

@poetics

The UB Poetics Discussion Group

Archive of Electronic Correspondence

March 1994

17 messages · Mon 7 Mar 1994 – Sat 26 Mar 1994

An electronic mailing-list archive

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

A reading edition. For each post the author's name, the subject, and the message are foregrounded, and the date is kept but subdued. Machine headers, encoded attachments, and the repeated listserv routing that once framed every message have been cleared away; email addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and similar personal contact details have been redacted.

Editor's Introduction

Kristen M. Fabians

March 1994 lets the theoretical fever of February break, and the list turns, gratefully, to place — to where each of its voices happens to be standing while it types. Joe Amato opens the month looking out the window of a spare bedroom in Illinois and finding an urban landscape that answers nothing in the woodsy Syracuse of his childhood; his subject-line, coeval with, becomes the month's quiet keyword. What moves him, he writes, is *"a sense of place, and corresponding dislocations"* — nostalgia refused, geography kept.

The theme travels. From Germany, Hans-Joachim Rieke writes in, hungry for reading on hyperreality and for news of an American poetry he can only reach at a distance, and the list obliges with its habitual generosity of lists and addresses. Susan Schultz sends down from Hawai'i a hard, funny pidgin dialogue about who counts as local and who as haole, adolescence and multiculturalism turned over without mercy. Distance, in March, is not an obstacle to the conversation; distance is the conversation's subject.

Martin Spinelli, still smarting a little from February's error-framed exchange, extends the argument about mediation into a meditation on the radio ham — the solitary broadcaster flinging signal into the dark and receiving, mostly, silence back. Whatever community the airwaves promise, he decides, the operators *"are isolated and remain so"*. It is a shrewd thing to say on a mailing list, which is after all only a more sociable species of the same wireless loneliness.

A slighter month than the one before it, and a more human one — the poets comparing windows, trading the names of books, locating themselves on the map before they resume locating themselves in argument. I have set each letter forward under its author's name, the private numbers and addresses returned to the dark, so that what remains is the talk itself, and the several distances it had to cross to arrive.

— K. M. F.

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17. Hans-Joachim Rieke — Re: German poetry

1. **Joe Amato**

coeval with...

Mon 7 Mar 1994

i must admit to being taken by a sense of place, and corresponding dislocations...

for me, whatever creative possibilites emerge from disruptions in place move me to thresholds---cognitive, emotional---that are often painful... in part because place for me IS the timing of space, a spacing in time replete with boundaries...

when i look out my window (in the spare bdrm. of my apt. where i've located my mac) i see an urban landscape that bears little resemblance to the suburban, woodsy, fifties territories of my childhood... nostalgia here is not the point---the point is that i feel a spiritual resonance with the geographies of central and upstate new york, while at the same time i have no intention of residing again in the city of my birth (syracuse, the salt city)... ambivalence more polyvalence---it's a mixture of feelings, longings, desperations, impulses---in the blood, as it were...

hence looking into *this* window is yet looking out another, and vice-versa... "coeval with" your various readings of this post---but with a few things more, perhaps...

the issue has to do with regionalisms as well as (inter)nationalisms... i'm hearing, in the background (someplace) lennon's "imagine," a song from my late teens, and i'm wondering what sort of cosmopolitan it is who *doesn't* identify with such identities ---which is NOT to say the lyrics... which, yes, translate into overarching sociopolitical exigencies...

fifty miles south of me the land flattens out like a drainboard... i spent a couple of lonely years in those directions, dealing with the death of my folks... but my solitudes were marked, thankfully, by having made a few best friends...

down that way, far as the (untrained) i can see [sorry] one generally witnesses endless orthogonal acres of single-crop farming---corn, or soybeans... this, for example and for me, is most definitely NOT nature... this latter may be problematic everywhere today, but whatever else it is, i don't quite identify it with non-diversity...

i have an eye for hill and dale and that sorta thing... variations against the Same, and in pixeled terms as well... but i'll probably mself end up someplace in the suburbs, or fringe burbs... i'm hoping it won't be entirely too mediocre, mall-ish... but there's this thing about having the bucks, yknow, to move, and where---and i'd like a little tomato patch before i'm too much older...

