



For

Symmetry of STRUCTURE

an interdisciplinary Symposium

Abstracts

II.



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SYMMETRY/ASYMMETRY:TWO KINDS OF TIME: AN ARTIST'S VIEW

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This is a proposal for a lecture with slides to demonstrate -- through my own personal work -- how as visual artist -- I gradually, intuitively and, often haltingly, accepted a vanguard position of viewing 20th century art as a search for understanding and visualizing the "Shape of Time".(1) In the process I will demonstrate how the concepts of balance/imbalance: symmetry/asymmetry are fundamental to my understanding of time. I will show how remaining in balance while in motion, requires moving back and forth from symmetrical to asymmetrical modes of feeling and thought. This back and forth motion reveals two aspects of Time -- stopped time and moving time. (2)

Science/art/technology permit us to to record this motion in time, or to stop time. This process of stopping/moving in time can be manually, mechanically, electronically and photronically recorded. Pens, brushes, cameras, copiers, video, computers -- all -- can be tools for recording our perceptions of time/space. With each new tool we alter our perceptions of space/time and in the process we alter our relationships to objects, to people and to our environment.(3)

In the United States, although there has been a shift from the visualization of objects in space to the visualization of objects in time, there has been little, if any, systematic study. I founded the program Generative Systems(4), at the Art Institute of Chicago (1969-1980), precisely to create such studies. In establishing this program I interwove my personal art work with that of the program. In this way I integrated into the teaching process personal/subjective/ unconscious studies with general/objective/ conscious studies. The last course I created for Generative Systems was called Homography, a foundation course in the visualization of time. Manual, mechanical, electronic and photronic tools were use to record relative ways of visualizing time.



HOMOGRAPHY (man's meaning) was intended primarily as a course in which all tools could be used for art exploration. As it turned out it became a course in THE VISUALIZATION OF TIME. I developed 9 relative ways of visualizing time based on my objective and subjective findings. All 9 ways were described symmetrically, i.e. Pressure/Flow was based on my dreams and my observations of the patterns of pressure and flow in my own hand and machine experiments. Stretching/ Compressing also came from dreams and from observing in my experiments that I could stretch or compress an image by light or heat or even by sound with a telecopier, merely by holding the recording needle down in time as I transmitted an image.

For each symmetrical way of visualizing time, the student was asked to use either manual, mechanical, electronic or photronic tools. Precise problems were set up, which gradually allowed for greater and greater problem setting by the student.

These are 9 relative ways of visualizing time:
(See attached figures 1-8)

1. Pressure/Flow
2. Scanning/Closure
3. Interference/Filtering
4. Internal/External
5. Opaque/Transparent Layering
6. Close Packing/Stacking
7. Stretching/Compressing
8. Metamorphosis/Morphogenesis
9. Synchronicity/Simultaneity

To these one can add other, innumerable ways of visualizing time.

In a sense, with only a gradually dawning awareness, I moved in a direction that (I very late realized) would have been a logical direction for the Bauhaus thinkers. Of these Laszlo Moholy - Nagy, came the closest to understanding the nature of visualizing time. I am now convinced that this was partially a result of his exploration with the technological tools of his time, which was directly related to his holistic philosophy.

Moholy's work with media technology permitted him to move into multi-dimensional landscapes, beyond any other of his contemporaries, more so than the Italian Futurists or the Cubists. Even Paul Klee, whose *Pedagogical Sketchbooks* became a model for integrating natural structural process into the creation of art, moved primarily from 2-dimensional to 4-dimensional space. It was Moholy who moved from 3-dimensional space to the 4th and multi-dimensional space/time, ie. his light modulator. Only late in my artistic career, during the course of working with new communication tools in the development of Generative Systems, did I come to understand Moholy's work.

