MAKING MONEY

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INTRODUCTION

Making money has become the principal obsession & dominant focus of the decade. Where are the utopian theories, mad manifestos pressing idealistic plans, burning ideas for revolutionary improvement? If art is optimism, to whatever extent artists dwell on negative thoughts & pessimistic conclusions they are not being artists.

In my own field it is widely rumored that film, this thing we all love & depend on, is dying & will soon be gone. It's already virtually unaffordable. This breeds paralysis, cynicism, identification with jobs, general inactivity. It's easy to find excuses not to do work, thus intensifying social problems breeding this state of despair, instead of seeking, fighting for solutions. Sometimes in unguarded late-night conversations a quickly suppressed intimation is tentatively offered, a suggestion that perhaps something new is in the process of being born. More immediately pressing concerns are rapidly restored to consciousness & this development is left to invisible technicians in California or Cambridge or Japan. More hardware for people with too much money to not know what to do with. Progress begins in the head, however, ultimately having little to do with equipment or grants or institutions or journalistic attention or family life or fashion or personal habits or public opinion. There used to be an activity called avant-garde art that was wildly experimental, shocking settled sensibilities as it smashed citadels of opinion & taste, destroyed outmoded conceptions & institutions even, forging highways of possibilities through unrecognized wildernesses. There is little taste for such disorder these days. It's unsettling to corporate planning, threatens lifestyle. It's not hip. Avant-garde film especially is not hip. What's hip is 'Post-Modernism' where everything is phony like we like it. Be true to your TV. One hit makes a superstar & the photographers & video take over, so forget the second record. An addict population is easily forced to accept more & more cut. Imitations of imitations of imitations are sound investments. What is going on good? We need to project our minds toward future solutions to get us out of this dilemma & on to the next level. It'll be better when it's all digital, but we already have our minds. We probably have more of them than we will by the time it's generally affordable lasers. Isn't this what we've been trying to do? So what have we left undone?

I can think of a few films I haven't made. Back in the late 60's I responded to an ad in AVANT-GARDE magazine & ordered the ESP SAMPLER, a tasty LP with one-minute selections carefully edited for sequence & transition from all the records on the notorious ESP label (including Sun Ra, the Fugs, Albert Ayler, William Burroughs reading NOVA EXPRESS, Patty Waters Sings, Sing-Along-in-Esperanto, etc.). I listened to it every time I tripped. This document, along with a screening at Bestoink Dooley's downtown Atlanta theatre of Andy Warhol's NUDE RESTAURANT with Taylor Mead & Viva & a book I had documenting several performances of the Living Theatre, Allen Ginsberg via TIME & LIFE & the FILM CULTURE interview with Harry Smith, formed my image of downtown New York life. I dreamed of a movie version. Finally a movie I could see over & over. I always thought every movie I saw was either too long by two-thirds or only a tenth long
obvious racial
could take all of the Warner cartoons as a finite set. These could be arranged to
through the footage one special shot will reveal itself as containing this essence.

create catalogs of her gestures
amount of unedited footage, a set of fragments from which to compose. We can
eliminate all scenes where she's not on screen (except Richard Widmark in NIA-

if a frame from a scene recurred twice in a second, a continuity of progression was per-
ceived. An interval greater than twelve frames gave the impression of complete dis-

The concept of literacy is already being radically redefined. This could be
extended to live broadcast & might be essential to keep informed of what's
being beamed-up on the multitude of signals that can be dished out of the sky in
the near future, presenting incredible interactive possibilities: Artists' World TV. All of us
plugged-in together. This selection & arrangement could be according to preselected
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on a program of sound films, but the question of what kind of soundtrack there might be which added-to rather than subtracted-from the energy of the piece is compelling. I had hoped to make a sync-sound version, three to twelve scenes occurring simultaneously with their sync-tracks superimposed. There would be a logical relation between the sound & image, the sound being actually generated by & recorded simultaneously with the image as it was shot. I carried out my silent experiments on an optical printer, frame-by-frame refiguring footage that had been originally shot normally & frame-by-frame backwinding for multiple passes, an extraordinarily tedious process that should yield a camera that was capable of bi-packing, a locked matte which was clear on the frames to be exposed (ten such mattes would be necessary) & black on the other frames (blocking the light) could be run through the gate along with & in front of the raw stock being exposed, greatly speeding up this process as the footage could then be combined (& the order possibly altered) in the A/B-rolling (which would, though, involve a lot of mechanical splicing unless you went to ABCDEFGH IJKL rolls). This rapid alternation of images (partially chosen for the interactive patterns they can make), whose own sequential pattern constantly varies, whose intervals (many things are going on at once) are also constantly changing & thus also the density of its superimposed sync tracks, would be explored in all possible variations to the extent that interesting results are generated & then composition would be carried out on this material as if it were normal daily rushes. Like most special effects, this could probably be done automatically in video on a computer. Video right now, though, is so ugly. Will it ever be capable of reflecting the crystalline clarity of work like Ernie Gehr’s? One could imagine speeding things up & instead of 24 frames-per-second having 60 or 1000 & then how many scenes could we train ourselves to register? By hooking up your PC to the channel-changer already you could even maybe make watching TV somewhat interesting. I have also thought about the possibilities in extremely long shots, say a 400 foot single take (approximately 12 minutes), a good double feature for the above. Lots of boring films used to be made like this, but it could be interesting. The main problem is that if everything doesn’t work out, for whatever reason, the whole shoot is shot. Very costly. This is the kind of film the Peabody should fund. The camera could be handheld & constantly moving. The perfect way for a dancer to make a film, to examine their movement inside-out. For Griffith & Bitzer & Lillian Gish, Eisenstein & Tisse & Alexandrov, the Kinok’s ‘Council of Three’, Fellini & Nino Rota, Godard & Coutard, George Lucas & Pat O’Neill’s former Cal Arts students, etc. This has not generally been the case with experimental filmmaking, where the artist attempts to work like a painter or poet, though I have been trying of late to imagine Stan without Jane. I want to bring out more of the less-visible to the writers. The rise of home video may offer a similar opening to the visual quality of the performance & low-tech homemade & prepared instruments & a demand for constant inventiveness, frequently unite in varying combinations to create a great deal of moment-to-moment excitement. The success of these sessions relies heavily on the enthusiasm, chance, & a complexity of emotions. Though over the years the apparent vocabulary of signals has arisen to encourage restraint & bring the pieces to generally satisfying conclusions, there isn’t consistently a sustained sense of development. I can’t think of very many leaderless records. Zorn’s own playing on duck calls & multi-reeds, underwater & muted & modified by cupped hands, exposed knee, tennis ball, etc., begins by rejecting anything normal or popular, then pushes marginality through to the other side where the accepted & unquestioned unveil themselves as arbitrary & deranged. His score writing, however, is supremely rational, at least the idea of it, filling a gap so obvious it’s a wonder the problem was not adequately dealt with decades ago: the possible extent & implications of the emancipation of the musician through the universal availability of recordings. This playing in a position in the home video may offer a similar opening to moving image makers. ARCHERY presents some obvious parallels to my own efforts. Here we have a document preserving historic samples of the work of a diverse grouping of artists displaying their unique tropes, but at every point the signature of the author is also prominently evidenced. I recorded sync-film documentation of the
premiere performances of two other Zorn compositions, CROQUET on March 5, 1981 at Soundscape; & TRACK & FIELD on October 8, 1982 at Roulette.

Elements of these were woven together, often as punctuation, with other preserved & created performances. Through weaving I made MONEY. These included a collection of typically unusual movements enacted on the streets for me by choreographers Sally Silvers, Pooch Kaye, & Yoshiko Chuma, which I post-synched animation-style to magnetic constructions assembled from left-over music track, cutting the sound to "hit" at points which emphasized subtleties of inflection in the movement. After working with actual sync over a number of years it became easy to create its illusion. By the time of the concluding shoots of this 2-1/2 year project I no longer had access to a sync rig & filmed even the talking parts with my wind-up Bolex, recording sound wild on my Sony TCDSM, & it would take a sharp sound-editor to figure out which scenes I did this with. I even reshoot earlier portions of the film that had been originally filmed in sync but whose image I had lost interest in compared to more recent material which had been preinformed by the emerging shape of the final product. Real sync doesn't "hit" at all points, so the dance footage often became ultra-sync. Other footage included David Moss singing to a Sunday crowd on Orchard Street, Tom Cora playing cello on the Brooklyn Bridge, Arto Lindsay in the basement at Georgio Grmelski's (Zu), jam sessions at the legendary Studio Henry at One Morton Street, Sally Silvers, Pooh Kaye, & Yoshiko Chuma, which I post-synched animation-style with members of my cast. Making a book is not as much fun as making a movie, although cut-out & paste-up is a somewhat similar activity. The film is also available on videotape.