i'm used to small pockets of italian ethnicity (being 'second generation' on my dad's (sicilian) side) and little euro-pockets as well (being 'first generation' on my mom's side)... chi-town does this for me at times, but the midwest, otherwise, rarely does... hence i'm east in many ways... my neuroses operating on the surfaces, the silent machismo of the midwest grates on me at times... and such regional, even moody judgments follow from feelings born of having found correspondences between my convictions, as i live them out, and my ongoing, provisional understanding---nothing arbitrary here, or innocent, or necessarily nice...

and yet i carry around a southwestern landscape someplace in my jeans [sorry again], a true-blue Western mythology probably as much a consequence of loving, in my child-adulthood, westerns (cinema and tv) as a function of more legislated attempts to establish an american ethos...

if there is yet an argument to be made in such terms... saturated though it might be with hollywood and jiffypop, my memory, altering, is something i live with and through...

if 'i don't know where i stand,' exactly, i'm damn well gonna have to be standing someplace, metaphysically speaking... looking out toward the shifting horizon, trying to figure the when's and where's of things as i find them...

joe

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2. **FUNKHOUSER CHRISTOPH** *Re: what they talked excitedly about*

Mon 7 Mar 1994

Steve--hello--

Thanks for the Kootenay update--it seems to have sparked at least one thread, & hopefully we ta'wil our way back to some of those other themes later. After checking back through The L Robertson/C Stewart/ C Strang entry in the oblek "Subject & Position" section & reading "Wrenched history is our machine's frontier" figured they'd bring some issue or another pertinent to our talk here & yes --

Can somebody post a citation for _The Poetics of Criticism_?

mr ltr funk

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3. **Hans-Joachim Rieke**

media theory

Mon 7 Mar 1994

As somebody asked for further information about Bolz/Flusser, I'll enter this part of my answer to the list: Vilem Flusser is native of Prague then lived in South America for a long time teaching media theory, and finally in the south of France. He died recently and is being read more and more in Germany. I only know German titles:UEBER SCHRIFT (ON SCRIPTURE); LOB DER OBERFLCHLICHKEIT (PRAISE OF SUPERFICIALITY/ SURFACES); he has written more though; Norbert Bolz is a strange guy, supposedly something of a genius, taught philosophy at the Free University Berlin, and is now professor at the institute for cultural and media studies at Essen. He started writing about Benjamin, taught Derrida and Lacan, Kant, Hegel and arrived at media theory. Argues that philosophy necessarily comes to an end, end of hermeneutics, leads to media theory... has written prolifically - in German AM ENDE DER GUTENBERG GALAXIS; PHILOSOPHIE NACH IHREM ENDE are the most recent books. I'm grateful for any "Literaturtips" on "hyperreality"

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4. **Robert Drake**

Re: what they talked excitedly about

Mon 7 Mar 1994

| Can somebody post a citation for *The Poetics of Criticism*?

A Poetics of Criticism

Juliana Spahr, Mark Wallace, Kristin Prevallet, Pam Rehm, eds.
1994

Leave Books

57 Livingston St.

Buffalo NY 14213

ISBN 0-922668-11-6

bonus question: which 2 editors are not subscribed to this list?

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5. **susan schultz**

(no subject)

Tue 8 Mar 1994

To members of the net:

More thoughts on identity politics (and I'm intrigued by the slow-starting discussion of Canadian identity, which I gather is English-speaking Canadian). The similarity of languages poses problems that are easily (perhaps too easily) deflected onto language politics here in Hawaii (where, yes, the weather today is gorgeous, since our rainy season ended recently). Here's an example of a poem that distinguishes between the mainland US and Hawaii, by Joe Balaz:

Eh, howzit brah,
I heard you goin mainland, eh?
 No, I goin to the continent.
Wat? I taught you goin San Jose
for visit your bradda?
 Dats right.
Den you going mainland brah!
 No, I goin to da continent.
What you mean continent brah?!
Dah mainland is dah mainland,
dats where you going, eh?!
 Eh, like I told you,
 dats da continent--
 Hawai'i
 is da mainland to me.

