Whatever happens between the pictures
a lecture by Werner Nekes; edited and with an introduction by David S. Lenfest

The films of Werner Nekes and Dore O were not well known to Americans interested in experimental film in 1971 when I first encountered them. At that time I was fortunate enough to see Dore's early *Alaska* and *Lawale* and Werner's *gurting I* and *jum-jum*. I found at the time that I was profoundly moved by these films both because of their visual density and variety, and because they invoked a deep level of the subconscious that I had only felt suggested in the work of Brakhage, Baillie, and Hindle, although Nekes feels more sympathetic to Gehr and Jacobs. Technical curiosity followed this initial impact, and I was glad to see the enormous growth in their work that had occurred by December 1975. Not only were there many more films of substantial length, but the work itself had deepened in the complexity and rapidity of images presented.

From a technical standpoint their films are remarkable because so many of the effects are achieved in the camera by multiple exposure. At one point in the following lecture Nekes indicates that the same roll of film may go through his camera as many as 16 times. This practice generates enormous problems for exposure and for registration, to mention only two of the possible dangers. In addition, this practice is further complicated by the use of masks to divide the image into geometric patterns. Once one understands that none of their special effects are achieved with an optical printer, the technical mastery of these two filmmakers appears even more extraordinary than it had before. Viewers are often perplexed by the density of the images and by the rapid changes in pace in these films, and the following lecture is helpful in understanding the principles behind these startling changes. Any "literary" content is denied to the films, that is, we may not expect a narrative sense from them; rather, the filmmakers tell us that the handling of the visual and audio material is the message that is being conveyed. Those techniques range from static images to images that "stream," and to horizons, or frame lines, that break before our eyes. Through multiple combinations of often diverse sub-

jets (say, in *Diwan, V. Hynningen*, a recumbent nude female torso combined with a multiple exposure of two windows) these films suggest the complexity and depth of dream states, in particular, and of the unconscious, in general. The truth of Walter Murch's concept of film is realized in the work of Werner Nekes and Dore O: "the real power of film lies in its ability to alter our subconscious awareness in the same manner as dreams. Deep films have a power over our lives that is similar to deep dreams." (Filmmakers' Newsletter, December 1974).

This lecture suggests a grammar of film which is a key to giving dreams a filmic shape. Perhaps the most radical and important idea here is the definition of film as being the difference between two frames. An old optical toy, the thaumatrope, is used to make the point; when it is still we see a bird on one side and a cage on the other; in motion we see the bird placed in the cage. "That's movies," Nekes tells us, and certainly he is correct and original in pointing to two frames as the fundamental unit of film. This notion is particularly important to a concept of film that wants to move away from literary and other backgrounds, because it leads to the assertion that every two-frame unit, which he calls the "kine," can be considered a montage. If that can be true then we can look forward to a much higher picture density than we now commonly experience. The identification of the two-frame unit, the "kine," also suggests the high degree of flexibility of image treatment that is characteristic of their work. Despite this interest in the technical, it should be remembered that there is always an intensely human element in the films of Werner Nekes and Dore O. We are always shown human beings in an environment, and we are always drawn into the active and subconscious lives of people, often the filmmakers themselves. People are frequently shown in relief in different landscapes, and these locations, ranging from the Hebrides to Poros to Sweden, interact with the level of the subconscious being suggested so that they also become internalized. The visual density, or, as Nekes refers to it, "the cumulative information level" of these films shows us levels of perception which literally derive from multiple exposure, but which at the same time reflect the richness and variety of the human unconscious. As we watch the alternately static and rapidly moving images of *T-WO-MEN* we come to understand the hesitations, distances, and closeness of the two women who are its primary subject. Multiple printing and alternation of static, or vibrating, images show us the inner reflections of these women as they close the psychic distance between themselves. There is no literary structure to the relationship; rather, what is perceived is a varying intense human relationship measured through the use of an enormously rich cinematographic grammar. The films then deny old stories and story frames at the same time that movie techniques lead us through perceptions of human spaces.

It should be noted that both Werner Nekes and Dore O work independently, although from the look of their films it is clear that they share many theoretical concepts. The following statement on the nature of film was presented by Nekes at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, on Dec. 8, 1975. Dore O was asked to speak as well, but she declined, preferring to say what she felt to be Nekes's more practiced lecturing style. However that may have been, it seems to me that much of what he has to say also applies to her work. The following version of the talk is syntactically and grammatically edited transcript of the talk. Questions from the audience have been included where they were appropriate. A filmography of Werner Nekes appears at the end of the article.

