

“Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow) is one of the most important and original artists of the American avant-garde cinema. He was a pioneer of structural filmmaking and ultimately the most incisive ironist of his generation. His films *Wide Angle Saxon* and *On the Marriage Broker Joke* are complex and profound reflections on the historical moment in which the film-maker played a prominent role. In those major works he addresses the issues of aesthetic and moral values within the avant-garde film community.” (P. Adams Sitney, author of *Visionary Film*)

TWO FILMS BY OWEN LAND provides detailed insights into the work of Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow). It features the illustrated scripts to the films *Wide Angle Saxon* (1975) and *On the Marriage Broker Joke as Cited by Sigmund Freud in Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious or Can the Avant-Garde Artist Be Wholed ?* (1977-79), complete with footnotes which untangle their elaborate web of references. Reaching far beyond the two films alluded to in its title, it also includes a new interview, annotated filmography and recent essays by the artist.

TWO FILMS BY OWEN LAND is edited by Mark Webber, and published by LUX and Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna.



TWO FILMS BY OWEN LAND

featuring the complete scripts
for the films *Wide Angle Saxon*
and *On the Marriage Broker Joke*
as cited by Sigmund Freud in *Wit*
and its Relation to the
Unconscious or Can the Avant-
Garde Artist be Wholed?





TWO FILMS BY OWEN LAND

Owen Land
Edited by Mark Webber

Published on the occasion of a LUX touring project in association with Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna, supported by Arts Council England. The films of Owen Land have been preserved by Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna, in co-operation with Anthology Film Archives, New York, Haghefilm, Amsterdam, and Listo-Film, Vienna.

TWO FILMS BY OWEN LAND

Edited by Mark Webber

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The period that interests me the most
Is what came before the after
In other words, Prepost

– Owen Land

“And indeed, it is a great thing to be both a saint and an artist. The one career would seem to dissolve the other, each being in its way an exclusive dedication.”

– Phyllis McGinley (on Fra Angelico)

Carl : Is Stanton a saint ?

Theatre Manager :

We're all saints here; saints, madmen and geniuses.

– Owen Land (from *Undesirables*, a screenplay)

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INTRODUCTION

Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow) is one of the major independent artist filmmakers of the 1960s and 1970s. His films are screened regularly at international museums and festivals, and have featured in influential publications on art and cinema. Alongside Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton and Paul Sharits, he is recognised as one of the most original and important filmmakers of his generation. The unique contribution of Land's work lies in the fusion of intellectual reason and, significantly, the humour that distances it from the supposedly 'boring' world of avant-garde film.

Having explored the basic properties of the celluloid strip itself in early works such as *Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.*, his attention turned to the spectator in a series of 'literal' films that question the illusionary nature of cinema through the use of word play and visual ambiguity. His work often parodies experimental film itself by mimicking his contemporaries and mocking the solemn approach of film theorists and scholars.

His two most complex films are *Wide Angle Saxon*

(1975), in which a man has a moment of spiritual revelation during an avant-garde screening at the Walker Art Center, and *On The Marriage Broker Joke* (1977-79), whose disparate cast of characters include two pandas discussing and making an avant-garde film about the marketing of Japanese salted plums.

Land constructs ‘facades’ of reality, often directly addressing the viewer using the language of television, advertising or educational films. The films *Remedial Reading Comprehension* and *Institutional Quality* propose an alternative logic for a medium that has become over theorised and manipulated. Later works, beginning with *Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present* and *A Film of Their 1973 Spring Tour* draw upon the filmmaker’s experiences with Christianity, but are actually far from evangelistic.

Though concerned mainly with *Wide Angle Saxon* and *On the Marriage Broker Joke*, this book reaches well beyond the ‘two films’ alluded to in its title to provide information on his entire body of work. It was our intention to realign some of the misunderstandings that have built up around his films.

As the filmmaker himself stated in the Film-Makers Lecture Bureau Catalogue No. 1 (1969): “My films are not intended as entertainment or easy viewing. They do not attempt to engage the spectator on an emotional level. Therefore audience reactions are unpredictable, especially during *Diploteratology* or *Bardo Follies*. A showing for the wrong type of audience could be commercially disastrous, though not necessarily without benefit.”

“Two Films By Owen Land” is published on the occasion of “Reverence: The Films of Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow)”, an international touring

retrospective, and together they should provoke new appreciation of Land’s diverse, yet somehow unified, work in film and video. I hope that it will be of benefit to all, not only those who may have followed his career since the 1960s, but also by introducing his works to a new generation of audiences. The book provides valuable insights into the methods and meanings behind what we see on the screen and experience in viewing, though I always believe that it is better to watch films than to read about or discuss them.

During the course of this project, which has developed through an extended exchange of letters and telephone calls, I realised that much of what we might find extraordinary about the films arises out of Owen’s straight-forward rationality. He has completely logical justifications for what at first appears to be obscure or mysterious. Despite this, his unique world-view and cinematic style enables the films to transcend such apparently mundane explanations, and they continue to intrigue and exhilarate me. Though we learn considerably more about his inspirations and references, his position as one of the most enigmatic filmmakers of our time should not be endangered by these revelations.

Some of the dialogue from *Wide Angle Saxon* and *On the Marriage Broker Joke* has been slightly altered for the sake of clarity in the written texts. Unfortunately I have not been able to identify the names of all the actors who appear in these films. If you are able to provide any further information then please email <info@lux.org.uk>

I am particularly grateful to the following people and institutions that have contributed to this project: Ben Cook, Mike Sperlinger and Jackie Holt at LUX for their support on all aspects of the retrospective and book. Alexander Horwath, Brigitte Paulowitz, Georg Wasner and the staff of the Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna, for their work on the films and in preparing the film stills. Paul Abbott for designing this book and the related materials for the tour. George Clark for his assistance and for transcribing the interview. Meredith Allen did the initial transcriptions of the films. Arts Council England's National Touring Programme has provided the funds to make the project possible.

I also appreciate the generous assistance and support of P. Adams Sitney, Peter Kubelka, Jonas Mekas, Robert Haller, Travis Miles and Andrew Lampert at Anthology Film Archives, Dominic Angerame at Canyon Cinema, David Ferguson and the Institute of Unpopular Culture, Shaun Rance at The Kitchen, Juan Vrijs at Haghefilm, Hermann Spengler at Listo-Film, Fred Camper, Malcolm Le Grice, Ted Seth Jacobs, Colin Murray, Friedl Kubelka, Peter Kingsbury, Gloria Moure, Steve Polta and San Francisco Cinematheque, Tony Reveaux, Nick Collins, Eric S. Thiese, Andy Ditzler, Scott MacDonald, William C. Wees, John Matturr, Kristy Matheson, Sharon Gallagher, Martin Whitaker, Harald Lillmeyer, Lindsay Maynard, Andy Vosper and Andrew King at TJ International and all of the curators and programmers that have supported this project from the outset. I apologise to those I have neglected to mention here by name.

Most of all I appreciate the collaboration of Owen Land himself, who, having been tracked down by my persistent detective work for a second time, has generously supported and endorsed this project. He has written the extensive

annotations for the scripts and several new essays specifically for this publication, and participated in the long telephone interview on which much of my original research is based. Our communications over the past year have been insightful and entertaining, and I really appreciate the care and attention that Owen has invested in making this book what it is. I hope that this publication and the revival of his films will inspire him to create new works whether in film or video, painting or writing.

Mark Webber

Owen Land would like to thank Peter Kubelka and the past and present staff of the Österreichisches Filmmuseum.

A message from Owen Land:

“To the person from Ireland who ‘borrowed’ the audiocassette of my lecture in Kyoto: Please return that tape. It’s the only copy I had. Make a duplicate for yourself if you want to, then please mail the original to me c/o LUX, 18 Shacklewell Lane, London, E8 2EZ, England.”

The film retrospective REVERENCE: The Films of Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow) will tour internationally from January 2005. For further details see www.lux.org.uk

WIDE ANGLE SAXON

THE ANNOTATED AND ILLUSTRATED SCREENPLAY

BOY PLAYING VIOLIN	Lloyd Wilson
TV NEWS REPORTER	
NARRATOR	Jack Kairy
EARL GREAVES	Earl Greaves
JOEL, THE SINGER	Joel Chernov
FIRST OFF SCREEN VOICE OF AUDIENCE MEMBER	Zari Harat
SINGER/JESTER WITH PORTATIVE ORGAN	Tom Jaremba
WOMAN LEAVING SHOP (WOMAN AT SINGING LESSON)	Diana Barrie
MALAYALAM SPEAKER	Zari Harat
VOICEOVER ON REGRETTABLE REDDING CONDESCENSION	Michael Snow
OFF SCREEN VOICE OF FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER	Anna O'Cain
OFF SCREEN VOICE OF MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER	
PREACHER	Rick 'Levi' Coghill
DREAMER	Denise Kaprellian
VOICE OF DREAMER	Margo Wickes
VIOLIN PLAYED BY	Tony Conrad
SONG BY LAMB SONG BY	Joel Chernov
CARE CHARMING SLEEP SONG BY	Grayston Burgess
WELCOME BLACK NIGHT SONG BY	Diana Barrie
OPTICAL SPECIAL EFFECTS	Owen Land
TITLES	Kevin Dole
SETS AND COSTUME DESIGN	Owen Land
JESTER COSTUME SEAMSTRESSES	Leah Bowman, Andrea Kalish
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED	Owen Land

Filmed in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; Chicago and Wheaton, IL; Minneapolis and Owatonna, MN; Panama Canal Zone.

For the Panama bloopers, thanks to Barry Gerson, who found them.



Title screen. On the soundtrack, a violin plays a rapidly repeated trill.

WIDE ANGLE SAXON

© 1975 by George Landow

Mid shot of shirtless boy wearing a yellow rain hat and playing the violin. He stands in front of a wall covered with flowery wallpaper and two antique portraits.

“Out of the blue...” is temporarily superimposed over the centre of the screen at the beginning of the shot.¹

Positive and negative of the image is later superimposed. Everything becomes negative except the portraits (the ghosts that were said to haunt this 18th century house).

Cut to TV news footage of reporter standing at the water’s edge, with the Panama Canal behind him.

REPORTER

Panama has been ruled by a military junta since last Fall. The nominal² boss is General ... I just can’t ...

Cut to mid shot of narrator addressing the camera.

NARRATOR

In the film you are about to see all of the events shown really happened, though some are re-enacted.³ This is the story of a man who reads the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew,

1 This text superimposition was planned as part of a special optical effect that was subsequently abandoned. It was not intended to appear in the final film.

2 Nominalism. noun. Philosophy. The doctrine that abstract concepts, general terms, or universals have no objective reference but exist only as names. (The American Heritage Dictionary)

3 Doesn’t a re-enacted event “really happen”?





chapter 19, verse 21. “If you want to be perfect, go now and sell your property and give the money to the poor, you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me.” Some time after reading these words he realises how attached to his possessions he really is, and he determines to do something about it.

Sequence of three different close ups of Earl Greaves, a middle aged man, cleaning the radiator grille of his car. He is mindlessly humming “Care Charming Sleep” by Robert Johnson.

Cut back to narrator addressing the camera.



NARRATOR

The actual moment of conviction comes to him while he is watching an experimental film at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When the film is over he applauds. Yes, out of common courtesy he applauds – as you will soon see for yourself – but it’s important to understand that at the very moment he’s applauding, he’s in the process of making one of the most profound and most difficult decisions of his life. In case you’re wondering why he was reading the Gospel of Matthew in the first place, let me explain. This man, whose name is Earl Greaves, once worked for a television station. Appearing on an interview program were ... Well, here, let me show you ...⁴

⁴ Appearing on this programme were Lamb, an evangelistic singing duo.

Close up of Joel, as he sings a song by his group Lamb.

JOEL

How can I express the anguish of my soul when sin obscures my vision of you, my Holy Lord?

AUDIENCE MEMBER *[off screen]*

Wait a minute! Let's stop and go back to a certain key word ...

Sound and image are rewound and run back and forth to repeat the word "sin".

Text superimposed over image.

"There it is: sin."

AUDIENCE MEMBER *[off screen]*

There it is: "sin". Now that's what I want to be included in this film. It's too important a concept to be taken for granted. Everything else depends on it. I mean, if there were no such thing as sin, salvation wouldn't be necessary.

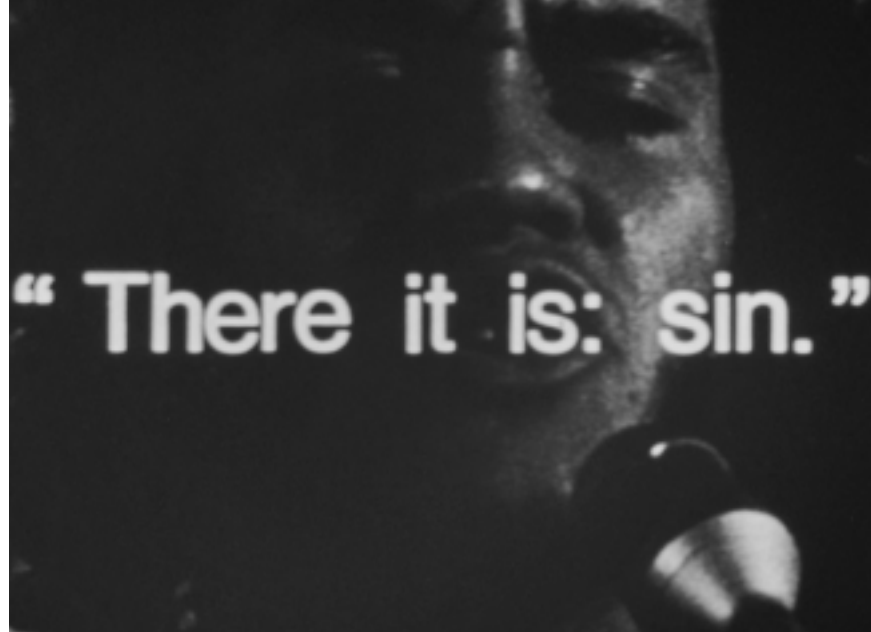
JOEL

Sin ... Sin ... Sin ... Sin ... Sin ...

