

(Re)framing Movement in Stan Brakhage's *Visions in Meditation N°1*

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Abstract. Considered as one of the main figures of the avant-garde lyrical cinema, Stan Brakhage questions perception. His language of inquiry constantly confronts the spectator with the limits of visual experience of the world and the multiple possibilities of their transgression. Critically addressing one of his short films, *Visions in Meditation n°1* (1989),¹ this analysis aims to discuss the way *movement* may become a principle of perception, that is to say, according to Gilles Deleuze's definition – a mode of transgressing the frame of *representation*. Reappropriating the cinematographic grammar and submitting it to a vibrating movement, Brakhage invents a rhythm which paves the way for a transcendental experience, meanwhile proposing a reflection on the meditative possibilities of the film in terms of the *image in meditation*. Gilles Deleuze's way of thinking of cinema in *Cinema 1: Movement-image*, as well as Slavoj Žižek's writings on cinema, allows one to consider movement in its cinematographic and philosophical meaning, a project which in Brakhage's case seems to be primordial.

Keywords: Stan Brakhage, Deleuze, rhythm and movement in film, avant-garde lyrical cinema.

Stan Brakhage's (1933–2003) monumental work, composed of more than 350 films, challenges the conventions of perception and the norms of expressing what “one is seeing with one's own eye.”² According to Fred Camper “his work was made in opposition to, even in terror of, the notion of the static, the fixed, the given. Objective measurement, predetermined forms, the overall arc structure of most narratives – all were to be undermined because they block the individual from experiencing the unpredictability of the inner life.”³ In the

1 By Brakhage, *An Anthology, Volumes One and Two*, 2010.

2 The expression is the title of one of Brakhage's films, *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eye* (1971).

3 Fred Camper, <http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/272-stan-brakhage>, last accessed at 20. 08. 2012.

absence of any narrative line or even sound – since for Brakhage the specificity of the cinema is its capacity to express and to explore the domain of the sight –, in order to be able to see Stan Brakhage’s non-static films, one is bound to adapt one’s habits of perception. In Deleuze’s first book on cinema, cinema is defined as a system of movement: “In other words the essence of cinematographic movement-image lies in extracting from vehicles or moving bodies the movement which is their common substance, or extracting from movements the mobility which is their essence” (Deleuze 2005, 22). Brakhage’s way to extract movement and thus to challenge the static and the given, questions the possibilities and the limits of the cinematographic language.

In *Visions in Meditation n°1* (1989) – according to the annotations provided by its author – “the filmmaker has edited a meditative series of images of landscape and human symbolism, indicative of that field of consciousness within which humanity survives thoughtfully” (Brakhage 2001, 228). As the title suggests, this film is marked by a movement towards the inside, opening thus a space where images may become “visions in meditation.” The study of Brakhage’s film grammar aims to show to what extent this film challenges the principles of *representation* and establishes between reality and the attempts to translate it, a type of relationship that Deleuze calls *movement*. In the context of cinema, the development of this mode of transgressing the monopoly of representation implies a reappropriation of the camera which aims to transgress the dichotomies of subjective/objective, human/non-human: “Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilizes and moves nothing. Movement for its part implies a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view, a coexistence of moments which essentially distort representation” (Deleuze 2004, 67).

1. For a Vibrating Shot and Montage

According to Deleuze, it is possible to recognize the global movement of a film already in its credits where it may appear in its purest form (Deleuze 2005, 16). The credits of *Visions* contains only the title of the film, unless we consider the first inscriptions that appear on the screen – the title of the film, the date of production, and the director’s name –, which may have been added afterwards. This information is presented in a neutral way and deprived of any movement. Whereas the actual credits, the title of the film is literally inscribed – handwritten – in white on the black screen. The hand executing the inscription

is invisible; its presence is carried by the movement of shaping the letters. In addition to this, a constant vibration can be observed as if the letters, once inscribed on the screen, were endowed with their own vitality. Indeed, once the title is written and the handwriting movement stops, the words continue to vibrate. The two movements we distinguished overlap each other: the handwriting dictates an accelerated rhythm and the vibrating movement reinforces it. [Fig. 1.]

