

## Chapter one

# Post Future Past Perfect

Grahame Weinbren

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*In a historic passage Mallarmé describes the terror, the sense of sterility, that the poet experiences when he sits down to his desk, confronts the sheet of paper before him on which his poem is supposed to be composed, and no words come to him. But we might ask, Why could not Mallarmé, after an interval of time, have simply got up from his desk and produced the blank sheet of paper as the poem that he sat down to write? Indeed, in support of this, could one imagine anything that was more expressive of, or would be held to exhibit more precisely, the poet's feelings of inner devastation than the virginal paper?*

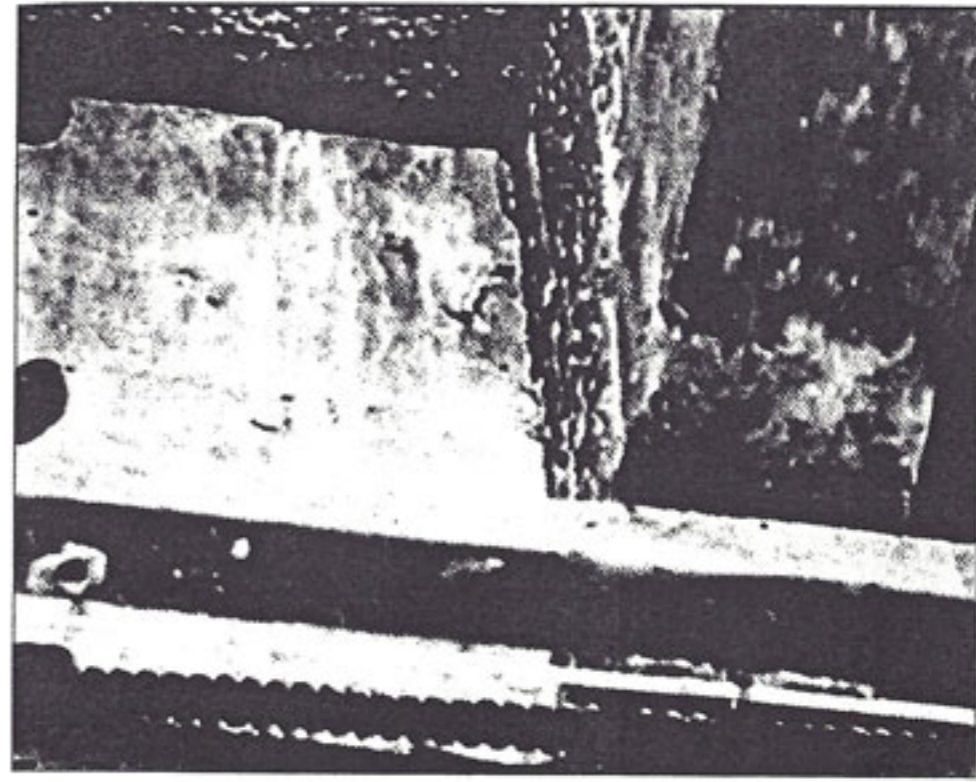
Richard Wollheim<sup>1</sup>

The contemporary equivalent of Mallarmé's blank sheet is the infinite plain of a blank word processor window, so effortlessly populated with trivia or outright nonsense that one might easily find typing the first character a formidable obstacle. My issue with creativity is the opposite of this, however. I am cursed with a kind of coagulation or infrangibility. An idea comes to me clear and sharp. However it appears as a single unit, like a mass of hair, straw and scraps of fabric, stuck together with mud, gum and all kinds of gook. The main characteristics of this ball of matter are its density and its indivisibility. It is so heavy, so densely packed that one can't identify a single piece of material as central or binding. At the same time the ideas that form this fecal mass are tightly interwoven, so much so that it appears, to me at least, to comprise one single idea, which ought to be speakable in a single sentence. But it never is. Even though the individual elements when finally broken apart are as often salacious, scatological or feculent as logical, aesthetic, or theoretical, each one is necessary. There is no excess, nothing superfluous or extra, and perhaps the metaphor is not quite accurate for this very reason. To omit one sticky shred would result in incoherence, a failure to lay out a clear line of meaning after the processes of decomposition and reassembly are completed. To turn this superhairball from thought to writing involves unraveling the





Images from  
*Future Perfect*,  
in film, 1978.



fibers, piece by piece, and laying them out one behind the next. Often one bit emerges still entangled with others, and what looks like an individual idea or a unitary stream is really itself a complex of thoughts and ideas that themselves cannot be easily individuated. Another problem is that what seems to be a unique element repeats itself again and again like a DNA sequence, but each time in a different context within the mass and therefore with a different meaning.

