

Words Per Page (1972)

Originally an introduction to a course in film production at Antioch College, 1970. Published in Afterimage in 1972 and in Form and Structure in New Cinema, ed., Dennis Wheeler (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1972). Translated into German and appeared in Xscreen (Cologne: Phaidon-Verlag GmbH) in 1971; reprinted in Film Culture No. 65-66, 1978.

Can we begin in the present? If film is to be "an art," it will measure itself in terms of the maturity, rigor and complexity of the "other arts" (advanced painting, dance, sculpture, music, and so on). Although the specific problems of film (temporal) are not the same as the problems of, say, sculpture (spatial), there seem to be some general aesthetic interests shared by contemporary arts (one of which is, "paradoxically," *self-definition*—"painting as the subject of painting," etc.). Being "contemporary" is not a simplistic matter of being "abstract" rather than "realistic" in subject choice; probably any "content" is valid—what is more problematic is attitude and systems of forming. Certain attitudes (nonintellectual, nonreflective, self-indulgent, noncritical, "intuitive-emotional") seem a bit out of place in the 1970s. Certain forms of organization ("the story," "metaphor-allegory," reference to "psychological states") seem to be somewhat expended. Older forms need not be negated but can become transformed through radical restructuring (Bresson and Dreyer) or through a purification wherein, say, "the story" may become "direct autobiography" (Jonas Mekas' *Diaries*) and then "investigation" or "measurement" or "document" (wherein the less interesting the subject is, the more interesting the procedure of recording becomes: methodology as subject matter; "the story" as a map of actual behavior). I would like you, in this "course," to regard your art as research, *research* in contemporary communication and "meaning" systems. Anticipating objections that this may be "sterile" and/or "nonexpressive," I would like to suggest that current research methodologies such as general systems, information and communication theory, structuralism, cybernetics, and others which are more involved with "form/function" than with "content/substance" are not isolated nonhumanistic fads. Because they are increasingly significant in anthropology, linguistics, sociology, economics, natural sciences, community planning, communication and transportation systems, engineering, medicine, psychology, and so forth, they are *defining our environment* and, as such, they must have some significant implications for culturally relevant art.

Before saying anything more about film, it is necessary to point out a few general concepts that have emerged in the last several years in painting and new three-dimensional work. The idea of "wholeness" is obviously not new, but recently it has taken on a meaning different than the accepted "organic

unity" principle, which Eisenstein stated so lucidly: "...in an organic work of art, elements that nourish the work as a whole pervade all the features composing this work. A unified canon pierces not only the whole and each of its parts, but also each element that is called to participate in the work of composition. One and the same principle will feed any element, appearing in each in a qualitatively different form. Only in this case are we justified in considering a work of art organic, the notion "organism" being used in the sense which Engels spoke of it in his *Dialectics of Nature*: "The organism is certainly a *higher unity*." ("The Composition of *Potemkin*"). This idea of a unity of tensional relationships ("collisional montage"), and Kandinsky's, Mondrian, and Malevich's ideas of "dynamic" asymmetrical balance are quite different from Pollock's influential nonrelational unity of the entire visual field: Pollock's "overallness," directness, flatness gives his works the "presence" of autonomous objects. In all cases, in the structural "self-sufficiency" of early nonobjective art and in the literalness of recent work, an attempt is made to segregate the works from "reality," so that the works take their place as a part of rather than representative of that reality; the works define rather than mimic actuality. "Objecthood" is achieved by: intensification of materiality (repetitive stress of "flaws" in a process, over-use of a variable, accumulation, intersection, allowing materials to shape themselves, and so forth); equal internal division of parts to create a sense of isotropism and to allow an easy enough gestalt so that the whole seems nonrelational; use of a prior systems of serial or nonhierarchical or chance or random or numerical ordering. Often serial structuring has the dynamic effect of shifting organization of the whole out of the work so that the perceiving mind is actively engaged in perceptual and conceptual creation. Before rejecting the viability of systematic approaches, because they sound "mechanical" and "nonemotional," think of the power of Bach's *Art of the Fugue*; at the very least, a priori decisions regarding ordering or nonordering have heuristic value in that surprising forms may emerge from their use which could never be pre-conceived or developed intuitively. Along with these phenomenological means, new ontological approaches have been highly developed. "Self-reference," through both formal tautology (as in Stella's edge-referring internal surface division in his "striped" paintings) and conceptual tautology (as in Johns' early "target," "map," and "flag" paintings) generate convincingly self-sufficient works.