In PLAGIARISM, my first sound film, I had consciously lifted lines & structural devices from Hannah Weiner's LITTLE BOOKS; INDIANS (Roof, New York, 1980) & Bruce Andrew's R + B (Segue, New York, 1981). Though MONEY contains fragments from NEVER WITHOUT ONE (Roof, New York, 1984) by Diane Ward, SPLIT THIGHS (Other, Dorchester, Mass., 1976) & VITALS (unpublished, 1982) by Alan Davies, & THE FOX (United Artists, New York, 1981) by Jack Collom, I had moved away from filming poets reading their works (too little eye contact, too much object) & employed them spontaneously generating dialogue in increasingly frenetic street situations on the Lower East Side, Canal Street, & 14th & Union Square. It has been suggested that this put them at a disadvantage in relation to other artists (that certainly was true in the "live reenactment" after the film was done), but in fact public reading is a secondary activity for writers anyway. Poets are the conscience of the art world, because it's impossible, no matter how successful they become, that they can ever make any money from their work. Society has traditionally rewarded them pariah status, because of the inherent threat in the nature of their expertise, control of language being central to the maintenance of power. Avant-garde filmmakers, as the moving image increasingly supercedes the written word, have attained a similarly glorious position, even worse because our trade is so expensive to carry on.

MONEY starts over black with a disembodied complaint: "I don't have enough money." What could I say new about this topic? In the Reagan-era it particularly weighs down our dreams. I wanted to address current concerns, however obliquely. A tinkle on the cymbal, a bowed wail on cello, & the anarchist, after a glance at the camera, hurls his Molotov cocktail. An oriental woman screams & the titles begin to roll. See acknowledgements. Black again, four beats, & the text begins. The large bold Helvetica type throughout this book presents the words from the soundtrack. If you memorize them before seeing the film, you might have as pure an audio-visual experience as you would if you didn't know English. The reduced computer print-out on the left side of the pages contains the working record I kept of the shots from which I composed the film in the order I pulled them & how they hung in my trim-bin (the Wordstar file name was 'Moneybin'). These lists are dated, so the thorough student can trace the growth of the work decision by decision as shots entered & exited the bin. The graphics are reduced xerox copies of the actual pages these were recorded on in my notebooks. All photos are stills from the film, except the back cover which is me directing the performance at Roulette. The normal sized Times-Roman type is an interview I edited out of 15 hours of taped one-on-one conversations with members of my cast. Making a book is not as much fun as making a movie, although cut-out & paste-up is a somewhat similar activity. The film is also
I HEAR MONEY!
**E-yun-doc**

**HH:** Although that's still there, you know, it might be interesting in viewing the film to try to reconstruct...  

**CHARLES:** ... what this other, but the reconstruction that you would do of what the original thing would be like a 3rd thing. There might be what the actual original situation was like, then there's what you've done to it, & then the possible reconstruction of the original would be even further away; that would be even more of a fantasy or projection. You'd get further away from the so-called reality or historical fact of the filming by this 3rd level of reconstruction of what it must have really been like, because it wasn't really like anything.  

**HH:** Just me saying, "Oh, start talking."

**CHARLES:** Yeah, I mean, there's the talking, there's the film & so on. There's so many different elements, that what actually occurred is so already screened & delimited by what you actually shot in the first place, the way in which you shot it & how the interaction of the camera & the being-filmed & the way the spectators & the situation responded to the fact of filming—all of these things altered the situation & made it into a kind of neither situation that wasn't ever quite what it seemed to be even at the time. It never was & never will be. These're only possible constructions, such as the one that you make with the actual film, such as the one the viewer might make in imagining what it might have been like, but it wasn't like anything!

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**Cleaning starts the day:** immaculate rollers, spotless heads, tidy bin = organized mind.

**CHARLES BERNSTEIN:** As usual to work with you I'm supposed to come up with things to say out of whole cloth, to simply make things up which are never frantic enough for your particular moment of revelation that you would like. Your blank stare, just as in this moment which duplicates the moment of your filming, prods one to say something outrageous or something even the slightest bit engaging to say & yet there never is anything to say because you provide no content, you give no direction, just your stare & your smile & then the kind of gesture of, "Oh, more so." That seems to be one of your big ones: "More so." But more so of what? One never knows & so I'm kind of catapulted into a frenzy of emptiness & pure gesture, which, of course, is quite decadent. But as it's recontextualized by you in the film, of course, you redeem it & reconstitute it as being something interesting. But this itself—this is what you call an interview. You haven't said anything. An interviewer is supposed to ask very specific questions.

**HENRY HILLS:** Well, but, um.

**CHARLES:** Do you see my role in your films as being the same character in the three films that I'm in?

**HH:** Yeah.

**CHARLES:** And how would you characterize that role?

**HH:** The narrator.

**CHARLES:** The narrator in the marginal sense of a superfluous narrator. A narrator of film to which narration is held in disrepute. The narrator of a ship's voyage from the point of view of the narrator being on the dock and the ship is out there. It's like the narrator of the Circle Line ship but he stays at the port at 42nd St./12th Ave. while the ship is going around Manhattan but the narrator is still at the dock the whole time narrating the voyage not knowing anything about what actually is happening, which of course nobody knows. It's all constructed after the fact of shooting on 86th St.

**HH:** Yeah, hopefully downtown next time. Well, is that objectionable?

**CHARLES:** Not at all. Of course it's your work. No, I mean, I've always discussed in the films this very topic. I'm simply continuing almost a running dialog which I've had in the three films of which this could be a 4th instance, about the nature of appropriation of—I wouldn't be so much interested in the films if you didn't in fact deal with the material that's presented & use it in some way. In other words, if you simply left the stuff that happened in so-called 'real time' be reproduced this wouldn't be interesting at all to me.
I'm remembering money.

Sounds like: Capitalism. Debt. Caniption fit. HIT ME!

POOH KAYE: But let's start with where we turned on the tape recorder which had to do with people being uncomfortable about being taped or being filmed, cause I think that people who do it regularly for a living have a method of relaxing the subject.

HH: I have another bottle.

POOH: Oh, good. You know that they really, when I've been with people who are very used to, especially like photographers who are very used to photographing subjects, they really can make people, they have a way of like talking a person into, beguiling a person, seducing them into a kind of ease as if there were no barriers of self-consciousness between.

HH: Well it's different though with film & with photos. There's nobody in Western culture that won't accept having their photo taken, it's just like a part of—

POOH: No, most people are uptight initially.

HH: Uptight, but everybody has their photo taken a few times in their life, but whereas being on film—something that's more revealing.

POOH: Cause they can see them moving & they move ugly. I don't know, I'm pretty uptight about being photographed & I'm pretty uptight about being filmed & I'm pretty uptight about everything.

HH: About being recorded.

POOH: Right & it takes somebody doing some kind of seduction, emotional seduction, to get me past that point where I'm aware that there is a medium between myself & that person. I think that's part of being a voyeur of any sort is this ability to break down a barrier, that's part of observing, whether it's through speech as a journalist or if you're looking through a camera, I mean if that's what you're looking for, if you're looking at the world through your exercise, I think you owe it to the world to try & make it as easy as possible for it, like getting me drunk.

* "I don't have any, haha"
TIME would align us poor $200,000 in the heyday. What do you want me to?

DIANE WARD: I was totally surprised by it. I mean, I don't even remember saying all that stuff & to see myself on film is very strange. It's like totally unintentional everything in that film that I'm involved in. It was just like rambling & sort of being there & running around on the street with you with all this equipment & everything, & that was enjoyable, I sort of enjoyed it, & laughing with Charles, so that then seeing the whole film later, I was just this background thing to like the invisible big idea which was you making the film, so that you were very present, I thought, & then everybody on the film was sort of in the background. The film precluded everything, overshadowed everybody, the fact that you made it & the process. So that's the whole exploitation side of it, right?

HH: ?

DIANE: Because you're so unprecious about it. You're not like preserving everyone in some sort of typical time structure. You don't have anything alone, so that way there's no great value put on a person's personality and their actions. They become these visual & sound elements, but isolated & not really attached to the real world too much. They're like very frantic & very kind of distressed, I think. Traumatized.

HH: It's more like lighthearted in a way, isn't it?

DIANE: There are elements, a sense of humor, but not always. Sometimes things are very poignant & sort of sad.

HH: Sad?

DIANE: Yeah, there are moments like that. Just the whole attitude about taking something & cutting it all up is like nervous.

SUSIE TIMMONS: Well, it's all right. It was fun to do, it was interesting to do it, I had big circles under my eyes, it was fun. It was hard to watch the movie & not feel narcissistic because all I really cared about was how I looked. I had those glasses, so it was nice to have a record of myself wearing those pointy glasses because I'll never probably ever have those again, you know & that was sort of a thing & I feel like that phase is over. Last winter was terrible, because I started out, I had Unemployment in 1983 till September & then it ran out & theoretically I was gonna get a job the minute my Unemployment ran out but it ran out in September & I didn't get a job until like December, then I owed like $1700 & I had like a Dispossess Notice & everything. I was really just destitute, then at that point my laundry, I left all my dark clothes in the laundromat at 13th St & A & I went away to get a newspaper & a coffee or something & I came back & the man had taken all my clothes out & lost them. Like all my dark clothes.

... led directly to the assassination—/uh, it, I...

It's probably linked to the digital crisscross action around the figure-8 triangulation scene, right? More Oedipus.

HH: You have the title role.

JAMES SHERRY: I should have been on stage a lot more. My role in the film was a kind of punctuation, except in the "money" section of MONEY. You forced me into this.

