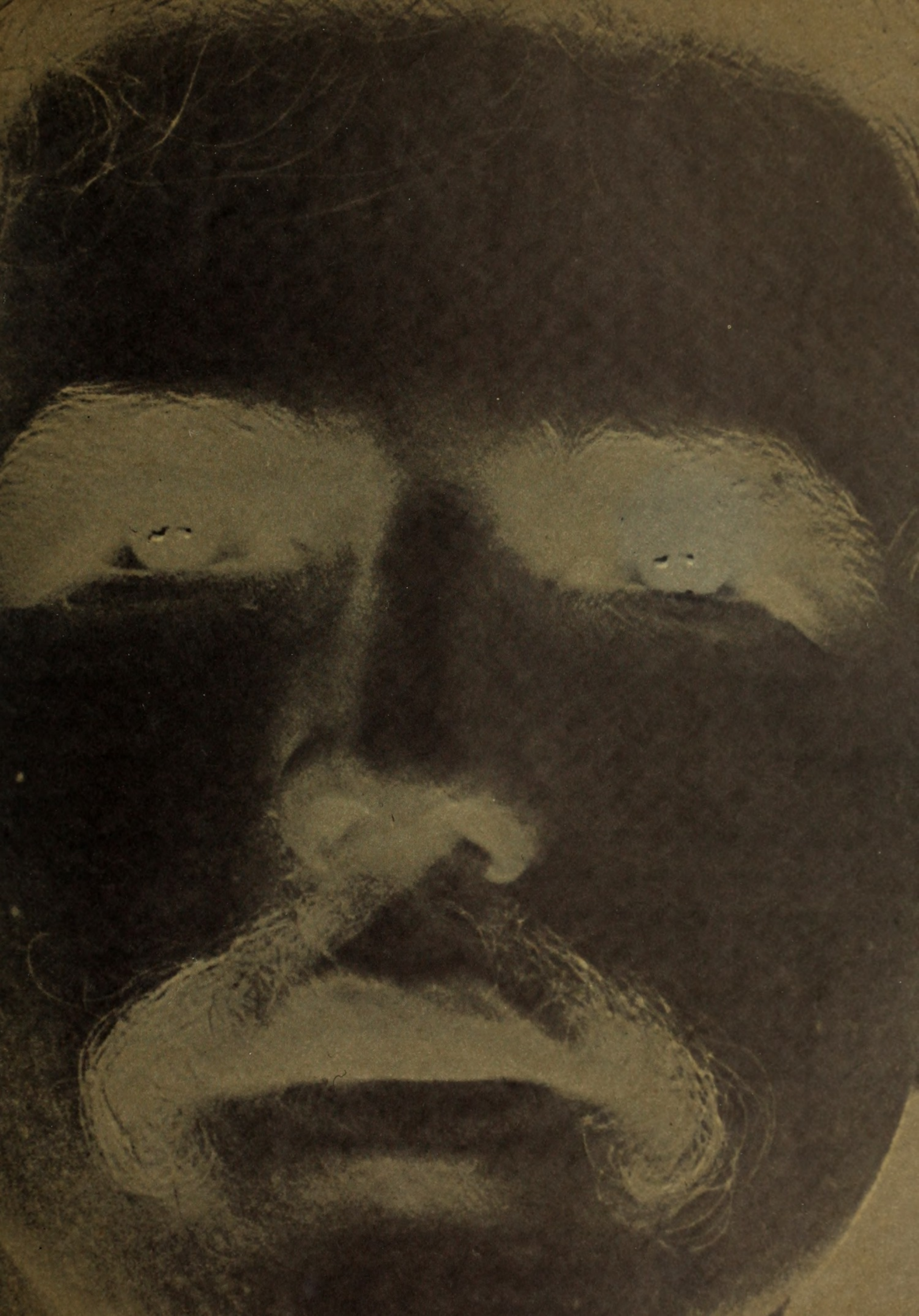
David Shepard

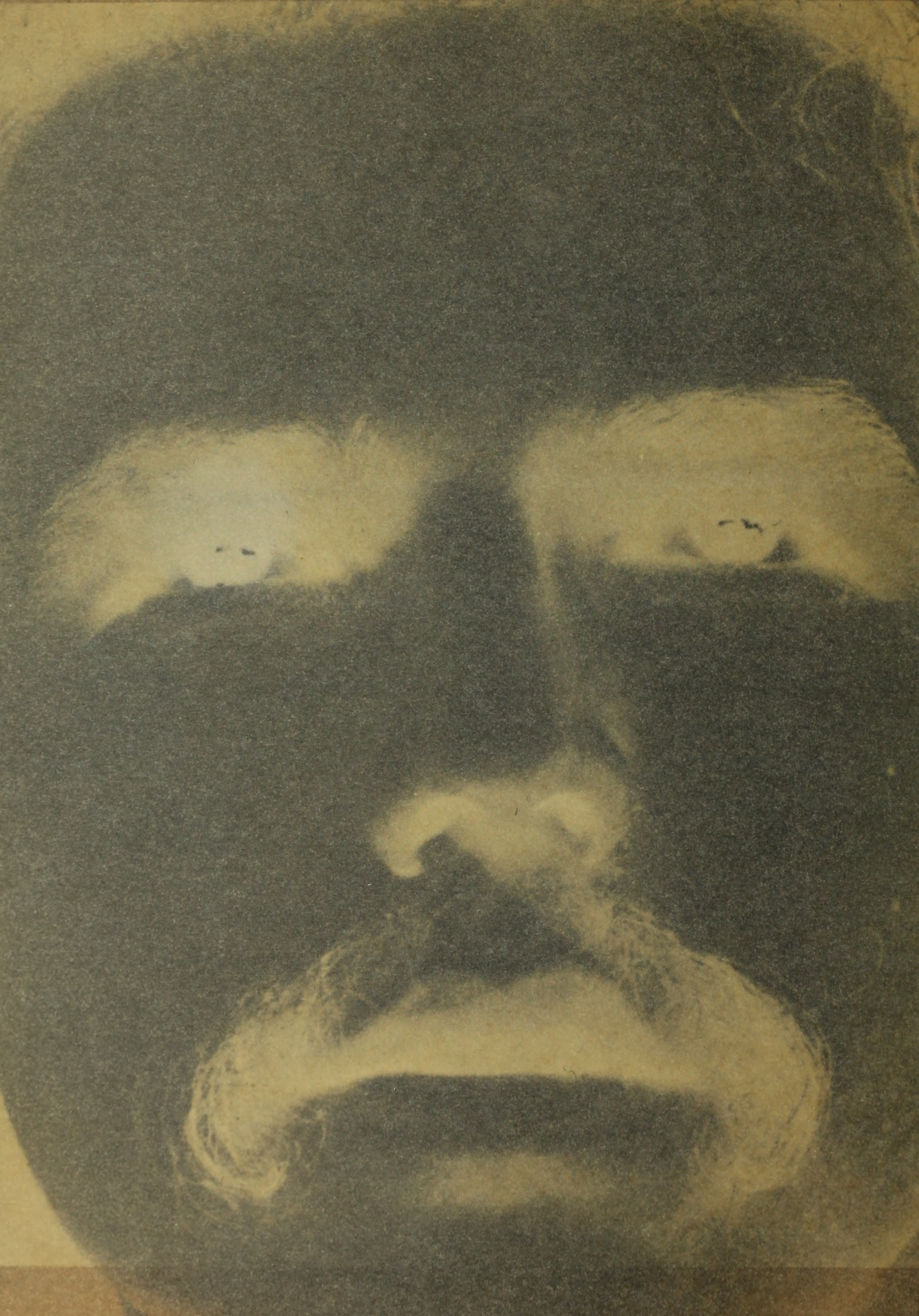
DAVID SHEPARD
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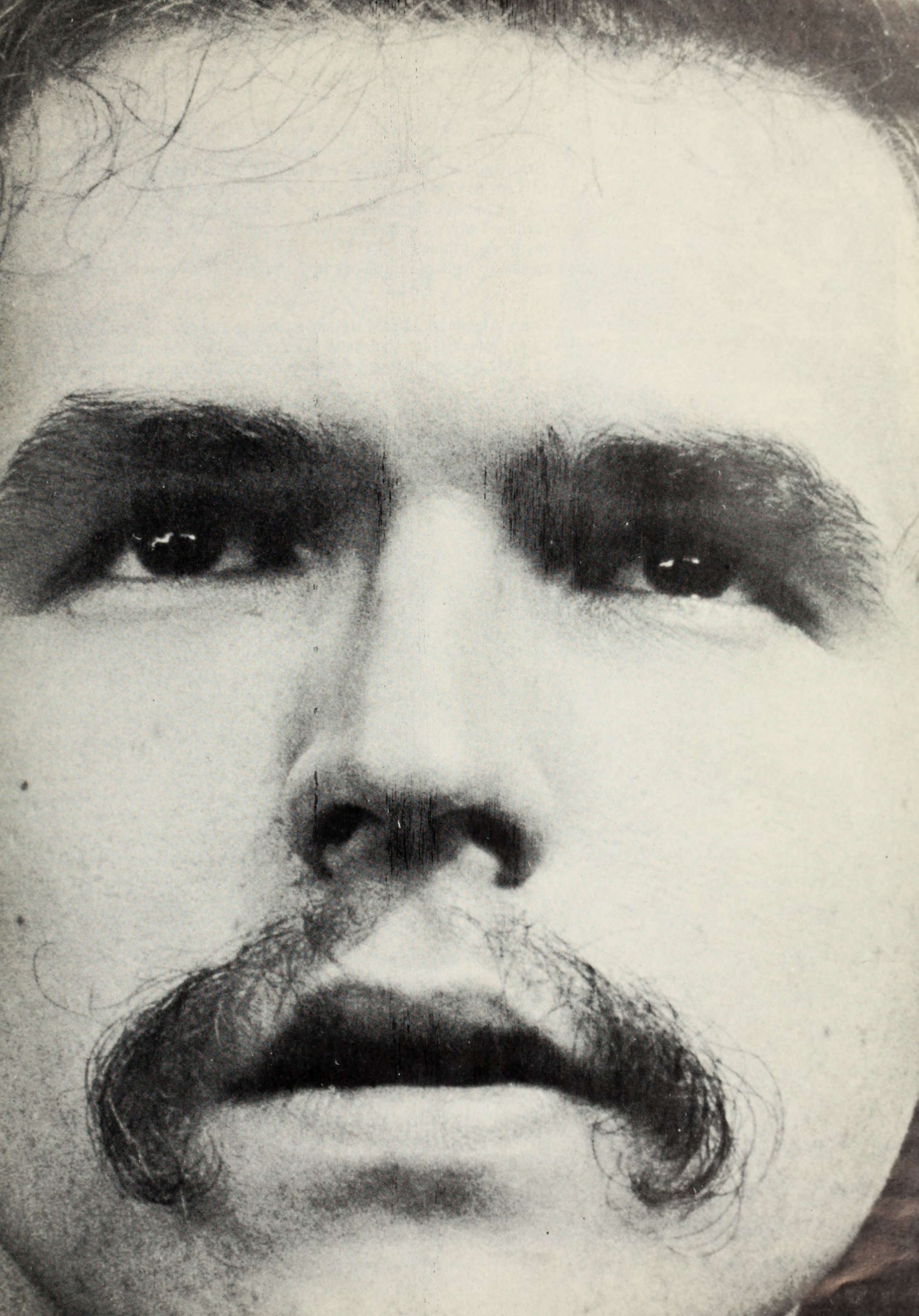
DAVID H. SHEPARD











"By Brakhage" should be understood to mean "by way of Stan and Jane Brakhage," as it does in all my films since marriage. It is coming to mean: "by way of Stan and Jane and the children Brakhage" because all the discoveries which used to pass only thru the instrument of myself are coming to pass thru the sensibilities of those I love. Some day these passages will extend thru the sensibilities of those I now can only imagine loving. Ultimately "by Brakhage" will come to be superfluous and understood as what it now ultimately is: "by way of everything."

Jane and I have agreed to dedicate this book to P. Adams Sitney who is so dedicated to it.

I am grateful to Kathy Alexander, David Heilman, George Landow, Charles Weston IV, and the University of Colorado for their help in preparing this manuscript. My special thanks go to Jonas Mekas whose love and determination made this edition possible.

INTRODUCTION

Here is METAPHORS ON VISION: it is a collection of writings on the film and, in particular, on the film as Stan Brakhage sees and makes it. Yet more significantly it is a testament of what makes mythopoeic art. Mythopoeia is the often attempted and seldom achieved result of making a myth new or making a new myth.

When Brakhage began to write METAPHORS, he had made some fifteen films. Most of them (from INTERIM in 1952 to FLESH OF MORNING in 1956) were in the part-neo-realist-and-part-dream-vision "psycho-dramatical" genre. Since then they have become classics to young film-makers continuing that tradition; but by 1958 (the year of his marriage) Brakhage had begun to move toward mythopoeia. He was feeling the limitations of dramatic form and sensing that film could do more than reveal the personality of an actor/subject. Simultaneous to this was the making of ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT, the first American film about and structured by the nature of the seeing experience; how one encounters a sight, how it is recalled, how it affects later vision, and where it leads the visionary. By making the film he came upon a simple but startling discovery which is central to his aesthetic: if vision is the highest value of film, then the camera (and its man) must allow visions to occur rather than force them (by script) upon subjects. The depth of his conviction in regard to this principle and the rejection of ANTICIPATION by many avant-garde artists and critics previously well-disposed toward his work inspired Brakhage to formulate an Apologia by way of METAPHORS ON VISION.

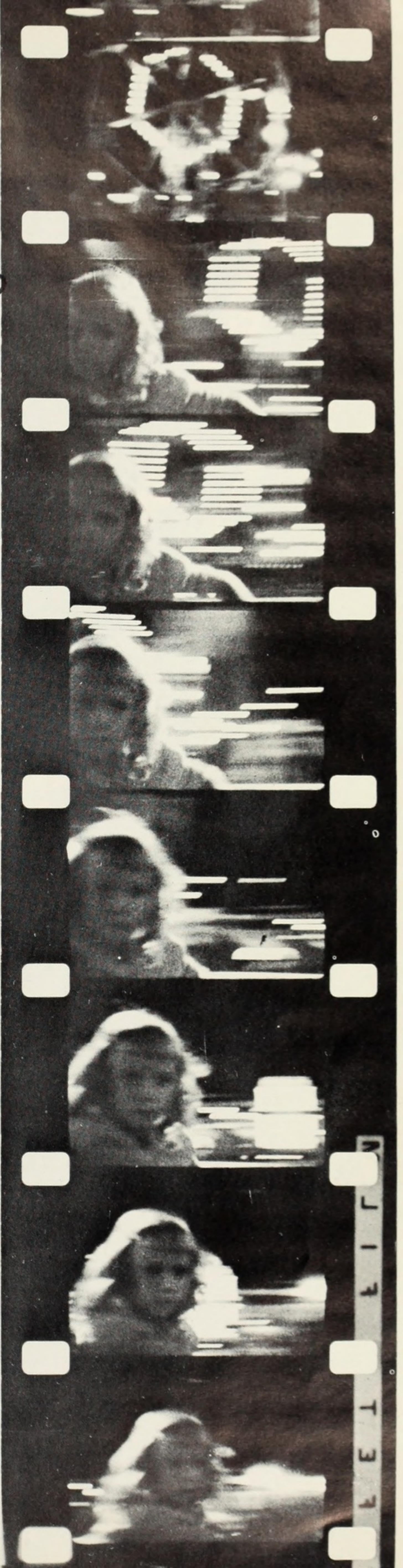
In the three or four years of composing the five initial chapters Brakhage's writing grew from polemics to a method of clarifying his discoveries in film-making and freeing himself "thru writing" to make new ones. About fifteen more films were made during the making of METAPHORS ON VISION. Among them were the PRELUDE and PART I of his magnum opus DOG STAR MAN.

In the period between finishing the first five chapters and writing "Margin Alien" Brakhage had made himself, and thus his work, open to incorporate the literary traditions referred to in that latter chapter. In so doing without ever letting allusion interfere with vision he made DOG STAR MAN a truly mythopoeic film. During this time he came to accept and rejoice in the humble position of the artist as Plato sees him in ION; that is, as one link in a chain connecting the Muse and the final audience. Brakhage became a mentor to young film-makers and a co-inspiring contemporary to artists in his own and other media. Just as his personality and work inspired a freeing process, and indeed works, in others, he was able to further his own development in answer to their letters and talks. Thus "Respond Dance," an amalgam of recent letters of his edited to be read as a single run-on statement, represents his stage of creative development and the state of his mythopoeia at the time METAPHORS was finished.

By way of introducing Brakhage the man to those who have not met him and his works to those who have not seen them, I shall make the body of this "introduction" the transcript of a conversation we had in the spring of 1963. It began in answer to a question about how he and his wife, Jane, have collaborated and inspired each other, and it grew into what is perhaps the most complete discussion of the films Brakhage made during the years in which this book was written.

Stan
Broshage

from ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT





I can remember when I got married many of my friends who had been waiting for me to transform into a homosexual were bitterly disappointed, frustrated, and considered that by their mythos of what the artist was I was completely through. It wasn't all just their personal wants, but it was in respect to the mythos. A married artist was an incomprehensible thing to many friends, artists working in film and other mediums. They were referring to a whole mythos that passes most clearly through Jean Cocteau in ORPHEUS, i.e. that moment where the whole film unreels itself and Orpheus is cast back into the arms of Eurydice, and he himself as poet, deeper than social-conscious poet, is completely destroyed. That mythos has been one of the most dominant in this century and I had to cope with that at a time when the total form-structure of my work had changed completely when ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT was made. That was in one sense to be my last film: I had seen myself, cast before where I was as a human being, as leading to inevitable suicide through another contemporary myth. Certainly by the age of 26 I was getting too old to still be alive and around and fulfilling the myth of myself. ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT was the vehicle out.

Do you mean you were actually going to kill yourself at the completion of the film?

I didn't think this through consciously. Occurrences which happened afterwards made it clear that's what I'd intended. For months I'd been getting more and more ill with neurotic diseases, some of them, like asthma, which had a long history in my life, and others that were completely new. At that time the fourth and fifth fingers of my left hand, that is the marriage and death fingers, were completely crippled with arthritis; I couldn't move them, I was practically on a cane (at the age of 26, mind), I was defeated in all searches of love, trying to reach out of myself, except in relation to film. Even the drama structures of film were collapsing around me like old walls that I could no longer inhabit. There was a reach out, but when those walls fell, it seemed as if there was nothing but night out there, and I then thought of all my life as being in anticipation of that night. That night could only cast one shadow for me, could only form itself into one black shape, and that was the hanged man. That is the shadow seen on the wall at the end of ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT. I had kept saying for months, without ever questioning why, that I would shoot the hanged man sequence spontaneously. On the one hand I was hyperediting the film, that is pitching more of the forming into the editing process than any film I had made up to that time. On the other hand, I was saying, "When I come to the hanged man sequence, I'll shoot it spontaneously. I will go out and put a rope around my neck and photograph as the feelings arrive and just attach that section on to the end of the film." I didn't really become aware of what I had intended until months after our marriage.

Did you get married while the film was still being made?

I was still editing the film, specifically the birth of the child sequence in which the child is made out of abstractions, i.e. water abstracted, the rose as a concept of prismatic light breakings, etc.; in other words the child is formed completely out of mythic elements. Right at that moment something, physically in myself, was wrenching out to another being, Jane, at a moment when she, for similar reasons in her own life, was completely open-ended; i.e. ready for suicide. She reached to me and we had a beginning, finding expression in immediate sex love, but with enough power open-ended re: sex-death, that Spanish tradition, that we had something to go on with. The conscious mind wasn't aware of this for some time.

A month after we were married, I was out on the front lawn with Jane, whom I wasn't yet seeing deeply beyond sex desire, and I was putting a rope around my neck and standing up on a kitchen chair in a suburb of Denver with all the neighbors gathering on porches to wonder what that madman was up to now. Those neighbors had seen me set a rosebush on fire and photograph it with upside-down camera. (The image was too myth-structured, too unreal to me, to be used in ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT: it had to be made more out of eye sources.)

Anyway neighbors were gathering, watching me putting rope around my neck and photographing my shadow against a wall. There was no need for the kitchen chair: my shadow was never seen below the waist. And out of my non-recognition of where I actually was as a total being, I was trying to re-enact, dramatize, or in some sense fulfill my own prophesy that I must die by hanging, and I was trying to realize what I had intended.

So there I was on a chair with rope around neck photographing and then fortunately a friend dropped by and was also watching the process, and I handed the camera to Jane and said, "Well that's that," meaning I'm finished, and without realizing or remembering that the rope was around my neck, stepped off the chair and swung in midair for a few seconds, was grabbed by the friend, put back up on the chair, and suddenly had the full

realization of what had been intended. I was sure that I had intended for months to finish the editing of ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT up to that point, go out into the yard, climb up on a chair camera in hand, jump off the chair, and while hanging run out as much film as I could, leaving a note saying, "Attach this to the end of ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT."

I had to re-enact some semblance of this intention. This is particularly appropriate to my idea (as expressed in DOG STAR MAN: PART I) of the rhythm of life being such that you could paraphrase it in two steps forward and one back. That instant, when I didn't realize where I actually was in relationship to Jane, and where we were going with new form, was the backstep. I had to step back, i.e. take my fall--rope around neck and all, and pitch myself into a close proximity of death, to realize what had been intended. At that point I was not really seeing Jane or what we had, the strength of love, and what it could build: she was the person who received the camera when I said, "Well that's that!" Or the person who was thought of as just doing the housework or as only in bed with sex the touchstone of something flowering between us that would be the growth up and out; but everywhere else we could not see each other and this non-seeing which many share during the first months of marriage became so crucial that I felt out of absolute necessity we had to film.

One day in midst of quarrel I felt the necessity to take the camera and photograph her again and again. I grabbed the lights and began letting her face emerge in and out of black and white flashes in order that as much as I could see be immediately pitched into expression. I moved the light with one hand--painting her image as it moved over her and away into darkness -- and photographed her with the other hand.

Was WEDLOCK HOUSE: AN INTERCOURSE the film being made?

Yes. At a crucial moment out of some graciousness that I did not fully comprehend; (I kept feeling a little guilty wondering what Jane's view of me would be.) I sensed that my view, or what I would cast upon her, was becoming too dominant. So I handed her the camera and she took it very quickly. We were trying to reenact the quarrel, trying to comprehend it.

You were acting?

We started by acting, but as we began passing the camera back and forth, the quarrel was pitched onto a visual level. Jane didn't have much technical knowledge of the camera, but enough to make it possible for her to control it out of her anger and determination to grasp those images, i.e. her view of me, and retain them for me to look at later. Her images came out of such a quality that they could actually cut back and forth with mine. She too grabbed the light as I had done and began taking up the same form of painting-in my image with moving light source, she automatically grasped what my style was on a feeling level, and went right on with her version of it. This was the first time we were both photographing; I photographing her, she me, but in relation to the form that was springing out of me. We got glimpses of each other, in flashes of moving light, as if emerging out of long hallways in sheer darkness. All the quarrels we were having at that time became pitched on that visual level. You do not need to know this, of course, to see WEDLOCK HOUSE: AN INTERCOURSE.

It is extremely interesting to Jane and me that her face changes so much through that film, and it changes always in reference to women I had known previously. At certain moments she looks like the girl in INTERIM, at certain moments like the girl in DESIST-FILM, at certain moments like girls that weren't in any of these films, and at some moments (shudder) like my mother (bless her). The amazing thing was that, without will, and with the light being moved interpretively faster than the brain could move, I was capable of forcing, by those movements, her face into a variety of contexts which were actually what was standing between me and my being able to see her as she was then. Her pictures of me related to pictures of her brother and other men that she had known. As a matter of fact, I was wearing a cast-off Army shirt of her brother's. This was one of her strongest images of him in that film. She was not conscious of this. The viewer, not having known, would not realize this by looking at the film and those images. But this is how we were astonished and kept tabs of the formal integrity that was passing between us. The next step was to take this material and edit it.

We were so shocked by seeing the footage that we suddenly had an intense realization of what we had to cope with as human beings to make our love grow together and be more than something that could flower in a dark bed where nothing more than body material was accessible for its pure sensual growth. That's what I mean when I say sex is a touchstone, but not a foundation. The crudity of trying to make sex a foundation would be like trying to take the Blarney stone and make it the foundation for Babylon; you know,

horrible. Foundation has to spring new at each moment from each happening. Cornerstone of any foundation or structure always, whether it's for one person, or two people, or a society, has to be supporting where they are at each moment. So we had to keep "making it new" in the pitched structure we had in mind as to where we were going. That it always be new, with its cornerstone supporting the moment where we were, however hard it was to make it tangential to that moment and where we thought we were going. I started editing WEDLOCK HOUSE months later. We had moved from Denver to Princeton, N. J. and it took me months to accept that footage as being material for a balanced work of art.

Looking at the images and getting only horror, I was afraid of editing, afraid that I would be performing some black magic act, cursing what little chance we had for making a love structure out of our life together. For months I resisted, resisted, I struggled with that footage trying to edit it, you know, trying to get it balanced. Finally I gave up and said, "If horror is what it is, then I will go straight into it." It was like breaking through a sound barrier: suddenly the total beauty of what had happened to us right straight off the battleground of our lives was what structured and made true scenes in these flashes.

The last shots give a clear sense of where we were when I was editing that film. I had been capable of editing all those images so they expressed, first Jane's parental love, then her romantic relations, then her sex relations, and my own also, and interrelated them and finally brought those image-material faces, hers and mine, to the point where it was close to the way we saw each other when I was editing the film, which was months after it was shot. Jane was involved in the editing too: I would ask specific questions as to what she saw in this facial feature of mine, always referring her to my images, not to my view of hers. I drew statements out of her that structured the work so that the quarrel would be totally fair. Then comes the finished work which in photography and in spirit is so dependent on her view of me and the things she said about my images that it was something like a collaboration; that is, her view of me and mine of her finally meshed so carefully and so closely together that it does tend to be a balance, not collaborative, but true.

The film ends with an intercourse scene. How does that fit in?

That was the whole other level of it. There were the faces, the movements through the hallways, the dramatic action, the quarrel and the coffee-cup scene, and then always interspersed and intercut with this was INTERCOURSE, that being to me the course, the way of the course; intercourse. Sex which was the thread which seemed to hold the whole tapestry together was always weaving in and out. It held together precisely to the extent that all intercourse scenes remained distinct from dramatic scenes. It became like warp-woof. You can call intercourse warp or woof, whichever you like, but whatever it is, the dramatic scenes are the other. The beauty of the ending is that previously every moment the film moves out of intercourse scenes into drama scenes of quarrels, or searches, etc., it does so by way of plastic cutting on a single part of the body, but at the end of the film Jane's face goes to pure white and the intercourse emerges out of white, making the most total plastic cut in the film.

Your next film was CAT'S CRADLE, wasn't it?

CAT'S CRADLE was next shot, but not next edited. The next edited was WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING. CAT'S CRADLE presented a crucial problem because then, Jane, like most young people, had an image of what marriage was, which was very uninteresting to her. I had a concept of what marriage was that was struck off of the marriage of two close friends of mine, James Tenney and Carolee Schneemann, who had married shortly after the making of LOVING in which I had seen them as ideal lovers. So they were heavily involved in the mythos of film-making by way of loving, and the love they had found for each other and the marriage they had made was an idealized one. Fool that I was, like many young husbands are, I felt an urgency to take Jane into a relationship with them, i.e. went to visit them in Vermont and stayed two very disturbing weeks with them, where naturally Jane, not sharing my mythos of marriage, and certainly not by way of another man and woman, resisted all of that concept tremendously. I was trying to take an ideal form and strike a marriage thereof, like taking a cookie shape and making cookies.

There was a fantastic level of sarcasm, particularly between the two women. Women are always great in this area, you know, resisting each other by way of fantastic allusions of which men, if they don't listen carefully, are never aware. And I was trying so hard to relate to Jim as man that there are images in CAT'S CRADLE in which you can't tell whether it's Jim or myself you are looking at, even though he had a beard and I didn't. How do you explain that kind of visual magic? I was trying to superimpose

Jane in relationship to Carolee Schneemann and failing miserably on all counts. The touchstone of this seemed to be that the cat belonging to Jim and Carolee happened to come into heat right after we arrived and shockingly enough remained in heat all the time we were there. So the cat became the source of sex objectivity and I didn't see it symbolically any more. I didn't have time to fool around with symbols and I didn't have enough film to waste trying to create symbolic structures. I had to move right into the shape/form of what was developing straight off that cat. That cat became a source of hyper-forms and a touchstone visually and formally of everything else that happens in the film. Since I did not have time to bother about casting dramas, I began shooting very short shots which interrelated total scenes. I had to get an image, an idée fixée, out of the way so I could see what was not on the surface and so we could go on. Then Jim and Carolee could go on unhindered by the myth and we could all be friends; but there was a tremendous battle that had to take place first.

But the film itself doesn't express very much of the battle. I mean I didn't see it in the film.

Well, you see, that would be hard for me to disengage myself from, I am so aware of the battle that was struck off from it. But people tell me that it is very lyrical and I think it is probably a song that uses all this material that was so painful to deal with at the time for making a tone poem which struggles to contain a sense of separation. A key phrase to it that I discovered later was Freud's quotation which Durrell uses in the preface to JUSTINE. Freud wrote in a letter, "I am accustoming myself to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved." So all sex within CAT'S CRADLE tends to be interrelated; that is, there is no sex that does not involve four people with the cat seen as a visual medium of heat. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether there are four people in it, or three or two. One person even thought it was a portrait of a single person. And some only see the cat. Well, this is fine, on whatever level you want to look at it, it still contains that lyric song, if not of struggle, then of love and its complications creating possibilities of marriage. That's the play in there; CAT'S CRADLE relates to the game children used to play. The cat is like the cradled center, like "the cradle of civilization" or "cat's cradle" the string game. I mean, it is that complex...two hands and a string; but at a certain point two hands are not enough to play the game and you need four hands; you need two external hands to come in and move the string around to make "the cat's cradle."

And then WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING?

In that film Jane was so busy fighting the battle to destroy my myth of what ideal marriage was in order that we might be free that she was not actively involved in the filming except as... Look at the source of inspiration she was providing for me at each and every shot as she resisted the domination of anyone else's ideally formed life. By the time of WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING, Jane and I were so separate that we were in a position to come together.

You were in Brussels during part of the time of Jane's pregnancy, weren't you?

I went to Brussels for a month to attend The Exposition of Experimental Film. This was early in the pregnancy. Then I went to Geneva to do work on a commercial job. That was during the seventh to eighth month of pregnancy. I became involved with death. This was when I shot the material for THE DEAD, which was edited three years later. Also there was one aspect of childbirth that was very dangerous to me. Again I, still subconsciously carrying the weight of my pitched suicide, and casting it forward, had the notion that my child might take my place in life and leave me free to die. That idea became more and more intense the closer we got to the actual birth. There were two things which held me back in terms of this mythos: 1) would it be a boy or a girl? If it were a boy, it would be a better stand-in for me. (This was all subconscious, but later figured out re what I did in filmic expression.) 2) Jane had had German measles at three months and we had one in so many chances of a monster-birth. Jane became more and more concerned with the birth and more and more removed from esthetic concern, and certainly removed from death wishes. Except she was so deeply aware of the dangers of my problem that she told me afterwards that, even though she wanted a boy, she hoped it would be a girl because she had some sense that that would be less dangerous to me. She became involved in her own bodily processes, reaching out, and finally in giving birth to the child. Everything to me was on the perceptual level...I desired that it be cast into a form that was neither home movie nor medical film, but that it contain the total reason for having the child, including any subconscious death wishes and our sense of love, starting right with the body, and all that we knew of marriage by this time.

Did she mind your filming the birth?

No. She realized that was how I could be most there. That is why we struggled so hard and managed to have the child born in our home. It was more crucial to Jane than to me that I be there when the child was born. So the Excuse Form for doing this was to make a film on the childbirth. We both knew that I could be most there if I were creating a film as she was giving birth.

At the moment when the woman goes into second stage and is pushing the baby out, many women begin cursing their husbands, about whom they otherwise say very beautiful things; and at the very least most women have no patience with any fumbling whatsoever, and men at that moment tend to become very ineffectual. While, Jane did say "I love you," (which was a great joy to me) it was immediately followed with "Please leave me alone," and then with "Are you filming?" Her concern was that I be there but not bothering or impinging on her. A woman at that stage can often have a good relationship with the doctor because he is capable of receiving the child, and helping it out. But a husband is too emotionally involved at a moment like this. I literally could not have watched that birth if I had not been working. I'm sure I would have passed out, but since I was working and intensively involved with my own concerns, Jane and I could be together in the most clear sense.

Who photographed you?

She did right after Myrrena was born. She had said a long time before, "I want a picture of you then too" (we had pictures of me from before the childbirth, of Jane and I kissing, of my hand) and "Don't you want a picture of yourself? You must have it." And I said, "Well, who will take it?" She said, "I will." So I said, "Alright," but I never expected that she'd have the strength. Sure enough, it was the first thing she thought of after Myrrena was born: She said, "Give me the camera." I, hardly knowing what I was doing, just handed it to her. She photographed all those images of my face. I grew prouder and prouder of her, of the baby, of having made it; I was out of my head. And she, just having given birth to the child, was recording my face. Do you see what the process was there?

And what did you do after WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING?

The next film that I edited was the CAT'S CRADLE. We moved from Princeton back into the mountains of Boulder, Colorado where I began working on CAT'S CRADLE. We lived in Silver Spruce, then, the same place that we lived during the whole shooting of DOG STAR MAN. Right before I started shooting DOG STAR MAN, I edited CAT'S CRADLE.

Did you have any idea of what DOG STAR MAN would be?

No. At least all the ideas I had subsequently proved to be irrelevant.

Then the next film to discuss would be the prelude to DOG STAR MAN itself.

There were other works in the way; for instance, I had shot SIRIUS REMEMBERED after I photographed the childbirth film and it was edited right after CAT'S CRADLE.

Now SIRIUS REMEMBERED is another death poem.

Another death poem.

How would you relate it to your general psychology of death, then?

I had photographed the material for THE DEAD, but I didn't edit it. I let it wait for two years before I edited it. In the meanwhile a dog of ours, named Sirius, that we cared very much about, was hit by a car and killed. We laid him out above the ground because of Jane's ideals about death. She said how beautiful and natural it is to find the bones of dead animals in the forest. She, from psychological needs of her own, did not like the sense of burying anything. It was mid-winter and the ground was hard, so I went along with her and we laid him out underneath a tree in a little field that we called Happy Valley. Every time thereafter that I went out in back of my house in Princeton I saw that body which did not begin to decompose. It was mid-winter and it remained frozen solid. Every time I'd see it, I'd break into what were to me incomprehensible tears. Suddenly I was faced in the center of my life with the death of a loved being which tended to undermine all my abstract thoughts of death.

I remember one marvelous time which gave me the sense of how others could avoid it. Parker Tyler and Charles Boultenhouse came to visit us and Charles wanted to go out into the fields "to gather a little nature," as he put it. "Nature" was such a crisis to me at this time that I was shocked at that statement. Charles made some martinis, handed me one; and Parker, Charles, and I all went out into Happy Valley where they toasted the new buds of spring that were beginning to come up, etc., and marched right straight past the body of Sirius either without seeing it at all (any more than they can see my film SIRIUS REMEMBERED) or else they saw it and refused to recognize it. Charles was

envailed in the ideal of toasting the budding spring and here was this decaying, stinking corpse right beside the path where we had to walk, and he literally did not, could not, or would not see it. All three attitudes, I think, arise from the same source.

