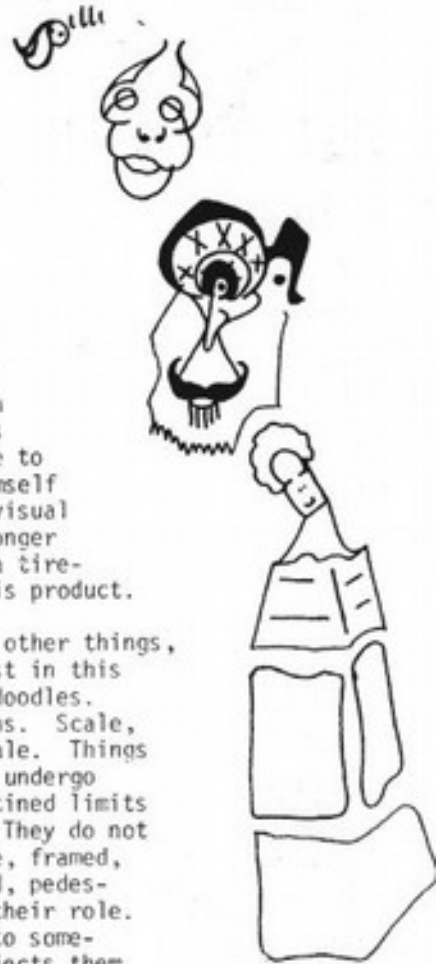


I: NOTES TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF THE DOODLE

Your doodle is, first of all, a creature of the present tense. It is graphic improvisation in a constant state of metamorphosis - the doodler is never aware at any one instant of what is liable to develop, come the next. The moment he finds himself standing back and taking aim at a preconceived visual concept - he has fallen from grace. He is no longer doodling - he is merely drawing. To resort to a tiresome lingo: doodling is process, more than it is product.

Now you may say yes, but there are all kinds of other things, paintings, sculptures even, that are created just in this way, out of the present tense, and they're not doodles. That's right - and there are other considerations. Scale, for instance. We all know the importance of scale. Things which function well on an appropriate scale can undergo monstrous qualitative changes once their predestined limits are violated. Doodles exist on a small scale. They do not survive being blown up, pushed into centre stage, framed, exhibited, spotlighted, pedestalled. That is not their role. It transforms them into something else again, subjects them to judgment by inappropriate criteria. A Jackson Pollock painting, whatever it is, is not a doodle.

Also, one does not doodle in oils, or in acrylics - not even in pastels, or gouache. One does not doodle into granite. To do so would be criminally hubristic. The doodle demands humble proletarian materials: the unassuming pencil and pen, for the most part - a finger in the sand, a twig in the dirt - beyond that pale lurks pretentiousness, and doodles are never pretentious. They are most at home on scraps of paper - the scappier, the more ordinary the better - or as benign parasites clinging to margins or versos, leaving the limelight of centre page to those texts and ^{designed} designed for it.





Doodles are also, by definition, ephemeral. They are not programmed for eternity, not even for the day after tomorrow. The simple fact that they have existed is enough. We sow them in our wake as we pass on, we scatter them behind us, and whether they are blown into the gutter by the wind, collected casually by a restaurant waitress who discards them without a glance, or are stumbled upon by a child who delights in their fantasy - this is none of our concern. Doodles are creatures of the moment only.

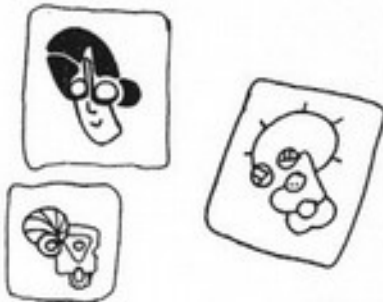


As to their content - here there are no criteria, no restrictions. They may be abstract, they may be figurative - my own, though of abstract origin (as they must be) invariably resolve themselves, sooner or later, into some variation on the human face or figure.

As to the degree to which doodling represents a direct line of communication to one's own subconscious, and as to the extent to which the result is an interpretable correlative of one's subconscious concerns or emotional state, I'll leave that up to others - such as for instance the narrator of the film whose existence provides the pretext for the composition of this piece - to thrash out as best they can.

