

Fashionable Supplements

The following texts provide background information to many of the materials included in the book *Fashionable Noise: On Digital Poetics*, published by Atelos Books in May, 2003. On their own, they will probably not make much sense; they should be read and/or examined accompanied by the poems and essays in that book.

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1. ICQ Chat Number

121531424

2. T.S. Eliot, Reflections On *Vers Libre*

(1917)

*Ceux qui possèdent leur vers libre y tiennent:
on n’abandonne que le vers libre.*

DUHAMEL ET VILDRAC.

A lady, renowned in her small circle for the accuracy of her stop-press information of literature, complains to me of a growing pococurantism. ‘Since the Russians came in I can read nothing else. I have finished Dostoevski, and I do not know what to do.’ I

suggested that the great Russian was an admirer of Dickens, and that she also might find that author readable. 'But Dickens is a sentimentalist; Dostoevski is a realist.' I reflected on the amours of Sonia and Rashkolnikov, but forbore to press the point, and I proposed *It Is Never too Late to Mend*. 'But one cannot read the Victorians at all!' While I was extracting the virtues of the proposition that Dostoevski is a Christian, while Charles Reade is merely pious, she added that she could not longer read any verse but *vers libre*.

It is assumed that *vers libre* exists. It is assumed that *vers libre* is a school; that it consists of certain theories; that its group or groups of theorists will either revolutionize or demoralize poetry if their attack upon the iambic pentameter meets with any success. *Vers libre* does not exist, and it is time that this preposterous fiction followed the *han vital* and the eighty thousand Russians into oblivion.

When a theory of art passes it is usually found that a groat's worth of art has been bought with a million of advertisement. The theory which sold the wares may be quite false, or it may be confused and incapable of elucidation, or it may never have existed. A mythical revolution will have taken place and produced a few works of art which perhaps would be even better if still less of the revolutionary theories clung to them. In modern society such revolutions are almost inevitable. An artist, happens upon a method, perhaps quite unreflectingly, which is new in the sense that it is essentially different from that of the second-rate people about him, and different in everything but essentials from that of any of his great predecessors. The novelty meets with neglect; neglect provokes attack; and attack demands a theory. In an ideal state of society one might imagine the good New growing naturally out of the good Old, without the need for polemic and theory; this would be a society with a living tradition. In a sluggish society, as actual societies are, tradition is ever lapsing into superstition, and the violent stimulus of novelty is required. This is bad for the artist and his school, who may become circumscribed by their theory and narrowed by their polemic; but the artist can always console himself for his errors in his old age by considering that if he had not fought nothing would have been accomplished.

Vers libre has not even the excuse of a polemic; it is a battle-cry of freedom, and there is no freedom in art. And as the so-called *vers libre* which is good is anything but 'free', it can better be defended under some other label. Particular types of *vers libre* may be supported on the choice of content, or on the method of handling the content. I am aware that many writers of *vers libre* have introduced such innovations, and that the novelty of their choice and manipulation of material is confused — if not in their own minds, in the minds of many of their readers — with the novelty of the

form. But I am not here concerned with imagism, which is a theory about the use of material; I am only concerned with the theory of the verse-form in which imagism is cast. If *vers libre* is a genuine verse-form it will have a positive definition. And I can define it only in negatives: (1) absence of pattern, (2) absence of rhyme, (2) absence of metre.

The third of these qualities is easily disposed of. What sort of a line that would be which would not scan at all I cannot say. Even in the popular American magazines, whose verse columns are now largely given over to *vers libre*, the lines are usually explicable in terms of prosody. Any line can be divided into feet and accents. The simpler metres are a repetition of one combination, perhaps a long and a short, or a short and a long syllable, five times repeated. There is, however, no reason why, within the single line, there should be any repetition; why there should not be lines (as there are) divisible only into feet of different types. How can the grammatical exercise of scansion make a line of this sort more intelligible? Only by isolating elements which occur in other lines, and the sole purpose of doing this is the production of a similar effect elsewhere. But repetition of effect is a question of pattern.

