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ANNETTE MICHELSON

I

> The entire conduct of our life depends upon our senses, of which sight
> is the noblest and most universal, so that those inventions which serve
> to increase its power are surely the most useful possible.
>
> —Descartes, *First Discourse on Light, Dioptrics*

A decade and a little more have passed since Jules Olitski wistfully revealed his desire to spray color upon the vacant air, a fantasy anticipated and realized some seventy-five years before in the projection of the first tinted film. The intensity of this illusionist aspiration, apparently frustrated by the materiality of canvas and stretcher, was to generate some of the most improbably and perversely painterly sculptures of the 1960s. Frustration and perversity alike may, as I have in another context suggested,[1] be read as elements of a more general syndrome, that of a crisis of pictorial enterprise. It is as though contemporary painting had acknowledged, through color-field painting, an impasse, hesitated upon the threshold of temporality before retreating, capitulating to sculptural materiality. It is in this critical moment that the polyvalent venture of Michael Snow originates.

That Snow began as a painter, exhibiting in Canada and later in New York, is generally known. The climate in which he matured was that of the mid-1960s, when the interpenetration of painting, theater, and dance, the flowering of happenings and performance were intensive. The systematic exploration of interrelated modalities of sculpture and performance, as in the early work of Morris and Rainer; the modification of the space of gallery and museum; the prospecting of new arenas and theaters of operations: these shaped the expanding and somewhat eccentric areas of inquiry in which Snow, together with figures such as Jacobs, Foreman, Jack Smith, developed. The consequent displacements

1.   In "Paul Sharits and the Critique of Illusionism: an Introduction," in *Projected Images*, Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, 1974, pp. 20–5.

and redefinitions were not to be accommodated by the decorum of pictorial modernism; these men drew upon the synthetic tradition of pictorial, sculptural, theatrical, and poetic enterprise—the cinema of the Bauhaus, the theater of constructivism, the objects of surrealism, the festivities of dada, preserved, partially and precariously, through the emigration of European artists driven to this continent by fascism.

The lone survivor of that older generation, the most sympathetic and seminal figure was, of course, Duchamp; and it was his multiplicity of effort and confusion of genres, his own passage from painting to sculpture, to cinema, his excursions into photography which were exemplary for some younger artists of this time. He was, in fact, a model of that polyvalence we shall see in Snow, who passes from painting to sculpture, to film, and whose mature work circulates more freely and regularly between film and photography, music and video and environmental installation, in contestation of the purity, discreteness, and irreducibility of pictorial effort central to the theoretical and critical orthodoxy of that time. For it was not only the polyvalence of Duchamp that disturbed; the subtle and radical manner in which he had long since introduced temporality into painting was now sensed as a threat to the integrity of pictorial space. The optical drawings made to turn and be filmed in *tournage*, the work *To Be Looked at (from the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour* can now be seen in their fully subversive functions—like the concept of "the delay in glass," with its ambiguous resonance of the time limit inscribed within the material as well as the stirring, turning, revolving figure, so constant in Duchamp's work.[2]

Above all, however, it was the idea of framing as the quintessential compositional strategy which challenged, in a characteristically paradoxical way, the value of pictorial purity. The frame, empty and infinitely mobile, directed literally and metaphorically towards the world itself, proved an implacable generator of forms. Against the irreducible purity of the image-free, color-field painting in its frame, Duchamp proposed *The Large Glass*, that painted window whose frame constantly renewed, in interstitial space, the composition of the visible world beyond it.[3]

To a young painter such as Snow, working in a Canadian animation studio, impressed with the implications of Duchamp's framing gesture, the motion-picture camera quite naturally presented itself as the most powerful instrument devised for the further implementation and articulation of that gesture's implications. *Wavelength*, the first wholly achieved articulation of that intimation, takes

2.   For a detailed consideration of these particular temporal aspects of Duchamp's work, see Annette Michelson. *"Anemic Cinema:* Reflections on an Emblematic Work," *Artforum*, vol. XII, no. 2 (October 1973), 64-9.
3.   Christian Metz has noted in *Le Signifiant Imaginaire* (Paris, Union Generale d'Editions, 1977, pp. 104-6) the affinities between framing and camera movements in cinema, on the one hand, and the mechanisms of censorship and desire, on the other. Further study of Duchamp's radicalization of the framing gesture and of Snow's multiple adaptation of it might well profit from consideration within this context.