—David S. Lenfest

want to give you a general introduction to what I think cinema is. There was a short mention of the title of one of my films. It was pronounced *T WO M En*. I pronounce it *TWO MEN*, and this pronunciation is the verbalization of the visual effort the brain has to make when it reads pictures in films. I have chosen this title because, with its programmatic qualities, it approaches the center of cinema. This title is programmatic because it deals with the legibility of film in a horizontal way: that is, horizontal as opposed to vertical reading. Horizontal refers to the time axis: receiving the information from

WERNER NEKES is a German experimental filmmaker. DAVID S. LENFEST is a freelance filmmaker and writer who now lives in Colorado.
frames in different time segments as they follow each other. Vertical reading happens when the viewer receives amounts of information on different pictorial levels within one segment. This means that horizontal and vertical reading of pictures can happen simultaneously. Not everything that say I will be clear immediately or understood easily, but some things I have to say are quite important, it seems to me, because I have never found them in any other books, or in other thinking about film.

So you all know that film is a strip of celluloid with frame after frame projected and viewed within a determined amount of time. If you think of having the strange writing of the title T WO MEN on three frames: the retina has to do this way the mind has to do to produce the fusion of the two frames. This small unit which I call kine is the smallest possible unit of a film: one can think of though the parts behind the image should be connected, it is composed of a lot of elements, the visual components do not yet determine the filmic language. If you, for example, take this time unit: a single frame, you have, to photographic information; if you take two frames, the difference between these frames is the smallest unit of filmic language. It is possible to time that every film can be regarded under the principle of this difference, which is a construct of a time/space relation. The synapses of the film combine to positions or conclusions over the language used, to determine the level of filmic information connected to the work the spectator has to do. Until now, most film criticism or theory, and also much of what I read of semiotics, has regarded only longer film units, such as the montage sequence.

If you take a short look back at the history of cinema from the viewpoint of information theory, you can say that film is always used for the transportation of information. With the first films you have the camera set up and a cassette on top of the camera, and the camera runs at the same speed as the frame. Those were the first reels, at the very beginning lasting three to five seconds. If I look now at the differences between the frames, the kines, I find that the time/space differences are all very minimal: the frames have the same relations towards each other. I call the frames a₁,a₂,a₃,a₄, etc. Among the first who realized the importance of the opposition of two scenes that follow each other (al till an opposed to bltillbn, etc.) were Melies; when he shot a traffic scene at the Place de l'Opéra in 1896, the camera stopped shooting for some seconds. The effect in the projection was that a bus drawn by horses was transformed into a funeral procession, men entered and women and vice versa. Among all the frames carrying the same time/space differences, or lack of visual information, there was one kine in which the difference was wider; the time was shortened, the difference was stretched.

This new quality of a kine was the subconscious start of the evolution of film language. When a great number of kines carry this time difference we call it quick montage, or if we shorten the time differences we call it slow montage. Naturally, in such a sequence the information level is as high in a continuous normal shot, because the predictability is very high from frame to frame in respect to the time difference. In other words: the lower the chance to anticipate the next kine, the higher the information level of the film. We can only deduce for cinema: the predictability of a kine determines the level of filmic information. This idea corresponds to the fact that the higher the information level, the more film realizes its own possibilities. Or, negatively expressed, film is not laden with the grammar of other media.

Another historical step in the development of the language of film was the change of the location, or of the space. One example for the change of different kine was Eisenstein. In his film The Conquered the composition of the kine before Nekes continues. What struck me was that film was always dependent on time segments, which can be considered the difference, the opposition of the content of the two whole scenes. After Eisenstein, this is the general rule for film, the general rule for filmic information. This question: What does this scene mean to the next scene? Or, what do they mean together? was the basis for Eisenstein's optical toy invented in 1826 by Fitton and Paris: the theщ racism, which is a small disk made out of cardboard with different scenes on them, and this is the illusion of a third when it was twisted quickly around between the fingers. The bird was on the one side, the cage on the other, the hand holding on the other side, when they were viewed in quick succession. This thymatropical effect is an example for me of how efficient the film "system of filmic information" is to complete these time sequences.