Scansion tells us very little. It is probable that there is not much to be gained by an elaborate system of prosody, but the erudite complexities of Swinburnian metre. With Swinburne, once the trick is perceived and the scholarship appreciated, the effect is somewhat diminished. When the unexpectedness, due to the unfamiliarity of the metres to English ears, wears off and is understood, one ceases to look for what one does not find in Swinburne; the inexplicable line with the music which can never be recaptured in other words. Swinburne mastered his technique, which is a great deal, but he did not master it to the extent of being able to take liberties with it, which is everything. If anything promising for English poetry is hidden in the metres of Swinburne, it probably lies far beyond the point to which Swinburne has developed them. But the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse.

I have in mind two passages of contemporary verse which would be called *vers libre*. Both of them I quote because of their beauty:

*Once, in finesse offiddles found I ecstasy,
In the flash of gold heels on the hard pavement.*

*Now see I
 That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.
 Oh, God, make small
 The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
 That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.*

This is a complete poem. The other is part of a much longer poem:

*There shut up in his castle, Tainiran's,
 She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
 Gone — ah, gone — untouched, unreachable -
 She who could never live save through one person,
 She who could never speak save to one person,
 And all the rest of her a shifting change,
 A broken bundle of mirrors. . .*

It is obvious that the charm of these lines could not be, without the constant suggestion and the skilful evasion of iambic pentameter.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, and especially in the verse of John Webster, who was in some ways a more cunning technician than Shakespeare, one finds the same constant evasion and recognition of regularity. Webster is much freer than Shakespeare, and that his fault is not negligence is evidenced by the fact that it is often at moments of the highest intensity that his verse acquires this freedom. That there is also carelessness I do not deny, but the irregularity of carelessness can be at once detected from the irregularity of deliberation. (In *The White Devil* Brachiano dying, and Cornelia mad, deliberately rupture the bonds of pentameter.)

*I recover, like a spent taper, for a flash
 and instantly go out.*

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

*You have cause to love me, I did enter you in my heart
 Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys.*

This is a vain poetry: but I pray you tell me

*If there were proposed me, wisdom, riches, and beauty,
In three several young men, which should I choose?*

These are not lines of carelessness. The irregularity is further enhanced by the use of short lines and the breaking up of lines in dialogue, which alters the quantities. And there are many lines in the drama of this time which are spoilt by regular accentuation.

I loved this woman in spite of my heart. (The Changeling)
I would have these herbs grow up in his grave. (The White Devil)
Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman . . . (The Duchess of Malfi)

The general charge of decadence cannot be preferred. Tourneur and Shirley, who I think will be conceded to have touched nearly the bottom of the decline of tragedy, are much more regular than Webster or Middleton. Tourneur will polish off a fair line of iambics even at the cost of amputating a preposition from its substantive, and in the *Atheist's Tragedy* he has a final 'of' in two lines out of five together.

We may therefore formulate as follows: the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest' verse; to advance menacingly as we doze, and withdraw as we rouse. Or, freedom is only truly freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation.

Not to have perceived the simple truth that *some* artificial limitation is necessary except in moments of the first intensity is, I believe, a capital error of even so distinguished a talent as that of Mr. E. L. Masters. The *Spoon River Anthology* is not material of the first intensity; it is reflective, not immediate; its author is a moralist, rather than an observer. His material is so near to the material of Crabbe that one wonders why he should have used a different form. Crabbe is, on the whole, the more intense of the two; he is keen, direct, and unsparing. His material is prosaic, not in the sense that it would have been better done in prose, but in the sense of requiring a simple and rather rigid verse-form and this Crabbe has given it. Mr. Masters requires a more rigid verse-form than either of the two contemporary poets quoted above, and his epitaphs suffer from the lack of it.

So much for metre. There is no escape from metre; there is only mastery. But while there obviously is escape from rhyme, the *vers libristes* are by no means the first out of the cave.

