The following index lists the major topics in the audio recording and the approximate point when they occur in the recording according to an analog cassette recorder’s tape counter. This tape counter index (TCI) has not been edited for accuracy by Archives and Special Collections.
Introduction to the program.

Bevis explains that American writers, especially those of the Northwest are trying to relay the culture of this area. Bevis believes that both Hugo and Welch have been able to accomplish this. Bevis is talking with the author, Jim Welch, and he asks him how much of the book is really an autobiography. Welch says that since the book is written in the first person and the places in the book are familiar to him many people think it is an autobiography but it really isn't. Bevis says that the illusion to realism is a great compliment in the book. He has a hard time believing that it isn't real.

Bevis and Welch talk about the opinion of several critics referring to the narrator in the book being a good author. Bevis comments that students in his class commonly say that the book has an upbeat ending, instead of remaining neutral, because the guy went on to write the book. From these statements by people they think that the narrator is the person who wrote the book when in truth there is no real narrator, the narrator is simply made up.

Bevis asks Welch to talk about his second novel that is about to come off the presses. Bevis explains one of Guthrie's comments about Welch's writing first. Guthrie, in a previous interview for this program, said that Welch was a good writer but he wished Welch would put a little more action into his books.

Welch talks about his second novel. The book is written in third person. Welch thinks that this third person context has allowed him to put more action into the book. They talk about the other advantages of writing in the third person. For one thing you can get into the minds of other people and fit them into the story but in first person you are very limited to what one person thinks.

They talk about how the majority of writing in the US today seems to be in first person. Bevis doesn't think that first person writing is always successful. Bevis tries to explain why people think that Welch's book is a poet's novel.

Welch says that he has a new bunch of poems coming out soon and these poems will be dramatic prose poems.
Bevis explains that the listeners that prose poetry is a prose form of writing that takes one or two paragraphs to tell a whole story, usually it is less than one page. Bevis asks why these are going to be more dramatic. Welch says that some are going to be simply dialogue and others are going to be more descriptive.

Welch says that his main purpose in writing in this prose poetry style is so that each of the stories can sort of be added up to get an overall bigger picture. Bevis explains that many of the contemporary writers are using this style that Welch is trying in his upcoming book. They talks about Merwin's writings.

Welch talks about his writing and how much he still has to learn about writing novels. He has written one in first person, one in third person, and now the prose poetry form has come about. Bevis asks him if he will go back to writing using the other forms that he has tried. Welch says that he doesn't know if he will because he didn't feel like he was going anywhere with it.

Bevis talks about the great amount of investment that a practicing artist has in experimenting with new techniques. Welch agrees with Bevis and says that a person is flirting with their livelihood but people have to take chances to see what works for them.

Welch says that some writers just write to be writing. Some writers don't write to get the technique correct in their books but instead to get the content of their visions down on paper. Bevis asks Welch how satisfied he was with Winter in the Blood.

Welch says that the whole book pleases him very much because when he wrote it he really didn't know what he was doing. Welch says that he was able to do many things that teachers of fiction writing would say is wrong. Bevis comments that he likes the way in which Welch was able to switch in and out of prose and poetry.

Bevis talks about a scene from the book where Welch is able to use one of these types of poetry phrases that tend to divert the attention of the reader from the plot to look over the poetry another time. Bevis likes this about the book. Welch comments that at the end of some of his chapters he put twists and punch lines to jokes on purpose. Bevis then asks Welch about the end of the book and whether it is positive, negative or neither.

Welch says that he conceived the novel as being a
circle. The plot of the book continued around until the story came back to the same area at the end of the book as the beginning. The plot was then set up the same as the book started out and then the book ends.

701-750 Bevis reads a paragraph from the book.

751-800 The paragraph brings out one of the key statements about the main characters life. The character is distant from his goals in life. Even as the character proceeds through the story, thus his life, he remains the same distance away from those things that mean the most to him.

801-850 Welch talks about the problems that people have in writing in that many of the things that come out as important to the reader are done subconsciously by the writer. In this book Welch says that he really didn't think about the distancing of the character and so it just continued throughout.

851-900 Welch wonders whether it is just because he is a poet that he wasn't aware of so many things that went on in the novel. Welch is always surprised by critical essays from his peers. The essays quite often note something that went on in the novel that Welch really didn't know he put in there. Bevis asks Welch how many of the essays from critics are really useful to him.

901-950 Welch says that all of the essays had some merit. He realizes that his opinion may differ from others and his opinion really isn't any better than other peoples'.

[END OF SIDE A]

[SIDE B]

000-050 Bevis asks Welch whether he found most of the essays very humane to the novel. Welch says that all of the papers were very humane and professional about his paper. Welch says that he does very little research but from the papers he received the essay writers did a lot of research just in order to evaluate the novel.

051-100 Welch says that most writers, if they are not too old and established, are very pleased that people would devote the time to criticize another writers work. Bevis says that writing is difficult because when you write something and publish it you are never sure anyone has even read it until someone criticizes it. So it makes a writer happy just to here a response that someone has read the work whether that person liked it or not. Bevis thanks Welch for being on the show.
Bevis begins the second part of the show. Bevis comments that he likes the book very much. Bevis then talks about the two disadvantages in the book. One is that people might find the book to bleak. Bevis doesn't really think this is a disadvantage, however, nor does he think it bleak. The major objection to the book is that it lacks the scope of a usual novel. Bevis notes that most novels encompass a considerable period of time and many generations, thus giving a person a grand scope of things that happened. However, in the poetic tradition this book is not small in scope and it fully depicts the consciousness of the narrator.

Bevis says that the traditional third person novel is the visionary, imaginative form. The poems are more objective, precise scientific documents. Bevis comments that much of Welch's success is that he can speak generally about native American life. Bevis says that the technique found in Welch's novel can very well be described as poetic.

Bevis reads a paragraph from the book showing the type of style used in the book. The paragraph stops with an abrupt thought sort of like a poem. So this fragmentation of consciousness within the novel is what makes it poetic not the language used. Bevis says that these fragmentary developments every once in a while do nothing to help move the plot along but they do give a person some idea of the narrator's personality.

Bevis comments that a plot is always a problem in a book like this. There does seem to be a structure to the book, however. There is some effectiveness and action in the fragmentary pieces of the book. They are not there to take up space and confuse the reader.

Dramatically speaking there is a climax to the book and it is the potency of knowledge that comes from the narrator at the end of the book. Bevis talks about the next book which is A Lovely Monster. Although this book is science fiction and written by a Californian living in Montana, Bevis will debate on the next program whether this book should be included in the collection of readings for the class. Bevis then signs off.

[END OF TAPE]