

VIDEOSPACE was an attempt to point out historical connections concerning television and its various environments. The content of that work included speculations about the making process and what we have come to call the mix. Also, I tried to bring our attention back to the delights and wonders of creating in an environment of mutual trust and interdependence, to an environment where the realities and dynamics of one's living presence are mixed with those of others, with concepts, materials and tools--and with the truths of being present among other humans being as unclear and uncertain as ourselves.

VIDEOSPACE AND IMAGE EXPERIENCE was an effort to reintroduce a more sophisticated and matured notion of this process. Its latter portion included a number of compositions conceived as triggers to imagination for interdependent members of some future mixing unit. These pointed to performance and the speculations which constitute this last work.

VIDEOSPACE AND PERFORMANCE is about a new theater, a theater of the mind; a newer version of the ancient theater of man.

**VIDEOSPACE AND PERFORMANCE**

Brice Howard

Two perspectives concerning television are now apparent and existing side by side. The second began to appear in the middle 60's.

Previously, there was only one--broadcasting. This one is functional and systematic.

Many critics of the second view do not regard those who hold it as working in television at all. Such critics regard television and broadcasting as synonymous.

Television broadcasting has been validated by considerable experience. Television without broadcasting is still primitive, unformed and has been experienced very little.

In order to sharpen our understanding respecting the differences of the two, we must focus our thought on what is central to the broadcasting system.

We return to an old definition: broadcasting is distribution. This definition does not exclude other aspects of broadcasting unmindfully. It simply reduces our description to broadcast function.

Since television appeared, technical advances have made it possible to distribute this experience in ways other than unwired transmission. Now transmitters are not required for distribution.

Irrespective of these advances, the attitudes sustaining the original broadcast system still apply.

Those who hold the newer view see television differently. Their impulses do not center in a distribution sequence. Their focus is on television content formed of electrically generated sights and sounds.

They can imagine their works in both public and private spaces and, in both cases, it is the work which concerns them.

Those who are responsible for conventional broadcast television can imagine their works only in private space and though this work concerns them with equal intensity, it is inextricably bound to its distribution means and ends. The ends of conventional television locate in the marketplace tradition. This is its center. Thus, centering in this tradition, the marketplace is brought into the private household. This is television in reality.

It could not exist in public space. It would be pointless to have television in public space. The motion picture theater and its precedent traditions already fulfill that function. It is precisely to the point to have marketplace television motion pictures in private space. This is the convention of current television reality.

So--two television perspectives exist side by side.

One is a highly organized system designed to sustain the marketplace in private space.

The other?

Since its entrance into American culture in the mid 60's, "the other" has become two.

For those who hold the newer attitudes, two roots supply them. One is implanted in the traditions of art. The second, in social change. Both practitioners seem to agree that conventional television practice is not the only way.

Neither is centered in the marketplace and, of course, both suffer because of this.

There appears to be no system which sustains them. This will no doubt change but, for the moment, this is certainly true.

Of the two roots alluded to, the one which grows from the arts tradition may likely effect the greater change. That is possible because the product and the making process is so different from what we generally experience now.

If nothing else, the likelihood that electrically generated sights and sounds will appear in public spaces designed to compliment them may be enough. This will undoubtedly take place.

But for now, let us concentrate on product and making process and try to understand why these aspects of the newer perspective contain the capability for change.

The product can now be described.

It differs greatly from the conventional television program, principally because it draws less from the history of theater and motion pictures and more from the history of painting, sculpture and music.

Sight and sound tend to be nonlinear and nonfigurative from this view.

At one pole, there is simply no seed of performance at all. At the other, such seed as there may be is less narrative, more referential; less sequential, more ambient.

Including both poles, and between, there is little, if any, of the old conventional story telling.

Most commonly, it is referred to as video art. It can be experienced in both public and private space.

Were it to be marketed, it would sell nothing except itself.

The time will come when its practitioners will be known for their works and, conversely, their works will stand for them. When they are marketed, it will be in ways traditional to other objects of art. Commercial buying places will exist. Techniques of duplication will be part of their commercial character and those who can afford the master will pay for it.

These electronically generated image-experiences will be appropriate for private household spaces. If we care to think of it this way, we can anticipate their competing with the products of "broadcast distribution" television and, ultimately, they will effect changes in each other.

If the art root of this new perspective is nurtured, a new television experience will be available to us.

Images will be images in the truest sense. They will be the electrically generated "first things" drawn from the minds of the artists who made them. We will not be lost in the

illusions of non-actors "acting," of non-story tellers shaping their information like "stories"; nor will we be confounded by "live" or "record." The medium will be the recording of the artist's works; not its message.

This will happen if we want it. Most will not, but some will.

These are some of the possibilities inherent in the new perspective. In this way, the new differs markedly from its predecessor--(and, undoubtedly, from its continuous companion along the way).

Now, respecting the other root--social change: How can we identify its special character and how might it effect cultural and social change through television?

In order to answer these questions, we have to think about what these people do.

Those who employ "hands on" television techniques to explore one another's motives and behavior may still be faced with some of the difficult questions, for just as the so-called "television documentary" suffers from its precedent motion picture influences, so will these new explorations fall heir to the same.

Visual images of one's neighbors and companions emanating from a piece of glass and their sounds exuding from speaker systems associated with it will always stand for them. They will never be the original; and well meaning though the new practitioners may intend their lives to be, the tools of television (cameras and editing technology, especially) still

will tend to edge them toward the old actor and story teller of the early theater.

The edge of difference will be drawn from the integrity of their personal involvement, their preparations for judgment and the ethics of their intentions.

Their products will tend to straddle public and private spaces; toward cassette and cable terminals in private households, and toward the public meeting. Both are possible.

Some of them will surely join the artists, and vice versa.

Both of those who draw their sustenance from these two roots have one matter wholly in common: They insist on "hands on" television.

Those who make and explore "do it themselves." They struggle against turning it over to any institutional or hierarchical convention.

This insistence cuts two ways. On the one hand, it insures their own authorship. On the other, they are temporarily limited respecting craft.

For either of them, this will change if they are willing to introduce principle and discipline into their work. If not, for both, their efforts will atrophy in narcissism and self-aggrandizement.

Now, concerning the making process in this new perspective: Just as we can describe the product, so can we describe



the way it is made. This, too, differs greatly from conventional practice.

The making process for those who draw their sustenance from the art root is directed toward a composition of images and sounds, but their images and sounds do not locate in actors and narratives.

The making process for those who draw their sustenance from traditions of investigation and social change is directed toward a recording of non-actors experiencing one another in non-narrative contexts.

Those who constitute the best of both seem to be seeking ends whose record will be non-metaphoric. Their works are clearly understood as recordings and not as simulated non-recordings.

Their language, though not always consistent, gives us the clue to how they perceive this process: "I've made a tape," or, "Let me show you a tape I've made." To superimpose the words "prerecorded" into any of this work would constitute a real inside joke for most of them. Of course, it's a record. It's tape.

(The term "prerecorded," appearing in conventional broadcast television, implies a very broad truth indeed: So successful are they in simulation, they feel obliged [it is almost law] to point out the difference; but, in a way, this is ironic, for, by and large, it appears that we at home are not aware of the difference and often do not care to know. The term also shows our unclarity about the record. Can there be a record which is not "pre"? Prerecorded constitutes a silly redundancy masking something else.)

For those who employ "hands on" television to effect social change, it is interesting to note that their making process does not appear to include consciousness of technical fidelity. Their consciousness seems focused on the content they seek to record. They assume that everyone knows they are making a recording.

Both are making an experience, and both want to be a part of the experience they are making.

The so-called video artists are making art. The so-called social changers are gathering evidence.

The difference between these two efforts defines the difference in their making process.

The video artist does have a full consciousness of technical fidelity, but a consciousness of an order which differs from his television broadcasting counterparts. This is because of the artist's concern for extremely delicate circuit balances which will affect his vision. The accuracy of his technical choices must match his aesthetic. Magnetic tape recording is a splendid field for the retention of his imagery, but its splendid capabilities are for naught if the artist is unable to accomplish the circuit manipulations required to achieve the chromatics and textures through which his expression becomes manifest; and, insisting upon a "hands on" effort, he must master the tools and craft of his new art.

His making process is determined by these concerns and other makers with whom he chooses to associate himself.

It is not impossible, but it is a very difficult

matter, to generate and record electronic imagery by oneself. Video art, such as it is in this early stage of development, is often the work of a number of people making it together. (To do so, the precedent producer, director, script relationship is less appropriate.) Artists, at least craftsmen, making toward a common conception, do not easily give up their independence. Each one continues to center in that portion which is ingrained in the interdependence of the common effort. This relationship may be essential to the new non-narrative, non-actorish video art.

(So--the making process tends to go this way.)

Whether it includes one or many, the making process for video art is closer to traditional search and discard, recast and record, commit and complete--; the traditional mode of artists at work.

That is the way it appears today.

In both instances--whether video artists or social changers--another perspective, together with a different set of attitudes, has emerged to exist alongside conventional television.

If it be true that anticipation of performance is a need amongst us humans which deserves appropriate satisfaction and, further, if it be true that electronically generated images and sounds are in our culture to stay, then it is not inappropriate to assume that ways might be conceived by which a new mode, a design for performances which include such experience, might follow.

Theater has given us much. Motion pictures have given

us much. Technologies which align themselves with television might be understood in a different context and give us more. This is a possibility.

Perhaps ways might be investigated by which public space and performance be redefined and, combining the essences of all three histories, a new and formal presentational experience be made available for the enrichment of our publics and their private lives.

With the introduction of new perspectives for television in our culture, many young people holding such views are seeking ways to express themselves with the tools, the materials and the surfaces of this most recent medium.

They not only anticipate change, they carry the seeds of change in their very beings. Many of them are much more skilled in the use of this new technology than we of a previous generation often want to acknowledge. More than that, so familiar are they with electronic image and sound generation, that some might describe it as their natural milieu.

Combining their new-found capacities for gathering evidence of the culture in which they live--and which they wish to seriously affect--with video's inherent capability to form images and sounds artistically conformed, they may assist us all in moving to new mornings, to new evocations.

To begin, we must identify the new form. In order to do this, we must return to traditional forms of performance to understand what is precedent.

If we are successful in identifying the new form,

perhaps, then, we can move on to define the new architectural space and volume which might contain it.

We will be seeking to discover new ways of bringing performance back to the public place which has always been its natural condition.

The term "audience" must be regarded as idiomatic, since it refers to those who hear.

We have used the word for centuries in many ways other than this, however, to mean those who attend, or gather, in many contexts other than simply audile. The idiom does, however, indicate our sense of, and respect for, the dominance of sound.

Now we are being asked to reflect upon this gathering in another context; one which includes video performers and this new material, electronic flow, and, specifically, respecting this newer experience as "performance." (And concerning a more recent idiom associated with television we will certainly not be thinking about ourselves as "viewers.")

In this newer context: Who is this body who will gather to experience electronically generated images? What do they seek? Why might they elect to attend a performance which combines video, living theater and motion pictures?

What histories, what influences, will inspire them?

What will their attitudes be?

Will they attend as those who attend to public performances today? Will they sit before the new performers in the manner they do before the--say--actors, dancers and

musicians of old?

Where will they go? What will the new place be?

What occasion will draw them there?