A picture not unlike my problem with writing is drawn by Freud in his descriptions of the struggle for an analysis of a dream – especially in his case history of the Wolf Man, where the dreamer's most emotionally charged memories, his deepest fears, and his darkest obsessional images are displaced and condensed into the opaque and highly symbolic image of white furry-tailed wolves, sitting on the branches of a walnut tree, staring, staring at the terrified dreamer. Freud admits that there is no logical or correct sequence for the dream components to appear during the processes of psychoanalysis, and that the written sequence of the case history can hardly capture the non-linear, repetitive, emotion-charged process of discovery/invention that the patient has gone through. Now whether this is myth or scientific fact, whether the process of psychoanalysis has any validity as treatment of mental disease, or as depiction of the human mind, is irrelevant. The point is that Freud's description of untangling a highly compressed image into its logical or emotional strands describes, as closely as anything else

I've seen, my difficulties with writing. My original concept always seems lucid to me. However, it is a single entity. Taking it apart, disentangling it into its elements and laying them out in a sequence that makes sense, i.e. putting it into words, is the whole process, the whole problem of writing.

With this epistemology as my basic psychological condition, one might wonder why I choose the cinema as my medium of expression. Sculpture or installation may seem to correspond more closely to the inner architecture I have described. However, though the initial image or idea can be best imagined as a spatial form, it is incoherent and incommunicable in this state. The mass must be deconstructed to be comprehended. I am interested in communicating my ideas, not just expressing them. So it is natural that the elements be disengaged from one another and recoded into a form that is characterized by duration. This is the process by which I make my works, and I've tried, in different ways, to capture this process in my films and cinematic installations over the last 30 years, looking always for cinema structures and forms that, paradoxically, can be multi-streamed while unfolding in time. The linearity of the filmstrip doesn't easily adapt to these concepts, so I've repeatedly looked for ways both to undermine and to expand it without rejecting it.

The hair/mud-ball I have in mind for this essay can be partially decomposed into the story of the power of a particular book. The book is elegant, carefully written, and precise, by a man who



obviously cared sincerely for his subject. It does not claim to be the last word, and in the preface it announces its shortcomings. Published 30 years ago, the book's influence still hangs over the field of avant-garde, experimental, independent, personal, call-it-what-you-will cinema (each adjective implies a contested aesthetic position). It changed the notion of independent filmmaking, erecting fences between filmmakers who belong in the same yard, and herding together some who ought to be kept fields apart. It is a coherent book. But its very coherency is its wrong-headedness. It ignores, in its analyses though not in its descriptions, the most important thing about cinema – duration – and as a consequence the book's underlying presuppositions and explicit conclusions about the nature of art and art-making belong more to the 19th century than the 20th. Because of these fundamental misunderstandings, combined with its substantial influence, it has left a swathe of destruction in its wake. The shortcomings of this book and its consequences deserve a full-length study. However, this is not the context for it, and I am probably not the person to do it.

1974 was a turning point, not only for me personally as a filmmaker, but for avant-garde cinema in the United States. I had lived in the USA for a year or two and had made a couple of films that fell somewhere between documentary, poetry, music, and conceptual art. In 1974 the borders separating documentary and experimental film were open. There were extreme cases of 'cinema verité' on one side (for example *Salesman* (1967), by David and Albert Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin and *Don't Look Back* (1967) by D. A. Pennebaker), and the semi-abstract, dance-like films of Marie Menken, Scott Bartlett, Stan Vanderbeek, and Pat O'Neill on the other, but most independently made works fell somewhere between the exploration of the cinematic image in and of itself, an expression of the idiosyncratic nature of individual vision, and an investigation of some aspect of reality. Fiction film, on the other hand, was another nation. Still the most popular form of cinema, narrative film was the mesmerizing monster that we all had to contend with. And almost all experimental filmmakers acknowledged in their work the magnetism of narrative transposed to film. Indeed the most notorious 'structural' film, Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), has Hollywood's primal scene at its focal point: i.e. a mysterious unexplained death, the dead man played by filmmaker Hollis Frampton, his body discovered by actress and writer Amy Taubin.

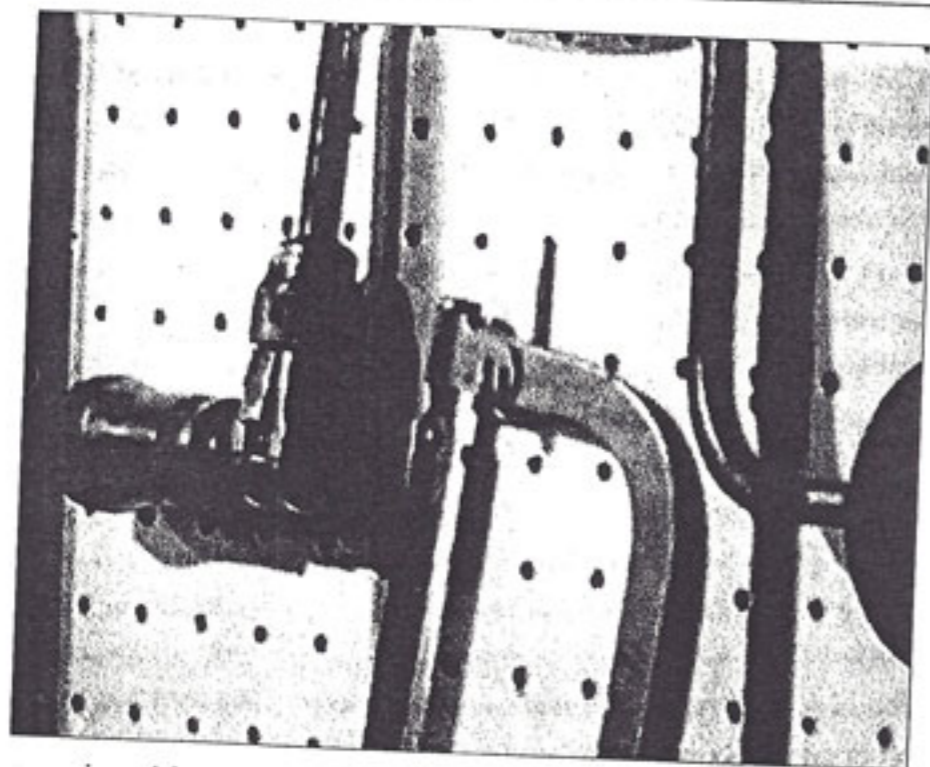
1974 was the publication year of the first edition of P. Adams Sitney's *Visionary Film*.<sup>2</sup> It is a study of about thirty filmmakers, with precise descriptions of many of their films. The book was read carefully by filmmakers, programmers, and, most significantly, in