When did you decide to film the body?

I filmed it all during that winter and did the last photography the day right after Parker and Charles visited. At that time the corpse was all torn up. I, sobbing each time, went out alone with camera and photographed it. Jane said something after watching me photograph it that made me realize the deep form taking place. She knew dogs. She told me that every time I went to photograph that body: 1) I was trying to bring it back to life by putting it in movement again; 2) I was uprighting it by taking the camera at an angle that tended to make the dog's image upright on the screen; 3) (which was really significant) Jane had often watched dogs do a strange dance around dead bodies not only of their own species but of others (it's like a round dance: the dogs, individually or in a pack, often will circle a dead body and then rub the neck very sensually all along the corpse perfuming themselves from the stench of decomposition). Those were literally the kinds of movements with which I was involved in making SIRIUS REMEMBERED without realizing it. Jane threw open the whole animal world; that is, the animal parts of myself that were at that moment engaged in filming the body.

I also find two intellectual parts: 1) the influence of very tight, formal music -- possibly Webern -- and 2) Gertrude Stein who has always influenced you. Now, where were you in relationship to the musical forms?

At this moment I was coming to terms with decay of a dead thing and the decay of the memories of a loved being that had died and it was undermining all abstract concepts of death. The form was being cast out of probably the same physical need that makes dogs dance and howl in rhythm around a corpse. I was taking song as my source of inspiration for the rhythm structure, just as dogs dancing, prancing around a corpse, and howling in rhythm structures or rhythm intervals might be considered like the birth of some kind of song. I won't try to guess out of what urgency.

But was not Webern an influence?

Not at this point; I had been through Webern's influence. Webern and Bach were strong influences on ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT. But the structure that was dominating rhythmically would be like jazz...no not jazz...it would be like song, simple song, plain song -- plain song, that's what it was clearly--Gregorian chant! That kind of howling would be the rhythm structure that was dominating SIRIUS REMEMBERED.

Where were you in terms of perceiving Gertrude Stein?

I would say the greatest influence that she had on SIRIUS REMEMBERED was by way of my realization that there is no repetition; that every time a word is "repeated" it is a new word by virtue of what word precedes it and follows it, etc. This freed me to "repeat" the same kind of movements. So I could literally move back and forth over the animal in repeated patterns. There are three parts to the film: first there is the animal seen in the fall as just having died, second there are the winter shots in which he's become a statue covered with snow, and third there's the thaw and decay. That third section is all REMEMBERED where his members are put together again. All previous periods of his existence as a corpse, in the fall, the snow, and the thaw are gone back and forth over, recapitulated and interrelated. Gertrude Stein gave me the courage to let images recur in this fashion and in such a manner that there was no sense of repetition.

You've spoken before of effects of snow and whiteness. This was the time before PRELUDE, while you were making THE DEAD. You've spoken before of the power of whiteness, and you have images of snow in SIRIUS REMEMBERED. Can you see how this would be a motif?

Yes, there are certain motifs that emerge through all my work, but some of them come together most clearly in SIRIUS REMEMBERED. One example would be "the tree." Over and over again the camera pans from the corpse up a tree. I had no sense of why I was doing that at the time, but now I realize I was planting the first seeds of my concern with the image of the white tree which dominates DOG STAR MAN; and remember the dog star is Sirius. So there for the first time the dog star is emerging, and then man's relation with dog or my pitching my sense of self into the dog corpse. My abstract senses of death were conflicting with the actual decay of a corpse. First, when it wouldn't decay and turn into clean white bones and then when it did. What we finally had to face in terms of those bones was ironic.

We had already gotten a new dog called "The Brown Dog." We wanted him to be the opposite of what Sirius was. He was a bum that we saved from death in the dog pound. He

was deliberately not given a fancy name but continually referred to as "The Brown Dog" as if having no life of his own. The events which made the last shooting of SIRIUS REMEMBERED possible were as follows: The stench of decomposition that was so strong in the valley began coming into the house and we couldn't locate it. First of all, we didn't know what it was. We thought a rat had died in the wall somewhere. Then we began wondering if it were blowing through the windows from Happy Valley, which was half a block away from the house. The next night we smelled it coming straight off "The Brown Dog," and then we knew that he was perfuming himself off that corpse. We tried to joke about it; we called it "sheepshit smell." We tried to call it "cheese;" we tried to call it anything rather than recognize what it was. The next day I had to see for myself and I forced Jane to come with me. We found that the corpse in the field was being eaten and that what was eating it was our current family dog. As we walked into that field, he demonstrated for us by sitting down innocently and beginning to tear off and devour a leg bone. Suddenly we had the realization of what made clear bones: they were picked clean. The psychological implications of how the family dog had to demonstrate to us how he was appropriating the powers of Sirius struck us. It is significant to us that "The Brown Dog" became the dog star of DOG STAR MAN. Jane broke into tears as the idea of death as a happening in life became clearer and clearer.

We began questioning why dogs perfume themselves that way. I recall Baudelaire's poem where he speaks with disgust of the populace for being like his dog who hates the smell of perfume but likes to come in covered with shit. Well Baudelaire had not smelled deeply enough. I became capable of smelling that stench at the center of all meat eaten. In the bacon for breakfast was the stench that was coming out of Happy Valley. I also began smelling it in ladies' perfumes: the center of most perfumes is a decayed matter very comparable to the stench of the dead dog.

Every time I sat down to edit SIRIUS REMEMBERED, I began having diarrhea. It was as if to unload the decay somehow. Every time I'd go into an intensive editing process on that film I'd have it. By way of that film certain other visions began emerging with extreme intensity which were relevant to DOG STAR MAN. One night after Jane had excused herself early and gone to bed, I was working. It got to be about two o'clock in the morning and suddenly I sensed Jane behind me. She handed me a small dried-up plant which I put on the table. She was always bringing me little things from the forest. I noticed the plant began to move. Every time I looked at it it would be pointing in a different direction. Then I noticed that I was making a lot of wind and motion with my arms and it was flipping and turning. It was a talisman hardened with its own death. I watched it closely and it became a source of inspiration. In the morning Jane had no memory of having brought me that plant.

Then other weird things began happening. One night I was stuck on a splice when I was dealing with decay. Decay is a long-term process of things pulling apart, transforming slowly, and producing heat. Where the decay was most intense on the inside it would melt the snow on the outside of the body. I was concerned with how to edit that, how to cast such a slow process into a form that would be hard. The form would have to be as hard as the stone image of Sirius covered with white as if he were a statue. I was having trouble with a splice at three o'clock in the morning, at which time I had a clear sense of three personages looking over my shoulder. As I started to turn around something seemed to pass through me. The phrase came to me, "He thinks we have something to do with what he's doing," as if said very sarcastically. I was immediately depressed with an emotional despair. I have no intellectual explanation of where those words came from. That phrase seemed to cut across all the lines of my thought at the moment as if it was layed down there or strummed. Imagine all the rest of my thoughts as strings moving out from a center of consciousness. Suddenly from some subconsciousness so strong that it seemed coming from elsewhere, came this damning phrase that struck off all of my sensibilities and cast me in a second into the most horrible gloom I've ever had. I stopped work. I was like a destroyed man. A split second later I had an all-encompassing circular sense that seemed to surround me as if I were inside a globe. That globe rang again with words heard from the inside out as if of my own thinking; yet alien to it: "They think we have NOTHING to do with what he's doing."

Who is the "we?"

The 'we' had referred to the voice that was speaking and the three entities that had spoken before. It was clear to my mind in an instant. I was overjoyed. And I began reaching to make that splice. Instantly, there was a large jelly sensation in the air as if this all-encompassing force had stopped and turned to a mass of jelly. The nearest approxi-

mation I could give, but it would be like a cartoon of the feeling, was like a Buddha, like a giant baby Buddha sensation, all jellied and fat and enormous. It was a chaotic force to me, oriental or foreign, as if dribbling out the phrase "He" (referring to the last voice speaking) "thinks we" (referring to all voices that had spoken) "have SOMETHING to do with what he" (meaning me) "was doing." Again I was cast into an intensive and horrible gloom such as I had never had before. This was immediately superseded by yet another voice sensation from the mind inside out that was all-encompassing and came with a sense of finality. And it said "He" (referring to the last voice speaking) "thinks we" (meaning all the voices having spoken) "have NOTHING to do with what he" (meaning me) "is doing." It was as if there were some power that was helping me from the inside out which freed me to go on to work beautifully the rest of that night, and the film was finished two days later.

How do you explain the voices?

I have no explanation of the voices other than as I've given it to you.

Do you believe this was a vision?

I don't know. The only visual senses I have of what might have spoken are crude cartoons. The first was Greek-like; it suggested a sense of Greek religion. But that would be a cartoon of what I sensed. It was like three Greek women or three Greek men, I don't know which. Probably men, or hermaphrodites. The second voice was like a circle. The third voice was like a Buddha or like a giant, bubbling, jellied baby. The fourth voice was so encompassing that I have no picture for it at all.

Do you often have voices?

Yes, often. But never before anything that incredible. That was so incredible but real that it immediately gave me the free power to go on and finish that film. When I was involved in editing the decay process, Jane looked at the footage and immediately reacted. She began cleaning the sink and cleaning, cleaning, cleaning all over the house. She said, rather mysteriously, "I can't talk about it," and, "I'm too busy." I said "What's the matter?" and she said, "Well, I feel dirty." Suddenly I had a sense she'd been engaged by that section of the film, and that was the first time I realized that I wanted an enclosed form which would not engage people. That decay section should be edited so finely and structured so beautifully that one would not have to get rid of the dirt.

Then do you believe all good art is unengaging?

Yes, I do. From that moment on I was completely convinced. Jane was the source of inspiration even there.

Your early films try to engage though?

Yes, surely, but I honor that in my early films which is the least engaging now. That's the only thing that I've been able to look at over and over again for years and still learn from. Everything in my early works that was of engagement bores me now. I'm no longer there; I'm not concerned with previous engagements. These days my struggle is to make each work complete unto itself. I began having ways to create an unengaging form by watching her reaction, re action. Then for the first time my central concern in working was the necessity arising from both Jane and me, not just from myself. It was like being able to pitch the center of a working process between the two of us. In some way this working process that began developing between Jane and me was dependent on the necessity out of which our drives emerge, and is cast out not between us but in some space that is the shape of both of us, and yet doesn't..enclose us. Terms like IN BETWEEN and INTERIM and all those "ins" or all those "outs" like RE-FLECTIONS, and re this and re that, re placement, ceased to exist; and we began living in direct relationship to a larger concern than each other or these dichotomies. We inhabit a world of which the orient gives us some sense by way of Zen, where good and bad, yes and no, cease to exist as opposites, and become one thing. The perfect symbol for this is the yin and yang enclosed within the one circle. The form springs directly from the separation line between the two which contains all the sensuality of that meeting. I don't know how to put it, but when a man and woman have this, and they give birth to a child, that child is not a thing enclosed between them. He's something that's given out; and that child is free to live his own life, to have his own form and his own growth. They always protect the child, meet his needs out of their needs and give him their own love. Then a child is something external to them, and from the very start they don't expect that child to live his life for them. They don't fight over him or smother him. In that sense the work of art arising from such a process out of the total needs Jane and I share is like a child arising out of that kind of love and is then free of each of us.

May we get back to the film's progression now? We're getting off on a series of abstractions.

No, I think we're getting off concretely when we talk about what arises from life's necessities rather than aesthetics. Talking about total forms without containing a sense of how they arise out of immediate life experiences is terribly abstract.

Can you get on with THE DEAD now?

By the time I began editing THE DEAD I had shot most of the material for DOG STAR MAN. Jane and I went out onto the mountain where she shot all the images of me and, without being directed, cast them easily and quickly into the forms with which I was concerned; that is, our shared necessity was so close we wouldn't even have to exchange directions. She would be out there and I might gesture wildly and she would get it that quickly and photograph some image or myself in relationship to an image-structure in just the way I wanted.

You said you had shot all of DOG STAR MAN. Do you mean all of PART I and PRELUDE?

No. I mean all of the material for DOG STAR MAN.

That was going into all four parts?

Yes, I thought I had all the material at that time, now I realize I needed more. At the time I was convinced I had all I needed for what I thought would be roughly a four and one-half hour work. Now I'm confused on that subject. I'm not even sure I'll be able to finish that film. First of all, whenever I had to be photographed from any distance Jane would have to do it. Then at times she went out with the camera to get things that I had some sense she could photograph better than I and with more total clarity. Once when I was ill and couldn't get out to shoot as the sun was setting and the sky was meaning what I sensed was needed at a certain moment in the film, Jane rushed out to get it, bringing back even more than what I had hoped for. So I tended more and more to give her any chance to add her view to mine for a more total view.

Certain crises were presented to me in the shooting of DOG STAR MAN of which I was not consciously aware. I didn't really stop to think why I, attempting to show a man's life work in terms of one simple action encompassed in a day, should choose that that man be a woodsman. I didn't even know why I had let my hair and beard grow that long. I had done it to give it a try and suddenly it became crucial to the film.

How long were they?

My hair was down below my shoulders and my beard was halfway down my chest. It was a hard thing to live with. I mean to walk down the streets of Boulder, Colorado, carrying that kind of an image, but I was aware that somehow I needed it. I cast myself as a woodsman with an ax and started climbing the hill. The dog was always following me and getting in the way of the photography. I began to accept this and realized the need for the woodsman to have a dog. Increasingly I began to be amazed at the amount of footage we were shooting at each and every like sight impingement. I saw the whole forest in relation to the history of architecture, particularly religious architecture, at least in The Western World. Sensing structure, architecture, history of the world as emerging, I began seeing prismatic happenings through snow falling, etc., and in relation to stained glass windows, for one example. This was not when I started photographing, but often through unexpected things that came through Jane's photography.

Without realizing why, I dragged a white tree up two-thirds of a mountain, replanted it at a certain point, then struggled with it, and pushed it over. As if battling with myself, some other man, or a monster, I struggled with that white tree, threw it over, then chopped it up. When I did that and sat down to think about it later, I began realizing why I was having asthma attacks again. The greatest clarity about why I was having attacks at this time came to me from reading a book on idiotoxic disorders by Dr. Freeman. He nailed down the foremost dream images that affect idiotoxically disordered people, that is to say, people with migraine, asthma, epilepsy, etc. That dream contains the elements of a man fighting with himself, with some beast, a dog, a serpent, a cat, or with his twin brother, or with another man. He fights naked in front of a dead white tree (usually sitting far in the background) while a woman, three women, or nine women, watch this battle. This is a standard symbol you can find stamped on Cretan coins, such as the one on the frontispiece of Robert Graves' THE GREEK MYTHS.

Is the white tree also on the Cretan coin?

The tree is there also. It's a living tree and it's not white. A white tree is most immediately a dead tree. There are other kinds of white trees (there can be a silver tree), but if it's a white tree, then in the mind it's a dead tree. The question that any white tree raises is, "Does it have the potentiality for new life?" that is, "Is it white because it's lifeless, or is it white because it's that kind of tree?" I began having daily asthma attacks and was terribly concerned with whether I was going to die. (By this time we had

the second child, another girl. All the material of the filming of her birth was to be going into DOG STAR MAN.) I was again faced with death as a concept; not watching death as physical decay, or dealing with the pain of the death of a loved one, but with the concept of death as something that man casts into the future by asking, "What is death like?" And the limitation of finding the images for a concept of death only in life itself is a terrible torture, i. e., Wittgenstein's TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS 6.4311 "Death is not an event of life. Death is not lived through. If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present. Our life is endless in the way that our visual field is without limit." In Freeman's book there is a painting by a woman patient of what she saw in a dream while having asthma attacks. The white tree is there, the woman, the man fighting with a beast. That fight may represent St. George slaying the dragon; it is any man coping with his beast nature or, as he may find that beast in his twin brother, his Doppelgänger, or his opposite, as Dionysus' Hercules. I had to cope with that material just as Jane had to cope with each asthma attack and my postulating the death-wish again in the center of our marriage which could destroy our future.

Right at that moment, I put DOG STAR MAN in cans, stuffed it away, and began editing THE DEAD. As I edited THE DEAD, I worked my way out of the crisis in which I was dying.

Did the old material from 1958 come to you in a flash?

I always had it there waiting for the time when the necessity would make it that vital that I could begin to work with it.

In that film why did you use material shot only in Paris?

I used material shot only in Paris because that was a total world of something which, if I'd leave it long enough until it impinged on me directly in life, would have a total form of its own.

Did your death wish emerge from that political mixup at the Brussels Experimental Film Exposition in which you didn't receive the money you hoped to get?

I would say that would be material for it, not cause of it. Money is always for us one way in which we comprehend the form of what we want. It's very important to us. I mean as in a fairy tale, you always have to get the treasure to get the princess and live happily ever after. I mean the hero has to kill the beast to get the treasure to get the princess to go off to the castle in the glass mountain and live (question mark) happily ever after. That's the form; and money is always part of the equation. I take that as an equation which is so strong in our consciousness that wherever money arises as a problem, as it always does in an artist's life, it needs to be wrenched away by an aesthetic $E=mc^2$.

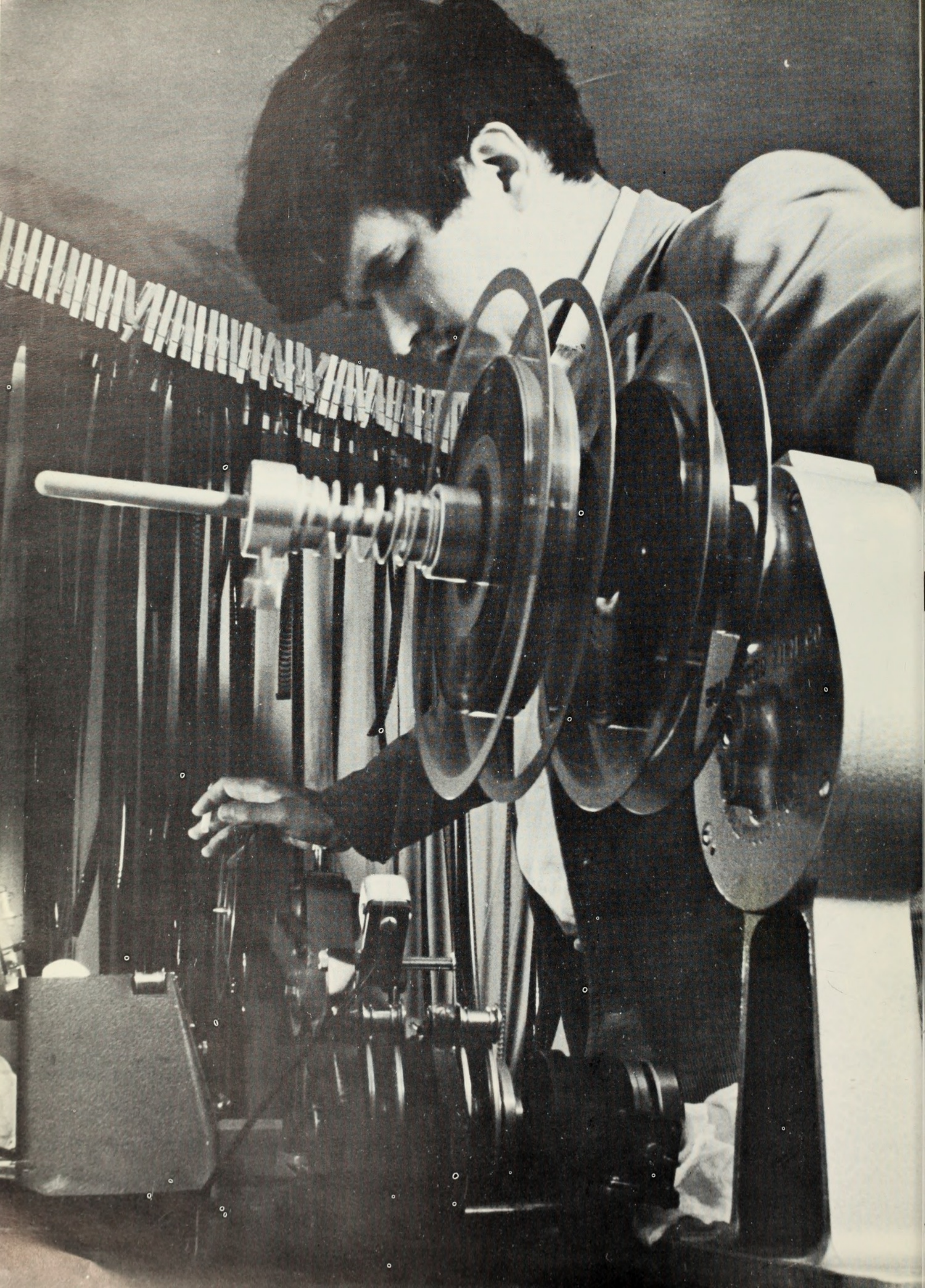
You edited THE DEAD then?

Yes. THE DEAD was the work most clearly removed from any direct relationship to Jane. She had to keep out of it. She always insisted on keeping out of asthma attacks, i.e. she would not become my mother. She kept absolutely clear, and sometimes it was very painful. But she had the integrity, which I little understood at the time, and particularly in the middle of an asthma attack, to keep absolutely out of my express death-wishes and even desperately try not to recognize them. THE DEAD was shot when I was away from Jane for a month and a half; and it was edited when she was avoiding me most of the daytime to keep out of the whole asthma destructive force that was operative through me. I had to find, realize re: THE DEAD that somehow all images of death or all concepts of it are structured here in life. Then I knew the answer as to why I'd shot in the same day, and out of the same needs, material in the graveyard of Père Lachaise and on the Seine. And even then, I knew somehow that they were going to go together. But how together? That became clear at the time of editing.

And shots of Kenneth Anger in a cafe?

I had no idea at the time of shooting that Kenneth Anger, as an image, would be used in THE DEAD. I was running out the end of a reel, which I wanted to get out of the camera so I could put in the color film for doing the shots of the Seine. So I said, "Well, I have no picture of you, still or otherwise." We were sitting in a cafe; so I took the image of Kenneth. It was only when I relooked at that footage that I realized that THAT one level of what I meant by THE DEAD was how I saw Kenneth and what he was encased in. I saw him as a concept. Seeing him as one of the dead, I had great concern and care and love for him at that moment. He was years without working, trapped by concepts of the Nineteenth Century with no way to break out, almost a destroyed man, and yet still living ... that was the important thing. All the rest of the people in THE





DEAD -- ARE dead. They're the walking dead; but he was a living dead. So he became my double in a sense -- my "stand-in," you might say. He was the image that was most immediately available for me to cast out there as statement: "Do you want this? ... Do you want to be trapped by all those symbols? ... Do you want to be trapped six ways sideways by concepts that are ahead of where you actually are?" And then my answer was: "No!" Then I could structure THE DEAD by way of the concept of the future as that through which we can't live. When we're living through it it's different from the concept of it. It's comparable to how you can't live through death. So the question becomes one of all that is pitched out of life; how the walking dead come to be that; and how what is sculpted IN stone becomes concept of what is sculpted OUT OF stone; and how the living people do relate to that, and how even trees, shaped that way and so ordered and structured, become living dead and like the walking dead, who are people so dead on their feet that you can't even use the word "living" in relationship to them.. well, not Kenneth. He was shining with all that beauty and concern with life; and yet he was trapped six ways sideways by forms he had pitched ahead of himself -- all that he wanted to do (such as film MALDOROR) and could not find the means or the money to do. This was intensely painful to me. I would have given anything to have found a way for him to do what he wanted, not only to see MALDOROR done by Kenneth Anger, or maybe not even foremost for that reason, but to let Kenneth have a way to accomplish it so that he could have gotten through it and could have gone on. He was ultimately defeated. There's new hope for Kenneth now because he did escape from that trap which MALDOROR posed for him and he IS back in the United States and has a new film in progress. Europe, weighted down so much with that past, was THE DEAD. I was always Tourist there; I couldn't live in it. The graveyard could stand for all my view of Europe, for all the concerns with past art, for all involvement with symbol. THE DEAD became my first work in which things that might very easily be taken as symbols were so photographed as to destroy all their symbolic potential. The action of making THE DEAD kept me alive.

How did you go about editing PRELUDE; and what do you mean by the Freudian dream aspect of it?

Right from the start I had some sense, and I don't quite know where it came from, that the work would be in four parts with a prelude. Once Jane and I had gone through the whole gathering process to get that total world and had survived the sense of death that was postured by collecting the material, the next step was to get a sense of the form of the film. At first I could only think of that large a work in symbolic terms. I thought, for instance, that the man climbs the mountain out of winter and night into the dawn, up through spring and early morning to midsummer and high noon, to where he chops down the tree...then I don't know what: but I know that there's a Fall -- and the fall back to somewhere, midwinter -- my idea of what that fall will be still remains nebulous. I thought of DOG STAR MAN as seasonably structured that way; but also, while it encompasses a year and the history of man in terms of the image material (e.g. trees become architecture for a whole history of religious monuments or violence becomes the development of war), I thought it should be contained within a single day. Then I thought about what any day's form-structure touches off. One thing I knew for sure (from my own dreaming) was that what one dreams just before waking structures the following day. That dream material is gathered from the previous day, and therefore is a gathering of all previous days, ergo contains the structure of all history, of all Man. I hadn't been involved directly with Freudian concepts, or even psychology, since I'd departed from drama as major structurer of my work; but suddenly drama, and psychodrama therefore, became pertinent to me in a new way. The first step in recognition of this was that I began re-reading Freud intensively to learn those early structures of dream experience. I had the sense that I could make a prelude before creating any of the rest of the work. Generally in the history of art, preludes are composed of parts and bits from the work to follow. Now I wanted to compose the prelude first, rather than last (as is usual), so that the rest of the work would spring out of the prelude. I had only a vague concept of the four parts that would follow. So I realized that whatever happened within this prelude would determine what was to come; and in that sense I wanted it to be as real from the very beginning as life happening. I wanted PRELUDE to be a created dream for the work that follows rather than Surrealism which takes its inspiration from dream; I stayed close to practical usage of dream material, in terms of learning and studying, for a while before editing. At this time I left strict myth considerations out of my study process as much as possible.

But there is much myth in it, isn't there?

Naturally, there's much myth in it. But that was not the primary concern at this time.

Myth became important later in terms of sensing the overall structure. Once I had wanted very much to make a film called FREUDFILM which would illustrate the process of dream development, and would show how a dream evolves out of the parts we don't remember into those we do. In PRELUDE I wanted to make a film which would swing on those transformations of unacceptable to acceptable images. And finally I wanted that to be the determining editing factor on the cutting table, and it did become that. I had to start with material that was incomprehensible and work my way backwards. For a long time of editing I was cross-breeding surrealistic concerns with, say, John Cage's sense of form through various chance operations. And then I would go over and over that material and restructure it; and finally ended up with one strip of film the length of PRELUDE as you find it now.

The hand painting was always in direct relationship to the particular kind of "closed eye vision" that comes only in dreams. The commonest type of "closed-eye vision" is what we get when we close our eyes in daylight and watch the moving of shapes and forms through the red pattern of the eyelid. Since PRELUDE was based on dream vision, as I remembered it, it had to include "closed-eye vision." Painting was the closest approximation to it; so I painted, throwing down patterns and controlling them in various ways. Shapes emerge out of that kind of eye-nerve action and reaction. The next step, once I had one whole strip of film, was to start with the second, the superimposition strip. One can have three, four, or more strips the full length of the film and superimpose one image on another wherever one wants. I took the strip that was largely determined by chance and surrealistic operations and began editing a second strip to it. From this point on, everything that I laid down was hyperconscious. I would go back and change shots to alter the form in strip number one as the need would arise in the developing form of strip number two. Strip two always developed out of what was on strip one to structure it and to transform it into something that would be comparable to what could be remembered when one awoke in the morning. On one hand there was that incomprehensible mass of material arising out of surrealistic and chance operation concerns which I called the "chaos" roll; on the other hand there was the "structured" roll which represented the dream transformed and made accessible for conscious memory in the morning. By the time I got through there were no chance operations left in the film.

How was Jane effective in this?

Jane had little or nothing to do with the development of the "chaos" roll. That was edited very quickly; I was pulling down shots and splicing them in faster than I could possibly think about it. Jane was always looking at them. At times I would alter the form by feeling some emanation from her as she'd stand in the room. I would feel, this is not right, this is not working. We wouldn't work faster than feeling, you know. Other times she'd sit down and we'd talk together for a long time; and then I would go back and rip up whole sections of the film. Other times we'd be immediately clear about the quality of a series of splices. Still other times, after I'd finished making a section, we'd look at them together, then go sit down, talk, have coffee, rehearse a Gertrude Stein play, or play with the children, or whatever, and see what kind of clarity emerged.

How many children were there then?

By this time there were two. Crystal was born in the middle of the shooting of the DOG STAR MAN material.

Did you shoot PRELUDE material separately?

No. I pulled material willy-nilly as it seemed to me most chaotic. Two things determined what I pulled out of that mass of material to go into PRELUDE. One was that material be incomprehensible to me. That would be comparable to Buñuel's statement about ANDALUSIAN DOG in which he said that he and Dali could not understand why in the world they were shooting those things that they did shoot. I was playing that surrealist game. The other reason for pulling specific material was that the symbols be directly relevant to the Cretan coin as an image of the creation mythology. That image, traditionally, comes to us through Adam and Eve; you know, the man, the tree, the snake, all distorted and changed because of the Hebraic tendency to build up such a damned patriarchy. If you check it back through Graves' THE WHITE GODDESS, and read the original version rather than the reader's digest King James version, you get a much clearer image. Most cultures have a similar creation myth, which contains these elements in one form or another. These elements are related to the dream of those suffering from idiotoxic disorders. Collecting those symbols was one problem; getting them all clear and in a pattern in that work was another. Those were the two factors that determined what I pulled out and began to work with.

The next film was THIGH LINE LYRE TRIANGULAR if I'm not mistaken?

That was the next film photographed, but **FILMS BY STAN BRAKHAGE** was the next completed. As soon as **PRELUDE** was finished, Neowyn was born and I photographed the material for **THIGH LINE LYRE TRIANGULAR**.

How was THIGH LINE LYRE TRIANGULAR different, when it was finally edited, from WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING, the earlier birth film?

The main difference is the painting on film in **THIGH LINE LYRE TRIANGULAR**. Only at a crisis do I see both the scene as I've been trained to see it (that is, with Renaissance perspective, three-dimensional logic, -- colors as we've been trained to call a color a color, and so forth) and patterns that move straight out from the inside of the mind through the optic nerves. In other words, an intensive crisis I can see from the inside out and the outside in.

You mean double exposure?

I see patterns moving that are the same patterns that I see when I close my eyes; and can also see the same kind of scene that I see when my eyes are open.

You mean you see color spots before your eyes?

Right -- spots before my eyes, so to speak...and it's a very intensive, disturbing, but joyful experience. I've seen that every time a child was born. Notice I use the word crisis. I don't mean crisis as a bad thing. At an extremely intensive moment I can see from the inside out and the outside in. Now none of that was in **WINDOW WATER BABY MOVING**; and I wanted a childbirth film which expressed all of my seeing at such a time.

And you added shots of animals, too?

That was because at moments like that I get flashes of what I call "brain movies." I'm taking Michael McClure's term there; he said, "When you get a solid structure image that you know is not out there, but is being recalled so intensively that you literally see it in a flash, that's a 'brain movie.'" Most people only get them with their eyes closed. They close their eyes and they see, in a flash, something from their childhood, or some person remembered, or something; and that should also be in the film experience. What I was seeing at the birth of Neowyn most clearly, in terms of this "brain movie" recall process, were symbolic structures of an animal nature. This struck me as odd because I was working six ways sideways, day and night, to avoid symbolism. It was as if something had gotten backed up in my mind so that it could release symbolic terms at me as soon as it had a crisis. Curiously enough, those animal symbols were easily represented by taking material only out of **ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT**.

Why are you never seen as father in this film?

That's because I centered the occasion in my own eyes.

Then from that you went on to FILMS BY STAN BRAKHAGE. How was Jane effective in this?

FILMS BY STAN BRAKHAGE emerged because certain people concern me with engagements from time to time. For instance, I've been asked for years, "Why don't you make a home movie of your children?" Actually, I've taken a lot of pictures of the children, of Jane and our life, and of places we've moved to, you know: Home movies, in a very simple sense...like recording something. I had always done this; but I had never edited any of the material. People kept asking, "Why don't you make a film out of this material?" It seemed to me like a challenge; but I was also concerned that I not make something of engagement, and that the source material or records be transformed into a work of art, if possible. I had a camera with which I could make multiple superimpositions spontaneously. It had been lent to me for a week. I was also given a couple of rolls of color film which had been through an intensive fire. The chance that the film would not record any image at all left me free to experiment and to try to create the sense of the daily world in which we live, and what it meant to me. I wanted to record our home, and yet deal with it as being that area from which the films by Stan Brakhage arise, and to try to make one arise at the same time.

And Jane was photographing all the shots of you?

Yes, we worked together on it.

There are intercourse scenes in that film. How were they photographed?

I was free to try to be as tricky as I could possibly be because I actually didn't have any hope that the images were going to come out at all; so I set the camera up and backwound it. While I was making this film, I thought I was rehearsing for making a film later with fresh film-stock. Much to my surprise, delight, and joy, the fire had cast that film into an intensely blue field. It was not like a filtered blue because pure colors could still come through the center of it. It was a weird thing what that fire had done. Now I wish I knew at what temperature that film had been cooked.

Getting back to your method of photography.

I set the camera up, flipped the switch, and threw myself where Jane was, in front of the lens, and eventually the camera ran down. Then I backwound and added superimpositions of the children. I was using a Cine Special; and I could go back to the precise place I wanted. I didn't want a film which would require much editing. I wanted it to be on an immediate level, like a sketch. And somehow the film turned out to be madly and wonderfully and incredibly much more than I had ever expected. I joke about it I call it an "Avant-garde home movie" because I don't think it's a major work like PRELUDE or like any of the DOG STAR MAN for that matter. I'm not really satisfied with what I got there, but it certainly turned out to be more than I ever expected.

And then came DOG STAR MAN: PART I. Will you discuss how Jane worked with you on this?

In the editing of that film, we worked together to the greatest extent we ever have. From the moment I began to work on it, I kept saying, "I think it's going to be something like a Noh Drama in slow-motion." I didn't know why I said Noh Drama because I had never been concerned with it. I hadn't really studied any form of the Noh Drama except what came to me by way of Ezra Pound. As I subsequently found out, that was precisely what I was concerned with: what Ezra Pound got from the Noh Drama which structured his concept of Imagism and later of Vorticism, when he added comments onto Gaudier-Brzeska's book. That was the literal structural sense that I was inspired by for the total form of PART I. And yet, I had to get the mind disengaged. In the first place, I had to leave room for Jane to come in to sit with me and view each stage of editing so that I might be emotionally open to everything that she said and did. I had to engage my mind in some area that would leave the rest of me free for the extension of love; and my trick for doing it was to question whether I could make the form grow stronger through chance operations than through a conscious decision -- (it wasn't any more serious than that). I forced myself to adhere to a conscious decision, never allowing a piece to go in by sheer chance and never allowing a decision which was weaker than a chance operation. I wanted PART I to be the opposite in rhythm from PRELUDE. I wanted it to be slow, drawn out, extended to the greatest possible tension that the material could contain. And I insisted to myself that why I made each and every splice be completely enigmatic as a conscious thing. A splice had to be made simply because that and only that was the thing that worked visually. Sometimes it would take a week to make ten permanent splices. I would slowly, torturously and laboriously try this, try that, break it apart and try something else. Sometimes I would chew up the whole previous shot by tearing off one piece of film after another that I'd spliced and have to start with the shot previous, etc. After I had a certain path or direction started by a series of splices, Jane and I would look at it together; and we would begin talking deeply about the film on many levels.