Until now film theoreticians have concentrated their efforts around the montage, when they want to say something about the language of film. This viewpoint has been successful to some extent with narrative cinema, with overlaying literary contents. But with this content was not so useful in the visual qualities; in other words, when the film itself was using its own medial possibilities, then this method of criticism failed. The critics didn't even see, or pay attention to, such unseen films. Extraordinary films like Ballet mécanique by Dziga Vertov, or many other of the small independent ones are used and used categories of thinking on film. Leger didn't use film as a literary medium, he invented a great number of filmic possibilities, which means that there is a type of criticism that the one who works seriously to free the medium of its old limitations is put into an outsider position. One may think what the work, but one didn't understand that he worked as a film-author, or filmmaker. One who would do the same, make for example of the last frame, the first frame of the following scene, seriously, was Kubelka in his film Unsere Afrika Reise. An example that he used was the neck of a giraffe on frame a₁, and the rifle that is shooting the giraffe at the same angle on the same place on frame a₂. If you compare the visual sequences: in the first frame you have the information of the junction of content, or the relation between the rifle and the giraffe, in the second you concern itself with the whole length of a shot as a unit.

If you take a direction out of film history, from Lumiere and Melies until the present—looking at films strictly from the standpoint of information theory, reflecting the information in the transport of information, within the shots—you'll get for the accumulation of information, a mounting asymptote. This concept corresponds to the general principle of progress that Buckminster Fuller called democry, to "a maximum of efficiency by a minimum of material or energy." This concept is applied for industrial design, is also applicable to film. This principle is a constant in the development of civilization, to get more with less, to think on the development of phones, radios, TV, computers, etc. Fuller also developed the geodesic domes, of which you have one in Milwaukee. This concept corresponds to the general principle of learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, that we have to learn to perceive properly, and that's how that we are to the next frame. This step won't make too much sense, firstly because the expression has been used too much for a different purpose, and secondly, because the thinking on film consists only of montages the expression becomes tautological, useless. So I call this small unit, the smallest element of filmic language, "kine." Film is constantly transforming, living language, that we are learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, to break a frame into endless chains of information. Extraordinary films like Ballet mécanique, or Ballet mécanique, etc. Fulleralso developed the geodesic domes, of which you have one in Milwaukee. This corresponds to the general principle of learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, to break a frame into endless chains of information. Extraordinary films like Ballet mécanique, or Ballet mécanique, etc. Fulleralso developed the geodesic domes, of which you have one in Milwaukee. This corresponds to the general principle of learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, to break a frame into endless chains of information. Extraordinary films like Ballet mécanique, or Ballet mécanique, etc. Fulleralso developed the geodesic domes, of which you have one in Milwaukee. This corresponds to the general principle of learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, to break a frame into endless chains of information. Extraordinary films like Ballet mécanique, or Ballet mécanique, etc. Fulleralso developed the geodesic domes, of which you have one in Milwaukee. This corresponds to the general principle of learning, that we have to learn to perceive. The problem is, thinking on film, to break a frame into endless chains of information. Extr...
"gestaltsprunge." The example I gave before of the Melies film was still a relatively young language that we have learned with an effort which might lead us to a quality of film. To give you a simplified example of different illusions that contradict the perception of time. If one frame shows a chair, while the next one you see a man in a sitting position. If you see this kine projected, you see the man sitting on the couch. In other words, the frame showing, in the same position as the chair, a couch? Then the frame with the man builds a new illusion of spatial utilization by gangster movies. A spectator who has learned that a means that if you have four frames a, b, c, d, the frames b and c build one kine, but b also forms a kine with frame a, and frame d forms a kine with frame d. If one thinks this over one might call the relations within a kine and its relations to other kines which form fields of information relations of uncertainty: uncertainty maybe in the sense that Heisenberg used it. The constant deception of perception is a function of time. The work or the capacity of the brain within time segments is dependent on the organ of sense. The kine stores two different time segments and the perception of a kine happens within one time segment, which is at the same time a part of a second time segment. If you associate the stored times of two frames with memory, which is a storage of time, the laziness of the perception of memory units produces imagination. Imagination becomes the illusion of a stored time which is fictitious. Imagination is a function of memory units. The collision of memory units produces imagination. By the way, this explains also why our imaginative faculty cannot produce something from elements that are not yet stored within us. What imagination can produce is the transformation of patterns of elements, the construction of new relations. The fascination of film can be explained by the analogy to the imaginative process of thinking.