*The boughs of the trees
 Are twisted
 By many bafihings;
 Twisted are
 The small-leaved boughs.
 But the shadow of them
 Is not the shadow of the mast head
 Nor of the torn sails.*

*When the white dawn first
 Through the rough fir-planks
 Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
 Up at the valley-head,
 Came breaking, Goddess,
 I sprang up, I threw round me
 My dappled fawn-skin . . .*

Except for the more human touch in the second of these extracts a hasty observer would hardly realize that the first is by a contemporary, and the second by Matthew Arnold.

I do not minimize the services of modern poets in exploiting the possibilities of rhymeless verse. They prove the strength of a Movement, the utility of a Theory. What neither Blake nor Arnold could do alone is being done in our time. 'Blank verse' is the only accepted rhymeless verse in English — the inevitable iambic pentameter. The English ear is (or was) more sensitive to the music of the verse and less dependent upon the recurrence of identical sounds in this metre than in any other. There is no campaign against rhyme. But it is possible that excessive devotion to rhyme has thickened the modern ear. The rejection of rhyme is not a leap at facility; on the contrary, it imposes a much severer strain upon the language. When the comforting echo of rhyme is removed, success or failure in the choice of words, in the sentence structure, in the order, is at once more apparent. Rhyme removed, the poet is at once held up to the standards of prose. Rhyme removed, much ethereal music leaps up from the word, music which has hitherto chirped unnoticed in the expanse of prose. Any rhyme forbidden, many Shagpats were unwigged.

And this liberation from rhyme might be as well a liberation *of* rhyme. Freed from its exacting task of supporting lame verse, it could be applied with greater effect

where it is most needed. There are often passages in an unrhymed poem where rhyme is wanted for some special effect, for a sudden tightening-up, for a cumulative insistence, or for an abrupt change of mood. But formal rhymed verse will certainly not lose its place. We only need the coming of a Satirist — no man of genius is rarer — to prove that the heroic couplet has lost none of its edge since Dryden and Pope laid it down. As for the sonnet I am not so sure. But the decay of intricate formal patterns has nothing to do with the advent of *vers libre*. It had set in long before. Only in a closely-knit and homogeneous society, where many men are at work on the same problems, such a society as those which produced the Greek chorus, the Elizabethan lyric, and the Troubadour canzone, will the development of such forms ever be carried to perfection. And as for *vers libre*, we conclude that it is not defined by absence of pattern or absence of rhyme, for other verse is without these; that it is not defined by non-existence of metre, since even the *worst* verse can be scanned; and we conclude that the division between Conservative Verse and *vers libre* does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos.

3. Original Poems from “When Lilacs Last in the Door”

[Following are the versions of the poems as they were written by their authors, prior to being “translated” into Scots. The original form of the essay can be found at the following URL: <http://www.umat.maine.edu/~steven.evans/3F-34>]

Kevin Davies, from *Comp.*

Quote Yeah you *wish* my abandoned command post were closer to your retrieval plant and wholly owned subsidiaries. You want the polka dots to be Aristotelian. Couldn't beadle my furrows evangelistically enough for you could I, yeah baby I know it hurts. I know because *I went to Fredericton and stayed there*, I painted baseboards vermilion for dunce dimes and ninny nickels. That doesn't mean I have to waddle up to raccoon-juice-colored marsh elders with alder awnings and slant-six Norwegian method acting strapped to their fungoes to know when I'm not connecting the weather bucket to the wet side of post-Minimalism. I know when I'm not hunted. Just don't

expect lemurs to magically reappear from the fine print of the self-storage contract. Don't even *think* about viola solos. We all just re-upped with the radiator fuzz Un Quote.

Tim Davis, from *Dailies*

does *viva zapata* mean _living shoes_
 the winner of the race gets to immolate any empty library,
 scrape the white off a dozen klines
 even nod during mao z.'s big singalong:
 "me and my spar-row"
 the school play remade the duelists starring
 god and godard to myriad reviews
 and I quote "I quote"
 "the one in the sunglasses
 seemed to intentionally misread his miscues"
 there's the signpost up ahead, it's collicky comme il faut
la vie de chan-ce

Jennifer Moxley, from *Sense Record*

You hurry home at dusk but fall upon a dead bird by the side of the road,
 tiny pink featherless neck, sun throat slashed. From the writing desk
 the workers bear witness to the destruction of your mental hideaway,
 but the fight you in your imaginary thoughts
 provoke in them proves nonetheless impossible to speak of [...]
 You grow weary when you realize the old world will not stay new for long
 and even the dead men interrogate you, the ugliest among them
 fills you with anguish and longing. They would rather look
 upon the flames of your funeral pyre from out at sea than abandon
 the will of their fathers. You like to suppose you will never love again.