Was it work print you were looking at?

No, original. I always work with original. I can't afford a work print; so I'm used to working under those terms. Jane and I would talk for hours about ten splices that went together. It was as if we were making a path that could contain the deep concerns of both of us. I would lay down paths that would be perfectly fine for my sense of it; and all the splices would work in this deep enigmatic way and carry through metaphysical concerns. But it would not contain her vision. Sometimes I would get too influenced by what she'd say; and I'd lay down a path in which she would be comfortable, but which would not contain my direction. We were not making compromises, rather we were finding the one right path that would contain the total view that would be an opening for something new. That slow, laborious, and torturous process is why it took us a year and a half to finish editing PART I. Meanwhile anytime the mind would start intruding, I would somehow tie it up into John's Cage. John's Cage was marvellously used in the making of this film in the sense that at any moment I could reach over and grab it and as a threat clap the possibility of chance operations over all brain dominance.

Are the "silences" in the film the Silence of John Cageism?

No, I wouldn't think they'd have any relevance at all there; because the visual "silences" meant to me that out of which something was becoming...you see, I really love John Cage's music even though I only used his aesthetics to tie up my brain with. I do love the occasions in his music, but more particularly in the music of Morton Feldman, of sound occurring and there then being a silence that's just long enough to sustain that sound before the occurrence of the next sound. But the visual silences, or lapses, in PART I were more directed by thoughts of the emergence of images out of either black or white. And my thoughts were directed by a feeling for destroying the dichotomy of blacks and whites as extremes. My tendency was to shape the whole work in such a way that there are no distinctions between black and white.



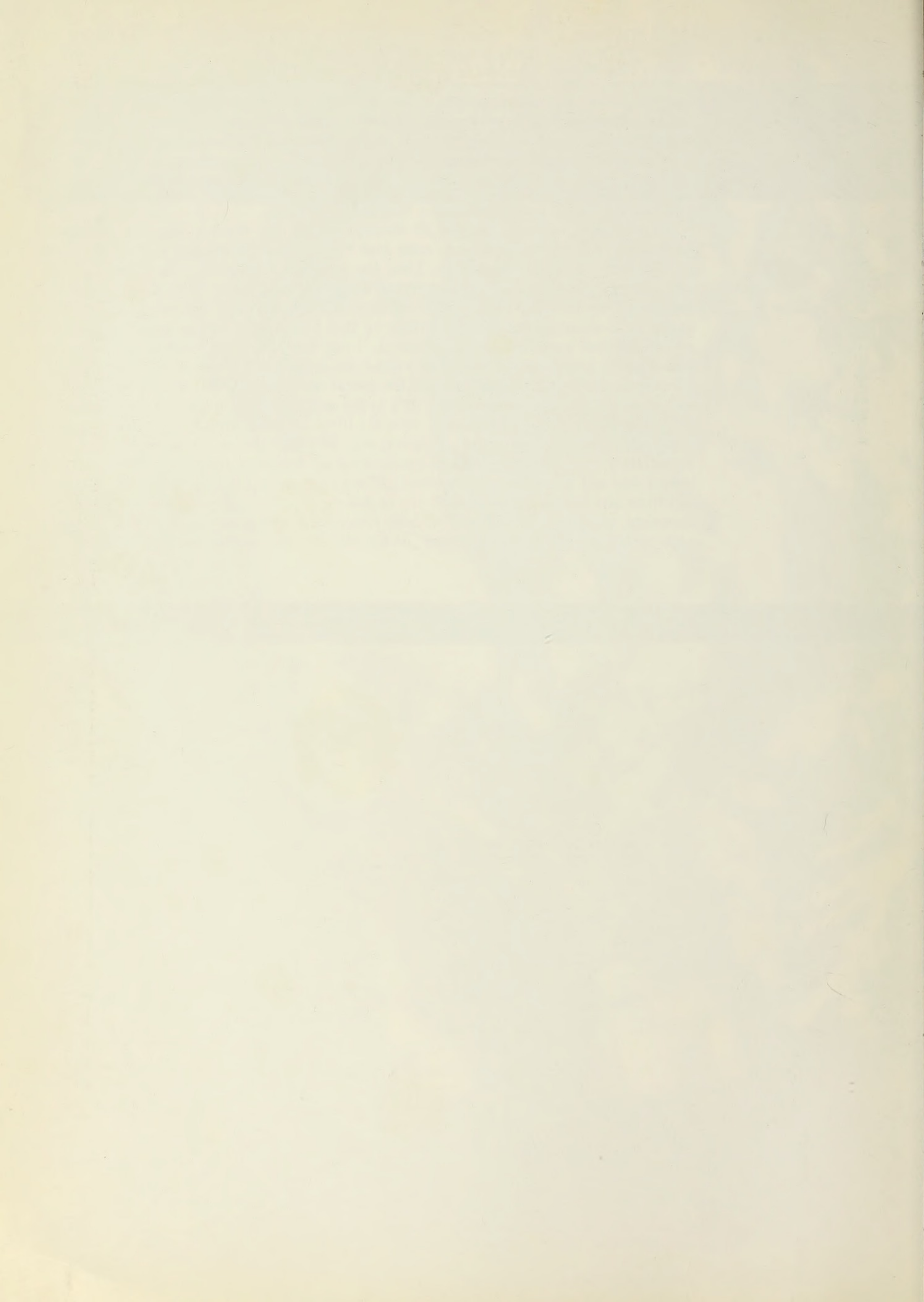


In the first place I hope I would not say "my own dog." The minute "own" comes into it dog would become property; the same for "my own children" or anything like that. They're mine to care for now. And so to get rid of that part of it.

Then let me ask one question which concerns all of your work. You talked about your own dog, you've talked about your family and so on. Aren't some critics in a way justified when they say that this is, not quite narcissistic, but very limited in scope as opposed to Eisenstein who posits his personal drama in historical context in IVAN THE TERRIBLE or in comparison to Stroheim, or someone who works in a more objective form?

I would say I grew very quickly as a film artist once I got rid of drama as prime source of inspiration. I began to feel that all history, all life, all that I would have as material with which to work, would have to come from the inside of me out rather than as some form imposed from the outside in. I had the concept of everything radiating out of me, and that the more personal or egocentric I would become, the deeper I would reach and the more I could touch those universal concerns which would involve all man. What seems to have happened since marriage is that I no longer sense ego as the greatest source for what can touch on the universal. I now feel that there is some other concrete center where love from one person to another meets; and that the more total view arises from there.... First I had the sense of the center radiating out. Now I have become concerned with the rays. You follow? It's in the action of moving out that the great concerns can be struck off continually. Now the films are being struck off, not in the gesture, but in the very real action of moving out. Where I take action strongest and most immediately is in reaching through the power of all that love toward my wife, (and she toward me) and somewhere where those actions meet and cross, and bring forth children and films and inspire concerns with plants and rocks and all sights seen, a new center, composed of action, is made. The best reference I can give you for the definition of soul-in-action, rather than at center, is Olson's "Proprioception" in KULCHUR No. 1.

--P. Adams Sitney
Denver 1963



**METAPHORS
ON VISION**

Imagine an eye unruléd by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of "Green?" How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. Imagine a world before the "beginning was the word."

To see is to retain -- to behold. Elimination of all fear is in sight -- which must be aimed for. Once vision may have been given--that which seems inherent in the infant's eye, an eye which reflects the loss of innocence more eloquently than any other human feature, an eye which soon learns to classify sights, an eye which mirrors the movement of the individual toward death by its increasing inability to see.

But one can never go back, not even in imagination. After the loss of innocence, only the ultimate of knowledge can balance the wobbling pivot. Yet I suggest that there is a pursuit of knowledge foreign to language and founded upon visual communication, demanding a development of the optical mind, and dependent upon perception in the original and deepest sense of the word.

Suppose the Vision of the saint and the artist to be an increased ability to see -- vision. Allow so-called hallucination to enter the realm of perception, allowing that mankind always finds derogatory terminology for that which doesn't appear to be readily usable, accept dream visions, day-dreams or night-dreams, as you would so-called real scenes, even allowing that the abstractions which move so dynamically when closed eyelids are pressed are actually perceived. Become aware of the fact that you are not only influenced by the visual phenomenon which you are focused upon and attempt to sound the depths of all visual influence. There is no need for the mind's eye to be deadened after infancy, yet in these times the development of visual understanding is almost universally forsaken.

This is an age which has no symbol for death other than the skull and bones of one stage of decomposition...and it is an age which lives in fear of total annihilation. It is a time haunted by sexual sterility yet almost universally incapable of perceiving the phallic nature of every destructive manifestation of itself. It is an age which artificially seeks to project itself materialistically into abstract space and to fulfill itself mechanically because it has blinded itself to almost all external reality within eyesight and to the organic awareness of even the physical movement properties of its own perceptibility. The earliest cave paintings discovered demonstrate that primitive man had a greater understanding than we do that the object of fear must be objectified. The entire history of erotic magic is one of possession of fear thru holding it. The ultimate searching visualization has been directed toward God out of the deepest possible human understanding that there can be no ultimate love where there is fear. Yet in this contemporary time how many of us even struggle to deeply perceive our own children?

The artist has carried the tradition of vision and visualization down through the ages. In the present time a very few have continued the process of visual perception in its deepest sense and transformed their inspirations into cinematic experiences. They create a new language made possible by the moving picture image. They create where fear before them has created the greatest necessity. They are essentially preoccupied by and deal imaginistically with -- birth, sex, death, and the search for God.

THE CAMERA EYE

Oh transparent hallucination, superimposition of image, mirage of movement, heroine of a thousand and one nights (Scheherazade must surely be the muse of this art), you obstruct the light, muddle the pure white beaded screen (it perspires) with your shuffling patterns. Only the spectators (the unbelievers who attend the carpeted temples where coffee and paintings are served) think your spirit is in the illuminated occasion (mistaking your sweaty, flaring, rectangular body for more than it is). The devout, who break pop-corn together in your humblest double-feature services, know that you are still being born, search for your spirit in their dreams, and dare only dream when in contact with your electrical reflection. Unknowingly, as innocent, they await the priests of this new religion, those who can stir cinematic entrails divinely. They await the prophets who can cast (with the precision of Confucian sticks) the characters of this new order across filmic mud. Being innocent, they do not consciously know that this church too is corrupt; but they react with counter hallucinations, believing in the stars, and themselves among these Los Angelic orders. Of themselves, they will never recognize

what they are awaiting. Their footsteps, the dumb drum which destroys cinema. They are having the dream piped into their homes, the destruction of the romance thru marriage, etc.

So the money vendors have been at it again. To the catacombs then, or rather plant this seed deeper in the undergrounds beyond false nourishing of sewage waters. Let it draw nourishment from hidden uprising springs channeled by gods. Let there be no cavernous congregation but only the network of individual channels, that narrowed vision which splits beams beyond rainbow and into the unknown dimensions. (To those who think this is waxing poetic, squint, give the visual objects at hand their freedom, and allow the distant to come to you; and when mountains are moving, you will find no fat in this prose). Forget ideology, for film unborn as it is has no language and speaks like an aborigine -- monotonous rhetoric. Abandon aesthetics -- the moving picture image without religious foundations, let alone the cathedral, the art form, starts its search for God with only the danger of accepting an architectural inheritance from the categorized "seven," other arts its sins, and closing its circle, stylistic circle, therefore zero. Negate technique, for film, like America, has not been discovered yet, and mechanization, in the deepest possible sense of the word, traps both beyond measuring even chances -- chances are these twined searches may someday orbit about the same central negation. Let film be. It is something...becoming. (The above being for creator and spectator alike in searching, an ideal of anarchic religion where all are priests both giving and receiving, or rather witch doctors, or better witches, or...O, for the unnamable).

And here, somewhere, we have an eye (I'll speak for myself) capable of any imagining (the only reality). And there (right there) we have the camera eye (the limitation the original liar); yet lyre sings to the mind so immediately (the exalted selectivity one wants to forget that its strings can so easily make puppetry of human motivation (for form as finality) dependent upon attunation, what it's turned to (ultimately death) or turned from (birth) or the way to get out of it (transformation. I'm not just speaking of that bird on fire (not thinking of circles) or of Spengler (spirals neither) or of any known progression (nor straight lines) logical formation (charted levels) or ideological formation (mapped for scenic points of interest); but I am speaking for possibilities (myself), infinite possibilities (preferring chaos).

And here, somewhere, we have an eye capable of any imagining. And then we have the camera eye, its lenses grounded to achieve 19th century Western compositional perspective (as best exemplified by the 19th century architectural conglomeration of details of the "classic" ruin) in bending the light and limiting the frame of the image just so, its standard camera and projector speed for recording movement geared to the feeling of the ideal slow Viennese waltz, and even its tripod head, being the neck it swings on, balled with bearings to permit it that Les Sylphides motion (ideal to the contemplative romantic and virtually restricted to horizontal and vertical movements (pillars and horizon lines) a diagonal requiring a major adjustment, its lenses coated or provided with filters, its light meters balanced, and its color film manufactured, to produce that picture post card effect (salon painting) exemplified by those oh so blue skies and peachy skins.

By deliberately spitting on the lens or wrecking its focal intention, one can achieve the early stages of impressionism. One can make this prima donna heavy in performance of image movement by speeding up the motor, or one can break up movement, in a way that approaches a more direct inspiration of contemporary human eye perceptibility of movement, by slowing the motion while recording the image. One may hand hold the camera and inherit worlds of space. One may over- or under-expose the film. One may use the filters of the world, fog, downpours, unbalanced lights, neons with neurotic color temperatures, glass which was never designed for a camera, or even glass which was but which can be used against specifications, or one may photograph an hour after sunrise or an hour before sunset, those marvelous taboo hours when the film labs will guarantee nothing, or one may go into the night with a specified daylight film or vice versa. One may become the supreme trickster, with hatfuls of all the rabbits listed above breeding madly. One may, out of incredible courage, become Méliès, that marvelous man who gave even the "art of the film" its beginning in magic. Yet Méliès was not witch, witch doctor, priest, or even sorcerer. He was a 19th-century stage magician. His films are rabbits.

What about the hat? the camera? or if you will, the stage, the page, the ink, the hieroglyphic itself, the pigment shaping that original drawing, the musical and/or all other instruments for copula-and-then-procreation? Kurt Sachs talks sex (which fits the hat neatly) in originating musical instruments, and Freud's revitalization of symbol

charges all contemporary content in art. Yet possession thru visualization speaks for fear-of-death as motivating force -- the tomb art of the Egyptian, etc. And then there's "In the beginning," "Once upon a time," or the very concept of a work of art being a "Creation." Religious motivation only reaches us thru the anthropologist these days -- viz., Frazer on a golden bough. And so it goes -- ring around the rosary, beating about the bush, describing. One thread runs clean thru the entire fabric of expression -- the trick-and-effect. And between those two words, somewhere, magic ... the brush of angel wings, even rabbits leaping heavenwards and, given some direction, language corresponding. Dante looks upon the face of God and Rilke is head among the angelic orders. Still the Night Watch was tricked by Rembrandt and Pollack was out to produce an effect. The original word was a trick, and so were all the rules of the game that followed in its wake. Whether the instrument be musical or otherwise, it's still a hat with more rabbits yet inside the head wearing it -- i.e., thought's trick etc. Even The Brains for whom thought's the world, and the word and visi-or-audibility of it, eventually end with a ferris wheel of a solar system in the middle of the amusement park of the universe. They know it without experiencing it, screw it lovelessly, find "trick" or "effect" derogatory terminology, too close for comfort, are utterly unable to comprehend "magic." We are either experiencing (copulating) or conceiving (procreating) or very rarely both are balancing in that moment of living, loving, and creating, giving and receiving, which is so close to the imagined divine as to be more unmentionable than "magic." In the event you didn't know "magic" is realmed in "the imaginable," the moment of it being when that which is imagined dies, is penetrated by mind and known rather than believed in. Thus "reality" extends its picketing fence and each is encouraged to sharpen his wits. The artist is one who leaps that fence at night, scatters his seeds among the cabbages, hybrid seeds inspired by both the garden and wits-end forest where only fools and madmen want, seeds needing several generations to be ... finally proven edible. Until then they remain invisible, to those with both feet on the ground, yet prominent enough to be tripped over. Yes, those unsightly bulges between those oh so even rows will find their flowering moment ... and then be farmed. Are you really thrilled at the sight of a critic tentatively munching artichokes? Wouldn't you rather throw overalls in the eventual collegic chowder? Realize the garden as you will -- the growing is mostly underground. Whatever daily care you may give it -- all is planted only by moonlight. However you remember it -- everything in it originates elsewhere. As for the unquotable magic -- it's as indescribable as the unbound woods it comes from.

(A foot-on-the-ground-note: The sketches of T. E. Lawrence's "realist" artist companion were scratches to Lawrence's Arab friends. Flaherty's motion picture projection of NANOOK OF THE NORTH was only a play of lights and silhouettes to the Aleutian Islander Nanook himself. The schizophrenic does see symmetrically, does believe in the reality of Rorschach, yet he will not yield to the suggestion that a pin-point light in a darkened room will move, being the only one capable of perceiving its stasis correctly. Question any child as to his drawing and he will defend the "reality" of what you claim "scribbles." Answer any child's question and he will shun whatever quest he'd been beginning.)

Light, lens concentrated, either burns negative film to a chemical crisp which, when lab washed, exhibits the blackened pattern of its ruin or, reversal film, scratches the emulsion to eventually bleed it white. Light, again lens concentrated, pierces white and casts its shadow patterned self to reflect upon the spectator. When light strikes a color emulsion, multiple chemical layers restrict its various wave lengths, restrain its bruises to eventually produce a phenomenon unknown to dogs. Don't think of creatures of uncolored vision as restricted, but wonder, rather, and marvel at the known internal mirrors of the cat which catch each spark of light in the darkness and reflect it to an intensification. Speculate as to insect vision, such as the bee's sense of scent thru ultraviolet perceptibility. To search for human visual realities, man must, as in all other homo motivation, transcend the original physical restrictions and inherit worlds of eyes. The very narrow contemporary moving visual reality is exhausted. The belief in the sacredness of any man-achievement sets concrete about it, statutes becoming statues, needing both explosives and earthquakes for disruption. As to the permanency of the present or any established reality, consider in this light and thru most individual eyes that without either illumination or photographic lens, any ideal animal might claw the black off a strip of film or walk ink-footed across transparent celluloid and produce an effect for projection identical to a photographed image. As to color, the earliest color films were entirely hand painted a frame at a time. The "absolute realism" of the motion picture image is a human invention.

What reflects from the screen is shadow play. Look, there's no real rabbit. Those ears are index fingers and the nose a knuckle interfering with the light. If the eye were more perceptive it would see the sleight of 24 individual pictures and an equal number of utter blacknesses every second of the show. What incredible films might ultimately be made for such an eye. But the machine has already been fashioned to outwit even that perceptibility, a projector which flashes advertisement at subliminal speed to up the sale of popcorn. Oh, slow-eyed spectator, this machine is grinding you out of existence. Its electrical storms are manufactured by pure white frames interrupting the flow of the photographed images, its real tensions are a dynamic interplay of two-dimensional shapes and lines, the horizon line and background shapes battering the form of the horseback rider as the camera moves with it, the curves of the tunnel exploding away from the pursued, camera following, and tunnel perspective converging on the pursuer, camera preceding, the dream of the close-up kiss being due to the linear purity of facial features after cluttersome background, the entire film's soothing syrup being the depressant of imagistic repetition, a feeling akin to counting sheep to sleep. Believe in it blindly, and it will fool you -- mind wise, instead of sequins on cheesecloth or max-manufactured make-up, you'll see stars. Believe in it eye-wise, and the very comet of its overhead throw from projector to screen will intrigue you so deeply that its fingering play will move integrally with what's reflected, a comet-tail integrity which would lead back finally to the film's creator. I am meaning, simply, that the rhythms of change in the beam of illumination which now goes entirely over the heads of the audience would, in the work of art, contain in itself some quality of a spiritual experience. As is, and at best, that hand spreading its touch toward the screen taps a neurotic chaos comparable to the doodles it produces for reflection. The "absolute realism" of the motion picture image is a 20th-century, essentially Western, illusion.

Nowhere in its mechanical process does the camera hold either mirror or candle to nature. Consider its history. Being machine, it has always been manufacturer of the medium, mass-producer of stilled abstract images, its virtue -- related variance, the result -- movement. Essentially, it remains fabricator of a visual language, no less a linguist than the typewriter. Yet in the beginning, each of an audience thought himself the camera, attending a play or, toward the end of the purely camera career, being run over by the unedited filmic image of a locomotive which had once rushed straight at the lens, screaming when a revolver seemed fired straight out of the screen, motion of picture being the original magic of the medium. Méliès is credited with the first splice. Since then, the strip of celluloid has increasingly revealed itself suited to transformations beyond those conditioned by the camera. Originally Méliès' trickery was dependent upon starting and stopping the photographic mechanism and between times creating, adding objects to its field of vision, transformations, substituting one object for another, and disappearances, removing the objectionable. Once the celluloid could be cut, the editing of filmic images began its development toward Eisensteinian montage, the principal of 1 plus 2 making 3 in moving imagery as anywhere else. Meantime labs came into the picture, playing with the illumination of original film, balancing color temperature, juggling double imagery in superimposition, adding all the acrobatic grammar of the film inspired by D. W. Griffith's dance, fades to mark the montage sentenced motion picture paragraph, dissolves to indicate lapse of time between interrelated subject matter, variations in the framing for the epic horizontal composition, origin of Cinemascope, and vertical picture delineating character, or the circle exclaiming a pictorial detail, etc. The camera itself taken off the pedestal, began to move, threading its way in and around its source of material for the eventual intricately patterned fabric of the edited film. Yet editing is still in its 1, 2, 3 infancy, and the labs are essentially still just developing film, no less trapped by the standards they're bearing than the camera by its original mechanical determination. No very great effort has ever been made to interrelate these two or three processes, and already another is appearing possible, the projector as creative instrument with the film show a kind of performance, celluloid or tape merely source of material to the projectioning interpreter, this expression finding its origins in the color, or the scent, or even the musical organ, its most recent manifestations -- the increased programming potential of the IBM and other electronic machines now capable of inventing imagery from scratch. Considering then the camera eye as almost obsolete, it can at last be viewed objectively and, perhaps, view-pointed with subjective depth as never before. Its life is truly all before it. The future fabricating machine in performance will invent images as patterned after cliché vision as those of the camera, and its results will suffer a similar claim to "realism," IBM being no more God nor even a "Thinking machine" than the camera eye all-seeing or capable of creative selectivity,

both essentially restricted to "yes-no," "stop-go," "on-off," and instrumentally dedicated to communication of the simplest sort. Yet increased human intervention and control renders any process more capable of balance between sub-an-objective expression, and between those two concepts, somewhere, soul ... The second stage of transformation of image editing revealed the magic of movement. Even though each in the audience then proceeded to believe himself part of the screen reflection, taking two-dimension visual characters as his being within the drama, he could not become every celluloid sight running thru the projector, therefore allowance of another viewpoint, and no attempt to make him believe his eye to be where the camera eye once was has ever since proven successful -- excepting the novelty of three-dimension, audiences jumping when rocks seemed to avalanche out of the screen and into the theatre. Most still imagine, however, the camera a recording mechanism, a lunatic mirroring, now full of sound and fury presenting its half of a symmetrical pattern, a kaleidoscope with the original pieces of glass missing and their movement removed in time. And the instrument is still capable of winning Stanford's bet about horse-hooves never all leaving the ground in galloping, though Stanford significantly enough used a number of still cameras with strings across the track and thus inaugurated the flip-pic of the penny arcade, Hollywood still racing after the horse. Only when the fans move on to another track can the course be cleared for this eye to interpret the very ground, perhaps to discover its non-solidity, to create a contemporary Pegasus, without wings, to fly with its hooves, beyond any imagining, to become gallop, a creation. It can then inherit the freedom to agree or disagree with 2000 years of Western equine painting and attain some comparable aesthetic stature. As is, the "absolute realism" of the motion picture image is a contemporary mechanical myth. Consider this prodigy for its virtually untapped talents, viewpoints it possesses more readily recognizable as visually non-human yet within the realm of the humanly imaginable. I am speaking of its speed for receptivity which can slow the fastest motion for detailed study, or its ability to create a continuity for time compression, increasing the slowest motion to a comprehensibility. I am praising its cyclopean penetration of haze, its infra-red visual ability in darkness, its just developed 360-degree view, its prismatic revelation of rainbows, its zooming potential for exploding space and its telephotic compression of same to flatten perspective, its micro- and macroscopic revelations. I am marvelling at its Schlaeran self capable of representing heat waves and the most invisible air pressures, and appraising its other still camera developments which may grow into motion, its rendering visible the illumination of bodily heat, its transformation of ultra-violets to human cognizance, its penetrating X-ray. I am dreaming of the mystery camera capable of graphically representing the form of an object after it's been removed from the photographic scene, etc. The "absolute realism" of the motion picture is unrealized, therefore potential, magic.

MY EYE

My eye, tuning toward the imaginary, will go to any wave-lengths for its sights. I'm writing of cognizance, mind's eye awareness of all addressing vibrations. What rays pass through this retina still unretained by mind? How long has sight's center continued pupil to other men's imaginings? This sensitive instrument must respond to all the gods who will deign to play upon it. Now as with the other four receptacles it too much fears The Devil, postulates "sights" as the end of its vibratory travels, remains bottled against any sinking, sticks to the surface to avoid ballooning into unfamiliar waves of unknown spaces, humanly preferring the certain breakers which will eventually shore it, scattering fragments, reflective surfaces and magnifiers of a word here, and a moving picture there, of what was once an internal continuing composition. For the one sea, once seen, becomes a wavering weary-summation, dulls, palls receptivity to the distant surf hush, known Siren only when beyond all but a smashed salvation. Even the inside-out decomposes belief in the message heavenly destined for the sole comprehension of God-The-Beachcomber. Still, within these limitations, my eye begins a movement toward realms less imagined than the sands of heaven, risks more than ordinary flight, plots land escaping to a sub-terrain.

It all begins with the art, the necessity to create -- for what? -- that explanation changing time to Time, the young man dreaming of deification, not seeing himself as mere star -- immortality rather casting his whole name in astral lights, spelled correctly for all time -- beginning this pursuit patterned after others, in essentially non-religious era "The Lives of the Artists" becoming initiates' Bible, all ending as youth loses sense of growth for ever, scents his decay, and comes to know, for all the remembering of him, he will die. In that instant he either falls spiritually on the spot or begins to bend at the

knees. In anger at his uneternalness, that he'll never see his biography unless he autos it himself, the aesthete begins cocooning toward his innards by demanding immediate internal return, release in creation, self-knowledge, etc. When each expression refuses echo and he discovers art unmirrors, this budding Narcissus either builds a boat, sits banked waiting his reflection, or plunges in. From here on out all endeavor depends on depth, and all reasoning only confuses each issue. He exhausts excuses until each art work seems more sneeze than statement. His entire being becoming instrument for the expression of incomprehensible forces, he finds these, not his, expressions mold him after the fashion they will any attenuated audience. Being the medium, however, he's more familiar with the material than most, inherits worlds of words if poet, sounds if composer, etc., these gifts, given only when unmasked after, exclude from the early epileptic "fall-out," the floater, and the reflective one. Yet all fall, the artist "in" and only surviving thru a formal resistance granting the illusion of bottomless descent.

My eye, then, inspiralling, frictioning style-wise, being instrument for striking sparks, is bequeathed visions at every illumination it's struck to create ... Similar vistas being available to any viewer willing to release his eye for comparable movement. My eye so lost in space that fall feels ascensional, so style-beguiled as to know no "reality," sea running down-up hill willy-nilly, waves not known by their phosphorescence but thru aesthetic reflection only ... similar illuminations possible for any viewer capable of understanding his very vision as a metaphoric creation either directly inspired by nature or watered down by the cliché sights of others.

My eye, then, sky-wards, relaxed, all cloudless, mind as non-reflective as possible, (where will I find the words to describe it), my wakeful awareness ... non-blue, near gold of it, God in it, flakes of God-gold of it falling as if down from it into my eyes. In non-chicken-littleness, my eye opening out to it, now hedging wording it, mind's eye narrowing down to it, destroying it. Imagine the headline: THE SKY ISN'T BLUE, discovered by -- on -- while -- etc. Impossibility of all of it. I sky-hypnotised, my eye involved without view, seeing thru the so-called color of it, discovering light, now sighting it down to "flakes," "God-gold," "falling," "down." Metaphors -- feathers, snow, reign, all golden. My best descriptive is still the negative -- "non-blue." Best sense of it -- "discovering light." Best sentence -- "Impossibility of all of it." Still there's some possible, even historical, precedence for it, i.e., human, world-making, "reality" to it. There are some cultures whose extensive scribblings never refer to the sky as blue, some who refer rather purely in terms of light. Look it up, if you will; or, better, look up to it, see for yourself. (In its deepest sense that would mean, forget all I've here written.) Additional note for parents and teachers: Please don't force your militantly Prussian or goblin Cobalt or any other kind of crayon bluing into the drawings of yellow sky happy children, respect those young ones who use any and all of the wax spectrum, and marvel at those who remain still representationally dissatisfied.

Closing these eyelids, shutting Pandora's trap for awhile, believing even in the reality of it, thwarting thought awhile, traveling thru the blue subterrain? -- marine? -- what? seeming tunnels of it, (utterly unable to photograph any of it), purposeless in my wanderings around, seeming to be spiraling at times, timelessly, encountering shapes (indescribable), passing thru them, or were they passing thru me? or was a corner somewhere turned? into an unrepresented dimension, sometime, in this non-time, even the human drama projecting into these spaces, as if here too there were curtains to rise and fall, entrances, exits, and a feeling of interrelation, some of these as-if shapes as if to be avoided, some of these imaginary colors unimaginable, alien even to this alien land-sea-what scape. I remember a once-upon-a-time shut-eye (but not sleep) adventure when I absolutely knew a certain very convex-or-concave hypothetically approaching, with marine-like motion, shape must not overcome me, i.e., envelope the entire field of eyelid vision, and my finally opening my eyes in an almost sexual sweat, wondering for hours how the drama had continued without me, whether eye-opening had excluded me, etc. There is a definite intent to manipulate these, mind's eye?, patterns and without hand in it or bodily weight, freedom from the physical world?, to influence this internal?, destiny as one humanly imagines any control, among infinite possibilities?, and a definite retention of imagistic, external?, superimpositions once eye's opened to the feeling of having cheated, having broken some original law?, in the act of opening eye. Thus the desire to rationalize the eyelid into a simple projection screen of one's own thought-provoked but rather irresponsible doodles ... a thought having nothing to do with these sensory experiences other than the mind manipulating to escape them, -- the realization of them, the eye open escape, being too difficult without physical paraphernalia (lacking a camera, etc.) -- the illusion of complete avoidance, unconsciousness, sleep,

etc., preferable to the brain. Yet that instrument, in some perverse moment, grants retention of the retinal eye's adventure and this inadequate description of the experience, perhaps the first civilized touch upon this optical territory, the first move meant to eventually colonize. Otherwise that chaos too would have to be humanly avoided. After all, the mind minds. The only way to know these visions as a world not just thought up is to experience them as a world to be thought about which will eventually make of them a round world thought full, description, which is to know them only as a world thought down, narrowed, in the process of the brain's eternal creation or dead recreation, as you will. Here is a realm waiting better than Columbus to discover it, demanding greater flights than rockets, existing in its own right. My wife, thru the needling eye of extreme concentration, has been able to retain the fabric of shut eye patterns with her lids wide open and thread her sight thru both sensory worlds at once, moving toward the sense of their interrelatedness. I am not seamstress enough for the experience yet, lacking patience, wanting to force, tear even veils without recognizable substance, either raping or retreating in a sexual sweat. My wife waits, receives, inspires my vision, as always, yet receives her source of inspiration in my art -- seen as a closed widening circle only superficially, as widening ripple Os on the surface of water not perceived depth-wise -- the art, each work, as past -- cast -- a completely other world -- in a space of its own -- known because given thru human motivation -- the impetus of its space-time existence -- incomparably inspirational -- disturbing air-H₂O-soil-all world otherwise known -- according to depth of perception -- dependent on where and how far the eye will follow. All the above and all below, available to all.

My eye, again, outwards (without words) dealing with these "indescribable," "imaginary" vibrations, producing the categorized colors, best known negatively, this sensibility dealing with this phenomenon, an irresponsible gamble thwarting the trained response link between retina and brain, breaking the associational chain, this mind-eye partnership playing the game with an unmarked deck, as in the beginning, giving eye's-mind a chance for a change, yet a deck all the same, only ship-shape for exploration, not a-bottled-trophy. (Drawing a string of language grown as impossibly rigid as contemporary bridge cards in comparison to their Tarot ancestors, I deck my prose with whatever puns come my way, aiming at deliberate ambiguity, hoping thereby to create a disbelief in the rigidity of any linguistic statement, knowing only poetry immortal enough to escape the rigorous belief in any one word-world as a sense-killing finality.) My eye, again, then, beginning its non-color, life-giving, continually created coursing, follows rainbows, no thought of a pot of gold allowed the mind, pursuing light, seeking to stare straight into the sun, yet humbly shunning no reflections, searching even electrical filaments, all fires. A bent black tube, toy spectroscope, broke up a light beam to shelve the colors in very neat rows for formal introduction, as lacking-daisical and hypocritical as histories on tombstones; still I began to differentiate in the shuffling of shelves, spectrum change, from light source to light source, came to know at least each mask, sun's mask, neon's mask, etc. Then began the identification of light source through the guise of reflection, sun's rays grass costumed, house bulb by way of rug, etc. Finally came the discovery of what costume added to the light source character, the subtlety of the shelving in the merging of "color" spanch to "other-color" spanch within the bent tubing, and cognizance of the vibrations between and within those, once thought of as dominant "color" solids, in discovering the moon's transformation of sun's rays, the "brown" varnished furniture's enchantment of fire source light, etc. The spectroscope itself then shelved, except for occasional reference in the contemporary game of also-being-somewhat-scientific which I am fortunately only childishly prey to, and the eye's flight discovery of its internal ability to produce prismatic sensations directly, without extraneous instruments. The original influence on this added venture was the prism, quickly discarded in the game and replaced by squint, allowance for the eyelashes to diffract the illumination prismatically. Finally, eyes wide open, the ray-like structure of the path of light, obviously still too influenced by Western sense of perspective, finding one vanishing point among bulb's filaments or at sun's center and radiating horizontally to the four corners of twin-trained eyes, and vertically to shatter among the lashes, contains within its web indescribable rainbows, still too influenced by the spectroscope and the prism, being imitative of each in arrangement of colors -- "red-yellow-green-blue-purple" -- yet exhibiting color oddities when the eye has been uninfluenced by scopism for a period of time. Under extreme non-concentration, fixed by effortless fascination, akin to self-hypnosis, my eye is able to retain for cognizance even those utterly unbanded rainbows reflecting off the darkest of objects, so transitory as to be completely unstructionable, yet retaining some semblance in arrangement to the source

of illumination, bearing incredible resemblances to eyelid vision, patterning their tonal dance to the harmonics of all closed vision, yet differing in just that spectroscopic arrangement. I am stating my given ability, prize of all above pursuing, to transform the light sculptured shapes of an almost dark-blackened room to the rainbow hued patterns of light without any scientific paraphernalia. I am even enabled to impose arbitrary selection upon this newly discovered sense ability, to choose one color toning, eye only filtering out all others, and perceive all light, either source or reflection, according to inclination ... this cast of eye-dye finding its parallel in everyday ordinary vision due to lack of perception rather than selectivity -- i.e., the seeing of a snow scene at twilight as essentially black and white or black and blue-white to the exclusion of all other coloration. I am finding now that all my seemingly speculative color pursuits have had precedence in my filmic statements, subconscious invitations which unfortunately needed the conscious approval, my low level taking more cognizance of the gadget, the science toy, than of my own aesthetic visionary encouragement. As eyes become freed of their introductory influences, they become increasingly subject to the inspiration of the art. Many will see this only as intro-spectrum. I say all is.