as its central statement the framing process itself, organized as an extended spatio-temporal strategy of complex resonance. Creating a radically new conception of filmic action as being literally the camera's use and exhaustion of a given space, punctuated by changes of stock, filters, light flares, superimpositions, alternations of positive and negative image, Snow made of the slow and steady optical tracking shot or zoom the axis of a displacement whose perceptual solicitations and formal resonance are those of narrative action.[4] The film, presented at Knokke-le-Zoute in 1966, broke upon the world with the force, the power of conviction which defines a new level of enterprise, a threshold in the evolution of the medium. Upon this threshold, differences of sensibility and of theoretical commitment were reconciled, conflicts of dominant and marginal efforts were transcended. This work came, as if in ironic response to Brakhage's characteristically categorical declaration: "My eye, tuning towards the imaginary, will go to any wavelengths for its sights."[5] This film quickly won an adherence which has surpassed any other of its period. But *Wavelength*, in its traversal of a space in depth, restoring the depth of narrative space, comes to rest on the framed flatness of the still photograph; this "monument to time," as Snow himself termed it, ends with an *instantané*. And Snow will now move with increasing freedom between still and moving pictures.

    Atlantic is a culminating work of that period. Still and cinematic image are comprehended within and mediated by a sculptural structure which confirms the specific properties of each. Thus, thirty images of the waters upon which *Wavelength* concludes its trajectory are disposed in thin, deeply recessed frames of tin, the whole forming a grid measuring 70″ × 96″ × 12″. Each photographic image is reflected on the polished surfaces of the grid, so that the structure is perceived as both an ordered series of discrete units and as a whole. Continuity is virtual, the effect of those reflections which subsume the frame which is their surface, in a general aspect that recalls *Wavelength*'s penultimate visual cadenza of superimpositions. As was immediately remarked upon its completion, *Atlantic* is the work of a particular moment in sculptural development; its idiom is that of minimalist sculpture of the mid-1960s, the most seminal working period of Morris and Judd, of LeWitt and Smithson. In it the elements which will now come to dominate Snow's work are focused and fused: the framing strategy, the adoption of the strong gestalt and of the systematically permutational form. And in the play between real and virtual image, the dominant axis of Snow's work now emerges in its obsessional force, replacing the incessant variational experimentation of the earlier *Walking Woman* series. It is the dynamics of the perceptual process, of sight, reflected in the titles of the works to come—*Blind, Sight, A Wooden Look, Scope, Glares*, among others—that henceforth occupies the center of Snow's thematic and formal preoccupations.

4.   See Annette Michelson, "Toward Snow (Part I)," *Artforum*, vol. VI, no. 10 (Summer 1968), 67–71.
5.   Stan Brakhage, in "Metaphors on Vision," *Film Culture*, no. 30 (Fall 1963), n.p.
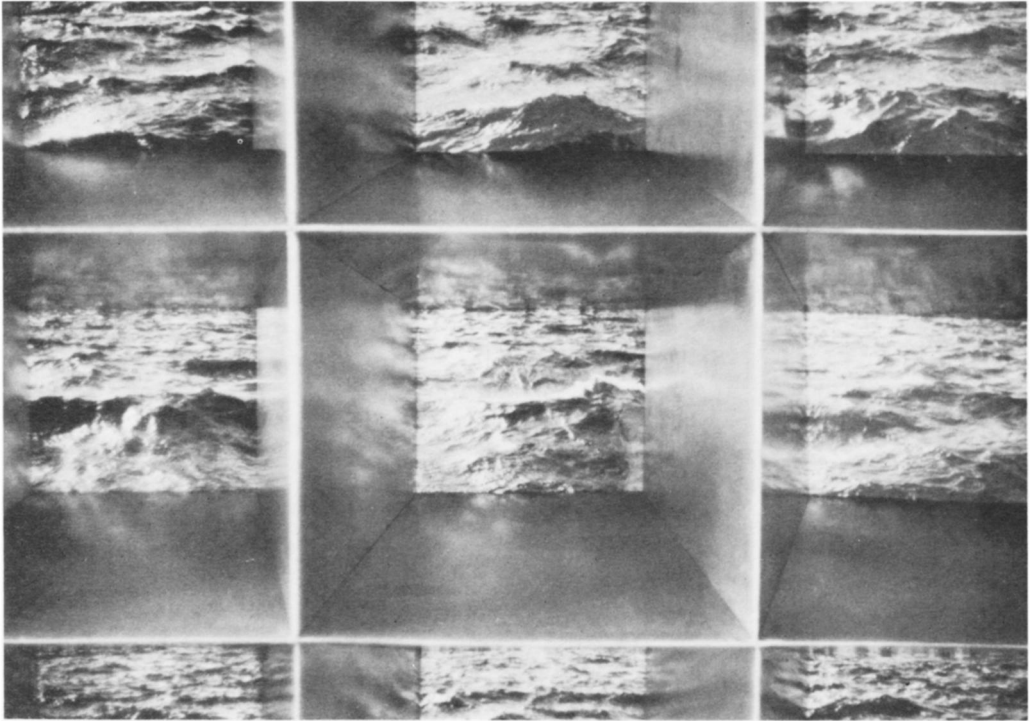
Michael Snow. Atlantic *(detail). 1966.*