(Lots of missing italics that I don't know how to do in email-speak.) My colleague, Rob Wilson, sets this poem and others in the context of a local resistance to global incursions in his forthcoming book out of Duke. But what's interesting to me at this moment is the local resistance to other definitions of local, which comes out so well in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's work, which is being received well on the "mainland" (or continent), but is getting flak here for perpetuating racist stereotypes, of which there are hundreds on this island of a myriad of ethnic groups. One of her adolescent girl speakers appears in a poem called "Kala Gave Me Anykine Advice Especially About Filipinos When I Moved to Pahala." Another attacks Japanese teachers (most local public school teachers are Japanese-American):

So what if the teacher look at us.
Just another stupid Jap. You eva wen' notice
that every teacher we had since elementary days
was one lady Jap?
Eh, what you trying for say to me?
I ain't one fuckin' Jap like them.
Their eyes mo slant than mine and yeah,
I one Jap, but not that kine . . .

So much for adolescent multiculturalism!

The new TV show, BYRDS of PARADISE, though its concept is lame, and the acting shallow, tries to do a good job of presenting a local view of Hawaii's problems. In fact, they presented just about all of them in the first 10 minutes of the pilot show.

Of islands: John Figueroa, a West Indian poet and critic, gave a talk here last week in which he showed how Derek Walcott's early work WAS local, both in its sense of place and in its switching of languages according to context. A good view of Walcott not as a postcolonial with a yen for the colonial, but a poet of his place, which includes the British influence, but also creole (English and French). His text was one of the sonnets from "Tales of Islands," in Walcott's earliest "Selected Poems." It starts out: "Poopa da fete!"

Best wishes from paradise!

Susan Schultz

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6. **James Sherry**

Re: putative ms

Wed 9 Mar 1994

Susan: Excellent notes on place, but how to include Beaudelaire's idea of place as a cipher for self, if by poetry we say one thing and mean also something else.

And also Charles said you think I have an unanswered ms of yours which I don't and if I did why wouldn't you ask me for it instead of Charles. James Sherry

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7. **Martin Spinelli**

last poetics post

Fri 11 Mar 1994

From: UBVMS::V139HLA3 27-FEB-1994 16:01:10.11

To: CHARLES

CC: V139HLA3

Subj: RESPONSE response

Hans Enzensberger's "Constituents of a theory
of the media"

the utopia in Enzensberger's article is made possible through "mass participation in the social and socialized productive process." the Vision is this: everyone a participant. that is a participation in the media -- in

its production. he says at once that media can produce the Social and production can control the media.

more interestingly for us Enze says the social power is in response. *response is power* shutting down response is domination.

in spite of the optimistic rhetoric, Enze himself gives us examples of media's failed potential (which he never sufficiently recuperates). in the hands of his "masses" short wave radio is pathetically impotent, badly imitating bad examples from commercial radio. the goal of his idealized liberated media is "mobilization" (vague throughout). whatever it is, radio hams don't have it. they are isolated and remain so. somehow mobilization for Eze must be physical. an intellectual mobilization, a mobilization of response seems possible both on radio and on the Net. Community needs dialog.

the Net, the medium with the potential for response, can't equal Eze's imagination. initially and in places there is a vocalization in unison at places if not an "organization" or "mobilization". but looking further it is lacking: there are only prolific and pervasive fragments, all their own centers or all speaking equally comfortably from the margins. can a greater Social exist without interaction between the frags, without impetus towards the improvement of the Whole? (yet there is this impetus around the hardware -- everyone wants to improve the medium itself.)