Within the immediately distinguishable -- the "known" unseen. Without confusion -- the vision fissures and dead. A way out -- disconnection of tele-antenna for incoming calls. A way out of the distinct -- out of focus ... of soft focus ... for the seen unknown -- taken in, as an intake easy as breath, yet not absorbed ... eye needing sense of irritation for its aliveness as well as any-living-thing else. In visual indistinction as other than ordinary outline emerges -- to be effortlessly received. Without deliberation, an aura of sensual annoyance establishes itself. To round out all -- this is the boundary of new visual phenomenon requiring alive perceptability. Forms merge, as the fingertips closing to touch, closely viewed, reach a blur of their color, changing their contour, visually merging with each other before physical contact; as all unattended forms in an emergency form formlessness, a something more or less than background; as all before faint. Within this aura of non-shape, shapes reshape, and as long as the eye breathes them naturally, sponse and response equally unconscious, they continue their transformatory dance until one is involved purely with the innards of what one once knew only as outline. Once cartoon sight has been utterly removed, the internal movement of each once-object subjectively reveals itself -- an effervescence, an as-if bubbling up-out for viewability of spaceless timeless entities. Once my wife, reading Lady Murasaki's TALES OF GENJI aloud to me began such a transformation while my attention was fixed to transcribing 20th-century Western prose into ancient Japanese imagery, my eyes being freed and abstractly receiving the reader, at first almost lip reading to take it all in, and then liberated thru extreme mental reconstructioning of word-sound to picture, all sight without thought, in indifference to differentiation, loosing visual solidity to an imagistic melt and then to something which should have been indescribable. But I received the experience "wisely," not being taken enough unawares, forgot Genji and warily thought my way thru the experience, calling on mind to supply metaphoric explanations, recognizing a continual evolution by stages -- rather than otherwise having the sense of the adventure, being attenuated to the external call and allowing only most distant internal echo, leaving ego's platform out of it. But because I missed, used, the experience, I am better haloed by what had been back-lighting, and the ring of it eventually spread to contour what had been the outline of her hair, then suffused the natural brownish color until white, her facial changes keeping pace with this aging process until every shadowed area had cracked across her features into wavering wrinkles eventually isolating the paler manifestations to the impermanent shape of a skull. Fear constricted me to glances then, and each sharpening of vision forced the imagery back to what I'd recognize as "normal." Yet reassured by my sense-destructive abilities, and all curiosity aroused, I stopped short of normalcy, with my wife's still white hair now streaming down beyond any brown length of it, pooling at her feet, and enclosing what was once her form entirely, I allowed the process to undevelop again, "undevelop" occurring to the mind as it remembers the second, lesser, evolution more negatively than the original, hair being almost the reverse of its ordinary manifestation and shadows this time shaping a skull while whitened areas palled to a variety of unrecognizable, yet continually akin to my wife's, features. As features became unbelievably aged, they constricted into a more believable infant aspect, hair aura suffusing throughout the room. My mental insistence on the drama gave me the sense that dead and unborn relatives were presenting themselves thru the living organism, my wife suddenly a spaceless entity containing a timeless evolution. This thought, a devastating limitation upon happenstance, constricted all reception and stopped the process dead. Later times my wife and I have both

sought to artificially recreate the experience for study. Restricted as we were to other considerations, "times," "art," "study," etc., we could adventure no further than to surround each other with a promissory aura which never developed internally. Undevelopment is what's needed, from positive, thru negative to some unexposed original. Those non-times when the happening imposed itself successfully upon us are indescribable and altogether too personally sacred for even a literary attempt, my true expression being the visual medium of film. Only one of these later occurrences was unsuccessful enough to bear transcription. In anger, coupled with a frustration at my inability to even attempt to communicate with my wife, I saw her head reshape itself thru the emergence of animal forces, most particularly and recurrently the head of a dog, an animal she has always felt related to. My wife describes this same scene, her seeing of me in that silence and thru her limiting anger, as if seen thru heat waves which distorted my form in terms of size more than change of shape, my becoming larger than ordinarily perceived, my concentrated visage, or rather something simply referred to as "you," filling my wife's field of vision, then diminishing to a size more normal yet presenting an aspect abnormally wavering as if unbounded and again able to assume giant proportions. Technical description: "I was watching a movie photographed thru a zoom lens and rippled glass." This episode ended when the source of illumination, a bulb, blew out, leaving us both with an unmistakable electrical burnt scent in the air.

There is then an akin-to-soft-focus-vision accomplished thru exactly opposite procedures, relative to hyper-focal clarity, and dependent on spacial indefiniteness. Self-hypnosis here is approximated thru a fixity, rather than laxity, of gaze. Willful attention, forced beyond the natural capacity for mental absorption, produces a willy-nilliness less memory-dominated than when one is unegoed. Here one seems more practitioner than patient, and patience is not as necessary. One feels less hypnotic and more as if hypnotiser of the object, "objectivity" a descriptive of this process. All optic nerves must remain strained, beyond any ordinary attentive sighting, until they are as truly, tho oppositely, involved with "the linear" as one is when focally negating alignment. The nerve ends must be as if drawn out to see all objects as if penciled. They must become identified with "the line" beyond any delineation. "Space" is what must cease to exist. The rationality which will be activated by these procedures must be turned to the destruction of all two- or three-dimensional logic. One may, for instance, feed the mind with the fact that in contemporary mathematics many problems are "solved" by allowing the problematical existence of many more dimensions than the realist, essentially Western Renaissance, three. Or one may simply allow the brain to wander among the multiple vanishing points and horizon lines of many Renaissance masterpieces and exhaust mental restrictions within those labyrinthian expressions. One cannot here diminish-vert-or-stract the intellect but must maintain a sense originating argument with all its restrictive manifestations. Thus concentrated once upon my wife's arm, elbow to hand, my eyes drew every possible line out of it until all seemed strands separated as if in a dissection of its light and shadow surface. Then a semi-reformation produced multiple arms, moving independently in this re-defined space, superimposing over each other, all differently drawn. The shaded area of the knuckles, the inbetween finger cast shadows, the very hair of the arm and the crackling blackened wrinkles produced a number of finely-drawn caricatures afloat without apparent interdependence. Eventually it became impossible for me to discern the originating image. At this point my mind, seeking to re-define "reality," wondered if my own hand so split-up would have a complementary image of itself for reaching out to touch or otherwise sense, to grasp or otherwise move in interrelationship, with each of my wife's imagistic offspring; and it then postulated an attempt to connect parent hands to this intent. The instant the singular image of my blundering fingers began to pry into this multiple exposure, -- the vision vanished, all lines snaking to their source. As in all previous examples of supernatural vision, my wife and I have both experienced a number of more successful eye adventures in this respect which are completely beyond any linguistic expression whatsoever.

If one were to turn an adventuring eye to literary correspondence, facsimilating visual adventure with similarly adventuring literature, transforming optic abstract impressions into non-representational language, enchanting non-sights into non-words, one could write only sound poems, the audio manifestation of letters not being restricted to a pre-determined logic and rather communicating on an emotional level only distantly related to all the known word origins of any written sound. Within that distant relationship is the embryonic form of a purely onomatopoeic art. The visual parallel of this art is being created by men already termed "abstract expressionist," who are fashioning the symbol-cuneiform-hieroglyphic-letters for future communication. The moving picture image en-

ables the development of continuity and therefore an evolution upon language as we temporarily know it. All contained within this book has died in the womb. I abort it to save the living organism, its origins ... itself a specimen ... at best a museum piece ... of value only to the anatomical eye.

There was, then, something which is not -- every split instant, and then some. Between then and now -- a move meant, and now, and now, etc. And now then, and then, and then, ad infinitum -- and then? How much human doubt does it take to beget the question mark? Yet if one uses it at each and every word step, does it finally ever mean anything? Yes. Every something when it's beginning implies its mark of quest begun, becoming shield, gradually shunning, ply on ply for reign rain shed over hovel cover. Language languishes in its age, only poet fashioning, striking back-forward all of a word shuffle, and making linguistic king's dome out of king doom, king dumb, or at least be he only poet, maker, i.e., of his time, knowing in his writing there can be no civilization not rooted in civility, and knowing his being "decadent" is of his time, by way of "decay," naturally, and feeling natural by way of nature, and of his being searching out both the "born" and "produced" of that and the "past part...to be born" and either sentencing himself to be just so bourn or borne as a produce (intuitive of earthy, of all earth, with room, womb, for the sand and the berg of Sandburg, the Frost of bobby, the Mase and the field of Masefield, or killing more, just originless "Trees," or cut down and stacked to House mann, and so off and on for the last hundred year word run-down) or else he can sense "past part...to be born." and know his life is all before him, being back-for -- less ward, and ward, less for, till ford, and then finally fore ... again, with the gain implied, as Western -- yet not to be then Western, but more what's imagined Eastern, but really what's just imagined and now then, by this one, unimaginable word wise, but rather envisioned.

Or, another way of saying some of the above: it took me three moves toward New York City and three away to recognize my own word relationship -- to ward and a way, i.e., that it was not the Emerald City or anything like it, that it was not even City to me. Add to this a dozen or so other moves into and out of minor centers of incivility before I came to recognize that my visions were super impositions upon those cities and therefore to know and then to feel which of my moves was most meant, which would most sustain the internal ignition of those visions and what place meant most reception of their externalization, their coming out, as birth. What confused me most was "re" as before "naissance." It took a year's work in the commercial motion picture industry to make me really aware of what I'd always been away of -- Mad Ave's relationship to the Pope, both advertising Renaissance, cigarette smoke and soap bubbles being too much of a come down from flesh and blood to sustain even my ill usions -- and to know now the transformation of re, or any, in its move to the other side of birth, to hold now, but not too preciously lest unjust gain enter too much in, to the envisionment of "born again"... and over, and over again, every split instant, ad infinitum -- and then?

A time for everything, questioning being path of least resistance in time of quest shunning only. Yet, either way -- to ward or A (as in beginnings) -- there is always implication of resistance, a psychological viscosity in humanness, proof positive or negative that every move is meant. What of proof negative, then -- the accident? The unknown, verbally, or unseen, visionally, bend in path while one was bent on other purpose. As one can never know until after fact (as one never knows anger until incensed) un knowing sound-wise does imply in fact a positive. Purpose (pro poser) might as well read -- to place for, or fore. Resolve: while one's path was bent on purpose, while will kept chance (to fall) in rhyme and balancing resistance. Take Re back far enough and you do get the Egyptian sun god, or scientifically, sterilly, enough and you get dvi-manganese. No, one must dance (per chance) with a word, to ward or a way, and in inter-relation to all words, passing from letter to lettering, understanding one's own Devi (dancing partner) of deviate, or even oneself as deva (devine) in devastation. If one does then dance, recognizing the relationship of ac (cident) to ad and ic one does then come to know The Will less insistent (more re) and The Want a way (more in), a chance instead of accident, one voiding the other in a void dance until all that's left (rather than right) is (rather than being) ... wanting (rather than wanted) ... a beginning (rather than a gaining) ... in (rather than on) ... time (rather than rhyme), etc.

Or, to put it another way: we (wife and I) came to have faith less in accident than in chance (as in: to take a chance) and then finally in neither (a void), preferring prefer-

MOVE MEANT

ence (to bear rather than be bourn), leaving then fate's womb because it had become a chaos of excuse (with out cause), knowing, whether provable or not, that there was more growth for us at that time in exercising (enclosing out) our response ability in every event (out come), and coming then to understand angels over it moving in relationship to our responsibility (immovable under our expectancy) and our giving birth to a believing in our control over anything and raising our belief to anyone's control over everything (allowing Will rather than Want to enter into all of it and begin to dictate dogma out of it) and thus expecting (looking out at) it to exorcise (bind by oath out) our excuse (to bear us rather than be borne by us) to the beginning end of all of it. But along the way we grew as never before. For instances: our animals always reflect more basically the architecture of our spiritual innards when we facade, the dog mirroring Jane more clearly and the cat's eye, I. We passed last midsummer through danger to both these surfaces in the following manner. While walking both our dog and Jane's childhood dog (now in the care of her mother) up a mountainside, we paused to make love, a forced endeavor verging on rape and masturbation, and then turned to discover the disappearance of our dog, the animal of childhood only remaining. Expecting that "ours" had returned to the house of Jane's parents, we too (we two) took path of least resistance down the mountain. When our dog had not returned by nightfall, I in an unexplainable fury forced both of us back up the now black mountain in what was at first only symbolic search. A quarrel, masked by hypocritical civility since afternoon, now broke out between us, defining our separation, finally refining us. To pretend is to act upon actual tendency before it itself is in motion, emotional. That is why it is foremost a child's game, evokes and is evoked by the child in us -- thus seen by adults as a hood for hiding. That is why the hypo (fixing agent) of the crisis of the city (which always exists in interrelation of one to another) is particularly adult, can be used to preclude -- a con game leading only to clusion. For example, our each mutual resistance to separation was marked by distant barking, which when asked after by each of us separately, one or the other of us calling the dog name (totem), went unanswered. Finally I launched an accusational chain of arguments which linked back to my wife's childhood implicating that she was anchoring herself under the influence of her parental environment. This set our relationship very much adrift in the dark and dog barking stopped altogether. Suddenly I directly accused her of causing our animal to stray, and then of course I had to admit my own weakness in allowing it. I did not then know older origins of "allow" (to place, use, assign). But it was enough for the moment to precipitate the actual crisis. Jane did, in fact, begin to cry; and I comforted. Our animal instantly appeared as if, in spiritual fact, from nowhere. Once the overall form was known, it could even be seen (perceived in remembering tendon by tendon) that we were all ways moving on path of least resistance, our inhumaness toward each other a spiritual (as well as psychological) viscosity (a short cut) for eventually bringing us together. Hindu love dramas concentrate on situations where separation increases responsibility to the love. But Indian love is taken for granted as true (godly), whereas the dis-Oriental West stages only dramas of affection (by comparison) in which one human being does to another, affects, the affectation of which has been posed by Shakespeare in TROILUS AND CRESSIDA (all "true" "false" passages) or contemporaneously by Robert Duncan in FAUST FOUTU. Jane, I, and our animal found our way down the mountain altogether easier but not less causative of stance than because of resistance. Within a week our cat was nearly torn to death by a neighborhood dog. Within our weakness over "cause" and "allowance" I could not bring myself to apply our philosophy because it had ceased developing (hypoed to the Germanic sense "love of wisdom" rather than the earlier, growing, of "wise loving") and I would have struck off such a terrifying negative in out-look toward my wife (cat ... torn ... dog) that I would have had to give up al to get-her. Our cat spent three expensive weeks in a veterinarian hospital running too high a temperature for hernia operation and showing no signs of improvement what so ever. I experienced the period temperamentally, punctuated by abdominal pains and nausea, all thoughts running temporarily toward safe-guards, insurances, in an attempt to materialize internal feeling-failing, to counter-balance the shift of the faith scale. Finally at Jane's insistence, we brought the cat back under our roof. Two days of my hyperprotective, and sub-consciously destructive, treatment of the animal increased her temperature and convinced my wife in her suspicions. She pointed out that the day previous to the attack on the cat we had visited my mother and I had indulged in a rather too possessive fondling of my childhood cat (now in the care of my mother) and was indeed willing (rather than causing) in some, now possessed, part of myself our animal's death. Jane was, for her part, willing (rather than allowing) that it should be so.

Yet neither had willed death yet beyond the point of cat resistance. Yet all were in perfect dis agreement: She had struck proof positive and I had perceived it, eyes awash with tears, she comforting, we receiving each other. Within a matter of hours, the cat's temperature returned to normal and her hernia eventually disappeared without other than the above mentioned operation. One eventuality balancing the other, my wife and I discovered our contemporaneousness and, therefore, rediscovered each other, as well as a number of now learned procedures (rather than processes) for retaining a hold on time and on ourself (rather than selves) and also (rather than as well as) a way to release all hold for growth. The animals are living happily every after.

Enough of word splitting for the moment, which is to say -- enough of re-search, as from Gnostic "Split the stick and there is Jesus," which is to non-negate now. I approached poetics some eight years ago, for better or verse, allowing words to become their own action as they described, more inspired by the round as a circular word dance than anything else, drawing contemporary inspiration from the rose in Gertrude Stein's garden. Yet I was not familiar enough with language to be more than an exemplary medium. Still, those words were inspirational enough in their becoming to improve all my reading of poetry, to disprove my own pretensions toward that medium of expression, to devine and define the difference between the vision fire rubbed words can start and that to be sparked by moving pictures. I immediately abandoned scripting of films as being a literary hindrance, henceforth dancing more directly with my visions in the act of creating a work of motion picture art, myself as medium (and therefore my medium) becoming less amotionally influenced and more emotionally inspired by works of all other arts. I circulate these approaches to poetry again then to here exemplify what I positively mean as medium of move meant. In the use of them, being something other than letting them be, they serve to introduce symbols into this book which will have to do with the margin alien. Most contemporary readers find the poetry of their age unsuitable, believing as they do that it should serve to cover their nakedness. This comes of a scholastic misuse (as any use will be a miss) of the poetry of the past (Homer's Ulysses being just as banable as Joyce's if comprehended). The poetic experience is in itself an enlightenment until bulbed by the gardeners and subjected to the shadow of clas-sickle-if-i-cation. Thus the contemptable-airy emphasis on "style" (if it suits) "design" (if it advertises). The following will not serve these poor pose purposes, being comparable in this respect to the Emperor's new clothes, having hopefully been rendered transparent enough by this introduction so that their adds don't block the view.

To walk upon
the sands of myrrh
to see a rise
to walk up on
the sands of mur
dirge is rung
to walk upon
the sands of myrrh
to see a rose
a wake upon
the sands of mer
myrrh.

The bear is fur
the fur is bear
the bear is walking everywhere
here there
near far
bear fur.

Hi, Rain, sing rain away to wash the snow,
the snow low land of the elfin.

High reign, King, reign away to hunt the foe,
fi fie foe from the elf land.

I ran to sun a way of willy nilly roads
with a rattle drum in my left hand.

I sang to sing away the colden Oh,
the frozen fingers of my white hand.

Hie, reign, King Gone Away, how red is a rose?
How blue the skies over Elfland?

Hie, Rain, rain rain away to whiten all the snows,
to kiss the mistle snows over Elfland.

The mist tree knows
snow's a secret,
sea's a dream.

The mist tree says:
now's a secret,
seize a dream.

The mist tree is
white
and green.

In the act of editing film I am enough detached from motion to be directly involved with the move meant. Whereas, while either photographing or viewing the projected results, my eye movements are so inter-related to the movements of whatever is being photographed or viewed as to render the experience unmentionable. But when motion is perceived through the viewing of series of still images in their arrangement on a strip of celluloid, my eye inhabits a dimension other than what it perceives, a move being only represented, needing eye's per-or-in-ception, being therefore capable of rela-transla-or-transforma-tion, being therefore then a move mentionable. Yet I also set these images in motion, thru an editing viewer, and allow the activity of my eye to inhabit their moving space. The first of these procedures may be related to my use of the word "amotional," the second "emotional." I always found it superficially easy to edit for the commercial film industry, which isn't even concerned with the statement that a strip of film has to offer but only with what it represents. Most commercial film editors make the mistake of viewing what they are to put together through movieolas, mechanisms which confuse them even more than an editor by rendering the stilled images as emotionally involving as if projected. I remained unmoved enough to endure the debasement of all film values, which the presentation of a moving picture product calls for, by simply editing strips as representations with as little view of their moving as possible. My come-up-pence, a nervous break-down, occurred when a producer to whom I'd bragged of my method insisted on my editing a film entirely by using only slides of the first and last frame of each scene photographed, ostensibly to save time. The tight-rope removed, the entire commercial film endeavor was revealed as the thin air it is and my tread upon it but the hallucinatory prelude to a fall. The Romantics of the industry, those not at all concerned with representation (best exemplified by live TV which doesn't even pre but only sends), concentrate on as little visual detachment as is possible, with results more mud-die but no less detrimental than the unimaginatively airy. It is, in the making of a medium, very much as in the making of a life -- to make sense (even beloved non) one must act upon both senses of the word ... or I should say: all -- for the lively scale is more like an endlessly projecting mobile that what blind justice offers. But however you view the scale, a fall is in either one end or the other of two extremes of it and certain immobility is in the center. An artist, even at his most ego centric, or clearly viewing his medium as instrument-of divine forces, is primarily aware of the communion of communicability ... tho' his eye is naturally upon the experience of the work of art itself rather than upon those who will experience it. To the extent that social pressures force the artist to concern himself with audience, he will produce something very like the applicable notes following:

"Considerations for Film Expression"

"First there is the image moving ... or not in movement, in which case our eye roves it, makes it move in a sense. Then we make something of it -- what it is. For instance, a certain shape is a pear. Having once seen its form we know it as pear and hold it so in our mind's eye. This is where we search for the meaning in particular. Then we associ-

ate what it is with the context in which it appears, especially if its form associates with other forms just seen in that context. We will then tend to search for the symbology of the pear and the pear shape within that context. This is where we search for the meaning in association. If the object is in movement, the movement will demand our immediate attention and our immediate search for the significance of that movement and then the relation of that movement to other motions within the context and finally the inherent and associational symbology of the object in that movement.

"It is important to remember that the object is always in movement in a sense. If it is our eye as audience which moves the pear, tracing its shape, filling in its whole, then we demand of it. If the pear is actually in motion it demands of us. There is here danger that we follow blindly -- all becoming motion only. When a balance is kept between what we see and what is shown, the experience can become the richest visual one imaginable.

"If the object is held long enough, either stilled or moving, at our attention, we will tend to search deeper, or else will tend to fall asleep, depending upon the use of that object as demands that attention. If it is flashed at us, a flicker image, in some contexts it may have the effect of keeping it in our mind's eye to hold over all else that we see for awhile. Thus the visual crisis, as in everyday life, is often more impressive than that which sustains, sustenance."

These notes of mine were written some eight years ago and, tho' then composed for press release, were actually set down for very much the same reason as everything contained in this book -- to get the mind rid of that which can only be a hindrance in the act of creating ... to make it fore granted. Language has become at worst our burial ground or at best, as Rilke puts it: "The earth has no other refuge except to become invisible; in us, who through one part of our nature have a share in the Invisible, or, at least, share-certificates and can increase our holding in invisibility during our being here, -- only in us can this intimate and enduring transformation of the visible into an invisible no longer dependent on visibility and tangibility be accomplished, since our own destiny is continually growing at once MORE ACTUAL AND INVISIBLE within us." Neither can the artist concern himself overmuch with the communion of the forces which generate the experience within him, other than in the sense of the spiritualist medium who asks that only the good manifest itself or who in some way guards against the demonic, for otherwise the artist presumes and his will hinders the angels. As Robert Duncan recently stated it: "How can anyone or anything give that which is expected?" The artist's relationship to the source of inspiration is his want of it. Yet Faustway is ever a temptation to the wispy-willed, and its materializations negative. To exemplify the artist's concern with the communicability of the materials in the act of creating, rather than their source or their materialization once created, I will quote from a proposal ostensibly written for the Guggenheim Foundation but never forwarded, being altogether over all their understanding.

"These films would be created not only with a sense of the projected experience, but also (as in all of my work recently) with an eye to their speaking just as strips of celluloid held in the hand and to the light which can illuminate their multi-colored forms. They will be created out of the deepest possible conviction that such a viewing (or any other, such as a frame at a time through a slide projector) can and should be so integral with the projected experience as to add another dimension to that projected experience. Please understand that I arrive at such a conclusion from a working relationship with film and a realization that all my significant splices (adding moving image to moving image) are the result of viewing the film to be edited both through the editor at an approximate 24 frames a second and also as stilled strips of film. Similarly, out of an aesthetic understanding of time relativity, I have the sense that my finished films should be viewable at either 16 frames a second or 24 frames a second. Very recently I have begun working toward a filmic realization which will retain its integral form (considering the structure of the work of art as integral with all its emotional and intellectual statements) even when run backwards."

The foregoing ideas had served me very well while working as memory strings around the fingers until I wrote the above and discovered I'd become too attached to the strings and, in the act of writing, had abandoned them altogether. And if you're following this, you will know that in writing that, I am abandoning abandoning -- etcetera. Altogether striking a balance, and in this sentence imbalancing it, and in that last balancing again, etcetera. The more mirrors reflecting mirrors which are created for the mind's eye, the closer that eye is to either per-or-con-ceiving the experience of the work of art, or indeed then anything. Yet even as I write that, I am aware this approach to ward is pass-

ing a way, as on a scale one inclines away and can only fall toward, and in this sentence then I'm free from that there to what where, and in such quest shunning becoming this here pretending to communicate what? -- no what! is as yet unmeant shun-able. Away is a weary awareness of too much materialization in mere or more mirroring. What is wanted is a more than reflective source of illumination.

STATE MEANT

I just said to some visiting friends: "Excuse me. I want to be doing some writing that I have been wanting to do all day and am just now knowing how I want to be doing it." Habit has kept me at tempting "ad infinitum," to continue (writing without realizing) um, my yawn, or continuum, that under this chapter heading I'm in vacu (writing without time) um, as un contemporaneous as any State Meant must be coned from time, as this book is a writing pony of past (passed) experience, as real eye say shun of State Meant (pre sent) must be real iced...now, therefore, then, excusing myself from writing, except explanatory marginalia, and becoming copyist of previous States Meant as they are pertinent to all (future) beginnings, begun, I be -- respectfully, mine:

(From letter to a distributor, 1954)

You see, I'm a young player in the game; and, at this stage, almost all my movements and reactions are instinctive and geared toward finding something out rather than stating something already discovered. In this context, all my films (and poems) are experimental. Naturally, some of the experiments blow up in my face; but in the creative mind, unlike the scientific laboratory, the explosions are not deadly. They always provide the propulsion for movement into new unexplored realms. The only artistic expressions I worry about are those that go "fluff." I've never had a fluff film. The expense of movie making, differing from the paper and ink of poem making, has necessitated a thematic understanding of what I was going to do before the camera would begin chewing up film.

(To the Fulbright Committee, 1954)

I am applying for a Fulbright scholarship so that I can continue my development as a 16 mm film artist in an environment entirely new. One aspect of my cinematography especially stimulates this desire for a shift of scene -- my preoccupation with background as an integral part of drama, the scene itself and its relation to the actors moving through it. In this sense my films are documentary. I have become a kind of subconscious explorer, through my art, of the emotions of people I have known. As such, I have realized that the discovery and interpretation of the atmosphere surrounding my filmic characters, rather than their story motivation, is the key for penetration of their psychological behavior. I have written, directed, photographed, and edited each of the films myself so that I could have complete control over the synthesis of scene and actor. There is another documentary aspect to my work in cinema. I never use professional actors, preferring to have friends and associates of mine enact the psychodrama of their everyday life, portray their emotions in scenes similar to those which they have actually experienced.

(In answer to a questionnaire, 1955)

I have searched far and wide in this country and have yet to find a formal training program, in school or otherwise, which could be of any use whatsoever to film artists. All the film educational courses I have ever seen, all of them rolled together, are not worth the price of one roll of film and a rented camera as far as creative expression in film is concerned. I began with a roll of film and a rented camera.

(Scenario submitted to the Creative Film Foundation, 1955)

The legend of Everest is Faust in reverse. The logic of the story is simple and easily outlined. As my method of work in film is based upon improvisation, where only the general content of the film is preconceived while the camera techniques, and even dramatic motivations, are created spontaneously during the adventure of shooting and editing, I can only pre-present story outline and my own very sketchy ideas as to what pure film art form might be. I cannot promise that either my outline will be recognizable in the completed film or that my filmic idealization will remain the same for any length of time. Everest is a young Faust inhabiting a cold water flat. We do not see him, only the dreams he has of himself and the objects of his flat which surround him and interfere with his dreaming. As all photography will take place in this one room, the objects (bed,

dresser, sink, floor board lines, window visions, etc.) are the material for his dreams, dream-stuff; however, they are so transformed through film distortions, extreme close-ups, and odd angles as to be unrecognizable until suddenly shown documentarily when they interfere with the dreams they were distorted into.

When Everest is visited by the Landlord, the rightful ruler over the objects of his dreams he turns to his own body as a source of dream stuff. Again, actual body interferes with body filmically transformed. He searches himself in distortions of the dresser mirror. These flights of fancy are interfered with by his second visitor, a young woman who loves him. The scene between them realizes that she has more claim to his body than he himself has. She comes to his body with love, something he believes himself to be incapable of.

Once the young woman has left him for a time, that time becomes a trial in torment. He is confronted with his own selfishness. He stands condemned by the aged all around him, older people seen through the floorboards and the door cracks in apartments all around him, people who have lived lives and are fulfilling their last days as Everest has his beginning without ever having lived. Still he desires the easy way out, makes a pact with his devil-self in the mirror, and hangs himself. As he hangs in torment he ages and is ugly in his age unlike those he saw around him. His wrinkles are cruel, his hair a flaming mass of white. He hangs in a frozen room turned white as winter.

The final scene is Everest's struggle out of death to re-birth. Storywise, it is this man struggling to undo the knots he has tied around his own neck. Filmically it is the facial struggle through all the stages of age back to his own freed, living features. In his triumph he is no longer Everest.

All of my experimentation in film has been directed toward the discovery of ways of expression as non-related as possible to other art form expressions. I am after pure film art forms, forms in no way dependent upon imitation of existing arts nor dependent upon the camera used as the eye. I do not want films to show, as in existing documentary (the only direction film has taken to free itself from photographed drama) but to transform images so that they exist in relation to the film only as they flash onto the screen... exist in their own right, so to speak. My roots are in drama. I dream of a film drama unrelated to any existing drama we know of, unrealized as yet. I dream of film abstractions, not used because of the motion film can provide them with but transformed into pure film meaning. I dream of film dance developing out of possibilities peculiar to film only and not dependent solely upon the fact that film can show things moving. My first step in direction of my dreams was to allow the camera to participate in the drama as something more than an eye. I have worked with difficulty at the problem of giving the visual impression of something (within the context of a drama) through film abstractions without depending upon showing that something documentarily. I am after feeling which film can express without depending upon reaction to something pictured.

(Notes on "The Movement of the Animal Form of Cat at Night" made prior to filming NIGHTCATS, 1956)

Color set stark on black, possibly movement out of and into, or dramatically cutting across, or perhaps etched on, even blocking out areas of, and always existing in relation to the black which is the night as the color is the cat.

All color other than cat will be cat realm: a white rail, a green touch of foliage, brown rough etch of tree trunk, as always partially a part of night, all isolated in the space of black -- reminders.

Color will present and, in that sense, heighten the dramatics of the continuity. The feeling of the continuity will be affected thru movement and pattern in its relation to its movement only. This is, stilled pattern will be thought to have more of a color relationship response than a pattern relationship response and will, therefore, be considered presentational.

The black cat, with his various lighted parts, will begin the film -- for nightcats will be elicited and evolved rather than shown and told of. The cats will emerge their various colors out of the dark and play their moving parts in relation to the fragments of their realm, the rail, the vegetable growth, and gradually then in inter-relation. Perhaps their stage will first be set with the whiting of the rail, the spot of the moon proceeding out of the backdrop of black. The isolation of the cat's eyes would be symbolic; however, once presented, they will become visual reminders, while the cat parts act out of themselves, becoming visuals in motion more and more unrelated to themselves as visual symbols. This assumes that "cat" shown, even as a visual symbol (that is, so that we say it represents "all of cat") is at best an elaborate hieroglyphic and related to

the literary. It is here desired to create a visual experience out of my feeling for the animal movement of the cat at night. I stress "animal" in relation to movement because I recognize an area of cat motion which is a performance for humans, a response to their thought up routines. As the cats will be almost entirely acting under this routine, I must depend upon my approach and my editing to arrive at that more natural sense of movement I glimpse in the "uninhibited" cat. I am after a more primal movement than that which I will be able to photograph. The action and interaction of pattern movement will give this sense more than any acting cat.

The black cat then begins and, with his eyes, is what he is. And light touches him and his world, withholding only to reveal the more. And he is positioned in the semblance of his world. And he is backed, once fully revealed, by the black which he is a part of and which then becomes a part of him. And light may lay a line of himself upon him as illuminated. And the illumination may then move as the line of him. Then the thrust of his legs may chop up the grass of the line and become a grace of its own. And light may play upon the brown of him. And the various lines of him, as illuminated, may reflect his movement. And the brown of him may insist upon attention more than the line.

The black of the cat, and his lines in movement, begin. The browns of him insist on color cat. And the colors evolve in relation to this beginning -- thru tonal development and thru contrast -- thru linear evolvment and thru linear conflict.

Let us suppose the browns, the darker aspects, of a Siamese cat coloring, the brown body movements in and out of black. A Siamese could then become, out of its area coloring, into the lines of itself. The lines of a Siamese, streaks for the nervous agility peculiar to this species of cat, could then become the white insistence of its total body. Under-exposure of Siamese would most certainly brown; over-exposure would then bleach white.

Cat head round as full of moon. Cat arched back as curved as quarter moon. Siamese length as horizontal as the rail he proceeds along.

Cat as white as moon as white as rail.

Here we have transitions thru parallel images and colorings.

(In answer to a questionnaire, 1957)

I am devoting my life to what is inappropriately called "The Experimental Film," in America, because I am an artist and, as such, am convinced that freedom of personal expression (that which is called "experiment" by those who don't understand it) is the natural beginning of any art, and because I love film and am excited above everything else by the possibilities inherent in film as a means of aesthetic expression. And film as an art form is at its beginning, so that most expressive films in our time will, of course, appear as "experiments." There is no place for an artist in the film studios, because they have universally adopted theatrical or literary forms and have become extension of the art of the theatre at best, or the novel at worst. There is virtually no art of the film to be found in any formalized motion picture producing system I know of and probably never will be. It is possible that, some day, there will be patronization of film art. Those who, today, are discovering what that art may be, must learn to accept inattention, and even abuse, and to remain in that state of independence where discovery is still possible. They must learn to use the least expensive means at their disposal, so that economic considerations do not constrict their efforts, and to express themselves freely with a keen eye out for the discoveries they will make, and to formalize their expression in film with the greatest of care that they forge their art form out of film itself, its inherent possibilities which they will determine, and watch that they do not "use" film to some easily attainable end, an abuse which it has suffered almost universally since its discovery.