Will they commemorate and celebrate? Or will they seek the thrill of vicarious betrayal, vapid romance and violence? Will it be Greece, Rome, the Ramayana, Kabuki, Noh, Broadway or Philharmonic Hall?

Or will it be the essences of sweet and cloistered drawing rooms?

Or will it be the street?

Whatever draws us, we will be there if we can recognize the form in which the experience is to occur.

Our appetite for presentational experience seems insatiable.

Yet, form we need--else we do not know how to relate. Form must be at the core of our quest. If we have form and understand it, we have context.

We in the western world have been greatly influenced by the crisp and rational impulses of Ancient Greece.

Some of the internal dramatic character--and, certainly, the architecture--of those early experiences have supported our presentational appetite and experience.

More recently, the heritage of China, Japan, India and Southeast Asia has impelled us.

For the so-called "audiences" of our western world, there is a common reference in these early European and Asian experiences: It is the impulse toward celebration or commemoration. In some instances, these are clearly religious. In others, they are quasi-religious, or qualified as rites in accordance with natural and seasonal cycles.

For centuries, humans have gathered to honor the earth and the families of men who sustain its fruit.

We have also gathered to comment on our endurance, our treasure, our spoils, our fears, and the devils who populate them.

What will bring us together in this newer way, in this newest formal way?

Will the old themes be restated?

What do we celebrate today?

Or, do we celebrate at all?

These are questions the new performers will have to answer if they are to enter the tradition of performance and form. They will be wise to ask: "Why will people gather to experience our work? What can we give which has not been given? Shall we renew the human spirit as the great performers have always done, or will we merely recreate the ancient sideshow, the diversion for the bored; reformulate our own passing titillations and conceits?"

If they are to be responsible, they must explore their own motives, as well as those who gather to experience what they do.

Again, we must remind ourselves that it is always the form in which we act which guides us to a fuller knowledge of ourselves.

Because video is what it is, it infers new relationships in form. If the video performer is to take advantage of the unique nature of his material, he must try to see what lies ahead.

Respecting this, there seems no genuine reason why his presentation should not be a recorded experience as in the history of motion pictures--unless the video artists elect to mix with the gathering of others who know that the form is designed to include their active, live participation.

This, then, would be the new "audience," the new "viewer," the new possibility.

This moment in our evolution has been evident in its approach for at least the last twenty-five or thirty years, largely since the proliferation of electronically generated images in the culture of western man.

Now, if it is to be this live gathering, how might it look? How might it sound?

How might it feel?



Let us speculate about the formal architecture of this new presentational environment.

But, first, some reminders:

Presentational, or performed, experience has occurred in similar configurations throughout the history of man--whether we be from the traditions of the West or the East.

We have employed the natural contours of the land, untouched by the village, city street or the shape of buildings.

We have brought ourselves into man-made edifices of rite and ritual, into man-made places of worship.

We have designed buildings and rooms whose allocation of space and volume have been influenced by the literary theater and by dance.

We have performed for one another and celebrated our presence in the village circle, on the steps of buildings which house the personifications of authority, and at the street corner.

We have gathered our precious artifacts and images in labyrinthian mazes that have permitted us to stroll and wander, see and reflect.

We have listened to the great music of our heritage in all these places and in many designed for that specific purpose.

We have performed and presented ourselves in all these ways.

However, we have rarely presented the moving graphic

image live, that is to say, where performers and performed-for share common space and time and, in such instances as we have, the experience has taken place in museum/gallery-like or theater-like environments. In the case of the former, it has been modified to appear like the latter.

It seems reasonable to predict that unless a new space-volume performer-audience relationship emerges for video, this new video art-as-performance will tend to draw heavily, as in conventional television, from theater and motion picture history.

If it is to be a live experience, a new space-volume is imperative.

Why so strong a term? Why this sudden imperative?

Because video form by nature introduces new possibilities, new elements.

The spiritual, psychological and cultural substance may be the same for theater, motion picture and video, but the material, the tools and the aesthetic surfaces are not. One differs from the other two.

Formally, video differs in the following ways:

The essential material of theater art is the living human organism, physical and psychological.

- The essential material of video art is the flowing continuum of electrons.

- Theater art is a narrative art; it contains the story, and the actors are the tellers.

- Video art can be independent of the narrative; its

works are composed of images, of sight and sound imagery.

- In theater art, the relationship to the audience is one of formal suspension of disbelief: "If you will suspend your disbelief, we will all function as if it were true--and for the first and only time."

- In video art, the relationship to the audience is more like symbiosis, as is the referential relationship between painter and looker, between musician and hearer.

These are not all the differences. They are simply the most challenging and obvious ones.

Because we are still unfamiliar with video in the formal sense, our references are limited. Our language is not yet drawn.

Conventional use of television has clearly fixed us in this theater-motion picture history.

However, video art beckons elsewhere.

Video art is to painting as dance is to sculpture.

Video art is to music as song is to poetry.

We are heading in a different direction.

Where performance of video art is concerned, we must design a difference space.

Given this, design will be determined by the motives which bring us together, as well as by the uniqueness of the medium.

Architecture will be of one kind if we draw together simply to amuse ourselves.

It will be of another if we have other intentions.

Such indications as we have had to this moment infer that entrepreneurs have moved to establish the former.

Thus, it has often been with the new.

However, it need not be this way. How might the new place be designed if, in our reaching, we were determined that the performance be a meeting?

Let us reflect upon entrances and exits. Architecturally, these mark the parameters and perimeters of the form contained.

Entrances remind us from whence we have come and what we bring. Exits remind us what we have been given and what we must return.

Without this consciousness in design, there can be little, if any, meeting.

What is the meaning of this word "meeting" that we include it in the body of our search for new form?

I have in mind that definition which describes "a junction, intersection, or confluence."

In the context of architecture, I have in mind a place where an appointment can be made; an appointment the fruits of which may yield not only meeting, but discovery and recognition as well.

I am not thinking about an amusement park or its various surrogates, with or without walls. We have plenty of

those. I am thinking about a meeting place, its formal characteristics having been designed to fulfill this purpose.

Here in this meeting place, we may attend a new kind of performance; one composed to renew the spirit, to reawaken and energize the mind, to refresh and delight, and one which husbands the seeds of human affirmation.

If this meeting place is to house electronically generated living art, then all who are present will be invited to participate. This they will not know how to do unless they are informed of the form itself.

The architecture will be part of that informing.

Let us imagine what the experience might be:

At the entrance way, images and sounds might remind them from whence they came and what they bring.

As they pass this way, reflections of themselves may mix and mingle with these and other reminders.

In attendance as well, video artists, whose training and craft have brought them to this state, will be rearranging and modifying that which occurs.

The composition will have begun, even so, leading the new audience--the new participant--deeper into the formal experience.

These new artists will be revealing their views of the culture just as their predecessors have done, but as ones whose images and sounds are mixed live. Some will have been

formed in time past; others will be formed in time present.

As the gatherers leave the entrance way, they are drawn forward toward junctions and confluences--toward choices.

If they go left, one kind of experience beckons them. If they go right, another. Even their conjecturing becomes a metaphor of the crossroads.

What one may choose to do one moment, he may choose to do again; but in the second choice, he may likely find a new combination.

The entrance is behind him now. He is in passage with others. He may return to start again but in order to do so, he first must exit, and the exit is still before him.

Along the passageways are cul-de-sacs, small enclaves designed for quiet and reflection. Here, one may stop awhile and meet one's introspections, or, in another, watch and listen for the "news." Another may contain the images and sounds of a different fantasy; a fairy tale, a memory.

When one encounters an intersection, no matter which way he chooses, he is always being led toward anticipation, toward possibility and toward surprise, and, gradually, he will learn--toward the exit.

From an architectural point of view, there are many questions: Is this a labyrinth, a helix, a honeycomb, a modern cave to be traversed by steel and glass, or is it spherical, conical or shaped like a giant lens that gathers the light and broadcasts its seed to rounded volumes that change and breathe?

Are our gatherers walking or being moved? Is it an

illusion of space or is it as small or as large as it seems?

Where are the performers and where are their instruments?

Do all surfaces glow with images and sounds or are some static, sculptural and three-dimensional?

What part does light play in all this rite of passage; this rite of passage?

Video artists and designers of spaces must meet, as well.

Back to the experience we envision.

The gatherers are always being led on toward anticipation, toward possibility and surprise.

The composition increases in magnitude.

The passages are leading to one internal place. Images and sounds are discretely forming to one climactic pattern.

The gatherers have entered and joined in one place, in one central volume.

They may sit, or stand, or move around.

In this configuration, they will know--for the composition will have brought them to this recognition--that this is the performer's moment. This is his theme and statement; also, this is our relief, our catharsis.

This is the convergence for which the appointment was made.

They will also know that this is where the exit begins.

If these composers, these performers of the moving image, are men and women of stature, of taste and discipline, of craft--if these image-makers are artists--then, as the

gatherers are moved to leave, they will have been reminded of what has been given.

And what must be returned.

This, then, is one possibility; one description of one view of the new environment.

Will the shared experience be a celebration, a commemoration, a religious event, or will it simply be another passing innovation?

It could be a house of mirrors, a fun house, a side-show. It could be a diversion, an electric carnival, an emporium for the sale of--anything.

It could be a journey, a wedding, a birthday party, or, even a ritual of death.

It could be a metaphor for violence and destruction.

It will depend on what our intentions are. What shall we intend?

Intention: So dynamic this key. Performance and meeting. Mixing and meeting.

Intending.

New video performance art may accept all intentions. Its nature is such that only a few will it welcome.

It is much too formal for mere whim and fashion; much too close to the organic evolution of nature to be a means for play alone.

It is a new beckoning to the mature mind.



Images and experience are its product; as fragile as a lacy mountain flower forcing clefts in stone.

Not a catch-all; not a panacea for all ills, and not a new mysticism locked in the whirring anagrams of electronic flow.

Video performance art is nothing more than another means we humans are being offered to objectify the convergences, the fluxes, the inner manifold of relationships we forever carry.

If it is to be realized, it will require of new artists disciplines so old and self-sacrificing that dilettantes with their limited imaginations will not even acknowledge it.

One of its most challenging aspects is that the new student will have no masters to turn to for many, many years.

He will have to draw from himself his own evolving mastery. He may turn to the painter, but only partially, for time will conform his compositions, and the painter's craft and art are directed elsewhere. He may seek the musician's guidance, but only long enough to grasp duration, interval, pattern sufficient to inform him of the moving visual image. He may return again to hear the sound of penetrating musicianship-- but, again, he will have to return to himself to make sound and sighting one.

If he elects the narrative, he will need the theatrician. With the help of the dancer, he may have to teach himself new kinesthetics of a two-dimensional surface.

From the sculptor, he can learn of space and volume and light.

He will turn to poetry as well--and, in the end, he will return to himself again.

The calligrapher will serve him; the print-maker, the photographer, the engineer, the technician with his riddles and circuits will have much to give; but because video is what it is and he will have chosen the performing artists' path, he will have to explore its contours in ways indigenous to the material, the tools and instruments, and the aesthetic surfaces available to him.

And all of this while he both informs and awaits designers who must arrange and construct the newest place.

Meanwhile, there are many questions to ask and much self-searching to be done.

As is likely true of all formed experience, we return to ask the question: What is intended?

What does a performer intend?

One aspect of this seems quite clear: Performers intend that an experience be shared: an experience be shared.