Harryette Mullen, from *Muse & Drudge*

singed native skin
binging island sun
shines on shingles
shunning unhinged singles

solar flares scrambled
bell bottoms sunnyside
signal didn't she ramble
those black holes backslide

tropical fancy
punany as you want to be
coked bottled bodies
with fanticide faces

drippy tresses bagged
in plastic do-rag
sensible heel in execu-drag
whose dress sucks excess

Darren Wershler-Henry, from *tapeworm foundry andor the dangerous prevalence of imagination*

andor publish transparent books for people who like to read while driving andor
establish internal rhythms andor write the regulations for more equitable blood sports
like the one in an oceanarium between a killer whale and a snorkel diver armed with
only a staple gun or like the one in a kiddie pool between a hammerhead shark and a
divorce lawyer armed with only a butter knife or like the one in a gymnaism between
a white rhino and a golf caddy armed with only a pitching wedge andor figure out a
way to do it without metaphor andor start a rumor that byron might never have swum
the hellespont if not for his use of duckshaped water wings andor replicate the visible
world in order to satisfy some bourgeois need for comfort and then bring even more
order into this illusion andor write each word of a long poem on a separate bumper

sticker and then apply one sticker to each car in a parkade using rows as lines and floors as stanzas...

4. Replacement Algorithms for “When Lilacs Last in the Door”

[I only imperfectly recorded what search-and-replace algorithms I used when “translating” the text of this essay into “Scots,” but for what it is worth, following are the notes I took during the process. The first, shorter sets are, I believe, in the order in which they were keyed in, while a final set (which duplicates some parts of the first sets) was alphabetized, for a reason I don’t remember.]

strang—hail	*
rare—rerr	
fidgement—muivement	try—ettle(e)
into—intil	doubt—doot
yaise	but—bit
(noun)—yiss	under—unner
polylingual—polyleiditnes	how—hoo
eckio—ictio	slow—slaw
criticism—heckle	ought—oucht
ible—eeble	gh—()
because—kis	famous—ken-speckle
already—awreddie	major—heid
y.—ie.	clash—blether (talk)
y, —ie,	result—upcum
ow (as in vowels)—oo	great—gret
what—whit	among—amang
ainl—onl	other—ither
empty—toom (?)	-ong—ang
addled—trauchlit	full—fou
abide—bide	more—mair
raileest--raeleest	oo (selectively)—ui
	warl’—warld
	do (the word)—dae

word—wird
 three—?
 and (the word)—an
 ea (ee sound)—ai
 fer—fur
 spoke, spoken—spak
 which—whilk
 —ect—eck
 by—bi
 —y (ee sound, selective)—ie
 had—hud
 own—oon
 play—pley
 course—coorse
 aften—aft
 last (adj.)—hinner maist
 about—about
 cheenge—chyng
 will—wull
 see (verb)—own
 Harold—Harauld
 real—rael
 comm—cowm (selective)
 ct—ck (selective, poorly done)
 when—whan
 markt—mercat
 quo’—quo
 nd—n
 (at end of word)
 culture—cultur
 off (the word)—aff
 than—nor
 engl—ingl