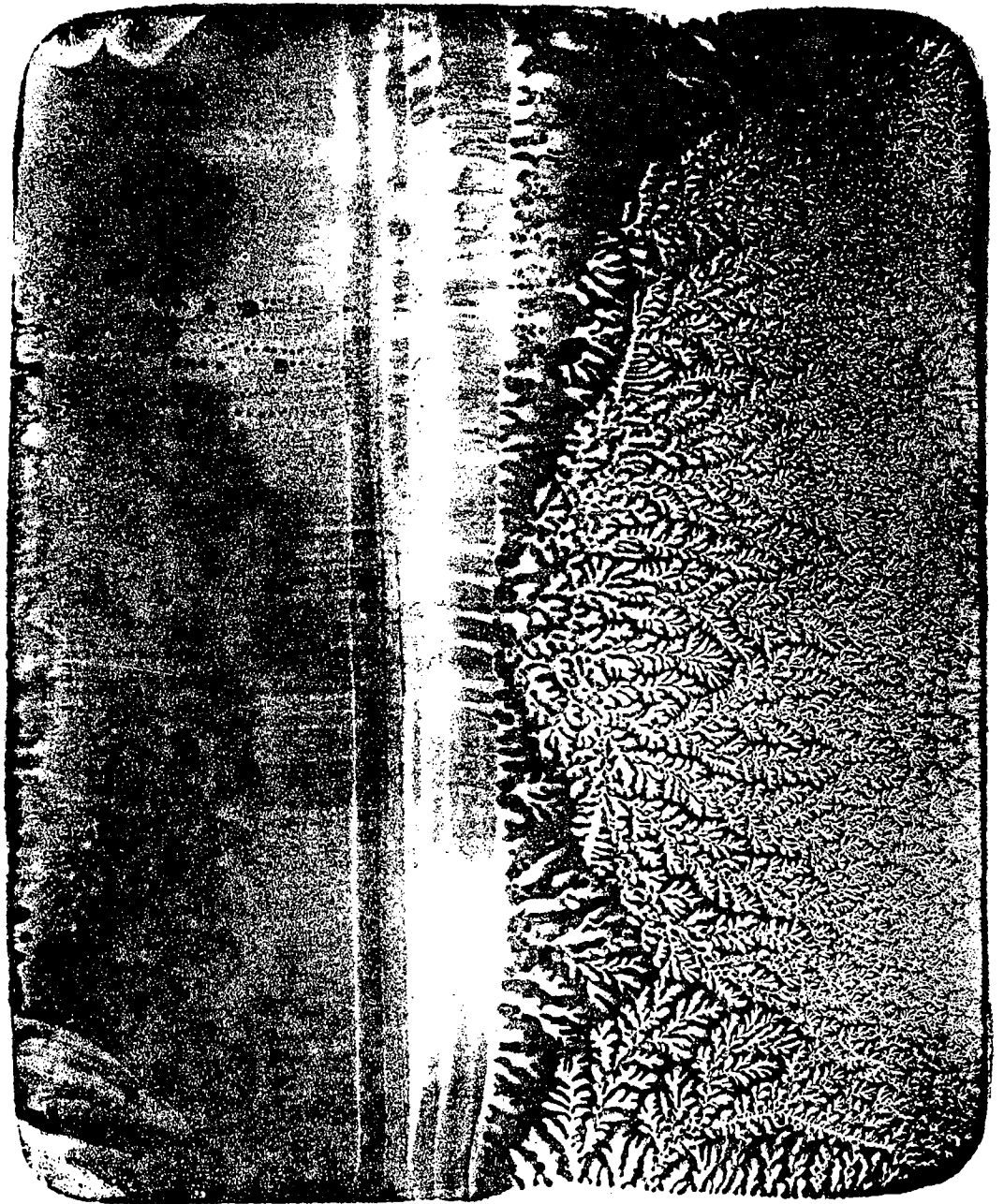
My great respect for Moholy's life and work was partially responsible for my enthusiastic response to your Hungarian invitation to submit proposals for an article and lecture. It is in the spirit of Moholy's quest for knowledge that I plan to develop this lecture with extensive use of slides of my own work to balance my words.

References:

1. Kubler, George, (1962) The Shape of Time, New Haven: Yale University Press.
2. Sheridan, Sonia Landy, (April, 1972) "Generative Systems", Afterimage, Vol. 1, No.2, 2-4, Rochester, N.Y., Visual Studies Workshop.
3. Sheridan, Sonia Landy, (1988), "Four Kinds of Time: Using Brush, Camera, Copier and Computer", Leonardo, Vol. 21, No.2, pp. 111-113, Great Britain: Pergamon Press.
4. Sheridan, Sonia Landy, (1975), "Generative Systems: 6 years Later", Afterimage, Vol. 2, No.9, pp.6-9, Rochester, N.Y.: Visual Studies Workshop.