When Andre Bazin asks "What is Cinema?" he answers by describing the interesting ways in which cinema has been *used* to tell stories, enlarge upon theatre, cinematize "human themes." When we dispense with such non-filmic answers, do we have anything left? I believe that we can turn away from the cinema that began with Lumière (*using* cinema to create illusions of nonfilm movement), and which developed through Melies, Griffith, Eisenstein, and

so on up to today's Bergman, Fellini, and others, and we can ask a new set of questions that greatly *expand* the possibilities of the system. There is no doubt that there is a great deal of value in the nonfilmic tradition of cinema, in the accepted descriptions of cinema as illusionistic representation and as "documentary"; but any further developments of these areas, without acute reappraisal of their metaphysical premises, will lead most probably to mere elaborations and effete indulgences in a time of massive cultural transvaluation. This is not to say that cinema *should be*, say, "nonrepresentational." Film, "motion picture" and "still" film, unlike painting and sculpture, can achieve an autonomous presence without negating iconic reference because the phenomenology of the system includes "recording" as a physical fact. And the linear-temporal physicality of motion pictures allows for a kind of "representation" suggested by Barthes in his essay "The Activity of Structuralism":

The aim of all structuralist activity, in the fields of both thought and poetry is to reconstitute an 'object,' and, by this process, to make known the rules of functioning, of 'functions,' of this object. The structure is therefore effectively a representation of the object but it is a representation that is both purposeful and relevant, since the object derived by imitation brings out something that remained invisible or, if you like, unintelligible in the natural object. The structuralist takes reality, decomposes it, and recomposes it again... 'something new' is brought into being, and this new element is nothing less than intelligibility: the representation is intellect added to the object... (the structuralist activity derives) from a 'mimesis,' founded not on the analogy of substances (as in 'realist' art), but on the analogy of functions....

Not denying the viability of this proposition, I would extend this "mimeticism" (by involution) and suggest that the "recording" of the structure-process of recording can free cinema from referring to anything beyond itself; cinema can then *legitimately* become "meaningless" *syntax*. It is, of course, too soon to define limits; numerous areas provoke interest and potentiality — some involve first-order mimeticism and some do not. The question "What is cinema?" is rather *open*. At moments, when faced with the overwhelming, confusing clutter of physical and conceptual definitions of *cinema*, that set of random anthropomorphic accumulations which is only understandable in its muddled definitions, is a worse point of departure for an understanding of human communication than is the more precise concept of "linguistics." Perhaps the vague term cinema should be abandoned with all its anthropomorphic, pseudopsychological presuppositions and, instead, the less fashionable term