The possible ambiguity of filmic information is connected to fields of kines which are organized in a thaumatropical way. The maximal differences could reflect relationships of uncertainty. A great number of illusions, or decisions that are contradictory, produce the information of a film. Connected to this, we shouldn't forget that most of the steps had been made against the power of the film industry. This institution devoted to satisfaction is not interested in developing anything; they are mostly trying to sell the same thing, the well-known entertainment, and not the effort, the participation of the spectator, the use of the kines, the levels of information, determine the effort the brain of the spectator has to make. And this effort is the message of the film.

This problem was already touched by an old Sumerian in 2000 B.C. when he complained on clay that there were no new words that could be invented, that every possible story has already been told and is known. Literary history proves with this that one has to start after this. But the importance of the stories was not their content, but the handling of this language-material, and the handling of this language-material in the understanding of the world. The organization of the material and the structure of the used elements influence the viewer.

We can now say that we have learned with an aesthetic education, to other who has not had an aesthetic education, to identify with the gangster hero. As language is an expression of thinking, so is thinking also determined by the forms of language. The repetition of the same expression of thinking, so is thinking also determined by the forms of language. The repetition of the same

For myself, I would say that increasing and decreasing motions are just the same category. The movements are predictable in the same way that they are in the categories of still movement or constant movement. When I say this, I compare it with the process of articulating rows of numbers, like 1, 2, 3; one anticipates 4; or 61, 51, 41, one knows that 31 would follow; after 3, 3, 3, follows another 3; or 1, 7, 3, 10, one knows that 3 will come after. The numbers, etc. have regular, or irregular, constant, decreasing or increasing rows. Maybe these categories work for McLaren because of his language. An aesthetic education will have extended us to need only one description for all possible filmic information. The formula for a kine is: k = a + b + c + d, if you substitute (x, y, 0, a), the formula (x, y, 0, 0, a), the formula (x, y, 0, 0, 0) The neurons in the brain have to correspond with the forms of language. By the way, this explains also why our imaginative faculty cannot produce something from elements that are not yet stored within us. What imagination can produce is the transformation of patterns of elements, the construction of new relations. The fascination of film can be explained by the analogy to the imaginative process of thinking.

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frames of film can ever be identical. That might sound a bit stupid or irrelevant, but it isn’t. The grain is different in each picture—even if it shows the same object, it is not the same picture. This becomes obvious if you just take a tiny corner of a frame and blow it up to huge proportions, you’ll see the movement of the grain, which is the carrier, the material the information is transported on. The grains are “written” in film nearly simultaneously; I’m not sure if there are differences in time related to the colors. Nevertheless, “simultaneously” would be correct, compared with television, where the picture is written twice in a horizontal way. From left to right, line after line as a reflection of reading: the electronic book. I wonder why the Japanese do not build TV sets with vertical lines. Technically this could be done very easily. Maybe one day we will know how this Western electronic book influenced Japanese culture.

Concerning my definition of film, I would like to tell you about a movie I made in 67, and this may be more than an anecdote. At this time we had a room and another room under it for filmmaking, so it was a real underground room, or a wet cellar. I was cutting a film down there, hanging the film strips on the wall, and the wall wasn’t dirty. I had to leave my work for a period of traveling and came back two or three months later. The wall had become moldy. I put the film in the Moviscop and what happened? A Moviscop is a machine to edit films, to look at the pictures frame by frame. If I took one frame of that film, showing a normal scene with green of superimpositions. If you have one visual level, then in the next level, third, fourth, fifth, and so on, you can distinguish this fusion, which can be additive as well as subtractive. I call this vertical readability. Horizontal readability is a process that happens in the brain of the spectator, whereas vertical readability is based on processes that have happened beforehand on the film material. So, that’s a bit of general film theory, and some of that could be found in my films.

**Question:** Could you explain a little more about the difference between your notion of kine, and Kubelka’s notion of shot to shot?