the backwaters of the academic world of the liberal arts. At that time these swamps were populated by mostly young, 'hip', professors in the English Departments of distinguished major universities. Sitney's book was respectable in a way that the films and filmmakers were not, and therefore filled the gap between the increasing isolation of the university from the culture at large and the recent (but getting more distant) memory of the university's power and influence, its *threat* in the late 1960s. With Sitney's book as a guide to the films, college classes could stay in touch with underground culture without the danger of interference by racial or economic – i.e. class – difference.

*Visionary Film* is reactionary. Backed up by a monolithic pre-Foucault view of history as causal and linear, its theoretical approach is based on the literary analytic techniques of Paul de Man and Harold Bloom. Because of these very qualities, it was well understood by the young English professors. They were trained in reading and analyzing poetry, and de Man and Bloom were the intellectual heroes of their party. Sitney's techniques of literary analysis domesticated the raucous films that were its subject, making them appropriate study materials of middle-class higher education, even if (or especially because) there were occasional glimpses of pubic hair. Based on its credentials, combined with its readability and teachability, the book had wide general appeal to the academic world. *Visionary Film* became the defining voice of the avant-garde cinema, canonizing certain filmmakers, validating certain tendencies, and at the same time, needless to say, excluding other filmmakers and invalidating other approaches.

Sitney's descriptions of films are, as I mentioned earlier, articulate, thorough, and sensitive. His analyses, however, are more problematic. They eschew the time-based aspects of the films in favor of poetics and (in the case of Brakhage) comparison with painting. The painting references are largely to Abstract Expressionism. But the book was written in the early 1970s. Abstract Expressionism is a movement associated with the 1950s, hardly an issue of import to practitioners in the 1960s or 70s. The current art world was dominated by Minimalism, Conceptualism, and the still-vigorously-kicking Pop, with parallels in the world of music of minimalism, free jazz, and indeterminacy. There is no question that such filmmakers as Paul Sharits, Hollis Frampton and Michael Snow were at least aware of, and, more likely, embedded in these very movements. However, in his analysis of their films, Professor Sitney either ignored, or was ignorant of, the concepts and practices that animated the arts of that time. Perhaps an even more troubling problem with Sitney's position was that he had a tendency to view works as monolithic, driven by a single idea or motive. For Sitnev.





grasping this single idea constituted understanding the film. So Structural Film, most reprehensibly, 'insists on its shape.' This is as vague as defining narrative film as 'telling a story'. The label was rejected by most of the filmmakers that Sitney included in the category, and criticisms of his definition have been repeatedly rehearsed, for example by George Maciunas, who points out, among other things, that his field of view is restricted to a certain clique of filmmakers. It not worth repeating yet again the shortcomings of the definition.