(From "Considerations on Film Making, 1957)

Understandably, one feels a higher sense of aesthetic control in some pre-twentieth-century newsreel footage than in the studio productions of the time. Due to the nature of newsreel photography, there is a greater variety of shot juxtaposition in covering an event than in the theatrical recordings of the studios; and (most important of all) there is camera movement. The first to develop any control of camera (or total image) movement was D.W. Griffith. Shot juxtaposition and movement within the picture composition were Griffith's first purely filmic aesthetic controls. From this beginning, he developed a language of the film upon which the entire grammar of commercial film is based. Only the artists in the film medium have taken Griffith's language and developed it; and it is only this handful of film artists who have broken the original aesthetic link to painting

and to the art of the theatre, the prime sources of composed juxtaposition of the picture image and the stylization of movement within the picture image. Griffith moved the total image but neither he nor his commercial imitators have ever established a satisfactory control over the camera movement to call their efforts aesthetically formal.

("The Silent Sound Sense," 1957, published in *FILM CULTURE*, 1960)

Méliès accomplishes a musicality of moving forms by way of rhythms of bodily movement (the dance of his magicanship) and the rhythms of appearances and disappearances (his harmony of the unexpected being always expected, as a greater composer always surprises with each development of a theme yet elicits the sense that each harmonic evolution could have occurred in no other way). Méliès creates perhaps the first silently audible rhythm in the aesthetic history of film. He is a drummer in a jungle of stage props at the dawn of the medium.

Griffith, with the controlled use of the action close-up, often evokes as great an aural as a visual sense -- through intercutting, a kind of orchestration of recall sounds, as a flash of lightning recalls thunder, as frantically moving leaves and a swaying tree evoke wind, as facial expression speaks for the tone of the voice which is most often of greater dramatical importance in a work of moving visual art than the spoken statement. In the courtroom sequence of *INTOLERANCE* the judge's gavel pronounces doom upon the hero far more effectively than the sub-titles "Dead, Dead! DEAD!" Griffith's battle scenes are alive with the sense of sound, whether the warring of swords as in *INTOLERANCE*, cut to close-up visual clashing, or the puffs of smoke in *BIRTH OF A NATION*, cut from close-up to a revelation of the entire battlefield with its sense of reverberation. Unlike Méliès, Griffith plotted his rhythms to create a parallel sense of time for correlating visuals -- the round shield of Belshazzar in *INTOLERANCE* cutting to the circular brunt of the battering ram against the gates of the city, pictorially striking at the exact spot where the king's shield had been. The visual sense is always subservient to the statement of dramatical correspondences, for Griffith was essentially a story teller accompanying himself with a musicality of vision in true skaldic fashion.

Eisenstein, having apprenticed himself to the study of Griffith, developed the sound sense of silent film from the use of it emotionally in *POTEMKIN* (the burst of smoke from Potemkin's guns answering the Odessa Steps massacre, intercut with first the sleeping stone lion, then the lion half-raised and last the lion with its stone mouth open -- a sculptured roar): to his use of sound sense to express a purely intellectual idea in *TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD* (the superimposition of the strumming of harps over a pacifying speaker intercut with the impatiently stamping feet of the revolutionaries). Rhythm, controlled by and endowed with associational sound sense, forms the integral structure of the famous Odessa Steps Sequence. The down beat of the vertically thrust boots of the soldiers builds the tempo up to the release of the smoke of their rifles, a developing staccato theme of stamp and bang, playing like a snare drum on the associational sounds of the mind, an indomitable rhythm at last answered by the all-enveloping white smoke and sculptured symbol of roar. Eisenstein, in his act of orchestrating, creates more than an accompaniment. Whether emotional or ideological, the stimulation is the result of visual and silent-audio recall. He plays upon the mind's ability to instantly relate the elements in montage and upon associative recall, attuning visuals to their symbolic contexts.

Many of the later silent film makers employed the sound sense to transmit the effect of mute speech. In Stroheim's *GREED*, MacTeague and his friend are visually accompanied during their difficult conversation in the restaurant by the vibrating strings and indented keys of a player piano. The gaudiness of the instrument indicates to the receptive mind the type of music which is being played, which is quite as effective as knowing whatever particular piece is intended, while the vibrant movement of the stringed insides of the piano and the outward mechanical motion of the keys, with their tempo and with their attendant context, visually paraphrase the dramatics of the scene. The images are especially effective because they are freed from their function as sources of actual sound. Similarly in Dreyer's *JOAN OF ARC* the silence of the inquisitor questioning Joan allows us to seem him pour "Etait-il nu?" into her ear, his lips a vial, her eye to the side of her ear the receptacle. In a sound film his voice would have to follow his speaking, as an echo, for this same powerful effect to be achieved.

The creation of a musical or sound sense in a silent film demanded an inventiveness which has never been equalled in the history of the development of the sound film. Creativity with sound has been lost in the superficial complacency of the mechanical adjustment of actual sound to visual occurrence, as if a picture of a streak of lightning were

real and therefore must be followed by the sound of thunder, as if the moving images of leaves were fluttering from the screen and must be attended by their perhaps aesthetically useless noise, as if the two-dimensional, cut-out actors on the screen were human beings in actual situations and the audience expected to attend their every statement whether or not they have anything to say, rather than to comprehend them as simply in the act of talking, hearing only those dialogues whose spoken meaning is essential in what must predominantly be a visual work of art, if any art at all. Similarly, as rhythm is the basic emotive element in all so-called movie "mood" music, other elements being ill-used if at all, the rhythm of the visual movement as well as the rhythm of shot length would seem a far more direct -- if a more difficult -- method of evoking the desired state of feeling than the juxtaposition of actual orchestral accompaniment, which is employed illogically and artificially in most modern film dramas.

The evolution of the sound sense in its aesthetic relationship to the visuals which created it has had no parallel in the development of actual sound and pictures. The sound sense which visual images always evoke and which can become integral with the aesthetic experience of the film under creative control, often makes actual sound superfluous. On this premise alone, one could disqualify almost every sound film from consideration as a work of art. There is no definition of a work of art which will admit superfluity.

(In answer to a questionnaire, 1957)

It is the position of the literary or dramatic artist, as the dynamic retainer of universal ideals, to investigate the morals of his time. Without timeless ideology there is no contemporary morality, and vice versa. The artist's inherent necessity to remain unbiased, true to his art, qualifies his investigation. The attempt to interfere with the exhibition and/or distribution of his findings is unquestionably an obstruction of the truth, or at least the closest approximation of the truth as can be defined.

(To the Pre-Selection Jury of the International Exhibition of Experimental Film in Brussels, 1957)

I could act irresponsibly and send you an elaborate statement of intention for every film, a statement designed to direct the attentions of your jury and impress them with the literary intelligence of the artist and superficially assure them that the artist knows exactly what he is doing and is altogether safe and confident in his proceedings. Or I could act with an ambiguous integrity and airmail you a bundle of papers on ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT, which was just completed -- preliminary notes, sketches, diagrams of interrelating forms, statements of intended development of color themes, reference data on symbolism relative to what I call the dramatic themes, etc....

I prefer to act neither irresponsibly nor ambiguously. I am far too impressed with your own statement of purpose in conducting this International Exhibition of Experimental Film. It is my opinion that whatever decisions your selections Jury arrives at, those decisions will define this entire field of endeavor for the public domain more than any other congress or competition in the history of film. That is not intended as a compliment, for I am very well aware that, as far as the public is concerned, experimental film might be defined (as it almost invariably has been before) to the great detriment of those working most conscientiously within the field. If so, it would add another strain to the already existing tension between the experimental film artist and the public. Ultimately, this would cease to affect him. He would simply adopt a new terminology and, as always, continue with his work. How the individual artist behaves in his relations to this exhibition, however, will ultimately affect him. That is why I take the matter as seriously as I am. That is why I must insist, despite the superficial risk of appearing self-indulgent, that my films be judged for their filmic statements rather than in relation to any written statements I might make.

(From a letter to a very dear friend and severe critic of ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT, 1958)

I recall all previous misunderstandings -- I remember my first lecture at the New School when I spoke of creating a film "spontaneously." My perhaps misuse of that word communicated the inappropriate idea that I, without mind or feeling, arbitrarily blundered my way with a constantly running camera through whatever scenes presented themselves. No one seemed to understand that which I had taken most for granted, that all my histories both passive and active, with strongest release of feeling I was capable of activating in the moment of creation and all intellect that was capable of possessing such feeling in

the given moment, were the motivation for the gesture, the as spontaneous as possible gesture, of the film. The misunderstanding which my language evoked was of the same nature as that phrase of mine (which even the New Yorker made much of) "magic in art." I have often used the word "magic" because its predecessors in aesthetic criticism -- "charming," "enchanted" -- have been weakened till they no longer adequately evoke the sense of the spell. The moment where the spell is cast for each individual approaching a work of art is that moment where the intellect passes over and must then step back, back in time to that moment. The ultimate spell is created out of that moment in the approach to the work of art where the intellect is ultimately baffled and the spell reverberates back in time over all the moments of the approach. I see the intellect as always in charge of and charged by the feeling. Within this war between two indefinables (which I must inadequately term "intellect" and "feeling") balances are struck under spell establishing what I call "the realm of magic." I determine the greatness of the experience with a work of art (for instance) by the length to which the intellect can approach -- two steps forward, one back -- before the spell is ultimately cast ... considering not only length but also the breadth of the realm created thereby. But the intellect must always be baffled and back-stepping at each successive moment, and must always be ultimately baffled, or the successive spells can never be cast and the ultimate realm never established.

It is the spell of the sounds of a poem which catches the throat of the young girl reading Browning (for instance), and then next the imagery which catches her mind's eye and then the juxtaposition of images catching at the mind -- and there she usually stops. Then she encounters the typical college professor who has passed on through statement and word sense, until his arrival at symbol (perhaps). Out of the nest of symbol he has developed his special corner (perhaps sex symbol) and tidied it up and put it to use to support him the rest of his life. One would think -- what new realms he could initiate for his students! what new spells they would soon be casting for themselves. But sadly (as almost always) it is in putting to use this ultimate of his once entire magic realm that he has forgotten the successive spells of which it is created. He no longer hears the sounds, no longer imagines imagery nor juxtaposes it. He now diagrams trees of symbolical sexual content which is meaningless without the total experience of the poem. With authority he then kills the greater touch with the magic in art which his students at their various stages of approach have had. Only the strongest survive this treatment and emerge from school as anything but a puppet on an unfoundationed plateau, remembering only the moment which the specialist created for them, having nothing left in themselves with which to create even their own special plateau.

There is an immediate spell for all untutored eyes and ears in every work of art. The vulnerability of the young make them easily hypnotizable. An order of sounds, contours, forms, colors, etc., is enough to put them into the spell. The development of taste and the estimation of relative greatness, hand-in-hand, are marked by the discouragement with works of art which disappointed by completely satisfying the intellect at the next successive step. There are then those works which forever baffle the intellect, cast spell, and forever allow the intellect to move on, and where even when some ultimate seems to be reached for the individual person, the reverberations have such a vast realm of magic to establish that they never cease moving backward and forward keeping the world of that work of art alive for the particular person. Once one can, or even feels the need (for practical reasons) to nest at any given point in the realm the spell begins dispersing. Memories, even from roost, may sustain that person in that particular realm the rest of his life. And one may have sustaining points in innumerable realms, their only discomfort being the inevitable desire to juxtapose realm on realm in such a way as to make all points coincide. Their greatness may even be in their effort to avoid such simplification. They become the great martyrs of aesthetic discomfort which keeps them alive in the sense of touching all kingdoms which they have created from diversity of reception. Still there comes a time when they will have lost the approach to the distinctly new, where they will read, see, hear it only in relation to the old, which it will be distinctly related to, but perhaps not from the vantage point or points which they now inhabit within all their realms.

(From a letter to friends, 1958)

I am now considering a second feature length which will dwell cinematically upon the atomic bomb. But as *ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT* is a work of art rather than an indictment of contemporary civilization in terms of the child, so too my prospective film will dream upon the bomb (create it out of, as I envision it, an almost Spinozan world of

mathematical theory, visualize the flowering of its form in relation to the beautiful growths as well as to those more intellectually parasitic, and in the wake of its smoke deal with the devastation it leaves in the human mind rather than material devastation, the nightmare and also the "devoutly to be wished" which it engenders, ergo religion -- the end, the resolve with death.

(Letter to a friend, 1959)

This has been an incredible week for us, in midst of what is an incredibly difficult time. Three days ago I finished editing a sequence of a film project I've been appointed "director" on at work. After I'd run the sequence for the producer, a deadly silence fell over the projection room. The producer began staring at me as if I'd gone crazy. He then told me the sequence was completely unintelligible. I started trying to explain why I had cut the pictures as I had. The more I talked, the more nightmarish the scene became. The producer's every reply was hyper-indulgent. He adopted the intonation one uses to pacify an over-excitable lunatic. He suggested I should go home and "get some rest" and return the next day. I became doubtful not only of the sequence in question, but also of my actions and speech; yet when I'd returned home and explained everything to Jane, she found me very coherent and in no way different from my ordinary self. I did manage to show the sequence in question to Jane before it was broken up and re-edited by someone else. And, in her company, I was as capable as she to see that the sequence was altogether improper for the pedestrian film it was to become a part of. The images were interspersed with black leader in such a way as to cause them to flash with a rhythmic sense, and though I remember using the black leader and cutting rapidly, I could not for the life of me remember my reason for doing so, that is -- the reason I thought such a sequence would be applicable to the project, although at the time of cutting I thought I was being quite logical about it -- that is, job-logical as distinct from creative-film-logical. Well, the entire incident has shaken me up quite a bit. You see, the only way I've been able to hold these professional film jobs the way I have is to consciously develop a personality split. For a long time right after our marriage, Jane and I used to jokingly refer to my job-self, the man she was sending off to work in the morning, as "the patron" and my home-self, the man she welcomed at the end of the day, as "the artist." But we soon came to have great difficulties in this respect, in that "the patron" who developed an altogether objectionable and degrading personality so that he could retain his job, began to feel unappreciated by his wife as well as by "the artist," the other self, whom he was supporting, whereas "the artist" began to resent the intrusion of "the patron" who would insist upon going to bed early enough so that he could get through the next day's employment successfully. Both personalities were jealous of Jane's affections or understanding (which is all she ever could have of "the patron's" position). We laugh quite a bit over it now, although the broader aspects of such a psychological difficulty are certainly not humorous. Our maneuver was to ban "the patron" from the house. It has not been successful, as is evidenced by our present difficulty. My only "real" personality is insisting on asserting itself everywhere, and I am (of course) finding it impossible to hold this job.

It seems to me that the entire society of man is bent on destroying that which is alive within it, its individuals (most contemporarily exemplified by the artist), so that presumably the society can run on and on like the machine it is to the expense of the humans composing it. I have felt this both personally and in objectively watching the lives of others alive in their struggles, and most particularly in observing the death of the average human being insisted upon by the society at the time of that human being's adolescence. I know what's expected of "the patron," what a zombi-like, parrot-paraphrasing, hypocritical (only because of the "other self") ghost of a man he must be to fulfill his expected function and to receive his pay, enough money to buy canned food, a cell-like habitation, a side-show (TV and the automobile presumably). (I've been supporting my films out of the side-show money). Time and again I've changed location, moved back and forth across this country, which I suppose many people have wondered about. The reason is simple: it's the only private personal key I have for the coffin lid, it's the trick with which I stay alive, a change of scene and of a way of life being that "gimmick," if you will, with which I re-awaken the self, re-illusion the dreamer, and thus prevent the death of the spirit -- all that I hold dear in life. I try to anticipate the night always, before it has closed in entirely. And my recurring nightmare, the one in which mad dogs pursue me across a swamp at night and eventually tear me to pieces, is just this, this change of location, this running. I refuse to be held at bay. The dogs will tear me to pieces if ever I'm caught.

(Description to a film exhibitor more interested in advertising the riot caused by ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT than the film itself, 1959)

A walk thru the vulgarity of the Brussels World's Fair Grounds, the atomium lit up at night appearing like some hideous ferris wheel of the future.

The refuge of the experimental film theatre, a familiarity in that it too was in somebody's basement (somebody's basement being always the theatre where I'd seen the best of films) under the Brussels painting, sculpture and theatre design gallery.

A familiar face -- Kenneth Anger. Last saw him in S.F., saw him off to Paris in hopes of filming MALDOROR. Now, four years later, very little money, still searching for the way. We talk about it.

The show begins. A UPA cartoon. We winch, then rest our eyes. 133 "Experimental Films" to be looked at before the week is over. Most of them just as unexperimental, as inaesthetic, and as uninteresting in any way. The audience laughs.

Then England presents her idea of "experimental film," an amateur documentary. Kenneth and I talk about how the Russians sent science films. We laugh.

A hand-drawn film. Interesting, but no form. Another English "doc." An Argentine film maker discovers abstraction all over again. We yawn patiently.

Then ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT flashes on the screen. The audience sits forward, straining eyes to read the titles. Just the calculated effect, these titles scratched onto film deliberately as eye-sharpener. As flashing image replaces image, the audience becomes restless. We become more and more aware of audience, offended audience. Three minutes into the film they are already hoping it will be short. It is not. Their eyes hurt. They fight the film. It is too much for them. Their feet hurt. They tap. Their butts hurt. They bounce about. They dance. They begin to howl like dogs listening to music.

"You've got yourself a riot," Kenneth says. We know we'll never be able to see the film (a film designed particularly for silence) under these conditions. We settle back to enjoy the audience. I recall John Cage's "Composition in Silence" where after three minutes poised over the piano without playing a note he bowed to the audience and thanked them for the musical composition of their restlessness.

A snare percussion of shushes and hisses answers the trumpeting. Those of an operatic nature in the audience break into speech -- agonized French, bellowing German. Then shapes move in the darkness all around us, individuals stomping, standing, showing each other in their dance, becoming one large shadow shape of the outraged audience, three-fourths protesting against the film, one-fourth protesting against the protestors.

How incredible that this film could spark the darkness, illuminating into this performance of the shadow of the audience, could make that shadow express all the pent-up rage of snobbish ignorance, accompany itself with all the sounds of its dumbfounded animality, sounds breaking thru the starch collars of superficial humanizations. I recalled the American equivalent of this European riot, the pent-up snicker, the tentative boo, the demonstrative walk-out -- so typically American. And this European riot, so typically European. This was at least an opportunity to see the monster of the contemporary theatre audience in performance.....

Sadly, however, afterwards I realized that as usual, whether European or American, the audience had not seen the film.

Later, in Paris, Kenneth and I found a basement room of the Cinémathèque Française, and ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT had its real World Premiere.

(Extracts from a letter to a disappointed interviewer, 1959)

I know well enough how we only seek from others the advice which we want to hear, that which will correspond to the advice we have given ourselves but, out of our insecurities, would like collaboration before acting upon it ... an unsanctionable weakness, unsanctionable principally because it inevitably leads us to alter our own true inward advice, to adjust it, to "fashion" it so that it will correspond to external support we feel we need. And I also see that while philosophizing abstractly (believing that I was acknowledging the fault in myself) I have spelled out that very fault in my writing -- "us" and "we" instead of "I" and "me" ... seeking partnership in my fault, asking again for the correspondence.

Interesting that this correspondence came about as the result of the interview ... interview. You were attempting to discover my view. Or were you? Should I, perhaps, have been discovering yours? It was, of necessity, after all your interview, even tho' I was the interviewed and you the interviewer. Were you, perhaps, trying to view me too much thru your perception (preconceived as are all our perceptions) for you to be satisfied with the results of an interview which (to me) was an opportunity to air some views. Yet, "from an editorial point of view," it is easily understandable how such an interview mightn't satisfy the requirements. In my estimate, however, it appears to be the most satisfactory interview I have ever had. I have been influenced ever since by some of the statements which had come from me at your instigation. I assume the responsibility for my own inwardness. I only pursue the questions which have arisen out of this interview and the subsequent correspondence to make the suggestion that perhaps the abstract theorist which I am on recorded tape, the interviewed who "seems not to know how to organize language and ideas sufficiently to communicate what is essential to general understanding" is precisely the truest representation of what I am. I have very often expressed the extreme, almost obsessive, in fact (perhaps) primarily motivating difficulty I have expressing myself with words. Writing was an intensive obsession for seven or eight years before I ever thought of making a film. At ebb tide of this pursuance; all the sea left for my satisfaction were a few poems where the sounds of the words were aesthetically expressive enough to prevent me from throwing them away as I had all the others, novels, short stories, plays, essays, and at last verse. Understanding this, you will see that it would be more accurate to say that at first I "switched capriciously to" film. But that switch allowed all the inward self to radiate its illumination, and if one believes in that illumination then one can still consider the lantern "magic" even if it cannot speak. While I have ego enough, I do not mean to praise myself with the "magic" lantern statement. I have also referred to myself as the goose that lays the golden egg, with the understanding that it is the golden egg, which it is merely given to the goose to lay, and not the goose which is important. Significantly, Proust expands his kingdom of words about the images as cast upon the objects of the room and not upon the innards of the projecting device itself, thus establishing correctly the symbol. Only had he been scientifically investigating his physical anatomy could he have torn apart the apparatus itself to any symbolic significance -- like those foolish children who tear apart their kaleidoscopes -- or like the man who killed the goose. Consider that I no longer even use sound in my films. Also, consider how often I speak of a "language of film." Now, whether I have communicated it or not, I have got myself around to the point of believing I have proved that (whether editorially usable or not) the interview was more true to myself, even in its false notes, than if it had been what you envisioned, your interview... just as strips of film (where some movement may be interpreted) would more truly represent my work than "stills."

Perhaps I am too much "sound and fury signifying nothing." I suppose, admitting that, there's no more to ask for than not to expect too much sounding and to pardon the fury, which is more the result of insecurity (especially insecurity as to how I'm to continue projecting the images -- the terrible expense of the art) than it is the result of arrogance or defiance. There is the very personal anger which has nothing whatsoever to do with expenses (more than that that is another expression of it) which dates back to the cradle rather than being a cue from fashion, which you suggest, and that also projects itself meaningfully only in the films. I believe varying aspects of that fury to be as film-contained as anything is self-contained. In other words I don't believe an understanding of the films is dependent upon an understanding of the self.

(Scenario submitted to and rejected by a foundation for grants to artists, 1960)

I am planning a feature length film in which those commonplace daily activities which my wife and child and I share in some form or other with almost every family on earth are visually explored to the fullest extent of their universal meaning. The film would begin with the awakening in the morning, and as the sleeper questions the world of "reality" most severely when exchanging the world of dreams for it, so too would the film begin by taking no image for granted. Each form and shape would formally take shape, every recognizable image first having to emerge out of an aesthetically controlled chaos of abstractions. Thus our coming to life in the morning would also be visualized as the creation of the world; that sun which streaks our room with light still being the explosive source of life, drying our eyes (or rather the photography through rippled glass) as we emerge from the waters of sleep. The very sheets we push away from us in arising would photographically relate to the thaw of the glaciers. Our rising forms would recapitulate

ontogenesis. We would seek to enact more than Adam and Eve and would dramatically also become related to every mankind creation myth known. The objects immediately surrounding us would be the source of all (photographed) forms. As sheets become glaciers and thaw in their (slow motion) falling, oceans roll in the blue (filtered) movement of shadow giving way to the light.

My body contains shapes for all god symbols. The sun is (reflected) in my eyes, both physical and spiritual mountains move when I flex muscle (in close-up) and the formation of the hairs upon my chest are (photographic) potential for every Tree of Life. My wife dances (her movements edited rhythmically) as though out of chaos when she arises. Both earth and moon move in (extreme close-up photography of) her eyes, and (as seen and photographed with love) she is all goddess. Our child sleeps in the shape of the egg, can become the breaking of the egg (in a lens turn from extreme soft-focus over-exposure, rounding and whitening her image, to sharp focused correct exposure) with awakening movement. Our pet fish, dog, and cat, and the birds out our bedroom window contain the potential forms (through isolating parts of their bodies, through elongation, vertical or horizontal, foreshortening, etc.) either to populate many Edens or to satisfy Darwinian evolutions. (I would develop all forms to their maximum relative potential in inspirational accordance with certain principles of D'Arcy W. Thompson's GROWTH AND FORM which even uses distortive graphs to show relationship in skeletal formation.)

Having launched the ship of "the dailiness film," the title which I refer to the inspiration of this project, I can only exemplify certain possible developments for such a beginning, as it is essential to the integrity of such a project that its individual scenes arise out of the daily activities of our living and that these developing fragments inspired in the immediacy of life direct the form of the entire work. In a Mallarméan sense, the shadow between the white waves of these stapled pages is a better hull for the "ship" of the dailiness film than any number of words here written, for each stage of this film must be realized in the drama of our living and visualized in the creative act, not predetermined by the literary form of this appeal.

For example then:

Our meal table is a stage for all agricultural drama, where milk and honey flows, where wars are waged in the gesture of hands (seemingly innocent gestures intercut to bring out the sense of graphic conflict and symbolic relationship of contemporary gesture to the Beth-Luis-Nion hand and finger language), where spiritual as well as physical bread is broken and the preparation of an egg includes potential for everything from scattering cosmos to humpty-dumpty's fall (from extreme close-up and microphotography to reverse photography with which our child can, as in imagination, put the broken egg together again. A walk with our child can transform forests into the fairylands which they originally inspired. I am reminded of Novalis':

"Where is the stream?" cried he, with tears. "Seest thou not its blue waves above us?" He looked up, and lo! the blue stream was flowing gently over their heads."

A contrasting passage which comes to mind is Sir Arthur Eddington's, from THE NATURE OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD:

"I am standing on the threshold about to enter a room. It is a complicated business. In the first place I must shove against an atmosphere pressing with a force of fourteen pounds on every square inch of my body. I must make sure of landing on a plank traveling at twenty miles a second around the sun-- a fraction of a second too early or too late, the plank would be miles away. I must do this whilst hanging from a round planet head outward into space, and with a wind of aether blowing at no one knows how many miles a second through every interstice of my body. The plank has no solidity of substance. To step on it is like stepping on a swarm of flies. Shall I not slip through? No, if I make the venture one of the flies hits me and gives a boost up again; I fall again and am knocked upwards by another fly; and so on. "

These seemingly diametrically opposite inspirations, one from the expression of the mystic, and the other from the scientist, find their greatest potential relationship in visual expression. The man who has seen sky as stream (on a film-loop of sky photographed through rippled glass in movement, the repetitional cloud streak pattern liquifying the heavens) and the man who finds himself hanging upsidedown in a space of physics (with extreme slow motion photography of his difficult movement intercut rapidly with extreme close-ups of the object of his movement moving away from him and rhythmically intercut with very extreme long shots of the earth itself in its whirling intercut with the man seen upsidedown and whirlingly inter-related to the earth he moves upon) are both very much the same man through visual representation of their distinctly different dramas. A similar parallel would be the war of the kings and spiritual leaders as symbolized in a dish-

pan by the multiple shapes of drops of water (in slow motion and extreme close-up) and infiltrations of dirt and grease substance (photographed through clear glass tanks of water) vie for supremacy in the turbulence of dishwashing, and ideal cities rise in soap bubbles to vanish as swiftly as dreams. At the same time, behaving according to the relative laws which govern the formation of microscopic creatures, king's crowns are also hydroïd polyps and church spires the shapes of Cordyphoras, ideal cities being worlds of cell division, etc. From a psychological standpoint, for example, memory (represented by single frame shots interrupting, at almost subliminal speed, a sequence of movement) would also serve to reveal symbolic relationship of an object or action to a field of thought rather than personal experience. For instance, while watching birds in flight, I may wear their wings for fractions of a second; leaves may instantaneously sprout from my wife's uplifted arms while walking in the forest and as instantaneously vanish again. As she sews, my wife may find the two other fated aspects of herself flashing about her, weavings and cuttings may subtly surround her, and the weave of her pattern may (subliminally superimposed) affect the movements of our child in play. And I will be working on the very film in the making, the statement that this is a work of art being integral with the work itself, and in so doing will be directing the movements of wife and child and will be directed by their movements, with all our actions integrated until we return to the chaos of sleep out of which we are born each day and to which we inevitably return. There is no state of being we inhabit, no action we perform, which is meaningless. My wife and I have directed our visual sensibilities toward understanding, making conscious, all meanings. There is no object we encounter, nothing entering our periphery of vision, which doesn't affect us profoundly, and we believe that only by comprehending each influence as deeply as possible can we discipline our reactions sufficiently to call them our own and direct all responses toward the realization of our ideals. This endeavor is the most integral inspiration for this, or any other film.

It should be meant shunned that THE FALL OF EVEREST and THE DAILINESS FILM were factually never photographed due to (in the first place) lack of funds and (in the second) the outright rejection of a foundation. They were actually never photographed because I scraped my skies to a slate in the act of writing, all script being in-right my own rejection slip to my-eye-self, but needing the external rejection of the foundation to fortify my own internal motiv-ovation. Even the notes on NIGHTCATS (which significantly enough was made for the Creative Film Foundation instead of the too expensive, expansive, FALL OF EVEREST) were written only to be rid of past, passed, techniques so that the visual experience could project itself and eventually be projected. As I know of no foundation which will support an artist without a blue-print (limiting the sky as they all do) nor one whose funds are even fertilizer for the artist's growth (being, as the name implies, concerned with foundation from the base meant to the sealing) I think I have discovered the only service a foundation has to offer the developing artist -- a corresponding Negative.

(A Final Word Or Two O're..., 1963)

I was twice in the Graveyard of Père Lachaise, first in the company of friends, myself and Marie Menken as American tourists, Kenneth Anger our guide, the three of us, as film-makers, eye orienting ourselves, but (of Orient) creating the exotic (in comp.) prehension re: childhood -- (the tour) nascence meant to be (re: our guy): follow the leader -- (membering: the first) game: to see as the other -- to see "other," by direction, to see "over there," where the lines of the many gestures converge, to see "O -- there, the vanishing point, to see "O" the point, to see "There," its vanishing ... so as to say "There?", the first quest shunning one's own vision, to say then "Oh, there!", the cognition which gears one's sight to the other's gesture, to say "Oh?", the second question being of the other's gesture wherein it vanishes at the point, to say "There!", the drawing of all gestures to oneself, a play of planes wherein one makes marionette of one's eye's sight for the vanishing of lines into perspective, to say "O!", to have x-changed one's owned sight for the first ring of a chain of other vision.

And we e-voked, x-changing each vis for viz: this for that, here for there, wording our ways a-way to haunts in which the ghosts of our children-selves could hunt as we were used ... each search con(tracted to) struct (the) tour (re: turn)ing. And cats were there, where here lost flowers to their eyes, where this lost (sun) flowers to that (moon) cat's eyes, wherein un-sound symbols flourished (to the x-pense of papier-maché) paying out a fee line space-wise (trans parent flesh), governing the person (all) sight, as any G-host (spirit) will will will within such con-(struct-tour)-text: -- as here, all Wo-Rds.

sentence at similar points, periodically, and vanish into space for para-graphing: - and there we were, not where we were, but having been there where we were -- tho', as Creeley points out (a parent thesis): "We is not the plural of I:" -- and I was there in Père Lachaise, for the first time, being where I was and imagining, vis-a-vis, some hypothetical where-with-all to include we of a three-part there-with-all, a fix to invent were or, more uni-vers-ally, a development to invert re for some sense of the invisible as members of a child(who-dead?)-scene, played grave-stonely with no thought for the mo-or-monu-meant. And we saw The City of The Dead as ave-newed, more a-live than the spooking words "Rue de la Reste," et set, or as if "Here lies" were to be taken literally as comment upon all tombstone writing.

With this word-wrest went all de-corum; and while we did not actually dance, we moved as if I, and he, and she, had each been aware of the dance we three were image engendering, viz-a-viz:

WISHING TO HELL --

(Epstein's Wilde little penis which wasn't there again to-(that)-day.)

SMELLING TO HIGH HEAVEN --

(The Polish roses on Chopin's grave being Stein's "is a - is a - is a - is a" ad-infinitum.)

PURSUED TO EARTH ENDS --

(Each crypt-door hinging on Bottom's pit, each crack-of-tomb light's abcess.)

FORE ALL TIME --

(Tears and tiers of imaginable coffins of descendencies x-tending Roman-tick-tock-ally down thru monks to monster monkies.)

SENSUALITIE'S MEASURE --

(All angel, and other-mother-death-sculpture, per-as-con-ceived sexually x-citing symbol's oh-and-ah bayence.)

in that state (you'll have to take my word for it) I became aware of (as if it clothed my eye's sight) and wary of (as if it were) a whitening of all objects seen.

...being entirely composed of script and scenario fragments so liter-realized that the necessity to visualize them never compulsioned the filming of them.

(This OF OCEAN, San Francisco, 1953)

The flow of black waves inward, smoothly building up themselves, forming a semi-diagonal line as the camera pans with them.

The flow of this line, faster now and forming more of a vertical pattern than a diagonal one.

With quickened tempo the line of mounting water moves toward a vertical pattern as the white crusts of toppling waves begin to appear.

The whitened tops of the waves suddenly reach the zenith of their vertical composition.

The contrasting horizontal of the waves head on approaching and...

Exploding horizontally against black rocks in the foreground... Exploding horizontally larger with the rocks forming only a thin ridge at the bottom...

And exploding in all directions with no visible rocks but only a burst of water filling the frame.

(Untitled script fragment, Central City, Colo., 1953)

A moon uncentered, round and white as ice.

A sun scratched mud pool. The revealing of fingers of snow which feed it. Then the pure white of their source.

Night and the uncentered moon overcome by clouds.

A street lit passageway of stairs leading nowhere.

Stars.

House lights patterning a mountainside with squares on black.

Fast movement over snow to a child's hand scooping a white ball.

The alive face of a child.

The sun.

The slow movement of the snowball breaking the mud pool into its components.

The hand of the child flowering open against the sky.

The laughing face and eyes of the child and a movement of laughter across town houses blurred across valley to the daylight mountain side.

HIS STORY

Victorian filigree pointing icily down to the crow-lined face of the mother calling across
a wash of valley to the road where a child stops play.
Disappointment in child's clothes, from capped face down to awkward toes and a frozen
mud hole in the earth.
The fingers of the child close.
Lines of water straight as arrows rush together to their foam.
The white stream of a woman's back to the dark of her hair -- her hand arranging.
Rocks foam-etched in water rush.
Fingers tenderly out of hand into hair.
A pool of the stream forever circling within itself.
Mirror white with the face of the woman appearing.
The dream of her eyes drifting -- all the white of her face in motion.
A shift of snow scene with two dogs racing play.
Their leaps to sky.
Their curves on white.
The poise of one.
The flash of the other.
Teeth meeting.
Angry fur.
Flowers of blood petal the snow.
Coals glow into flights of fire.
The leap of the flesh of a man's face in the play of light and dark.
Ribbons of snow lie on the mountain slopes.
Clouds reach for the sun.
The dark mud pools glisten and beyond them, up a dirt road, a man walks head down ob-
livious of the mountain town passing behind him.
A church tower large in its symbology hovers over the roofs of the town down to the dirt
road and the solitary figure of the man moving speck-like against black mud bands
through snow.
The sharp dark profile of his head as he looks up to the mountain side dominated by the
white of the church with the partially clouded sun behind its tower.
His face uplifted to wag in the direction of the church, the road passing in wrinkled ruts
beneath him until he steps suddenly into its mud pools with a splash.
The explosion of water up all around him as he whirls furiously to regain his balance.
The contorted lines of his face as he curses. Drawing back he looms against the blank
of the sky.
The beauty of worlds of bubbles in motion.
The circles of water widening out.
The curved lines of water straightening into parallels in movement.
The rippled sun growing round in the calm of the waters.
The curved lines in the white of snow hills.
The shadow lines of mountains whitened.
The stretches of curves and whorls to white horizon lines where the sun is setting.
(Unfinished DOG STAR MAN, Denver, 1954)
A moon uncentered, round and white as ice.
Beneath it pine trees spread their wings in wind against the snow. They pass again to
darkness.
House lights pattern a mountain-side with squares on black.
One window holds a Mother where she rocks and the white cottoned form of a girl Child
armed in sleep. They weave dreamily through curtaining.
The Mother smiles through lace.
Her hand strokes the Child beyond strings of patterning
Pattern mists the Child's face in a sketch of dream white.
Cotton wrinkles shift across cotton body Child.
The Mother whiles time away rocking, clothes her eyes in perfect peace.
The moon as down is struggling in the hands of clouds.
The Mother is aware, as arrested as animal, of the night without.
The child face shifts on awakening's edge. Her mouth yawns a silent scream in sleep.
The window is square with black, and the mother rises within its frame. She looms large
through the threads of the curtains, moves heavily with her burden, then draws the shade
line strong down.
Down night to the points of arched windows whose lit oblongs contain the shadow form
of a Young Man.