The new form we are trying to understand includes substantively the electrically generated image. Let us pause a moment here so that it is made clear how the word "image" is being used in this text.

It is not being employed to refer to that which occurs

inside one's head, "I have a picture of you in my mind," nor is it being used as reference to that which we say institutions may have, "The institution has a bad image."

It is being used to refer to that aspect of human experience which occurs outside oneself and, being formed of electromagnetic energy, or light, impinges itself on the brain through the human optical means, the eyes.

Now we enter an area which is yet unclear: This has to do with sound. Heretofore, I have been referring to images as being both sighted and sounded. I feel I will only confound the issue if I continue in this manner for there are few who employ the term "sound image." Yet, I hasten to point out that in video art, it is a much denser matter than we might at first infer. More to the point, I am suggesting that as we penetrate the unclarity of this emerging new art form, we will very likely discover that the performer composes both sighted images and sound and that, as he refines his craft, he will discover that because electricity is the material of his composition, that which emerges as sight and sound are one and the same phenomenon. The material is the same. It differs only with respect to the senses and the technical means which make it manifest.

In the performer's creative being, he will learn that the material, in fact, modifies itself. Given a sufficiently sophisticated technical means, pictures can modify sounds as efficiently as sounds can modify pictures. The composition is

one. Its manifestations, therefore, may also be described as one.

However, since our common reference to this kind of experience is so limited, I intend, from this point on, to employ the word "image" to identify that portion which is sighted. In the old way, I will refer to the other as sound.

To return:

The video performer will likely draw his motivations from the history of performance and if this is so, we may assume that his intention will be to perform an experience composed of electrically generated images and sounds.

This performer will be unlike the actor or the dancer, for he will not embody, or himself be, the material of his performance. In one sense, he will be more like the musical performer.

Our meaning must be clear when we use the term "embody." It is this: In order for us to understand form, we must be able to identify tools, materials and aesthetic surfaces.

In video art, the material is clearly electronic flow.

In the so-called "living theater" or "dance theater," the material is mixed; but one aspect of the matter is clear-- the human body and all of its physiological/psychological possibility is central. It seems to be the basic material.

The physical presence of an actor is central to the theater art. The same is true for the art of dance. A physical and psychological presence dominates its meaning and form.

Therefore, when the term "embody" is used, it is as

much to say--physical and psychological presence is the dominant material.

The video artist will not embody his material in performance as the actor or dancer does. His material is electronic flow, but, as in the case of a musical performer, he will perform with instruments. Of course, as with the musician, his body and his instrument will enjoy kinesthetic relationships and balances which, in themselves, constitute a visual presence.

To illustrate: A pianist performs a work. The dominant material of musical composition is sound. The pianist is making sound. This is what he does through his instrument, the piano. He cannot make piano sound with his body alone.

On the other hand, actors or dancers may perform a work composed entirely of the material of their own physical/conscious being.

The pianist must train himself with respect to both his instrument and the sound it makes and, indeed, physically and psychologically, this has to be a very sophisticated relationship.

So it will be for the video artist.

The balance between his instrument, his body and his brain will be no less acute.

His performance, or formed expression, will be embodied in his instrumentation. Its ramifications will be electronically generated images.

Now, we come to questions of considerable significance:

Is he, himself, visually present during performance? Is his visual presence necessary? Is it even wanted? The answers are significant because they will affect the relationship between performer and performed-for. They will affect the very architecture of the place.

If this new and emerging performer decides he will be visually present, both performed-for and space and volume designer will find themselves embraced by influences drawn from the history of the theater.

However, the new environment must hold no pretense or fiction. It must be one in which reality is truly composed for the ears and eyes of beholders. And for their becoming...

If designed appropriately, formal activity there could be an inviting, community-like, shared experience--where the performed-for move around, make contact and modify one another.

In the presence of the artist performer.

Generally speaking, any environment designed for presentational experience is directional with respect to performer and performed-for.

The performer performs to those who have gathered for that purpose.

Perhaps because of this configuration, it is not surprising that communications theorists often think of performance in the sender/receiver/feedback model of behavior.

This may be restrictive, however; indeed, it may not be appropriate at all.

In any case, in the present context, the message is not the substance of our reflection.

In art, one reflects upon experience and form, not message.

And we are speculating about a new performance which includes video performers.

Previously, it has been suggested that if the performer insists on his visible presence in the shared space volume designed for him, he will find himself under the influence of theatrical history.

It is because of this "from-to" configuration that he may be bound.

Must it be this way?

Must we insist that performers be in one direction and performed-for in another?

Not if we respect the unique nature of video art presentation.

Though performance of video is essentially a manifestation of electrical energy, human beings are composing these figures. Their images are specifically or abstractly drawn from the organic world of which both they and those for whom they perform are continuous parts. More importantly, they and their guests can be present together in common time space, and

to be able to see one another may be essential.

Though they will experience one another in the presence of electrically generated images and sound, the beauty of human relationships is psychologically secured in their physical presence.

Again, we must return to the designer/architect: How will he conform the volumes so that our newest formal meeting place will make possible this journey without limiting us to the old to/from directional relationships?

One way, of course, might be to locate the performing video artists in the center, but on planes raised above those upon which the performed-for move or are moved; or, perhaps, if the basic total structure were spherical, they would be suspended on planes distributed throughout the sphere.

However, there can be no illusion in this design; no pretense. The performing video artists are who they are, doing what they do. They cannot be camouflaged or made to appear as being in a role-playing guise. The design must be harmonious with the live, non-pretense character of the material, electronic flow, and they and the tools (the instruments) they employ must be organically integral.

Given some such relationship as this, a curious change will have taken place and one which is probably more appropriate to the evolutionary edge characteristic of our present day: The orchestra, the priest's seats, the aristocrat's row, the king's seat, will have been eliminated. The old theater space will have been modified to make room for the new videospace.



All vantage points are essentially equal in such a meeting place.

Another change will have occurred. It will be clear to all that live video performance is ensemble performance. Though some video artists may possess greater gifts than others, none will be able to function alone. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine any who would want to in such configurations as these.

This, alone, may be one of the richest fruits of the new video performing art.

It is difficult to image a live video performance of any consequence which can be enacted by a single artist, unless, of course, we restrict ourselves to the theater-like, museum/gallery-like directional presentational modes; and, if we do choose this course, there seems no logical reason why the work need be presented live. It could have been recorded as is characteristic of motion picture experience.

If we are to perform live, then we must do so consonant with the nature of the medium. This will lead us to new architectural/presentational conditions. These, in turn, will almost invariably require ensemble performance.

In this new, imagined meeting place, every human effort must be made for performers and performed-for to truly meet, discover and recognize one another.

At this moment, on the scale of evolutionary growth, it seems that we have made ourselves ready.

It is time that we reaffirm and celebrate our presence.

Ensemble performance appears inherent in the new form.  
Return your imaginations to the kind of place and  
experience envisioned earlier.

You will recall my concern with entrances and exits--  
and my description of the experience as being a continuum  
modified by convergences, confluences and spatial flux.

Now, add to that a plane above, centrally located,  
upon which an ensemble of video artists and their instrumenta-  
tion rest.

All human presence is visible to one another. The  
performance is not this alone, however. The performance  
also includes the experience of passing amongst electrically  
generated images and sounds. Thus, the performance is enhanced,  
in turn, by the visual presence of all concerned--both artist  
and non-artist alike.

You will also recall that there was to be a climactic  
moment, an arrival in space and time where all passing would  
meet, where the appointment would be whole.

At this convergence, the most formal part of the  
performance-experience takes place. Here it is audial and  
visual, too, of course. Here it is electrical, acoustical,  
human and light.

Here the form is revealed in mind.

And here the exit must ultimately begin.

Let there be no mistaken impression about the  
importance of this search. A new location and physical volume

must appear if the live performance of video art is not to be simply a hybrid form of theater or motion pictures.

It is not for lack of respect for theater tradition and practice. Quite the contrary. It is because theater form and the psychological cast that conform to it is so powerful and authentic in itself.

Responding to the nature of video, one is led to the realization that when directed to live performance--if it must rely on theater history and the body of principle which sustains it--it will be dominated by a directional relationship between performer and performed-for.

This, in itself, need not be considered a formal deterrent. It is the cluster of traditional attitudes and practices which align with this dominance that will, ultimately, inhibit the development of the new artist's live video performance.

Let's put it this way: There is a psychological line that runs straight across the proscenium opening. It is unseen, yet, in form, hundreds of years thick. On one side of the line is one attitude; on the other is another. Live video performance can never penetrate that unseen "fourth wall" simply because the performance is composed of electrically generated images and sounds, as well as living psychological/physical presences.

If these new artists continue to think of their works as directional, they might as well align themselves with the rich tradition of moving pictures and forget about live performances altogether.

There are established artists of theater space. There are hard-won disciplines which inform their arts. These disciplines are authentic and concerned with truth, but all their craft and art is directed toward one end: to form their experience in the context of the magical, mystical, mythic line that runs across the actual or psychologically simulated proscenium opening.

There are those, of course, who will argue that this argument is too severe; that from the old Greek theater of Dionysus to the current little theaters-in-the-round, the proscenium arch has been constantly modified. Some may even allude to drawing room comedies which, indeed, take place in drawing rooms, and they will be reminding us of a certain architectural truth by these allusions. However, they will not have touched upon the basic attitude of separation, which the unseen line enforces.

They will not be modifying in any substantive way the fact that there is an illusionary emphasis on one side, which deeply affects the psychological presence of those on the other; and that this magical formulation is embodied in living persons who have chosen to express themselves this way, formally, be they actors, dancers, scenic or lighting designers, acoustic specialists, architects, or simply stage managers.

From the history of hundreds of years of formal experience, the audience knows how to "act" in this relationship.

The theater is a wondrous place. Let it be. We know what that place is. Let's get on to another.

Let us get on to one in which image and sound, mixed with living presence, creates a new model of human process.

It is the word "process" which keys the evolutionary change.

Electronic material gives itself to process.

Process is passing and accumulation, the mixing of past and present in ever-growing flux; the continuous creation of growing, emerging contexts unavailable and unknown before.

An art which could present process would be a very human art, indeed.

We constantly seek meaning. A performance of such an art would bring us close to meaning, close to revelation. It would bring us close to ourselves, for each of us is one embodiment of an apparent never-ending process which includes us all. All present at such a performance could experience the reality of this all-pervading consciousness.

The mythic, separating line appropriate for theater is inappropriate to the possibilities inherent in the new form which video art must find and embrace.

The theater will only deflect the thrust of this search. It is much too much of what it is already to allow the dynamic change video art must inevitably bring.

For video art, as performance, will not tolerate the imposition of illusion and a wall between. Video art insists on touching the mind through process, not through separateness.

There is another matter that concerns us here. For too long, we have ignored the power and resourcefulness of sound.

Electronic technology has given us new subtleties, new capabilities, new dimensions with which to underline and support artful manifestations of human process.

For too long, the question has, seemed to be: Can one hear? However, there are others, as well: What are the sounds of relationship, the private sounds which are evidence of the private contexts in which we all hear?

Sound artists are also concerned with a full, not exclusively directional, volume of sound--interspersed and--modified by patterns within patterns, with movement through internal, as well as external, space.

Video performing artists will be concerned with the sounds of process; the accumulating marvel of particulars constantly modifying and redefining the whole.

A new place must be made for this experience.