**Nekes:** She asked me about the difference between what Kubelka is doing and what I’m thinking. (laughter)

**Question:** That isn’t what I said at all, but it’s ok.

**Nekes:** Kubelka, as I understood him, and we had a couple of talks on this problem when I invited him to give a lecture in Hamburg, worked precisely on the kine of montage, a, b, the rifle and the neck of the giraffe fill the same shape on the frames. He calls this opposition the meaning of shots a-a, in relation to the shot b-b, I called his use of the kine, respecting the shape of the objects at the montage, step by step. As to what I am concerned with in my work, I have defined the kine as the basic unit of filmmaterial, and you find it not only at the end and beginning of a scene, you can, or have to, work on each difference between each of the frames. This constant articulation could give birth to a new cinema, that one could call, because of the speed of kines with high A,B,C,D, are exposed pictures; X means unexposed frames in shooting.

This single-framing superimposition is part of what I would call vibrating film. But naturally this section is only a step to further possibilities this working method could provide, a new cinematographic language might be developed. However, this part of T-WO-MEN part 4 is, it giving a different kind of information, movement related to time. I would like to make a bit more complicated—I want to give you a filmic example. I organize a scene that I want to stage.

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nine minutes in projection time at 24 frames per second. But the second time around, after about a year, I shot the same scene again, but now with a high speed camera at 240 frames per second, which means 100 frames per minute. That change in speed would be nine minutes. And if you copied every tenth frame of this 90 minutes strip on a different roll, I'll get one hundred different, but still similar, films, with 2, 12, 22, etc. I'll have 10 different rolls with 10 different films. After all this, we have 11 different films which I call the same scene. And each one of them has the same speed. What do they show? Do we see the same film? Do we see the differences between the films? After all, we are the same but at different times. But who can tell us that they are different?

The spectator who could distinguish between the films and the differences would have to be the same like us, too, as beginners learning the language of film. As I showed with the tendency of filmic history, we have already learned to speed up our capacity to receive information. And I'm sure that we have not yet reached our frontiers of perception at all. The most important barrier in perceiving such highly informative film is possibly our attitude towards new aesthetic products. In front of the new, the unpredicted, the spectator gets anxious and refuses to look at it. Nevertheless, what filmmaking did from the beginning was to speed up the transport of information. On a surface level one could say that this is not true, that's wrongly expressed. The differences between the frames are stretched, are wider. All frames are projected at the same speed. If there were black frames, for example, the films would have to be changed. But in the beginning there were no variables coming together. That means that the perception of the frame depends on the frames. If you have the row of frames a, b, c, a makes a jump, and b and c are between it. That means that there is information on the frame of a kine. If you have the row of frames a, b, c, a makes a jump with b, and fuses with c. That means that the frames depend on each other. And one would find classifications for groups of kines, similar classifications for different frames. These similar characteristics will define the classifications of kines, and one would find classifications for groups of kines, possibly because kines will appear in fields. One would find laws of appearances and so on. But I think there are no research centers where one could explore such possibilities. But I think this development for video is just a question of time. The future filmmaker will make programs for camera set-ups. Animated filmmaking has already started to be computerized.

**Question:** Are the number of different levels that you recognize structures more easily. With this example I don't want to compare, to judge, the different qualities. I'm just saying that different levels of consciousness are touched. There is a constant relation between the perception of the kine and the perception of structures. Did that answer your question?

**Question:** What I'm asking is, is the kine simply a function of this, or is there more information, so that there are different sequence recus, it's the same kine? Or does it also depend on the location of that sequence recus? A whole sequence recus, the performance of two recus later it would be considered a different kine?

**Nekes:** Their meaning in relation to the context might be different. It might be the same with the other. The level of filmic information that is transported. But naturally there is an influence on a kine by the information that is transported. And that is what the filmmaker defines its character. In films one would find sequences where the differences between the frames, in quality and character, are the same, so one would find a characterization for a number of kines. These similar characteristics will define the classifications of kines, and one would find classifications for groups of kines because kines will appear in fields. One would find laws of appearances and so on, but I think there are no research centers where one could explore such possibilities. But I think this development for video is just a question of time. The future filmmaker will make programs for camera set-ups. Animated filmmaking has already started to be computerized.

**Question:** ISIS there a limit to the spectator's potential proficiency in the language of film? Isn't there a limit to the number of differences that can be perceived? Can one ever be sure that every frame is different? Hasn't the filmmaker to be concerned with the relation to a, b, and c? And does it mean that the same question, displaced a little. Do you think that you are obliged to deal with repetition with such an amount of information in a real frame and each one between two frames? Do you think, as in the last part of T-WO-MEN, you are obliged to deal with repetition?