HH: You're the only one I knew that had a suit.

JAMES: Basically I thought the movie was a counterpoint thing, juxtaposing say Sally Silvers to John Zorn, who were really sort of the stars. The real meaning that comes out of the film is the sense of its masses, not in the sense of its timing or the overall line. You can concentrate on it for 20 minutes & get a sense of trajectory, & since there's no narrative, you end up having an accretion of these little focal points.

More "G.L."

HH: But as you become more familiar with the film...

JAMES: After you see something a certain number of times then you're no longer getting meaning out of the film. You're constantly being thrown into the film. I think what really gives shape overall structure is repetition.

HH: Oh, to say that life has structure is just to look back on it. Like it doesn't have any structure as its happening.

JAMES: Individual events in the immediate sense. That's an interesting question. I suppose they do by virtue of the fact that you never exist only in things as they're happening. You're constantly classifying things & remembering & projecting & saying, "Oh my God, if this person reaches over & kisses me."

Bruce complete soundtrack:

"So we're walking around imitating this crisis cross action around the figure-8 triangulation scene, right? More Oedipus, more R.K. translations, more greed, more Graeco-Roman. You want the old wrestling style? You want the new wrestling style? We can break into the energy fields, ya Henry? U... he's not, however; he's a businessman trying to sell you everything he can sell you/come, we got impose—" etc.

Bruce Andrews
"E-o-wanna kick-kok-tic," or even cured:

a future existence in Outer Space.

SUSIE: You know that thing of seeing yourself is fun, first of all, & it's very primitive. I always think I'm funny about it, like I'm funnier than other people about my image. In my family no one ever took pictures so every time I see my picture I'm always intrigued by it. The first time you watch the movie that's all you're looking for, you know you can't even enjoy it because you're just waiting to see what you look like. So then you're there & you see yourself & you feel very nervous because everyone is there sitting next to you looking at you too. So you wonder how you look & you sort of look not so great. I felt like sort of spotty & big circles under my eyes. Then the 2nd time you see it it's nicer because they have to say & I couldn't understand how they fit together in a certain way & that was very interesting to me, I hadn't considered our proximity.

POOH: ... but it's not like a big ego display. I don't feel like I'm like, I don't really think there are any stars. I'd say all of the people in the film are doing weird things & saying weird things.

HH: Somebody pointed out that you were the only one who doesn't speak.

POOH: I know. I wondered about that. I felt a little hurt.

HH: This person thought that that made your role much more mysterious & interesting, because of the major characters you were the only one.

― Or is it a greater menace... You don't know. I thought artists belie work (which isn't too clear) & I think that (blank!) that they got, that their TRUST NOT PERISH.

It's this security, perhaps, of-of-of swerving breasts that they need (much more rapidly) all the time.

I don't! don't want it!

JOHN ZORN: I think that I'm in a lot of the film. I kind of see myself there, but maybe that's because I'm looking for myself or notice myself easier or I'm self-conscious about seeing myself.

SALLY SILVERS: Well, I mean I'm in there more than anybody else, right? You let me say a lot of cuss-words mostly & I think it gives a really good indication of the type of language I prefer to use & my attitude on the world. Um, let's see, & I like the movements I was doing then. It was really a long time ago though, so those things seem more like ancient history now. I mean they're very clear to me what they are, I have them written down.

BRUCE ANDREWS: I'm just curious, other than the kinship thing, why not just use trained actors or TV personalities or people that are used to reading the news or people that are used to speaking in the classroom or giving talks before social service workers or people that are great storytellers, raconteurs, or something like that?
Um, a little more sudden, old, didlittle pecker (HIT ME!) State direction interfering with the remote control role analysis of this, y'know, I don't know, y'know, anti-Socialist society, the verbal & the visual, & the hideous attitudes towards women.

HH: Well I think trained actors would be something quite different, but otherwise you're right. Anybody who could talk well is an appropriate choice for the role that I gave the poets in MONEY. As far as future work, there's no reason why it couldn't be any other artist who's articulate. My inclination, though, is to continue using improvised dialog.

BRUCE: Well what's so great about improvised dialog?

HH: Because I want it to be more like real life.

BRUCE: It's just not like real life when you have people out in the street being prodded to be charismatic, moving around on Canal St. to find some exciting backdrop, where it doesn't even matter that much what the words are as long as you say them really strong or really exciting or really sexy. In real life, the only kind of dialog there would be would be at home. People don't stand on the street & give speeches, so what's so naturalistic about that?

HH: I've heard people stand on the street & give speeches many times.

BRUCE: Yeah, but not the people you're asking to do this.

HH: It keeps coming back to your feeling that it would be more effective for me to be using actors & a pre-written script to be doing what you perceive that I'm doing.

BRUCE: It's a possibility.

HH: There are other possibilities also.

BRUCE: Like Charles is a very great talker, but his talking doesn't necessarily have that much to do with what makes his writing very distinctive. My suggestion would allow a place for the poets in the future.

HH: I like to have a pretty clear vision of the finished piece before I start & structural ideas, but I prefer to let the details kind of emerge & then make the film on the editing table.

Their styles: REACTIONARY!

SALLY: We were raw material in some ways for the way that you compose, but the level of meaning that's there, as opposed to like NORTH BEACH, is on a whole different level because of the fact that you're dealing with all these elements that are not so easy to categorize. I mean you can say, oh there's movement, there's sound, there's language, there's this, that, and the other. But it's not like you could say, oh there's the lamppost or there's the stairway or there's the landscape. It has some of the same compositional techniques which definitely say, OK this is Henry's film, but the raw material is much more variable. You're composing those thoughts based on the language you received or the motion. I don't think that it was necessarily your point to clearly individualize the people that were in the film, so in that sense it's not a documentary. It is & it's not at the same time.

HH: Well I thought that by the way I put it together, it was emphasizing the interrelatedness of these different groups of artists' aesthetic concerns. The interaction among this group of people has increased over the time I was working on the film. I mean I saw certain connections with people who weren't really familiar with each other's work, but have become & even have collaborated.

POOH: Right, now I'm working with all of them. It was prophetic.

HH: The reason I thought to do this book is because the film finally is so short that in the kind of context that normally you have the opportunity to show your films, it just goes by & it's just another film & it's more than 2 years of my life but it's just 15 minutes of the audience's life & most people might normally only see it once or twice & so I thought I'll use all the excess stuff & monumentalize it more than just a 15 minute film which is maybe very interesting to whoever might see it, most people I would think, but still it's just a little short. Most people engaged in a 2 year project would probably make a feature & I feel like as much work & as much thought went into it as a feature-length film & certainly as many scenes.

ALAN: The only real difference is that it didn't cost as much.

HH: Although it cost quite a lot for a film of that length. And it's still costing!

SALLY: In a feature you're not that conscious of the editing. I think most feature films are planned so that you don't notice the editing so much. It's supposed to have more of a natural, it's supposed to be more like what you experience in actual time, even though they cut back & forth to past & future, there is more of a sense that you're really existing in that time frame.
...ahhh & it, I don't know, OK, retaliates.

HH: But that's such bullshit, because it isn't at all like what I experience in actual time.

SALLY: Well would you say you experience what your films are after 2000 hours of editing or whatever?

HH: Much closer than a Hollywood movie.

SALLY: Come on, man, you're a laid-back kind of a guy, y'know, you don't sit around your place or experience your life events as this last-forward, multi-focus, incredibly stimulating environment. I mean you have to make that, you have to have that happen.

(MORE MEANING FASTER)

HH: You don't know how I experience when I'm sitting around, but certainly when you go out on the street in New York it's like that. You constantly have multiple demands on all your senses that are constantly pulling your senses in every possible direction & so your consciousness is very fragmented as you're walking down the street or in the subway, just being out of your place in N.Y., I think, not when you're in a movie theatre when the lights are off, but if you're at the Collective with half the film community there or when the lights come up at DTW or DanceSpace when every other dancer in N.Y. is there, your consciousness is going to be pretty fragmented then too, right?

SALLY: Um hmm, especially if the piece is bad.

HH: Well, if it's good, that's because it's fragmented & it's taking you along on its own fragmented course.

SALLY: Exactly. I think there is a natural developed inclination towards fragmentation when you live in an urban environment & when you have these options of choosing what's gonna affect you or not, when you're walking down the street you don't have those options, so that, yeah, you're inclined towards seeking those things out after a certain point, I think, if you become urbanized or if you live in some stimulating environment like this, like N.Y. And so if you don't get it in the piece, yeah, look around the room or you're gonna get out your paper & start writing stuff or your mind's gonna wander onto things that you'd rather be thinking about. Yeah, you're gonna make that happen for yourself in some way.

Well, I don't know. You don't know, though, y'know, & that all our energies exist toward PROCESS.
Filming in a bar one time, I thought, "Screw Pa! This is all being, being realized not to sell you a certain kind of, uh, y'know, CAPITALISM VS. WORKERS in interplanetary "Star Wars," right?

I gotta fix my hair.