Imagine our new performed-for travellers entering an environment in which they can hear the sound of their own blood pulsing in their ears. Imagine one pausing before a vision of earthly colors and a distant human voice whispering in his ear, "beloved."

Imagine the roar of the city mingling with the sound of wind passing through an empty chasm. Imagine words from the thinking, ancestral masters of our human race filling an enclave. And one chooses to hear each thought at one time.

Imagine a chorus of voices that travel before us,

beckoning us to follow them. Imagine another in conflict with the first arguing "--not that way. Follow us."

Imagine sound defining volume and space, itself; acoustical delineations designed to react to the presence and movement of those who pass that way.

Imagine being given oneself back in sound; the sound of one's own time past, mixed with the time present, which constitutes an accumulation of those present.

Imagine the juxtaposition of sound; of genres, classes and categories.

Imagine the sounds of world and community events mixed with these.

Formal sound composition is other than music and words alone.

Perhaps you have begun to sense the magnitude of the question.

Quite apart from the fact that the form of video art is difficult to perceive because of its association with a precedent television broadcasting convention--it is an art of sighted and sounded images.

The auditory portion of the formal experience can be as dominant as the visual. In fact, when expertly formed, neither need be one or the other. It is not a question of one over the other. Neither is subservient.

For those who search for, and speculate, about

emerging principles sustaining video art performance, the relationship between sights and sounds is fundamental. This relationship is complimentary.

Composition is the appropriate relationship of both to one another.

It is this reality which modifies--even deflects, perhaps--the directional character of video art in performance.

From motion pictures to television to video art, the dominance of vision has sustained those who argue in behalf of directional experience.

However, video art need not succumb to this historical prejudice.

If you agree with this conviction, then those who choose to perform this way need no longer be confined to the volumes or designs which are strictly directional. They will be free to move their images and sounds around, and we who attend these performances may, ourselves, move around among our newer artists' images and sounds.

Television reality has been among us for a sufficient period of time, that we can now be serious about it. It is no longer an exotic and passing fancy. We need to be serious about it. If not, we may discover that a dominant convention so inextricably joined to our culture has entered our lives and our habits that there may not be any turning back.



There is still time. Television reality is not yet quite the truth, but it may be introducing a troublesome authenticity which, in time, may accurately reflect a will-less human spirit and a geography of mind empty of being.

Now--I want to propose some assumptions:

One is that a convention is emerging which encourages us to tacitly assign authorship and authority to images and sounds and that these, in turn, are elements being shaped by men and women who (unwittingly at best) are employing methodologies derived from previous conventions learned in theater and motion picture and business practice.

Another of my assumptions, then, is that the manipulation of these images and sounds is done so to the end of "selling" something other than themselves.

A further is this: that this newest emerging convention is more pervasive and influential than theater or motion pictures because the experience of it occurs in the privacy of our households.

And, finally, that if this be true, it is happening because none of us are sufficiently conscious of the nature of performance, its significance and what it may mean to us.

Something like performance has invaded our privacy, and we have not taken the time to understand what this is or what it means.

A performance is something very special. It cannot

take place without anticipation. It is formal.

In order for a performance to happen, both performer and performed-for need some familiarity with the form.

The form includes certain precise conditions:

- Both performer and performed-for agree to meet there.
- The performer understands what is expected of him.
- The performed-for anticipate composition.
- Success for both is measured by the fulfillment of this anticipation.

In short, performance formalities include common space and time, performer and performed-for, composition and anticipation.

Each of these aspects of the form have certain formal characteristics. For instance, the meeting place provides for entrances and exits of nonperformers. It also provides for specific allocation of spaces for performer and performed-for. Each of these spaces, in turn, are suitable to the nature of the composition. In conventional performance, composition is almost always directional; therefore, space and volume is arranged so that performer may present and performed-for receive the presentation.

Respecting the agreement to meet: Both performer and performed-for hope for, or expect, an appointment to be met; therefore, the performed-for is notified in advance of the meeting time. This is part of the form of performance. He

is also notified as to whether or not an admission fee will be required and assumes that this fee will cover certain amenities, such as mutual comfort, performer's fee, etc. These, too, are part of the form of performance.

The performer understands what is expected of him.

Expectation is very much a part of the form of performance. The performed-for are justified in expecting the performer to have made an effort to achieve proficiency in what he does. If his performance includes the employment of tools or instruments, the performed-for have a right to expect that these technologies will be functional and properly maintained. In the form of performance, these expectations are known by both parties.

There is another formal characteristic of the larger form of performance: The performed-for anticipate composition. This is a most sophisticated matter; perhaps the most sophisticated matter of all. Composition can be described as the mature act which confirms performance. Composition is the central content of performance form. Without it, all the other formal characteristics break down and dissolve. Without it, anticipation cannot occur.

Yet, fulfilling composition is elusive, for it resides only among the gifted. When we say a performance is inspired, we mean that something unique and of the order of first-things has occurred. All the performer's understanding, preparation, style, craft and art have converged in a single, composed experience.

Composition is balance-in-form. Composition is

realized intention. In performance, composition is the reality and presence of first things.

We are justified--both performer and performed-for-- in measuring the success of performance by the degree of fulfillment of our anticipation of composition.

We all seek it. We have a right to seek it, and it is because of it that we are filled with anticipation whenever the performance appointment is made.

Now, this is quite different from the kind of experience which takes place in the private space of one's household; it is not the kind of experience which television reality terminated in private space produces.

And the convention of image and sound as performance is quite a different matter altogether.

Some of you may feel that not only are my assumptions incorrect, but that the emerging convention of which I speak is not one to question.

This is to miss the meaning, and the danger, I believe.

Images and sounds do not respond.

Images and sounds are incapable of engaging with us.

Images and sounds are unaware of our presence.

Only those responsible for the organization and presentation of images and sounds are capable of response, engagement or awareness.

So dense and complex has our culture and television

reality become, that the means available for contacting these image and sound managers is extremely limited.

The moving pictures of another person appearing on the surface of our television monitors and the sounds emanating from their speaker systems--even when delivered into our private households "live"--are not in the relationships to us which is our common, person-to-person experience in or out of the performance form. We may respond to the picture and the voice-like sound any way we care to. These will not take notice of us. We are not, nor can we be, present among these first things, or first presences, which characterize their original environment.

A principal characteristic in the reality of image and sound is an incapacity for response. No matter how faithful and lifelike the representation may be, there is no way for living presence to be acknowledged.

In television reality, there is no he, nor is there any she. There is only it.

Images in television reality are not first things in the generally regarded sense. These images are representations of some other process or condition. The visual representation of another human conformed to a piece of glass by electrical means is not the original human. It is a picture. When these pictures exist in a series consonant with the time it takes for the series to happen, an appearance of the original human being

occurs. When this sequence, in turn, is reinforced by what appears to be original sound, then a new reality, itself, appears: television reality.

For the purposes of this present conjecture, I am proposing that television reality is closer to the reality of theater and motion picture experience, and that this is linked to a marketplace tradition now centered in the American home.

The images and sounds of television reality are its. These are being manipulated by those who draw their methodology from the theater, motion picture and business practices.

Our human organisms must be disconcerted, for television reality occurs in the privacy of our homes. There are he-looking and she-looking its, and there are he-sounding and she-sounding it-sounds.

This sound deserves careful consideration in the context of these speculations, for, in architectural volumes, sound's 360° accessibility must certainly tend to dominate the two-dimensional illusionary visual substance of television reality.

How common it has been for all of us to have mistaken recorded--or represented--sound for natural sound in our private space. The radio or television is over, we are not in the room, and suddenly we hear the telephone ring or someone seems to address us. We respond in the normal way, only to discover that there is none there to whom we may respond. Recorded

or broadcast, sound experience travels a one-way street. It does not respond to our response.

Now, here is an edge we must learn to acknowledge and appreciate:

We have accepted the convention of two-dimensional visual images in public space, the experience of motion pictures. Included in the experience is the actor, the narrative and the lifelike three-dimensionality of sound.

Now, it is clear that we are being taught to accept the convention of two-dimensional visual images and three-dimensional sound images in private space, the experience of television. However, included in this experience, we are asked to accept not only actors, narratives and lifelike three-dimensional sound, we are also asked to accept non-actors, non-narratives, and, persistent still, the lifelike natural sound.

Adding to the density of this matter, commercial managers have designed their messages and experiences in such a way that we are confronted with an unusual new combination of stimuli, namely, actors and narratives designed to appear as non-actors and non-narratives. Underlying (or dominating) this is the continuous sound of natural life filling our private space.

Let us think more carefully about this sound element. Wherever we have air, we have sound. Sound is in our homes, our private household, our private spaces. Sound is all pervasive in the habitats of human beings.

Technical means discovered in relatively recent times makes it possible for sound records of reality to be made, which, in turn, can be played back. This playing back occurs in three-dimensional volumes. So refined has the recording and playback technology become, that the played-back sound can mingle with non-recorded sound, and one cannot always distinguish the differences between the two. Such choice rarely exists, because we generally appreciate the context in which the played-back sound is given.

We can recall the early Mercury Theater radio broadcast, which Orson Welles and his company performed, when many people in the eastern part of the United States panicked because of the sound impression they had that Martians were landing on our planet.

Radio sound and telephonic sound can be distressing when we do not understand the context in which it is employed. When we do, and the context is repeated sufficiently to become convention, we can learn to live with it.

Indeed, for many, radio sound mingles with the other sounds of private space from daylight to dark.

Some of us still strain our minds to deal with simple telephonic sound. (How troublesome it is to have a clever, actor-like friend who speaks from another space the sounds and inflections of someone else. A moment of tension, sometimes fear, passes through us when, listening from our private space through the telephone earphone, we hear the represented sound of a voice we had not thought to hear.)



Many of us still stutter when calling someone whose sound we anticipate; we, indeed, hear that sound, but discover that it is a record--and the record asks us to pause a moment, then speak for its later hearing.

Another troublesome sound moment, which frequently occurs today, is that which includes the sound of someone no longer living, but referred to by a radio host as still existing in time present.

However, here, again, we learn to identify the contexts, and these being sufficiently repeated without apparent harm, we adopt them as convention.

The sounds of two persons speaking via telephone are not the original sounds, they are a technical duplication of the original. We have learned to accept this convention.

The so-called live broadcast of sound is not the original, either. It, too, is a technical duplication. We have learned to live with this convention as well.

It is important for us to recognize that duplication technology is what it is and that its capacity to duplicate faithfully is of a very high order.

What we hear, be it a record or a live transmission through air or cable, will always tend to dominate its two-dimensional visual counterpart in private, three-dimensional space.

What is being referred to here as television reality is an experience composed of sights and sounds which is delivered into our private households; and though we are referred to by

them, the deliverers, as "viewers," the sense of the new convention resides deeply and, perhaps, dominantly in its sound. A conventional television broadcast rarely makes sense without its sound. It does make sense, more often than not, without its picture.

So--it would seem "senseless" to think about the images of television reality as they are delivered to the privacy of our households, without appreciating the relationship and significance of sound to this newer convention.

All of this deserves the most careful examination, if you feel there is any relevancy in my assumptions, for what I am asking that we attend to--television reality--may be separating us out from one another in a most profound and (possibly) disastrous way.

We may be giving up our capacities for response to authors so distant and alien to our own personal intentions that we may never be able to make contact with them.