**Nekes:** We don't know the spectator's proficiency. There might be subjective limitations in perception, but as far as I see it, we are still far, far away from reaching that. I was not surprised because of the perception of the eye, the eye was offended, was bored by not having to work in other films. Its capacity needed to be inflated, so that it could work to this extent. That perception was buried in other films by the transportation of literature. In perceiving vibrating frames, the eyes probably caused disappointing expectations. As for the technique of looking, one can be a bit more tired in the beginning, but that's fine, that's a condition related to everything that needs concentration. If one is getting weary one normally tries to concentrate on the pictures by closing the eyelids a bit, for better focusing. I found out that this is wrong. It's much easier to leave the eyes wide open and just let the pictures stream into your brain. What can be seen? That is a very relevant question. I think that training improves perception.

You see, when Jum-Jum was first shown in '67 nearly everybody told us that it was too quick, too stroboscopic, And at that time it was very quick for me, too. But this was refreshing for me. By now one is used to the speed, and even one kine is already a long time unit. Perhaps television with its 625 lines will bring another acceleration. What happened with T-WO-MEN was that I approached some frontiers of cinematographic language by using the camera in a special way. But I realized that the standard camera was inappropriate for my purposes. Being at the frontier, I had to work with different, older medium, photography, I shot the frames like photos, combining them to the film. Simpler processes occur in every medium; you have to go very far back if you want to progress. In television the most advanced programs are the movies. Television isn't yet using its own possibilities. By possibilities I mean the transportation of television information, the flow of pictures with electronic speed. Perhaps T-WO-MEN parts 2 and 5 could have been produced much more adequately on video. By the way, there is no frame repeated in these parts. I achieved manually the same as what I could have achieved with the most perfect set up of electronic equipment. My handicap has the charm of inaccuracy. For television dramatization it was an immense step in the '30s when they first shot a scene with one camera for each angle. Even now we know from our daily TV programs these three to five camera changes.

My scenes could have been realized with a cluster of cameras which were programmed, with the finished film coming out of the programmed mixing-board. To describe the development once more: it started with one camera for all scenes, with the editing done afterwards; then, for example, three cameras for a scene with the editing done on the mixing-board; then the last step in this line is the editing done before shooting, by making a computer program for the change from one camera to the other; every camera records only a specific number of frames or single frames. To put it more succinctly: from one camera for a whole film to one camera for every single frame. Nowadays this sort of work in film is done by the special effects section in the laboratory, but this amount of work couldn't be done in the labs. They couldn't cope with it. The electronic medium is especially suitable for such possibilities. As for my work, I regret that there are no video research centers where one could explore such possibilities. But I think this development for video is just a question of time. The future filmmaker will make programs for camera set-ups. Animated filmmaking has already started to be computerized.

there are two ways of superimposing pictures with each other, the additive method and the subtractive method, till the picture is black; or the combination of the two printing methods.

**Question:** Isn't there a limitation on how much time the brain needs to receive an image?

**Nekes:** That is the speed of the light and the speed of the brain, but I guess that our brains work so much more quickly than the slow projector that we can forget it. A more important factor is that you need hours to see a projected taboo word, compared to the time that you need if you see something that you want to see, like your boyfriend.

**Question:** The idea that I'm extremely exhausted, is that psychological?

**Nekes:** That is not the intention, but possibly a transitory effect. If I have the choice of, let's say, presenting the same information within 10 minutes or 10 hours, I would prefer the 10 minutes. As understanding gets more and more differentiated, so the medium and therefore the perception becomes more and more complex.

**Question:** I'm curious about your use of sound. Could you give a brief answer?

**Nekes:** I have another question. We have been talking a lot now about the smallest structural principle of the film. A cine cannot be a structural principle of film. It is the smallest element of filmic language.

**Question:** Then, when you have a 20-minute, or a 10-minute film, could you talk about the way you handle larger units? I don't know if this term fits your intentions, the film being a unit, the smallest unit necare film is. Could you maybe talk a little bit about how films are built? Do you have larger units? If you come from literature, for instance, could you compare cinema to phoneme? Would you have equivalents for morphemes, for syntax, and so forth?