cinematics should be used as a base for our fresh systems. A lot could be gained from a study of linguistics if one wished to build a comprehensive and usable "cinematics" model. As a process, film is related to language in that both are, on many levels linear systems; for example, "the sound wave emanating from the mouth of a speaker is physically a continuum" (Malmberg, *Structural Linguistics and Human Communication*) — this is easily demonstrated by looking at the way speech is patterned on an optical soundtrack of a film. And, as Ferdinand de Saussure pointed out, "The signifier, being auditory, is unfolded solely in time from which it gets the following characteristics: (a) it represents a span, and (b) the span is measurable in a single dimension; it is a line." (*Course in General Linguistics*). I am not prepared to make or support at this time the hypothesis that "cinematics" is a viable analogue of "linguistics," but I am convinced that thought in this direction is not without value; it is easy to see how the concepts in the following quotation are relevant to such a case: "A structure, according to everyday usage, is made up of parts or elements having a certain mutual relationship, as opposed to a mere accumulation of mutually independent items. If human language is said to be structured, this should be understood in such a way that any language is built up of so-called discrete elements (that is, sharply delimited from each other and without any possible gradual passage from one to the other). Language consequently is analyzable into minimal independent units, which are restricted in number and the functions of which are determined by their relations to the other units with which they are combined, within a system of communication possibilities (a paradigm) and within the actual speech sequence, the chain (or the syntagm)... If linguistics is called structural, this consequently implies that its main concern is the description and analyses of its functional units (its discrete elements) and of the relationship between these." (Malmberg). We see that it is highly problematic which of the parameters of "cinema" can be legitimately regarded as "elements"; in fact, it is clear that our definition of what we shall regard as our "morphemes" and "phonemes" will predetermine what paradigms we can create. How can we discover "elements"? Certainly not by conceptual logic alone. William Burroughs suggested that his "cut-up" writing method could reveal the essence of a political speech more easily than a careful analysis of the unaltered speech; that is, cut the thing apart and scan over the random reassembly of words and phrases and the deeper logic of the statement becomes glaringly apparent. A method of empirically probing the cinema system, aside from looking at the system one part at a time, is to allow several redundant and permuting parts to "rub against each other" in time; emergents from such systematic interactions can be regarded as "natural" macroscopic representations of "microscopic" "cinematic" elements. So-called "defective parts," which in "cinema" are regarded as "mistakes," are probably

the most adequate parts to deal with in “cinematics” approach; obviously, flaws reveal the fabric and “cinematics” is the art of the cinema’s fabric. (For the sake of brevity, I have decided not to develop the “cinematics” model any further in this introduction; so, I will most often use the conventional term *cinema*, rather than “cinematics,” it is worth noting that because this approach is structural-informational, because it provides a means of creating powerfully *direct* perceptions, it is as fruitful an approach for the politically motivated filmmaker as it is for pure researchers. Godard has begun to understand this in newer works such as *One Plus One*, where he seems to be cautiously moving away from traditional narrative dramatic molds towards the sort of compellingly blunt recording style Warhol has invented. But these are not convincing examples for the truly radical political filmmaker because while Godard’s films “contain” political sentiments; they are not ultimately politically *activating* because they are viewed not by “masses,” who need to be activated but by a group of persons who are no doubt already convinced of at least the possibility that a form of revolution is occurring. Truly effective political statements have not been made yet; however, the important experimental filmmakers working in Russia after the Revolution of 1917, by scrutinizing what they believed to be the *syntax* of film, came closest in making *radicalizing* films.)

Stan Brakhage’s massive work is too expansive in its implications and richness to discuss here except to mention that his use of the camera as a behavioral extension, his forceful modulation of disjunctive, “distractive” “mistakes” (blurs, splices, flares, frame lines, flash frames) and his decomposition-reconstitution of “subjects” in editing, because of their cinematically self-referential qualities (they reveal the system by which they are made), bring cinema up to date with the other advanced arts. And, in another manner, Andy Warhol has demonstrated in his early work that *prolongations* of subject (redundant, “nonmotion” pictures), because they deflect attention finally to the material process of recording-projecting (to the *succession* of film *frames*, and by way of consciousness of film grain, scratches, and dirt particles, to the sense of the *flow* of the celluloid *strip*), it is perhaps as revealing of the “nature of cinema” as is consistent interruption of “normative” cinematic functions.

At one point some artists felt that painting had evolved irretrievably away from “reference.” Delaunay even believed that he was not only making “non-objective” but also shapeless (pure-color) paintings. Because his semantic culture set did not recognize, as we recognize today, that regularly bounded color fields can be regarded as subsets of the concept “shape,” he was unaware of the referential nature of his forms. Definitions of “reality” change. It is hard today to make distinctions between what is “nonobjective” and what is “symbolic” and/or “referential.” “Reference” is not longer an adequate axis of differentiation, but there are those who still hold simplistic notions about