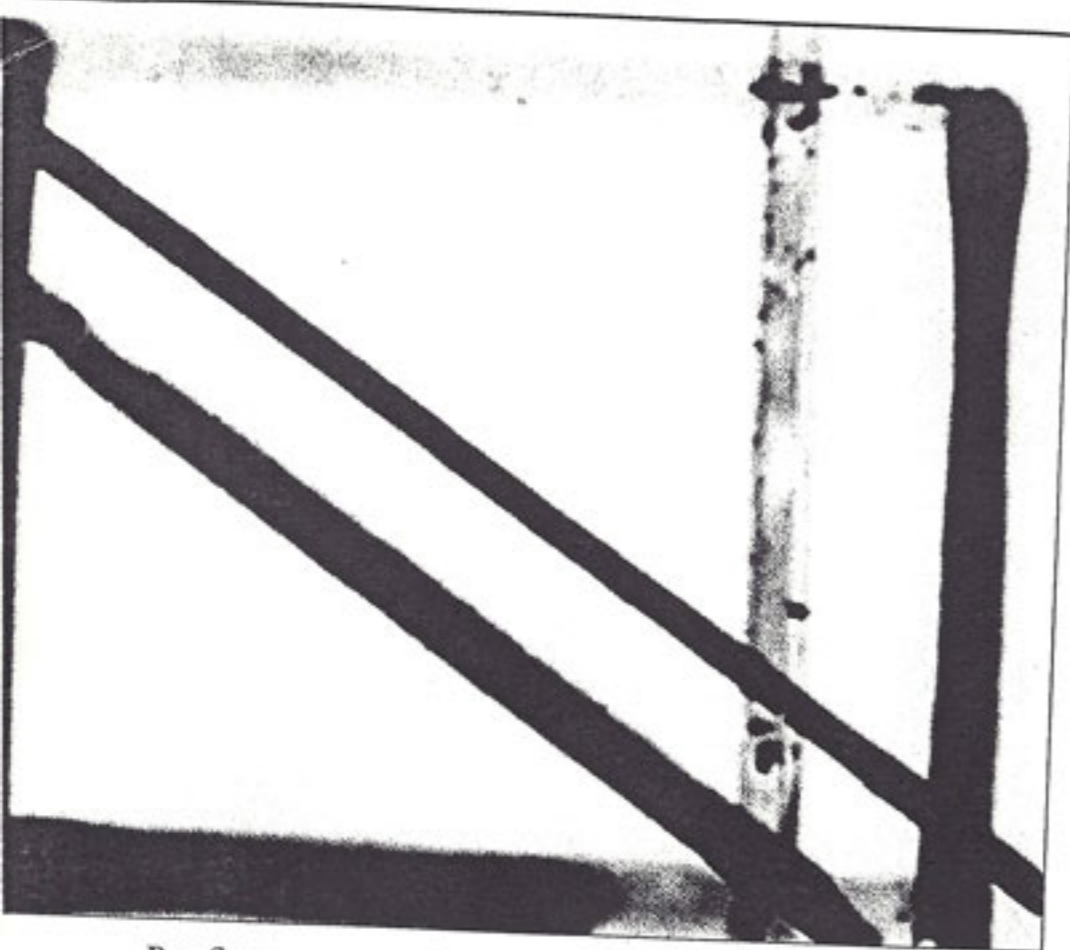
My point is at an angle to the critique of *Visionary Film*: it is about the effects of the book. Despite its limitations, the notion of structural film spread like a forest fire among young filmmakers, some of who began to make films using Sitney's description as a formula. These may have been the only actual structural films ever made, and they were disastrous – films inspired by *Visionary Film* were, in a word, thin, and, in another, academic; and finally insignificant.<sup>3</sup> The second effect was that it effectively defined a canon based on aesthetic criteria. It was odd timing – during this period the very notion of the canon was under attack on the grounds that it was, in principle, symptomatic of cultural, gender and racial biases, nevertheless, after *Visionary Film* it was almost as if experimental film was over and done – here is the list of filmmakers, here is the list of relevant issues, and the shop is now closed. No later book had the impact or influence of *Visionary Film*. It defined the subject, the objects of study, the relevant figures and the approach to the

whole ball of wax. Not only were we younger generation of filmmakers shut out, but we remained shut out, as a lost generation of filmmakers whose work was ignored or reviled.