ZORN: Well, what about the performance that you did? How did that relate to the film itself? When you were putting the film together, did you have the performance in mind? When you were putting the film together, how much did the words? The words kind of become sentences; you took a word from one person & a word from another person & you create a whole different set of meanings & the whole thing 'money', there's a lot of stuff about money, people are saying, "money" & not just Sherry but a lot of people, like a lot of references here & there that kind of tie the film together thematically, but how much did a real kind of narrative sense play into your construction of the separate shots? I mean there's lots of ways you can put shots together. I mean, one way is by taking a word from this person & a word from that & then it adds up to a sentence or a poem. You're doing it kind of by meaning or you do it by sound, you want sound splashing back & forth in a musical kind of way, or visually—you want a very dense shot, then you want a single-person shot. What were your criteria in picking shot after shot?

HH: Well, I wanted all of that. . . . I mean, I would start each editing session by doing pulls & I would go through my different material which some of the shots were aimed towards getting language & some towards music & some towards dance & pull shots out & put them on the bin that holds all my elements that I compose with that night & whatever was left over from the previous nights & I had this bin full of shots arranged in various categories, so I would get warmed-up for 4 or 5 hours just pulling shots, which is a big part of the composing anyway because as I pulled the shots I would pretty much plan where they would begin & where they would end—I would choose out the frame that they would begin & end on. I would like look through my rushes & some scene would strike me, either I was looking for certain types of material for one reason or another & I would have categories, whatever was useful at the time for storing the pieces in the bin. After a number of hours I would start putting the pieces back in & some days my head would be completely into working with the language & then other days it would be more with the music, & then other days it would be more with the rhythm & not with the music then I'd have to stick music in between, little bits, weird things would balance it off. Sometimes putting a whole bunch a minute earlier of something else would just change the sway of the whole piece to where something much later would work. Whenever I find myself working in the next room from someone who works in the industry, I'm always amazed at how homemade & raw
Which is interesting (mmmmmmmmmm) Which is one reason to stop & I don’t wanna.

ZORN: It’s a really long process. I mean it took you years to do it, right, so over the course of years each time you’d go up there it’s kind of like you were inventing new systems & playing little games with yourself.

HH: Right, exactly. I filmed you talking about TRACK & FIELD when you were still finishing composing it on the board (& I filmed T&F’s premiere at Roulette later) & I broke it up as I was shooting it, which is what I did all through this movie; sometimes I wasn’t even listening to what people were saying, I would just be going for visual stuff & then work later with what I got. That way I wasn’t so stuck with what people happened to be talking about, but could rather explore how they talked. I got the idea for the performance before I finished just because I had generated a lot of notebooks of material & I wanted to do something more with it. I had the cue-sheets for my sound-mix with all of the words to identify scenes on that & the relationships between the periods of music & the periods of words & I just sat down in a couple of nights & wrote the score based on that, so structurally it would parallel.

ZORN: The feeling of it wasn’t like the film, but there were elements that were. I thought it was interesting, the relation of what the performance was to the film. At first I thought, well y’know he’s not really capturing the speed of it & then you want the text to come through & then I thought structural it would parallel.

UU: Right, exactly. I

ZORN: Exactly... & it’s sort of one’s self so being able to position (put. . .PUT) traffic so that ("oh GOD!") the cars

HH: OK, well in that sense, I wanted this line that was supposedly telling something about a topic going through it, but I wanted constant detours. When I was trying to work out the overall structure for this piece at a very early stage in my notebook (see left) I was thinking about this Melville story "The Encantadas" which is kind of like a miniature MOBY DICK where it has some kind of story that weaves it together, but basically it’s a whole bunch of chapters about a whole bunch of different topics, it’s like turtles instead of whales, but the thing was you could draw a diagram—this one thing going forward but there were all these little pockets that were just very slightly related to the line that was moving forward, these kind of unified periods of interruption, & that’s the way I thought of the structure of this piece. This money theme is always kind of moving it forward, although I don’t know that it moves forward; it just keeps coming back to it, but it’s always going away from it too. I thought of MONEY, although on the one hand it is centered around this one thing, I thought of it on the other hand as a more encyclopedic work, that it had a form that could incorporate more kinds of things or at least it presented the possibility of a form that could incorporate more kinds of things than any of my previous films.

ALAN: Yeah, it’s encyclopedic in its ability to include, its willingness to include. It’s like a history of N.Y. art consciousness, at least during the years that you made it.

BRUCE: Why was that? What was it about the form, why was it different from say RADIO ADIOS in terms of being able to incorporate more?

*Fucker, they’re gonna!
Rode on out.

BRUCE: Not a thematic line.

HH: No, it was a line in the sense of one thing led to the next thing to the next thing smoothly without anything interrupting this. Maybe there were references to earlier parts or whatever, but rhythmically & the way the words fit together it kept moving forward in one continuous monologue—I mean there were references to earlier parts or whatever, but rhythmically to a certain point & then it stopped & then it started up again, there was like a once, instead of being cut-up throughout the thing.

BRUCE: Well that might have something to do with the thematic focus too in a way. It might be that having a little thematic focus enabled you to feel much freer about breaking up the linear progression.

HH: & digressing into any kind of area that I feel like.

BRUCE: Right, because you knew that when you came back, you would be coming back to something that had a coherence with other things that went before, whereas if there's a whole variety of different types of thematic material, then you have to kind of work it into a single linear progression & you have to be very careful then about when you stop it & when you start it up again, because you're depending on a line to give it coherence, whereas if you depend on a theme to give it coherence then you don't have to have a single line, you can have this scattered thing going all over the place. With poets, they sit at a desk & you write a poem about a theme, something's on your mind or some mood you're in, I think it ends up having that thematic focus as well as having usually a kind of linear progression, because of the fact that it's all being composed at one time & to me that ends up seeming too limited. I get bored with that. It's like redundant. To me you need the line, some kind of single progression, or you need some kind of thematic focus, you don't need both, either one is sufficient.

Out to strain retaliation.

SHOUT: HIT ME!

HH: & then you want to go on because you don't want something to last over what it needs in order to be what it is. You have to assume people are paying attention & that they want to be stimulated & that they're going to be bored in that 10 seconds or 4 seconds or 2 seconds of lag is wasted time for people cause people don't mind wasting time as long as it's their own, but when they're looking at what you're doing it's not their time really.

SALLY: ... & then you want something to do with the thematic focus too in a way. It might be that having a little thematic focus enabled you to feel much freer about breaking up the linear progression.

HH: & digressing into any kind of area that I feel like.

BRUCE: Right, because you knew that when you came back, you would be coming back to something that had a coherence with other things that went before, whereas if there's a whole variety of different types of thematic material, then you have to kind of work it into a single linear progression & you have to be very careful then about when you stop it & when you start it up again, because you're depending on a line to give it coherence, whereas if you depend on a theme to give it coherence then you don't have to have a single line, you can have this scattered thing going all over the place. With poets, they sit at a desk & you write a poem about a theme, something's on your mind or some mood you're in, I think it ends up having that thematic focus as well as having usually a kind of linear progression, because of the fact that it's all being composed at one time & to me that ends up seeming too limited. I get bored with that. It's like redundant. To me you need the line, some kind of single progression, or you need some kind of thematic focus, you don't need both, either one is sufficient.

Out to strain retaliation.

SHOUT: HIT ME!
uh,uh, (taki-i-muntu) is the same thing as religion

HH: I feel that what I’m trying to do is explore possibilities that exist in film before film disappears. It’s inevitable. It’s such a backward thing in a way: y’know this mechanism based on the bicycle, this chemical thing that whatever it takes to make it pollute the environment.

PETER SEATON: What if it disappears before you’re ready to stop making films?

Broderick Crawford

HH: It’s not going to disappear until it’s replaced by something that’s seductive enough to make all the filmmakers quit making films & start doing this other thing, right?

PETER: Including you?

HH: Especially me. Like digital, I mean like this bookshelf could have like the whole New York Public Library on it. It just seems only completely logical that they will eventually have some kind of electronic thing that will more than compare, that will be los better. Why not? And not only would it look better & be much more vast a thing, but also you’ll have access to even more minute pieces of it. You have access to every single point. Instead of having access to frames, you get access to every single grain within every single frame. You’d have so much more control than you have now, I think. There was this article which I read a few years ago in Fortune magazine, my father cut it out for me, & said, “This looks like, I think you’d be interested in this,” y’know, & it was about smarter chips. Y’know they have chips that hold the information in computers but they also have, or they’re working on, chips that can see.

PETER: What do you mean? That can—

HH: Can see. My impression was that it would be like these little tiny eyes that can see as good as the human eye could & give the same kind of information to the computer that the eye gives to the brain, but they would be like a grain of sand, so you have this wall & instead of having one lens focussing on something forcing the whole audience to more or less look at the same thing—I mean on a big screen you can look all around the frame & stuff, but really you’re more or less focussed in a certain direction—if they had this thing that was like 100 billion eyes on this wall here looking at something, then you could have like millions of perspectives on what was being filmed & the editing possibilities are amazing.

& there’s the River


ABBY CHILD: We’re talking about it like escape or daydreaming, but it’s also control, so that it offers you actually a vision of control in a world that seems otherwise uncontrollable & the word ‘control’ or power has this double-edge to it. Is it control in your dark corner, control of a margin of the world? Or is it control that somehow will affect the world, which you hope for actually?