The period of minimalist art, whose full consequences have yet to be appraised, is that of a systematic exploration of the modalities of perception, epitomized not only in the sculpture and painting of its artists, but in a particularly rich theoretical production as well. The period of 1964–71 is that of Robert Morris's "Notes on Sculpture," Smithson's textual variations on the theme of entropy, of Judd's "Specific Objects." To these we must add the writings of Frampton, Sharits, and the printed statements of Breer, Landow, all following upon the preceding, pioneering work of Brakhage. If one were to characterize this period in terms derived from older art-historical tradition, one might say that it brought about the recapitulation, in the idiom of abstraction, of the passage from the theory and practice of expressionism to that of a New Objectivity.

This transition, developing within a North American context—that is to say, within a relatively thin theoretical tradition—relied upon conceptual sub-structures largely imported from abroad. These artists proceeded to replace the ideological postulates which had served the preceding generation of abstract expressionists (a somewhat Jungian psychoanalysis and the immediately postwar continental existentialism) with perceptual theory, grounded in phenomenology

and the more specifically Anglo-American tradition of analytic philosophy. In this context Peirce and Wittgenstein had privileged status.

It is the peculiar strength of these artists—and of their predecessors—to have assumed and, as it were, exploited the contradictions of this syncretic positivism. Shaped by an empirical tradition, artists on this continent have refrained from giving to their successive sets of postulates, axioms, and methodological options the status of orthodoxy; these have functioned instead as working hypotheses, generative, productive, or, when not, easily disposable. The intense concentration on phenomenologically grounded perceptual theory as implemented by the art of Judd and Morris, among others, was, moreover, supported by a critical tradition which extended from the writings of Roger Fry to the younger critics, many of them grouped around *Artforum*. Analytic and descriptive functions now succeeded the expressive imperatives of the 1950s.

The situation of filmmaking presented one very different aspect: a kind of continuity through change. Two related factors assured a continuity between the theory and practice of these two successive periods, between, let us say, the work of Stan Brakhage and that of Michael Snow: an insistence on the primacy of vision and a correlative emphasis on the primacy of Light. Further study should reveal the seminal strength of what we might call the scopophilic and fetishistic characters of this American avant-garde in its perpetuation of the idealist primacy of vision.

Independent film between 1950 and 1965, as exemplified by the work of Brakhage, had adopted an artisanal mode of production, in 16 millimeter. The problematic sound technology of that format was joined with the primacy conferred by a romantic poetics on the sense of sight to produce an oeuvre that is, with very few exceptions, silent, predicated upon the optical spatiality and the gestural dynamics of abstract expressionist painting. It went so far, in fact, as to incorporate a gestural painting on the surface of the film. And Brakhage's theoretical production, comparable in both its scope and its contradictions with that of Kandinsky, rehearses in its central text, "Metaphors on Vision," the notion of film as the luminous inscription of the Imagination, deployed in a pristine purity of vision. This is a vision uncorrupted by that Fall we know as the Renaissance, perpetuated by the codes of representation and ground into the very lenses of the camera. We recognize in this seminal text of 1963 Brakhage's anticipation of the major theoretical and critical themes to emerge in the French literature following upon the crisis of 1968.[6] The cinema of Brakhage, however, is one of pure presence, in which the limits separating perception and eidetic imagery are annulled in the light of Vision as Revelation.