The sources of these movements are nonetheless invisible: although we presume, by association, that the handwriting of the title is that of the author, he remains physically absent. His presence is reduced to the movement of his handwriting, more precisely, to his signature.⁴ The rhythm of the handwriting doubled by the vibration evokes the movements of an eye engaged in the act of seeing. Moreover, the rapidity of this rhythm also echoes an accelerated breathing process. In keeping with Deleuze's suggestions, these movements reveal the global movement of the film, which in this case could be considered as a movement of vitality: indeed, the film seems to be endowed with a human dimension, it sees and it breathes. For Deleuze, the global movement of a film is metaphorically equivalent with the director's signature: "certain great movements are like a director's signature, which characterize the whole of a film, or even the whole of an oeuvre, but resonate with the relative movement of a particular signed image, or a particular detail in the image" (Deleuze 2005, 22). It is a coincidence that in Brakhage's case the global movement of the film is announced through his actual signature, on condition that his handwriting be considered as a signature. His handwriting fills the screen the way images shot by his handheld camera will occupy the same space. In these conditions, the metaphorical and the literal meaning of the word signature overlap each other. The human dimension of the film also implies a new status of the camera, which is said to be the extension of the person who uses it. Brakhage explicitly expressed his desire to become one with his camera, a process which, according to him, requires daily practice: "I practice every conceivable body movement with camera-in-hand almost every day. I do *not* do this in order to formalize the motions of moving picture taking *but rather* to explore the possibilities of exercise, to awaken my senses, and to prepare my muscles and joints with the weight of the camera and the necessary postures of holding it so that I can carry that weight in the balance of these postures through my physiological reaction during picture taking and *to* some meaningful *act* of editing" (Brakhage 2001, 132). "One thing I *did* do [...] was to practice handholding the camera, with no

4 The actual initials SB at the end of the film are written on the screen with the same handwriting and the same vibration. Therefore we consider that the title written by the author is part of his signature.

film in it, for an hour or two a day – so the camera could become one with my body. It wasn't to increase control so much as to increase the possibilities of emoted feeling that might move through me into that camera when I was actually shooting. I wanted a degree of oneness with the camera" (MacDonald and Stan Brakhage 2003, 5).

The emphasis on the physical aspect of filming reveals the fundamental principle of Brakhage's aesthetic program. Seeking "a degree of oneness with the camera" implies, of course, a strictly handheld camera. In the fifties, when Brakhage started his filming, the camera had just begun to be released from the tripod. In this perspective Brakhage was among the first ones to recognize the necessity of this release and to live with its possibilities to create a cinema of the human presence. The cinematographic attitude developed in consequence redefines the status of the camera by endowing it with the vibration of immediacy. The human presence behind the camera becomes secondary in comparison with the primary presence of the camera. Indeed, the camera, as the extension of the body, becomes a body itself; it no longer plays the role of a mediating instrument of the present, but, through its "vibration," it gets hold of the instant immediacy. It is in these conditions that the possibility of an eye "unruled by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception" (Brakhage 2001, 12) can be envisaged.

Yet, experimental modes of perception, which undermine five hundred old conventions and aim to free the human eye of "man-made laws of perspective," question the notion of human subjectivity and its cinematographic expression. According to P. Adams Sitney, Brakhage was the pioneer of the lyrical film for he was able to invent a form in which the film-maker could "compress his thoughts and feelings while recording his direct confrontation with intense experiences of birth, death, sexuality, and the terror of nature" (Sitney 1974, 168).