Cut back to another take from the TV news report.

REPORTER

Since October a military junta has ruled Panama. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is his fellow general Omar ... I cannot remember that guy's name.





Cut to the shining word “SIN” illuminated in the darkness. Sustained organ chord.

Close up of the singer/jester with flames rising from bottom of screen. The flames are first black, then white.

Cut back to news reporter.

REPORTER

A military junta has ruled Panama since last Fall. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is General Omar Torrijos, commander of the National Guard ... [laughter] ... I got it right but I blew it ...

The singer / jester, with his portative organ, sings as white flames rise from below. The flames disappear during the fourth line of the song.

SINGER⁵

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted white; fall like a cloud
In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
Or painful to his slumbers; easy, sweet,
And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
Pass by his troubled senses; sing his pain,
Like hollow murmuring wind or silver rain;
Into thy prince gently, oh gently, oh gently slide,

5 This singer, who viewers have called “The Devil”, “An Angel”, and many other things, is simply what I imagined the singer of this florid song to look like. I designed his outlandish costume while listening to the music. Those who call him a Jester are close. He is playing a portative organ, an authentic period instrument. Acted with understanding by Tom Jaremba, performance artist.





And kiss him into slumbers like a bride.⁶

When he sings “rain”, the word RAIN in dense, diagonally arranged text flashes over whole screen in superimposition.⁷

At the end of his song, the singer pauses.

Cut back to news reporter.

REPORTER

Panama has been ruled by a military junta since last Fall. The nominal boss is General ... I just can't ...

Close up of Earl Greaves sleeping, his face resting on a pillow. He is snoring. The image starts to slip and rise through the frame, as if the film is slipping through the projector.⁸

Cut back to news reporter.

REPORTER

Since October a military junta has ruled Panama. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is his fellow general Omar ... I cannot remember that guy's name.

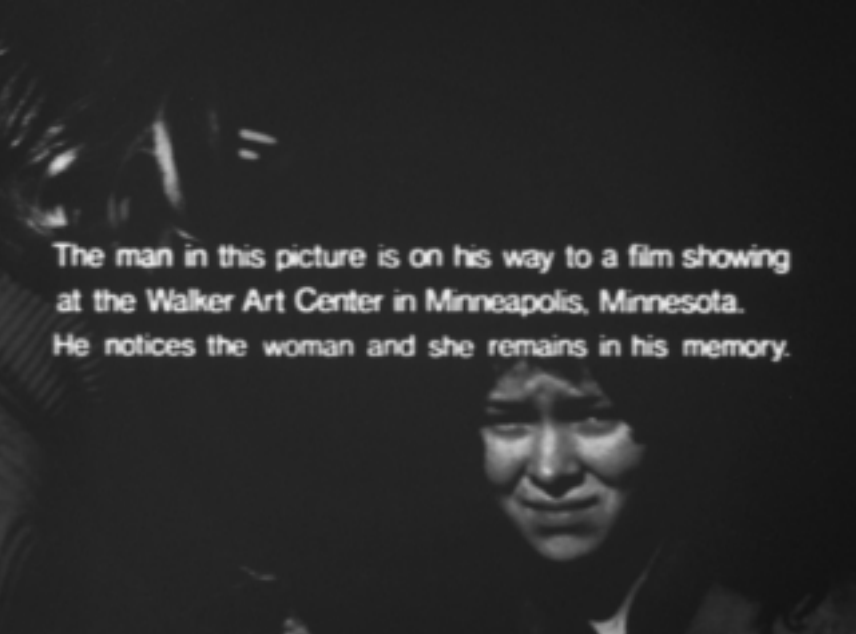
Frozen shot of the singer / jester facing the camera. Behind him is the slipping image of Earl Greaves sleeping. In the foreground, still images of the white and black flames are cut to change in time with the repeated violin trill (same as at the start of film) heard on the soundtrack.

6 “Care Charming Sleep”. Text by John Fletcher (1579-1629). Set by Robert Johnson (c1583-1633).

7 Similar to techniques used in educational science films.

8 A technique which Owen Land previously used in *Baroque Slippages*, 1969.





Cut back to news reporter.

REPORTER

A military junta has ruled Panama since last Fall. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is General Omar Torrijos, commander of the National Guard ... [laughter] ... I got it right but I blew it ...

Shot of a woman coming out of a shop door as Earl Greaves goes inside. Sync sound.

The following text is superimposed over these images.

The man in this picture is on his way to a film showing at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He notices the woman and she remains in his memory.

The shot is repeated, with a second page of text superimposed.

The woman in this picture is on her way to a singing lesson where she will sing a song by John Dowland. She does not know the man and therefore does not remember him. She wonders why her picture is being taken.

The shot is repeated a third time in colour negative, and a fourth with positive and negative superimposed.

Mid shot of a woman in a kitchen with a large cooking pot.

Text superimposed over image.

MALAYALAM



REGRETTABLE
REDDING
CONDESCENSION

© 1970 by Al Rutcurts



She speaks first in Malayalam and then repeats the statement in English.

MALAYALAM SPEAKER

The process of making this film is very much like cooking.⁹

As she speaks in English, the following text is superimposed on the screen.

English translation: The process of making this film is very much like cooking.

Cut back to TV news reporter.

REPORTER

Panama has been ruled by a military junta since last Fall. The nominal boss is General ... I just can't ...

The repeated violin trill is heard on the soundtrack. Shot of the Malayalam speaker in the kitchen is rapidly intercut with an image of a punctured film frame.¹⁰

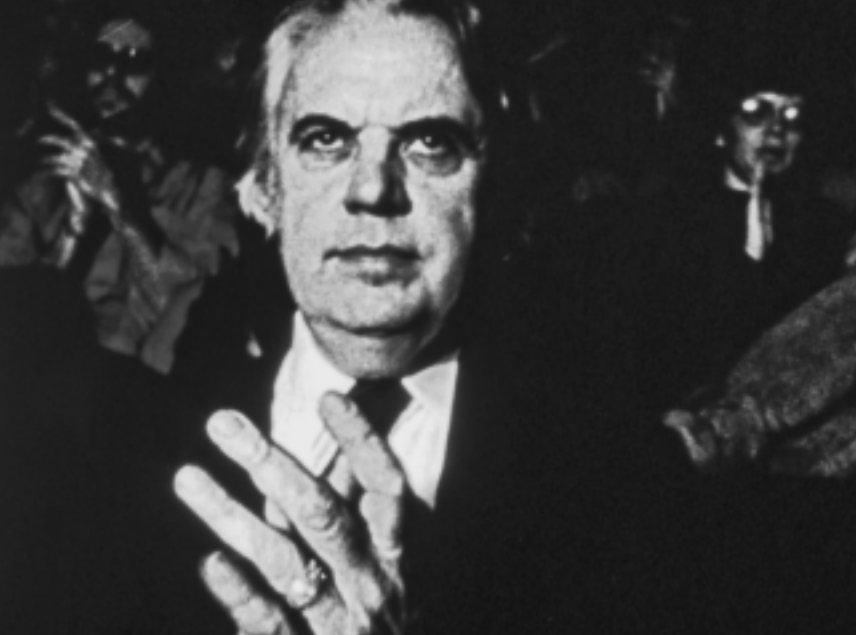
Title screen, white text on black background.

REGRETTABLE REDDING CONDESCENSION
© 1970 by Al Rutcurts

VOICEOVER¹¹

Since 1966, I have been filming the process of pouring red

- 9 "Socrates has demonstrated to Gorgias that both rhetoric and cooking are branches of pandering ... pimping ... because they appeal to the emotions rather than true knowledge." (Robert M. Pirsig, on Plato's Gorgias in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 1974)
- 10 For the significance of the punctured film frame, see the enclosed essay *Wide Angle Saxon*.
- 11 The voice of Michael Snow, mimicking his voiceover on Hollis Frampton's *nostalgia*.



paint on a wide variety of objects. A few weeks ago, I felt an urge to film another object being covered with red paint. What I believe I see recorded in that piece of film fills me with such fear, such utter dread and loathing, that I think I shall never dare to make another film again. Here it is ...

An electric hotplate, shot from above, is covered in dried red paint.

VOICEOVER

Look at it. Do you see what I see?

Silence. More red paint is poured from a bucket over the hot plate. It starts to bubble and steam as it heats up. Image fades to black.

Shot of cinema audience applauding the film.



Earl Greaves is centre screen, dressed in a formal suit and with a serious look on his face.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER [off screen]

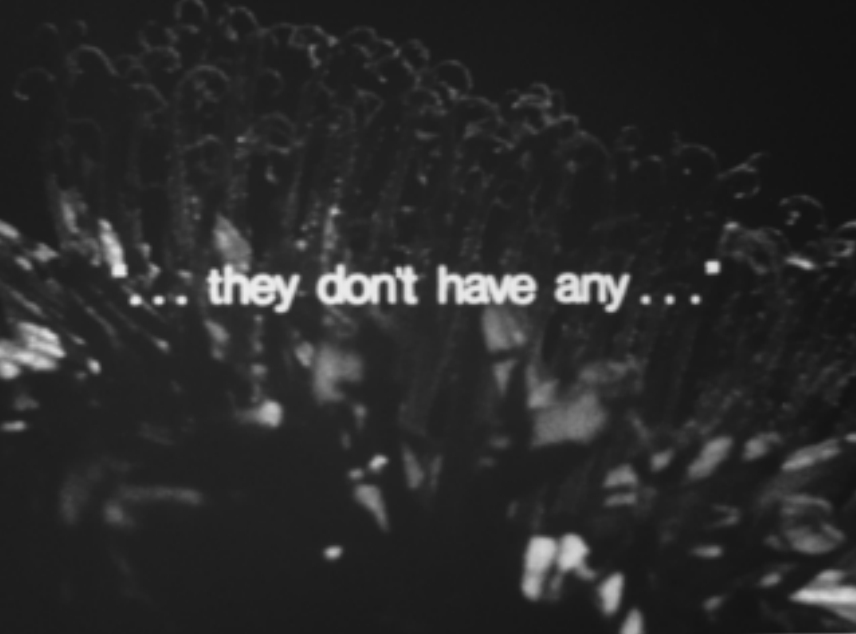
What I don't like about his films is they don't have any close ups of flowers.

Cut back to TV news reporter.

REPORTER

Since October a military junta has ruled Panama. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is his fellow general Omar ... I cannot remember that guy's name.

Extreme close up of an orange flower. Sound of crickets.



White text superimposed.

“... they don't have any ...”

Cut to a shot of the night sky. The frame is punctured at the bottom of the image. An arrow and the word “Moon” intermittently flash in superimposition, pointing at the moon in the distance.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER *[off screen]*

... Or shots of the moon ...

The image is revealed to be a film strip re-filmed with a rostrum camera which pans down to show the punctured frame below.

Close up of the woman who was earlier seen leaving the shop, as she sings a song by John Dowland, accompanied by a lute player.¹²

Her singing is unsteady and out of tune.

WOMAN

Welcome ... Welcome black night, Hymen's fair day,
Help ... Help Hymen Love's due debt to pay.¹³

Cut to TV news reporter.

REPORTER

A military junta has ruled Panama since last Fall. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is General Omar Torrijos, commander of the National Guard ... *[laughter]* ... I got it right but I blew it ...

¹² John Dowland was the world's greatest composer for the lute.

¹³ Hymen is the God of marriage in Greek mythology. “Welcome Black Night” could be called “Hymn to Hymen”.



Cut back to woman's face in close up. She has her eyes and mouth closed as if in prayer, though her singing continues on the soundtrack.

WOMAN

Love's due debt is chaste delight,
Which ... which if the turtles ... the turtle ... the turtle ...

As she repeatedly sings the words "the turtle ..." red paint is poured down her face. Sound is looped and overlaid in rounds.

... the turtles want tonight.¹⁴

Cut to TV news reporter.

REPORTER

... since last Fall. The nominal boss is General ...
I just can't ...

Close up of preacher, Rick Levi Coghill, talking into microphone. Guitar accompaniment.

PREACHER

... punishment, which turned out to be crucifixion. David had no idea what he was writing. It's right there in the Book of Psalms, it's not covered up, it's not garbled in some language you can't understand. It says, "hands and feet pierced." If he were to die any other way ... the number of times that they threw stones at him ... that they tried to kill him. If they would've succeeded, he wouldn't have been the Messiah. He had to be crucified with the two thieves. He had

14 Turtle = turtledove.





to be buried in a rich man's tomb. And he had to be betrayed by a friend. Not for thirty-one pieces of silver, not for thirty pieces of gold, but for thirty pieces of silver.¹⁵ If it had been thirty-one, he would've been a phoney. Okay, this gets even better. The New Testament accounts tell us that the soldiers came along to break the kneecaps of all three men. Now, if you're accustomed with Jewish Law you know that, according to the times there, they could not have any punishment carried out over the Sabbath, Passover, which was coming up. That's what the last supper was, it was a Passover Seder¹⁶ that Yeshua¹⁷ and the apostles had. Now,

15 I don't agree with him on this point. I believe Bible prophecy has a margin of error of $\pm 3\%$, so 31 pieces of silver would be acceptable.

16 The Passover supper.

17 Hebrew for Jesus.

Passover was coming up. The men couldn't be alive on the cross, but yet men can stay alive on a cross for days ...

As he speaks, Rick's image is scraped off the screen, from left to right, until the film breaks.¹⁸

The sound of Rick fades out as the image cuts to Earl Greaves asleep on his pillow. The original performance of "Care Charming Sleep" is briefly heard, played backwards.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER [off screen]

What I don't like about his films is they are always full of scratches and dirt particles.

18 The filmmaker's stylus destroys his film.



Optically printed sequence of a stressed frame shattering to reveal white light.

Cut to TV news reporter. The following text superimposed across centre of image.

A MAN, A PLAN, A CANAL: PANAMA!