the “intrinsic realism” of film (Kracauer). Further, most critics and historians still regard the *tentative* experience of perceiving a film as “more real,” in their definitions of cinema, than holding in their hand a non-tentative strip of celluloid that has a measurable length and width and that has a measurable series of “frames,” degrees of opacity, and so on. It is interesting to consider some phenomenological differences between painting, music, and film: in viewing painting, our experience is changing while the painting’s existence is enduring; in music, both our experience and the existence of the music are changing; however, in film we have a case where we can experience both a changing and an enduring existence—we can look at the “same” film as an *object*, before or after projection (and it is not a “score”; it is “the film”), and as temporal *process*, while it is being “projected” on the stable support of the screen. This equivocality of object/projection is further complicated when we admit that there are occasions when we are looking at a screen and we don’t know whether we are or are not seeing “a film”; we cannot distinguish “the movie” from “the projection.” Let us say that the room is dark and the screen is white; we may believe that the room is dark and the screen is white; we may believe that the projector is simply throwing light on the screen, because there is no indication that a film is being shown; yet, in fact, the projector may be casting *images* of a succession of clear-blank frames onto the screen, projecting not “light” but a *picture* which represents motion (the motion of the strip of film being projected); so, unless we are in the projection booth and thus experience both the film as object and as projection this “viewing” would be incomprehensible. Even Cage’s “silent” piece for piano does not present this problem because we can see the performer “non-performing” the music without having to look “behind the scene.”

There are even deeper implications issuing from the apparent dualism of film’s “being” in that those who acknowledge only the projected “movie” as a source of their metaphysics tend to impose a value hierarchy that recognizes the frame and the strip of film only as potential distractions to the flow of a “higher” process, that temporal abstraction, “the shot.” Notice that in the normative cinema we neither see the motion of the film strip (unless the strip is scratched) nor are we aware of a succession of frame units (unless the projector is “improperly framed”). The cameramen who shoot such “movies” utterly and disdainfully ignore the frame structure of their medium; when the cameraman “frames” a “shot” he is thinking in image boundary abstractions rather than acknowledging the basic modularity of his image support. On the other hand, a filmmaker like Man Ray, in his *Return to Reason*, directs attention to the *fact* of film’s frame structure in his rayogram constructed passages where there is *discontinuity* from frame to frame. Brakhage, in *Mothlight*, allows the natural length of his “subjects” to determine their duration on the screen—in the

unforgettable passage where it seems as if a long thin leaf is *passing* us (rather than it seeming as if the camera is tracking over the leaf), we get an immediate fix on the film strip *process* which is in fact occurring; this remarkable film "feels frameless" and congruently, *has no frame lines!*

This problematic equivocality of film's "being" is perhaps cinema's most basic ontological issue. George Landow's films coherently frame these issues, particularly *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.*, wherein one becomes involved in the perceptual differentiation of the dirt/scratches as image (those which refer to the printed frame) and the dirt/scratches that are actually on the surface of the particular print, the particular *strip* of film passing through the projector. One is reminded of Vermeer's multiple mappings of mapping procedures in *The Painter in His Studio*.

To begin getting a clear perspective on these complex questions, it would be valuable to regard cinema as an informational system, rather than starting with a priori metaphysical theories or with a fully developed aesthetic or with the kind of exclamatory presumptions that Vertov's "Kino Eye" concept typifies (the drawing of morphological analogies between the human body and the nonhuman instruments). Let us investigate the system as it exists in a descriptive, concrete modality of comprehension. It would be a mistake to be initially concerned with the *intentions* that formed the system, the native pseudo-aesthetic that "caused" the technological development of photography ("capturing a likeness of the world") and cinematography ("capturing a likeness of the world in motion")—after all, the system exists today, with or without our "intention" that it do this or that. The system simply exists, and a taxonomy of its basic elements seems a more appropriate beginning from analysis than propounding rashly abstract, speculative "reasons" for its existence. This latter case, in its simple overgeneralizing, has led, from the very beginning, to premature, so-called "languages of the film," "grammars of the film." Such a beginning accounts for the normative postulate that "the shot" is one of cinema's irreducible particulars. As if their remarks were analytically suggestive, "informed cineastes" speak of "mise en scene." My hypothesis does not exclude the formation of higher abstraction classification; I only suggest that there is nothing to be gained by starting with highly abstract and highly questionable presuppositions. Lumière was so emphatic in his belief in "the shot" that he constructed both the internal structure and external boundaries of his films with one and the same shot.