In these conditions Brakhage's film is determined by the tension triggered by the cinematographic situation in which the camera is said to have its own presence not as a mediating instrument between the human organ of vision and the world seen by this organ, but as an independent eye, and yet, it is bound to express the author's subjective (selective) perception of reality. The credits of *Visions* announce the primary tension at work in Brakhage's films in terms of the absent presence of subjectivity: one can constantly feel a human presence thanks to the vibrating movement, yet the person behind the camera remains invisible, *out-of-field*. In Deleuze's distinction subjective implies the point of view of a person who is part of the narrative whole and appears in front of the camera, whereas objective implies the point of view of someone who is external.

The status of the human presence behind the camera is ambiguous for, on several occasions the position of the camera evokes the *voyeur* position (for example, most of the time the shots showing houses are taken from behind bushes, as if someone were watching the house [Fig. 2.]). This position may correspond to a semi-subjective one that Deleuze identifies in the case of Paolo Pasolini. For Deleuze Pasolini succeeds to develop the grammar of the free indirect subjectivity which favours the emergence of the camera-self-consciousness (Deleuze 2005, 77–83).

Brakhage's use of the camera results in a cinematographic language which may tend to acquire the status of a "poetic cinema" that is no longer concerned with the distinction of objective/subjective. The spectator is invited to see what the eye as an "organ without body" sees (Žižek 2012, 137).⁵ However, Brakhage's experimental cinema seems to go beyond Pasolini's research of this consciousness, for he still maintains a narrative function of the point of view. If Brakhage's use of camera can be considered as endowed with its own consciousness, with its own flickering eye, its point of view is to be considered in the context of the American experimental cinema, which according to Deleuze, was the most successful in obtaining a "pure vision." This notion of purity is to be interpreted as opposed to a centred vision dependent of the laws of perspective: "A whole aspect of that cinema is concerned with obtaining a pure perception, as it is in things or in matter, to the point to which molecular interactions extend. Brakhage explores a Cézannian world before man, a dawn of ourselves, by filming all the shades seen by a baby in the prairie" (Deleuze 2005, 87).

In keeping with Dziga Vertov's aesthetics of kino-eye, Deleuze underlines that perception in cinema is not only a question of the point of view represented by the position and the movement of the camera; in the construction of perception montage plays a primordial role. According to Vertov, it is actually the montage that allows one to obtain the perception of a non-human eye which does not correspond to the perception of another animal:

5 As Žižek points out in *Organs Without Bodies* (Žižek 2012, xii) with the notion of "body without organs" Deleuze fights against organism and not organs, that is to say he wishes to transgress "the articulation of a body into a hierarchic – harmonious Whole of organs," each at "its place," with its function. He argues that Deleuze's notion of "body without organs" when confronted with Lacan's theory of desire would acquire a more subversive dimension for drive considered as an organ without body, frees the notion of organ from its hierarchical structure of functionality. This way the body may become a space in which "autonomous organs freely float," yet an undeterminate space which opens itself to an infinite Whole. In Brakhage's case, if the organ is the camera, it is indeed autonomous of the body functions with which the historically determined cinematographic-perceiving body endows it.

“What montage does [...] is to carry perception into things, to put perception into matter” (Deleuze 2005, 83). This movement towards things, towards the matter in Brakhage’s case can be identified as the vibrating movement. Indeed, the vibration one can identify in a shot also defines the nature of movement that emerges from the succession of shots. Its double presence can be interpreted as a chiasmatic interaction which tends to endow the non-organic – for example in shots showing a wall – with an organic dimension, and vice-versa, to extract movement from the thing moved, as it is the case in shots of the waterfall, or of the wheat field.