*

()’t -- ‘t
 ()any—ony
 ()ful—()fu
 take()—tak
 ()way()—airt
 ing,—in,
 down—doun
 wer (as in “flower”)—our
 long—lang
 -ed---ed
 ()our—oor
 ()me—()mi
 though—tho
 you—ye
 language—leid
 evry—ilka
 ever—ilk
 change—cheenge
 not—nae
 no—nae
 for—fer
 one—ane
 will—wull
 now—noo
 modern—modren
 their—thir
 was—wis
 just—jist
 write—scrieve
 join—jin
 hand—haun
 stand—staun
 call (name)—cry
 name—nam
 system—seestem
 center—mid

safe—sicker
 start—stairt
 print—prent
 follow—folla
 thing—theeng
 subject—subjeck
 betwixt—atween
 early—airlie
 makarry—poetrie
 school—scuil
 —ist (as in Maoist)—eest
 use—yaise
 understood—uptakit
 war—weir
 past—bygane
 literature—liteerature
 book—buik

*

move—fidge
 enough—enuch
 many—mony
 other—ither
 from—frae
 over—owre
 who—wha
 gar—make
 -ight—icht
 even—e'en
 most—miast
 far—faur
 good—guid
 between—betwixt
 -ing—in
 head—heid

much—muckle
 big—muckle
 heicht—heich
 high—heich
 violent—gundy
 spectacle—gy
 have—hae
 never—ne'er
 were—wur
 none—nane
 ead()—eid()
 poet—makar
 if—gin
 go—gae
 off—aff
 often—aften
 before—afore
 upon—upo
 two—twae
 not—nae
 no—nae
 so—sae
 little—duddie
 where—waur
 widna—waudna
 talk—clash
 against—again'
 each—ilk
 song—sang
 strong—strang
 such—sic
 sic a()—siccan
 money—siller
 sister—titty
 usin—wearin
 them—thaim

wom—wunim
 elves—els
 matter—maitter

*

of—‘o
 irony—bocage
 very—gey
 with—wi’
 self—sel’
 one (as in person)—yin
 don’t—dinna
 all—aa
 everything—aathing
 called—caad
 then—syne
 as well as—as weel’s
 away—awa’
 without—wiout
 strange—unco
 know—ken
 these—thae
 own—am
 having—haein
 replace “it” by ‘t and elide with
 previous word
 give—gie
 will not—wiima
 home—hame
 belong—belang
 every—ilka
 within—wi’in
 aove—abune
 perhaps—aiblins
 weird—aliryn

around—atour
 both—baith
 blood—bluid
 except—binna
 stay—bide
 cleisher—creep?
 four—fower
 bottom—boddom
 -ind—in’
 -old—‘auld
 outside—ootby
 nothing—nocht
 said—quo’
 beneath—neth
 shoes—shoon
 too—tae
 world—warl’
 those—thae
 ask—speir
 sure—shair
 small—wee
 wet—weet
 few—wheen
 beyond—‘yont
 ould—ud
 udn’t—idna

*

contemplatin—layin the brain asteep
 whether—whither
 my—mi
 certain—certaint
 out o—outen
 range—reenge
 bar—baur

type—teep
 first—firsten
 I—aw
 particular—parteeclar
 class—clessic
 hell—the ill place
 love—luve
 break—brek
 deomonstrate—kythe
 sing—tweetle (selective)
 heaven—heiven
 confess—awn
 consider—consither
 dirtie—clarty
 nature—naitur
 rather—raither
 whine—draunt
 captur—tak'
 tale—spin
 nam (name) —nem'
 satisfied—fittit
 eternellie—fur aye
 sincere—aefauld
 hurredlie—fiercelins
 hope—howp
 previus—umquhile
 while—whill
 yet (adv)—still an on
 yet—yit
 apparent—kenable
 neither—naither
 mischievous—ill—deedie
 succeedit—mad wel
 way—wey
 part (word)—pairt
 desire—will

experiment (word)—prattick
 somethin—sumhin
 entertainin—shortsome
 funnie—knackie
 turn—birl
 debate—flyte
 comm—cowm (selective)
 agree—say thegither
 wasn't—wisna
 outwards—ootwan