REPORTER

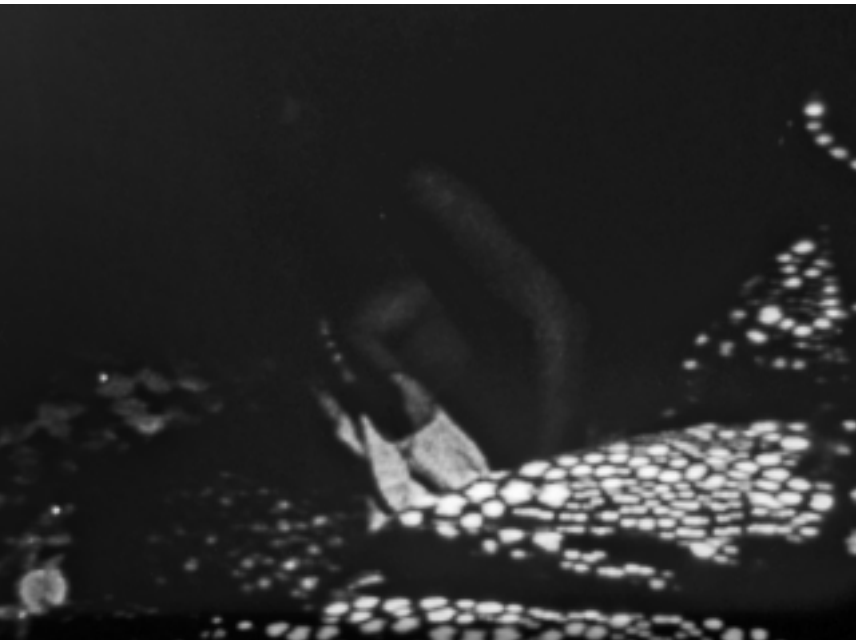
A military junta has ruled Panama since last Fall. The nominal boss is General Jose Maria Pinilla, but the real power is General Omar Torrijos, commander of the National Guard ... *[laughter]* ... I got it right but I blew it ...

Panning shot of a woman suddenly waking and sitting up in bed.¹⁹

DREAMER

Oh, it was a dream!

END



¹⁹ The only moving camera shot in *Wide Angle Saxon*.

**ON THE MARRIAGE BROKER JOKE AS CITED BY
SIGMUND FREUD IN WIT AND ITS RELATION TO
THE UNCONSCIOUS, OR CAN THE AVANT-GARDE
ARTIST BE WHOLED?**

THE ANNOTATED AND ILLUSTRATED SCREENPLAY

Johnny O’Keggem
 Was a Middle-Aged man
 When he was born
 A philandering Flan
 Never one to take a chance
 He did not die
 ’Til the Renaissance

ECSTATIC WOMAN	
JOHN MILTON	Keith Anderson
POET (AND LECTURER)	Morgan Fisher
FIRST PANDA	
SECOND PANDA	
CLAPBOARD MAN	
OFF SCREEN VOICE OF DIRECTOR	
FAKE PANDA	
OFF SCREEN VOICE (DIALOGUE WITH PANDA)	Kevin O’Connor
FIRST EXECUTIVE	
VOICE OF SECOND EXECUTIVE	
PROSPECTIVE BRIDE	Bonita Lei
SUITOR	Minoru Maeda
DANCING PROSPECTIVE BRIDE	Yoshi (of Yoshi’s in Oakland)
SUITOR’S FRIEND	
LIVERACCIO	Paul Sharits
DIMINUTIVE DICK	
LECTURER	Morgan Fisher
TV MOTHER	Adelaide Donnelly
TV FATHER	
TV SON	Elliot Donnelly
BRIDE’S MOTHER	
WOMAN IN BED	
OFF SCREEN VOICE OF MRS EDWARDS	
MUSIC	Johannes Ockeghem*
SETS AND COSTUME DESIGN	Owen Land
OPTICAL SPECIAL EFFECTS	Owen Land, Daina Kruminis, Pat O’Neill
WRITEN AND DIRECTED	Owen Land

Filmed in San Francisco and Berkeley, CA; Chicago, IL; London, UK.

*Johannes Ockeghem (1425-1512) was called the “patriarch of counterpoint”.

FOCUS

PREFACE TO THE TWELFTH EDITION

SINCE this book first appeared, nineteen years ago, the study of mysticism—not only in England, but also in France, Germany and Italy—has been almost completely transformed. From being regarded, whether critically or favourably, as a by-way of religion, it is now more and more generally accepted by theologians, philosophers and psychologists, as representing in its intensive form the essential religious experience of man. The labours of a generation of religious psychologists—following, and to some extent superseding the pioneer work of William James—have already done much to disentangle its substance from the psycho-physical accidents which often accompany mystical apprehension. Whilst we are less eager than our predecessors to dismiss all accounts of abnormal experience as the fruit of superstition or disease, no responsible student now identifies

Focus frame.

Lap dissolves of woman moaning in ecstasy. The following preface to "Mysticism" by Evelyn Underhill is superimposed in white letters, while a chorus sings "Hosanna in Excelsis".

PREFACE TO THE TWELFTH EDITION

Since this book first appeared, nineteen years ago, the study of mysticism – not only in England, but also in France, Germany and Italy – has been almost completely transformed. From being regarded, whether critically or favourably, as a by-way of religion, it is now more and more generally accepted by theologians, philosophers and psychologists, as representing in its intensive form the essential religious experience of man. The labours of a generation of religious psychologists – following, and to some extent superseding the pioneer work of William James – have already done much to disentangle its substance from the psycho-physical accidents which often accompany mystical apprehension. Whilst we are less eager than our predecessors to dismiss all accounts of abnormal experience as the fruit of superstition or disease, no responsible student now identifies the mystic and the ecstatic; or looks upon visionary and other "extraordinary phenomena" as either guaranteeing or discrediting the witness of the mystical saints. Even the remorseless explorations and destructive criticisms of the psycho-analytic school are now seen to have effected a useful work; throwing into relief the genuine spiritual activities of the psyche, while explaining in a naturalistic sense some of their less fortunate psycho-physical accompaniments. The philosophic and theological



landscape also, with its increasing emphasis on Transcendence, its new friendliness to the concept of the Supernatural, is becoming ever more ...

Text fades out before it can all be read.

Cut to John Milton, in period costume.

JOHN MILTON

How charming is divine philosophy!¹
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets
Where no crude surfeit reigns.²

1 Milton says in five words what Evelyn Underhill needs a long, over-wrought paragraph to say.

2 From Comus, a masque by John Milton.



POET

There is no motion in a motion picture,
Only the projector moves the strip,
Pulled along by wheels with sprockets,
The protruding teeth to get a grip.

The teeth fit into holes on the border,
Finely sculpted panels of light,
They always line up in perfect order,
Like stars upon the clearest night.

In Rochester,³ some inspired bards,
Working in the dark like moles,

3 The headquarters of the Eastman Kodak company are in Rochester, New York state.

Relieved by occasional games of cards,
Invented the name sprocket holes.

The importance of holes is no delusion,
To them we'll always be the thrall,
For providing us with all the illusion of movement,
On a flat white wall.

Applause.

*Title scrolls up to centre of screen. White text
superimposed over the poet.*

ON THE MARRIAGE BROKER JOKE AS CITED
BY SIGMUND FREUD IN WIT AND ITS
RELATION TO THE UNCONSCIOUS, OR CAN
THE AVANT-GARDE ARTIST BE WHOLED?

© 1978 by George Landow

*Previous image splits into three strips of film. The centre
strip slips through the frame. The poem is repeated, but
this time it is overlaid, out of phase, on three
simultaneous tracks.*

POET

There is no motion in a motion picture ... [etc]

Cut to two pandas sitting in a black and white living room.

FIRST PANDA

What game are we going to play tonight?

SECOND PANDA

We each have to tell one marriage broker joke, and then
pretend we are avant-garde filmmakers making a film about
marriage broker jokes.



FIRST PANDA

What's a "structural film"?

SECOND PANDA

That's easy, everybody knows what a structural film is. It's when engineers' design an aeroplane, or a bridge, and they build a model to find out if it will fall apart too soon. The film shows where all the stresses are.

FIRST PANDA

Okay, I'm ready. My film is going to be introduced by a fake panda and its going to be about Japanese salted plums, among other things.

SECOND PANDA

Among other things? What do salted plums have to do with marriage broker jokes? I don't see how you can combine those two things alone without being too confusing.

FIRST PANDA

Just leave it to me. By the way, they say that more avant-garde filmmakers are using animals in their films these days.⁴

SECOND PANDA

Animals! You mean poor, dumb, brute beasts?

FIRST PANDA

Self pity aside, yes, that's exactly what I mean.

⁴ Specifically dogs, cats and horses – but not exotic animals like pandas. After humans, the greatest number of films have been made about cats.



Scene change to jungle set, adapted from "The Dream" by Henri Rousseau. Jungle sounds.

FIRST PANDA *[off screen, as if in memory]*

My film is going to be introduced by a fake panda and it's going to be about Japanese salted plums among other things.

Dwarf enters from stage right with clapper board.

DIRECTOR *[off screen]*

Take 3.

Clap. Fake panda enters from stage left.



FAKE PANDA

There is a company in Japan that sells umeboshi plums. You know, those salted plums that are eaten either as a sweet or as a stomach medicine. In order to improve their sales they introduce a new brand name: “Marriage Broker Brand Plums”. The trademark is to be the traditional figures of the marriage broker, the suitor and the prospective bride. They hire an artist named Kenji Kanamori to design a label for the jar. While working on the design the artist has an intense moment of realisation, in which the true meaning of the figures of the marriage broker, the suitor and the prospective bride are revealed to him. That whole sequence, however, may not be included in the version of the film which you are going to see.⁵

5 It's not included in the film.



VOICE [off screen]

Oh, you mean there's more than one version?

FAKE PANDA

Yes. Yes, there are several different versions, and I've forgotten which one this is.

Panda exits stage left and returns with a portable projection screen. Zoom in to close up of screen.

Cut to back lit, dramatic close up of a jar of salted plums. The jar is first seen in silhouette.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

Mr Kenji Kanamori, an artist of indisputable ability, has designed a label for our new line of umeboshi plums, which

as you know will be called “Marriage Broker Brand Plums”.

Lighting changes to reveal the elaborate label as the brand name is announced.

Cut to first executive directly addressing the viewer.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

Now, all that needs to be decided is the number of jar sizes which we will offer. I’d say: small, extra small, medium, large and extra large.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

No. There should be small, large small, small large, large, extra large and jumbo.⁶

FIRST EXECUTIVE

But you left out medium.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

Right, and for good reason. Think of the state of the economy. People want to buy a large jar but they feel guilty. So small large satisfies both their guilt and their gluttony. Whereas people who can only afford a small feel consoled by the availability of a large small, thus giving them a sense of superiority over their neighbour who can only afford a small.

6 Five years after making this film, I spent a year in Japan. I then discovered that Japanese beer is sold from vending machines. In these vending machines, the consumer may choose from about ten different can sizes, from a half-pint can to a half-gallon can (a very impressive can). If these cans have size names, they would need designations like large small and small large, as there are so many sizes available. Their jumbo would make an elephant drunk. The American product that offers an unnecessarily wide choice of sizes is, of course, olives.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

But those for whom a small is too small and a large ... even a small large ... is too large, a medium offers a better alternative.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

No. Medium is a word with absolutely no customer appeal. It is neither small and economical, nor large and lavish.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

That’s exactly why it is needed.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

But I say we should offer large small and small large to fill that need.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

But small large presents a negative image. The exciting promise of large plums is completely destroyed by the nagging reminder that they are only small large, not really large. The whole reason why the customer buys large in the first place is undermined.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

Wait a minute. We are not talking about small large plums, medium plums and large plums. We are talking about large small jars, medium jars and small large jars. The size of the jar only, not the size of the plums.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

Of course, I forgot. But that doesn’t diminish my argument one bit. Everything I said about small plums, medium plums, small large plums, large small plums and large plums applies



just as well to small jars, medium jars, small large jars, large small jars and large jars, not to mention extra small jars, extra large jars and jumbo jars.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

Alright, alright. We will have extra small, small, large small, medium, small large, large, extra large and jumbo.

Dissolve to brief shot of the jar and its label, then cut back to first executive.

FIRST EXECUTIVE

Hmm. Extra small, small, large small, medium, small large, large, extra large and jumbo ... Are you sure we're offering enough choices?

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

What do you mean?

FIRST EXECUTIVE

Well, if we limit the customer's choice too much we are denying his free will and he might suspect he is being manipulated.

SECOND EXECUTIVE *[off screen]*

Good point, and don't forget we are talking only about the size of the jar and not about the number of salted plums contained within.





FIRST EXECUTIVE

Precisely. The size of the jar has absolutely no relationship to the number of salted plums contained in it.⁷

A suspended palette is seen from above.⁸

A panda paw deals out three cards, names each card, and then picks them up again.⁹

FIRST PANDA

Marriage Broker ... Suitor ... Prospective Bride ...

Medium close up of a hideous looking bride.

The second time the cards are dealt, the palette is contains circular holes.