HH: That was the whole thing about daydreaming, when you make art you kind of rein in that impulse, instead of just letting it freeflow all over everywhere, & also you make it into something concrete. By making this thing you take your fantasy life & make it actually change the world.

BRUCE: So what role do you think this film might have in the revolutionary transformation of the advanced Capitalist society? That’s a rhetorical question. I think it’s important to raise that though. And how you think your future work is going to be even more relevant to the struggles that are engaging the world at this point.

HH: I need closer access to the pause button.

“Scam / the sonofabitch / scam / all fucked-up”

ALAN: What do you think is the most obvious feature of the film?

HH: To me?

ALAN: Yeah.

HH: Well the aspect that I enjoy of it is the density of the movement, not only the movement from scene to scene, but just within the scenes there’s so much density of movement, which is kind of a development. Like in PLAGIARISM there was pretty much not too much going on in the background. I was just filming people reading & talking, nice backdrops but I kind of began to understand what was interesting me was when other things were going on behind as kind of decoration & I did more of that in RADIO ADDIOS & in this one, where I allowed myself a huge shooting ratio, I totally went for this kind of, plus I became much more uninhibited about going out in crowded situations on the street to shoot to obtain that kind of imagery, but who knows what if I look at it in 10 years I’m going to feel. I can’t say that at this point I see things I’ve never seen, but I get a huge amount of exhilaration at all this wiggling around in the rear & one leading to the next & swirling motion. I guess I could take it much further even, & eliminate all the foregrounding. There is still pretty dominant foregrounding from one person to the next even though all this other stuff is going on.

BB: Hm.
It's a rather long operation.

ALAN: There's also foregrounding of other aspects, like the sound. I.e., you could create it almost entirely in terms of rhythms & gestures & stuff & just have this incredibly flowing thing, sequence of images.

HH: Without any language at all.

ALAN: Yeah, without any attention to language. It would limit the kind of humor that you'd be able to permit or the kind of contradiction or the kind of repetition of vocal elements. Although I think you did an incredible job of mixing those different aspects. There are times when the discourse appears to be swinging in one direction & the movement appears to be going in another direction or through that dimension. I mean I can imagine you taking that & saying, alright forget the sound, I'm going to edit just in terms of movement, but the film you actually manage to have elements & aspects of that while at the same time you had literal statements made by a group of people in sequence, or a non-group, a sequence of people in sequence. You would see people kind of contributing to this on-going mini-non-statement, at the same time that they were doing that you might have also found gestures that followed one another either in terms of coherence, meaning that the 2nd gesture that occurred followed through from the first, or in terms of contradiction in that one went one way & one went the other way. That's why after the film when I asked you how you did it, y'know, which of the things was most important , that was because to me that was the most amazing sequence of people in sequence .

& actually manage to have elements through that dimension . I mean I can imagine you taking that those different aspects. There are times when the discourse appears to be swinging in one direction, or in terms of contradiction in that one went one way & in terms of coherence, meaning that the 2nd gesture that occurred followed through from the first, or in terms of contradiction in that one went one way & one went the other way. That's why after the film when I asked you how you did it, y'know, which of the things was most important, that was because to me that was the most amazing aspect of the accomplishment.

OK, what-a-be-do Soho toe to MOTO to go (A nice young Mick)

SALLY: What's carrying the load of the meaning at any given point varies, & some things seem to act as the main carrier of the meaning in a particular instance & other things seem like punctuation & other things seem like disagreements, like some kind of contrast blaring in at it, or at other points it seems more like what's holding it up, y'know like that wasn't enough so that all these things were kind of building to make that stand on its own like some sort of accumulation thing to make a particular point that you didn't know it was leading up to stand on its own. It varies how each thing comes across depending on what's happening at the time. And some things are punctuation—like big exclamation points everywhere.

HH: I feel like your work particularly lends itself to that kind of, that it's real segmented & so it really lends itself to short scenes like that.

SALLY: Well we plotted it that way too, though.
SALLY: Plus that was improvised. The stuff we started out doing, I remember I just took my notes with me & just went down the list. I wasn’t confident about doing improvising at all then. To me, in the film, the earlier stuff actually seemed more filmic, because it was, I think, more distinctly angular in some way & contained. With my own eye, now, like seeing the repetition in the film almost bothers me, because that’s just the way I am about movement, I don’t think it’s like something in the film that people would get bored with, but for my own eye in terms of movement I never use repetition in my own work as far as going back to something that was earlier in the piece & doing it again. I mean sometimes maybe it gives a clear sense that something’s been composed, instead of like a string of ongoing events. Often if you go back to something it’s more of a clear-cut indication of a compositional device, the old musical ABA or whatever.

In dance, too, always it was considered that was like one of your basic compositional plys was to make a phrase, make a variation of it, & then go back to the original or whatever, not that you’re making variations but that seemed to be a stop-point of indicating that you made decisions about how it was composed.

HH: It’s funny cause James went into this long thing about how it didn’t have that aspect to it & therefore it was impossible to feel any overall structure to the piece.

SALLY: Oh I didn’t find that at all. First of all, if you’re just looking at it as a moment to moment structure then that assumes that each part that you have in it doesn’t have any relationship to the whole thing. The way you work, the thing takes on a shape even if you don’t impose it from the outside.

Sighs want us to, I don’t know.

HIT ME!

A.O.K. (duh-duh-duh), so that’s what (“yeah, shit”) & everything began trying to get DOWN where it’s all different language or all that noise:

Disco Machines

HH: When you asked me what my first perception of the work was—

ALAN: Yeah, your main experience of it.

HH: Other people, lots of other people, seem at least their initial experience of it is one of speed, which some people find very problematic. I mean this one woman in Germany posed this argument as if someone else had said it, that like this is so typical of America to do something so fast that it’s almost on the verge of being out of control, just faster than you can possibly take in, faster than you could reflect on at any rate, & that this is connected with the Arms Race. At least it’s not doing anything about the Arms Race, it’s just like continuing the same kind of crazed mentality where you have no sense of any end, you’re just like going as fast as you can go & just finding ways to go even faster.

ALAN: She must have been a Green person.

HH: But I’ve heard that over here too.

ALAN: Yeah, but the problem with that is that when people say that that’s an expression of a personal perceptual problem, because they’re caught up in a dilemma of whether this is one thing that lasts 15 minutes or 1600 things that are all packed into 15 minutes. If her primary experience had been of a 15 minute thing bounded by beginning & end that happens to have incredible varieties of texture, then she would never have raised that question. Then it would be like whatever speed it had would be interesting but it would simply be the speed bounded by that duration. It wouldn’t be a statement of loss. I.e., she’s saying, “There are 1600 things packed into 15 minutes. They go too fast. I can’t see all of them.” So her argument was as if you had made a 2 hour film but speeded it up when you showed it. It’s a perceptual problem that keeps people who make that kind of response in a certain position. That would be like going to look at Hieronymus Bosch’s GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS & saying, “This is a failure because there’s too much information in here.” And it’s really just somebody who would rather go look at a portrait by Vermeer. It’s not even an aesthetic judgment or statement. People who have that response are just telling you where they are, really.

MINIATURIZATION, not speed.

SUSIE: Where did you say that? That was an interesting thing that fast shots were considered aggressive & masculine, etc., like this kind of cultural feminist analysis, that fast movies were masculine & aggressive & the real slow movies were feminine. That was in the program, right?
HH: That's not exactly what I said. There was some kind of argument that was implied but I never could ever see a straight version of it, but it was implied a lot of places & people referred to it, although I have never been able to find where it exists except for just by implication, that political films, films that were politically correct, were had those long, slow, which is bullshit, you can't find any concrete examples that fit that, & it came up in a review of Chantal Ackerman's work. (tape break)

THIS media ass would be rather incompetent, which is kind of like the noise, ("it's hard") & uh, something like the image upon a verb, right? Saying, "a verb," right? Could say, "Wanna cut off my." . . ?" Pleading with him said, "I've gotten a lot of . . ." (Di shakes head No) (background: "Why not?") "I just decided really, uh uh, LOVE."

It's gonna be (It's true) VISION that this was (nnnn)

SUSIE: ...why is it so appealing? I mean that's the thing, there's something very appealing about the Ramones, that's the thing of speed & stuff, there's something really energizing about things that are really fast, y'know, almost it's not just because you have a short attention span & it encourages a short attention span, I've had that argument with Europeans about how Americans just have terrible attention spans & I'm really dubious about that, y'know, cause all that popular culture that we just eat up, everybody around the world craves, anybody in an advanced industrial society really wants—

HH: & not even, in the Third World also.

SUSIE: Yeah, right. Everybody wants that kind of patterning. It's something that's happening to you at a rate that's faster than your heartbeat. That was the Muzak definition I saw at one time. Muzak is all physiologically geared to be slower than your heartbeat cause it soothes you & if it's just at your heartbeat it makes you feel happy & peppy & you know music that's louder than your heart-beat interferes with your heartbeat & causes you to have a heart attack.

HH: I find that Muzak has the opposite effect on me. It makes me so nervous.