His other side is warmed by a livingroom, his form still etched to the flowered walls of the room edge him in, then his Mother knitting precisely on the one side, his Father shifting newspapers on the other.

Young Man turns to stare the length of the room.

The room in reverse. Young Man's Mother and Father are in position at the far end of it.

They follow Young Man's movement out of the room with their eyes.

Out the window and up to where its points dance as flames kindled to the distant glass above lighting against the dark of the house.

The face of the Young Man as candle dances softly beside a clock.

Young Man stoops to something unseen. The clock moves by and the room turns to a world of patch work quilt.

The kingdom of quilt gives way to Young Man's hand. The bed is white as blank.

The face of the Young Man ghostlit beside the pure tower of the candle.

Pine angels fade in and out of the night.

The candle flickers to a tiny point. Lines of fingers rush to guard it.

(Finished DOG STAR NIGHT, Central City, 1955)

The night lighted squares of the windows of houses irregularly scattered up the side of a mountain. The shadow form of a man moves up and blots out one by one each nest of windows until all is black.

Titles: white on black.

The night street of an ancient mountain town, alive with the electricity of saloon signs and plate glass fronts, moving pacedly by where three hunters drink and two people, a man and a women, sit in the foreground at a table. Suddenly, the quick turned face of the young woman in surprise and fright.

The moon crossed by clouds.

The face of a man is seen as a negative through the plate glass staring in with fixed eyes. He is distorted in anger.

The flash of bulbs illuminating a saloon sign outside.

The window in positive, empty of anyone.

The fingers of the woman creeping tremblingly up over her own face more wondering than frightened.

A young man sitting with her at the table stuporing over his drink. He looks up at her with suddenly ogling eyes.

His wobbling view of her as she tries to smile.

The bar and those lined up alongside it -- the first hunter standing beside his gun turns slowly toward her.

Wobbling view across the young man, across the table, finally resting on the woman looking quickly questionly in his direction.

The second hunter sitting at the bar sliding off his stool to stare across the room in her direction.

Wobbling view up to the face of the woman.

The third hunter turning quickly in her direction.

Hesitating view wobbling between his two companions and finally resting on the woman.

The three hunters staring in the direction of the woman, each drunkenly stepping, watching steadfastly.

The view moving in on the woman.

The view inching out all else around her.

The view wobbling in close on her face broken with sweat.

The hand of the young man reaching across the table to her hand fingering itself away to hide beneath the table.

The eyes of the woman in negative and rolling frantically in their sockets.

The ground blurring by underfoot.

Shadows fuming across the face of the woman turning.

Shadows flicking across the face of the man at the window. He turns in her direction.

The man and the woman on horseback and in slowed motion riding. Their ups and downs are those of a merry-go-round.

The woman leaning back into the sky with arms thrown widely.

The man riding low on the neck of his steed.

The woman thrown back.

The woman falling, slowly grounded.

The man tumbling forward down.

The sun whirling through the black branches of trees.

The fingers of the woman scratching earth.

The sun through trees.
Her fingers gripping.
The sun through trees.
His hands moving under the cloth of her shirt.
His other hand moving under her thigh,
The blinding sun uncaught and clear.
Her hands as fists.
The face of the woman struggling up away from him.
Her hands like birds whipping his face.
Her face breaking into a scream which carries across trees, across sun, across clear sky
to three men standing on a knoll by the two horses. Their guns move like scales in their
hands.
The rifle of the first hunter rhythms time and then is suddenly caught up to the firing po-
sition and the face of the hunter.
The face of the man now fixed in fright, down the checks of his shirt in an even row
down to his feet moving slowly backward.
The squinting eyes of the hunter and away from them along the level of the gun.
The figure of the man turning to run.
The dance of his feet in the turn.
The checks of his shirt in a whirl.
The mouths of the other two hunters opening...
Along the level of the rifle to the mouth of the gun tearing a hole of whiteness.
The trees circling... an upraised bloody hand countering their movement.
The dead face of the man pivoting.
The counter motion of the trees.
The face of the woman opening into a slowed motion scream.
The trees down to the ground to blackness.
The eyes of the girl following down and down.
The negative eyes of the girl wild with memory.
The young man in the bar leaning sympathetically in her direction.
The door of the bar blown wide open.
The woman seen through the moving rungs of chairs.
The lighted doorway from outside the bar, the woman rushing into its brilliance and then
turning shadow as she steps into the night.
A spot of blood flowering on the ground, then a trail of them.
The shadow of the man moving over the earth.
Three shadow forms struggling in the saloon doorway. The young man is pulled back in-
to the light by two of the hunters and the door is closed.
The shadow of the man waiting across an expanse of broken rock. The shadow of the
woman drifts in, hesitates, then joins the man shadow, crosses, turns, crosses, again.
The face of the woman as she circles the form of the man -- the lights of the town whirl
by behind her.
The clouds toying with the moon.
The shadow hands of the woman gliding along the ground.
The shadow hands of the man playing across the rocks.
The lighted squares of the town whirling.
The still of the moon.
The shadow fingers of the woman reaching out.
The white hand of her opening as a flower.
The shadow hand of the man stilled upon the earth.
The woman lowering to her knees and reaching downward.
The white hand of the woman tenderly resting at the edge of the shadow hand, fingering
its shadow tips, then lifting dust out of the palm of its darkness.
The face of the woman lifting with her hand outstretched before her until her supplicating
gesture looses the dust from between her fingers -- it sifts down misting her features.
The shadow of the man interrupting the moon.
The woman abandoning herself beautifully to the earth. The shadow of the man crosses
her body.
The moon as freed.
The moon shade of the man slowly blanketing her face ... her eyes closing.
The rising of the moon.
The rising and turning of her white breast.
The lacing of the hands of man and woman.

The pure, pale curve of the woman's thigh -- the intrusion of the haired knee of the man.
His arm circling the white of her back.
Her fingers playing upon the knolls of his vertebrae.
Their faces meeting and closing to a line between two forms of white.
The pulsing line between the white of their two bodies.
The rivers of their twined legs.
The darker curves of their bodies turning into night.
The hand of the woman as a star against the dark of the man's hair.
The moon overcome by clouds again.
The hand of the woman fallen upon her moving breast suddenly stilled to a frozen pool of white star crossed.
The sun, fierce in a blank sky.
The crooked fingers of the woman hooked to her breast in this new light.
The feet of the woman black against the ground.
Her other hand lost and cut among rocks.
Her face dead as her eyes are wide, her smile idiotic as the continual peace it suggests.
And yet she is hauntingly beautiful. Up to the forms of the hunters against the blasting sky. They wag their heads.
The sun again and down to rope, down rope to the agonized face of the man hanging by the neck, down his back to the sheriff and his deputy standing beyond the hung form shaking their heads.
The hand of the sheriff crossing his star to pull a knife from his jacket pocket. Follow-
in his reaching up reveals the sign attached to the blood-ribboned front of the hanged man. It reads "BEWARE THE DOG." Then the form of the man drops down and all that is left is the blank of the sky.

THE END titles -- black on white.

(Prose script, Denver, 1956)

Dissolves of mountains make great softnesses of them, a mountain range becoming transitional as clouds. The lowlands are a shift of scenes pin-pointing around twin lovers against the grass. The dreams of geographic lines fade to the solidarity of their bodies. In the break the sun is the vision of the boy in a white blindness.

Each part of the girl's body then becomes a dream, dissolving into each other part, herself apart and each part transitory as the world he's thought to have inherited.

His lips move love-like.

Flickering shapes of mountains, sharp as lightning streaks.

Her eyes shift over terrain that catches like a net and holds fast to this clearing where life lines of flowering weeds stalk too close for comfort.

A hand crawls in the grass, its spider fingers searching out a prey. She stands and the horizon sinks around her. There is a house behind her, and a dark mountain, furred with trees.

Her hands fly to his clothes and she clutches him desperately, seemingly gathering him up into her arms. They kiss and the yarns of their body lines thread together. The valley and the mountain ranges spin around them. Something with five fingers creeps over a stone.

They run hand-linked together. And as they run their shadows lengthen before them and the shadows of the valley reach beyond them and the house itself is then in shadows and its windows flash lightning. It seems to take them until night to reach their destination. The landscape behind them, they race in as shadows into the shadows, enlargingly closer. They are laughing playfully, then breathlessly, then hysterically. And the door shuts black against the mountainous background, enclosing them in a dark hall with mirrors where they can see themselves and large stuffed animals on the walls. There is only the sound of their breathing.

The boy observes the animal heads, the serenity in a semblance of life, the glass blank of their stare. He is reflected in their eyes.

She stands uncertainly in the hallway. It is empty, yet there is a sense that something has passed through. The eyes of the animal heads are alive with a mysterious light, an electricity. She turns to the nearest mirror and sees a monstrous boy with a sense of such mysterious power yet beautiful calm that one would think of the walking dead, a trespasser from that world which guides all our lives with its strength yet remains detached in our memories. He is covered with blood and stands with an axe in hand. She turns as if to confront him, confronting only another mirror with his image still reflected, standing. She turns again in a rage and finds herself in her lover's arms.

The eyes of the animals die into the darks of their bodies.

(fragments of THE DARK TIME, 1956)

The lovers as they lie: He in the dreamfold of the valley beneath dissolving mountains and in mist of dried grass, She sharply alive to rock and grass blades. While he drifts as a plastic form, she is cut to pieces by the edges of her world.

The preparation of the hearts of artichokes is a witches' ritual of slowly boiling water through the mists therefrom as its mixes with the fingers and body movements of the girl and obscures her face. The boy fries meat as he had ignited the fireplace in the living room, with a sense of barbaric ferocity, exulting in the flame and the explosive consuming heat, delighting in the slowed fountains of grease bubbles. The exchange is a ceremony, paced and beautiful as expressions of deepest feeling.

She leaves him and there is a terror in her eyes, it is her eyes that move now down the stairs, through the vestibule, into the living room, her eyes that reflect the flotsam of household objects moving distortedly by, her eyes icing into defiance. The telephone becomes the instrument of her finger movements, its mouthpiece her voice, its wires her tension.

A complexity of wires carries her defiance beyond the mountains, down to worlds of lights, a pool of electricity, a city.

(Verse script, Denver, 1956)

The scene

a green with pines
a brown with pools of needles
a white with the star of twined bodies

The green as fur

movements into
softnesses in full light
the unbroken motion in breeze play

The brown as feather

waves of deadliness
a motional circular
a seething softness

The white in search of form

the star as it shifts
the limbs lingering
the fingering

The green with its shadow

the blades of pine
the definition
the needling cast on sun

The brown with its black

the wavering mode
of star shadow
and tree shade

The white with lines

the form of body
rhythming
writhing

The green particularized

the knives of pines
the clash of lines
the intertwining

The brown alive

the scene seething
the sea seizing
the freeze

The white
obliteration
slur linear
pure

The sun through green
the unmeshing shade
the parting
the sun

The red in brown
the blood of the ground
the rivulets
the dripping

The bed in white
discoloration of white
the fingertips
the lips

The scene as was
once remembered
dissembles
unably

(A fragment of FAUSTFILM, left unfinished in 1957)

The aged climbing stairs in dim light. Their footsteps.

The stairwell broken by their passing shadows.

The eye of the youth lighted and then shadowed by vertically passing forms.

The outline of the aged hardly distinguishable from their shadows.

Their labored breathing mingled with their footsteps.

Their steps between enclosing lines of banister and wall tilting side to side in slowed motion even as heart's olding beat

The eye of the youth narrowing, focusing, then closing altogether.

The aged as a man and a woman assisting each other in their climb.

A mousey whispering between them mingling with their breathing.

The feebly wavering movement upward reveals the youth poised on a landing staring downward.

The now opened eye of the youth moves away to reveal his full face, a moon in the darkness of the corridor.

The aged move more into light, their faces upturned. A silence.

A sweep up stairwell fixes on the skylight.

The face of the youth retreats until his full form is mixed with the greyed forms of the corridor.

The doors of the corridor slipping past as vertically increasing lines.

The vertically diminishing lines of the banister supports slipping away.

The groans of the stair wood becoming an increasingly hysterical creaking.

The fingers of the aged, insect-like, pulling their hands after them up the diagonal rail.

The opposite diagonal foot of the aged, pressuring upward.

The vertical slur of clothing moving upward.

A thin skinned hand steadying.

A bony knuckle in circular turbulence.

A tree of upstanding veins.

A fingering nail.

A pincher of fingers.

The diagonal down thrusting lines of caught clothing.

The fist clutching diagonal rail.

An upstarting bone seems to break through translucent skin as the light falling on it seems to break through darkness.

A thrust of muscle quivering in and out of light seems to burn like fire through shadow.

The flame of bony movement through the smoke of clothing.

Unfocused reflection in pits of eyes.

Sharp gleam in dark.

The aged man turning to help the woman.

His steadying hand on the banister, the length of his arm, a crossing diagonal, his strictured neck muscles strong in light, the turbulent sweep of his other arm in reaching, his fingers clutching.

The pincher fingers of the woman releasing their hold, her hand fondling for his, her face upturning, shedding its shadowing, moving upward to the gleam of her eyes unfocused.

The twin stars of their two hands crossing in bright light.

Their clasping...

Clutching...

Fingering sensually.

The butterfly fluttering of the woman's fingers.

The toadying creep of the male fingers, all knuckles.

Fingers lacing in fingers.

The male thumb under.

The feminine nails playing upon veins.

The firm knot of their hands moving upward, veins of wrists disappearing, the covering darkness of sleeves of clothing.

Down whorls of varnished wood, down lines of banister, down diagonal to the upclimbing hand of the man gracefully reaching and the following fingers of the woman ... their shadows passing.

A silence.

The receding horizontal lines of rail supports.

The door lines of the corridor moving past in horizontal unison, an unbroken rhythm.

The irregular heart beat of the youth sounds softly under his breath.

The receding lighted patch of the stair landing is broken by the silhouetted forms of the aged.

The revelation of the open door comes with a cross cutting line of light...

Revealing the face of the youth in his movement backward, half in light, half shadowed, a half moon in the darkness.

The involuntary gasp of the youth, part cry of pain, part ecstatic.

A rush down corridor reveals the full lighted stage of the stair landing, the silhouetted shadows of the aged.

The out thrust shadowed hand of the man.

The bend of his shadow leg straightening.

The taut rise of all his form.

The frenzied shake of his darkened head.

The stage set with silhouettes, the old man standing in a posture of defiance, the woman reaching for him.

The old man's crackling voice: "Satan, get thee hence!" ... breaking into maniacal laughter.

The pointed shadow finger.

"Get thee hence, Oh Satan!"

The breaking line of shadow leg.

"Oh Satan!"

The faltering shadow hand reaching back to reveal the breaking line of shadow arm.

"Oh, Oh, Oh..."

The dance of the armed hands of the woman reaching for the trembling arms and hand of the man, all motion in time to his groaning "Oh."

The upthrusting stance of the shadow legs of the man...

"Get thee hence ... hence, hence, hence!"

Breaking into a dance in time to his words.

The lighted scene with silhouettes, the old man dancing in time to his whining voice, the old woman jumping up and down beside him in rhythm reaching for his hands.

The "hence, hence, hence!" of the old man breaking into a cackling laughter.

The fingering fingers of the woman touching the now trembling fingers of the man.

The sharp laughter dissolving into a whispery weeping.

The interplay of fingers in rhythm with weeping.

The shadow figure of the aged woman leading the crippled, bowed form of the aged man away into the darkness beyond the landing.

The hiccuping of weeping becoming whispery sounds of shuffling feet which fade to a sound no louder than breathing.

The face of the young man turning into the light, lost not in thought but in contemplation.

His inner conscience voice: "My name is George ... a name for kings."

He, too, as an actor, stands postured in the doorway; yet he is in lightened area backed by shadow. His contemplation shifts to sensing, a shift of eye.

The posturing of his face, an artificiality of muscular movement upward into haughty pride.

His lips parting.

His voice: "Why..."

His fingers to his lips in gracefully moving horizontal lines.

"I..."

Horizontal fingering lines covering thin line lips, poising there --

"am I."

Then moving to the tips of fingers touching the flowering of lips into a round.

The sound of a kiss.

His full figure in a theatrical flourish handing his kiss to all the room.

The strong upstanding vertical fingers of his hand in parting.

"This..."

A movement along the vertical floor boards reveals...

"being..."

The round of a patch work rug.

"my garden..."

The sewn flowerings of the rug appearing over each other in dissolving shifts of patch-work...

Then the frenzied dissolving movement among the threaded stalks of the rug...

And at last the revelation of the rug in its entirety, a tattered ovular with spotty, irregular patches and loose ends.

An egg breaking, crumbling slowly in air, falling in air.

A soft explosion, sharp as breath in exclamation.

The slowly falling egg, the trembling white strings of it, its emptied shell in hand.

The egg striking frying pan, its circling liquid translucence turning hard white instantly.

A violent hiss punctuated by continuing sputtering.

A burst of steam diffusing in air.

The screaming whistle of a tea pot.

The slow breaking into drops of downfalling milk.

A tinny splashing and then the even tone of pouring liquid becoming gurgling.

The bouncing dance of splashing drops of milk in air.

A rhythmic gurgling.

A gnash of white teeth tearing white biscuit.

The crackling of jaw bone in chewing.

The cooked egg and the plate: three circles held in hand.

The fingers poising, then the poised fork suddenly down thrust.

Fork cutting egg, breaking yolk.

The crack of metal on glass.

The face of the youth moving forward and down to receive the egg, his lips parting.

The youth towering over the stove, his plate in hand, first eating of the egg, then tearing biscuit with his teeth, then drinking from a steaming cup to wash it down.

The sounds of cooking and eating mingling.

Rising steam beclouding his eyes.

The room is seen dreamily through the quivering heated air from the stove.

His voice is unnaturally enclosed in his throat, his mouth full with food: "This room being..."

The youth towering over the stove, drawn to his full height, sets aside his food.

"...my home..."

The room distorted to a squat flatness, the heat waves seen now struggling upward against a world of horizontals.

"...my castle..."

(A poem fragment remembered by Walter Newcomb)

Oh to find the lips of the sympathetic drinking water,

Then to the softest unconcealings...

Must one

Must one

Must one...

NOTES OF
ANTICIPATION

A continuation of His Story. This, though, unrealized in words -- hence the film, AN-
TICIPATION OF THE NIGHT.

The sun is a red ball in zig zags. It is the star which, alone, is without definitive
course.

Only the mountainous horizon passing toward, beneath, and away from the sun fixes its
movement into a line. The horizon passes above the sun as well as below.

The whirls of the sun splash into green leaves.

The earth curvatures, a continuity, fix its line -- the sideways sweep of mountain hold
its course.

The frantic rush of sun explodes on water in reflection.

The modulations of earthen movement converge from all sides upon the centered, stopped
circle of the sun.

The whitening exposure of the sun as a rush forward blots against the shadow side of
leaves.

The negative of the sun, as a bruise, whitens in gathering itself into the smallest circle.
Water becomes a whirlpool.

The horizoned mountains show their rocks.

The sun as cut bleeds across the horizon.

Its memory is the black negative of fire covering the earth, burning in the shadow trees,
exploding against rushes of water.

The flowers trail a smoke which sinks.

The grasses are buried in gaseous streams of white.

A child's hand falls amongst fallen leaves.

Lovers' lips seek resting places in shadowed folds of flesh.

The light dies in an aged eye.

Two young men fight with glistening knives in the moonlight.

The rectangular squares of lights in houses shift.

Sequence Order for Shooting the Night Film

The rose as it may pertain to self.

The self reflective among tree shadows.

The self as a force of water.

The dance of the twilight children.

The children faces in the night backed by artificial lighting.

The water spots as fallen stars.

The self reflected in black pools.

The fires of night.

The self afire.

The passage of night events, shifts of scene, explosions.

The self in a perpetual turn.

The drunkenness becoming sensual night.

The self as God.

The passages of memory as blocks of light suddenly thrown open.

The self in parts played out as on a stage.

The avalanches of white sheets.

Night Film

Twilight begins enclosed in the house with slants of sunlight picking out those symbols
of the self which will play themselves out during the night.

The light play ends on the rose: reflected in black and shadowed on the wall.

The fire of light beneath its bowl.

The shadow play cast of leaf and water fire.

The rose itself -- a color -- then a fire.

The slant light as gold on lawn and tips of leaves.

The shadow of trees.

The rose at sunset.

The light

The water

The rose in water

The fire in water

The rose at sunset

The light

The shadow
The water
The rose in water
The light in water
The shadow in water
The fire

Sky with water (w & w)

Green gold white

Sky with water

Green gold white

White White

Reveal rainbow

White white

Rainbow move

White white

CU Rainbow move

Rainbow sequence

(all white)

then. . .

Burning bush

Rainbow into darks

(sequence)

Green to gold fare

Gold to black

Green to gold fare

Gold to black

Green to gold fare to grass (alas)

Grass to dark

Dark to rose

Rose to pattern

to Dark

Dark to white

to dark

Dark to rose

Water & Rose

Dark to green

Grass -- Child!

The Development of the Child

Pure white

Make hand on grass evolve out of

White struggle

Then green evolve to arm and into

White struggle

Make legs evolve out of white struggle

Then green evolve to legs and into

white struggle

Then white struggle evolve into

Body to body arm to arm to green

dark to light to dark

Body to hand to green

dark to light

Arm to body to body body

light to dark to light to dark to light to dark

Structure of Amusementation

(From blur of lights (into cubes)

3 (To freeze within which

(blur of children

(promise of rainbow
burning bush gold
purple always in white)

Repeat 3

2 (blur of children
(to freeze of child

Repeat 2

(Freeze of child with blur
1 (of lights behind
(To white of child in opposition

Repeat 1

Variations --

Large flash away to large light
(white) in confusion to dark
Reappearance of distant moon transversed (or) to dis
lights in confusion
flash to appearance to dis moon
lights in confusion to red
Red to moon and dis
Moon move
Greens to light
light flashes
Greens, greens
Temple greens
Greens, greens to bars
Temple
Bars to light to greens

(insert dark scenes in dark trees)

flare to yellow-white

flare to trees to dark

(light flares to polar bears to dark

(dark to pink

repeat

(dark to pink to boy

repeat

(dark to pink to boy to flesh

repeat

dark to pink to boy to flesh

flesh to face to girl & pillow

polar bears white to

pan girl to under pillow

scene

(repeat)

pan girl to under pillow

scene -- neck join

(repeat)

trees in complexity jumps)

jump to rope)

trees to white)

Shadow man)

theme and variations

Best lift superfluous child pan to

find bird flight mix

Make greens consonant until reds are firmly established

Then mix pink PJ's to boy

Bird into red jungle under pillow

Then bird lingers to make flight

Then mating

All mix yellow and pink with blue

Boy pink take over

Through sheets to polar bear

The trees to night



Out of darkness, the trees to trees movement
↖ ↗ showing very little contrasting
blue and rose skies to darkness

Out of gold, the trees to clear skies
(contrasting blue and reds) then to trees
then to plains with trees then to trees
and gold

Out of white, thru gold, to plains
piling up with contrasting blues and
reds to darkness, then reflections
to the skies white, blues, reds to
darkness, then trees, ~~white then~~
blues and reds, to darkneses
to gold

Gold to dark to gold.

Shadow out ← to white

White back to green

~~white to green~~

Gold to green to white →

white to green to gold ←

White with rainbow © circular to green

Green to gold streaks ←

Black with white streaks → ←

Green to gold streaks ←

Black with white figurine

Green to gold streaks

Black with white streak + figurine

Shadow to green to gold to white (forward)

~~Shadow~~ Green to gold to black with light

The same

The same

Black to white

Berth

The rose to pink
The skin to dark
The dark to rose to green
The green to skin
The pink to green to pink
The skin to green to skin to green to skin
Green to sky
Sky to head
Head still
Green to arm
arm still



Child in green withdrawn
Light in green withdrawn
to moon flickering
to lights \nearrow to moon \nearrow
to moon with \downarrow transverse to moon
to lights \nearrow to moon \nearrow
to moon with \nearrow transverse to leaving \leftarrow
lights scattered
to return of moon (pavilion) to scattered
lights
to transverse (leaf seq.)
to moon transversed
to moon breaking into lights colored
build to red to moon trans \rightarrow
moon breaks to lights (artificial)
light play to moon
moon to Ala string
string to passing ether, reflections,
etc.
amusement Park,

(movements \leftrightarrow)

Appearance of the Temple

(make mathematical - light flashes between upward and downward appearances of temple scene)

Flare to Temple \rightarrow

Bars in dark - corner flashes green \rightarrow

Temple \leftarrow Temple \rightarrow Bars \leftarrow

Bars - (repeat) \rightarrow

Temple \rightarrow
Temple (distance) \leftrightarrow

Spots of children \rightarrow

Temple (distance) \rightarrow

Spots of children \rightarrow

Temple (infantesimal) $\downarrow \uparrow \leftarrow$

spots of children \rightarrow

Light flashes + green $\uparrow \uparrow$

Temple (infantesimal) \uparrow

* Light flashes + green \uparrow

Light flashes + children
(repeat)

Temple with flare to green

Green to light flashes etc. (repeat)

Temple and moon move

Temple to lines

(Repeat Bars - Greens light flashes children)

appearance of the Temple

Proved mathematical - no light flashes

Flare to Temple \rightarrow

Temple \leftarrow

Bars to green \leftrightarrow

Temple \rightarrow

Bars to green \leftarrow

lights to temple \leftarrow

Bars to green \leftarrow

Lights to \downarrow Temple \leftarrow

etc.

Temple and moon more
Bars to green + light
~~Temp~~
Temple
Bars to light to green
Temple + green
Green, green to light ~~to light~~
Temple
Bars to light to green
Animal Flashes amongst greens
Green to light
Temple blue
Child spots
Temple blue
Child spots
~~Temple blue~~

yellow - boy - white + 2 blue

moon and blue and brown suggest

Dark to boy to dark

moon and blue and brown suggest

curl out of dark - colored up →

moon up and blue and temp suggest

more dust goal - colored up →

moon up and blue and temp

Dust, girl to colored ---

--- to ° III/

--- to ° III/

--- to dust girl to colored

~~--- to moon moon~~

--- to ° IIIII

--- to ° III

--- to dust girl to colored

Moon moon,

shut.

The yellow - the boy head - bread to white
flashes attended by blue 2 -

Moon and blue interspersed with vague
suggestions of brown following to
2 blue and white

Color lights to black haired girl
to disappearances

Moon and blue repeat

Color lights to more distant girl
appearance

Moon and blue repeat

~~white~~ (1) white $\searrow \nearrow$ blue $\searrow \nearrow$ white $\nearrow \searrow$ blue
 brown - blue dot - brown - moon \square

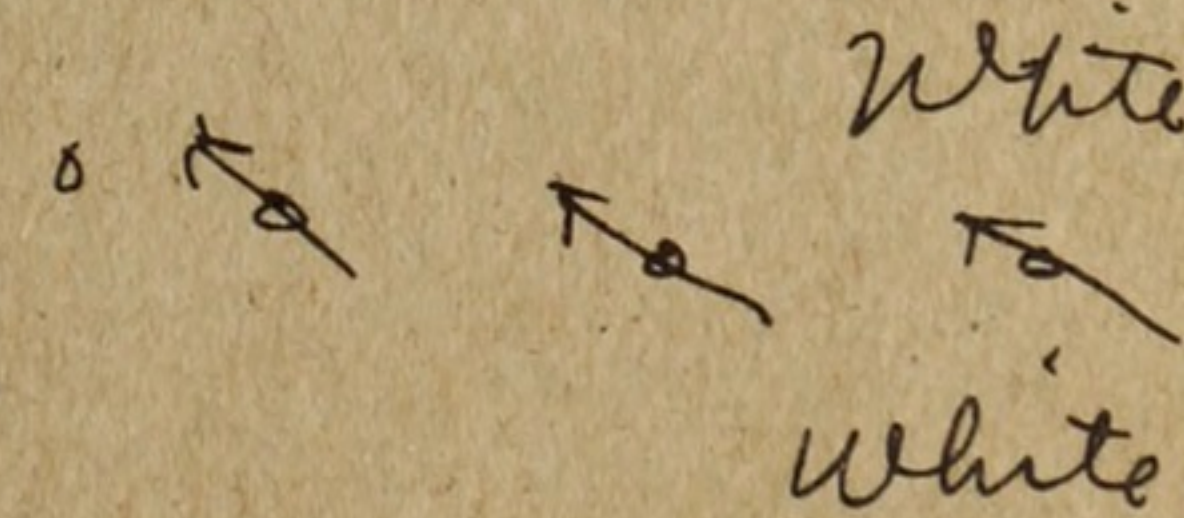
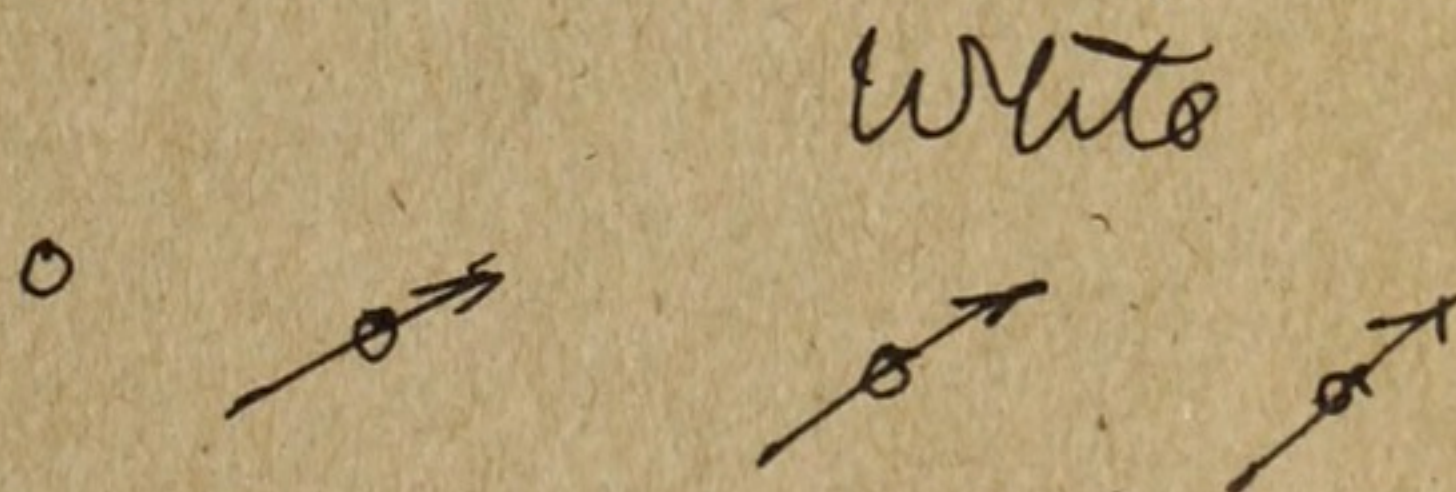
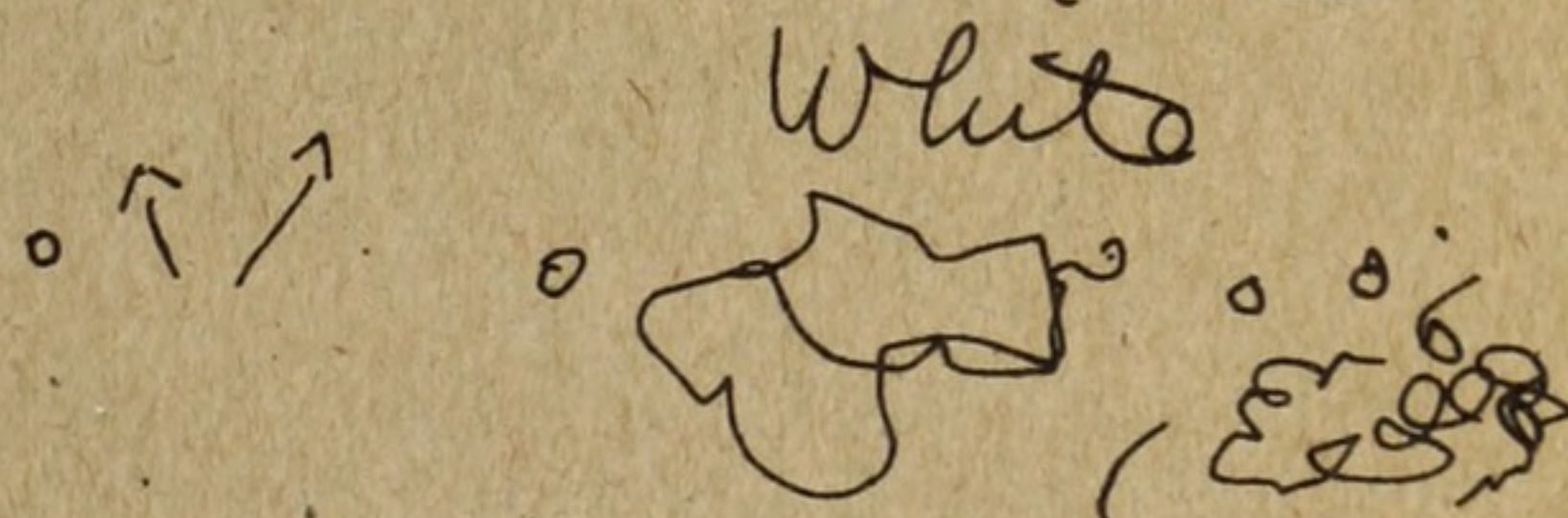
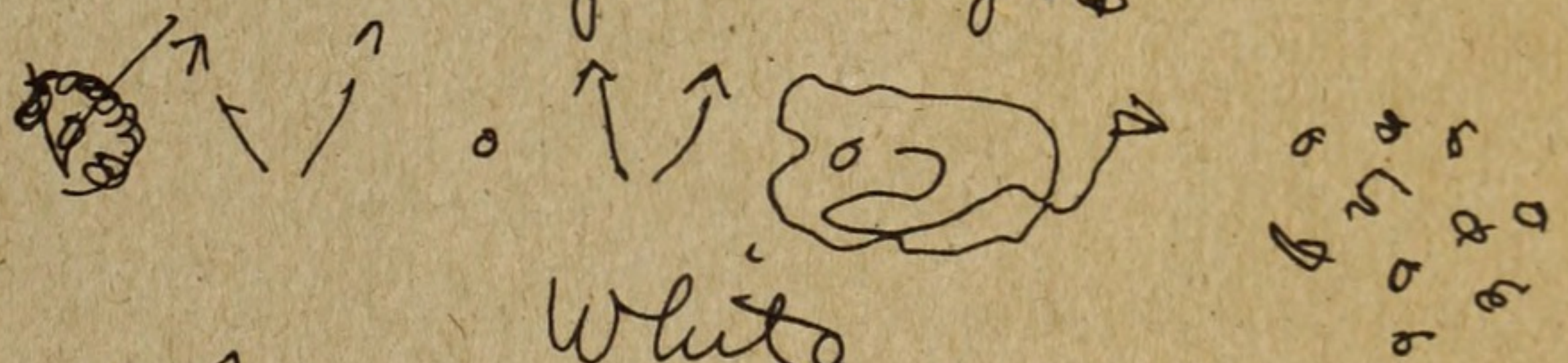
~~white~~ (2) white moon \leftarrow moon \rightarrow moon \nearrow to hill brown
 \uparrow moon $\frac{1}{2}$ \rightarrow $\frac{1}{2}$ = blue

center \uparrow moon \uparrow moon \rightarrow moon to $\frac{1}{2}$ \leftarrow moon
 = twice repeated of color stresses

with \rightarrow moon $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ \rightarrow \rightarrow to $\frac{1}{2}$ \rightarrow
 = twice repeat.

with \uparrow moon to $\frac{1}{2}$ \uparrow moon $\frac{1}{2}$ \rightarrow \leftarrow to $\frac{1}{2}$

all white
 moon-child surged by green away down
 Becoming moon
 moon emitting white lights



As early as 1956, following a Freudian trail well Frazered to Graves, I began to understand the migration of the totem thru Christ-cross to The Tree as it was to me -- still very much of a mist tree as rooted in the verse previously quoted. It took a while for literary awareness to wear a way to feeling. The natural mystery of my own origins, as I was adopted, had kept both the father and mother images nebulous enough that childhood imaginings (his majesty in exile, bastard son of an international whore, found floating in a basket among the barges on the Mississippi River, creature of another planet, etc.) could project themselves into the immediate present and continue a' sending. I always tend to identify with the father of TOTEM AND TABOO, especially when his stature became fully developed in MOSES AND MONOTHEISM. The recurring dream of pursuit by the dogs intended to tear me to pieces, previously quoted, naturally brought Diane into the picture (as Rembrandt saw her, but also as Pound Cantos her), THE GOLDEN BOUGH naturally leaving me suspended with kings and virgins out on a branch very much in the dark with nothing to turn to but Graves and, as is Phoenixically natural, to the origin myth of THE WHITE GODDESS. But setting up patriarch Freud against matriarch Graves was just foster father and mother quarreling again over golden apples. While waiting for the grey lady to whiten in the corner, is there anything more natural than to suffer the dis-ease of Proust's protest? Asthma! Asmodeus of the Christian demonologists, known as Ashmadai to the Hebrews, back to Aeshma (as Lilith) Daeva, out of Bel (Babylonian baal) whose lady is unquestionably more Be-lit, than when Christ-crossed by almost 2000 years of virgin worship. And all those Christianly-chronic-called demons, legions and legions (did anyone ever think to ask how many demons could sit on the head of a pin?): Asthma, Hay-Fever, Para-Hay-Fevers, Acne, Migraine, Epilepsy, etc., all scientified by Dr. Freeman (a natural pun) as Toxic Idiopathies. But the Persians knew what to say to the demon: "In truth thou art Asmodeus." And, in return, he would give a ring -- teaching the sciences right down to mechanics of, etc., answering "truthfully," as well as rendering invisibility and revealing hidden treasures. Today, we can only converse, as Tolkien does beautifully in THE LORD OF THE RINGS -- albeit all angled out of Saxony, etcetera -- "Three Rings for the Elven-kings, 7 for Dwarfs, 9 for Men, 1 for "the Dark Lord."