Where is the revolution?

there is the opportunity to exercise power -- to say something. like a baudrillard essay nothing is heard before [EOB] or after the last footnote. containment. what would the virtual revolution look like? erev? control cannot be taken of anything on the Inside -- for the first time the Inside is the place bereft of power and imagination, bereft of agency with the simulation of agency.... curiously supervised

scrutinized

Clipped

surreptitiously censured

evaluated

categorized
and
fast

(it posits an new class.sys: the techobourgeoisie over the infobourgeoisie.)

again Eze: media's power is its mobilization of the masses. but real mobilization coming from media would presume at most three channels (three access points, three meanings all referringtoeachother). mobilization is an anomaly on the Net because of the infinity of channels and the infinity of messages...is it enough to be united around a medium? to have a vested interest in the medium, to be dependent on it? there is a kind of mobilization around this but it can only ever be mustered _in support_ of the medium. with an infinity of channnels, consumption and production don't just get blurred. production *becomes* consumption. supporting a right to production is only like good advertizing... teaching us we're not really happy. we didn't know how unhappy we were. responding erodes. the mic is too close to the amp.

feedback... the repetition of what has already been transmitted fading and distorted but essentially the same as what has already been said. the difference between feedback and response is the difference between a system of simulations and asystem of meaning? Badrill is great on this in his "The Masses": public opinion polls dictate the limits of public experience.

in his media strategy which seeks to end isolation (read "alienation") COMMUNITY IS MANDATORY

Eze is aware that a sys in which everyone produces/expresses will yield only noise. noise which does not hold one's interest like nonsense but is only irritating -- distressing. here he says that the masses must be taught to be better producers if the utopian mobilization is to be realized. in this way they could record their daily experiences and learn from them. again organization is liberating not the tech that provides it.

on the net you can respond to the message, and only indirectly, inadvertently about the medium. you use the Net yet you cannot have a dialog with the Net.

there is a danger when the link between community and medium becomes too perfect (seemless, transparent as tech pretends it can make it) *as obvious intrusions of the media begin to disappear more completely the less there will be to say* the connection is the only viable issue, source and site of discourse. as it evaporates so must communication.

the resistance of the medium, the time spent in the friction of translation/communication allows for rumination, for contemplation, for thought (even if it is only an examination of its deployment). when this space disappears all we will be able to do is sit and stare.

the eze short term solution: authors and producers must work as agents for the masses and only when the masses learn to cut tape and mix music can the producer "lose himself". This is how he ultimately solves the noise problem.

as media are currently constituted (one-directionally), *response* is anti-media. the ideal response that Eze is after must go beyond the limits he sets for it. it must be outside like spray paint on the monitor. Badrill claims there exists "a possible subversion of the code of the media [in the] possibility of alternative speech and a radical reciprocity of symbolic exchange."

exchange is the radical thing... but exchange of what... a change must happen in the exchange -- reworking it into what is an anti-aesthetic -- (anti- to the aesthetic of the professional media and the OED) -- upset the hegemony, don't believe the authority and twist its structure with implied orthography. Signify without rules. ignore Expectations.

the Net is not often used in the way say Bill or Ben or Jonathan (Howe, Freidlander, Fernandez, three that came first to mind) use language in their poetry. the

materiality of the Net
is not often tinkered
with --thought about --
addressed as something
other than a transparent
medium of representing
(thought or something).

the hegemony of these lingos
is not exposed or disrupted
by toying with, or even
showing, the structure. it
is believed in. we must
lose/loose our faith.

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8. **Martin Spinelli**

oops

Fri 11 Mar 1994

sorry for the accidental repost

ms

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9. **steve evans**

coeval with...

Sat 12 Mar 1994

The lull in new messages is not, I suppose, necessarily something to fret over. In the interval, I find myself mulling over posting that are now several days old. I'd like to pose a question or two to Susan Schultz and Tom Mandel, with apologies to anyone who thinks I'm forcing us back over ground already covered....

First, it would interest me if Susan Schultz could supplement the discussion of poets such as Joe Balaz and Louis-Ann Yamanaka with a word or two about the way access to publication is structured in Hawaii: are the conflicting definitions of "locality" played out in terms of publication sites as well as in subject-matter? Since print *mediates* and seems always to slip from "local" sites, I am curious as to how these writers conceive of and perhaps work to contain this inevitable generalization.

Then there are several questions I'd like to ask Tom Mandel. Tom writes (7 Mar 1994): "An identification of the persons and places we see is basic to

survival, isn't it?" The rest of his post abbreviates this "identification of" with a series of somewhat vague "it"s.