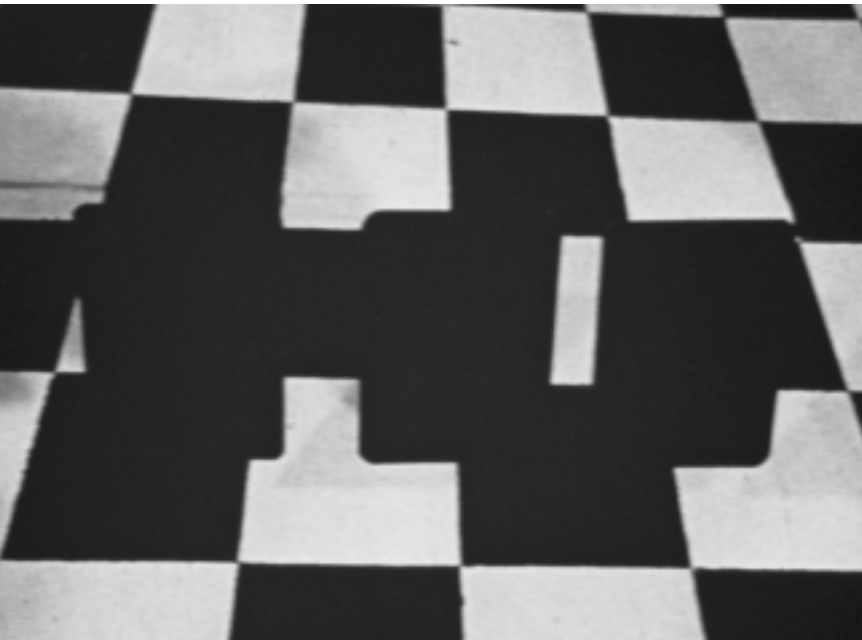
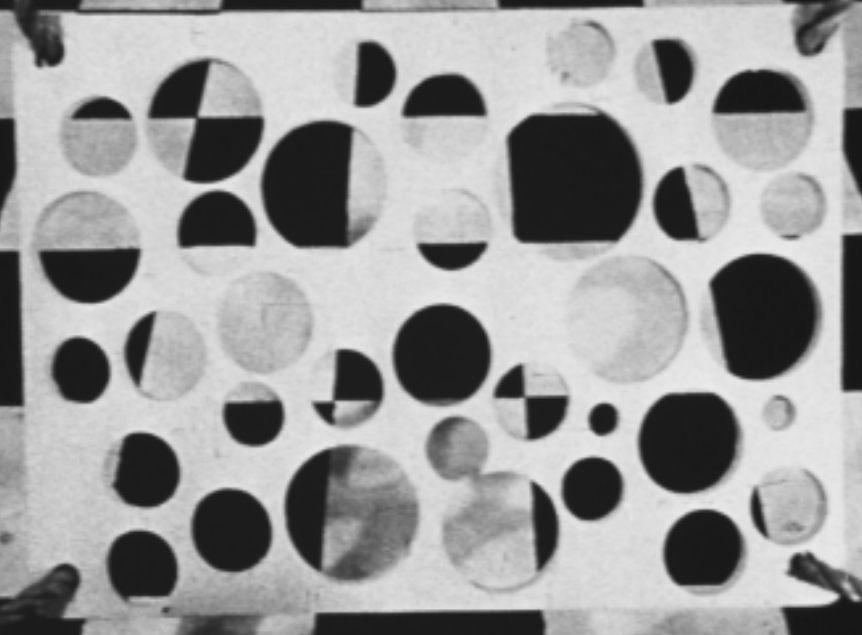
Marriage Broker ... Suitor ... Prospective Bride ...

Cut to close up of the suitor as he passes through a door. He pauses and his image is strobe cut with shots of the marriage broker dancing with the prospective bride.

SUITOR

By mistake I arrived early at the place where the marriage broker had arranged the meeting. He said he had briefly met the prospective bride's family, but he had never met the prospective bride. When I opened the door I heard music and then I saw the marriage broker and the prospective bride dancing together like they had known each other a long

- 7 This is really a statement about the titles of my films: The title of the film has no relation to its content.
- 8 Compare this palette to the objects in Buñuel and Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).
- 9 Is this perhaps a bestial variety of Three Card Monte, a game of Spanish origin, in which each player is dealt and shown three cards, which are then placed face down on the table, the players betting they can identify a particular card?



time. So obviously the marriage broker lied to me. Why? Was he involved in a plot with the prospective bride? Why did she dance with him so lasciviously? Is she really a gold digger? And is the marriage broker merely some kind of a pander? I'll never trust another marriage broker.

Suitor walks back out and closes the door.

Cut to head shot of suitor's friend

SUITOR'S FRIEND

Did you see them fornicating?

SUITOR *[off screen]*

No, just dancing.

SUITOR'S FRIEND

Well then, so what! They probably just arrived early and had nothing else to do, so they danced to pass the time. It's probably a technique used by the marriage broker to relax the prospective bride. Prospective brides are always so nervous, so afraid of being rejected.

SUITOR *[off screen]*

She didn't look nervous.

The panda deals the cards a third time. This time the palette is transparent.

FIRST PANDA

Liveraccio *[laughter]* ... Diminutive Dick ... the Swoony Devout ...

Liveraccio ...

Mid shot of Liveraccio approaching the camera. Smoke rises behind him. A romantic violin and organ duet is heard on soundtrack. Lap dissolve to close up of Liveraccio.

The cards are dealt again onto the transparent palette.

FIRST PANDA

Liveraccio¹⁰ ... Diminutive Dick¹¹ ... the Swoony Devout¹² ...

Diminutive Dick ...

Mid shot of Diminutive Dick preaching.

DIMINUTIVE DICK

It has been claimed that Christianity should be abolished, because it has been used by certain governments to make the people submissive in the face of inequality and oppression. That makes about as much sense as saying that because someone once choked to death while eating dinner, that food should be banned as a hazard to life.

10 Lee Liberace, Roman Catholic Swoony Devout, was the living embodiment of bad taste through his televised piano performances. Liberace was a homosexual who posed as a heterosexual.

11 Little Richard, Protestant Swoony Devout, was one of the screaming inventors of the primitive pop music that shocked bourgeois sensibilities in the 1950s, and a Pentecostal preacher. The bawdiness of his lyrics was undetected by censors because of his use of argot. Little Richard was a heterosexual who posed as a homosexual – in order, he explained, to avoid being lynched by jealous white men.

12 The Swoony Devout is a phrase coined by C.S. Lewis, who as an Anglican Evangelical, proud of his 'orthodoxy', viewed the American Pentecostal as a Hysterical or Hyperactive Devout, and the Roman Catholic as a Swoony or Swishy Devout.



Lecturer stands in front of a classroom blackboard, pointing to those words that illustrate his speech.

LECTURER

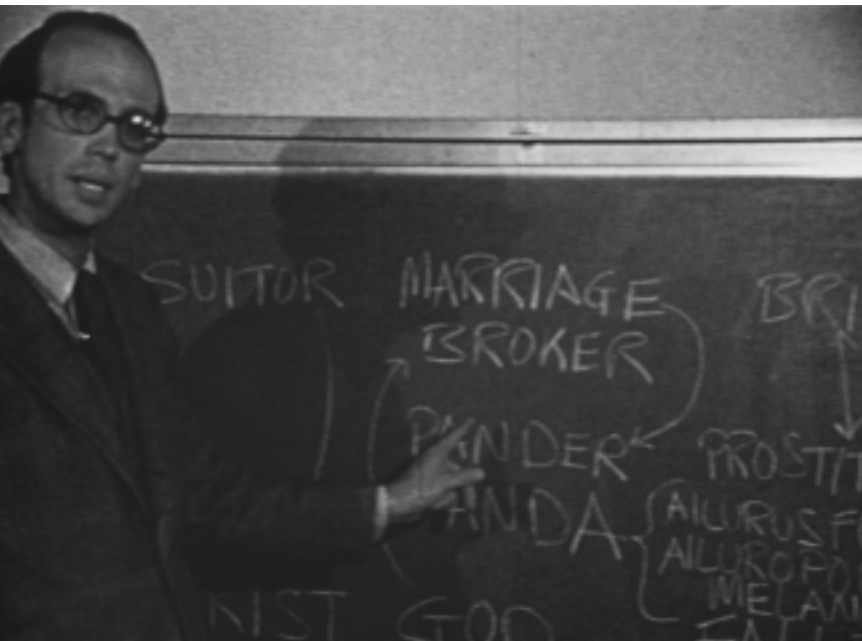
Of the many theories that have been proposed there are few which, in my opinion, merit serious consideration. Of the more credible hypotheses, the following stand out. The marriage broker is merely a pander, and the so-called prospective brides are in fact prostitutes. Textual corruption has in some versions changed the word pander to panda. P.A.N.D.A. Thus two opposing schools have developed. One claims that the panda referred to is *Ailurus fulgens*, the Himalayan panda, having the face marked with white and a long bushy tail marked with pale rings. The other school insists that the panda referred to is *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*,

of Tibet and southern China, which is white with black limbs, shoulders and ears and with a black ring around each eye. Another interpretation has it that the entire situation is in fact really an allegory. The marriage broker represents God, the suitor is Christ and the prospective bride is fallen humanity, undeserving of the redemption which Christ offers it through the grace of God, but willing to put its faith in the ability of the marriage broker to effect a match.

Cut to an American family – mother, father, boy – watching the lecture on television.

TV MOTHER

What is this programme all about?





TV FATHER

A broken marriage, a suitcase and bribing a prospector.

Canned laughter.

Cut back to lecturer.

LECTURER

The adherents of this theory invariably refer to the lines: “I am pleased with your choice,” says the suitor, “She is beautiful and cultured.” “That’s true,” replies the marriage broker, “but she is not my choice, this one is already married. It is her impoverished, sick, widowed mother whom I have chosen for you.”

Canned laughter and applause.

Prospective bride is seen in the background, as the marriage broker whispers in the suitor’s ear.

The lecturer’s last statement is repeated off screen as the prospective bride walks forward, between the two men, revealing her sick, widowed mother.

LECTURER [off screen]

The adherents of this theory invariably refer to the lines: “I am pleased with your choice,” says the suitor, “She is beautiful and cultured.” “That’s true,” replies the marriage broker, “but she is not my choice, this one is already married. It is her impoverished, sick, widowed mother whom I have chosen for you.”¹³

Cut to woman asleep in bed. An alarm clock rings and she wakes to turn it off. She faces the camera to speak as



13 The marriage broker is a con man.



*the following text, in small capital letters, densely fills the screen in superimposition.*¹⁴

LAST NIGHT WAS THE SWEETEST NIGHT I EVER HAD IN MY LIFE. I NEVER BEFORE FOR SO LONG A TIME TOGETHER ENJOYED SO MUCH OF THE LIGHT AND REST AND SWEETNESS OF HEAVEN IN MY SOUL BUT WITHOUT THE LEAST AGITATION OF BODY DURING THE WHOLE TIME. PART OF THE NIGHT I LAY AWAKE SOMETIMES ASLEEP AND SOMETIMES BETWEEN SLEEPING AND WAKING. BUT ALL NIGHT I CONTINUED IN A CONSTANT CLEAR AND LIVELY SENSE OF THE HEAVENLY SWEETNESS OF CHRIST'S EXCELLENT LOVE OF HIS NEARNESS TO ME AND OF MY DEARNESS TO HIM; WITH AN INEXPRESSIBLY SWEET CALMNESS OF SOUL IN AN ENTIRE REST IN HIM. I SEEMED TO MYSELF TO PERCEIVE A GLOW OF DIVINE LOVE COME DOWN FROM THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN INTO MY HEART IN A CONSTANT STREAM LIKE A STREAM OR PENCIL OF SWEET LIGHT. AT THE SAME TIME MY HEART AND SOUL ALL FLOWED OUT IN LOVE TO CHRIST SO THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE A CONSTANT FLOWING AND REFLOWING OF HEAVENLY LOVE AND I APPEARED TO MYSELF TO FLOAT OR SWIM IN THESE BRIGHT SWEET BEAMS LIKE THE MOTES SWIMMING IN THE BEAMS OF THE SUN OR THE STREAMS OF HIS LIGHT WHICH COME IN AT THE WINDOW. I THINK THAT WHAT I FELT EACH MINUTE WAS WORTH MORE THAN ALL THE OUTWARD COMFORT AND PLEASURE WHICH I HAD ENJOYED IN MY WHOLE LIFE PUT TOGETHER. IT WAS PLEASURE WITHOUT THE LEAST STING OR ANY INTERRUPTION. IT WAS A SWEETNESS WHICH MY SOUL WAS LOST IN; IT SEEMED TO BE ALL THAT MY FEEBLE FRAME COULD SUSTAIN. THERE WAS BUT LITTLE DIFFERENCE WHETHER I WAS ASLEEP OR AWAKE BUT IF THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE THE SWEETNESS WAS GREATEST WHEN I WAS ASLEEP. THE GLORY OF GOD SEEMED TO SWALLOW UP EVERY WISH A DESIRE OF MY HEART.

Two simultaneous monologues occur.

MRS EDWARDS [off screen]

Last night was the sweetest night I've ever had in my life. I never before for so long a time together enjoyed so much of the light and rest and sweetness of heaven in my soul, but

¹⁴ This text is by Mrs Jonathan Edwards, wife of the American Puritan theologian who lived from 1703 to 1758, and wrote books with long titles, e.g. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton* (1737).