**Nekes:** It's an analogy when I use the word "language" for film, and certainly one could find the equivalents for film of a phoneme, morpheme, sememe, up to a syntax and even to a language itself. But I wouldn't want to give you the definitions for them within a filmic grammar. Before using such classifications, before getting to more complex units, I think we should perhaps give ourselves the possibility of returning to the fundamentals, which are not legitimate in the language of film. This seems and will be possible for films in the tradition of non-fiction cinema as one understands the historic Hollywood film.

Compared to the written or spoken language, the language of film is less versatile. It is too arbitrary and too tiresome to construct this tool of understanding. It would be senseless, because the deviations from the rules will be the modes of expression of tomorrow. On the contrary, our means of expression are so limited in the use of the film by the film industry that we have to be more concerned with the deviations from what is known, if we want to understand film as something living. The classifications of the kines should not only include the kines and the syncines, but also the more abstract ones, which one hasn't yet seen, which are theoretical images. I was asked earlier this evening what I did in Makimono; I will tell you now what I did in my work.

**Makimono** is a film about the unfolding of a socioeconomic varying expression of the representation of a landscape. The film is made up of one single location, using all possible camera axes from this fixed point. It shows what the camera is surrounded by, the landscape, houses, persons, trees, etc., but by stretching the differences of time and space between these units of time, of the frames, the kines continuously change in such a way that the impression of filmed reality becomes lost. The spectator isn't able to interpret the pictures, to help of sound, which are conventionalized anymore. This is the beginning of the interactive process of the spectator, to gradually reorganize his/her own perception of filmed reality. In that sense **Makimono** is an intervention into the spectators' perceptions, methods and patterns of understanding.

**Question:** By seeing the film, the work the spectator against a hidden 'object,' that becomes a criticism of cognition, or perception. The film is being seen only by the film as the producer of sense. He has to work against this idea, and he realizes that understanding is working.

**Nekes:** It is caused by the difference of the causes of the kines. They are arranged in various fields without differences, in superimpositions, two to four levels, fused waves of light in different lengths and amplitudes, different angles of the same object, local length, increasing movements around one center; movements and judging forms of movements like static, pan, circle pan, and so forth. At the same time, the film is made up of several single frames and the perception is continuously changing the distances between the loads and the shot with the stretching of time differences between the shots to organized movements within single frames, long time exposures; single frame superimpositions. The interpretation of the film has to be changed by understanding the impression that there is a development from filmed reality towards a "reality" which recalls modern painting. This is done by evolving the capacities of the kines.

**Question:** Is the length of the films completely arbitrary?

**Nekes:** Not at all. It depends mostly on the nature of the film material itself, on the filmic processes I'm working on, on the challenges of the language that I'm working with. So I could answer for every film differently. But one is quite important in this context is the work the spectator has to do to perceive this form. The effort caused by the structural concept. This perceptual effort is part of, but not the only important message of the film. It is the film itself, the kines, by attitudes, by the viewer himself. Films can lose their innovative qualities, which can be felt by the spectator as a kind of aggravation. I did **Makimono** in '67. But because of similar experiences I would have found this factor might disappear. Due to the accumulated visual experiences, the audience that will see this film has become more and more and more and more complex. The horizontal reading happens in everything of different levels in different lengths and amplitudes. In other words, I need a certain amount of redundancy to transport my information. By the way, the term "film" I use is technical. For the moment I need 10 minutes for the process of perception I would say that one is able to see sometimes the whole picture with all the levels at once; but the spectator has to do to perceive the possibility of jumping between the different levels. This is a process I would compare to looking at a painting, but with the spectators. It seems to me something else, but does this not also happen when there was no intention to produce different levels? One can become lost in the film.

**Nekes:** Question: Then, when you have a 20-minute, or a 10-minute film, could you talk about the way you handle larger units? I don't know if this term fits your intentions, the film being a unit, the smallest unit necare film is. Could you maybe talk a little bit about how films are built? Do you have larger units? If you come from literature, for instance, could you compare cinema to phoneme? Would you have equivalents for morphemes, for syntax, and so forth?