A listing of elements is confounded by the object/projection "dualism"; but at least a crude breakdown of the modes that the system can embody can be made; this seems necessary before "elements" can be located. There are at least: processes of intending to make a film; processes of recording light patterns on raw stock (films can be made that bypass this mode); processes of

processing; processes of editing; processes of printing; processes of projecting; and processes of experiencing. The problem of whether or not "concepts" like "intention" are "elements" complicates the issue; that is to say, even those "things" that are observable, such as "emulsion grains," can be shown to be essentially "concepts." Remembering this difficulty, a partial list of elements that can be observed should be made as a (tentative) fundamental frame of reference. We can observe cameras, projectors, and other pieces of equipment and their parts and their parts' functions (shutters, numerous circular motions of parts, focus, and so on). We can observe the support itself, its emulsions before and after "exposure," sprocket holes, frames, and so on. We can observe the effects of light *on* film and, likewise, we can note the effects of light *passing through* the film and illuminating a reflective support. There is a remarkable structural parallel, which is suggestive of new systems of filmic organization, between a piece of film and the projections of light through it; both are simultaneously corpuscular ("frames") and wave-like ("strip").

Warhol, in his early "static" films, by disregarding the normative idea that a film is composed of parts and that its time-scale (its duration) is the sum of those heterogeneous parts, made the important discovery that the internal structure of a film (the natural duration of its "subject") could define, be congruent to, be a parallel of, the perimeter of a film's shape; this is a temporal analogy to Jasper Johns' making the edge of his "flag" works congruent with their surface area image. Ironically, this freed film from its "scale" being dependent upon arbitrary subject-oriented judgments; now we see that even when there are internal subdivisions in a film, the "edge" of the film can be *generated by*, rather than arbitrarily *contain*, the internal structure of the film; a sort of natural ("necessary") wholeness is possible. As P. Adams Sitney has pointed out, the edges of the temporal shape of some new films are highly emphasized; this is because a film's shape, its time-surface area is comprehensible as a discrete unit. The factor of "wholeness" is central to this discreteness. In time, this wholeness is sensed in homogeneous structured works as a *constantly simultaneous gestalt*, whereas in developmental works, senses of linear direction *through* nonsimultaneous, nonredundant time gives a sense of coherent overall duration-shape (in other words, the "edges" of the duration-shape of a film are not just the beginning and ending measurements but have as much to do with defining the shape[s] of the time after the film begins being projected and all during the projection until the film stops being projected); in these works, which appear to have the kind of cohesiveness wherein shape and edge are indistinguishable, one cannot speak of "beginning" and "end" because that implies a fragmentation of the film's shape and a truly one-part temporal shape cannot be apprehended as such if we can make it *three* discrete shapes ("beginning," "ending," and "middle"). What an irony it is that such a discrete

shape does not have the boundaries of beginning and ending! Somehow, these new films achieve the quality of being revelatory fragments of a larger system that is patterned after the prototype of the film itself. Warhol's "actual scale," in works like *Sleep* and *Empire*, because it documents cyclic ideas such as sleep/wakefulness/sleep and night/day/night obviously implies larger cyclic systems; another homogeneous work, Snow's *Dripping Water*, does not imply a cycle of any kind because there is no predictable measure of where the dripping began or ended or whether it even began or will end—so, since there is no definable boundary such as "end," this noncyclic work implies that it is a segment of a larger non-cyclic system. One can conceive of many forms of homogeneous and nonhomogeneous overall time-shapes. In what senses can these shapes be regarded as cinematic? Snow understood the vectorial implications of the projector light beam and this seems to account at least in part for *Wavelength's* directional structure. Physically, the conic shape is directive toward the projector lens; yet, we sense the internal projectiveness of the beam directing itself toward the screen, as if magnitude was its target. In 1966 I became aware of the projectory beam, in a piece called *Unrolling Movie Screen*, and to a certain extent allowed the beam's projective and volumetric vectorial characteristics to inform the overall structuring of the piece. The piece involved the projection of a film loop called *Instructions*, which depicts one conventional way a roll of soft white tissue can be used; using rolls of that white tissue, I gradually, physically actualized the light beam while I delivered an informal lecture on the logical necessity of developing movie screens that would realize the projected image at every point, from the projector lens to the screen. The piece ended when the screen finally became a volumetric, tautological metaphor of the projection beam. One could say that because time itself is "an arrow," it is impossible to avoid vectorial directionality in articulating temporal media and that one inevitably ends up with a sort of story form. But this "story," if it is such a form, is a physical or procedural one and what it tells us is analogous to what we are actually perceiving while it is being projected. Besides, approaching film from these new frames of reference, we are free to conceive of not only forward-oriented vectors but any vectorial direction; negative vectors come to mind easily but they are something which are not intrinsic to narrative development logic. *Last Year at Marienbad* and other works that shift temporal arrangements out of linear order nevertheless do not ever achieve retrograde vectorial structures.