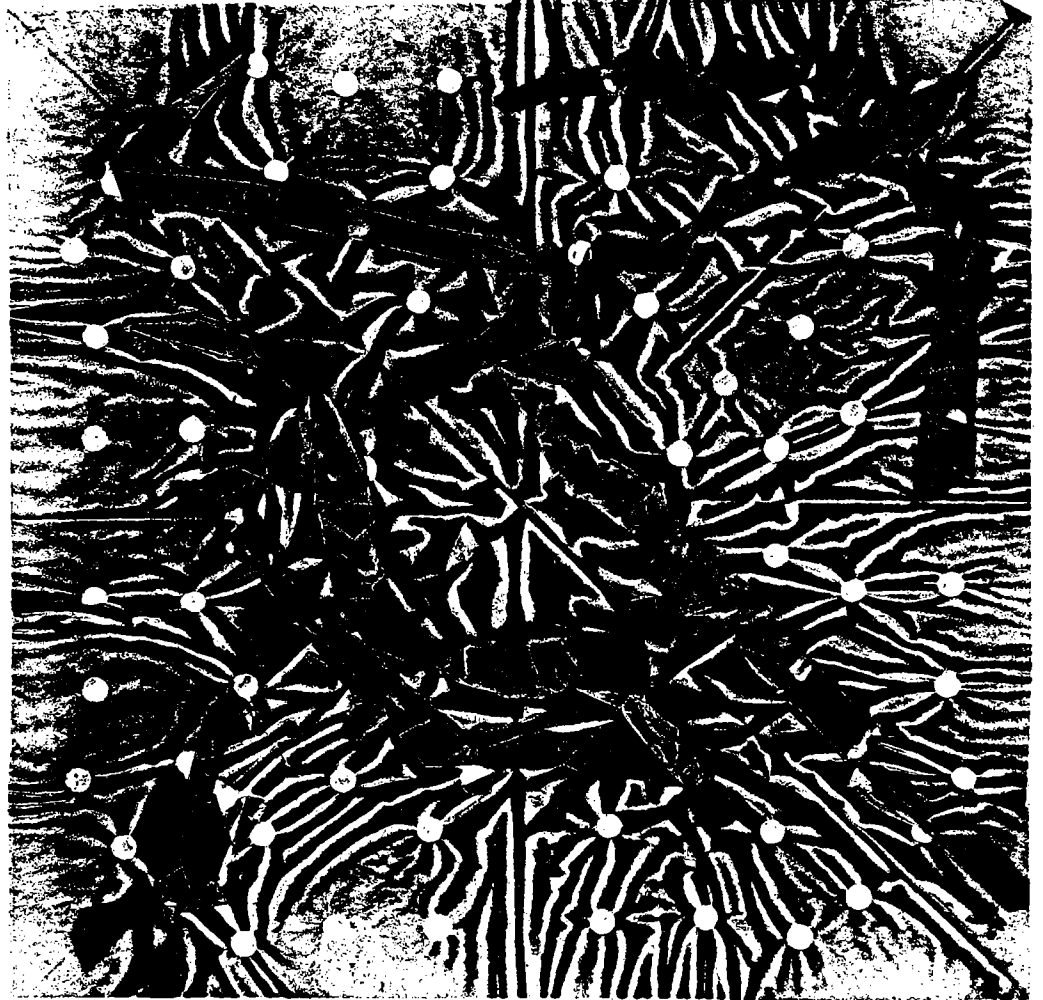
PRESSURE/FLOW

FIG. 1



PRESSURE/FLOW

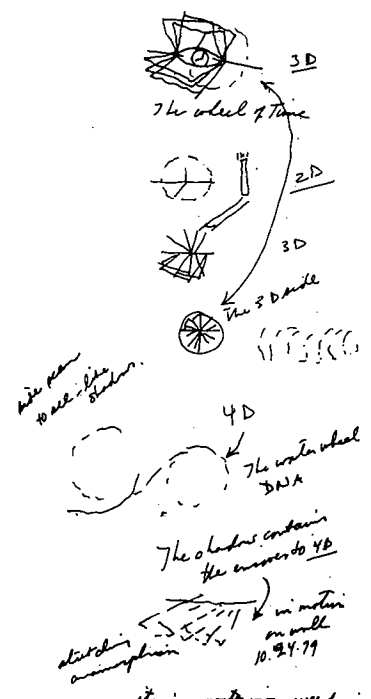
FIG. 2



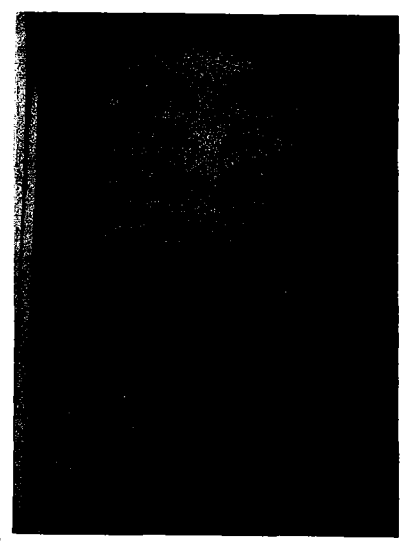
OPAQUE/TRANSPARENT LAYERING

FIG. 3

- Layering lens
- Layering hair
- Layering eye
- Layering cakes
- Layering around
- Layering in wait
- Layering in waiting
- Layering in lay and lady



The 4th level of the brain



waiting - waiting - wedding
 waiting - wondering - why?
 21

see... set
 The answer

see... point
 see... back
 see... small

see... receive
 eye - ear
 mouth

see... hostile?
 see... ???