According to Deleuze, a shot is movement itself: “The shot, that is to say consciousness, traces a movement which means that the things between which it arises are continuously reuniting into a whole, and the whole is continuously dividing between things (the Dividual)” (Deleuze 2005, 22). In Brakhage’s film movements of reuniting and dividing contribute to the creation of the dynamics of the film. On the one hand, the shots echo each other through the repetition of the same elements such as the house, the dog, the moon, the sea, the trees, the waterfall etc. and thus provide the illusion of the existence of a whole in which all these shots would fit in, like the pieces of a mosaic. Whereas on the other hand, the possibility of the mosaic-like whole is constantly threatened by the introduction of new elements, for instance the last shots which show a little boy in a forest. The notion of the whole in Brakhage’s film is a slippery one for it is not based on a narrative coherence in which every shot would have a predetermined function in the development of a story. Yet, the *whole*, as Deleuze points out, “is rather that which prevents each set, however big it is, from closing in on itself, and that which forces it to extend into a larger set” (Deleuze 2005 [1983], 18). In this perspective, the experience of the *whole* proposed by Brakhage is in keeping with the deleuzian concept.

If we consider the vibrating movement as the global movement of the film, the whole does appear as the Open which “relates back to time or even to spirit rather than to content and space” (Deleuze 2005, 18). The constant vibration sets the shots in movement, more precisely, it inscribes them in a movement through which the film lives in a continuous present where these images may coexist as memory coexists with the present moment. In order to be able to settle in the continuous present, one needs to consider the interior and exterior spaces shown as both belonging to an inner space where regardless of the “content,” time is bound to unfold in the simultaneity and the continuity of the past and the present.

2. In Search of a Frame

The global movement of “the vibration of immediacy” seems to influence the function of framing to a point where one may wonder if there is any framing left? Indeed, the vibrating movement can also be interpreted as the expression of the hesitation with which the cameraman approaches the question of framing: in Brakhage’s film the shot seems to be in search of its framing. The multiplication of backward zooms or forward zooms, as well as the multiplication of the points of view – on numerous occasions the spectator is invited to come back to the same spot and to consider it from a different point of view, as it is the case with house or the big wheel [Figs. 3–4] – suggest that there cannot be any fixed and standard framing of a reality. Thus, multiplicity becomes a principle of filming, and creating a cinematographic object which asserts that perception is a dynamics, a movement from one point of view to another. To come back to the example of the house, one is able to see the house from the outside and from the inside through the window, or even from the side, in a clear or in a blurry way. These procedures translate, according to Deleuze, the desire to adapt the framing to the bodies, the essence of which one is engaged to fix, and transform the screen into a “visual accordion” (Deleuze 2005, 14).

In *Visions in Meditation* this transformation takes place in a way which favours the presence of geometrical lines. Most of the time the bodies, the objects and the landscape are treated as compositions of lines: the sea appears as a horizontal line [Fig. 5.], or the wall of the house as a composition of vertical lines. According to Deleuze’s distinction of the two types of framing – the geometrical and the dynamic – Brakhage’s framing seems to intermingle the two conceptions: “The frame is therefore sometimes conceived of as a spatial composition of parallels and diagonals, the constitution of a receptacle such that blocs (masses) and the lines of the image which come to occupy it will find equilibrium and their movements will find an invariant. [...] Sometimes the frame is conceived as dynamic construction in act (en acte) which is closely linked to the scene, the image, the characters and the objects which fill it. [...] In any case framing is limitation. But depending on the concept itself the limits can be conceived in two ways, mathematically and dynamically: either as preliminary to the existence of the bodies whose essence they fix, or going as far as the power of existing bodies goes” (Deleuze 2005, 14).

Most of the shots in *Visions in Meditation* show blocs and lines – the blocs of snow for instance, or the blocs of water, and the lines mentioned previously – but these lines are not conceived mathematically but rather dynamically, as if they were engaged in the process of revealing their own power. Indeed, one can assert

that the parallels and the diagonals transgress their function of space organizers, and through their movement, which is constantly doubled by the vibrating movement, they become bodies, the essence of which the framing tempts to fix. Moreover, if we consider the recurring shots of the sea, we can say that the lines of the sea and the human figures are both shown as elements of a composition, a composition which has no centre, and therefore no hierarchies. In the absence of a narrative line, the characters are deprived of their narrative potential in order to become elements of the landscape in the same way as waves are. [Fig. 5.] Their function in the composition is to introduce discontinuity in the homogeneous landscape of the sea. The process of becoming line of the bodies is accomplished gradually, through the rhythm determined by the insistent repetition of certain shots, such as the waterfall or the branches in the snow.