LAST NIGHT WAS THE SWEETEST NIGHT I EVER HAD IN MY LIFE. I NEVER BEFORE FOR SO LONG A TIME TOGETHER ENJOYED SO MUCH OF THE LIGHT AND REST AND SWEETNESS OF HEAVEN IN MY SOUL BUT WITHOUT THE LEAST AGITATION OF BODY DURING THE WHOLE TIME. PART OF THE NIGHT I LAY AWAKE SOMETIMES ASLEEP AND SOMETIMES BETWEEN SLEEPING AND WAKING. BUT ALL NIGHT I CONTINUED IN A CONSTANT CLEAR AND LIVELY SENSE OF THE HEAVENLY SWEETNESS OF CHRIST'S EXCELLENT LOVE OF HIS NEARNESS TO ME AND OF MY DEARNESS TO HIM; WITH AN INEXPRESSIBLY SWEET CALMNESS OF SOUL IN AN ENTIRE REST IN HIM. I SEEMED TO MYSELF TO PERCEIVE A GLOW OF DIVINE LOVE COME DOWN FROM THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN INTO MY HEART IN A CONSTANT STREAM LIKE A STREAM OR PENCIL OF SWEET LIGHT. AT THE SAME TIME MY HEART AND SOUL ALL FLOWED OUT IN LOVE TO CHRIST SO THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE A CONSTANT FLOWING AND REFLOWING OF HEAVENLY LOVE AND I APPEARED TO MYSELF TO FLOAT OR SWIM IN THESE BRIGHT SWEET BEAMS LIKE THE MOTES SWIMMING IN THE BEAMS OF THE SUN OR THE STREAMS OF HIS LIGHT WHICH COME IN AT THE WINDOW. I THINK THAT WHAT I FELT EACH MINUTE WAS WORTH MORE THAN ALL THE OUTWARD COMFORT AND PLEASURE WHICH I HAD ENJOYED IN MY WHOLE LIFE PUT TOGETHER. IT WAS PLEASURE WITHOUT THE LEAST STING OR ANY INTERRUPTION. IT WAS A SWEETNESS WHICH MY SOUL WAS LOST IN; IT SEEMED TO BE ALL THAT MY FEEBLE FRAME COULD SUSTAIN. THERE WAS BUT LITTLE DIFFERENCE WHETHER I WAS ASLEEP OR AWAKE BUT IF THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE THE SWEETNESS WAS GREATEST WHEN I WAS ASLEEP. THE GLORY OF GOD SEEMED TO SWALLOW UP EVERY WISH A DESIRE OF MY HEART.

without the least agitation of body during the whole time. Part of the night I lay awake, sometimes asleep and sometimes between sleeping and waking. But all night I continued in a constant, clear and lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ's excellent love, of his nearness to me and of my dearness to him. With an inexpressibly sweet calmness of soul, in an entire rest in him. I seemed to myself to perceive a glow of divine love come down from the heart of Christ in heaven, into my heart in a constant stream, like a stream or pencil of sweet light. At the same time my heart and soul all flowed out in love to Christ, so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing of heavenly love. And I appeared to myself to float or swim in these bright sweet beams, like the motes swimming in the beams of the sun, or the streams of his light which come in at the window. I think that I felt each minute was worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure which I had enjoyed in my whole life put together. It was pleasure without the least sting or any interruption, it was sweetness which my soul was lost in. There was but little difference whether I was asleep or awake ...

WOMAN IN BED

In all the preceding examples the veiled aggression was still directed against persons; in the marriage broker jokes it is directed against all the parties involved in the betrothal – the suitor, the prospective bride, and her parents. The object of attack by wit may equally well be institutions, persons, in so far as they may act as agents of these, moral or religious precepts, or even philosophies of life which enjoy so much respect that they can be challenged in no other way than under the guise of a witticism, and one veiled by a façade at

that. No matter how few the themes upon which tendency-wit may play, its forms and investments are manifold ... If the marriage broker's speech is endowed with such a strong resemblance to logic, which on more careful examination proves to be merely a semblance, then the truth must be lurking in the fact that the witticism adjudges the marriage broker to be right. The thought does not dare to admit that he is right in all seriousness, and replaces it by the semblance which the wit brings forth; but here, as it often happens, the jest betrays the seriousness of it. We shall not err if we assume that all stories with logical façades really mean what they assert even if these assertions are deliberately falsely motivated. Only this use of veiled sophism for the veiled presentation of the truth endows it with the character of wit, which is mainly dependent upon the tendency. What these stories wish to indicate is that the suitor really makes himself ridiculous when he collects together so sedulously the individual charms of the prospective bride which are transient after all, and when he forgets at the same time that he must be prepared to take as his wife a human being with inevitable faults; whereas, the only virtue which might make marriage tolerable – mutual attachment and ...

The sound level of the woman in bed rises and begins to obscure the off screen voice. The onscreen text disappears leaving the image of the woman in bed talking.

WOMAN IN BED

... willingness for affection and adaptation – is not once mentioned in the whole film.¹⁵

15 The text spoken by the woman in bed is adapted from Freud's Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious.

Extreme close-up of a woman's face (as at beginning of film), sighing softly in physical, or spiritual, ecstasy.

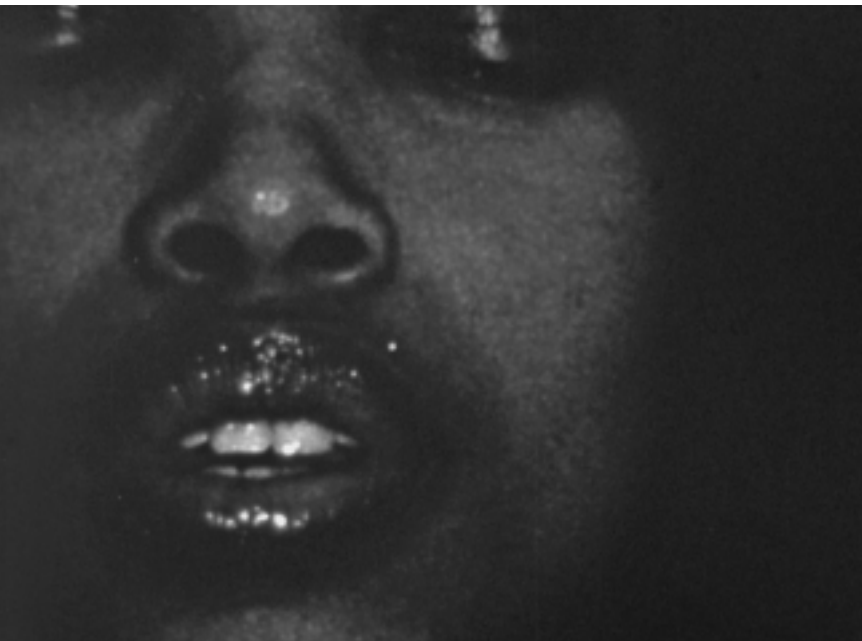
MRS EDWARDS *[off screen]*

... but if there was any difference, the sweetness was greatest while I was asleep.

END

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ESSAYS BY OWEN LAND

**HEAVENS TIBET SEES
A MEMOIR OF MAKING BARDO FOLLIES**

For the 1967 incarnation of his Film-Makers' Cinematheque, Jonas Mekas had chosen the 41st St. Theater near Times Square. This theatre was in the basement, and so underground films were now being shown, appropriately, under the ground. I was hired as a sort of security guard. My job was to be stationed in the ground floor entranceway, and when moviegoers asked, "Where is the Cinematheque?" I would answer, "Down those stairs."

This evening's program was *The Chelsea Girls*, a seemingly endless collection of unrelated episodes by Andy Warhol, who apparently didn't believe in editing his films.¹ At that time, I probably would have agreed with his belief.

As an added attraction there was to be a live performance of the Warhol-produced Velvet Underground after the films.

The 41st St. Theater, with its stage and velvet curtains was the velvet underground. As an amateur songwriter I

1 In Jonas Mekas' laudatory review of this film in *Movie Journal*, he says most of the critics and "normal" audiences will dismiss it. I guess that's my problem. I'm too normal. Jonas writes that director Carlos Saura walked out of a screening of *The Chelsea Girls*. I've always liked Saura's films – but only because I'm a Flamenco freak and a Gitanophile.

found the Velvet Underground's material to be highly mediocre, their songs often being blatant paeans to heroin. How predictable!² Meanwhile, in California and New York, the really exciting new music of the era was being born in the brains of Terry Riley and Philip Glass.

An exuberant young woman asks me, "Is this the Exploding Plastic Inevitable?" (That was the name of Warhol's downtown discotheque on St. Mark's Place) I answer, "No, this is the Film-Makers' Cinematheque." She replies. "Yes, it is the Exploding Plastic Inevitable!" No doubt something plastic was exploding in her stomach at that moment.

Then I see a vision with eyes as big and black as a panda's: A girl bohemian, the costume designer for the Theatre of the Ridiculous. My improvised, only-in-1967 pick-up line was something like, "Do you like to be filled with wonder and magic?" "In your dreams!" is her cynical reply. Then, from somewhere in the crowd, another girl, a flower child before the term was invented, emerges and says enthusiastically: "I do! I like to be filled with wonder and magic!" But she lacked magic, and I wondered.

The art world was going through a strange period. What Giulio Romano³ was to Shakespeare, Robert Rauschenberg was to us. The buzzword was Pop Art, a late development of Surrealism and Marcel Duchampism. It had already been done ten years earlier in Chicago by the artists of the movement called the Hairy Who, so despised by the establishment that the Art Institute of Chicago refused to dignify any of them with an exhibit. But Chicago's little

2 Drug songs, both pro and anti, are a staple of the folk-blues-jazz tradition.

3 Raphael's most famous pupil, and the only painter mentioned by name in Shakespeare's plays.

Museum of Contemporary Art compensated with its fabulous 1970s shows of Karl Wirsum's 2D and 3D works, and ex-Chicagoer Claes Oldenburg's Mouse Museum and Ray-gun collection. Then there was Fluxus – really New York Dada.

I thought some of the painters of the late sixties were excitingly original, e.g. Peter Saul, later to become the El Greco of San Francisco, and the Scandinavians Fahlström and Erró. Like the Hairy Who, Saul and Erró explored taboo subject matter in wild, comic strip derived, anti-art styles.⁴ Another was Art Green, who did for tire treads what Rembrandt did for gold chains – made them look delicious.

After the films, I go with Cinematheque regulars Ken Kelman and John Cavanaugh for our usual tour of 42nd Street. Kelman was a surprisingly literate critic who wrote about the avant-garde cinema. Cavanaugh was an 8mm psychedelic filmmaker. On this occasion, Kelman was the critic of my nascent moustache, "Why do all you painters think you need a moustache to be an artist? Anyhow, you're starting to look like Ron Rice." My answer had something to do with Velazquez and Dali, and using the moustache tip as an ad-hoc paintbrush.

I liked Time Square's huge billboards, the inspiration for Jim Rosenquist's paintings. When hunger got the better of us, we went to the automat, where there lived, said Cavanaugh, the Great God of Garlic. Cavanaugh explained, "He became a Titan by taking LSD while reading the Bardo Thodol – the Tibetan Ars Moriendi." I made a mental note to check the Bardo Thodol in Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's

4 Warhol silkscreened a humdrum photo of an unoccupied electric chair, but Peter Saul painted the execution of serial killer John Wayne Gacy at the high-voltage moment of truth.

English rendering. I did, and could find no reference to Titans. I concluded that Cavanaugh's ideas were pure Cavanaughism. It seemed that now the Titan, or Great God of Garlic, spent his time, and his dimes, at the automat. The gods work in mysterious ways.

For me, the automat was the source for the Pop artists who specialized in depicting food: Oldenburg (burgers), Thibaud (pie), and Warhol (soup). That's because the automat food was displayed like museum treasures behind glass windows, each food in its own compartment.

The ten-year-old son of prominent Manhattan dentist Dr. Pullman Toothaker was being touted as "the Mozart of Cinema." This child made animated versions of the kind of drawings kindergarten children make. Where is that Mozart now? He's probably a personal injury attorney in Fort Lee.

On a corner in Times Square we see Salvatore Paradiso – or is it Gregory Corso? The downtown poets, and the out-of-town poets, come to Times Square to look around and mutter: "The horror! The horror!"

One of the large, uptown museum/galleries, the Jewish Museum, had a massive show of Psychedelic Art, emphasizing installations and environments rather than individual art pieces. This was great interactive fun, but not of as much interest to me as their subsequent exhibition, which brought together several painters who were returning to the figure, placing their figures in contemporary urban settings. This to me was the future direction of painting, a future hinted at by the avant-gardists of the 1950s, such as de Kooning and Rivers. Abstract painting had hit a wall, a wall painted black with a charcoal grey stripe painted down the middle.

FOR FURTHER READING:

If you are not old enough to have lived through the 1960s, or if you are too old to have participated, or if you are an extra-terrestrial, I recommend Tom Wolfe's book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, an action-packed history of those times; plus his book on art, *The Painted Word*.

REMEDIAL READING COMPREHENSION

A man, the filmmaker himself, is running. He is running fast to amuse a muse, a woman chosen for her resemblance to a young Maya Deren, this filmmaker's muse. The films of Deren and her contemporaries were about their makers, the personal, poetic/lyrical (highly subjective) cinema. This filmmaker in 1970, running uphill in the Sierra Nevada mountains, needs to distance himself from the lyrical cinema and from its centres in New York City and San Francisco. He borrows a Big Lie from advertising: This is a film about you, not about its maker.

Some of the images in this film are the over-exposed 'flash frames' which occur at the start of every shot and are always discarded in editing in standard film-making procedure. They are accompanied by percussive sounds on the soundtrack. Brown, whole-grain rice vs. white, degerminated rice is an analogy for real, nutritious cinema vs. junk-food commercial cinema.

The title is a conflation of Remedial Reading, a type of course, and Reading Comprehension, a type of test. It's a phrase that appears to make sense, but really doesn't. The original title was "For Slow Readers", which prompted this comment from Stan Brakhage, "That's good. I'm a slow reader."

THE BOOTH BIMBO AND THE CHARISMATIC

Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present began as a document of the life of Marilyn Clubine, a resident of Phoenix, Arizona, who had attracted a following of spiritual seekers through random, informal meetings with various people in her daily life.

Marilyn, who on the surface appeared to be a typical middle class suburban mother, was a visionary who claimed to see and talk with Jesus Christ in person. I almost wrote 'Jesus Christ in the flesh' but I suspect that may not be doctrinally correct. Marilyn was not a member of any religious sect, and I thought of her as a mystic in the medieval tradition, but without interest in theology.

A close-up of Marilyn's face in one of her meditations comprises one layer of this film. The other layer was filmed at the International Automobile Show in New York City, on a side trip during the filming of the CWLF tour.¹

On display was the Lada, a Russian-made car which the Soviets planned to begin marketing in the U.S. Fortunately they changed their plans, because the Lada, which resembled

1 See *A Film of Their 1973 Spring Tour Commissioned by the Christian World Liberation Front of Berkeley, California.*

an older model Fiat, was not a design likely to appeal to American buyers.

Female models who are hired to promote products at trade shows and conventions are known as 'booth bimbos.' One stood on top of the Lada, wearing a fur bikini and Russian fur hat. My camera was framed on a young man on a campaign to prevent the killing of animals. Then I noticed the booth bimbo had turned to face the camera, no doubt seeking some publicity. I panned the camera to include her in the shot.