One thing we can say for sure about the release print of a film is that it is a long single "line" of film stock and that during its projection, even though it may be structured according to retrograde vectorial concepts and even be experienced as temporally negative, it is, in fact, a *straight line* in our actual overall isotropic time field. And the frames on the strip, as well as the image frame

on the screen, are regular and repeating. So, a homogeneously structured film would be as valid an amplification of the nature of film as would be a vectorial oriented work. In fact, from this angle it would seem that film experiences that had *any* variation would disrupt this sense of linear homogeneity and would in effect be anti-filmic. However, by considering one of cinema's most basic syntagms, "the fade," we discover a most natural way of reintroducing structural directionality without negating either the continuous nature of the strip (the fade *emphasizes* the linear quality of the strip) or the flat, modular nature of the individual film frames (because of the flat screen, being the most direct projection/image of the frame's morphology, constantly refers our attention across its even surface in all directions to its edge, rather than looking *through* a "frame" into a picture, we find ourselves looking at an image of the film frame). My work of the past five years has been based on the importance of the fade; it provided a believable model for the vectorial construction of those works. My interest in creating temporal analogues of Tibetan mandalas, evoking their circularity and inverse symmetric balance, led me to making what are basically two-vector, symmetric works in which the first part's forward-directed structure is countered by the second part's retrograde direction. A complex form of this vectorial approach, which issues a sense of isotropic homogeneity rather than a sense of developmental directiveness, can be obtained by overlapping or regularly intersecting two opposing vectors (that is, superimpose a forward progression "over" a backwards progression); the whole work is, so to speak, a conceptual "lap dissolve" and will have the curious quality of constant but *directionless* motion. In 1968 I abandoned the mandala-like structures and am now working with a single vector form, rather than dualistically balanced vectors; I have come to believe that while they provide discrete experiences, the latter are too closed and death-evoking in their overstressing of "beginning" and "ending" and, in this sense, are models of closed systems.

Once the screen frame is regarded as a projection of a total film frame, we must begin to think about *appropriate* scale relationships, such as distance of camera from subject to distance of screen and projected subject and viewer and, consequently, the size of the image to the size of its frame, and the size of the screen-as-image to the size of the wall on which it is projected. These features are normally regarded as arbitrary; the flat film frame does not have the deep space most "shots" containing diagonals evoke, yet directors do not hesitate in using diagonal shapes in their compositions; rarely do these diagonals refer to the rectangular shape of the frame. If the film frame is a valid subject of footage, then footage should be considered a valid subject within the screen frame. A continuous scratch across frame lines down the length of film refers not only to the footage as a flowing strip, but is also a valid internal division in its congruent relation to the verticality of the right and left edges of the frame

image. An intensified splice not only refers to the horizontality of the top and bottom edge of the frame, but it also interrupts the flow of our experiencing a film in such a way that we are reminded that we are watching the flowing of footage through a projector. When a film "loses its loop," it allows us to see a blurred strip of jerking frames; this is quite natural and quite compelling subject material. When this nonframed condition is intentionally induced, a procedure I am currently exploring, it could be thought of as "anti-framing." I am developing another approach to simultaneously reveal, both the frame and strip nature of film (both of which are normally hidden due to the intermittent shutter system) by removing the gripper arm and shutter mechanism from the projector.