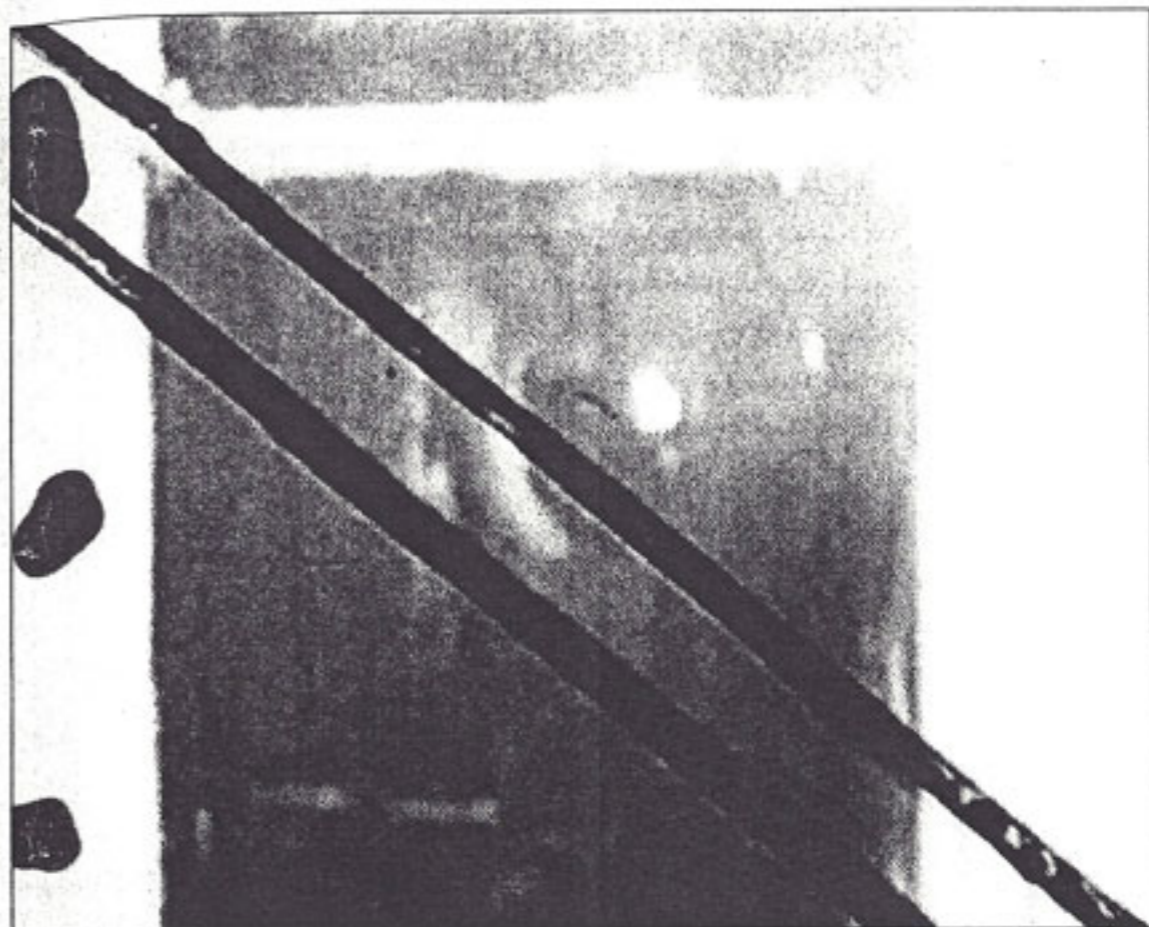
It is difficult to find in *Visionary Film* any reference to the elementary notion that the understanding of cinema depends on the fact that the film image undergoes constant transformation. This is a more serious shortcoming than the book's narrowness of vision. To experience cinema is to rely on memory and re-evaluation of what one has seen, on anticipation of what is to come, on milestones and signposts, on repetition and variation. Furthermore, films that attempt to do what is, to my mind, most appropriate to the cinema, that is perform multiple functions simultaneously, were either considered unworthy of consideration, or their multi-facetedness was ignored. Sitney's underlying critical philosophy was: one concept per film. It is this sense of unity that allowed his definition to become a formula, and differentiated those films that are thought of as the core avant-garde film canon from those that followed. One must keep in mind, however, that the most interesting films, not only of the 1960s and 70s, but throughout the hundred year history of cinema, have been those that keep many balls, many kinds of ball, in the air at once.

Of course Sitney was not the only critic active during this period, but his influence can be clearly felt in the work of others. My examples are Fred Camper and Paul Arthur, both highly respected, astute, and prolific observers of avant-garde film for over 25 years. In essays published in 1986, each expressed his own disappointments with the direction avant-garde film had taken since 1972, though Arthur is much more positive than Camper. I joined the three-person editorial board of the *Millennium Film Journal* for the '20th Anniversary Special Edition' published late in 1986, for which Camper, Arthur, and Amy Taubin had been invited to contribute reviews of the current independent film scene.<sup>4</sup> Taubin wrote a short piece insisting that video was, though underrated, an essential component of the independent cinema. Arthur's article 'The Last of the Last Machine? Avant-Garde Film Since 1986' compared structural film and the 'new narrative' that had emerged in the later 70s and early 80s, and Camper's article 'The End of Avant-Garde Film' was an expression of regret at what he saw as the demise of creative filmmaking. Both Arthur and Camper are in general agreement with Sitney – Camper's A-list of filmmakers is coincident with Sitney's, and Arthur explicitly embraces the concept of Structural Film, refining and sharpening the definition but applying it to the same group of films originally identified by Sitney. He even goes so far as to explicitly describe these films as 'the Structural Canon'.<sup>5</sup>





But first we must, reluctantly, turn to Fred Camper's ugly attack on the work of several filmmakers of the 1970s and early 80s. My focus is Alan Berliner, from whose work I derive great pleasure and with whom I felt an affinity, though his work was quite unlike my own. Camper devotes three paragraphs to dismissing Berliner's films, comparing them unfavorably to the work of Peter Kubelka and Bruce Conner. Kubelka is invoked because Berliner, like him, makes sync events out of images and unrelated sounds, and Conner because Berliner also works with found footage. In reference to Kubelka's *Unsere Afrikareise* (1961-66), Camper finds in a picture and sound moment that 'one feels that the filmmaker has combined two elements [...] into a new entity.' Berliner, in contrast, 'tends to produce an undisturbing smoothness of texture and tone'.<sup>6</sup> Camper misses not only the point, but the poignancy of Berliner's work. His *Myth and the Electric Age* is a compendium of images drawn from the filmmaker's collection of found footage. The images cover a vast array of subjects, and Berliner links each shot to the next by precise editing based on movement, color, composition, and occasionally subject-matter, or by continuing the sound from one shot to the next in a magical sync, though images and sounds are almost