The soundtrack has several layers. There's the ambient sound of the auto show, the voice representing Marilyn praying (which is actually the voice of another person, a spiritual leader whom I met in San Francisco), and there is the ostinato phrase "Oh God, oh God oh God oh God", which is a loop of a recording I made at a Pentecostal church in Berkeley, California, after I became aware of the fact that Pentecostal preachers have made their own art form out of elaborate word repetitions. (The rock and roll idol Little Richard gave up his singing career to become a Pentecostal preacher.)

The early Surrealists noticed that unrelated verbal images in Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror* seemed to relate to one another in unexpected ways, simply through their juxtaposition. This same principle applies to these unrelated layers of images and sounds, which appear to comment on one another. For instance, "Stop killing animals" seems to be a comment on the booth bimbo's fur bikini and hat, though any connection is fortuitous.

A FILM OF THEIR 1973 SPRING TOUR COMMISSIONED BY CHRISTIAN WORLD LIBERATION FRONT OF BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Christian World Liberation Front (known as CWLF) was formed to preach the gospel to left wing radical students and womb babies (a womb baby is a former student who remains in the vicinity of his/her university after graduating or dropping out of the university). The campus and environs of the University of California at Berkeley in the 1970s was a magnet for radical youth from all over the world. The leader of CWLF was Jack Sparks, a quiet, patient man from Indiana, who had a remarkable tolerance for the foibles of his flock. He's the bearded man walking in the opening scene of the film.

CWLF published a newspaper, in the format of the Berkeley Barb, called *Right On*. *Right On* printed an interview with me. I was a fairly recent convert, a notorious avant-gardist, and a professor at an art college.

The interview came to Jack's attention, and he asked me if I would be willing to make a documentary film of a tour of the entire United States soon to be embarked on by Jack and a few other members. It was to be a lecture tour of Christian colleges, secular universities, and seminaries, which Jack referred to as "cemeteries." (He also addressed his

followers as “bretheren and sisteren.”)¹

I said, “I’m not a documentary filmmaker; I’m an avant-garde, experimental filmmaker.” Jack was quiet. Then he somehow communicated that I was the one he wanted for this project.

Would I have complete artistic freedom? Absolutely. Was there any payment involved? Well, CWLF didn’t have any money, only “treasure in heaven,” but they would pay for film and lab work. How long would this tour take? Many weeks.

The plan was to drive from Berkeley to Washington D.C., and then eventually across the country back to Berkeley again, stopping at dozens of institutions, including Columbia University Divinity School, Calvinist colleges, African-American Pentecostal churches, and the evangelical Wheaton College, “the fastest growing liberal arts college in the United States during the Depression.” My assistant was to be Clancy Dunnigan, a recent college graduate from Texas. He would hold the tape recorder and microphone. I would hold the camera.

In all of my previous films it had been a matter of principle to keep the camera on a tripod. Hand-held camera shots were out of the question. For this film I decided to use almost all hand-held camera, and of an extremely ‘personal’ style, using the camera as organically as possible, and in counterpoint to the continuous sync-sound track.

For example, in one sequence I tilted the camera downwards to Jack’s shoes (rough-out, Swiss hiking boots), then I tilted to the shoes of one of our academic hosts (shiny black leather). Another time I noticed the interesting

1 Jack was not an ordained minister, but he had a degree in statistics (!)

compositions being made by a professor’s shiny bald head against a backdrop of Venetian blinds. The camera followed the wandering eyes of a bored listener, as most listeners to anything tend to be.

Boredom, what a good subject for an experimental film. Film, a medium overly concerned with the spectacular and the exciting, has overlooked boredom. Film critic Andrew Sarris once wrote that watching films of sprocket holes is boring. I couldn’t agree less. No subject per se is boring. Especially not boredom. When the subject matter is ‘boring,’ anything of visual or kinetic interest would have to be created filmically.

There were many surprises on the trip. Once, at the meeting house of the Germantown Jesus People outside of Philadelphia, Jack suddenly gestured toward me and announced that I would now deliver a lecture to the congregation. This was entirely unplanned, and a complete surprise to me. Of course I had prepared nothing. I began talking, hoping that, like the apostles at Pentecost in the Book of Acts, I would be inspired with a message for the Germantowners, and in a ‘tongue’ which they would understand. In the tradition of Alfred Jarry, Kurt Schwitters, Tristan Tzara and Groucho Marx, I delivered a lecture. It wasn’t filmed.

Now, in retrospect, I think I should have documented Vancouver, B.C. in those early years of the 1970s. Not only did they have a chapter of the disreputable Les Enfants du Dieu (also known as Les Enfants du Diable), but also a Canadian woman, a second Aimee Semple McPherson, started her own aggressive organization which made Les Enfants look like child’s play. The two groups were at war.

A NOTE ON THE DOCUMENTARY

Stan Brakhage made the film *eyes* while riding with some Pittsburgh policemen on their daily patrols. Years later a commercial television series aired, one of the first of the so-called 'reality shows,' it was the exact same concept as *eyes*: a video photographer accompanied the police on dangerous chases and arrests, recording both picture and, unlike Brakhage, sound. The title of the program was *Cops*, the same as *eyes* if you accept Brakhage's explanation that the word *police* derives from a word for eyes (although my dictionary traces *police* to the Greek word *polis*, meaning city).

You might say *eyes* is to *Cops* as the landscapes of Cézanne are to the mythological scenes of Poussin. *eyes* is *Cops* without the narratives. It's the viewer's choice: Cubes, spheres, cylinders, and cones – the geometry of vision – on one hand, or Flora and the Fauns, piping on Parnassus, the ur-plots of our culture, on the other.

Geometry, you say, follows rules. It's always the same, while the unruly, sleazy drug dealers and the self-proclaimed falsely accused schlubs are different every time. Or are they?

WIDE ANGLE SAXON

Wide Angle Saxon is about the psychopathology of everyday life and the little failures therein. There's the failure of the reporter to remember the name of Panamanian dictator Omar Torrijos. Torrijos was a man with a plan. His plan was to take the Panama Canal away from U.S. control. The White House was not amused. Torrijos' plan was a failure, as was Manuel Noriega in his attempt to defy the U.S. in Panama some years later.

The palindrome "A man, a plan, a canal: Panama," is wide in its implications. It takes a wide angle lens to photograph that wide canal. The other palindrome in the film is "Malayalam," the non-Indo-European language of the people of the Malabar coast of Southern India, a language which has failed in the modern world, especially considering that it is the language of India's Jews.

Lest anyone think that *Wide Angle Saxon* is very structured, the Malayalam speaker reminds the audience that "the process of making this film is very much like cooking." What she means is that the cook has the freedom to add ingredients extempore, according to how the concoction tastes from moment to moment, an accurate analogy to how

this unscripted film was made. Like a stew, *Wide Angle Saxon* combines ingredients from real life (documentary footage) with fictional ingredients (re-enactments and staged scenes).

Another type of failure that occurs is the physical failure of the film medium itself, as the film reveals its physical ‘wounds’ – holes punched in frames by the lab in development when they stapled a label on each roll to identify it. During the “thirty pieces of silver” talk the filmmaker scrapes off the emulsion from the film in real time until the film becomes so weakened that it breaks into fragments.

Wide Angle Saxon was inspired by *The Confessions Of Saint Augustine*, an account of a religious conversion. Rather than write a fictional screenplay, I wanted to use the real life story of an actual person. By chance I met Earl Greaves, a total stranger who had no acting experience. Earl, a denizen of Owatonna, Minnesota, a place I had never heard of, told me a little about his life, a history which included a religious conversion and attempts to detach himself from valuable possessions, including a Mercedes-Benz auto.

Augustine’s temptations were sexual (The Flesh), but Earl’s temptations in the film would be material (The World). In the Faust legend, the temptations are from evil spirituality (The Devil). Religious conversion is an immanent event without visual signs. How does one deal with it in a visual medium?

I decided to stage a re-enactment of the moment of conviction when Earl realises that he is too attached to his possessions. In the film this moment occurs while Earl is watching an experimental film at the Walker Art Center in

Minneapolis. In reality, Earl did watch an experimental film at the Walker, but it was one of my films. The Walker is a museum for avant-garde art in a community which would rather have Norman Rockwell, but it had the best film series in the Midwest.

What is seen is the film Earl is watching at the moment of his realisation: *Regrettable Redding Condensation*, a condensation, in the Freudian sense, of my film *Remedial Reading Comprehension* and Hollis Frampton’s *nostalgia*, made by one Al Rutcurts, an anagram of structural. The narrator says, “when the film is over he applauds” – an absurd act in a canned medium like film, but a widespread convention.

When Earl is not seen in the movie theatre, he is seen sleeping, a device used to indicate the fact that many of this film’s images are dreams, memories, and fantasies – and an oblique reference to Andy Warhol’s film *Sleep*.

A critic has remarked on the alleged similarity between the shot of Earl polishing his Cadillac and a shot of a hot-rodder polishing his hot rod in the film *Kustom Kar Kommandos*. Any such similarity is entirely coincidental. The critic, who has studied films but ignored cars, failed to mention the obvious differences between the two scenes. The hot-rodder is a 1950s-style teenage punk with a Fascist haircut and he is caressing his customised ‘cream-puff’ with a powder puff. Earl is a pudgy bourgeois and his car is a stock Cadillac. The hot rod is in a well-lit garage and the Cadillac is outdoors at night.

Related to the theme of failure are remarks made by off-screen members of *Wide Angle Saxon*’s hypothetical audience: “What I don’t like about his films is they’re always full of dirt particles,” “What I don’t like about his films is they don’t have any close-ups of flowers or shots of the

moon,” and “Wait a minute! Let’s stop and go back to a certain key word. There it is: ‘sin’. Now that’s what I want to be included in this film. It’s too important a concept to be taken for granted . . . if there were no such thing as sin, salvation wouldn’t be necessary.”

These audience members tell the filmmaker how he should make his film, and their advice is taken. A close-up of a flower and a shot of the moon, the most hackneyed clichés of film-making (it’s always the full moon seen through a telephoto lens) soon appear in *Wide Angle Saxon*, but the close-up of the flower is so close that the lens keeps bumping against it.

The young woman who Earl has noticed in a chance encounter attempts to sing an Elizabethan-era song, but fails to reach the right key. Earl imagines the red paint from the film he saw at the Walker being poured on the frustrated singer.

The film ends with a previously unseen character suddenly awakening and exclaiming, “Oh, it was a dream!” This is a stock ending, borrowed from the comic strip Little Nemo in Slumberland and used in dozens of Hollywood fantasy films like *The Wizard Of Oz*. Its use is ironic, the mundane subject matter of *Wide Angle Saxon* being entirely un-dreamlike.

SOURCES OF MY TITLES

Fleming Faloon: Robert Benchley in an essay on “What is an inhabitant of Flanders called?”

Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.: Self explanatory. I prefer Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Sprocket Holes, Etc. regardless of what the title on the film says.

Bardo Follies: From Sammy’s Bowery Follies, Bowery and Bond Street, NYC, across the road from my loft, where the film was made.

The Film That Rises to the Surface of Clarified Butter: A direct quote from The Upanishads, although the imagery of the film is Tibetan.

Institutional Quality: The film is institutional, and it lacks quality.

Remedial Reading Comprehension: A conflation of Remedial Reading and Reading Comprehension.
(SEE ESSAY)

What’s Wrong With This Picture?: A cliché.

Diploteratology: Madame Blavatsky in Isis Unveiled. H.P. Blavatsky introduced esoteric Tibetan Buddhism to the West.

Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present: This phrase is spoken in the soundtrack of the film.

A Film of Their 1973 Spring Tour Commissioned by Christian World Liberation Front of Berkeley, California: Self explanatory.

“No Sir, Orison!”: A palindrome written by Owen Land. Orison is an archaic word for prayer, used in Hamlet.

Wide Angle Saxon: A phonetic misunderstanding.
(SEE INTERVIEW)

New Improved Institutional Quality: In the Environment of Liquids and Nasals a Parasitic Vowel Sometimes Develops: Taken from a linguistics textbook. (New Improved, an advertising cliché, was used by Herbert Jean deGrasse in *The New Improved Inner Argh.*)

On the Marriage Broker Joke as Cited by Sigmund Freud in Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious or Can the Avant-Garde Artist Be Wholed?: Descriptive.

Noli Me Tangere: New Testament (Vulgate), John 20:17.

The Box Theory: An early scientific theory of Heredity, and a pun on ‘box’ (butter box).

INTERVIEW WITH OWEN LAND

**RECORDED 3 & 4 JULY 2004
CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY MARK WEBBER
REDACTED BY OWEN LAND**

MW: Is the story of enlightenment in *Wide Angle Saxon* based on personal experiences?

OL: The conversion experience?

MW: Yes.

OL: The film was originally based on The Confessions of Saint Augustine.

MW: I thought you'd written that it was an experience that Earl Greaves had gone through himself?

OL: Yes, Earl had a conversion experience, as did Augustine.

MW: So, who was Earl Greaves?

OL: Somebody I met by chance. At the time I was thinking about using the real-life story of an ordinary person instead of writing a fictional screenplay. I had already done that with Marilyn Clubine in *Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present*. Marilyn is an Arizona saint, though she'll never be canonised – she's not Catholic. Earl Greaves saw *Thank You Jesus* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and he wanted to meet me. The Walker people told him that I taught in Chicago, and he drove down to Chicago in his broken-down car (he had already sold his Mercedes). He found me. When I saw him I realised that he would be a good person for the film because he's not the kind of person you usually see in films. He'd never acted before, which is a plus for me – but only for characters with non-speaking parts.

MW: But how much of the film is based on real life? Did Earl really work at a TV station, where Lamb performed on his show?

OL: Yes, he worked on a TV show but the appearance by Lamb was a fabrication. Lamb became famous recording artists. When I eventually heard one of their LPs I was very disappointed, because the recordings I made with a monophonic Nagra sounded much better. The LP was too arranged, like so much music that gets onto records. Rick is very versatile, he gets a lot of different sounds out of the guitars. He uses some electronics as well in live performances. According to rumours, he's played guitar on some of the records of James Brown, the Godfather of Soul. Lamb often played for high school audiences. The talk in the film was given at a high school, which explains why it's kind of sophomoric.