Snow, presenting an outline for *Standard Time* in August, 1967, said:

> I'm interested in a kind of balance that has some similarity to the way Cézanne equalized the physical facts and the presented illusions in

6.   This anticipation is discussed in "Reading Eisenstein Reading *Capital* (Part 2)," *October*, no. 3 (Spring 1977), 77–8.

painting. On film the transformation is into light and time and the balance is between the illusions (spatial and otherwise) and the facts-of-light on a surface.

It had been the singular achievement of Brakhage, as a typically New World artist, to have fashioned from the contradictions between his modernist strategies (drawn from Pound, Stein, Cage, Olson) and his idealist presuppositions the working hypotheses which could generate the constantly renewed filmic enterprise of two decades. This interesting and, as I have suggested, generally characteristic contradiction is further articulated in a prime filmic text of 1970, Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma*, a triparte structure in which the central section, whose form is derived from set theory, is preceded by the presentation of that set which is the English-language alphabet (in the 17th-century version of the *Bay State Primer*, the first textbook published in New England). This section is then followed by a twelve-minute sequence, whose sound track is composed of a metrical reading from the cosmogony of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (1168-1253), celebrating light as the shaping agent of form. "Light, the first bodily form which drew out matter along with itself into a mass as great as the fabric of the world," is celebrated in a metaphysics that stands beside Grosseteste's contribution to scientific method and the theory of knowledge. Frampton, in a characteristically lucid and allusive manner, translated the contradictions between lyric and analytic modes, between idealist and modernist tendencies at work in the theory and practice of his predecessors and contemporaries.

Asserting "difference," film as proposed by "Metaphors on Vision," solicited, nonetheless, a hallucinated gaze. Not narrative form, but the *space in which it takes place*, was the object of radical assault. For the gaze of fascination, the filmmakers of the late 1960s were to begin substituting analytic inspection. Jacobs's *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* (1970), which subjects a ten-minute primitive film to an hour-long review on an analytic projector, is the key work in this vein.

Adopting and expanding the repertory of filmic "anomalies," as Vertov had termed them, the independents made use of superimposition, slowed and accelerated action, freeze frames, alternations of color with black and white, conspicuous change of focal length, and the aforementioned empty frame, among other devices. (The elimination of gestural camera movement and of sexual thematics, following upon Warhol's *Chelsea Girls*, makes for a de-eroticization of the independent film of that period.) It was, however, insofar as these "anomalies" were enlisted in the subversion of the perspective constructions which served as models for the construction of cinematic space and its narrative forms that filmmakers implicitly claimed the sovereignty of the spectator. The hallucinated viewer was, so to speak, replaced by the cognitive viewer, but common to them both was the status of *transcendental subject.*

It is within this broader context that Snow's particular contribution may now be viewed, and for elucidation of its crucial quality, I turn to a celebrated text of Jean-Louis Baudry.

Situating the ideological role and function of the cinematic machine within Western ideology, Baudry, in a text which acquires a very precise resonance for viewers of the independent cinema, traces the origins of that ideology in the rationalization of perspective performed by the artists and theoreticians of the Renaissance.

> Fabricated on the model of the camera obscura, it permits the construction of an image analogous to the perspective projections developed during the Italian Renaissance. Of course the use of lenses of different focal lengths can alter the perspective of an image. But this much, at least, is clear in the history of cinema: it is the perspective construction of the Renaissance which originally served as model. The use of different lenses . . . does not destroy (traditional) perspective but rather makes it play a normative role. Departure from the norm, by means of a wide-angle or telephoto lens, is clearly marked in comparison with so-called "normal" perspective. We will see in any case that the resulting ideological effect is still defined in relation to the ideology inherent in perspective. The dimensions of the image itself, the ratio between height and width, seem clearly taken from an average drawn from Western easel painting : . . the painting of the Renaissance will elaborate a centered space. ("Painting is nothing but the intersection of the visual pyramid following a given distance, a fixed center and a certain lighting."—Alberti) The center of this space coincides with the eye which Jean Pellerin Viator will so justly call the "subject." Monocular vision which, as Pleynet points out, is what the camera has, calls forth a sort of play of "reflection." Based on the principle of a fixed point by reference to which the visualized objects are organized, it specifies in return the position of the "subject," the very spot it must necessarily occupy.
>
> In focusing it, the optical construct appears to be truly the projection-reflection of a "virtual image" whose hallucinatory reality it creates. It lays out the space of an ideal vision and in this way assures the necessity of a transcendence—metaphorically (by the unknown to which it appeals—here we must recall the structural place occupied by the vanishing point) and metonymically (by the displacement it seems to carry out: a subject is both "in place of" and "a part for the whole").[7]