see... TIME

FIG. 4
OPAQUE/TRANSPARENT LAYERING

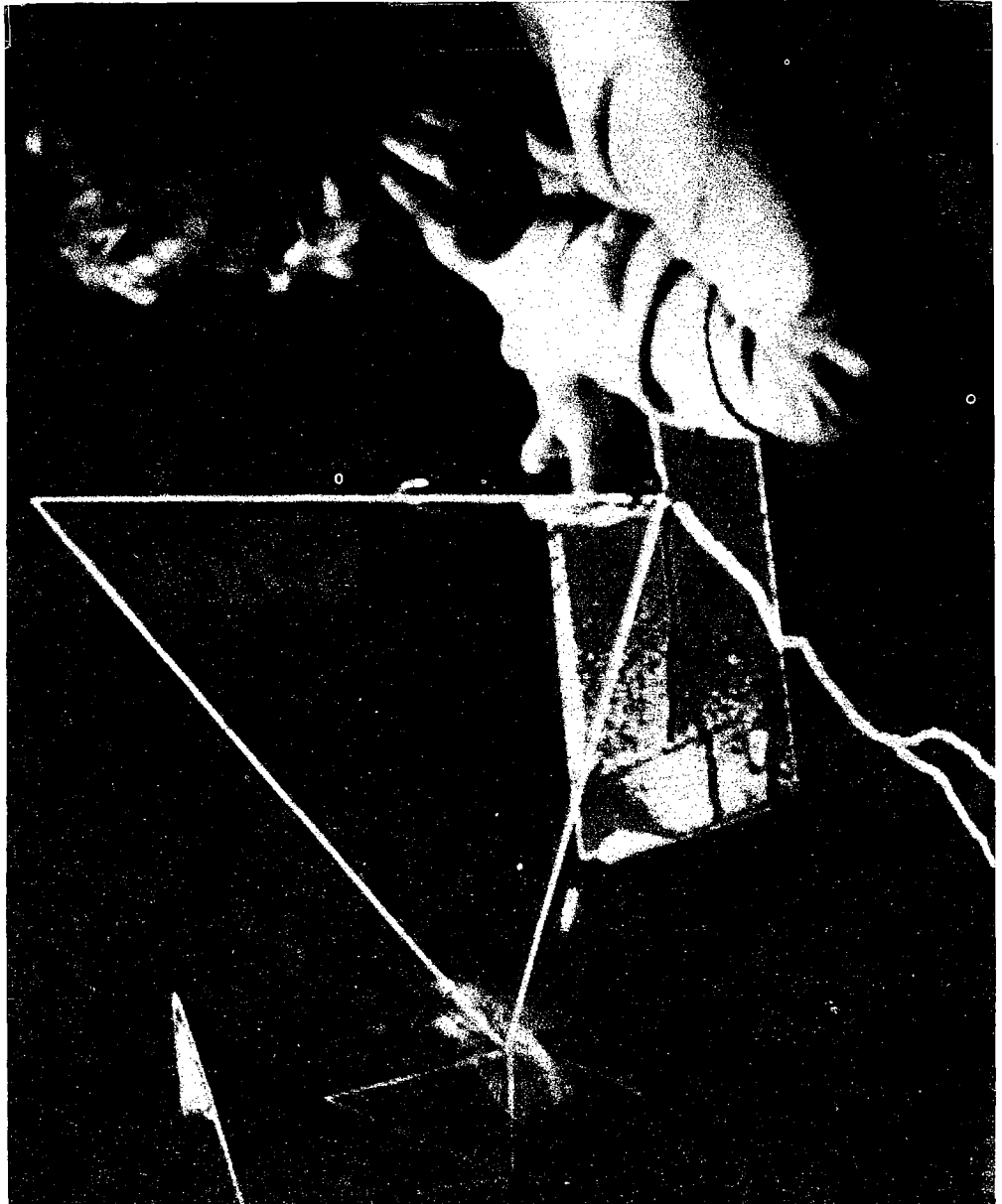
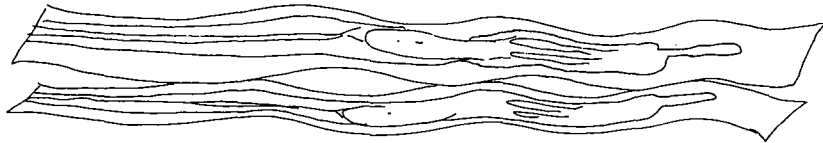
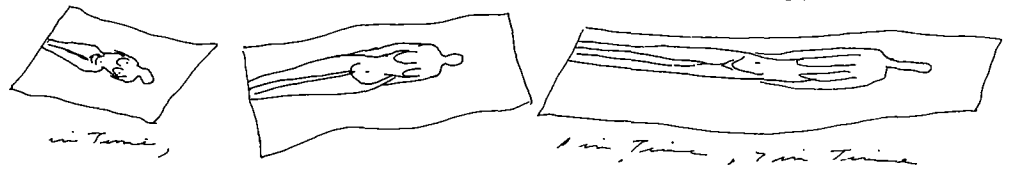
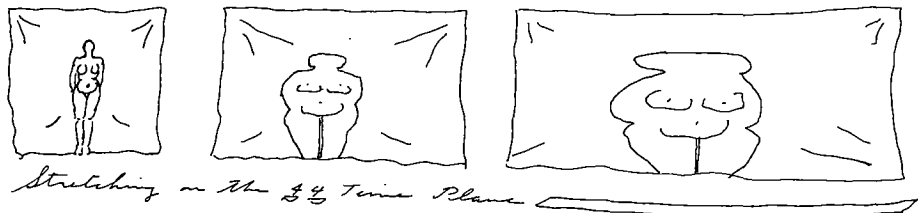
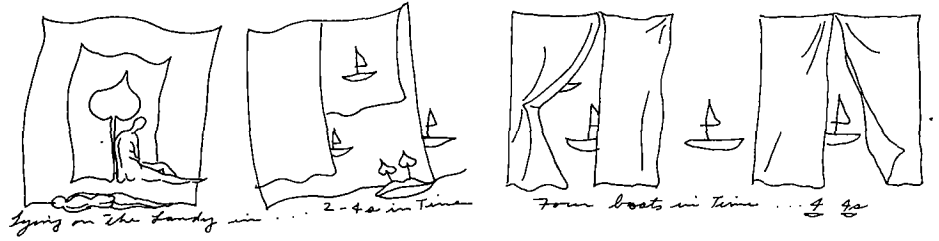
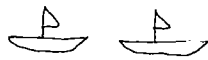


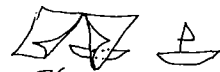
FIG. 5
STRETCHING/COMPRESSING



side = flow, flow = stretch, stretch = grow, grow = know,
know = no, no = number 3 3 3 3 sides on the
3/4 Time plane in? on? through? the wheel of time



nos know no nos



Through the Time curtain

6.23.81 ... 7:14:48 PM in the woods of northern America central

FIG. 6
STRETCHING/COMPRESSING



"Stretching from in Time" was made by putting the Computer graphic system video out of synchrony again. The resulting stretched parts when they reassembled much like an out-of-synch image on your home T.V. In this case I used a Cromemco 2-20 Computer, a CAT 400 graphics and EASEL, Time bits software

These hands took about 1 minute to compress and 10 to stretch. . . . A hand image 6 stories tall took 4 hours



"Stretching and Compressing in Time"

3M VRC remote copier . . . Controlling the time it takes to transmit an image . . .