MW: Really? Poor children! In your essay on *Wide Angle Saxon*, you denied that the shots of Earl polishing his car were related to *Kustom Kar Kommandos*. But it seems so close, you must have been aware of it ...

OL: You think there's a connection, even though I pointed out all those differences?

MW: There's as much of a connection as there is with your parody of Hollis Frampton's *nostalgia*.

OL: No. The narration in the parody is taken directly from *nostalgia*, and modified only slightly. In *Kustom*, the hot-rodder has a fetishistic relationship with the car, which is certainly not the case with Earl. Hot-rodders and car customisers build their cars themselves, so they're personally involved with their cars in a way that the owner of a stock model vehicle can never be. Isn't the powder-puff sequence in *KKK* called the "Dream Lover" sequence? That proves my point even more.

MW: Why did you choose *nostalgia*?

OL: It has to do with my disappointment with conceptual art, and with the conceptual tendency. I thought that particular film was hindered by its over-conceptualisation. And it was an example of the kind of films that would be shown at the Walker Art Center. The Walker really liked being mentioned in the film, by the way. It's a free advertisement for them.

MW: Whereas nowadays they'd probably sue you! Is the Malayalam speaker's comment about cooking a reference to Peter Kubelka?

OL: No. Only recently, when I saw a brochure with Kubelka's resume which you sent me, did I realise that he was so involved with cooking, that he actually teaches cooking. I like his title "Architecture for the Mouth." I've also done some amateur architecture, I studied Industrial Design at Pratt Institute.

MW: Where did you get the title *Wide Angle Saxon*?

OL: Some people think that the title refers to the protagonist, Earl. It does not. If I wanted the title to refer to Earl, I would have called it "White Anglo-Saxon." Earl does happen to be a white Anglo-Saxon, unlike most people who live in Minnesota, who are Norwegians or Germans. But here's how that title came about: In 1973, two years before *Wide Angle Saxon* was made, I was riding in a car with Clancy, the soundman for *A Film of Their 1973 Spring Tour*, and he said something that sounded like "wide angle Saxon." Clancy spoke with a Texas drawl that was so thick that he pronounced "white" as "wod." As soon as I heard what I thought was "wide angle Saxon," I decided to use it as a title for something. What Clancy had actually said was "white Anglo-Saxon."

MW: So the title is the result of a phonetic mistake, much like the pandas in *On The Marriage Broker Joke*?

OL: Yes. I store titles in my title file and I use them for paintings, poems, and films. Sometimes I use the same title for several works in different media.

MW: Why did you decide to re-present avant-garde film within *Wide Angle Saxon* with your own avant-garde film? The self-referential aspect of film became very specific at that point.

OL: Well, I don't think it had been done before in film. It's also something that's unfashionable. It opens up a whole realm of possibilities.

MW: Why did you use that footage of the news reporter in Panama?

OL: It connects with the theme of making mistakes.

MW: What mistakes?

OL: The singer flubs the song "Welcome Black Night." The punctures in the film were a mistake, although the lab which did that probably wouldn't agree ...

MW: You've mentioned that parts of the film take place in Earl's imagination.

OL: Yes, that's how I think of it: Stream-of-consciousness, dream images and memory images. Using mental imagery is a method of getting away from the conventional story arc, as Joyce did so effectively in *Finnegans Wake*.

MW: And then you chose to end the film with "Oh, it was a dream!", which connects with the early avant-garde trance films, and also the end of *On the Marriage Broker Joke*.

OL: I did that because it's a false convention, used in a lot of other works. I was using it ironically.

MW: So what about the use of humour in your films? When I show the films to audiences that aren't really familiar with avant-garde film, they always enjoy your work, and I guess that's initially because of the humour.

OL: And the other audiences don't?

MW: What I'm trying to say is that your films are particularly accessible because even if people don't think about the different layers behind the construction, and the references, they at least have the humour to hang on to.

OL: Like a life preserver?

MW: Something like that. Or else it's bait to reel them in.

OL: I suppose that's a good thing, but it's of secondary importance because humour is extremely subjective. Some people have found humour in the parables of Christ, but did the disciples laugh? We'll never know. If a joke came about in the process of making the film, I wouldn't edit it out ... just as some have come about in the process of doing this interview. I left them in. But I wouldn't insert a joke just for it's own sake.

MW: The pandas appear out of a humorous misunderstanding, but why did you originally start to build a film around the Freud book?

OL: The film came about because Carmen Vigil recommended that I read *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious* because he thought that what Freud was describing were things that occurred in some of my other films. So I started reading the book and I was struck by the fact that Freud keeps citing marriage broker jokes. They're

the only jokes that he uses as examples, and they're bad jokes! Freud didn't have any good material. He would have bombed in Las Vegas. I was also interested in Zen koans, a kind of riddle used to bring about satori. In a way, koans are similar to jokes, especially the kind of jokes known as shaggy dog stories, pointless jokes. I thought, "Marriage broker jokes, Zen koans, shaggy dog stories ... There's got to be a film there!" Once I had those elements the film almost made itself. Sometimes I look at it and think, "Who made this film?" It doesn't look like something I would have done. Something took over and made the film. I think it's good when that happens because you know you're onto the right thing. When you have to force the material then I think you should stop.

MW: Umeboshi plums are a strange product to focus on. Maybe also chosen as a potential source of amusement?

OL: Once I had established that the marriage broker, suitor, and prospective bride were traditional figures, I thought they could be used as a brand-name for something. Because of Japanese Zen Buddhism, I thought of umeboshi, which are Japanese salted plums. They're used in macrobiotics, a rather ascetic Zen regimen, which permits no sweets. Umeboshi are the sweets, so to speak. When you first taste one, it's a shock; they're so salty, so strong. Our palates aren't used to anything like that. But Japanese food is wacky, in general.

MW: Had you already been to Japan?

OL: No, not until 1984. It was just luck that the Japanese do have as many sizes of beer cans sold from vending machines as the number of jar sizes in the film. Selling beer in vending machines would be completely illegal in the U.S.

MW: How come this film took so long to make?

OL: Because it was made in phases. The first phase, shot in San Francisco, included the fake panda scene, Morgan Fisher's scenes, and the scenes with the marriage broker, suitor, and prospective bride. The next phase was in Chicago, where I shot the scenes of the two pandas and their games, Diminutive Dick, et cetera. Then I had to go to Buffalo, New York, to film Paul Sharits as Liveraccio. At that time I found out that Paul Sharits was actually half-Italian, which I hadn't known when I chose him for the role. And I needed a British actor for the Milton recitation, so that required going to London. Then I added long crawl titles and the many voice-overs for the characters' dialogue. It took about two years plus.

MW: When the panda begins to deal cards onto the palette, I always associate them with the cards of fate.

OL: They're playing a variant of Three Card Monte, although I only recently realised that, since I know nothing about card games. It's just one of a number of games that the two pandas play.

MW: What do you mean?

OL: The first line of their dialogue is: "What game are we playing tonight?" In their first game, each player has to make a film, that is, to come up with a film scenario. The film introduced by the fake panda is the film that one of the pandas wants to make. Notice that it has a film-within-a-film structure, like several of my films, including *On the Marriage Broker Joke*. Eventually they play Three Card Monte, trying to predict which of the swoony devouts will turn up.

MW: Tell me about the significance of the two texts in the film.

OL: I wanted to use the preface to the book *Mysticism* by Evelyn Underhill as a preface for the film to introduce the subject of mysticism, to turn the film in that direction when it didn't seem to be going in that direction at first. The other text is from the journal of Mrs. Jonathan Edwards, an account of night-time visions and out-of-body experiences with Christian imagery. At the end of the film a sleeper awakens, and I wanted to present two alternative interpretations of the marriage broker jokes, and *On The Marriage Broker Joke* itself. The sleeper is a mouthpiece for Freud, and simultaneously we hear Mrs. Edwards' monologue. In the preface to *Mysticism*, Underhill discredits the Freudian view of mysticism, while damning it with faint praise. Underhill takes the side of the mystics, represented by Mrs. Edwards. Underhill calls mystical experience "the essential religious experience of man."

MW: Why make the religious references so prevalent in your films?

OL: Because it's unfashionable. I don't think I've used it in a didactic or propagandistic way. Do you think so?

MW: No, I don't think so, but I imagine that people probably thought that you were including this material to somehow try and convert them.

OL: There's nothing in my films that would convert people, even though I've been converted more times than Uncle Ben's Rice. The only place where I touch on a serious presentation of Christian apologetics is in *Wide Angle Saxon*, during Rick's talk toward the end of the film. He comes off looking pretty bad, so I wouldn't have included that scene if I were trying to

convert people. He was so embarrassing to me that I scraped his image off the film with a sharp-pointed instrument.

MW: Various things have been written about your beliefs at different stages. What are they?

OL: What has been said?

MW: That you've been involved in various fundamentalist groups.

OL: Never believe anything that you read in the newspapers. I'm not a fundamentalist, I'm more of a Liberal Christian.

MW: What do you mean by Liberal Christian?

OL: Not Liberal in the political sense, but liberal as in freethinking. I'm curious about all belief systems. Lately, Voltaire's ideas have been interesting me. I see myself as an impartial observer, sharing my observations with the public and usually just stating the obvious. Common sense is very uncommon.

FILMOGRAPHY

Assembled and annotated by Mark Webber

Two Pieces for the Precarious Life

1961, b/w & colour, sound on tape, 10 minutes

16mm

“They were more or less subjective camera films. The camera was my eye, involved in simple daily sorts of activities. One part was colour and one part was black and white.” (George Landow, interviewed by Tony Reveaux, 1977)

Faulty Pronoun Reference, Comparison and Punctuation of the Restrictive or Non-Restrictive Element

1961, colour, sound on tape, 5 minutes

16mm

“I made several films while still in high school, one of which was called *Faulty Pronoun Reference, Comparison and Punctuation of the Participle Phrase** (or something like that) and was about grammar. More specifically, it compared three commonly made grammatical mistakes with three people who were making them. The soundtrack was a dirty poem (what else?) and I made my own concrète sound.

* ... *Punctuation of the Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Element (?)*”
(George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

A Stringent Prediction at the Early Hermaphroditic Stage

1961, colour, sound on tape, 5 minutes

16mm

“That was a film about a person who had a mystical religious experience. The idea entitled is the early stage of foetal development, the point when the foetus can become either male or female, so it’s a hermaphroditic stage. Somehow that had something to do with this person making a choice, a decision. Could go both ways, in a spiritual sense. I lost the film, and I expect it was rather ambiguous anyway. It was more or less an excuse to make some visuals and had images of church architecture, religious statues and things. I think it was influenced throughout by Gregory Markopoulos’ films.” (George Landow, interviewed by Tony Reveaux, 1977)

Are Era

1962, colour, silent, 3 minutes

8mm

“*Are Era* was filmed off of television sets, of TV and news announcers, similar somewhat to *Fleming Faloon*.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Richard Kraft at the Playboy Club

1963, colour, silent, 2 minutes

8mm

“There is a TV screen superimposed over his face, his face being the screen and the screen being the image. The image of a TV screen can be an image in a movie. On television, the movie is the television image. This seems logical.” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“A study for *Fleming Faloon*. Kraft is the actor in *Fleming*.” (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2004)

Fleming Faloon

1963-64, b/w & colour, sound & silent, 7 minutes

16mm

“The idea behind *Fleming Faloon* was portraiture. The title was supposed to suggest Flemish painting, which perfected portraiture. There was an essay by Robert Benchley in which he said something like, “What is the word that describes an inhabitant of Flanders? It rhymes with balloon.” And the word is ‘Walloon.’ As I understand it, the Walloons are the French-speaking inhabitants of Flanders, and the Flemings are the Flemish-speaking inhabitants. Actually, I knew someone whose name was John Faloon, so that’s really where that name came from.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Fleming Faloon Screening

1963, colour, silent, 2 minutes

8mm

“*Fleming Faloon Screening* does not document filming of *Fleming Faloon*. It is only a screening, contrasting the movie images with the interior of the room. The people in the room are ‘once removed’ from us. The person in the movie is two (and three) times removed.” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“There was a screening of *Fleming Faloon*, the 16mm version, in the Film-Makers’ Cooperative office, and I filmed, on 8mm, the screening on the screen in the office. It shows the whole room and the people in the room watching it.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Not a Case of Lateral Displacement

1964, colour, silent, 8 minutes

8mm

“The sore – which is not static, but a series of exposures of a healing infection – is called *Not a Case of Lateral Displacement*. It is not a ‘medical illustration’ but an actual infection.” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

The Leopard Skin

1965, colour, silent, 4 minutes

8mm

“*The Skin* was never, alas, screened publicly. What it is is a leopard skin which is filmed so that something optically happens as the spots flash on and off – the effect is similar to a film which was recently made much over caller *The Flicker*. Actually, the correct title is *The Leopard Skin* (the Cinemateque notes were dictated via telephone to secretary). (Date: 1965? or 4.)” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“It was a fake leopard skin.” (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2004)

Adjacent Yes, But Simultaneous?

1965, colour, silent, 3 minutes

8mm

“Both sides are the same time (well, almost). It’s really simultaneous – practically. Except at the end a car burns and that is the same car we have been looking at on the other track, already a burnt out wreck around which kids dance. All this was taking place in and outside of my window when I lived uptown.” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“Two random street events in New York City ... in one of them a car was on fire. They’re shown in split screen, created by matte-ing.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Studies and Sketches in 8mm

1963-65, colour, silent, 17 minutes

8mm original transferred to 16mm

16mm blow up made by Anthology Film Archives in 2001. Contains the films *Are Era*, *Richard Kraft at the Playboy Club*, *Fleming Faloon Screening*, *Not a Case of Lateral Displacement* and *Adjacent Yes, But Simultaneous?* This 8mm compilation reel was in distribution circa 1967-74.