Film by	Donald Winkler
Animation Photography	Wayne Henlebod Claude Lapierre
Narration	Maurice Podbrey
Re-recording	George Croll
Sound Editing	Don Douglas
Production	Robert Verrall

II: THE DOODLE AS COUNTER-CULTURAL SYNDROME



May I propose a microcosmic mandala for Western Man? Thank you. Conceive, then - a sheet of white paper (8½" x 11" will do) - with inscribed upon it a series of, say 39 pale parallel blue lines, ½" apart. An untutored child, presented with such a surface, will scribble indiscriminately across the page, blissfully oblivious to its careful structuring. He has to be educated to accept and respect these parallel blue lines. And educated, in due course, he certainly will be.

But there comes a time when such a discipline begins to feel restrictive. When he feels impulses coming up at him out of the depths of the paper, which are distorted and deformed from having to squeeze themselves



into the pattern laid out upon the surface. How can he handle a situation like this? One thing he can do is to try and ride rough-shod over the lines - to act out against them, attempting even to push them apart by force, like Samson straining against the pillars. In most cases such behavior provides no more than a momentary release to one's frustrations.



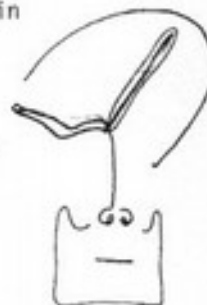
There's another technique, however, which is widespread, and which allows our anarchic impulses a certain amount of play, without compromising our fundamental allegiance to established institutions. This - is where doodling comes in. It subsists on the margins, it infiltrates in



and around the established order, permitting us to let off discreet steam - and it is tolerated,



and around the established order, permitting us to let off discreet steam - and it is tolerated,





just as a wise government will tolerate anti-social activity, as long as it doesn't pose a threat to the body politic. Or, to use another analogy, doodling stands in the same relation to the institution of rational literacy as a certain amount of genteel peripheral philandering does to the institution of marriage - serving as much to preserve as to undermine it.



But what happens when things begin to get out of control, when the doodles start to make incursions into the



middle of the page, when they do not keep their distance, when they begin to obliterate the established text? What has been a tolerated

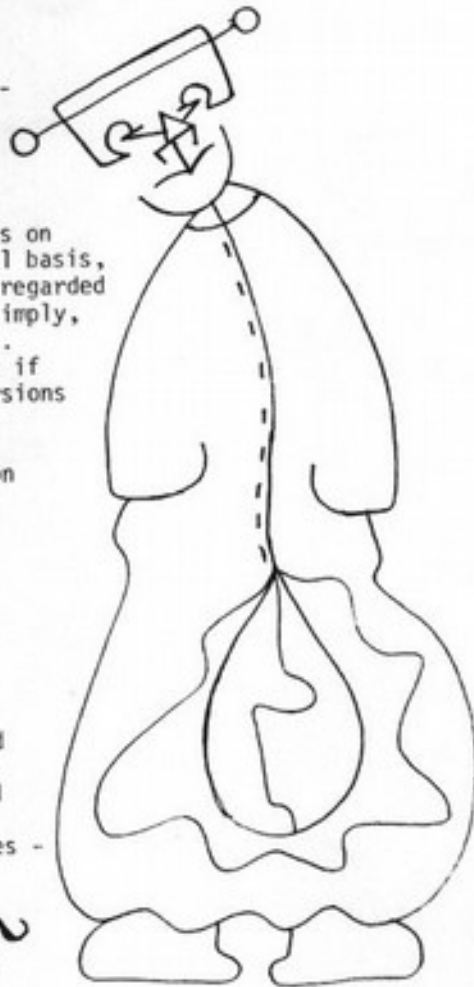
keep obliterate aberration suddenly becomes a much more serious

matter, and it is an instance such as this which we witness in Doodle Film.





If it occurs on an individual basis, well, it is regarded as, quite simply, madness. However, if the incursions begin to occur on too wide a scale, they can no longer be dismissed as clinical case histories -



they become a threat, and society must act to stamp them out. What has been the relationship of a harmless parasite to a tolerant host,



undergoes a significant change when the parasite begins to



predominate over the host: the parasite becomes a cancer, and the host has to fight back or be destroyed.



In such a way is doodling dangerous, within the microcosmic context of a simple lined piece of paper, mandala in miniature of Western Man.

Donald Winkler