Author and authority are one. Citizens of a democratic republic cannot afford distant authorities. The evolutionary processes which have led to democratic culture are aligned with principles which give us in our private households the principal authority for our acts; for what we do.

We cannot afford unclarity about actors and narratives, about non-actors and non-narratives which are shaped as actors and narratives, nor about the central intent of those whose

professional nourishment derives from marketplace traditions and the theater.

Yet, for a large (thus, important) portion of every day all over America, millions of private households are filled with sights and sounds of actors and non-actors pseudo-performing in narrative or disguised narrative-like ways.

We sit and move in these it-presences responding, but unseen and unheard.

I urge that we patiently examine this moment. We may discover that this unique condition persists (and is strengthened) by not only our lack of understanding what is and what is not performance, but, also, by our misunderstanding concerning the importance of sound with respect to sight.

Let us return to the performance question.

Is there, perhaps, something in our nature which seeks the "inspired" performance?

If so, every day millions of us may be sitting before our television sets anticipating one that cannot occur.

We may be in the grip of sophisticated manipulative forces respecting this one aspect of human behavior.

And even it cannot persist outside a meaningful and trusted context.

This, somehow, the managers and producers appear to understand; therefore, meaning, trust and context seem to dominate their conscious efforts to satisfy this anticipation.

But the performance cannot occur. Thus, added to their conscious effort is the enforcement and reenforcement of a new convention which displaces the old.

Let us step back to speculate on the steps leading to this new convention.

To do so, we might, first, speculate about the nature of performance, itself.

Threading our way back from the television pseudo-performance in our private households, we can perceive in the distant past the rites, rituals, commemorations and celebrations of our ancestors, both Eastern and Western.

We can recognize the moment when the formal performance emerged; when poet and author and narrative and actor united to perform. In the recognition, we can see the magical line, be it a circle--or a proscenium--separating the performers and the performed-fors.

Subsequently, yet not so distant as to be altogether removed, we can detect the outlines of the theater, both as architecture and as formal principle.

Not so distant--and certainly less removed--we "see" the beginning of the motion picture experience.

From such beginnings as we know, we can perceive one convention existing with another in public space. We have both these conventions present, and we anticipate amongst them both.

It is possible that in the distant past, the first

inspired performances were the result of what we have come to call "revelation." It may be this which we anticipate most.

If this be true, surely, in those early hours of cultured man, part of the anticipation must have been fulfilled by being in the presence of those enacting or presenting the revelation.

At any rate, our earliest memories of formal performance included performers and anticipating performed-fors sharing common space and time. That experience has had a long history, and it has been a convention of long-standing significance. It is only in recent times that this convention has been modified by one which has no such requirement.

Motion picture experience does not require that performers and performed-fors share common space and time, though what we consider the most worthy of this most recent convention does draw our anticipation, and probably for the same reasons: the enactment and presentation of revelation.

We can anticipate inspiration but in motion picture experience, we must give up the privilege of being in the physical/psychological presence of those who have formed the inspired performance. Not only have we denied ourselves the privilege, we have denied ourselves the spiritual sustenance as well.

Presence has been replaced by image and sound.

At this juncture, we approach a very subtle matter: Sound appears to remain the same as before; only sight has changed.

However, even so, presence has undergone a massive change: A recorded "performance" does not permit performers and performers to interact; we cannot respond to one another. Thus, an important quality of inspired performance (revelation) is certainly modified and, perhaps, denied us.

We hear in the old, natural way, but we do not hear one another.

We must be clear about this change.

To jump quickly forward to television performances in private space, one can appreciate the enormous self-consciousness of producers who insist on "live" audiences and "lifelike" laugh, or sound, tracks.

In order for visual image and sound to be managed in architectural, public space, managers and producers of motion picture experience have had to rely upon recorded experience.

There is no such condition as a live motion picture.

Actors and narrative authors in motion picture experience may be less essential performers than those whose task it is to shape the record, namely, those who select and edit. They may have become the dominant performers.

And it is at this connection that we may fruitfully encounter television.

However, to do so, we must be very clear about something that seems to consistently elude us: The human audial visual content of television reality includes both actors and narratives--and non-actors and non-narratives; and it is the tension between these two genres and their employment by those

who design, manage and produce the experience which can make television reality a threat to other experience occurring in private households.

There are no performances on television monitor surfaces nor emanating from their speaker systems. There are only records of what might have been in the first instance, an event that had such formal characteristics. This is true even if we are informed that the experience we are attending to is happening "live." It is certainly not happening in our living room, our private living space. What is occurring in that highly specialized and unique environment is a carefully shaped, selected representation of the original; and the experience is one composed of images and sounds.

What is becoming threatening to our very nature, perhaps, is this employment as a dominate content of our lives. This can become especially severe if this content, itself, is dominated by theatrical and business practice. Our unclarity about performance makes it possible, then, for the shapers and selectors to so conform the record that it appears to be an original reality, a first thing.

It appears that a convention is being established in which performance is composed of recorded images, instead of non-recorded images, and, of course, shapers (or managers) can appropriately conform experience as if it were non-performance merely by appearing to be dealing with first things.

Thus, in the private living spaces of contemporary

culture (which include television monitors), unsuspecting "first thing seekers" (which include all of us) are being led away from our own capacities--toward reliance upon others; or, in the most severe instances, toward reliance upon surrogate authorities.

In the public spaces known as motion picture theaters, performance is entirely composed of visual and aural imagery. Yet, even these experiences, formal though they may be, cannot be accurately described as performances. So, it is at this junction that the unclarity must have begun.

It is the term "public space" which needs clarification first.

Public space, as the term is being employed in connection with performance, is that place where publics meet. They do so because of a set of assumptions and expectations they have concerning what will occur there. If these assumptions and expectations (anticipations) are satisfied by the occurrence there, the public space is defined, and can be attended to within its definition. Its context has been confirmed again and again by experience.

One assumption, which repeated experience has confirmed, is that which occurs there will always occur in the context of visual and aural imagery.

The fact that motion picture theaters are an historical extension and modification of the so-called "living theater" (where performances do, indeed, occur) has made it possible for publics to accept the term "performance" as a



description of the motion picture experience.

Thus, with the advent of television, the term "performance" as a description of certain living theater-like, motion picture-like experiences seemed to be appropriate as part of the assumptions and expectations accruing to the newer medium.

We, the attendants, may have failed to appreciate, however, the significant difference which image and sound in public space and image and sound in private space manifests.

Assumptions and expectations relevant to our private spaces differ markedly from those respecting public spaces, or, at least, one would hope that this were true.

It is the character of form that defines the difference primarily.

When I employ the terms "actor" and "public space," I do so in the following sense:

A generally accepted norm for those whom we describe as actors is that they have prepared themselves to be performers in theatrical contexts; that their intention is to perform, and that this intention is widely known.

That they formally function in relationship to a prepared script, that they rehearse their role with others in this same context, and that they are skillfully managed by a director whose function it is to create a theatrical experience to be performed in a public place.

That this public space is designed, or its intention is organized, to place the actors and the narrative on one

side of a mythic line and the audience on the other.

Given this definition, I must say, again, I believe that actors and narratives are inappropriate for our private households as a general rule, and their activities are anti-theatrical to the kind of experience we usually regard as appropriate for these private and personal environments.

Healthy individuals do not engage or exchange as actors in private space. They are present and being as themselves. This is the form of experience in a healthy household. There are no actors and no performances. A healthy household is not a living theater or the motion picture theater. It is the home of living humans being.

Without realizing it, we seem to have applied these public space assumptions and expectations to the television medium. Since the television set occupies a portion of our private space, the assumptions and expectations accruing to public space may have been accepted as new convention. It would not be surprising if we have done this.

At any rate, it is apparent that the managers and shapers of television experience have assumed some such likelihood as this. They produce theater-like, motion picture-like experience in our private spaces.

What we and they, together, have failed to appreciate is the enormity of this act as new convention.

Let us return to the junction where misunderstanding

may have begun: the motion picture theater. It is in this place where both theater and image meet. Reflection will reveal why images presented in this place are thought of as performance. This will be quite relevant because, surely, it is obvious how related, in one sense, is the television monitor's visual surface and the motion picture screen.

We must step back in history one step behind motion pictures experience, however, for its parent, the theater, presented it with two important gifts: the narrative and the actor. It is because of these two remarkable inheritances that the experience which occurs in motion picture theaters is almost always described as performance. If we can capture the relevancy of this connection to contemporary conventional television distribution, we will move forward much more clearly.

Narrative and actor: The principal link between theater and motion pictures. Image and sound as performance in motion picture theater subsequently links itself to television.

Unfortunately, the popular misconception arises from the lack of distinction between public space and private space, and is further advanced by lack of understanding of the formal character of performance.

Narrative is story telling.

Actors are the personification of characters in the story.

When the two occur in performance, publics are witnessing live theater.

When the two occur in motion picture theater, publics are witnessing images and sounds of actors and their narrative environments as recorded phenomena. The former embodies the performance form. The latter does not.

Both occur in public space.

In only the rarest kind of circumstances do either occur in private (or household) spaces, and, in those rare instances, the household space is reorganized to conform to performance form.

The formal relationship of actor and narrative is not appropriate to private (or household) space without significant psychological and architectural modification.

Actors and their formal ways are not appropriate to private space.

Non-actors performing as images are even more inappropriate, particularly when those occupying private (household) space are unclear about whether the human images are participating in a narrative-like environment, or whether or not it is a shaped experience.

This is unfortunate, for until we pointedly and precisely mark the difference between reality and a record of managed or shaped reality, we may ultimately suffer a more severe dislocation than we now do concerning image and that significance it represents.

Many feel that this is not something about which to be seriously concerned. I believe we are simply not paying attention and, continuing this way, we may be forced to discover

one day that all experience for us has become a metaphor, a symbol, a surrogate for something else. First things will have seemed to disappear. Only authors as managers of images and sounds will carry the seeds of reality. We will have become utterly dependent upon their authorizations of reality.

We may be close to this condition at the present moment, particularly with respect to television; indeed, so close that we often are unable to know the difference between news and theatrics, between the dead and the living, between what is being sold to us and what we genuinely need.

The new convention of television reality is ubiquitously present. It satisfies many; troubles others. However, it is present and real. Whether the assumptions and speculations herein expressed can be validated by others is something only others can know.

There are those who might argue that were it to change, our economy might suffer. There are many who feel that flow of information has been increased; thus, our personal knowledge enhanced. Others have found its programs satisfying entertainment. Many feel that without its record of cultural events, they would never have experienced such beauty. It is claimed that many Americans are better off because of it.

One's view of the truth is less often one's own than we care to acknowledge. Be that as it may.

Television does exist in our private spaces. That means that its reality is present there, also. We live with its images and sounds of authorities and pitch men; of men and women of careful judgment, of statesmen and truth seekers and manipulators, of showmen and women, of actors and theatrics. We coexist with images and sounds of fantasies of whatever realities bestir us. Whatever its passing program may be, it is rare that such is not employed to sell us something else-- perhaps a car, perhaps a mouthwash, perhaps an idea someone feels it is important for us to have. Its presence is accepted, sometimes grumbled about, sometimes chided, sometimes cheered.

Images and sounds of men and women we shall never meet pervade the environment of our private household with more regularity, with more frequency, with more invitation than the very friends we say we cherish but whom we rarely see and hear. Our newest invitation is the snapping of a switch, the turning of a dial.