To this powerful exercise in the archaeology of the cinema, we may add Snow's own description of "trying to make a definitive statement of pure film space and time, a balancing of 'illusion' and 'fact,' all about seeing. The space

7.   Jean-Louis Baudry, "Effets Idéologiques de l'appareil cinématographique de base," *Ciné-thique*, no. 7-8 (1970), 1-8. Although translations have subsequently been published in *Film Quarterly* and *Camera Obscura*, the reader is advised to consult the original text for a sense of the specific historical context provided by the journal *Cinéthique*.

starts at the camera's (spectator's) eye, is in the air, then is on the screen, then is within the screen (the mind)."

We are now, I believe, in a position to more fully understand the particular impact of Snow's filmic work from 1967 on, to discern the reasons for the large consensus given to the work honored at Knokke-le-Zoute and to answer questions of the following sort: How did Snow's film differ from other recent uses of the long take? Why was it that differences of taste and of theoretical orientation were so promptly reconciled on the appearance of this work? Why was it that viewers and critics, hitherto resistant to the innovations of independent filmmaking, found themselves engaged by this particular new work? Why, in fact, did it seem to constitute, even at that time, a threshold in the development of the medium so that a critic known for his allegiance to dominant narrative cinema could speak of it as a kind of *Birth of a Nation* of the avant-garde?

Snow invented, in the camera's trajectory through empty space *towards* the gradually focused object on the farthest wall, a reduction which, operating as the generator of the spatiotemporality of narrative, produces the formal correlative of the suspense film. Baudry's text, however, gives us another grasp upon the reasons for the impact of this work and of others that were to follow. For Snow had, in that reductive strategy, *hypostatized* the perspective construction within the space of cinematic representation, and in so doing he had laid bare the manner in which cinema proceeds from the conventions of painting. He had made visible the way in which "painting is nothing other than the intersection of the visible pyramid according to a given distance, a fixed center and a specific light." He had, in fact, by restoring and remapping the space of perspective construction, reestablished its center, that place which is the space of the transcendental subject.

Wavelength, then, appeared as a celebration of the "apparatus" and *a confirmation of the status of the subject*, and it is in those terms that we may begin to comprehend the profound effect it had upon the broadest spectrum of viewers— especially upon those for whom previous assaults on the spatiotemporality of dominant cinema had obscured that subject's role and place. The spectator for whom that place was obscured—and threatened—by the spatial disorientations of, say, *Dog Star Man*, (a space purely optical and a temporality of the perpetual present) could respond, as if in gratitude, to Snow's apparently gratifying confirmation of a threatened sovereignty.

But Snow was not content to reestablish "the referential norm"; he subjected it—and in this he is, indeed, the follower of Cézanne he claims to be—to constant analytic transformation. Thus the slight, constant movement of the camera within its sustained propulsion forward, the light flares and filters which punctuate that movement, the changes of stock and the final shot which intensifies, in superimposition, the flatness of the photograph on which the camera comes to rest. The depth and integrity of the perspective construction is at every point subjected to the questioning and qualification imposed by the deployment of anomalies as differences within the spatiotemporal continuum.

Michael Snow beside the machine for shooting La
Région Centrale, *1970.*

II

Even our judgments about the cosmic regions are subordinated to the
concept we have of regions in general, insofar as they are determined in
relation to the sides of the body.