The oscillation between the geometric and the dynamic conception of framing is also perceptible in the playful variation of shots which can be said to favour the emergence of lines, and of shots which, on the contrary, are engaged in dissolving the lines through gradual fading. In this case, Deleuze notes: “the frame is no longer the object of geometric divisions, but of physical gradations” (Deleuze 2005, 14). On the one hand, the elements of nature are perceived as lines in a composition which is the landscape: the water, the trees, the moon, the snow are sharp lines and determine the direction of the movement. On the other hand, they are dissolved in a blurry image, and the result produces the effect of time suspended: “It is the hour when it is no longer possible to distinguish between sunrise and sunset, air and water, water and earth, in the great mixture of a marsh or a tempest” (Deleuze 2005, 14).

To these dissolving images one may add the numerous travelling shots, which, due to their rapid rhythm, contribute to the elaboration of an aesthetics based on the notion of work in progress, more precisely, on the image in progress, which seeks to transgress the necessity of framing according to the expectations and the conventions of a representation in perspective. The images in search of a frame, or, on the contrary, fleeing from a frame, suggest that engaged in *out-of-field becoming*, these images carry, in spite of themselves, the conventionally necessary movement of finding their frame. Indeed, the process of becoming implies reciprocity,⁶ hence if there is a becoming out-of-field, at the same time, a becoming field is also at work.

6 Inspired by Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari developed the notion of becoming in order to be able to provide a movement structure which favours *hecceities*, that is to say new modes of individuation. Through the example of the wasp and the orchid, the authors insist on the fact that interactions cannot be conceived without the notion of reciprocity, which actually conditions every process of becoming (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 1987 [1981], *A Thousand Plateaus*).

The illusion of absent framing is also the result of what Pascal Bonitzer calls *deframing*, (Bonitzer quoted by Deleuze 2005, 16) that is to say the effect of “abnormal points of view which are not the same as an oblique perspective or a paradoxical angle, and refer to another dimension of the image” (Bonitzer quoted by Deleuze 2005, 16). Brakhage’s images multiply these kinds of points of view which show what one would consider according to a perception based on hierarchic distinction between the objects and elements filmed out-of-field. For instance, in one of the window shots showing the window of a house mentioned previously, one can only see a fragment of the curtain in a close-up. [Fig. 6.] The emphasis on this phantasmagorical material may evoke well known frames from the history of the cinema such as Hitchcock’s framings in *Rear Window* (1954). However, Brakhage’s images resist framing: even if the spectator is tempted to find a possible, already existing frame for the image which seems to be out of frame. Brakhage’s camera does not know the hierarchical organization of the elements; on the contrary, even if an object appears to be in the centre of an image, as it is the case for example with the big wheel, Brakhage frames it from another point of view, suggesting, once again, that it is not possible to fix the essence of an object without the multiplication of points of view. Thus, he emphasizes the openness of his composition, increasing its availability to introduce “space to space,” “of transpatial and of spiritual” (Deleuze 2005, 18–19).

In these conditions, the film opens itself to a “duration which is immanent to the whole universe, which is no longer a set and does not belong to the visible” (Deleuze 2005, 18–19). This type of duration is available, according to Deleuze, in the process of actualization of the virtual, which implies the time of becoming. “The pure structure of time ‘as such’ is thus available as the transcendental experience of a time released from the narrative, the progressive time segmented according to a ‘before’ or an ‘after’” (Žižek 2012, 10). The virtual, Deleuze argues, cannot be opposed to the real, for it is “fully real in so far as it is virtual” (Deleuze 1994, 208–209). This may be a way to define cinema, as a language which is constantly held by this ambiguity – producing reality with the “image of reality, as if all this was real” (Ishagpour 2006, 12).⁷ Deleuze’s notion of virtual seems to grasp the – reality of cinema, that is to say it denotes a reality which is in process of actualization, a process which is completely dependent on the spectator and his/her recognition and acceptance of the image as real. Moreover, virtual means an Idea which is engaged in the process of its actualization through differentiation. Deleuze underlines that to