All over America, as the sun sets and the lights of night appear, a blue and colorful rectangle begins to glow. It lights our living rooms, our playrooms, our kitchens and our bedrooms. Night after night we sit amongst surrogate acts of performers and pseudo-performers. We anticipate performance which will never take place. The images of men and women cannot see us, they cannot hear us. Someone knows we are there because a statistical system has applied meaning to our household. We are not even images and sounds. We are a number

which has no end; the same its as they:

Anticipating and unfulfilled.

You may not agree with my description of television reality. Be that as it may.

You must agree, however, that an enormous change has occurred since television evolved in our lives in the late 40's and early 50's and, further, that it is likely that television has taken a dominant position in our private circumstances.

Whether or not current television reality will change, is a question left to the future.

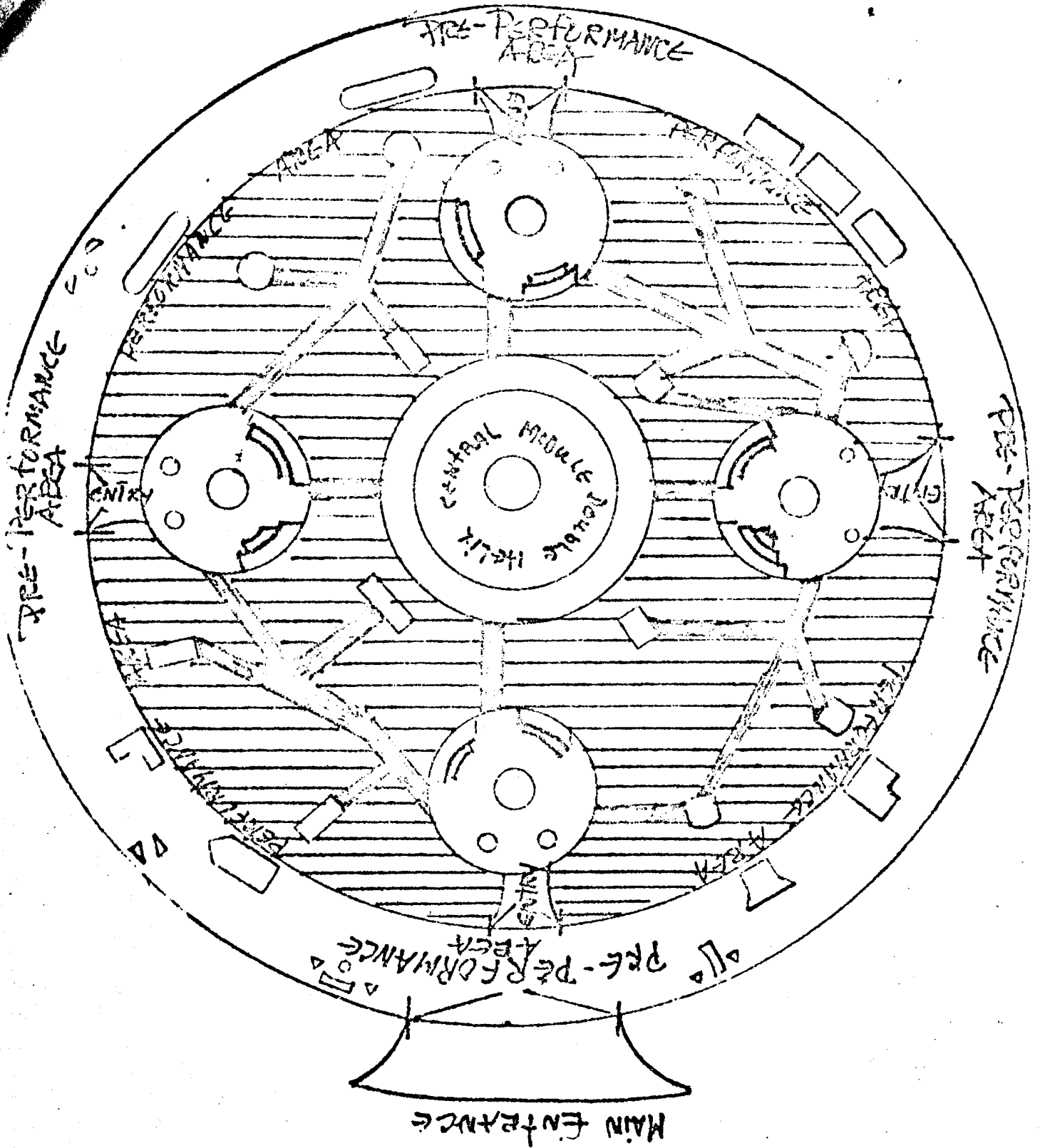
However, there is a possibility which is available to us if we care to pursue it. In this newer possibility, we can combine our innate appetite for performance and the exquisite technology which television has given us. In this newer possibility, we can experience the reality of images in public contexts more appropriately conformed to electronics, human needs and human nature; and in the new possibilities, we may encounter the wonder of new experience, artfully composed, in an environment of performance proper to truth.

If we care to reach toward our newer possibility, we may discover a new theater of humanity, a new meeting place for aesthetic form, a new invitation for the human spirit.

We may embrace a new myth.

Shall we speculate about that?

S





Suppose the future were today, and such a place existed: a structure of unique design created to house environments for electronic experience and video performance.

A resident company has been performing their work since the beginning of the new year. Eight times a week they have performed, just as in the living theater--six evening and two matinee performances.

Each performance is approximately ninety to 100 minutes; however, those who hold tickets for any may arrive two hours earlier and stay one hour longer, if they care to. Performing artists are guaranteed to be present only during the time the formal experience occurs. They may be present at other times, but performance is the only assured time.

#### PRE-PERFORMANCE AREA

Why anyone should want to appear earlier, or stay later, is because there is much to experience other than the performance, itself.

All conventional terminals for existing broadcast and cable facilities appropriate to the locale are in this place; both sound and sight. News wire services feed into one portion of the facility. In another, film or tape documents made by local groups are available for playback. These documents are changed from time to time, determined by the

producers and the management. If guests have playback facilities at home, they may have a videotape record of what has touched them.

Duplicating machines make it possible for them to make inexpensive copies of the wire service reports, if they care to have them.

One portion of the pre-performance area is designed for playback of specific broadcast history. For instance, in this location, prize-winning commercials are stored and registered through computer terminals. Some of the finest production techniques are in evidence in these examples of broadcast marketing messages and, for some, many of these constitute entertainment of a high order as well.

Also registered in the computer are copies of some of the early, historically important programs broadcast in this--and other--countries. They can be retrieved for playback and enjoyment.

Both these libraries are kept up-to-date. This portion of the building is open to the public, without payment.

In another part of the structure which houses all this activity, guests may sit in comfortable spaces listening to sounds of electronic or traditional recorded music. If they care to, they may purchase audio-tape records of what they hear. This can be accomplished simply by inserting the proper amount of money and activating a recording instrument compatible with their own playback modes at home, and this is designed with sufficient flexibility so they may choose from a number of feeds.

The works of certain video artists are available to those who wish to see and hear them. A room is provided for that service. Playback is simple, since the operation of cassette technology is operative with simple, printed instruction. If they wish a private record, this can be arranged.

There is much to see and do in this place for those who are interested in its maintenance and operation. Visitors' galleries afford visual access to artists and technicians at work, if they care to avail themselves of this.

Even the central performance volume can be seen and heard at certain junctions in the passages that constitute this outer network of rooms and confluences. It is a very attractive and inviting space. Its surfaces fluctuate with moving color and texture. Its sound is an invitation to enter.

However, that entrance is to take place at a later time. That space will contain the climax of the performance.

Four hundred people can be accommodated at each performance; no more.

Some of those who will attend tonight's performance have never had this experience before. They are curious. Many have been there before; not simply at the current presentation, but previous ones. They understand the form. The newcomers do not. They are a little anxious. It is understood that they are expected to participate. They have received the impression that the performance has something to do with television. They have heard that actors and dancers and musicians are also likely to be present. What does all this mean? Will they be treated

tastefully and fairly? Will they be made fools of as has so often happened in the new presentational modes? They will have to wait--and see.

Meanwhile, the structure is designed in an accommodating and inviting way. Sounds from one room to another do not intrude. There are pleasant sitting and resting places.

Music--or, that is at least, sound permeates the air of certain passages. What is so pleasant is that one can modify the sound simply by way of moving in different planes. Indeed, if another can be persuaded to cooperate, various sound configurations can be devised merely by moving bodies along certain axis. The same for light. Light subtly changes with the passage of persons amongst it. One, in the company of others, can devise delightful sound and light combinations. One can do it alone, as well.

One discrete space is especially interesting, for there one not only can make some sophisticated images, but can mix them with himself or his companions; and if one is interested enough--and has the playback technology at home--a recording of what has been generated can be made to take with him.

The performance environment, composed of a series of passageways and enclaves, surround the main performance module. The entrance and exit-ways into the performance environment are limited to four and designed in very special ways.

One cannot pass directly from the street to the

performance area. One enters this environment only by way of the four entry points.

The exact time of performance is not known until the cues in the pre-performance environment are clearly stated. These occur in certain ways.

All who have chosen to appoint themselves to the performance know approximately when it will begin, within--say--ten to fifteen minutes. The passage of time through sight and sound varies slightly from performance to performance. Sights and sounds gradually change from variety to unity. One knows when it begins, for all sight and sound is as if it were one in anticipation.

Only then are the four entrances made clear.

The future is today.

The place exists, and performances of the current work have been taking place since the first of the year--eight each week, just as in the living theater. The performers know their craft. Some have begun to be regarded as artists. Audiences have begun to anticipate the work of certain individuals. They have also come to appreciate the ensemble and its unusual skill in creating certain spontaneous mixes appropriate to the day and the particular audience present.

There is much to anticipate--possibly, even revelation.

## PERFORMANCE CONCEPT

There is a figure, a personality, a presence which is central to this current production. It is from the ancient tradition of the storyteller; Pan-like, prophet-like, poet-like. Its visual and aural presence filters through all the composed experience; sometimes leading, sometimes following, sometimes lost--but one is always conscious of its being present. It is manifest only on monitors, never in the flesh; nonetheless, always in real time. That is to say, it is always capable of being in direct contact with the passing circumstances, whatever they may be.

The company calls him Fool. One may encounter Fool about anywhere, and first does, in the outer environment before entering the performance area.

One might be looking at something occurring on a monitor when Fool appears, superimposed and capable of supplanting that which was previously there. Fool often communicates directly with the observer, commenting on matters shaping the experience of the moment, or on the public life of the day, or on such mundane subjects as what one is wearing, how one looks, the apparent relationship between companions.

Fool has no visual environment other than himself as image. His is not an illusion being transmitted to the monitor. The monitor and Fool are one. What one sees is Fool and nothing else--unless he chooses to and is mixed, himself, with what was previously there or occurring elsewhere. The monitor is Fool's head.

Fool speaks directly to members of the audience and often urges an exchange of dialogue. He asks questions and waits for a reply. If he does not get one, he often presses the point, urging one to respond. Often, in these moments, he is looking straight at you. There is no mistaking; he is talking directly to you, and to no one else.

At other times, Fool addresses the general body, often giving instructions that separate out certain members of the audience from the others. In such instances, again, he is very specific. He tells them precisely what he wants them to do.