*

until—gin
 wheel—whurl
 poem—pome
 aiblins—mebbe
 want—wint
 board—boord
 doesn't—disna
 hall—ha
 humor—eemir
 weather—wather
 bucket—bowie
 sensation—gliff
 written—scrievit
 escape—ootcome
 imagine—jalouse
 water—watter
 office—offish
 quick—gleg
 work—wark
 suggest—propone
 discussion—conmiunin
 dusk—glaomin
 sun—sin

throat—thrapple
 bear—bide
 witness—wutness
 provoke—chaw
 growe—grow
 interrogate—speir
 ugliest—maist ill-faured
 anguish—fash
 look—leuk
 flame—flam
 funeral—beerial
 abandon—forhoo
 like—lik
 suppose—jalouse
 show—shaw
 possibilitie—maybe
 her (pron)—hir
 audience—owdience
 scope—scouth
 cup—tassie
 box—buist
 contain—haud
 skull—pan
 burden—trachle
 home—hame
 sense—sinse
 fault—faut
 engage—fee

*

behavior—ongauns
 ground—grun
 hail (strong)—strang
 master—maister
 makar—bard (selective)

present—praisent
 motion—mudge
 reduce—lowden
 touch—tig
 stone—stane
 hersel—hirscl
 shine—sheen
 scramble—scrammle
 bell—skellet
 didn't—didna
 black—bleck
 hole—thirl
 slide—sly
 back—hin
 fancy—wheem
 bodies—buddies
 face—neb
 bagged—poked
 tresses—flachts
 dress—ootrig
 suck—sook
 whose—whase
 opposite—conter
 recipe—receipt
 collpaps—fooner
 publish—proclaim
 people—fowk
 drive—hurl
 equitable—richt-lik
 sport—play
 whale—whaul
 staple—stapple
 hammer—haimmer
 lawyer—lawer
 butter—freet
 white—fite

golf—gowf
 pitch—pick
 wedge—wadge
 out—oot
 airt—wey
 rumor—clatter
 duck—quackie
 satisfy—pleasure
 bourgeois—haif—knab
 comfort—easdom

believe—trew
 invent—deck
 reside—bide
 fine—braw
 various—sindry
 varietie—kin
 manner—mamner
 smart—smairt
 reputation—word
 energy—birr

*

separate—saiprit
 car—caur
 wear—weir
 row—raw
 short (alone)—jimpit
 information—witterin
 staunard—stannert
 space—piece
 gaze—gower
 up—oop
 imagination—fance
 bit—bittie
 (selective)
 anger—birse
 happen—come (selective)
 heavy—hivvie
 mthod—road (selective)
 blue—bew
 sailor—tarry—breaks
 vomit—boak
 spome—fyow (selective)
 fast—fest
 digest—digeest
 again—agane

(final set)
 stannert—staunard
 staple—stapple
 staun—stand
 stone—stane
 strang—strong
 strong—strang
 subjeck—subject
 suck—sook
 suggest—propone
 sun—sin
 suppose—jalouse
 tak—captur
 talk—blether
 thaim—them
 the ill place—hell
 theeng—thing
 thir—their
 tho—though
 throat—thrapple
 ritty—sister
 toom—empty
 touch—tig

trauchlit—addled
 tresses—flachts
 try—ettle
 twa—two
 tweetle—sing
 type—teep
 ugliest—illmaist
 umqu—previus
 unner—under
 until—gin
 upcum—result
 upo—upon
 uptakit—understood
 varietle—kin
 various—sindry
 vomit—boak
 want—wint
 wasn't—wisna
 water—watter
 waur—where
 wearing—usin
 weather—wather
 wedge—wadge
 weir—war

weir—wear
 wha—who
 whale—whaul
 wheel—whuri
 when—whan
 whilk—which
 white—fite
 whither—whether
 whose—whase
 widna—wouldn't
 wis—was
 witness—wutness
 work—wark
 world—warl
 written—scrievit
 wull—will
 wull—will
 wur—were
 yaise—use
 yaise—yiss
 ye—you
 yit—yet

5. Thomas Gray, On the Death of Mr. Richard West

[The italics are those Wordsworth inserted in the introduction to the Lyrical Ballads of 1800 to point out those moments of “real value” in Gray’s sonnet, in which the language did not deviate from that of prose.]