7 Translation mine, E. S. from the original French (“l’image même de la réalité, ‘comme si’ tout cela était réel”).

have an Idea is an act of creation in a specific context, and according to him, to have an Idea in cinema means to invent “blocs of movement-duration,” more precisely to tell a story with “blocs of movement-duration” (Deleuze, 1987). From this perspective, and considering that Brakhage’s cinema is deprived of any narrative, we may assert that Brakhage fully assumes the virtuality of the cinema and carries the cinematographic Idea to its purest form by emphasizing the reality of the image itself, more precisely the reality of the experience of movement. Brakhage’s film corresponds thus to a “potential or virtual object” in case of which to be “actualized is to create divergent lines which correspond to – without resembling – a virtual multiplicity” (Deleuze 1994, 212). Indeed, Brakhage transgresses the limits of human vision by exploring a multiplicity of possibilities and constantly reinforcing the virtuality of the “kino-eye” perception, that is to say shots which are “somehow subjectivized without the subject being given” (Žižek 2012, 138). In one of his essay this program takes the shape of a long list which textually reinforces the infinite dimension of such an enterprise.⁸

3. For a Transcendental Rhythm

The dynamics and the openness of the framing shapes the rhythm of the film, and at the same time it questions its nature and status. Once the rhythm disobeys the conventions of pre-existing narrative structures based on the linearity of the development of an intrigue, it becomes a movement which is constantly in search of its next direction. Actually, one is bound to speak of a

8 “By deliberately spitting on the lens or wrecking its focal intention, one can achieve the early stages of impressionism. One can make this prima donna heavy in performance of image movement by speeding up the motor, or one can break up movement, in a way that approaches a more direct inspiration of contemporary human eye perceptibility of movement, by slowing the motion while recording the image. One may hand hold the camera and inherit worlds of space. One may over- and under-expose the film. One may use the filters of the world, fog, downpours, unbalanced lights, neons with neurotic color temperature, glass which was never designed for a camera, or even one may photograph an hour after sunrise or an hour before sunset, those marvelous taboo hours when the films labs will guarantee nothing, or one may go into the night with a specified daylight film or vice versa. One may become the supreme trickster, with hatfulls of all the rabbits listed above breeding madly. One may, out of incredible courage, become Méliès, that marvelous man who gave even the ‘art of the film’ its beginning in magic. Yet Méliès was not witch, witch doctor, priest, or even sorcerer. He was a 19th century stage magician. His films *are* rabbits.” (Brakhage 2001, 16.)

network of movement the dimensions of which are determined first by the vibrating movement constantly present throughout the film. As we have seen, the organicity with which this movement endows the film reinforces the primary tension at work in Brakhage's cinema, that is to say the tension that emerges from the confrontation of two different tendencies. On the one hand, Brakhage seems to develop a way of filming, framing and editing which blurs the frontiers between the human eye from the mechanic eye of the camera. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to explore and to reveal the mechanic procedures which reinforce the artificiality of the device. It is in the context of this tension that the two types of framings and the editing are conceived, and as a result, the camera behaves as a hybrid being which observes, reconsiders, blinks its eyes, and takes long minutes to meditate, to regulate the distribution of the masses and forces, and to release "the qualitative duration of consciousness without self" (Žižek 2012, 4).