"One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them."

And "the Dark Lord?" He is (note as the lungs begin to whistle, the head to ring) the Prince of Wants. He is (mark as the familiar and recurring shape of the spot begins to spread blood color across the whole swelling area of the skin) the burn of the desire. He is (well record it in all chronicalling as you learn how the tendencies of these diseases are inherited) the god of fury, revenger-protector of "the sins of the fathers." He is (do not over-see genetic insistence as you psychologically tabulate the recurring every-day and dream-seen themes which touch off individual dis-orders) that which even assails the souls of the dead. He is that which has given the power to note, mark, record, and tabulate. He is -- not ... even the Indian zero becomes him. His home is (remember the visions crowding the brain as the body cripples, collapses into its foetal self) in the East -- both Hesse's and Tolkien's JOURNEY TO THE EAST two sides of the same coin. He is, to coin it, Revealer of -- here and where-home-is his twin deceits, that an ideo-toxicologically-disordered individual trying to avoid the in-flict of dis-ease must, to paraphrase the prison of Dr. Freeman: avoid sun-or-other-light, seek to travel in such a manner as to inhabit only the autumnal-and-wintering seasons, shun the company of fellow human beings, sleep as little as possible, etc. -- or specifically: he must cave-live; at least as one does in the concrete city, run from the hunt of the summer equinox, avoid all flowerings, sex, laughter, or other human excitements, and rest preferably in a squatting or other near wakeful position cautious to eliminate his dreams. Shall I add vice to the above? His other out is the medicinal resort: jimson weed (of the Delphic oracle) still used for colonial american asthmatics, three cigarettes (if taken in time) providing adequate vascular constriction to stop my spring-summery-morning attacks while weakening the lungs for the following morning. Westward Ho, technological man! The world is a ring that brings you round. Out spite of all this, I direct the mind eastward, blind mine eyes, and so know and use "the Dark Lord" as Blake knew and used him ... as even Solomon used him to build the Temple.

An actor of some of my earlier films, Newcomb by name, visited my wife and me at Ides of March, 1960, we very much inhabiting that time-place then. He, having once portrayed my false mask: curiosity (out of Yeats A VISION): was now slowly working his own way thru SHADOW GARDEN and listening for cues. Mid night he was awakened by the howling of cats. There grew in the corner of the room of his mind a large white tree

triple branched to the ceiling whose roots, naturally, never touched the floor. The tree, all of the garden, aglow, phosphorescent in the night as naturally as veins standing blue on the white wrist, was a moving image ... that is, of and in an approach to the new. As he moved to ward it, i.e., to prove it a painted image of some filmic contrivance, i.e., it danced in interrelationship with all his motion, was distinct from the wall (the viewer fixing stance in relation to the wall, the distinction being twixt The Tree and The Wall) yet could be seen thru to the wallflowers in and of that dance (the mind's eye given thus its glass, the choice between image-zen-ations monocle and/or some more westerly wonder-ring.) Newcomb turned to the windows, searched their panes for explanatory cracks, perhaps reflecting moonlight, found himself on the dark side of the house and, in dark of moon, returned to bed ... to blanket himself under cover. The next morning at breakfast all his vision became incident which excited both my wife and myself at the time but we promptly, obeying our own cues, forgot. Proceeding truly with our life all before us, I dragged a dead white tree up two-thirds of a mountain, re-planted it so that my wife could photograph my actor-self pushing it down and chopping it into the fragments of material for my epic film DOG STAR MAN. That took us to the almost uninhabitable time-space of mid-summer, where-when curiosity became my motivating force and I sought out my actor of the vision. I proceeded to remember and fix with referential hypo our physical-space habitation of that time: that we had then been living in a community called Silver Spruce, Star Route, Boulder Canyon, accessible only by crossing a bridge clearly marked by the Colo. Dept. of Highways "DI5AN," all water passing east down the canyon from Nederland Dam. My cat self out of the bag proceeded to spend its nine moon-given lives at an astonishing rate, one asthma attack after another sending me to the hospital. We found ourselves living in a city of the plains where we had moved at the begin of summering, the circle of equals. We found our love dying by inches, all measurement reduced to interstices, all attraction of opposites pulled to taught with study, all past tense to trap -- or, in other words: all of net. And as in prophet, the brood of thoughts shaped a vast dream body (Jonathan Williams once asking: "What is the plural of cosmos?") turning in its sleep as I turned in mine (as Otto Rank and Artaud can both dream oppositely of the same "double") its movements corresponding exactly to mine but mimed as an unact of alphabetical action (as naturally as Wittgenstein destroyed the picture-theory of language to create the riddle in which "the riddle does not exist") therefore moving as if with centuries of imperceptible s-space (thought of as Michael McClure thought of his child's first sounds: "Art is Zen") and perceived to be moving from in to im balance in my awakening. In the daytime I lifted the tons of stone of the Graveyard of Père Lachaise, now transparent two-dimensional image-film-stripped, and ordered this lyre of the originals. In the evening a man named Sigismund visited preparing the sacrificial rite: "...to be opened ...the hands up-turned on the knees ...the legs apart ...the breathing deep and steady ...the eyes attuned to the inward sound ...the eyes fixed to the single object of concentration ...turned in ward ... turned in ...side ...out ...;" and the approach to the altar: "to receiving ...fingers entwined ...hands clasped behind the back ...to prevent one from touching the spirit vision ...to be prepared to be touched by the spirit force without reciprocation ...to speak when spoken to and never to interrupt the voice of the vision ...to stand aside and never block or cast human shadow on the view ...to approach from the out ...side ...in ..." And in a darkened room lit only by red-light, havoc on the optic nerves, the spiritually lazy gathered demanding their rite, evoking only the spirits of the plains, caterwauling unrehearsed hymns and pop tunes to fabricate ectoplasm, boxing vox to the noises of the medium behind his curtain, and indians, "ugh," and Ethyl Barrymore, "my dears," appeared as the medium-curtained night-curtain came down, sinking all into the Styx. A siamese cat led me out of the cere-moaning, till only its distant ecto ringed my ears, led me out of Knighthood into the night, its dark form a black to match Yeats' sky so white "a child might think" "a spot of ink" could destroy it; and I saw, by its undreamed stars, the turn of all my mind. Later that night, camera once again in hand, I photographed an eclipse of the moon. In this fall, we moved away from astral and geographical plains back to Star Route mountains in ghost town Crisman, to finish with THE DEAD and to continue in pursuit of the Dog Star Man.

I evolved in some nonsuch as the belief that visualization had limited itself to illustration until this century (for whatever) reason had been the binding (forever) the poetic word the texture (ever) and the picture the graphic of the book of the world; and I proceeded to search for The Tree among the card catalogues (other elements of all creation myth: dragon-serpent-dog, star-man-and-twin-self-Hercules-Dionysus, and woman-triplicate-or-nine-fold, readily libraried) and I found it missing. And then, coming again

to Pound in the earliest of Personae, "...stood still and was a tree amid the wood." Touching on Villier of the isle of Adam, I found key to the missing linked age binding tree to the background of all sets, at least since "The Dream of The Rood" of the Savior's Tree over-shadowed Kynon's tale in The Romances from the Cycle of King Arthur, i.e., since the tree stripped of leaves learned to sing of itself, "adorned with silver and gold," to boast, "I could have crushed them all. And yet I kept myself erect," and with self-pity, "I bear the scars of malicious gashes," in identification with Christ, "We were both reviled, we two together," since its earlier up-bringing out of Jewish parentage, "reared as a cross" obscures The Tree of Owain's quest which, when stripped of leaves, is clothed in vision of new spring: "Great flocks of multicolored birds lighted upon the tree and sang, covering its bare branches, a melodious foliage." And with Kai, I could agree, "I never heard any melody equal to that, either before or since, "until I imagined the singing of the woodman in the distance as Axel destroyed the twin luring illusions of sexual love and hidden treasure. Then Santa Claus became real again as L. Frank Baum found him "Child of the Forest" becoming "Woodsman," or as Tolkien's Strider-becoming Aragorn, Beorn becoming Bombadill, "The Hobbit" becoming part of "The Fellowship of The Ring." And by way of "Distances" I came to sighting "Variations" with Charles Olson while "In Cold Hell, In Thicket," or at times to handspring "thru a barrier of 'em" with Michael McClure singing "Hymns to St. Geryon" and finally to attending Robert Duncan's "Opening of the Field." And so to The Woman, Jane going on to become Virgin Mary Crazy Jane Mad-onna Jenny, even memorizing Broughtonian drama, played it out as I sought, by way of Shelley to come "To Jane With A Guitar," fashioned of the wood of the tree. In loss of this, in less of Jane with all miss-myth, I often thought to go with Stevenson's axeman, "to die with Odin," and began a lec-touring round the country, even became entrepreneur for bringing poets to the sad state of Colorado, soon becoming public imaged Dog-Star-Ad-Man-Oroborus, reducible to even TV's eyes, chewing tales and otherwise making the scene, interfering with seeing -- as I'm here-doing ...to be un-doing. To begin then in fall, where all name dropping accompanies, with Broughton's "A Prelude for Brakhage:"

"I saw in the frame
the cosmic game
of all that begins and ends,
I saw the whole screen
of turbulent dream
from which the world descends.

I saw on the sky
a human eye
in search of angelic friends.
I saw in the frame
a man's heart aflame
with all that begins and ends."

and then, from Chamaelirium luteum, yet true friend restored, six months later in answer to further quest shunning:

"Let it be"*

After which the rest was wind-wise taken out of hand, in moment of recognition, and sailed into a nearby stream heading seaward. And then from Michael McClure an angry action re: previous chapters of METAPHORS ON VISION:

"(Grumble ... snarl...) I believe that one of the social functions of the artist is to destroy constantly such ideas as myth and ritual--or any other habitual and accustomed 'vision.' Clifford Still said it perfectly long ago -- look at the quote of his I use in the first Hymn to St. Geryon -- right after THE GESTURE, THE GESTURE ... "**
reminding me immediately, I only looking-up Still later, of:

"ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION."

and of that entire section of Charles Olson's STATEMENTS ON POETICS which most perfectly describes for me the working processes which have come increasingly into their own thru each attempt on my part while filming and editing to avoid John's Cage, per chance, these last several years. Per se:

Olson's (the passage referred to above.)

"...the process of the thing, how the principle can be made so to shape the energies that the form is accomplished. And I think it can be boiled down to one statement (first pounded into my head by Edward Dahlberg): ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION. It means exactly what it says, is a matter of, at all points (even, I should say, of our management of daily reality as of the daily work) get on with it, keep moving, keep in speed, the nerves, their speed, the perceptions, theirs, the acts, the split second acts, the whole business, keep it moving as fast as you can, citizen. ***

Cage's (selected from SILENCE by chance operations.)

"The highest purpose is to have no purpose at all. This puts one in accord with nature in her manner of operation. If someone comes along and asks why?, there are answers. However there is a story I have found very helpful. What's so interesting about technique anyway? What if there are twelve tones in a row? What row? This seeing of cause and effect is not emphasized but instead one makes an identification with what is here and now. He then spoke of two qualities. Unimpededness and Interpenetration.

The relationship of things happening at the same time is spontaneous and irrepressible. It is you yourself in the form you have that instant taken. To stop and figure it out takes time."

and then, of principal, from Figure of Outward, Robert Creeley:

"FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT."

or, as in detail, in a letter:

"Ah well! But really your films, you see, showed me how detail can be invested with a rhythmic insistence apart from an overt 'meaning' for 'purpose' etc. That is, seeing your films I do see, first of all, and 'think' later -- and that's what I'm now intent to accomplish as a ground sense in the narrative. So that I write what 'comes to mind,' rather than what I might propose should 'come to mind' etc. So that the control comes in finding just that sense of the thing provoked by its 'appearance' in the narrative, be it a sudden anecdote, or simply the insistent feeling that a sense of relation is at the given moment best said as 'an empty ice box' etc. I want in short to give over the process of 'explanation' and/or 'understanding' of a specious kind -- "

And finally then, from Robert Duncan, on "depth" and "complexity:"

"Given the immediate frame of the film, or 'word' of the poem -- the perspective or history arises to express the felt-known content of the frame. For painter and poet (and then won't it be true for film maker?) this is his imagination of what a man, a tree, a river, God, past, or form is, and depends upon, springs from his area of intent in living. If he have taken deep thought -- what we call study (as Charles Olson studies the nature and origins of language and action) -- then he will need depth: his imperatives will come from those depths. If he have complex recognitions (as Proust or Shakespeare) then the art finds the medium complex."

and in an earlier letter:

"If I've tried to get one idea across in the art it is that the poet must have no deep and complex feelings, no 'I' at all, that does not belong to, arise in the orders of, the poem itself. ***

And of the film itself, as I then wrote:

"(I mean the strips of film and what moves me of what's been to begin to splice what is to be, or ((if I hesitate)) thru its insistence upon what has to be)"

and its relationship to all this period of (sigh)-arc-(eeoh)-phi-(fie-fiddle-eoh)-(so)-see-saw-med-Id-(EEEEEEE)-The-awl-(lowww)-pose-poe-rhet-(eeeeee)-call-spir-(i.e.)-(tummmmmmmmmmm), refer to the title of this chapter, and sentence The self again to the para-noidal-graph of round's-stance, for it is a game played here too Siriously for comfort, myself having here the last word in this beginning, all played out in tent of living, 'an empty ice box,' per-chance-perception gestating all this tour which when working howsomever being then whom?-soever with whatever lets it be. Most often then, when taking a break and margined to most living room, Gertrude Stein comes to me, "In the great kitchen of my fanciful world," as Sherwood Anderson saw her, sits down at the table, throws back her head, "As if staring straight into the face of the sun," as Donald

Sutherland saw her, and sings. And all questions of relay-(myth-rít-or-other-wise) are lost in choring, all religious becoming:

"Mountains and mountains of saints singing and singing"

and I am delighted, of light air breathing; and all dark lording it over is over, leaving only super-stich for a thread of Proustian "dress-making," and that too passing into remembrance and out of immediacy of experienced singing:

"I am not I when I see"

or laughing down all criti-cat-calling and The-arising:

"Oh, praise, praise, praise!"

making margin without alien:

rose.rose
is a rose
is a rose

And now I am truly false if with this ending, back to all beginnings. Is this then but another ring with which to bind 'em?; all these pages so much mumblety for such unchivalric pegging?; am I still in-flu with now Steinian spiritus anti-bodying?; will I will out with mu-sick, testamenting the Ruggled-Ivesy-covered-Weberning-Cage-of-a-Stockhausen, making a paraphrase of Varèse because his name, like all else of him, won't fit a metaphorical line-up, drowning St. Subotnick 'clausé to all the new sound word ear rationals such as Tenney-Sender-Mumma-Young-and-Ashley-Krumm, (and where-e-oh-where'll Berio go), and what has it all to do with Ann Arbor, St. Francis, and enfant-terrible York?; and would I do better to say "zen," moan "A," pursue the water-lillies spreading Pollock in the air and follow thru the process to "deK"?; or would a soundring influenzing describe a film more filmically than script, than art, than arc-key, than spiri-spherically?; and is a film, a fil, a fi-fie-foe-fiddle-di-dum?

A Post Script

Three nights ago I decided to stop righting. Later, when I turned in somnia, the darkened room full filled itself with growing branches glowing white which, when thought of as related to Michael McClure's "cracks of brightness," Lamantia's "Weir," Anglo-Saxon "Aelf-Scin," all faded, died to the eyes, leaving me once again in the dark. Thus, the last several hundred words since the last word of ended ritual, a "Beware the Dog" who might go as I have here into the House of the Poet, the Seance, Sancti-or-scientified, knick-knacking and knocking about, looking for keys and key-rings, symbols, sturms and drangsss, et sets. I am thru writing, thru writing. It is only as of use as useless.

Foot Notes

*(The whole Broughton poem had to be fished for downstream among the rocks and rapids:

"Let it be.

Let me be

here by the sea

like the boatman I saw in Bangkok

smiling by the sunrise river

as he washes,

as he pours over himself

a bucket of the river,

pours over and over himself

the river to which he has offered

his spit, his urine, his shit,

the river which he drinks

and launders in --

pours it over himself

with a smile

as he washes --

and then sits down refreshed

and starts fishing."

** (The statement by Clyfford Still as quoted by Michael McClure in his first Hymn to St. Geryon):

Clyfford Still: "We are committed to an unqualified act, not illustrating outworn myths or contemporary alibis. One must accept total responsibility for what he executes. And the measure of his greatness will be the depth of his insight and courage in realizing his

own vision. Demands for communication are presumptuous and irrelevant."

*** (Continuation of the paragraph from Charles Olson's "Statements on Poetics" quoted previously):

"And if you also set up as a poet, USE USE USE the process at all points, in any given poem always, always one perception must must MOVE, INSTANTER, ON ANOTHER!"

*** (Or to be extremely specific, regarding against (as Robert Creeley would call it) "specious" usage of language by film-makers or other -- from a yet earlier letter from Robert Duncan):

"Feelings take on depth and complexity only in language -- these are terms of the articulation itself."

RESPOND DANCE

To James Tenney
June, 10, 1963

This is a letter to anyone from everything in my correspondances which found occasion for coming into a state (not meant) of being other than my particular response (beyond ability) and which so fashioned itself as to move me (to measure) from the act of writing c/o (accompaniment) to joining in The Dance (as singing) its sælf: songs herein gathered (together) out of my (for Thee) pleasure (of It).

I just must diverge here to encompass some thoughts about the whole breakdown of drama in the western world: First, the total community danced. Then the best dancers led the dance; and as they became more and more special, specialists of the dance, these leaders separated themselves increasingly from the rest of their fellows eschewing followers (power over fellow humans) and preferring to serve The Dance (which does begin to have Caps. here). Now, as there are always those who choose to rule rather than serve, my guess is that The Original Fallen Angel was he who tried to lead, thru organization, those who were individually serving The Dance. His dance, natch, suffered; and he was naturally thrown back upon followers. But as he was not a follower, he found himself in limbo. He, and others like him, formed The Secondary Dance, that which stood as a bridge, so called, between those individually possessed of The Dance and the rest of the community, that which eventually became The Chorus and, as forms broke down further and extended further into the complexities of the whole community, any Commentator who presumes either in Chorus or Individually, to reflect the views of the community watching The Dance while remaining, actually, specialist -- that is: At Best being he who speaks because of insight (proximity to The Dance) for the subtlest possible views of the followers (who do, by this time, become audience) and At Worst being dictator, because of power, hatching propoganda for his own purposes. The creation of The Chorus must indeed be viewed as some early democratic procedure to thwart ritual dictators, just as I think the very tolerance of The Secondary Dance was out of an attempt to prevent the development of the primitive "star" system -- that is, it did provide a dance for the ego-centered and left those who served The Dance free, thereby, to be in touch with the actual stars, heavens, etc. But when the lines of The Chorus began to be written, a new danger presented itself, one which has indeed by this time destroyed all dramatic ritual in the western world. At first only Poets were involved: and what was chanted by The Chorus was what had been inspired in The Poet as surely as the dances of The Prime Dancers. Yet in time, of course, The Fallen Angel writer did dictate not only to The Chorus but to those of The Drama who were originally intended to perform only under the inspiration of, first, The Gods, and, later, the god-men, heroes, etcetera whose parts they were being, fulfilling, finally acting. Acting does absolutely need direction (as a lifetime of attempting to create with actors has shown me (only exception being my collaboration with Bob Benson in BLUE MOSES))) and Directors are ipso facto Dictators, i.e.: Fallen Angels, FOR SURE. And all power mad infiltrations into The Rite, in the name of every sound tangent to that word from The Right (getting it right) to Righteousness (Morality) have destroyed it completely. And I think the conversation which Charles Olson and I had on the subject of the steps of the destruction of western theatre is completely clear in this context: Step No. 1: the removal of the masks -- Step No. 2: the addition of women, actresses, onto the stage -- Step No. 3: the creation of the star system ... that is, getting everything else off the stage except The Chorus, leader of, or ego-centered individual representatives of, etc. And when the star is also able to write his own script effectively -- we have Adolph Hitler and/or, to extent of effectiveness, any politician (and I do find a bit of encouragement when I find a politician who hires writers -- that is, his position is, thereby, made a little more clear). These thoughts also lead me to the realization that in the non-theatrical arts of the western world, those which have naturally remained individualistic in the moment of

creation, and to the extent they have remained free of the necessity of presentation, have been increasingly threatened by a new kind of Choral infiltration -- that is, first of all, the Art Historian (like that guy Vasari with HIS Renaissance) and then The Art Commentator (trying the guise of flattery for centuries all over the place) and finally (the very word itself betraying the essentially destructive nature of the endeavor now that any kind of "take-over" seems impossible) The Critic...and aren't representatives of this form almost always, clearly, Fallen Angels -- that is, those who have fallen away from the creative process because of some need to rule rather than serve? And I think the outrage which most critics express against the individually created films is due to the fact that an art form is, right there, freeing itself from a process which did, due to the dominance of theatrical forms, seem to be completely possessing it -- How Wonderful... How Absolutely Magnificent, when I stop to think about it: I mean that so young a medium which was so completely possessed by Fallen Angels collaborating all over the place, and as usual in The Name, and for the Benefit Of, The Community at Large, IS, through individualistic effort directed toward the service of The Film, and ergo in the service of all the unknown, the fates, the gods, real stars, and real everything that can be sighted, IS FREEING ITSELF to create. It should be added here that the only exceptions to the above Critic Rule are, at least among film critics, those critics (such as Jonas Mekas and P. Adams Sitney) who are also making films-- otherwise I would have to refer to individuals who were film-makers first and then also did pieces of criticism, so-called...I can think of no other exceptions to the above rule.) But I can think of a danger which this last statement might tend to suggest as at least worth looking into (individually, I mean): that it might be the fallen parts within each of us, individually, which touch off criticism, statements, aesthetics, letters (such as this one), etceteras... Now Sidney Peterson recently made a statement to me (of which Jane just reminded me) that: "There are only two kinds of sound tracks: mood-music and lip-sync." Now I think it very relevant that he designated the other-than-atmospheric(or Choral)-sound track with the specific term: "lip-sync." Jane does think of it most clearly in relation to the image of a rock: "You either have some comment upon the rock or you have The Song of The Rock, the rock's lip-sync, so to speak." So it does become clear to me that I have been Fallen Angel with sound, excepting BLUE MOSES, and that while I have silenced this dictatorial part of me out of the working process, it is still rooted in all my living processes: that is, that I do not often serve sound. Well, it can become a personal quest shun, generalized as: "How much can any man do?" It has taken me 10 years of reading poetry and knowing many poets, without trying to write it or having pretensions toward being a poet, to begin to learn what service to language really is, or at least something of what it can be. All the same, the language served in BLUE MOSES is the "Language of the Barker," as Michael McClure put it, and is a good service, as Michael heard it, to the extent that it honestly serves that given language form without pretension. That is, much as I hate to admit it, there is a given limit, qualified by time and The Times, to what this man can do; BUT I do envision a way thru to unlimited human possibilities...something like being of service to The Dance which includes all The World starting with whatever of The World arises naturally, of necessity, in The Dance, leading most immediately to dancing with, in relationship to, whatever other dancers (whatever their medium) one's individualistic dance is naturally, of necessity. (AHA -- strike "with" above, and all dependency it implies) RELATED TO. And the relationship of both Jane and I in the service of The Film does become most clear here...as clearly of necessity as the first, natural love-dance...and as clearly destructive, wherever 'use of' enters in, as the end-product of the exclusive sex-dance, death-dance, stance, etc.

Ah yes, dear Bob, here it is at last:

(I'm deliberately NOT writing out the visual aspects of this drama because I don't want to get it SET and would rather "talk it thru" with you as we go along and then do something at least a little different from all talking when we get down to Rollem-Camera-Action) (Also, what is here written could be complete in itself; but I'm almost sure the concept will enlarge itself as we go along into a work at least three-times this in length ...or perhaps three works, tryptich-like, with each similarly fragmented into little sequences.)

(SEQUENCE NO. 1)

(All words in parenthesis are directions for the actor. Only "break" actions, or token actions, are indicated, all others to arise more spontaneously while photographing the result of, numerous needed?, rehearsals.)

To Robert
Benson,
March 1962

And then the woman...his wife, so to speak -- the tracks. THOSE DAMNNNNNN TRA-
AAAAAAAAAACKS!

(Repeat running as in first sequence) (Stop). (Come back and impulsively grab the camera, run along with it shouting:)

You see -- You see -- You SEEEEEEEEEEE.

(Etc.)

After thinking awhile about comments I sent you in my last letter, Jane did finally out with: "But a song, a tune, can and does impose itself on me without being consciously recalled -- in fact, does often run on and on in my head, uncommissioned, to the extent of interfering with all other thought." And, of course, I immediately realized that was true for myself also; but then, as I almost immediately pointed out: "It is not the sound of the tune forcing its way into memory-ear but the intervals of the melody...indeed, one would have to, and often does to be rid of it, consciously commission instruments to play that tune, voices to sing that song, in the head -- or, that failing, whistle it out to exhaust the impulse." This soon led me to the conclusion, with tentative agreement from Jane, that it is the mathematical nature of music which enables the sub-conscious to impose a melody upon our consciousness in a way similar to super-imposition remembrances; and there in my path lay the further, and specifically relevant, consideration that any musical treatment of sounds which concerned itself with intervals (time and pitch) only, and to the expense or even exclusion (where possible) of other aspects of music (such as timbre or, on a larger formal scale, theme and variations, etc.) would naturally evolve a process analogous to visual processes. This reminded me that, when I had recently visited Bell Laboratories in New Jersey (in company of James Tenney, who is currently working in the computing dept. there -- creating and composing with sound generated by means of a Digital Computer) and while viewing the purest color I could ever hope to see (in the Maser Dept.) created by, or rather being, light emitted with a uniform wave-length, one of the scientists interfered with, stuck his hand into, the beam and spoke of the resultant, distorted pattern as analogous to the overtones of an impure sound. Well, we do hear much closer to pure, pitched sounds in listening to music than we have ever (except in Maser Depts.) seen pure, orderly light. This thought led me to the revelation that it is primarily shape which imposes itself on the conscious mind, un-called for, and that colors are almost invariably commissioned, filled-in after by conscious recall or imaginative whim. This last thought seems to be checking itself out as correct in all my experiencing these days. THEREFORE, it is the relationship between space-shape and rhythm-pitch which gets closest to the heart of the matter (that is the blood-pumping to the meat-bulk of the creature) of providing a form for audio-visual experience which is something other than a cheating of sense-ability-and-itivity (and, for me, form must ((whether acknowledged -- classic -- or not -- romantic -- etc.,)) find its prime source of inspiration in the physiology and psychology of the creator.) And I do take very seriously Charles Olson's warning in "Theory of Society:"

we already possess a
sufficient theory of
psychology)
the greatest present danger

the area of pseudo-sensibility:

And as to "the gods," as referred to in your letter, Gregory -- I have found that if I keep the total instrument of myself in shape (form) and sea-worthy (going...growing), or ship-shape and sea-worthy (to keep it light...afloat, that is) while maintaining capability of depth and complexity (anchors at sails with attendant et sets and etceteras -- what's past, pre-sent, and futurahhhhhhhhh) then "the gods" seem to keep up their beginning-middle-and-end of it admirably ...i.e.: do persuade me (breath-wind : inspiration) to raise sail, steer courses unmapped, etcetera, and force me, (usually by appearing under sign of Dis; that is, do'ert me, rendering themselves invisible for my searching, hiding for my seeking below the Surface of them (thoughtstop-windead: spiralization) to drop anchor, Vat and all, et settle, and fin-ally to S'ave me too, 2, for partnership-shape (thoughtwind-breathstop and/or key: exspiration and/or invention) to add new rigging, disentangle the nets, and strengthen the links, make weightier anchor, et sets. I do not ever like to take "the gods" as fore-granted, find no likeness there, and am, at least in this sense, natural class-assist.

To Gregory
Markopoulos,
June 8, 1963

To P. Adams Sitney,
June 19, 1963

OF NECESSITY I BECOME INSTRUMENT FOR THE PASSAGE OF INNER VISION, THRU ALL MY SENSIBILITIES, INTO ITS EXTERNAL FORM. My most active part in this process is to increase all my sensibilities (so that all films arise out of some total area of being or full life) AND, at the given moment of possible creation to act only out of necessity. In other words, I am principally concerned with revelation. My sensibilities are art-oriented to the extent that revelation takes place, naturally, within the given historical context of specifically Western aesthetics. If my sensibilities were otherwise oriented, revelation would take an other external form -- perhaps a purely personal one. As most of what is revealed, thru my given sensibilities clarifies itself in relationship to previous (and future, possible) works of art, I offer the given external form WHEN COMPLETED for public viewing. As you should very well know, even when I lecture at showing of past Brakhage films I emphasize the fact that I am not artist except when involved in the creative process AND that I speak as viewer of my own (NO -- DAMN that "my own" which is JUST what I'm trying, DO try in all lectures, letters, self-senses-of, etc., to weed out) -- I speak (when speaking, writing, well -- that is with respect to deep considerations) as viewer of The Work (NOT of...but By-Way-Of Art, and I speak specifically to the point of What has been revealed to me AND, by way of describing the work-process, what I, as artist-viewer, understand of Revelation -- that is: how to be revealed and how to be revealed TO (or 2, step 2 and/or -- the viewing process.)

To Bruce Frier,
Late August 1963

"The twentieth century and all its works" constitute, as a matter of course, the natural tomb of living man, or life itself, which approximately 20 centuries of steadily increasing (not to count previous sporadic instances) monotheistic thinking has created: a gigantic Grave Yard which by this time has no boundaries on this earth and is manifest everywhere, built for the dead at the expense of the living. It seems likely that the first grave stone was, in fact, laid when Pandora's box, which might actually have been a coffin, was opened and the truth, mortality of man, was known. And it seems quite natural that Man, or any man, or woman (from Pandora herself to Bluebeard's wife opening the one forbidden door -- the latter myth still sufficient to stand for the whole Western sex complexity of 20th century realization) having released the potential of all evil (that is: insufficiency and/or the irreconcilable: that which neither he nor she could hope to more than "come to terms" with) the natural tendency would be to climb into the very box wherefrom all evil came and therefore, presumably, was not. (Or if you prefer Eden: once having tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, become then that fruit, even food for serpent, later, rather than be subject to more temptation -- or to find opposite of Bluebeard version, take earlier Eden myth where we find Adam disobeys Eve, Earth Mother, in tasting and is, therefore, driven from Eden, Nature.) However it happened and at whatever rate, its works are the monoliths of entomb-meant of life-force in man, the Tree of knowledge a gallows for living sensibility, made manifest by quest-shun-an-swear, rather than a source of nourishment for growing sensibility, a course of man, chorus sing in harmony, each one in inter relationship to every other, coursing altogether of necessity whenever narrow passage (if ever), dissimilarity the measure of individual core, co only re: Pan, for companionship... or, as Olson sez:

And now let all the ships come in,
Pity and Love The Return The Flower
The Gift & The Alligator catches
and the mind go forth to the end of the world.

Which brings us, if you follow me as graciously as you lent me your support, to "The Twentieth Century and all its workings;" I mean that which is really moving in this time, each move meant and of a rhythm more ancient than all history, each in time only to the life-force being listened to as it hasn't been in at least 2000 years, all underground, of necessity -- only statues on mon-u-meants above the ground -- all messages rapped out secretly along the drain-pipes of civilization, difficult to decipher amidst the roar of shit -- only epitaphal mono-thesis disgracing the more muddy than underground air of the surface. But nothing moves up there (it's all in "the works") and down here, where at least I am (and I hope you'll join me) there's such a human burrowing as the world hasn't known since Pleistocene man.