Light and color are obviously primary aspects of cinema. However, even in fine cinema works color has not very convincingly realized its temporal potentialities. Some works use color as a "functional/symbolic" tool, in an Eisensteinian sense, or for psychological reference and physical effect, or for definition and clarification of images in the picture. In a lot of lesser works, color is decorative and ornamental or is used nonphilosophically merely for its stimulatory values; this latter use of color to produce essentially nonfilmic "psychedelic effects" is conceptually uninteresting and is better suited to video works where color more intense than cinema's reflected screen color can be obtained. This area has elicited very little systematic concern from filmmakers and film critics. In many cases a great deal of attention is paid to getting "proper color balance" for no good *cinematic* purpose; this technical "attentiveness" is not what I mean by "systematic concern." The vast problems of cinematic light and color structuring call for a separate discussion.

Perhaps the most engaging problem of cinema is the relationship sound may have to visual image. Although Warhol and Snow have used synchronous sound in convincing ways, an uncritical acceptance of this traditional mode of correlation usually leads to work in which both sound and image are mutually weakened: this is true in both the "lip synch" of anthropomorphic works and in the simplistic paralleling of sound and image effects in non-narrative works. Eisenstein's idea of "vertical montage" is a classical point from which one can consider nonsynchronous uses of sound. It may be that through a controlled continuous collision of sound and image an emergent psychophysiological heterodyne effect could be generated. Both light and sound occur in waves, and in optical sound composite prints are both functions of interrupted light, that is, both are primarily vibratory experiences whose "continuous" qualities are illusional. The major difference, aside from obvious differences in physical qualities between the two systems, is that the soundtrack operates in terms of continuous passage over the projector soundhead while the image intermittently jerks in discrete steps through the film gate—there are no frame lines in the

soundtrack. From this angle, it is apparent that drawing direct relationships between systems that have significant structural differences is an illusional oversight. There is also no intrinsically filmic relational logic supportive of the use of "mood music," whether it be the electronic music *background* for so-called "abstract movies" or Bergman's use of Bach fragments to act as psychological *backups* to certain key visual passages in his film *Through a Glass Darkly*. The variations on sound systems that are basically supportive of visual images are innumerable and vary widely in their levels of conceptual relationship to visual images. Whether or not the audio and visual systems should be discrete and powerful enough in themselves so that they achieve mutual autonomy is a serious question. What possibilities are there for developing both sound and image from the same structural principle and simply presenting them side-by-side as two equal yet autonomous articulations of one conception? Of course, sound need not be considered as a primary aspect of cinema; the wealth of films that succeed on visual levels alone is enough to justify silence. Aside from a few eccentricities, the first projectors had no sound option; the sound variable could be regarded as an arbitrary addition to an already complete visual system. (If we regard works that have no sound tracks as "silent films," then why don't we regard listening to music without visual accompaniment as "blind music"?) Only a few types of sound can be regarded without doubt as cinematic: the case in which the sound of a synch sound camera might be recorded and projected in synch with the visual "recording"; the case in which the drone sound of a projector projecting a visual "projection" might be heard; and the case in which one hears the sound of sprockets acting as a commentary on the length each frame of visual image has in time.

In the end, the cinematic process as the "subject matter" of a new cinema, as in a work like Ken Jacobs' brilliant *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son*, which is literally a film of a film, or as in more filmically concrete or conceptually filmic works, has already proven its viability. When a focus on highly general and prematurely fixed narrative or narrative-like forms is blurred in shifting perception to more distinctly contemporary focal lengths, then that "blur" measures wide angle lengths *from* "reality," telephoto lengths *to* micromorphological understandings of "cinema" and, lengths of temporal modulation in what is ultimately an omnidirectional grammar. Certainly an analysis of the focusing process itself is necessary; but "focusing" does not necessarily mean "reductiveness." It may be that by "limiting" oneself to a passionate definition of an elemental, primary cinema, one may find it necessary to construct systems involving either no projector at all or more than one projector and more than one flat screen, and more than one volumetric space between them. A focused film frame is not a "limit."