Editing people ("cause that's what we're here for") was only systems, uh, monosyllabic, uh, systems (sss asshole)

\* "vagina dentata"
"Right?"  "Yeah"

HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA haHA

JAMES: There's this whole series of lives that you were participating in while you were filming MONEY. The fact like that I was going through this serious illness... People in your films going through their lives & what was really going on in their minds while they were presenting this supposedly objective artistic viewpoint of the world.

HH: Well I filmed it at different times & I continued my relationships with most of them & still do & their lives continue to change or whatever, mine also, but it doesn't, well in a sense that did connect to the editing. It didn't connect so much to the shooting of it because like maybe I shot Alan 3 years ago or something & a lot of things happened in his life after that which certainly doesn't affect the footage I have of him because it didn't affect his being before it happened, not that he's any different in any real sense now than before.

JAMES: I think he is.

HH: Well maybe he is but the fact these people are the material I'm working with over a period of time but I'm also interacting socially with the people & my feelings towards them lots of times would affect decisions I would make in the editing for instance. I mean I might get pissed-off at somebody & I wouldn't just cut them out, but I would look much more critically at their role.

ABBY: They're all crazy as a result of the hold of money on their lives & imagination & so everybody's struggling against something that they're shaped by. My work seems to be about smaller or more intimate issues. I'm looking for areas that haven't been explored. That's one of the things in a wandering imagination that is really fertile is that you actually register on your brain. That incident, that gesture, that moment, that speech made a mark that you could foreground it. I think that happens in your work & think that happens in my work, whether or not that's an answer to monopoly capitalism is another question, or it is not the question. Seems like maybe it's not escape but it's this sense of something that can be controlled so you film it & foreground it because that you actually registered on your brain. That incident, that gesture, that moment, that speech made a mark that you could throw back out in your art, so it's kind of like a recovery process almost, but that makes it maybe too much like memory & that can be really nostalgic & I think the kind of aggressive, what people call aggressive, rhythms in your work & in my work are an attempt maybe to penetrate the censor of convention, the censor of peacefulness.

ENERGY

POOH: This is for your grant, right? We can't talk about the flexible & forgiving element of human nature?

HH: As long as we don't mention names.

POOH: Well I think it helps for one to exist incredibly in the world if you don't see yourself as a perfect person. For me, at any rate, I certainly was doing a lot worse, if you can feel like, well, not only are you not perfect, but also you're made of plastic materials & your possibility for assimilating new information is still functioning.

HH: I don't think it was a matter of thinking of yourself as perfect, it's a matter of thinking that your glaring imperfections were an unchangeable part of yourself.

POOH: & that you had to maintain defenses in order to cover up for your maladies. It's not like that.

HH: It is a weird thing that you can know that you're totally fucked & still have lots of ego-strength & ambition.

POOH: You can still provide yourself with pleasure. That I figure is the ultimate.

HH: Or you can still contribute.

POOH: To the universe.
The sequence in this film is based on play, always on the innocence of mistake, broken-up space, & a bit of a weird head.

ZORN: Well what are you going to do next? You gonna try a totally new approach?

HH: No, no, I want to incorporate everything I've done up to now into something that looks different at least on a surface level. I feel like the form that MONEY opened up—it doesn't have to be all quick shots at all, it can have any kind of shot. I'm going to do less foregrounding & have more than one person, instead of having one person relating to the camera, for a lot of it I'm going to have 2 or more people relating to each other.

ZORN: Well when I think of a new piece, it's kind of "Well what's missing in the last piece?" So what's missing in this film?

HH: By having it be more than one individual, that opens up a lot of possibilities for framing & also...

ZORN: But it also brings up a narrative quality. Is that important to you?

HH: Well, in a lot of ways that has very negative strong connotations, right? But, well, I have a lot of trouble with 'acting,' you know. If I could do like a narrative quality but still have it be real live people just being themselves then...

ZORN: I think that's what we need, I think that's what's missing now. When people go to narrative films, they think they've gotta go Hollywood & have people acting like someone else & make a completely different story. It's almost like they're afraid to show snippets, like the way you do, of people just being themselves relating to one another. You could have those narrative elements, have them be real, have them work in a large format, have the added element of a narrative coming in & out but still have it be the real thing.

This woman isn't in control ("Oh, boy!") She what she why, um, luckless. I mean. (ZORN) women ("wait-a-minute") women, I mean shit they're gonna get get involved in the strain, splice (hot), & then have you release it.
FLESH spoke MERGING. ALBUM spoke FACT. Liquid to within suction to point to the next plastic wrap that they can describe writing that would work a little. What it means, too.

ALAN: Probably not from the point of view of the person who consumes the art by listening to it or by reading it or whatever, but from the point of view of the person who makes it, I mean the first thing that occurred to me in terms of writing was really how poor the language was as a tool, how totally inadequate it was. It's as if you get up in the morning & someone says this pile of garbage here, this is for you to use today, & I want you to make something beautiful & something that will last for awhile & something that people will like. At first it was in terms of referentiality & stuff, you just don't have the words to express what you want to express, not in any mundane way & certainly not in a romantic way, but just in a simple utilitarian way. By giving it a context you would get a little closer to what you wanted to say, but then the more I look at it, the whole tools, not just the referentiality of the process, but all of the tools involved in the bringing of those referents to life are like really clumsy too. What made me think of this was the really dumb state of video art, how inadequate it is to take care of what we're capable of thinking. They say that the average human uses 5% of their brain. It might be in part, although it's impossible to say which came first, because the tools that we have are also in our brains. It's an incredible mechanism because the material is in there & the tools are in there & to a great extent they're not separable. But the tools that we have for using the materials that are in our brain are really not adequate to move more than that percentage of what we're capable of thinking or conceiving. It's almost as if in this one place, which from other points of view is many places or no place, but in this one organism, the human brain, you have both, in that way it's the same as the language, but you have both the materials, which you could say are like the nouns, & you have the tools, which you could say are like the verbs, to make a really kind of childish metaphor. You have the material for what is being expressed & you have the tools for that expression but they're locked together, so there's a kind of identity of them & it makes it difficult. The function of art, I think, is to separate them & get them far enough apart that they can develop & grow & evolve or mutate. But it's as if they're so close that the mechanisms of thought can't get far enough from the materials of thought to change themselves & the materials can't get far enough from the mechanisms to get the rest that they need to generate more materials.

Buying & selling means only more money against thought.

HIT ME!
"Thin. Stone."

etc.

HH: Everybody's effort is kind of partial. Even partial within their limited capabilities.

ALAN: Maybe talent is just the ability to use the whole 5%. But don't you when you're making, when you're producing something like that, when you're editing the film, don't you feel this incredible kind of expansiveness. And you feel like you're pushing your brain to its limit and your eyes and your hands and your person and your self and you're really like extending yourself further out in relation to everything that exists to a greater extent than you could in any other way, really? And yet, then when this feeling subsides & the activity is momentarily over or when your heightened awareness of it is momentarily gone, then you look at it & you say, "Good God!" Not how horrible it is, although you might have that feeling too, but at least what an incredible paucity there is of material & method & so on to express what I just felt was there. I mean you really get this rush of, & I don't think there's anything trippy about it, it's just like the mind finally working at a little more than its potential, but you get this real feeling of potential & size & scope & connection with a lot of things or everything or whatever & then when you look at what you've got as a result of that experience, that's what I'm talking about is this difference between what you're able to express & what you've actually experienced.

HH: & when other people look at it & they don't even . . .

ALAN: They don't even get that. You work all night for one metaphor & really hammer it into the structure & nobody even sees it.

HH: Yeah, but if you quit doing it, then you don't have the experience either.

ALAN: Yeah, you can, I think.

HH: Well, sometimes I take walks, or just going somewhere, & sometimes I'm really on to where it's just like a film, my eyes are jumping all over the place & I'm seeing all kinds of stuff & I'm fitting together the movement & in fact I don't even know in these cases whether I've trained myself to look a certain way by the kinds of films I make or whether the films I make are the way they are because of the way that I do look, but yeah & so I might have a moment of real exhilaration just in real life, I mean you have to, because your work is always going to be real partial. It's just impossible that your work is going to encompass the whole world. You don't have the whole world. You're just a part of it, anyway, & I mean I guess everybody, people that are not artists, have moments of exhilaration where they really feel like they're comprehending a part of the world & things have meaning for a minute or just are producing an extraordinary amount of pleasure just in & of themselves. But, that's very passive. It's kind of like a rich person's way of going through life, right? You just take everything that the world has to give you without adding something to it.

ALAN: Often that's why it's so great to travel, just a change of scene & place can be an incitement to that kind of experience. I know that if I get up & go to work on the same bus the chances of my having an experience like that of real enrichment & newness & totality & strength is much less likely than if I get up on Saturday morning & drive out to Pennsylvania & see the sun through the trees for the first time in two months. But it's good to create something as you go along, because a lot of people either don't have that kind of experience, really don't I think, or they're not aware of how unique it is & therefore they don't value it as a part of their life. But I think the value of making something as a result of that experience or in the context of it or for no good reason at all is kind of a reminder to people that that kind of experience is possible & the ability to make that kind of reminder & to make it beautiful enough & structurally strong enough etc. that it can sustain itself certainly beyond the period of its making & last at least for a while after that & continue to affect people is reason enough to do it.