**Nekes:** I did in Makimono; I will tell you now what my work was. In jum-jum, because we have referred to it several times, we have spoken about the landscape, making the pictures, the frames. The film starts after the title—the silent part before is my personal MGM iron— and after the title there is a cut after every frame, a visual segmentation of the swing movement. The units all have the same length. The small time intervals of the sound refer to the short cuts from the pictures. If one now compares the work of the eye to the work of the ear, one finds out that the eyes tend to be lazy. They want to read everything at once, that's how the spectator makes you believe that it is synchronous. But it is not synchronous: the visual and acoustic rhythms are completely different. The reader is interested in the perception of the Kines and the changing rhythm of the pictures. I like to speed up the possibilities of looking. But after a while the accelerating capacity becomes more and more complex, and then the process repeats. That's another example of the waves of concentration and perception. This is a reason why the reading of the film is not a time passing from one time during the film to be able to reach a couple of waves. I have chosen a similar relation between sound and picture, a relation that you might find between the kines with the high capacities, or trauma, tropical effects, where the quick-rhythm sound gives the spectator the possibility of revealing the film, the kines, and so forth?

**Nekes:** Question: In Diwan 2 Alternatim, you use the sound in a different way, using high speed sound, very rapid images, and then continuing on very static images, and so you have a complete contradiction between sound and picture handling.

**Nekes:** By the way, "Alternatim" is a Persian word, that is used in Europe for an anthology of poems. "Alternatim"
is a musical expression for two choruses singing alternately. I have chosen this expression for the extreme change from the nearly "standing pictures" to the sequence of the flickering images, showing a Greek castle on a small island where people brought their lepers in former times. The sound is a very simple one with a quick complicated rhythm, a kind of minimal music. It is not a speeded-up sound.

Question: You alternate two different kinds of shots: a very rapid one, and then a very slow one, which has the same continuing sound. As a viewer I was very disturbed by the same sound continuing from the complicated images to the frames with the minimal differences between them.

Nekes: It is a sequence of sound processes at slightly different speeds, and speeds change the emphasis of the rhythm by getting to a synchronous point, in approaching it, in reaching it, in getting more distant from it. So, it always is to be the same sound, while it is the same sound material which is constantly transformed. This is partly a description of the sound material itself. The kines is entering and its function in relation to the pictures. How is the sound influencing the perception of the pictures? So you have on one side the kines and on the other side the frames, two angles, etc., or on one frame a picture of the castle and the second frame, or another picture by where the space that one frame covers normally on the celluloid is stretched over the size of nearly two frames. This last one is done by opening or leaving away the pressure gate in the camera while shooting a single frame. This results in the film fluttering through the camera, and the film is exposed in this special way. On the other side you have these sequences with nearly no movement within the pictures, with minimal differences between the frames. You have these nice, bright pictures opposed to this flickering, quick picture rhythm. Your vision is speeded up and working as quickly as possible, and then this process is followed suddenly by nearly no visual effort. Because your brain is already sweating over the speed it has to work, at cannot stop immediately and so the brain keeps on running on the pictures where it could work slowly, on the minimal differences. It takes a while before the brain slows down again. And then the next quick part follows and the brain again needs quite a while till it re-accelerates. So you receive two different lines: on one side the effectiveness of vision, which the information of the film requires of the spectator, and on the other side the line demonstrating the retardation of perception which is a constant factor that all films have to take into consideration.

Question: I think you are playing on both levels—with the kines, and on another type of articulation with the sound, that permits the overlapping of the two sections, of the two different types of kines, which is a level that is beyond the level of kines.

Nekes: Surely, at the same time, when the static pictures appear and the visual perception tends to slow down there is the possibility, because of the overlapping sound, to accelerate the looking processes, because of the speed of the short time intervals. Although there is an obvious difference between the visual materials, one knows or experiences the illusionary character of the flow of information. This flow has the same speed in both cases. This use of sound helps us to understand this effect. The sound of a kind is expanded the horizon. We are not trying to make a straight horizon, but the gestalt doesn't work there.

Nekes: Are you talking of the horizon in T-WO-MEN? Question: Yes. We perceive the break within the paradigmatic breaks. I think we can very well respond to the kines and on another type of articulation with the sound, that permit the overlapping of space/time relations as an entity. Modified relations give us new topological entities. We have to analyze the units and their interrelations to be able to work with different classifications. A huge amount of work, if one wants to treat film seriously. Don't let us be anxious about this. It seems to be worthwhile.

Question: Continuity and discontinuity are just the two ways of filmic information. They are not opposing each other. What can you say about syntagmatic and paradigmatic breaks? That has been done in the normal history of the cinema. But I have never seen before a paradigmatic break, the horizon breaking the frame. And that I think is not a matter of continuity, but discharge.

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