always from quite different sources. There is a special pleasure for the viewer in this 'smooth texture' (to quote Camper), especially when one realizes that the film is rapidly traversing a universe of places, materials, things, and people. One of the operations of the film is a negotiation between continuity and discontinuity, which is pointed out by – of all people – Marshall McLuhan, in an unexpected voice-over commentary. McLuhan's surprisingly modest voice is heard several times, in a commentary that is apparently about the structure and subjects of Berliner's film, e.g. how 'the electric age' collapses discontinuities and compounds continuities. Berliner exploits unintended ambiguities in McLuhan's words, playfully setting them against literal visual realizations of the metaphors he uses. Thus in the film the conceptual is weighed against the sensual, the sudden pleasure of a sync moment offset by the delicate transformation of, for example, the release of a satellite from a space station match-cutting into a man's dive from the top of a cliff into the blue ocean and then to the shimmer of a turtle far beneath the surface elegantly continuing the diver's arc though the air. Berliner is a gifted montagist, and the viewer delights in his virtuosity. It is a wonder that material drawn from such a diversity



of sources can present so smooth a texture. Themes are introduced and developed (liquid, light, fire, smoke, steam, wind, space, circus, fireworks...), repeated with variations, eliciting a musical response, memory and anticipation playing against each other. The pleasures offered by Berliner's film are manifold, but they do not include the self-conscious existential dilemmas that enchanted Camper in the tortuous work of Markopoulos and Brakhage. There is no tormented reading required, no decoding of densely built up collage, no grappling with the filmmaker's sexual identity or reflection on one's own. These are, for Camper, the virtues of the avant-garde films of the 1960s. But for the filmmakers of the late 70s and 80s these virtues have become the vices of arrogance, mastery, and self-indulgence. Berliner does not ask us to insert ourselves into the psyche of the filmmaker, but rather to navigate through the meticulous, multiple pleasures of the cinematic, to share these pleasures with him. Times had changed.

Paul Arthur argues that the Structural Film is reductivist, always centered on a metaphoric reference to the materiality of cinematic construction 'in the hope of blunting if not totally expunging poetic association from film's semiotic array'.<sup>7</sup> Understanding a structural film requires not a 'reading' of layerings and disjunctions in the film's images, as was the mode of interpretation for earlier avant-garde films, but a comprehension of the film as a whole, 'clearly Bazinian in its insistence on univocal (even seamless) enunciation'.<sup>8</sup> This is an echo of Sitney's notion of the film that 'insists on its shape.' In my experience, a film that requires a univocal view of its entirety, and nothing else, is agony to sit through. In contrast, many of the films that Arthur and Sitney refer to as central to the Structural Film enterprise are replete with small pleasures as they unfold in time. In these films there is usually a governing materialist metaphor, and it is this spinal structure that differentiates them from the work of the following generation of filmmakers. However, to ignore their cinematic detail is to render an interpretive disservice to the films. To amplify this point, I would like to reconsider the film that is perhaps the paradigm of Structural Film, *Zorns Lemma*.

Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* (1970) is the last work discussed in the 1974 edition of *Visionary Film*. It is a film that is centered on the notion of ordering inherent to the Latin alphabet, and each of the three parts uses words as its organizing principle. The central section consists of one second scenes of words, mostly images of public signs in New York City, arranged in alphabetic order. The alphabet is navigated many times through, and one by one images replace the words. Over the forty-five minute course, all words are eventually eliminated and a regulated montage of 24 frame shots

remains. The notion of an ordered set dominates the film, and endorses the authority of the filmmaker's intelligence, his ability to master his materials. However, subsidiary to the front-line metaphors of order and authority, the film offers multiple pleasures and themes to engage the viewer as it progresses. Occasionally super-vening alphabetized words reveal little phrases – 'lady madonna', 'limp member' – encouraging the viewer to watch out for secret messages. And thematically there is much to occupy the mind as the film unwinds. *Zorns Lemma* references *minimalism* in its undifferentiated, regulated time structure (cf. Carl Andre's sculptural work of the time), *pop* in its celebration of the anonymous visual artist (i.e. the designers of the many public signs and letters), *narrative* in its small segmented stories that replace some of the letters, *memory* and *anticipation* in its multiple forward and backward indicators, a contrast and interplay between *nature* and *culture*, minor moment-to-moment pleasures and puzzles, *indeterminacy* (in John Cage's sense), and the indefinability of time's passage. These different themes and experiences do not support each other or build on each other; on the contrary one often undercuts or obscures the next. The viewer must navigate between them, though the sense of playfulness is always restrained by the fact that the single alphabetic organizing principle holds the film together from beginning to end. For me it is the multiplicity of themes that makes the film watchable. Filmmakers who emerged in the early to middle 1970s tended to reject the strategy of centering their work on a single idea and forcing other ideas into subsidiary relationships. Rather, as I have suggested for the work of Alan Berliner, they liberate many ideas to float together simultaneously, supporting or contradicting each other in a fabric composed of multiple weights and weaves. It is for the viewer, not the authoritative filmmaker, to navigate the tapestry, to break the conglomerate into its individual strands.

I'll conclude by describing a film I made with Roberta Friedman in 1978 called *Future Perfect*. It was filmed and finished in the illegal loft we were living in at the time, above an Irish bar on the corner of Wall Street and Water Street in New York City, a couple of blocks from the financial heartbeat of Western Capitalism. The back room of the loft was dark and unfinished, its one window looking out onto another building that cut out any daylight. We had our lights, our tools, our rewinds and viewer set up there, as well as a 16mm Moviola, and when friends visited they would sleep on a trundle bed in that gloomy studio.