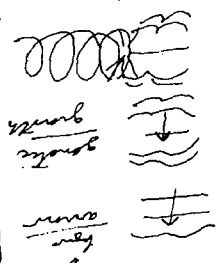
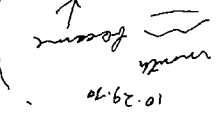
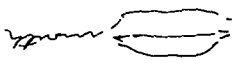
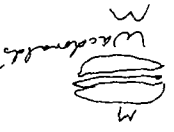
FIG. 7 METAMORPHOSIS/MORPHOGENESIS

1.0.25.78

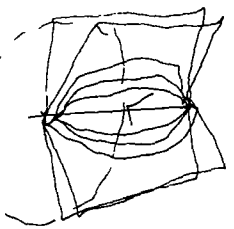
The order of things

Structure for 21st Century Art
 morphogenesis - the mechanism of natural growth
 and natural system.

Soft system
 Soft wave
 Soft



The clock thing
 comes up thing
 the sound of



The inside should not be
 the human world structure
 the technology which is not yet
 a natural input - but lets
 and process - analogies -
 metaphors for life - living -
 we can relate close to the
 human world
 at least in Germany - over 2
 study.

Germany as a
 shadow of the modern
 world
 modern world of the modern
 world

diff-oca
 is only 2D
 version
 of the
 thing

Make SP

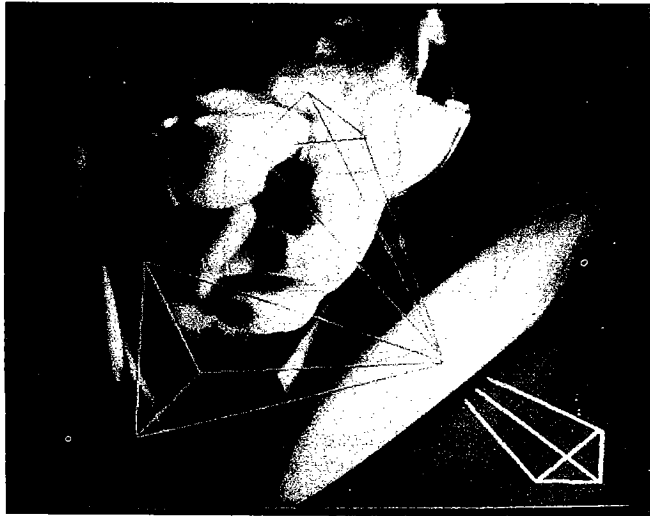
Germany, things, time

Germany, the time plane
 by many things in the space
 and time - map the world
 for the things things time

more this way

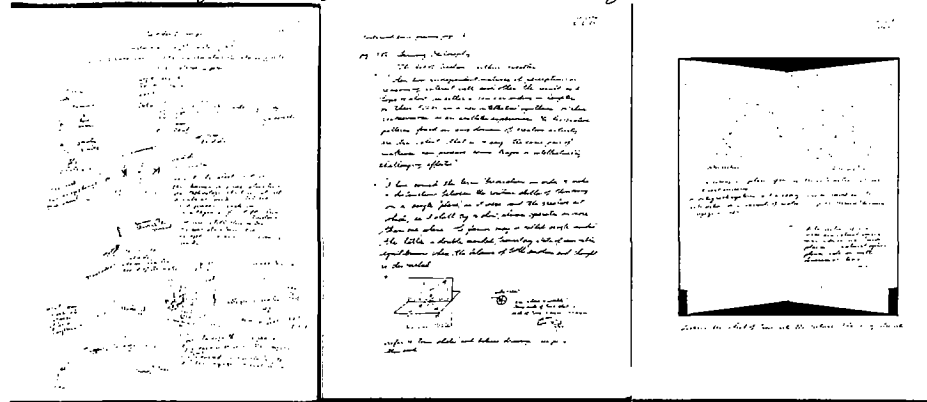
1965
 (1965)
 (1965)

FIG. 8
SYNCHRONICITY/SIMULTANEITY



"Light Plane"... 1985 computer graphic... Crayonco Z3D/CAT 400 hardware, EASEL/Time Arts software... Looking for the other side of Time on a light plane of the Wheel of Time. The right side, the right side, the dayside-the outside... with the fuseside, inside/outside...

Piercing the layers, flowing with the path, penetrating the night, the light, the unknown



"Wall Note No. 10" with 5 pages from nightbooks of Oct. 1979 and April, August, 1983.