He is an actor, make no mistake, and, being a person as ourselves, we may have encountered him on the street or in a public dining place. There, in such circumstances, he is as he is--one of us. On the other hand, should any of us allude to that contact while talking with him on the television monitor, he simply changes, becoming very still--his gaze penetrating and impersonal. He might even change color or texture or, if you persist, he might go away, being replaced with visual noise, snow. Once one enters the building where the electronic experience is to occur, one cannot make contact with Fool in a private sense. He is only a public figure, an actor. Fool is wholly a television reality, but we can respond to one another.

A number of those who have commented on the performance to date have found the quality of Fool somewhat disturbing. As some critics have claimed, "His is a mixed metaphor."

Whether or not he is--or, what he is--Fool is certainly a central figure in the company's performance. The actor who portrays him is gifted. One often cannot detect the difference between his skill at spontaneous interchange and his skill for memorized line. The actor employs both. This is especially evident when he muses and reflects on our human condition.

Fool has one whom he frequently encounters in the performance area only. His name is Dark Side, and he is an actor, too, of course. His role is a colorful one, indeed, for it changes throughout the performance. Previous to entering the performance area, Fool alludes to him, but they never engage one another, except during performance. It is then that members of the audience are asked to gather in a specific place. They are instructed as to where it is and when the interview will take place.

The interview is a unique experience. It is always between Fool and Dark Side. They both appear on television monitors. The room, or niche, or space--or, however one might term it--has a number of television monitors, like sculptures, arranged within it. Fool and Dark Side never appear on the same monitor. Though sound fills all the space, it is capable of being employed in a specific and directional way. Thus, the two may be speaking to one another directly--monitor to monitor; Dark Side's visual presence often moves away to another sculpture. This is frequently preceded by his sound coming from the new place first. We hear his sound in another quarter,



turn and find him revealed there. Though the timbre of his voice remains the same, often his visual character has changed a great deal. Both actors perform this moment with great skill. Pool pursues Dark Side. Dark Side eludes Pool. The climax of their exchange can be both a delight and a shattering experience. Dark Side does not always change character from monitor to monitor, but one is given the feeling in the presentation that it can happen at any moment; and it often does. The climactic accumulation is an unusual audio visual experience, and the electronic sculptures are very much a part of it.

Speaking of electronic sculptures, there are a great variety of these. Some are holographic; most are not.

In the pre-performance area, there is one quarter where one first gets a feel of these sculptures. It is only in the performance area where one truly encounters their integral part in the presentation. In this context, they are frequently quite topical, feeding back visual experience previously recorded in the pre-performance areas. The sculptures do not omit sound in the accepted sense. The room space contains sound, but it is rarely drawn from any single sculpture.

Early in the performance one comes upon them. They are just within each entrance way to the performance area. At these locations, they are especially topical, having placed within them conventional off-the-air television monitors feeding standard fare from the broadcast world beyond. No sound emanates from them, and the sounds which we hear are collages of juxtapositions. Occasionally, pictures and sounds appear

synchronous; most often not. Actual broadcast sound is never present. With respect to their off-the-air feeds, they are purely visual.

The most moving arrangement of these electronic sculptures is integral to the composition which occurs in the central module at the climax of each performance.

This central module is approached and retired along paths of a double helix.

It will be recalled that members of the audience are invited to remain for at least an hour after the performance. It is during this closing interval that one experiences the ebb and flow of passage along the helix--ultimately toward final exit.

The full design of the building is directed toward public experience. At no juncture is there any attempt to simulate the architectural volumes which identify our private spaces, our private households.

The performance is indigenous to the space; it is authentic performance in the sense that it occurs publicly. It is both unlike and like other performance conventions. Its unlike quality derives from the new mixture.

(Some critics have referred to this company's presentation as one of multi-media. It is, indeed, that, but that of a new order. So unique is the character of this presentation experience that, in truth, there is a real question whether any can qualify as critic in the conventional sense. Those who write for newspapers and magazines are experienced in other

matters. This company's performance confronts them with a new order of composition.)

The content of this company's performance can be described as a journey-toward-appointment. The culmination of the journey is "The Appointment," itself, which occurs in the helix volume.

As is characteristic of most journeys, there is a plan. This plan constitutes the known and predictable portions of the company's composition--most of this part of the experience is recorded. However, as with journeys, unpredictable modifications are likely to appear. At junctures where predictability is most likely threatened, the company is prepared to deal with the experience live; and these junctures are composed by space and volume, as well as electronic record. It is precisely the relationship between performer and performed-for at these previously arranged junctures that insures the meeting. In one sense, the company controls the passage; but each performance generates a somewhat different meeting--that is, until the climactic moment in the helix. That moment is very formal, and this the audience comes to know as a result of the less formal experience which precedes it.

Once one enters the performance module, time is managed by the company in a very special way. Time and audience movement are joined by the less formal composition that precedes the climax. Time is managed in both passage and rest. In passage, it takes a certain amount of time to get from one place to another. During rest, or non-passage--when one has arrived

at a place to which he has chosen to go--or accepted direction--another amount of time passes. It is very discrete. It is at convergences and confluences where the time it takes to flow from one place to another is affected, for choices are offered; and what choice one takes creates, in turn, alternative choices for the company composing the experience. For instance, both Fool and Dark Side occasionally present themselves at junctions; it is their individual capacity for persuasion which effects one's choice at these moments. Fool always retains the capacity to deal with the audience in real time. He can contact individuals or everyone directly. Dark Side, on the other hand, is, as always, a record. He has one advantage, however--more production design has gone into his making. He does not have to rely on spontaneity. He is very thoughtfully presented, as a good play might be. The audience soon learns the difference. At first, they don't know, but they learn quickly. If Fool has any advantage, it is that over continuous performances he has developed persuasion skills and, knowing what Dark Side is recorded to do and say, he can sharpen audience anticipation. He has memorized the roles that Dark Side performs, but some among the audience might find him less colorful and exciting. He is always the one he is. He has no decor or costume to assist him.

At these junctions, both are dealing with the appointment. Each is trying to persuade the audience to take the journey he feels is most appropriate. Fool wants to prolong the journey in order that more will be experienced. Dark Side

wants the formal culmination in the helix as quickly as possible. The one rule of the game the actor performing Fool lets the audience understand quickly is that he regards the formal performance as highly as does Dark Side. He never denigrates that experience. He simply insists that the audience will enjoy it more, find it more meaningful, if it permits itself more experience.

It has been reported that the company thoroughly enjoy the meetings at these functions. Indeed, once audience members locate the company in the mixing center, they can relate to one another visually. They can never speak to one another directly, however.

The mixing center is a lesser module suspended in the helix performance module proper. Through gradual development of light changes, its physical character becomes apparent after one has entered the labyrinth of the performance module. It cannot be seen when one is located in the pre-performance areas, except in the prescribed visitors' galleries available before performance.

Fool has been described as a storyteller. This he does; sometimes, traditionally, by gathering as many as will around him. Other times, he involves a small group in a brief rigmarole, extending their and his storytelling with sights and sounds which emanate from monitors around him. This is an example of one kind of experience he urges the travelers toward appointment to take before they continue their journey.

An example of Dark Side's urging-on might be his

promise to show the audience something very special if they will follow his path; an inference, perhaps, of exotic images usually forbidden.

One soon learns that he need not follow either of their suggestions, but may step aside from the flow and enter enclaves separate from the main path; more introspective, more meditative in character. In these environments, electronic experience is very simple and very formal. It may include a new kinesthetics which makes it possible for the audience to see live dancers, as well as their seemingly self-composed images, on combinations of monitors and large electronic projection surfaces. It may include no other visual experience than formal nonfigurative shapes, colors and textures. In either case, the sound is always gentle, a combination of natural and synthesized. These enclaves are like small theaters--directional and comfortably appointed. Each of the presentations are short in length and narrative based, like brief morality structures; even the nonfigurative images hint at story. Between each event, the space becomes nearly lightless and silent. In the distance, one can hear the others. The appointment is still to be met.

#### PERFORMANCE BEGINS

Passage from the pre-performance to the performance area can be made through any one of four entry ways: openings as at the quarter points of a compass.

The experience one encounters is the same at each one, that is, insofar as the company have composed it. As described previously, one's first encounter is with the electronic sculptures playing back feeds from broadcast and cable sources in the community; vision with no synchronous sound. The multiple track sound which first greets the visitor in the performance area is a collage of juxtapositions. These four entry ways lead to similarly configured room volumes capable of accommodating approximately 100 persons each. They are irregularly formed, though generally circular. Tiers of varying heights are placed asymmetrically around the room. Some of these have chairs and sofas; others, pillows. One can sit or stand where he wishes, including accommodating himself to the floor. He can move around, if he wishes. One need not stay put.

In these spaces, a multiple track composition is presented which the company has entitled Journey of Infants. One cannot tell for certain, but there must be at least four video tracks. Clearly, the sound that is heard is quadrophonic.

The multiple monitor visual experience appears in a large sculpture located in the very center of the room. Apparently, all the combination of video tracks can be seen from any perspective.

It is difficult to describe, accurately, the content of Journey of Infants, for it is the relationships of the monitors to one another, to the sound, and to the people gathered, which constitutes the content. At any given instant, focusing

on any single monitor, what one sees is a carefully composed moving picture series displaying the concentrated efforts of a child learning to perform a specific task; but such single view is, of course, insufficient, for it is the mixture and the accumulation of these, synchronized with rich sound, which constitutes the composition.

The piece is about ten minutes in length, followed almost immediately by the appearance of Fool announcing an interview with Dark Side to occur in the same room.

In the time span which separates the two events, monitors reveal an elaborate, moving texture and color design dealing with the word imagination. The sound changes to a shifting playback perspective concerning a child learning to speak the word, syllable by syllable.

Then, Dark Side supplants this by appearing at the top of the electronic structure.

The first encounter between the two is a pastiche of insult and invective, much as in the old Punch and Judy show; but, in a short while, the interview gets underway.

At the beginning, the audience is unable to tell whether it is a so-called live or a recorded interview. It soon becomes clear, however, because Fool in his real time capability introduces himself into the playback in other monitors in the sculpture.

His association with the audience at these points is much like the old theater device of "the aside." He comments on what is occurring, elaborates and invites audience participation.



This is often quite a challenge, for Dark Side's production tape has been composed at certain points to give the illusion of nonaction. At such moments, Dark Side seems to stare steadfastly out of the monitor. Fool plays with this. It is in this association with the audience where real time and recorded time become subtly manifest. Which is which?

The walls of the passageways, or labyrinth, are like opaque milk glass. Both controlled ambient light and projected design change this surface in passage. More directed to performance imagery, however, is the appearance of geometric shapes on this surface. Within the shapes are specific, composed images passing as does the audience-in-passage.

Though each of the shapes may at first appear in an asymmetric way, as one gets closer to the formal helix performance space, these apparently disparate shapes and contents gradually conform to one another symmetrically, and the emergence of specific content becomes evident.

No matter by what route audience members traverse the distance from entry way to formal performance area, the visual experience occurring in the opaque walls is the same.

The company calls this portion of the performance The Communication Trap.

It, too, of course, is composed, and in such a way that certain redundancies occur in passing.

The experience commences immediately after leaving

the rooms in which Journey of Infants and the first interview took place.