Inspired by Eisenstein's idea according to which the "montage is the whole of the film, the Idea," Deleuze defines montage as "the operation which bears on the movement-images to release the whole from them that is, the image *of time*" (Deleuze 2005, 30). If we consider the four types of montage that Deleuze distinguishes in *Cinema 1*, we can conclude that the montage in *Visions in Meditation n°1* bears the traces of the American heritage represented by Griffith, that is to say the parallel montage and those of the montage conceived by Eisenstein in response to the American one. Griffith's conception implies the idea that "the composition of movement-images" is "an organism, a great organic unity [...], unity in diversity, a set of differentiated parts; there are men and women, rich and poor, town and country, North and South, interiors and exteriors, etc." (Deleuze 2005, 31.) There are, indeed, differentiated parts in Brakhage's film such as the interior and the exterior, the town and the country, the earth and the sky, the horizontal and the vertical, the water and the fire. [Fig. 7.] Yet, even if it is possible to identify these binary pairs, the duel which is supposed to develop, seems to be neglected. The alternation of these parts does not follow the logic of a duel, and the convergence of the portrayed action is only a tendency in the absence of any narrative line. In spite of this rupture, one can still identify the traces of the American heritage in the way the two aspects of the image *of time* – the "chronosigns" – persist and determine the rhythm: "on the one hand, time as whole, as great circle or spiral which draws together the set of movement in the universe; on the other, time as interval which indicates the smallest unit of movement or action" (Deleuze 2005, 33). Brakhage experiments with the relations these two aspects maintain with each other, more precisely his research aims to explore the dynamic potential of their interference. As Deleuze suggests, "time as interval is the accelerated variable

present, and time as whole is the spiral open at both ends, the immensity of past and future. Infinitely dilated, the present would become the whole itself; infinitely contracted the whole would happen in the interval” (Deleuze 2005, 33). In *Visions in Meditation*, when confronted with a two minutes long shot showing the movement of the waterfall, one may indeed experience the dilated, continuous present. In this case, the cut is postponed, movement is amplified and the spectator is invited to lengthen the duration of watching in a way as to reach a duration of contemplation that may favour meditation, that is to say the emergence of *visions in meditation*.

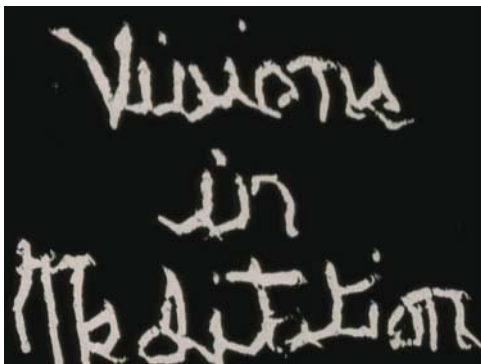
In any case, the experience of time proposed by Brakhage’s film is the experience of duration, which on the level of the shot manifests itself as a continuous present, and on the level of the whole it may point to the infinite virtuality of the transcendental field of becoming. As we have seen, Brakhage’s cinema focuses on the image in progress, a movement which endowed with the vibration of immediacy marks the movement from the virtual to the virtual actualized. Instead of being dependent on a narrative line and its conventional rhythm, Brakhage’s shots, the framings and montage invent a language through which this movement unfolds its many aspects. Movement towards the matter which releases composition of its pre-established hierarchies multiplies points of view and thus decentres the image, marks the capacity of the film to transcend *representation*, that is to say a mediated mode of perception and to constantly re-enact the possibility of *movement* as an immediate mode of perceiving and translating a constantly moving reality, the vibration of immediacy. These conditions seem necessary to open an “inner field,” in-between movement-image and time-image, in-between subjectivity and objectivity, where *image in meditation* can take shape. The spectator is thus invited to meditate, and why not, in a playful manner, to participate in the process of actualization of the virtual narrative possibilities these images carry. One may thus find pleasure in asking, along with the principal question of “who is watching?” a series of questions that these images suggest in the context of the virtuality of fiction: “who is living in the house?” “who are the people represented in the photos?” “who is driving the car and where to?” “where are the people absent from the hotel room?” [Fig. 8.] Thus framing and reframing the image in meditation would result in the framing and reframing of narrative structures and may endow Brakhage’s film with a condensed narrative core in quest of its own accomplishment through the spectator’s playful, meditative participation.

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