—Kant, *On the First Ground of the Distinction
of Regions in Space*

Snow now proceeded to embark upon a series of films which systematically
explore the modalities of camera movement; they culminate in *La Région
Centrale.* This film marked, to begin with, a significant break with the technology
and production system with which filmmakers such as Snow had been involved. It
was made possible by substantial grants from the Canada Film Development
Corporation and Famous Players. State patronage and the film industry joined in
financing this venture for which a special machine was designed to control a
maximally mobile camera. There is at roughly this point, among filmmakers as a
whole, the developing interest in an expanded technology (use of video, compu-
ters, sound synthesizers), and it will be largely the role of the universities to
provide them in exchange for teaching duties. The situation develops somewhat
on the order of musical composition in the United States during the 1960s, and its
consequences, insofar as one can at all foresee them, raise a number of questions.
Having returned to Canada from some years of work and residence in New York,
Snow found himself free of the particular academic constraints which characterise
the American filmmaker's situation, and *La Région Centrale* is one among a
number of major enterprises benefiting from government patronage.
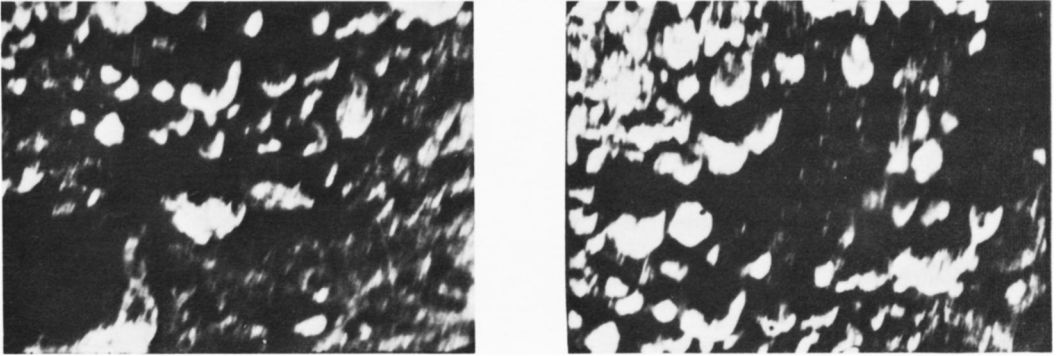
The camera of *La Région Centrale*, instructed and controlled by the machine, turns in a wild and isolated Canadian landscape in a series of circular variations whose multiplicity—of speed, direction, focus—is the function of a "liberated" eye. As Snow himself has said, "I wanted the spectator to be the lone center of all these circles. It had to be a place where you can see a long way and you can't see anything man-made. That has something to do with a certain kind of singleness or remoteness that each spectator can have by seeing the film." And, "just think of that . . . that there is nobody there."[8]

Returning now to Baudry's text, we pursue the investigation of the role of camera movement within the cinematic apparatus.

> To seize movement is to become movement, to follow a trajectory is to become trajectory, to choose a direction is to have the possibility of choosing one, to determine a meaning is to give oneself a meaning. In

8.   Michael Snow, in Jonas Mekas, "Interview with Michael Snow on *The Central Region*," recorded January 2, 1972; tape deposited at Anthology Film Archive, New York.
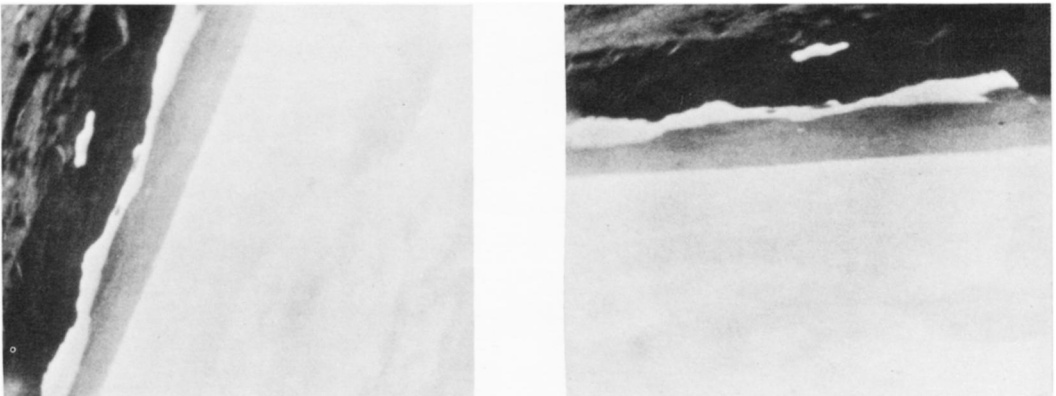
Michael Snow. La Région Centrale. *1971.*
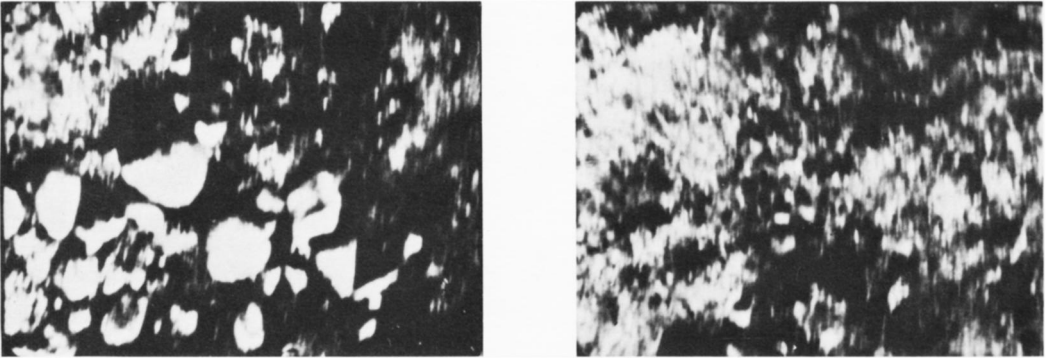
this way the eye-subject, the invisible base of artificial perspective (which in fact only represents a larger effort to produce an ordering, regulated transcendence) becomes absorbed in, "elevated" to a vaster function, proportional to the movement which it can perform.