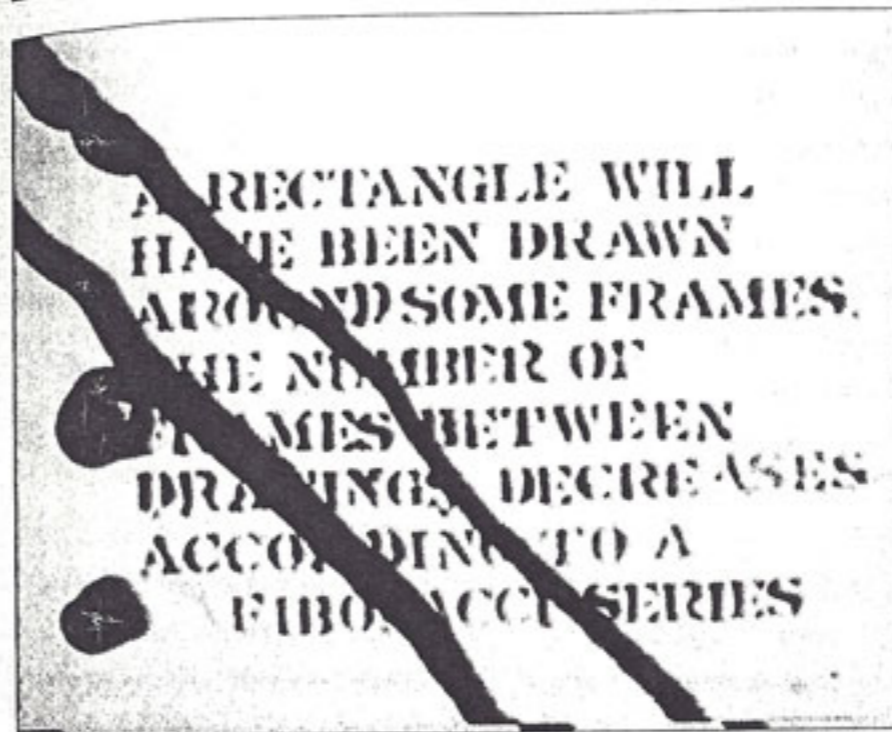
A friend of ours was an architecture student and we asked him to draw a plan view of the studio, which was more or less in the ratio of a wide-screen cinema frame. We thought about the possible ways



geometric marks could be made on this film frame – a rectangle around the edges, a diagonal line from one corner to the other and back, dots down one edge, a line that would cut the bottom edge and re-emerge at the top edge if it traversed the horizontal frame line, arcs in upper and lower quadrants. We planned to move in these patterns through the room and record our path on 16mm film. The cinematographer Anthony Forma agreed to help us. We recognized that a primary experience of the photographic cinema is indexical – the viewer looks through the frame like a time-space window into the period and place when the image was produced. However, against this depictive aspect of the cinematic we wanted to play the fact that the film image is materially a small flat transparent surface the function of which is to transform the light that passes through it. We wanted to make a film that highlighted the materialistic and illusionistic aspects of cinema while keeping both of the aspects floating in parallel. We were also interested at the time in the fact that the labor that it takes to make a film is not inscribed in the finished work; rather in most cases it is deliberately obscured, and we wanted the labor involved in the construction of the film to be part of its content. The general idea, in other words, was to expose everything. So after we plotted our camera paths through the room, forming these geometric figures, we placed stenciled signs at the end points of intended camera moves. These signs indicated our intentions for finishing the film. We would stop the camera in front of each of the signs. The plan was to draw on the exposed and developed film the same geometric shapes that we had plotted with the camera movements to create the photographic images. Only after these figures had been drawn directly on the surface of the emulsion would the film be finished. We used a calculator to figure out a series of decreasing numerical series, which would determine the intervals between the marks that we would place on the film. Thus the stenciled signs were, for example:

A RECTANGLE WILL HAVE BEEN DRAWN  
AROUND SOME FRAMES. THE NUMBER OF  
FRAMES BETWEEN DRAWINGS DECREASES  
ACCORDING TO A FIBONACCI SERIES

The photographed texts in the film, in other words, state the formulae that generate the images, which eventually dominate the film. The shooting plan features the stenciled texts which function both as milestones and signposts, as targets aimed for in the erratic camera movements so that the camera pauses when it finds them, as descriptions of visual composition of the final film, as well as plans for the filmmakers to follow. The connection is obvious with a conceptual artist like Sol LeWitt, whose work at that time consisted of plans as to how a painting or drawing was to be realized.