This Film will be Interrupted after 11 Minutes by a Commercial

1965, b/w & colour, silent, 12 minutes

16mm film loop plus separate 16mm reel

“You could mention that the ‘cigar commercial’ was for Dutch Masters – surely this was significant – its use in painting (Rivers, Deem), historical associations, Holland and Flanders in the history of art – the beginning of genre and (still life) painting, common scenes, portraiture. *Fleming Faloon*, the title, also refers to this era (not ‘our era’). *Fleming Faloon* deals with portraiture, but is closer to still life.” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“After 11 minutes the projector was turned off, re-threaded and the commercial – a found object – was put on.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.

1965–66, colour, silent, 3:30 minutes

16mm

The title stated here is the one which is currently on the film, though it varies from previously listed titles.

“I think it’s important to note that in the printed version, one is very much aware of the repetitive movement of the dirt on the film. (The printer insisted on cleaning it. I insisted he leave the dirt on. He left the dirt on – maybe for the first time in his career – when he got home did he take a bath?) Dirt which collects on all films and sprocket holes – two neglected aspects of film. Why have these aspects of life been neglected by people who produce films and are very much aware of their existence?” (George Landow, letter to Sheldon Renan, 1967)

“My preferred title is *Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Sprocket Holes, Etc.*” (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2004)

Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc. (“Wide Screen Version”)

1966, colour, silent, 20 minutes

2 x 16mm

Double projection with two screens side-by-side. Each projector contained the same material, a 20-minute long print of *The Film in Which There Appear*, but the left screen was flipped horizontally so that the ‘China girl’ is joined in the centre to form an almost complete face.

Bardo Follies

1967, colour, silent, 45 minutes

16mm

This film, originally shown in its unedited state, went through several shorter versions before being completed as *Diplotenatology* in 1978.

“In the Tibetan instructions for the afterlife they talk about various visual phenomena. It seems like the skill necessary for attaining the correct reincarnation, or going onto the next stage, has to do with identifying these various visual phenomena. Some of them are, I believe, more abstract things, like a bright light. And then some are actual beings, wrathful deities. The ‘folly’ is being attracted to the wrong thing, and that’s what causes people to have to be reborn. It’s our folly that causes us to constantly come back.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

The Film that Rises to the Surface of Clarified Butter

1968, b/w, sound, 8:45 minutes.

16mm

The print sent by George Landow to Österreichisches Filmmuseum in 1970 is a different edit to the one in distribution. After approximately three minutes that are exactly the same as the distributed version, the shots are subsequently placed in a completely different order.

“I did all the drawings and animated them. There is no ‘animator’ in the film, only a cartoonist. Several years later at MoMA I saw early animated films that had that idea in them – static drawings coming to life. The figures in my film are from Tibetan mandalas, with a stylistic change to bring them closer to the Walt Disney style. Eastern content with western style.” (George Landow, interviewed by Tony Reveaux, 1977)

Baroque Slippages

1969, colour, sound, 3 minutes

16mm

“The soundtrack was Baroque harpsichord music composed by Georg Böhm. It was shown privately, and at the Film-Makers’ Cinematheque on Wooster Street. The film was made, but never put into distribution.” (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2004)

Institutional Quality

1969, colour, sound, 4:45 minutes

16mm

This film was withdrawn from distribution in 1976 and replaced with the “remake” *New Improved Institutional Quality: In the Environment of Liquids and Nasals a Parasitic Vowel Sometimes Develops*.

“This began with a found object too, the soundtrack, which was an audio tape I had inherited from a former schoolteacher. But none of the visuals are found, it was all filmed by me. I felt like I was actually taking that test, and after a while I just got bored with it and started thinking about other things. Then, after looking at it many times, I started to think there were other ways that this could be done and that it would be interesting to show more of the person who is actually taking the test.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Remedial Reading Comprehension

1970, colour, sound, 5 minutes

16mm

“It was an attempt to break with the tradition of the psychodrama. Psychodramas are about their makers, and even though I was in that tradition, I wanted to go in another direction. Prior to making that film I was on a macrobiotic diet. The main ideology is based on the idea that whole grain rice contains perfect nutrients, and when you remove the germ from the rice all you have really is a bit of starch, which has no food value. It seemed to me that commercial films were like de-germinated rice and they keep telling us they’re good for us through advertising.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Diploteratology or Bardo Follies

1967 / 1971, colour, silent, 30 minutes

16mm

First shortened version of *Bardo Follies*. Refer to previous entry above.

What’s Wrong With This Picture? 1

1971, b/w & colour, sound, 4 minutes

16mm

“The original material was a film that someone had given to me, they knew that I was interested in instructional films from that era. I wanted something that was outside of the realm of art completely, something that was just manufactured to be a utilitarian sort of object, like one of the found objects that Duchamp might have used. I wanted to take a vulgar object and promote it to the status of ‘art.’” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

What’s Wrong With This Picture? 2

1972, b/w, sound, 7 minutes

16mm

The original footage was photographed on 1/2” videotape and transferred to 16mm film before the text was optically superimposed over it.

“We were taping something in a courtyard of the museum and he just came by and started talking. I wanted to see what it looked like to see written text of some unrehearsed, unpolished spoken text. I needed to know, for some things I was doing in playwriting, how spoken language differs from written language ... Sometimes I like to use a written form of language when my characters are speaking, even though I know in reality they wouldn’t say anything like that. That’s really the only reason for it. Since then I’ve learned the relationship between written and spoken words so I don’t really need that film anymore. It served its purpose.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present

1973, b/w & colour, sound, 5:45 minutes

16mm

This film was originally listed as *Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present – 1*. “It starts out with the sound that we recorded at the auto show: the animal rights guy talking and the sound of that space, which continues on through the film. Then there’s the woman saying “Oh God, Oh God, Oh God”, which was recorded at a church. Then when Marilyn’s face comes onscreen, there’s the sound of somebody praying, not Marilyn but somebody else.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

A Film of Their 1973 Spring Tour Commissioned by Christian World Liberation Front of Berkeley, California

1974, colour, sound, 11:30 minutes

16mm

This film was originally listed or subtitled as *Thank You Jesus for the Eternal Present – 2*.

“It was edited that way to maximise the amount of information on the screen at any given time. I didn’t think the specifics of what was being said (a) Was that important in the hierarchy of what I was presenting, and (b) That it would even be possible to cover it all without making an extremely long, talking film.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Diploteratology or Bardo Follies

1967 / 1974, colour, silent*, 20 minutes

16mm

Second shortened version of *Bardo Follies*. Refer to previous entries above. * Some copies of the 1974 print have sound for the duration of the first shot (approximately one minute). “Ignore any sound on *Bardo Follies*. It should be projected with projector sound turned off, at 24 frames per second.” (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2003)

“No Sir, Orison!”

1975, colour, sound, 3 minutes

16mm

“I had once seen a woman on a city street, on a street corner, and she was kneeling down on the corner and praying. I think it was on Castro Street, San Francisco. I thought “Wow! What a demonstration that is.” Nobody was paying any attention to her. I thought the idea of praying in a public place would make a good film. What would be a good place? The Supermarket.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Wide Angle Saxon

1975, colour, sound, 22 minutes

16mm

“I had already been thinking about making a film based on The Confessions of Saint Augustine, and I was trying to decide how literally I would do it. Then I thought maybe it'd be better to find somebody, a real person, instead of a fictional character, and use their real life story. And then Earl Greaves just called me up. He had seen one of my films in Minneapolis and something about it interested him, something that really had not much to do with the film but had more to do with his own personal life. He drove down to Chicago, found out my address and phone number and he came over. When I met him I realised that he'd be a good person for the film because he's not the kind of person you usually see in films ...” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

New Improved Institutional Quality: In the Environment of Liquids and Nasals a Parasitic Vowel Sometimes Develops

1976, colour, sound, 10 minutes

16mm

A 'remake' of George Landow's earlier film *Institutional Quality*, using a longer section of the same audio source as the soundtrack.

“When I was in Edinburgh, someone there in the audience was a filmmaker from Brussels who had made documentaries on Magritte and Delvaux. He said that my films were the clearest examples of Surrealism that he had ever seen, which surprised me, but it makes sense. I think I see some influence in that film from Magritte, in the over sized objects and the clear focus on common objects in a room.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Diploteratology

1978, colour, silent, 7 minutes

16mm

A revised edit and re-ordering of material from George Landow's earlier film *Bardo Follies*.

“This is the definitive print. I think that *Diploteratology* is a better name, although afterwards I decided a really good name would have been 'Heavens Tibet Sees'. Diploteratology is a word that is used only once, in Isis Unveiled by Madame Blavatsky. I think that's called a *hapax legomenon*, a word used only once in literature. Diploteratology means 'the study of doubly formed monstrosities' and there's a double formation of those globular forms in the film, so it seemed very appropriate.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

On the Marriage Broker Joke as Cited by Sigmund Freud in Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious or Can the Avant-Garde Artist Be Wholed?

1977-79, colour, sound, 18 minutes

16mm

“Carmen Vigil recommended that I read that book because he thought that what Freud was describing were things that occurred in some of my earlier films. Freud keeps using these marriage broker jokes; it's the only kind of joke that he uses as an example of humour. They're really very bad jokes. Around that time I was also very interested in Zen koans, which are a kind of verbal riddle that are used to bring about satori. In some way they are similar to jokes, especially the jokes of the kind known as 'shaggy dog stories', pointless jokes. So I thought “Hmm ... Marriage broker jokes, koans and shaggy dog stories: there's got to be a film there ...” And there was and this is it.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Noli Me Tangere

1984, colour, sound, 6:15 minutes

3/4" video (edited on 1" tape)

“The idea behind it is: Feminists claim that men objectify women's bodies. So this was a revenge or a punishment for men who did that during their lifetimes, by being subjected to objectification by women in the after death state. The man is sobbing, and the woman is saying, “Turn around”, that's basically all, and then at one point she says, “It's so small!” Their faces are obscured as part of the dehumanisation process. I wanted them to look completely flat like cut out pieces of paper. The movement is horizontal and vertical but there's no movement in space – it's only about the surface of the screen, reinforced by a grid, whereas *The Box Theory* is about penetration into deep space.” (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

The Box Theory

1984, colour, sound, 15:36 minutes

3/4" video (edited on 1" tape)

Included in the exhibition "Resistance or Submission: Snatches of a Christian Conversation" organised by the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada (travelled to Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Le Musee du Quebec and London Regional Art Gallery, Canada).

"Land o'Lakes is one of the few labels that has an image of the package on the label itself ... and then inside the package is the image again and inside that there's another one. This parallels 'The Box Theory', which was an early scientific theory of what we would now call genetics, before that concept was invented or discovered. They thought that within the human being there was a little human being and within each little human being were other little human beings, ad infinitum. The beings were called homunculi." (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

Undesirables (Work-In-Progress)

1999, b/w, sound, 12 minutes

16mm original, transferred to vhs video

A rough-cut of selected scenes, edited as a sampler to be used in fundraising towards completion of the film *Undesirables*.

"The idea started with a casual comment made by Stan Brakhage, must have been way back in the early 1970s. It stuck in my mind. Now that I think about it, Brakhage may have meant this as a joke. He said, "Someday Hollywood will probably make a film about us," - 'us' meaning the experimental filmmakers - "and I wonder which actors will play us?" Think about that first of all: the idea that Hollywood would make a film about experimental filmmakers is totally ridiculous. The fact that one would think about which actor was going to play me at some time in the future, I think that's very funny. Eventually it germinated in my mind and I thought it was an interesting idea ... A film about experimental filmmakers, especially in the very formative period, approximately 1968 to 1972. The movement went from a high point where there was a lot of publicity generated in the media, and seemed to peter out shortly after that. At a certain time, I guess it was in the 1980s, there was some discussion in film circles about the decline of the experimental film and people were theorising about why it happened and some people suggested maybe because of video, and I guess there were other theories too. So I thought, "Why not come up with a fantastic theory about why that happened?" - a fictional theory - and put that into a film?" (Owen Land, interviewed by Mark Webber, 2004)

FILMOGRAPHIC FLUXNOTES

Infections

1964

8mm loops

This title was listed on several occasions in Fluxus publications.

"I don't think that was ever made. I think you're getting some of this information from letters I wrote to people, in which I sometimes talked about planned films or abandoned films or otherwise not completed films." (Owen Land, interview with Mark Webber, 2004)

Home Movies

1964-65

Offered for sale by George Maciunas in Fluxus sales lists, these films were advertised as being made to order. There are no records of any sales.

"I like the concept of Home Movies Made To Order. I remember two that I made for people, but they were not ordered. Just people I knew in the Soho/Little Italy neighbourhood where I lived in 1969. The films were lost, or destroyed." (Owen Land, letter to Mark Webber, 2004)

The Evil Faerie (Fluxfilm No. 25)

1966, b/w, silent, 23 seconds

16mm

Owen Land states that this film was not made by George Landow, and believes it should be credited to John Cavanaugh.

"George Maciunas had a number of films which didn't have titles on them. Then he put them together into his Fluxus reel and tried to remember who made them. It was an intentional Fluxus joke." (Owen Land, interview with Mark Webber, 2004)

STAGE PLAYS BY OWEN LAND

Irene Bordoni in Paris

1967, Group 212, Saugerties, New York

Text-tures

1970, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A soap opera, staged serially.

L'ame Soeur

1971, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Mechanical Sexuality

1977, University of Illinois, Chicago & School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Adapted by Owen Land from works by the Italian Futurists, with three dramatised poems by Hans Arp and Owen Land. Music by Poison Squirrel. Co-directed by E. W. Ross.

Piece of Tale

1978, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Schwimmen Mit Wimmen

1982, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Music by The Nudes Descending A Staircase.

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NOTE

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The two videotapes by Owen Land are available from The Kitchen, New York. www.thekitchen.org

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Owen Land spent many years of study in drawing, painting and sculpture with teachers in a direct line from the French artist Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), who is remembered for his historically accurate scenes of life in ancient Rome.