And if the eye which moves is no longer fettered by a body, by the laws of matter and time, if there are no more assignable limits to its displacement—conditions fulfilled by the possibilities of shooting and of film—the world will not only be constituted by this eye but for it. The mobility of the camera seems to fulfill the most favorable conditions for the manifestation of the "transcendental subject."[9]

It is, of course, this disembodied mobility of the eye-subject which is *hyperbolized* in *La Région Centrale,* and it is again the spectator as "lone center" and as "transcendental subject" who is personified in the camera, whose extended mobility rivals that of dominant cinema—that of Ophuls, Welles, or Kubrick.
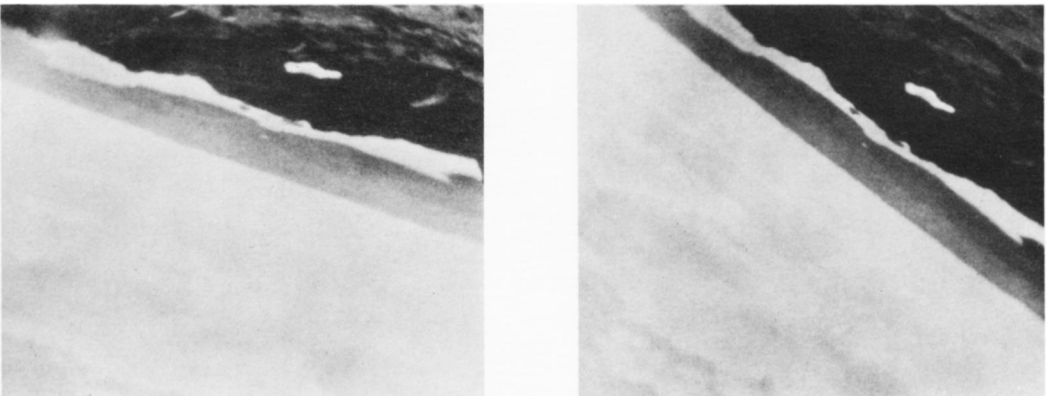
9.   Baudry, "Effets Idéologiques."

Photo courtesy NASA.

La Région Centrale was conceived and shot during the two years which
followed the most intensive period of America's space program, culminating in
the fulfillment of the Apollo Mission, itself the most extensively filmed and
televised event in history. Snow's film conveys most powerfully the euphoria of the
weightless state; but in a sense that is more intimate and powerful still, it extends
and intensifies the traditional concept of vision as the sense through which we
know and master the universe. This film, in its circling, spiraling, rising,
sweeping movements, crossing the distances between peaks, creating, in imper-
ceptible loops through empty skies, reversals of direction which disorient the
riveted spectator, seems to question, through kinetic counter-example and disori-
entation, the "ground" of the Kantian "view" which founds the modern sense of
"place":

> Since through the senses we know what is outside us only insofar as it
> stands in relation to our selves, it is not surprising that we find in the
> relation of these intersecting planes to our body the first ground from
> which to derive the concept of regions in space. . . . Even our judg-
> ments about the cosmic regions are subordinated to the concept we
> have of regions in general, insofar as they are determined in relation to
> the sides of the body. . . .