The mathematical series were calculated so that each one would yield values of less than one frame (if it was an asymptotic series) or would end, at about eight minutes from the beginning. Thus *Future Perfect* gradually builds in density and rhythm according to mathematical principles, until at about eight minutes there is a copious display of drawn figures and an emergent music (since each drawing was to be accompanied by a sound produced by bowing a kitchen utensil) which transmutes into a continuous discordant metallic humming as the space between drawings and sounds becomes less than a single frame and in effect continuous. *Future Perfect* was both how we thought of the completion of the film, plus of course the grammatical tense in which the sentences about intentions were stenciled on the walls of the studio. We printed out lists of the frames numbers that were to receive marks, set the exposed and developed reversal film on a rewind bench in the studio, and began to mark the appropriate film frames with special transparent inks intended for overhead transparencies and slides. In contrast to the shooting, which lasted an agonizing but delimited 33 minutes (running the 16mm Arriflex at eight frames per second), the marking of the frames took months, but we kept the perfect future in mind, the deferred time when the film would have been fully marked up and complete.

Viewers are thrown back in time by the tense of the texts, looking forward through the film from the time of production to the time when the various marks will have been made, which is of course



the time of the continuous present when the film is finished and finally shown. So the film invites its viewers to see their way through and around multiple temporalities, while it is also a nostalgic record of the dark loft in the financial district where we lived as young filmmakers, and a record of the different kinds of work it takes to make a film, with the aid of mechanical equipment, light sensitive materials and chemistry, in contrast to the more traditional way of making art by marking materials, and the way the two types of labor play against each other parallel to the inexorable relationship of technology to natural law, and all of this is realized in more or less a single gesture unwound into an eleven minute strand of time, which does its best to break out beyond its own temporal frame by referring clearly to its own future and its own past. There was something very compelling in the idea that an entire film could be contained in six statements of mathematical formulae. I hope that readers can see how *Future Perfect* is generated by a compressed set of interlocked ideas, like the dense hairball with which I began this essay. The film's apparent complexity is largely a result of the way it must be described, since English is much less efficient than mathematics.

In a subtle argument based on distinctions made by Peirce, Wollheim argues that the blank sheet of paper proposed in the epigraph to this essay cannot possibly express the poet's terror of the void that swallows and demolishes creativity. A poem, Wollheim points out, is not an object like a sheet of paper, but rather a type of which its individual instantiations are tokens, but a poem nonetheless. The identity of a poem is presupposed by its non-materiality: it remains the same poem throughout its re-printings and dissemination. We need a parallel ontological distinction between the semantics, the mechanics of meaning, of those works that are characterized by duration and those that are not. Though comparison with painting and poetry may be useful as starting point, finally it will be music, storytelling and theatre, dynamic media, that will serve as models for the understanding of cinematic works.

The most gifted theorists of art undertake the analysis of a work because it has moved them. There must be a powerful first read, an appeal, a rush of unanalyzed impression that attacks the mind or emotions and motivates the critic to devote the hours and days required for a comprehensive analysis of how a work works. It is the complex first 'thin slice'<sup>9</sup> sensation that I attempted to depict in the description of the superhairball with which I opened this essay. I am sure that the three critics to whom I have referred, write in order to comprehend and communicate their genuinely felt immediate responses to works. My disagreement is never with an initial response, only with how it is theorized and how that theory affects

later evaluations and responses to other works. When a text like Sitney's happens to emerge at the right historical and cultural moment, it can become more than one writer's individual response and analysis. Seized by institutions, it can itself become an institution, a standard against which later work is judged, ignoring the fact that standards need to be adjusted to fit changing cultures. An authoritative book, *Visionary Film* celebrated films that accepted as given the authority of the filmmaker. Adopting this view of the artist makes it difficult to comprehend works, which undermine his or her dominion.

And this leads to my own dominion over the ideas expressed here. I cannot capture in an essay, one letter after another, one word after another, one paragraph after another, the sense of compressed cogency that characterizes the works that move me and that I aim for in my own work. One can only ask for the reader's indulgence, for him, for her, to ride along and to attempt to see things, for an instant, through my eyes.

#### Notes

1. Richard Wollheim, 'Minimal Art', ed. Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1968), p. 388.
2. P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
3. They are better left un-referenced and un-described, though if desired, one can refer to Fred Camper's acerbic article 'The End of Avant-Garde Film', *Millennium Film Journal* Nos. 16/17/18, Fall/Winter 1986-87, pp. 99-126, in which he describes, with some relish, films he disapproves of. I am in fundamental disagreement with much of this article, though I believe that the view he expresses is sincerely and deeply felt.
4. *Millennium Film Journal*, Nos. 16/17/18, '20th Anniversary Special Edition' (Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1986).
5. Paul Arthur, 'The Last of the Last Machine? Avant-Garde Film Since 1986', *Millennium Film Journal*, Nos. 16/17/18, '20th Anniversary Special Edition' (Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1986), p. 77.
6. Fred Camper, 'The End of Avant-Garde Film', *Millennium Film Journal*, Nos. 16/17/18, '20th Anniversary Special Edition' (Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1986), p. 118.
7. Paul Arthur, 'The Last of the Last Machine? Avant-Garde Film Since 1986', *Millennium Film Journal*, Nos. 16/17/18, '20th Anniversary Special Edition' (Millennium Film Workshop, New York, 1986), p. 77.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
9. The term is Malcolm Gladwell's, from his book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (New York and Boston: Little Brown and Co., 2005).