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire;

The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And newborn pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain;
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

6. David Larsen, Dogma '01

[This manifesto originally appeared on the Buffalo Poetics List, where I first read it, but can presently be found here: <http://www.litvert.com/lrsn.html>]

We in the last quarter of 2001 affirm the following guidelines for the publication of literature, patterned upon the manifesto of the Dogme95 filmmakers. The Dogme95 Manifesto declared itself to be a "VOW OF CHASTITY" from the coercive representational techniques of mass-market cinema (sets, lighting, musical soundtracks, etc.); Dogma '01 goes even further, rejecting the no less coercive marketing and distribution apparatus which Dogme95 filmmakers seem content to have deployed on their behalf. Dogma '01 rejects the division of labor between writer and publisher that prevails in the literary market-place, and therefore its productions are unfit for all but the most informal modes of distribution (barter, give-aways, and low-volume sales). These rules are to ensure that they remain so:

1. Dogma '01 is unalienated labor. Author and publisher will ideally be the same person. If not, they are to share the labor and cost of printing. Dogma '01 productions are to be assembled and bound by hand. No sending books out to be Docu-teched, and no perfect binding.

2. The contents of Dogma '01 books should be photocopied. Type may be set on a word processor or typewriter, but handwriting (the textual equivalent of the hand-held camera mandated by Dogme95) is best. No technique of reproduction is definitively barred, but those methods and materials most widely available to the general public are preferred. What in the world of fine printing are considered defects, Dogma '01 views as beauty marks: staples, thumbprints, "binder's creep," etc.

3. The one-of-a-kind is hateful. Editions should be as large as humanly possible, unsigned, and un-numbered (except perhaps to compensate for the flaws of "first fruits" rush-jobbed in time for a reading). Scarcity should never be exploited to drive up exchange value. At such time as an author's Dogma '01 publication turns out to be a valuable commodity (i.e., quickly reselling for inflated amounts soon after issue), that author is obliged to produce ever-larger editions to compensate. Should demand exceed the author's production capacity, that author is obliged to withdraw from Dogma '01 and either go with a mainstream publisher, or become one. This is the only excuse for going with or becoming a mainstream publisher.

4. Publishing in journals is kind of a gray area, on which we do not care to pronounce. Without it, Dogma '01 would risk becoming a solipsistic enterprise, with a readership as tightly circumscribed as that of any corporation's report to its shareholders. On the other hand, the wider an author's public, the harder it will be for that author to remain within the bounds of Dogma '01. The same goes for anthologies. Nor have we come to grips with the question of later reprints of Dogma '01 productions. Entering contests is fine, unless you win one.

5. Dogma '01 is not a bid for elite/outsider status, but the affirmation of a literary and artistic sphere of exchange unmediated by the apparatuses of market capitalism. (Except does the post office count?) Authors need not lose money to qualify, though they assuredly will. Dogma '01 authors are to maintain cordial and friendly relationships with mere writers. No Dogma '01 clubs or juries are to be formed, and no one whose work meets these Dogma '01 criteria is barred. You will know it when you see it.

Dogma '01 is no guarantee of quality. Without going so far as to abolish the category of "artistic merit," it is our stance that 1) the above criteria are more important at the

present moment in the history of writing, and that 2) they lead to better work anyway aesthetically as much as ethically speaking.

Please note that the above rules cannot be bent to include unqualified authors whose company and fellowship we may covet. For example, the book "Scram #2" by Mark Gonzales and Cameron Jamie with Raymond Pettibon photocopied in a signed and numbered edition of ten and sold for fifty dollars apiece last year at a gallery in Hollywood cannot be claimed as a Dogma '01 production. (Too bad, because it's the summit of the half-sized booklet form.) It will also be noted that Dogma '01 is hard for novelists and writers in non-fiction genres, though we would be delighted to see someone try.

You are invited to reproduce and disseminate this manifesto freely. We will not rest until the earth is encased in a rustling jacket of paper. Oh wait, that's already happened.

Oakland, Calif., 10/6/2001

On behalf of Dogma '01

LRSN