For Snow, in jettisoning all anecdote, in enforcing the collapse of camera or
filmic agent into "character," has deprived the spectator of all other possible
source or medium of corporeal grounding and identification. "It's not," he

remarks, "handmade, but rather as if the film were made by the machine. The film seems to come from the machine towards the spectator. The reconstitution is more mental than physical. For some films, you think of the cameraman when you see camera movement. He sees for you. Here, it is as if you were the cameraman." [10] This ultimate identification of spectator with the camera completes and intensifies, as well, what Christian Metz has described as the primary cinematic voyeurism, unauthorised, and reenacted, through framing, as a direct recapitulation of the child's vision of the primal scene. Snow's infinitely mobile framing, his mimesis of and gloss upon spatial exploration offer, most importantly, a fusion of primary scopophilic and epistemophilic impulses in the cinematic rendering of the grand metaphor of the transcendental subject. *La Région Centrale* gives new meaning to the notion of science fiction.

III

Cinema is a Greek word that means "movie." The illusion of movement is certainly an accustomed adjunct of the film image, but that illusion rests upon the assumption that the rate of change between successive frames may vary only within rather narrow limits. There is nothing in the structural logic of the filmstrip that can justify such an assumption. Therefore we reject it. From now on we will call our art simply: film.

—Hollis Frampton, "For a Metahistory of Film"

A thing is what it is and not another thing.
—G. E. Moore

Let us suppose we must compile a set of instructions for the use and understanding of Snow's work. One might begin by listing the basic formal and discursive strategies which animate films, photographic work, projections, sculpture, painting. To hypostatization and hyperbolization one would add such pairs of terms as identity and contradiction, reduction and extension, punning and disjunction.

I have chosen to consider Snow's film work—and it is extended in the vast and systematic exploration of image-sound relation of *Rameau's Nephew*. Consideration of the above paired terms and the manner in which they function throughout the range of work leads one, however, to locate axes and continuums which join seemingly disparate efforts. Or rather, let us say that Snow's obsessionally systematic investigations exclude the notion of disparity.

10. Michael Snow, in "Entretien avec Michael Snow," *Michael Snow: Retrospective*, La Cinémathèque Quebecoise/Musée du Cinema, 1975, p. 19.

Consider, for example, *One Second in Montreal*, a work which he has described as an attempt to construct a purely temporal structure. It is one of the less frequently screened and appreciated works and one of the finest and most arresting. It offers a filmic projection of a serially composed succession of still photographs of squares and parks in Montreal (possible sites for a monument), seen "under snow"—the sort of small, assertive pun in which this artist delights. The images succeed one another in series of expanding and contracting length. The main compositional parameter is that of duration and the work offers, consequently, with unadorned intensity, the tension inhering between still photograph and filmic image. Or rather, it forces the question: why present still photographs in filmed succession rather than through slide projection? Reply: the temporality which circulates through the optical flicker of projected film joins to the rhythm of images in static succession the pulse of an ostinato. This is, then— not unexpectedly—the most musical of a musician's visual constructions. And if one reflects upon the nature and condition of the continuity-in-stasis given each still image projected at twenty-four frames per second, one sees, as well, that they compose, in a sense that is both strictly and paradoxically Framptonian, that cinematic entity, a "movie."

Snow then continues to pursue, with an obstinate sort of wit, the exploration of the modalities of photographic imagery. Thus, *A Casing Shelved* has two components: a colored slide in projection and a taped recording of the filmmaker's voice. Before one, on the screen, is the single still image of a bookcase (most likely the one installed near the beginning of *Wavelength*). Its bisected shelves, structurally recalling *Atlantic*, contain (frame) the contents which Snow begins to enumerate and describe in a narrative that evokes the years of work and residence memoralized in the accumulation of objects and documents. The disjunction of the narrative is generated by the random order of objects and intensified by the manner in which Snow directs our attention to events separated in time through the scanning of objects scattered in space. And we, instructed by the author's verbal scanning of this "landscape," find ourselves performing those eye movements over the surface of the projected still image which compose the repertory of the camera: the pan, the tilt, the crane shot. The reduction performed in the passage from film to filmed photograph to projected slide has generated a continuum structured by the formal strategies of identity and contradiction.

When is a film not a film? And when is a film a movie? And, as they say, "What is cinema?"

Well, let us make a movie (we will call it *Wavelength*) and show that it is film. Then, let us take the still photograph and show it as a movie. And if we instruct the camera-subject to scan the surface of the still image as though it were a landscape, what must we expect—a film or movie?