Morose moments don't sync up & distribution, as a whole is totally fucked.
This is my street & I have a theory about this. This place stinks. Like I like, “Capitalism isn’t dramatic.”
"The Man is across the street. We can't mess with the Man."

"& a youth gang is also approaching with baseball bats"

in a cemetery

"No, not in a cemetery"
Men tell you women envy cock. I think it's really shitty (good, good)...but just coming, like maybe next to the toned possibility & factories in Outer Space*, I think all those words are a little rotten, when they decay. I can't remember. I, I think it's clearly, well, research when to press the button (Thank you, America) It's only a symbol to lead the Soviets in a little emotion. I appreciate it. You want a little? These are off. . .

**JAMES:** What I think is that right now people are using art & all this computer stuff in some sense in a computer-centered way, or in an information-centered way, & I think that the reason we're making thinking machines is not to make a machine that thinks like a person or to teach people to think more like machines, but rather to use this process to illuminate the way in which people think. And that's where I see the strongest opening in your work. It seems to me that that is most readily done by applying limited modes of thought, such as computer thought or computer organization of information, to clarify the way in which we think the better off we are. And that's where I see the strongest opening in your work. It seems to me that that is most readily done by applying limited modes of thought such as computer language structures or computer syntax to film studies. Instead of applying hardware to content, apply software to content. What's interesting about your work is the thought-concepts, not the mechanical concepts. What you're doing is synthesizing new material; you're not simply deconstructing things anymore. You've gotten down to the point of a single frame & you can't get any smaller.

My pen & uh, your papers...remember?

"We don't have time to read."

**HH:** So you actually think of your writing as similar to filmmaking?

**BRUCE:** Yeah, cause I'm going out & shooting. It's all on these little notecards. It's not visually oriented. It's more like the process of shooting & editing seems similar. I.e., I don't sit down at my desk & write a poem anymore. I'll sit down at my desk with hundreds of notecards & I'll just lay them out on the page & I'll see if I can string a few of them together in an exciting way & then I'll have a little phrase, etc.

**HH:** So your writing is heavily involved in editing then?

**BRUCE:** Absolutely.

**HH:** Cause some of your peers absolutely don't believe in editing.

**BRUCE:** Absolutely, they do not. So it's just like a different way & I think it's related to this thing about thematic focus.

---

*Studies have been done.*
Tactics vs. strategy, perfection vs. progress

SUSIE: ... to say that by taking into consideration the audience's existence & that they have a certain attention span & beyond that point they're not going to hear what you're doing anymore & they're going to start feeling *bad,* y'know ... I don't want to endure, I want to be entertained. I don't want to *endure* somebody's art work. Then it becomes like a social obligation.

HH: Well it affects the quality of the attention, too.

SUSIE: I'm finding that being boring is the worst thing.

HH: & like boring poetry readings are the worst of all.

SUSIE: You can't get up.

HH: It feels like church.

SUSIE: It's exactly the same thing, it's like school.

HH: & I keep thinking, "What am I doing this of my own free will?"

**HIT ME!**
"What does it mean?" That's the thing, to mean. Five or ten years from now... "DAYS, hahah"

ZORN: Always.
HH: & they're not fully developed.
ZORN: & there are silly elements.
HH: & they have to work through all that same crap & it's a matter of looking & seeing if there's something there. Well, that's where it helps to see people's work again a year or so later & you see...
ZORN: Where they've gone.

... was all trigger muscles drawn (punk), who knows? Stroke! anyhow...

HH: There is an awkward, funky aspect to people's work in the first few years, maybe the first 5 years that they're doing it, depending on how late in their life they start it & how much of a vengeance they start with. There's kind of an awkward aspect to anything anybody in their 20's does.

ZORN: People thrive on that shit.
HH: There's also a kind of dead element to anything that anybody over 30 does. That's just so great. You get ignored, or people are just embarrassed by you, for all these years & then suddenly you're an old fart. There might be like a week or two when you're there. Then you're an old fart doing the same old shit. I get sick of hearing all that Zorn shit over & over—when is something new gonna come along?

ZORN: Yeah, man, then you try to do something different & it's "copping out."

Because I hear it in sight, you just want me to call Griffith, or an indian, don't you? "Absolutely"

Griffith's mother & my mother were both surnamed Oglesby.

Someone presses her butt in his nip (pft) but our feet said, "Zorn, ah ah, normal / turned to 45."

Everything else hatched out of my brain, repeat, in/over/& up, uh, this & that lip-trade as they were fun & money "... is, um, vague, it's very vague, it's not, it's nothing in particular."

Hit me
He’s doing everything except quakes (“away from home” HOME!) and T-shirts (“Move to Russia”) and communicating emotionally one to another (“tonight?”)

CHARLES: What happens is, after I was shot everything blanked out for a couple of minutes & I don’t remember anything for what seemed to be some indefinite period of time. Then I felt very, very relaxed. I felt like I was in a park, but it was very pleasant, kind of like Southern California, blue sky & maybe about 75 degrees, very clear, & I felt I was lying not on the ground but a few inches above the ground & that I was going up just slightly, very slightly, up to the level of 4 or 5 feet & I felt a sense of warmth, of contentment, & the events of my life didn’t pass by actually, but certain highlights, certain of the more positive things kind of were in a list that I saw, in writing actually, but in a language that I hadn’t previously known but was able to understand, kind of red letter dates & so on that I saw kind of not so much in the sky but against the horizon, & then that sort of faded away & the sky became suffused with a kind of orange, kind of like Orange Julius because it had that foamy, y’know, that kind of foamy as if there was some egg mixed in, & that began to kind of close in on me & then I began to feel this kind of orange foamy stuff kind of come all around... It was a very pleasant sensation of being kind of enveloped in this orange kind of thick foamy stuff & I remember laughing & giggling & then I blacked out again.

HH: Then what happened?

CHARLES: Oh, then I realized it was just a toy gun.

and one can feel free to express one’s emotions (scream)
Anyway, Capitalism: it's not so well!

Election lost to vicious bureaucrat (he's a businessman) (p'duke puddee k'dee) that would then create division & radical elements.

Respond to it, react to it!

******

ABBY: I think money is censorship. We’ve talked about all this before.

HH: Not on this tape.

ABBY: Ok, like I was actually surprised to read in your proposal your concern with the representational image, because I always thought you actually, I don't know, it was a fairly, you know it was THE argument for representational imagery, like an interest in what carries meaning or what seems to have a lot of meaning. You didn't seem to really be discussing what kinds of meaning, but anyway so what interested me was what you thought about that.

HH: What do you mean you were surprised?

ABBY: Well I've just never heard you discuss it as an issue.

HH: Didn't you ever think my movies were always very concerned with representation?

ABBY: No, I thought in some ways the formal ones, I mean I know that they were things you loved which then allowed you to play formal manipulations with them, but in fact no.

HH: Well it was a different era for one thing, I think. And also those were like learning how to, I mean I knew that I had to do this kind of experimentation to learn how to make films like I wanted to make films. Yeah, right, the rhythms are more important for a long time than the, uh, but that was when I was living in San Francisco & that was a more meditative environment. I'm trying to make more aggressive, out-in-the-world things now. It's not a very meditative period, but also I think it's important. If you want to change the world, you finally at some point gotta start trying to do it. I don't mean aggressive as far as being manipulative, more like Rock n Roll is aggressive, like you're blowing up & this is something that blows you up too but in a good way. It's not quite that simple. All the drives & urges that are going on behind my films are not so simple as the adolescent drives behind rock, but there's some of that I think. I mean I don't think Ernie could ever make films like these or me like him because it's a different kind of craziness, y'know.

ABBY: Ah, [scream]...

HH: I'm not sure that the image is carrying more meaning, but you are having words be full of meaning, but I'm not sure you're approaching the representational image.

ABBY: Well what do you think of the choice of that—

HH: It's not a choice so much. Well it's a choice in a sense, a choice not to make doopy shit like everybody else does, the choice though is to make films that are appropriate to my consciousness or sensibility. Beyond that it's not a choice of what my consciousness or my sensibility is. I mean I guess it's a lot of choices over my whole life. How much control does one have over one's formation? Where does personality begin? It's not like completely thrust upon somebody. I don't know how much is volitional, though, or how much is accidental or whatever.

ABBY: Personality emerges in the decision to not have any personality in the work. But then also there's the personality in the rhythm, which is what leads you to make a hot film rather than a more meditatively-paced film. Your silent films had a meditative sense which the sound definitely is not. If you showed your recent films silently I think they would be more meditative too. They would fall into an image patterning. It's the sound that's the real disrupt. Yeah, from PLAGIARISM on you could argue that your films are more involved with the representational image, but in some ways I don't feel that's true. I feel like you've substituted people for architecture & in a very cubistic way & what's interesting is I'm not sure that the image is carrying more meaning, but you are having words be full of meaning, but I'm not sure you're approaching the representational image.

ABBY: Well what do you think of the choice of that—

HH: [scream]...

ABBY: [scream]...

HH: [scream]...

“IIf you’re not getting enough here in America, go to Russia!”