Ambient light accented by projected texture hints at the previous experience. As the first of the geometrics appear, the hint is expanded to include portions from previously seen images. Though the shapes can appear and reappear in different alignments, the content within them, though recognizable from the previous material, is motionless. Gradually, motion is introduced.

But, this is not all.

Images recorded previously in the pre-performance area are mixed with these selected from Journey of Infants and visual puns played off modifications of the word imagination.

In the early part of this, members of the audience often discover moving pictures of themselves. These may be pictures of a group of friends standing talking to one another. Since no synchronous sound exists, their words cannot be heard, or another series of pictures may be of individuals staring straight ahead. Fool occasionally appears in conversation with an audience member. We cannot hear what is being said, of course.

The sound portion of this passing experience is composed of, what appears to be, three basic textures: natural animal/bird/elements-sound, natural urban sound, and voices reading from selected writings commonly shared by both Eastern and Western cultures.

Throughout this passing, junctures and intersections are encountered where one is confronted by the persuasions of Fool and Dark Side. These are interruptions to the basic sound which commences again when members of the audience proceed along paths of their choices. Choices are made, stories and rigmaroles are shared. For those who follow Dark Side, erotics and sensuous audial/visual experiences await them; for others, quiet, formal presentations are experienced and enjoyed.

The company has shaped the passage in such a way that the audience spends about fifty to sixty minutes making the traverse.

Of course, at any point in passage or in enclave, the audience can remain where they choose to be.

At the fifty-to-sixty-minute mark, throughout the area (be it passage, theater or enclave), all visual and auditory experience slowly fades below levels of perception, to be replaced by another configuration. The fade is so measured that as much as four or five minutes pass before its counterpart cross-fade takes over. This counterpart is a low, rumbling surge which can be hardly detected at first. Little by little, it replaces all sound which has preceded it. It has a visual companion which, in the same gradual increase, pervades all sight. In light, color and texture, it is the visual counterpart of the low, rumbling surge.

Whether one is close to, or distant from, the helix, this change is a cue that the most formal part of the performance

is about to commence, and means are given those who may have lingered longer in any one place as to how to get to the most formal area.

One approaches through any one of four entry ways at the top of the helix, around which a broad, circular balcony has been constructed. From this circular plane, one can descend the helix to the farthestmost plane below. There is a similar means to ascend from below, when one wishes to. These are the paths of the double helix.

Standing on the circular plane, the audience is directly adjacent to the suspended mixing center module. For the first time, audience and performers have direct eye contact with one another.

All electronically generated sound and sight is an extension of the cue previously given. All aesthetic surfaces are full of color, texture and moving figures. All the room volume contains the sound.

Audience members may move around the balcony or descend, whichever they desire to do. If they choose descent, seats are provided along the inner edge of the passageway. The same is true if they stay above. Seats are situated around the rim of the balcony and, below, in a circular manner, around the entire perimeter in four quadrants separated by aisles.

As people arrange themselves wherever they care to, light and sound gradually diminish, with attention focused on the suspended mixing center module. When all light has been eliminated, except that which lights the mixing center

from without and within, near silence is centered. This is sustained for, perhaps, a minute, or so, save for the sounds of the people, themselves, and their room ambience. Light in and without the mixing center is extinguished.

The most formal and final portion of the performance is near at hand. The sound of a high frequency electric motor fills the room. The company calls this part of the performance The Appointment. A footnote in the printed program describes this as a "Celebration of Presence."

When the light reappears, the mixing center has disappeared.

Light is discreetly arranged to illuminate the ring of people around the top, those lining the circular descent of the helix and those who have situated themselves on the lowest level. It is precisely in this order that the audience appears to one another. They are revealed as a travelling light that first encircles the top and descends the spiral to circle the group at the bottom. When this is completed, light immediately continues to the surface behind those in the lowest plane and reverses its path in ascent to encircle the wall surface behind those on the balcony rim.

The encirclement and descent of light is flesh colored. Its continuation and ascent is blue.

Still no sound is heard, save the ambience and the people, themselves.

Precisely as the light completes its traverse, a sound like wind chimes is heard--and from the ceiling directly above, where the mixing center had previously rested, a shimmer

of light descends straight down in a column to form a bright circle on the lowest plane.

The light illuminating the walls behind the audience and that which has travelled the outer surface of the helix is extinguished.

The blue light left to illuminate the people is dimmed.

The celebration is begun.

The sound of someone approaching is heard. It travels behind the audience, for, whoever it is, is employing the exit passageway of the double helix to enter.

When he steps into the circle of light on the lower plane, it is Fool's Dark Side whom we recognize. He is dressed as one of us; though, previously, we have seen him only on television monitors garbed for whatever particular role he was performing at the moment.

He stands in the center of the pool of light, turning steadily toward all who are gathered around and above them, then speaks:

"I have entered from the exit I hope you will want to take when the time is appropriate. The way I have come is the way out."

He studies his audience for a moment and asks, gracefully, "Shall we meet? Shall we fulfill our appointment?"

Fool appears on monitors which are situated in the ramp walls. His face is friendly and smiling. He appears to look around at the audience gathered, then addresses himself to Dark Side:

"Let's meet."

Dark Side: "Thank you."

Fool: "Of course."

Fool slowly fades to snow. This visual noise continues.

Dark Side observes this, turns, and retires from the circle through a door which opens on a wall behind him. Its opening is accompanied by the opening of three others, each occupying points delineating the four quarters of the compass. Light floods the four aisle entry ways.

The monitors continue to glow with snow, but, concurrently, are expanding to become the total inner surface of the helix ramp.

In the center of the column of light from above, where previously Dark Side had stood, a holographic three-dimensional volume appears--like an altar. Its appearance coincides with the disappearance of the light from above.

And the appointment is met.

A journey toward appointment has culminated in The Appointment, a celebration of presence.

This is the most formal part of the performance and fulfills a period of time approximately 25 to thirty minutes in length.

It is an evocation, a commemoration, and is composed of light and sound and living human beings performing as actors, dancers and musicians. They both mix and are mixed with electrically generated images and sounds. Even the mixing

module ascends and descends as did the deux ex machina of old.

This is a new form of performance in which surfaces, volumes and human movement identify the new aesthetic. Images represent images. Living humans represent humans. Human sound and nonhuman sound are clearly differentiated. That which is recorded is known to be that. That which is not is clearly present.

The Appointment is a celebration of life, and all the participants--both performer and performed-for--are present together in time and place.

If the performance is inspired, revelation is possible.

At this point, my narrative description ends. Now it is the imagination of others who may complete the appointment, if they care to.

The time is today, not a possible tomorrow.

The young people are amongst us--reaching forward from the midst of a culture which has named them "the television generation." They have the same capacity for skill and taste that previous generations have had. The tools are available. The money is always available, and a rich history of performance supports our natural anticipation of composition.

Respecting our needs to meet in the spirit of performance, how shall we continue with these new materials and new possibilities?

How shall we live with electrically generated images



and sounds? Only as television reality, or are there other ways?

We come from close and distant places of the mind. We come to meet, bringing with us our private edges, our private contexts and our natural yearning that our journey be confirmed.

We come for the sake of presence, else we would have stayed at home.

We come to conjecture and to test the reality we carry, to re-involve the dawns of human being. We come to be together.

We come to dignify the grueling street and the marketplace, to tender our caring, to wonder a little while.

We come for love.

We come because it is not enough that we should only work to sustain our bodies, that it is not enough that we must be eternally reminded of our innate violence.

We come because we need to know that others, too, seek toward the outer limits of the human spirit; that others, too, await the revelations.

We come, hoping to meet a friend.

A true, living performance of any art is a special experience, and one who has been present on such occasions has enjoyed a rare and treasured gift. A few moments in one life-span generates a high order of sustenance. Though one cannot live on these alone, there is nourishment in these experiences that can be found nowhere else.

Performing artists of stature carry this nurturing ingredient in their craft and being.

We will always come to meet them and their work.

We have needs which only they can serve and satisfy.

Television reality has limited us to limited visions.

Television reality is unresponsive.

Television reality, as we presently experience it, atrophies and withers our human nature.

If we accept its convention without question, we may give ourselves away.

This would be a tragically inhuman act.

There are other ways to experience television reality. We must search for them.

And we must search for them today.

Time is passing and we are troubled; our culture is troubled. Television reality has contributed much to our distress.

It certainly must be clear, now, that we are dealing with a different formal matter. The substance of our "possible" performance has not greatly changed. We are still dealing with a human being with other humans being.

What, specifically, I have attempted to do is point out the uniqueness of electronic material as a means of formulating a newer way of expressing our wonder of one another.

If this is meaningful to you, you may now speculate

about new myths to perform and new environments in which they may happen, or you may care to think about process and continuum and the nonlinear world of dream.

That I must leave to you.

However, before I let you go, I must ask you to think with me about one more important matter, namely, the education of young people to these ends.

No longer is the old television curricula enough; no longer is the theater's. If we were to follow the path I have suggested, we would find that a newer synthesis is required, and it is about that which I ask you to think with me.

Let us assume that that of which I have written has become part of the convention: How will we educate our young in such a context?

I believe there are sufficient questions inherent in the descriptions to point us forward.

Clearly, the performing unit is of a different order.

The individuals who comprise it express themselves on two technical levels: One level of the performance includes composed recorded content; the other includes spontaneous, real-time composition. Both levels include aural and visual image. Both actual living presence and recorded imagistic presence constitute a portion of their work.

Sight and sound appear as elements in both a theatrical and an electronic context.

Electric cameras are employed, and so are the objects of film cameras. These imply a knowledge of both tape and film techniques.

Words are listened to. Someone has composed the words, but the writing portion of the composition is related to other elements interdependently.

Often, words are part of music. Often, words are the music. However, music composition is employed as well. Who makes this portion of the larger performance? Does the term "writer" apply properly? Does the term "musical composer"? Irrespective of how this individual is named, his knowledge is no longer exclusively one or the other.

Who composed the purely nonfigurative graphic images? From whence came his understanding? Undoubtedly, whoever is responsible for these portions must have, at the very least, an understanding of painting, calligraphy and print.

In the brief description I have given, mixing consoles are not far distant from their technical cousins, the computers. Indeed, they no doubt employ computer technology as well. Who has trained these individuals--to think at the speed of electricity?

Indeed, what might be the preparation for such a performance? Is it an electronic education which is necessary? Is it a musical, a mathematical, a psychological?

The actors and dancers are not far distant from their theatrical tradition but at moments in the performance, they, themselves, are mixing themselves (in part) with their own electronic images. From whence came that education?

Who among them has been trained to make appropriate selections of subject matter from the events of our daily lives? Surely, the composition of the performance includes room for

such events. Do traditions of journalism apply in this connection?

What, in passing, is the meaning and significance of image, and who will teach our new performance unit the nuances and sophistications of that subject matter?

Is it not possible to envision a learning environment which prepares those who care to attend for something other than the theater of contemporary television?

Though the broadcast environment clearly dominates the practice of television today, that dominance may diminish in the sense in which we have known it.

Since at least 1967, an incredible change has been occurring, and all over the world--but especially in America--young people are moving television around. It is not the old, exclusive broadcast game any longer.

Whether or not any of this burgeoning tribe turn to a new theater is another question; but given even where they have come to today, there is, practically speaking, no university or college environment of any consequence which takes this change really seriously.

And the old curricula go on and on, while invitations of the young fly like birds beyond the imaginations of the keepers of the gate.