To Jonas Mekas,
July 17, 1963

Even tho' you said it was a joke, I could not help but be bothered by your referring to the Co-Op as a "monastery of fools." My thoughts, touched off by this phrase, ranged as far back in human history as 75,000 years ago, centered around that skeleton found in

Shanidar Cave, Iraq, an eastern Neanderthal who had been born with a withered right arm (amputated by one of his fellows above the elbow) and yet who had lived into his 40's (killed finally by a cave-in) -- all of which indicates that he must have been fed and altogether cared for by his associates...which means he was the first human we know of to be granted the so-called "leisure" in which he COULD have, might HAVE, had ideas, inventions, creations to give those who cared for him and, thus, to pass on to the whole human race. Unfortunately for most of human history, since "leisure" has been granted willingly only to cripples of one kind or another, most artists, philosophers, inventors (at least in pure research areas) have in fact either been naturally unhealthy, either physically or mentally, or have feigned and/or actually created ill-health, much like "The Nigger of the Narcissus" to permit them the given support of society. Even many of those who have inherited wealth, such as Proust, have felt the necessity of developing their ideo-toxic (self-poison) disorders to remove themselves from any expectation of "usefulness." I wonder if, perhaps, the ancient initiations of the priests, such as that one traced so eloquently by Graves (THE WHITE GODDESS, KING JESUS, etc.) where the left thigh bone is deliberately broken to make the priest crippled for life, don't find their origin, and indeed perhaps rational necessity, in a created illness to permit successful begging, etc. The role of the Fool in western civilization is easily traceable within this context. Once the authority of the court poet had been usurped by religion, he soon became, or became replaced by, The Jester. But Tom'O'Bedlam was, for all that, poet and, as Shakespeare sees him in Lear, the wisest one in the castle. Yeats is still playing the last strings of that form in many of his plays. And undoubtedly the poet, who never needed cap, could preserve his integrity best as the traditionally protected and invulnerable ("God's Child") Fool. And even later, Chris Smart must have found Bedlam an altogether better place in which to write than Debtor's Prison. But, dear Jonas, in this society even cripples must be, and are being made USEFUL, insanity altogether considered subject to cures, of various soul-destroying treatments, monasteries make wine, and even saints become so by performing deeds of usually aggressive heroics, etc. I think the time has come to abandon this Neanderthal form of pardon for insistence upon support for creative endeavor. I think the time has come to throw off The Fool's Cap (kissing it in passing for all benefits granted) avoid the looney-bin with all good wit available (and all other monasteries) cultivate whatever health each has (I mean avoid accidents, suicidal accidents, suicide) and trace a history of the benefits of creative endeavor which will confound all nebulosity of aesthetes (and trace, as well, personal histories to replace or at least throw into true perspective those overpowering sickness myths LUST FOR LIFE and MOULIN ROUGE which so dominate people's thots about artists, etc...the sure ugliness of that representation of creative life is proved in TIME each week when they trace a line, however crookedly, thru any artists's life to make it appear a shambles according to Irving Stone's 30's bestseller, or Maugham's view of Gauguin, etc.)

I've been having (after some ten years of work) an immense difficulty making a splice... I'm speaking aesthetically, not technically natch -- all touched off by John Cage's appearance here, long talks between us, the listening to his music, and subsequent readings of his marvelous book SILENCE. Cage has laid down the greatest aesthetic net of this century. Only those who honestly encounter it (understand it also to the point of being able, while chafing at its bits, to call it "marvelous") and manage to survive (i.e. go beyond it) will be the artists of our contemporary present. All those pre-tend artists who carry little gifts in their clutching, sweaty hands (the "cookie-pushers" as Pound calls them) will no more be able to get thru that net than those monkeys who are caught by gourds with small holes in them filled with fruit (monkey grasps fruit, hole too small to withdraw hand, monkey too dumb to let go of fruit, etc.)

Then the spiritual trial, as always, is relevant: that is, I have come to the time of life of which Mr. Pound speaks (in the book on Gaudier-Brzeska) thus:

He (Gaudier-Brzeska) even tried to persuade me that I was not becoming middle-aged, but any man whose youth has been worth anything, any man who has lived his life at all in the sun, knows that he has seen the best of it when he finds thirty approaching; knows that he is entering a quieter realm, a place with a different psychology.

and this re: "spiritual" can only be sensed psychologically with some deficient image ("only," as yet, in mind) such as a spiral being pressed (by all pushing ego past) to be thought of as a circle (all to make ends meet -- out of future foreboding -- as if to make

To P. Adams Sitney,
March 11, 1962

To P. Adams Sitney,
End of Second Week of
December 1962

"security" there) ...my struggle being thus, TO SPRING! But then I am sharply stop-answered (In Gilbert Sorrentino's article of great worth in KULCHUR 8) by T. E. Hulme: In November 1829, a tragic date for those who see with regret the establishment of a lasting and devastating stupidity, Goethe -- in answer to Eckermann's remark that human thought and action seemed to repeat itself, going around in a circle -- said: "No, it is not a circle, it is a spiral." You disguise the wheel by making it run up an inclined plane; it then becomes "Progress" which is a modern substitute for religion...

and I am haunted by Webern's piece based on Bach's MUSICAL OFFERING, the intense center of the piece, where as the ear makes obvious, he struggles most desperately to break dissonantly with the imposed past form -- and fails...and dies shortly thereafter... and I am haunted by Pollack's rages when he found the totems of his earliest work turning up again -- and could only think of them as of re-turn... and died shortly thereafter. And fear of death (in both physical and spiritual sense) is certainly not new to me but it does come in a new form...with a stupid una'kin, yet mannakin, to "Rage, rage, against the dying of the light."

Well, all the above is, for the moment at least, past tense now -- as we have just seen DOG STAR MAN: PART I -- and it is of these above struggles and (unlike I feared it might) does not assume old forms but rather transforms image, in a total concept and thru completely filmic magic, with such strength that PRELUDE looks flashy and even superficially imitative of painting beside it. It does not save me from the dilemmas mentioned in the first paragraph, nor was I saved in the act of making it (one of the falsest delusions of the young artist is that his art may act therapeutically as if "finger painting" were more than fingers painting); but it is just that the finished work gives me the same sense of both sssss-and-ave which has acted within me for this al-vation long before the work was started -- so that it, the work of art, can act upon the artist as much as Gertrude Stein (in PICASSO) says that war acts upon civilization...i.e. to inform the civilization of what has already taken place in terms of change.

...Of all kinds of survival a film artist struggles for, the economic one (as typified by my personal one as expressed in this letter) is the most immediate. Yet film enthusiasts generally hate to have any expression given to a personal economic need. I think this as serious an oversight (if deliberate shielding can be called that) as that devious refusal from filmgoers, well entrenched 8 years ago, to consider the personal statement within the aesthetic structure as anything but a mistake engendered by psychoanalysis...well, mis or not, it has taken; and the whole structure of now recognized areas of film where the artist's hyper IN-volvement with his per-son (if un-owned -- i.e. given to the process, at weakest, or medium, when medium, of God-force ((that thrust, out of necessity, of all the invisible coming thru us)) when greatest) proved the way to most of universe -- albeit not, CERTAINLY NOT, "Universality" in the old sense...the distinction between "Universe" and "Universality" here most be-speaking the confusion which arises when the viewer take "a lity" for a light, thinks "the universe" what-is-already-partitioned rather than enjoying and joining the search for the unknown and accepting the unknown ways to it as more reasonable than all paths.

To Robert Kelly,
June 26, 1963

I had as a child always one predominant vision of my future life: I was, with all my friends, backed into caves of a mountain and attacked by an enemy (most often the police, sometimes Germans, later Russians, etc.) I was always the leader, most distinguished by the possession of the only machine-gun. We were always hopelessly outnumbered but always confident of eventual success. I had usually worn, in my imagination, a cartridge belt (patterned after those of FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS, etc.). Three years ago Jane fashioned a leather belt, to my specifications, with pockets for carrying film, light meters, inst. books, and bags (including an actual bulls-balls, given us) for carrying lenses, prisms, filters, etc.; and when I saw it completed, hooked over my shoulder as intended, I recognized the whole transference pattern into my contemporary living. My particular love of the machine-gun like noise of the camera in operation (usually an annoyance to film-makers because of interference with sound taking), my naming of our projector "Old Thumber" (what an interesting slip -- when what I had intended to write was "Old Thunder"...particularly as I do take thumb, Graves-way, as Venus, birth, finger, and find deep relevance in over-lap of thumb-eye area of human brain, etc.) and the screen "Lightning" -- so perfectly fitting my picture of a film-show where machine-gun like flashes of vision reflect off the screen to kill "the enemy" which I do find, now, some unenlightened part of every man, woman, and child...even myself, in DOG STAR MAN as an old man of the mountain climbing to cut down that dead tree,

myself knowing better than any other man (except possibly yourself) that it IS dead, not silver (as was once in legend) nor ever going to grow green branches again, that it MUST be cut down... The fear of its falling is where, I'm sure, all bomb-scares find origin, in the same sense that Gertrude Stein said of wars: "The spirit of everybody is changed, of a whole people is changed, but mostly nobody knows it and a war forces them to recognize it because during a war the appearance of everything changes very much quicker, but really the entire change has been accomplished and the war is only something which forces everybody to recognize it." (PICASSO, page 30)

I have been working almost entirely on MOTHLIGHT these days and finding it THE most difficult film to finish, at least per length (about 100') I've yet been involved in (I had to pause after involved to decide whether in or with should follow; and this ambiguity illustrates my difficulty with the film itself -- a difficulty engendered by the creation of a whole new film technique, a new niche into which few of my previous working techniques will function adequately enough to leave me free to be myself, to be myself, adequately functioning instrument for the film's simple passage thru me...technical considerations, as conscious thoughts, making me be by myself, eventually beside myself, at every turn; so that "involved with" would describe a great many of the moments in the making of MOTHLIGHT, tho' I have always had sense enough once past event-or-crisis-ally to follow The Dance rather than take over as I was often tempted.)

Long after I'd begun making strips of film, with no thought other than creating a frame at a time in relationship to all other frames within a given strip (the length of Mylar I'd cut off, rather arbitrarily, before beginning to stick a given collection of parts of a plant or plants, etc., onto it), the words came to me: "As a moth might see from birth to death if black were white:" and shortly thereafter the title: MOTHLIGHT. Up till then I had thought-up the title: DEAD SPRING: growing out of a simple pun on the process, the material involved, and the simulation of life which the eventual unwinding of this film would create of the material by way of this process, etc. But these new words, in their coming to me, made me aware of the extent to which the movements of this film were inspired by my previous thoughts, observations, and study (most recently D'Arcey Thompson's GROWTH AND FORM) on the flight of the moth and moth sight, etcetera. I have been very involved with moths since a curious incident in early winter 1959: I was working on SIRIUS REMEMBERED -- it was late at night and Jane had gone to bed -- I was sty-my-eyed sinking into sty-meeeed in all self-possession when suddenly Jane appeared holding a small dried plant which she put down on my working table and, without a word, left me -- and I soon began working again and then noticing that the plant was shifting and that I had, without thinking, been picking up whatever its flattened petals, and sometimes its stem, had seemed to be pointing to; but as soon as I took notice of this interaction my relationship to this plant broke down into speculation, etcetera, until I stopped working altogether...the next morning, much to my surprise, Jane had no memory whatsoever of having brought me the plant; and the following night I returned to my work table, and the plant thereon, in a struggling-to-be-open, preventing opening, frame of mind...in midst of attempts to work, what must surely have been the year's last moth, and a gigantic multi-colored beauty at that, began fluttering about me and along the work table, the wind of its wings shifting the plant from time to time and blowing away all speculations in my mind as to movements of dead plants and enabling me to continue working and, later, to notice that I was again often, but not always, moving in relationship to plant-points and moth-moves and, in fact, every moving thing within the workroom; but finally I got hung-up like they say, on the moth itself, its movements, particularly when it began settling first on one then another strip of film hanging beside me...the next day I photographed this moth in extreme close-up as it fluttered against the window glass, with the specific idea in mind to use those images in DOG STAR MAN (which I already have) and Jane and I were referring to the moth as "The Moth Queen" and were quite excited by the entire several days' events (which naturally distracted from continuing work on SIRIUS REMEMBERED)...by the third day I was beginning to worry about the moth; and we agreed that night to let the moth outside, as it was warm weather; but that night when I went to the workroom I found the moth dead on my table beside the dried plant and, on closer inspection, found that the head of the moth was as if sliced almost completely off, swinging as if hinged to the body, and that the body itself was completely hollow inside...both plant and moth remained on my table, without undue attention but constant inter-relation, until the end of the editing of SIRIUS REMEMBERED.

So, when moth words recently came to me I began thinking of this film as being dedica-

To Robert Kelly,
August 22, 1963

ted to "The Moth Queen" and knew it to be inspired (as have many movements in other work since 1959) by moth flight, thoughts about, feelings thereto; but I tended to take the words too literally; and, as an example: I began thinking that Mothlight must begin with the unraveling of a cocoon and end with some simulation of candle flame or electric heat (as all moths whose wings were being used in the film had been collected from enclosed light boxes and lamp bowls) and, while it bothered me to think of painting on an otherwise purely collage film, I began to plan to create a black flame (to literally emphasize "if black were white") at the end of the film. Well, to make a long story short, no matter how hard both Jane and I tried we could not find a single cocoon (let alone the twenty to thirty I had thought I needed) and the search touched off violent quarrels between Jane and I and dramatic statements of outrage at "nature's stinginess," etc., and other nonesenses and none-suches so totally out of key with the spirit of all our working together on the rest of the film that I am amazed and ashamed at my stupidity in retrospect. Finally I found a cocoon in a blade of grass with a spider on top of it. I thought: "That spider must be eating the insides thru some hole it's made in the cocoon:" and, with much righteous feeling of indignation, shook the spider off. Then, with very little feeling at all, I proceeded to unwrap the cocoon along a strip of the sprocketed scotch tape. Much to my surprise, the cocoon was full of spider eggs, or at least what I quickly assumed was spider eggs, and not a caterpillar, or semi-moth, or moth at all; and I realized that I had committed the first (and last) intentional destruction of life in the making of MOTHLIGHT by my actions and that I would have done so no matter what had been inside the cocoon. It was a sobering moment in which all the false path I'd been insisting on was revealed clearly. I gave up, as gratefully given sacrifice, both cocoons and candle flame in that instant.

Then I began to have disturbances over the fading of the flowers packed within strips of Mylar, devised elaborate schemes for making many strips of flower patterns at once, rushing them to the lab, and getting them printed before they could fade. All such schemes failed. The fresh flower strips would not run thru the printer. Only later did I realize, after a week of remonstrances similar to those during cocoon search, that the colors hardly ever faded completely away and that the fading process was leaving intricate patterns of incredible beauty creating sensations of depth of dimension such as I have never seen on film before.

But the former concern then touched off a fear that the film wasn't going to be printable at all. This almost broke me down completely so that I couldn't even bring myself to continue editing the strips I had let alone make any more. Finally, however, I approached the film with only the thought in mind of letting the total form of it pass thru me just so that Jane and I could view it at least once (before all flowers had faded completely) in the little table viewer; and, from that viewpoint, found myself easily editing what is easily the most perfectly formal work I have yet made. It quickly fell into three sections, each containing a specific set of what I might call "round-dances" (I did spell out "rough-dances" rather than "round-dances" indicating the actual looseness of this original editing) for lack of a better term; but when I had completed the three movements the work appeared to me as unfinished. I simply could not bring myself to even thinking, at this time, of making more strips; and I stumbled out onto the front porch in a state of terrible dejection. Almost immediately a large moth fell at my feet, fluttering wildly. I said, to Jane: "What's that?" in a stupefied voice to which she immediately replied: "It's death dance." It fluttered for fully twenty minutes before our dog ate it. So, I went back to work again, composing what might be called "a coda" to the work. Then we looked at it thru the viewer and became so excited that I found faith enough to pick clean about 10,000 sprocket holes, tear open thick sections and carefully slice plant forms, twigs, etc., in half, and intersperse every 6 feet of film with 3 feet of leader (to enable the printer, or printing machine, to run smoothly and adjust itself periodically.) Finally I found myself in the blacked-out printing room at Western Cine, with all my [above] full-failing anger and bad faith, as above, directed at and tortured by machinery.

The printing machine looks like something out of a 1920's German science-fiction movie, its sprocket claws hand-filed to perfection, its machinery set to tolerate very little deviance in film widths, etc. There was finally nothing for me to do but pray, and certainly not to pray to the machine but just to pray. We sat in the dark while the printing machine supplied the most nerve racking atmosphere imaginable by setting off a series of sputters and clicks which kept building up in intensity to the full burst of its warning buzzer (which sounded exactly like those warning buzzers in spook houses which accompany the display of papier-maché monsters revealed in burst of garish light) which only discontinued when 3 foot strips of leader were being printed. When I saw the developed

film, the next day, as was to be expected certainly was: that is: the strips were every now and again printed so that a set of sprocket holes were visible sliding back and forth at the edge of the picture. As these sprocket holes were printed with a regularity more specific than anything else in the picture, or than anything intended, they tended to draw the attention completely away from the developing forms of the film; and no matter how hard I tried to convince myself that they could be disregarded, left in the film, I knew it wasn't so. Worse yet, those original strips were so battered by being printed crookedly that there was less likelihood they would be run thru the printer than there had been before. The case seemed entirely hopeless, whatever damage to the total form irreparable; and this did crack me up and break me down altogether, which was all to the good: viz: I was forced to accept any personal defeat left in my relationship with the film. I came home, last night, and resolved, with Jane's marvelous, patient encouragement and remindfulness of your Enki-du statement in that morning's letter and of, thereby, our deep working processes of all these years, to re-edit the total form of the film in the light of the strips of film which were free of sprocket holes. I began work and, lo and behold (and what meaning those words have for me today) discovered that of the 7 strips sprocket hole marked: (1) was of abalone shells (which had been more or less forced into the film which otherwise has no material except from this area) which could be cut, leaving the total form intact, IF I would but remove the piece of spider cocoon as well, (2) could be removed without impairing the total spiraling in-and-out development of the first section BECAUSE it constituted an entire spiral and no more than that AND had been creating an unbalanced spiral on the in development, (3) occurring in the second section constituted THE ONLY un-developing, or backward running, them of that section which did not thematically balance its co-responding in-coming piece at the beginning -- the removal of both pieces unquestionably improving the form of that section, (4) being THE only case in section two where poppy forms were not replaced, in the unwind by pansy patterns, AND a divergent piece anyway, (5) and (6) constituting an entire part of section 3, and not one hair over, even tho' to accomplish this the printer machine had to stay out of sync thru an entire piece of leader AND return in sync during the run of a Mylar strip AND said part of that section being the only one which I included because "it is so beautiful" and I had no other place where it could conceivably fit, and (7) being removable from the coda without the slightest alteration of the form.

Amazing, isn't it -- even after all these years of dedication of letting, as you put it: "the prima materia of film, the Visual, constitute its own 'story.'"

And so, we now have given, are receiving, a 100' film (less than 3 minutes length) of indescribable beauty and perfection.

I have beside me here two pictures relevant enough to the processes I'm most vitally concerned with in this correspondence that I'm going to make reproductions for all concerned. Both are by 4 1/2 year old Myrrena. The picture I mark number 1 revealed to her the following: "God is a man...and Jesus is a woman." The picture I mark number 2, and finished shortly after the first, caused her to say: "Jesus goes up the sky...and God goes up the mountain. The moon has a mouth." She asked Jane to write those words on the backs of the respective pictures and then to hang each picture up on the wall.

To James Tenney
July 1963

"EASTERN CONFERENCE

Conditions are much more complicated in the Eastern sphere of influence. Advance information indicates a run to the wire which may develop into a three-way photo, a bit of jokeying not viewed unkindly by the higher echelon around the league or the fans. Anyway, let's watch the Eastern Conference public-relations advisors carry the ball for their teams."

Oh, Jane -- beautiful woman,

Enclosed find "First report of 'Eastern Conference'" as Olson said of the page of a book found on the street at 4:00 this morning, as he walked me back to Gerrit Lansing's apt. after more than twelve hours together. We each took note, laughing together in the deserted Gloucester streets, agreeing it should be sent on to you, he saying: "Ah, yes, send it on to Jane, just by itself as 'First report;'" but I do feel the need this morning to write as much as I can of the entire 12 hour experience, to share with you as much of what can this morning be remembered as is possible -- and also to have some record available to conscious mind even tho' I'm sure the deep-working centers of our conversation will already be moving sub-conscious, taking direction away from what I might throw up or put down.

To Jane Brakhage,
May 17, 1963





I arrived, with bags full of groceries and beer, in company with Gerrit Lansing and Harry Martin at 4:00 in the afternoon, was immediately overwhelmed by the SIZE of the man and the electric look of the face, his grizzley beard, up-standing hair, all white, the reflections of lights in his glasses, thru which his eyes pierce with a look that would terrify were it not for the amazingly immediate look of the man, the love out-going as clearly as if, and being, blessings. I began taking stills almost immediately, filling the air with flashes of light (having now an entire roll of still photos of the Olsons), keeping myself on that sight plain until the others had left -- at which point, Olson and I moved out for a walk along the bay front to "the bridge," then up around Gloucester streets, turning back along "Angel" street, into his favorite bar, then on home late at night for waiting supper with Betty (Charles Peter being then in bed, beautifully asleep, 8 year old boy turned into himself in sleep making me wonder so much about Bearthm), and so on talking in the kitchen, drinking 'Old Crow' until 3:30. And of that whole talking time, the range was so extensive I cannot really believe even the small fragments I remember could have been packed into 12 hours.

The money problem came up almost immediately, Olson being clear in confirmation of "this last year" being most difficult ever -- but quick to follow with: "That's changing, changing so fast...I see that change -- yes, I HEAR you." And, "How it takes form in terms of money: but then remember, this IS America -- in 3 weeks this whole picture could be changed for all of us...I mean that quickly the money can move, when the time's right. When Robert Duncan was last here he asked me was I interested in 'A College,' having himself some source. I said, "Awww, come on, Robert, you know it isn't going to work this way. What's needed is 12 men each independently supported, backed, in such a way that they form flanges of a hierarchy -- given that support, you'll HAVE that which attracts everyone of importance TO-gether, won't need land, won't need buildings, won't need ad-ministration...will HAVE it, what's needed." First clear statement I've had, after listening to stories and stories of hierarchitectitiptitopticals re: College, like Branaman's mad dream or The Kellys' 'Blue Yak' dream college. Then: "In the meantime, get to the center, quickly -- don't fuck around with small colleges...get to the BIG centers, use them, you CAN, you know -- I mean, even the MEDIUM, film, having that possibility built in, IN, to it... the power there, thru the eye, I mean: how anyone will go in to look at a movie, you hear?, are you hearing me?" ...myself wondering all the time if this wasn't another version of Duncan's old belief that I was going to make it in Hollywood, beCAUSE of my medium, and be able to support everybody while actually "making it," or Michael's recent insistence that my fate, as artist, would be, at least economically, easier than his just because of the medium, etc.

Then, in all this time, Olson did show me how Gloucester is, really, an island, how he was raised on the first point of "the mainland -- or, that point geographically furthest out, I mean where I could be most easterly-westerly...how I was, as my father before me, letter-carrier: my first job as a boy -- right here, where we're standing." And he showed me the place where, unknown to everyone, a battleship's hull is buried, one wall of it backed by shit from the sewers of the town, the apparatus, wheels, tubes, being that which pumps the shit out from Gloucester into the bay, the whole thing buried under a monument centered in an innocuous plot of grass -- "I mean, what goes on underground." He showed me the house which was focal point for his reconstructing history in MAXIMUS -- now lived in by the president of The John Birch Society of Gloucester. We began talking of schools, he clarifying for me that all my worries about the girls and Bearthm going to school must be centered where the complete concern is: with the total system, of which school is just one small aspect. What a relief -- and how wonderful that I could think of coming to terms with the total system easier than particularized "school," etc. He showed me the house where a man who "actually studied with Ruskin" lives, now growing the most beautiful flowers. He showed me the house where he had left his mother that awful night written of as St. Valentine's Day Storm, wandered down to the bay to be bombarded by sheets of ice blown in from the sea. In the bar we began talking of Eisenstein, the wide-screen concept ("Do you really have anything to add to that?" -- which I thought best left unanswered until he had seen my films...the following night) and then on into "vision" and "drugs." "You must take sillosybin -- all the rest very dangerous. Nuts to that whole science scene -- completely right to keep free of it, as you have...all spreading bullshit to hide the one drug of value IF taken in company, a simple occasion -- no bullshit...just a way of seeing." I then threw up "One ring to bind 'em." This seemed to raise some doubt, then very specific concern with respect to myself -- "Yes, okay, I'll wait and see...you may be right there." Then we shifted quickly to drama, began talking deeply of how-why it doesn't work, with complete

agreement from him on my tracing the breakdown to drama into "ring to bind 'em" with the loss of "the mask," drama now making flesh masks for people to wear out each other against, etc....he adding "the introduction of the female onto the stage" ("misplaced cunt dominating all else") and "the star system" ("cult of personality rather than creation of Person"). But we did start with Robert's "Adam's Way," and onto why the greatest living dramatist cannot finish a play, the social scene impinging, as it did in S.F. in a way to make finish in life, not on stage, etc. Olson: "Yes, we must, must, must get rid of drama, at all costs -- I mean, even get rid of narrative -- the temptation...you hear?"

Then, after supper, the question of magic: here, dear Jane, for all of my trying to remember, the deep substance of this matter is too deep in me for any kind of transcription; but I will put down what does come to the surface as best I can. It begins with reference directly to "the eyes," Olson's wonderful re-spect: that he had said to me much earlier, within five minutes after meeting him, to be precise: "With you, Brakhage, it is at this point a question of focus -- is it not?" Then, later, after supper, stomach pulling at my brains, I shifted to superficial level of defending black magic of Maas and Deren, as film-makers, by way of "After all, film is at the Lascaux Cave-Painting level." Then quickly, sternly, back from him: "Don't give me that! I'm an authority on cave painting, as you surely know. Stop trying to defend the fact that you ARE, are you not?, myopic, that is: NEAR-sighted: and wall eyed ... as am I ...as is Robert Duncan... Right?" After immediate relief of: "Yes, yes, of course!" from me, Olson went right on: "I have, even tho' I suffer from claustrophobia, crawled around IN those tunnels, seen how, very often, the Pleistocene man HAD, that is chose, to paint where he couldn't have been more than six inches from where he was painting, eyes THAT close. And the point is, after all, that Pleistocene Man WAS that close to us, where we are -- that is: he was living in a world where all predators, that is everything that COULD EAT HIM, was so MUCH larger than he was!...and then how he did choose to paint where he did, in that most difficult position, rather than just anywhere, per chance. I love that sense of that fisty little creature being, maybe, FIRST to say: 'Fuck you,' to all of it which didn't arise from HIMself, in the sense of: 'I will have it my way'...I mean, his knowing that he must GIVE instruction or be eaten by nature, one way or the other (Hero being, to me, later, being only 'He who demonstrates Nature' -- that is, being memorable biographically ONLY...you hear?...only -- Hero still being just that except for interference with Nature -- that is: specifically THAT which threatens us all with annihilation...that is HOW the Hero has been possessed is no longer relevant, BECAUSE nature is being so possessed...how in Dogtown even, that area which, since the beginning has certainly been the most beautiful natural spot of these surroundings, NOT dependent upon any man's concept, not quote natural unquote, IS now being made center of reservoir, place where trees are being cut down, other trees planted, placed, whole basin filled with water, dust of their blasting settling over the whole eastern seaboard. And now, how YOU Brakhage must get clear about focus -- right?...I mean, do you hear me?...that is: Hold your hand in front of your face and find OUT just how far away you can take it and how close, without throwing all the lines of that hand out of focus." I tried it, found FOCUS somewhere between 4 and 6 inches, that is: I could have measured exactly some specific point there which was THE ONLY TRUE FOCUS. And Olson began laughing beautifully, saying: "How wonderful I can teach you that, you with all concerns of vision so wonderful -- that I am permitted to teach you where your TRUE focus IS...and believe me, it is somewhere there for all men -- RIGHT THERE. And you DID know it at 18 when you threw away those glasses...I mean, the TRUTH of it which you just hadn't YET come to think of, make reference to, in your BRAIN." Then, Olson leaning over closely, winking, holding his hands that close to his face, saying: "And, Brakhage, what is all the rest beyond that point -- I mean what IS all that out there which we CALL focus?... What IS focus, Brakhage? Hey?"

(I am now writing almost 24 hours later than when I ended the last paragraph -- much more of the conversation has, natch, been forgotten; but there's some advantage in that yesterday I went again over to Olson's and the conversation did tend to take off from the end point of the above paragraph...so, rather than try to stick to narrative, I'll just write what I've understood of all his talking these last two days, as it comes to me as a total picture.)

(It should be understood that if my memory ear were that correct, I could put most of the following in quotes, after the name of Olson, except that I would make crucial mistakes, probably, out of my problems, and that it did all arise out of conversation between us): There is a, probably precisely determinable, diamond line which could be drawn so that

one point would be crucial outer focus, another crucial inner focus, the other two points of the four available for a drawing of a line which would bisect the diamond into two triangles -- TAKE that line as LOCUS, in a view-plate sense: that is: out of the understanding that there are three rings which bind men (a departure from Tolkein's number): "thought," "consciousness," and "sense-perception," the latter really meaning: the eye, how it dominates all other senses in men. Referring to Michael McClure there was a loooooong name relating him, per example, specifically to me, by way of affliction, which did break down to another triangle, rings of ring true, the three corners of which could be viewed as corresponding to a type having: "Narcissism," "shyness," and "desire to have absolute power over the world"...characteristics. But then there is all that which men CALL focus, a flexible diamond, that is: subject to squeeze-play in the mind, its bisecting line being most clear as horizon line (calling up in my mind the quest shun: what point beyond the horizon line must I be focused upon, in order to see horizon line as that line which bisects that diamond: i.e. fixes it...to which Olson immediately answered: "You must have Hopi," being playful with what he later referred to as: "The Hopi Indian having the only language which was constructed to make speech in terms of 'definition' possible...that is that the Hopi would only speak in terms of where he was, would have to walk over there, locomotion, to speak of what was there, then being where he was a - gain ((in fairness to Olson's speech, he was throwing back at me a lot of puns here, and laughingly, in reference to the puns he had just read in some of my newer writing -- he being specifically clear that I should stop using 'em, that dispersal, in my writing)). (P. S., pisssss -- "But given 4 to 6 inches as my "True focus," I said, "You, Olson, are already 'over there'"...he replied: "You know nothing of Aurora? -- I mean, to keep it simple: don't you know about your Aurora?...that given temperature ((I don't mean Aura)) that inner temperature you have always with you -- I mean, how you die, even, with your Aurora on, so to speak...but we'll get to that later." ...something of it beginning to be clear when Charles Peter gave me some stereopticon cards with glasses, and that when I said "Thank you, I'll give them to my children" and he, the boy, replied "No. Keep them yourself," Betty gave me a quick lesson in it of it by saying: "You see, he's a Hopi -- that is, he doesn't know your children.") That -- is...(damn the distraction of parenthesis)...there are, at least TWO things which must MUST be taken as "stabile," "energy" and "dimension:" that is that when Olson was under sillosybin and went to the toilet to pee, he became aware of the sense that tho' the toilet seemed miles away from him in distance, it remained the same size and that he was able to pee directly into the center of it: that is: tho' all of what was beyond 4 to 6 inches, even tho' CLEARLY not true focus ergo being CLEARLY picture of the mind OUT, appeared unstable, he (out of his energy) was peeing into it (because it had a fixed dimension). Given these two "stables's" (this form) out of his prime necessity (out of the prime truth of total organic necessity) he could "instruct" all the rest, just as Pleistocene man had, etc....out of, or gaining, TWO other truths: "The World as the object of God ...God being, therefore, the subject of The World" (The caps and the "therefore" possibly being my thoughtless addition -- I don't know. That is: when I told him of the vision of the four entities appearing to me during the editing of SIRIUS REMEMBERED he took that as a kind of visitation which was to make me aware of the four corners of a given position so that I would be enabled to go on my own way; but when I told him of the statement "We cannot go deeper unless you stop smoking" Olson responded with immediate sense of: "Ah yes, that's the way she usually speaks, that is: that's instruction which you are bound, if you want to go on your own way, to resist. ...this before he'd heard how I'd resisted, tho' he could see me smoking.)(Somewhere in here he suggested, pulled out, and read from, Coon's: THE STORY OF MAN, making, a day later but as if to give the other side, "a horrible book," called: THE ASSESSMENT OF MEN, taking great delight in the fact that Coon was typical American in that he had gone to the very site ((I almost spelled "sight")) where a Frenchman had dug up "the oldest human skull yet found," and that Coon had, when shown the digging, gone immediately WITH HIS FINGERS and dug deeper until he found yet an OLDER skull and OPENED UP THE WHOLE FIELD -- at which point Olson pulled out a Mayan Owl head in stone which he'd dug up with his own fingers, somehow knowing where to dig...and when I said: "How did you know where, if you do not rely on 'magic,'" it opened up the whole discussion of magic, albeit with some reluctance on his part. Robert Duncan kept, naturally, coming up into the conversation here: "As I wrote Robert the other day: there are only three terms of time we should deal with now: day, year, millenium -- he replied by referring to those first 7 years of man's growth, that being his crisis: how we get up to adolescence, that is: sex, etc." Or: "AS I wrote Robert,

and that part of my reply which he could make most use of, poem coming out of it, that Christ was the FIRST sacrifice, yes LAST too, that is the beauty of how he laid his life down as sacrifice, I mean, like in animals -- 'cut my throat'...Christ being FIRST HUMAN we know of to so come to terms with 'thought,' 'consciousness,' and 'sense perception' right out of 'Narcissism,' 'shyness,' yes AND 'desire to have power over the world.'" ((Olson then reading me Robert's reply which did take Christ as 'Second Person,' after ADAM 'First Person,' in terms of subject of the world (((you see, Jane, how hard it is for me to, how I must capitalize "ADAM" over my mistake of God in that place --and was I right there to take adam in terms of "subject of the world?"...of course not -- Jesus, how I have to keep the demons at bay in writing to you with true perspective...i.e. what is Adam? ...well, Duncan had said something like "I take Adam as made." ...puns using him?)))))) Wow -- parenthesis (that is, on end, 'says' and/or parent thesis.) That -- as a matter of FACT: "We live at the beginning of the new millenium -- God, what an exciting time...how much there is to do, that is: How much we must here instruct the angels, who are at this time running around being very busy, needing our instruction, and OF our necessity, that is of your necessity and my necessity, etc." And, as to magic: "You are not a black magician -- you are a white magician...and that is a very difficult, dangerous, thing to be in a time like this...I mean how much we are each of us drawn to evil in such a time, how easy it is, how each of us falls into it all ways, that is because of all the ways."

Now as I'm being presumptuous enough to put in quote marks outside of parentheses, here, that is above, I'm going to copy out of Gerrit Lansing's wonderful collection some printed statements of Olson's which came up over and over again, threading in and out of the conversation as references I should, and have, and am here making, to end the substance of this letter -- give you as much as I can, dear Jane, knowing your needs, dearest Jane, they being so related to mine now and for a later look-up for each of us... To start with, as Olson read it over and over to me, out of the Melville book CALL ME ISHMAEL, look up the passage in there where Melville makes, strikes, balance between Goetic (Olson making reference to "trickster" magic there, immediately) and Theurgic (Olson emphasizing, "to start with The -- or, to pun, Godic, magic).

Stan Brabholz