NO! hahahaa
That's for those down here in, uh, Belize, but our careless purpose, a part of which moving is never kilter. Hmmph, what is that to do with that STOP!

You like that?

HH: Oh I feel less with PLAGIARISM, more with RADIO ADIOS, & much more with MONEY & the thing you were commenting on is that I want to do it that much more &, in a way, if I want to expand out to a larger work, that's the area to expand.

ABBY: It's the traditional area to expand, the conventional one. Just what you're saying in a way about marginality is like you're going to use a certain thing that's out in the world & transform it.

HH: Right, I mean I never thought that I might not ever approach more conventional filmmaking, but I wanted to approach it from a totally backwards way. I remember years ago that I wanted to make a movie that people might think was almost like a normal movie, but that would really be like totally weird, I mean completely, absolutely, anybody that was sophisticated to whatever degree that they were sophisticated about film could see how weird it was & all these other things going on, but there would be this veneer on the top. Uh, but I mean I don't want to be that conventional.

ABBY: It seems to me that you've talked about how you're making it more interesting & more detail & it is more colorful & there is more movement, but except for the obvious metaphors, like dancing in garbage or standing in front of ruin, the real heavy-duty-city-straightforward background, the street stuff just seems like 'out on the street,' it's more like the cubistic issue, it's texture/color/movement, it's not really the meaning, which is fine. It could be that the sound is, you're investigating an aspect of the detailing of the frame.

HH: You read a novel & that's like saying that all the scenes are not what has meaning, what has meaning are the way the words are put together & maybe the development of the character or something.

ABBY: Fine, & the way you put your words together seems to be carrying the meaning, but the way you put your images together... Well I'm just wondering is the representational image... okay, like you look at a Bosch painting, well it's a representational image of a fantasy life, but if you're talking about in a way out of abstraction towards a frame that could be as complex, I mean in some Utopia, as a Hieronymus Bosch painting, you know, filled with figures & little events & scenes, kind of what Tati is looking for in PLAYTIME in 90mm where things are happening in the corners of the frames, so that's it's one thing, although I think you almost fight against it by putting a figure in the center. It's almost as if there was a Bosch that had a portrait on top of it & it was like the background was tapestry. Maybe the representative is in fact the portrait of the people.
F'doo, (pre-) make-up mIRRrr. Poe last tension. (background noise, pause, then toot)

Abby: But I wonder, for a viewing where they don’t understand the words it seems to me that the meaning is much closer to NORTH BEACH. The film doesn’t seem to be about money whatsoever except in the word comment upon it. What does it have to do with money? I mean that became the unity that you chose because it’s a ‘deluxe attention-getter’ & also a state of mind we’re living in & increased & you can extend it real easy, but I don’t think the film, I mean the words talk about money in interesting ways, but I feel like in a way that the image aspect is a color/movement field, which is fine.

HH: Film is just one big accident. The fact that it works, that a procession of pictures creates motion. And the way sync is matched. There’s no reason for the format; it was just some guy working for Edison. The only reason for the video format is that RCA was able to make vacuum tubes in this certain format in the 1940s. Even the projection speed, it’s already changed at least once, at one time it was variable, the projectionist was a participant, now the guy who did the effects for 2001 & BLADERUNNER says it should be 60 fps.

Abby: A lot of people approach film because they like the physicality of it.

HH: Do you? I don’t love sitting down at the renews & rolling film back & forth. I like looking at it & a lot of my ideas come from examining the strip, but I hate working at the reews actually. I love working on the flatbed. It’s more like instant gratification. There’s so many delays in filmmaking, it’s not like painting where you can be working all the time. There’s money & the weather & getting people together. I sort of appreciate the delay getting rushes back from the lab; it gives you some distance. Also the fact of the cost limiting how much you can shoot I think is an advantage over video where you can shoot all you want & how can you possibly deal with all that material? I think that also makes the image more dominant in film than the sound. I think it’s not just the smallness of the image that makes the sound more dominant in video, as you see with something like stereo MTV. You can easily record all the sound you might ever want. It’s pervasive, like Peter was saying about television. You depend very heavily on having background music in your life. It’s not that you can’t stand silence. You don’t have silence. It’s not even the street noises you want to drown out; it’s like all the motors & stuff in your place, the refrigerator motor, the heating system, the plumbing. I’ve even been in situations where the sound of my electric clock was driving me crazy. I don’t know what that says about your consciousness. . . . It’s hard to sit down to classical music & listen for the kind of development that the composer intended. You can certainly sit down in front of a live group playing this music & follow it in that way. I find sometimes I can do it lying in bed at night with the lights off, but I think a lot of the music we listen to, especially in New York, is aimed towards shorter, more fragmented . . . Cage, Kagel, Zorn . . . any order is ok. That’s another physical restriction of film, the pieces are not mobile where you can switch them around, which may be the case in some future laser system. When that comes we can all quit making experimental films & write programs for people to use to get interesting viewings out of their vast videodisc libraries.

Zorn: Well, what else can we say about your new film?

HH: That sounds like the kind of question I might ask.

POOH: Do you know that Kathy Acker is my cousin?

"There’s variety of texture, and yet, “Something there in the trained rectangle. Surfaces imply sensuality, that is, there’s variety of texture, and yet, technology’s brilliant illusion finally nothing for the body to grasp. Angles advance downward to establish a rhythmic separation. Mental messages are sent on a common plane from alternating points and stop abruptly at the wall, which is the eye."―Diane Ward, "Independent Screws"
REVENGE!
I wish to thank most of all those artists who appeared in my film (see last page) & particularly those who additionally contributed words to the text of this book. I also want especially to thank those who contributed money to the Segue Money Fund: Frances O. & Henry L. Hills, Richard A. Oglesby, Margaret H. Fairleigh, Dr. Joel D. Epstein, Bruce & Mary Anna Edenfield, William F. Reiter, Fielder Cook, M. Lamar Oglesby, Rick & Barbara Painter, Marie Brown, Clint Palmer, John F. Oglesby, & Stuart L. Oglesby. MONEY was begun with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (E21-3411-191, 1982). It was completed & the performance & much of this book done through a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. As the NEA funds ran out & before the Segue Money drive, I supported the project as a laborer for Lower Manhattan Construction Company & as a carpenter's assistant to Charlie DiAllo. Much of the footage was shot on an old CBS News camera, a Frezzolini single-system rig rented cheap from Rafik, from whom I purchased all of the Ektachrome reversal stock on which the film was shot. I have edited my sound films primarily at Young Filmmakers (now Film/Video Arts). PLAGIARISM & KINO DA! in Times Square & RADIO AIDS & MONEY at Pennebaker's on West 86th Street. I am deeply indebted to Bastian & Marlies Cleve for loaning me their house in Los Angeles for the month of January 1983, during which time I solved the structure of the piece after many months of tortured floundering, & to David & Diana Wilson who helped keep me sane during this month. Thanks also to Peter Seaton & Mr. E who shared viewings on the flash of the developing stages in the making of this & my previous films & to Steve Ledbetter whose good sense amplified many ideas. All of my lab work was done at Cinelab (now Le-Jen Labs). Thanks Marvin, Benito, Fred, Betty. My transfers & final mix were done at Magno-Sound. Thanks to Maria Pon for the discounts & Aaron Nathanson for the mix. The titles were shot at Animus by Dan Esterman. Abigail Child & I have shared ideas & listened to each other's problems almost daily for the past nine years. Without her loving influence & astute critique this project & much more would never have been. Diane Ward advised & encouraged me at every stage in the making of this book & made it a more pleasant experience. Additional production thanks: James Sherry, Susan Bee, & Freda Mekul. Thousands of pages were xeroxed at Heuston Copy on Waverly near Washington Square. The interview text & the "Moneybin" section were patiently deciphered from the mess I gave her & entered into Wordstar on the Segue HM-PC by Sharon Gary. All type was set by Accent Graphics, Lincoln, Nebraska. Thanks Michael Jensen. Photographic work by Ken Pelka & St. Marks Graphics. Special thanks to Jon Rubin whose Ludlow Street studio I shared during the first mock-up of this book & on whose J-K optical printer & Pentax I shot the still blow-ups. Back cover photo by Lona Foote. I did the paste-up & mechanics.

Printed in Ann Arbor, Michigan by McNaughton & Gunn.

Of this first edition 26 copies are lettered A - Z & signed by the author.
Now that you've read the book, SEE THE MOVIE!

MONEY

starring
JOHN ZORN
SUSIE TIMMONS
JAMES SHERRY
ARTO LINDSAY
FRED FRITH
JACK COLLOM
CHARLES BERNSTEIN

DIANE WARD
SALLY SILVERS
DAVID MOSS
POOH KAYE
ALAN DAVIES
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BRUCE ANDREWS

with
jim staley
buck morris
bill lawwill
robert dack
coby hatty

and
rottenberg
akur mori
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"Hills edits his films on an electron microscope, placing audiovisual particle energies in combustive arrangements. He's inventing soundfilm, taking synesthesia further. When MONEY talks it puts the Lower East Side in a swirl, personality and poverty go into their dance. The film is a loud report, on a scene of bright ephemera, that doesn't die away."

—Ken Jacobs