It was my impression that we were discussing a slightly different question, namely what are the bases of identifications *with* (a territory, its "populace"). And related to this, can such identifications withstand de-naturalization.... Is there a "we" that could convene itself without naturalizing its conventions, without pre-deciding the criteria for answering the question "who is of us, and who is not"? The suggestion in Tom's post is that to proceed with this question requires unreflexive "mental privilege." Am I interpreting that correctly?

I'd be interested in Tom's own gloss of Hugh of St. Victor's maxim. To my ears, "that one is perfect to whom the whole world is exile" registers as Christian dogma. But then I am unfamiliar with Hugh....

Finally, on 5 March, Tom claimed that Oppen was pondering "how to live in a spirit world (and *that* one is the "numerous" world) when one is ineluctable [sic] alone and confronted w/ it at all times. But you [Joel] know all that."

I initially let the "you know all that" mislead me into thinking I did. But upon reflection, I wonder if Tom would expand on this spirit world=numerous world equation. My own, never rigorously examined, take on the numerous has always seen it in the context of a decentralization of value regimes, partly the consequence of social and political shifts that we might, if speaking in shorthand, indicate with such words/events as global decolonization and national (U.S.) desegregation. The historical, then, has stood in my thinking just where Tom would apparently put "the spiritual."

What I'd be interested in is a definition (however provisional) of the "spirit world" that is also the "numerous" one in Tom's reading of Oppen.

Since I happened to watch Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth* a few days ago, I find myself thinking also of his intentionally slight but insightful depictions of transitory bonds invented against the grain of what's "plausible" in an (international) social order still effectively structured by essentialist principles. But then, the film isn't as top-heavy as that sentence makes it sound.

Hoping to find that there are still people out (t)here.

Steve Evans

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10. Charles Bernstein

it's ascii but is art or "Oubliez .Gif"

Tue 15 Mar 1994

A friend passed this on to me, clipped (if that's the word) from the alt.ascii-art newsgroup.

From: [REDACTED] (Kaisar Neron)

Organization: The House Of Hades

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11. **susan**

Re: coeval with...

Tue 15 Mar 1994

To Steve Evans and all:

In answer to Steve's question about publishing in Hawaii and its relation- ship to locality. There are a lot of small presses here, that come and go with the financial and emotional tides. The most sturdy and influential one is Bamboo Ridge, which published Lois-Ann Yamanaka's recent book, and has by now sold over 3000 (I kid you not) copies here and on the mainland. Joe Balaz has his own press, I believe. While Bamboo Ridge is often criticized for publishing only

local Asian-American writers, or everything they get in pidgin, or only fishing/family/etc. poems, they have come out with at least two books that I know off that concentrate on native Hawaiian work, one edited by Dana Naone Hall, and another by Rodney Morales, on the life of George Helm. (Helm was an activist who drowned while protesting the American military's bombing of Kahoolawe, a small island that was bombed for over 40 years as target practice. George Bush stopped the practice right before the 1990 senate elections in an effort to throw some votes to the Republican, who lost.)

At a local literature conference held this past weekend, one of my colleagues pointed out that many, if not most, people find out about local lit through performances throughout the state--either readings by the poets themselves, or dramatizations that are presented at schools. Yamanaka, however, has run into censorship recently; schools want to make sure that she reads poems that aren't too profane! I may have mentioned that members of the Filipino community are upset by her speakers' use of stereotypes against Filipinos. An interesting problem of audience.

One of the problems in disseminating native Hawaiian literature is that so much of it isn't "literature," but chants that accompany hula. The grant in support of the Hawaii Literary Arts Council, for example, has no provision for paying performers to do hula--money is only provided for literary events (literally). The University of Hawaii press, while it publishes OLD Hawaiian stuff, has a very bad record on publishing any new Hawaii literature. They only picked up Milton Murayama's influential, *All I Asking For Is My Body*, after Murayama had self-published it, and had started to sell a lot of copies. They have a new series on Pacific literature, which seems geared toward other (south) Pacific lit. More exotic.

There was a predictable attack on the UH English dept at this conference, with several speakers calling for members of the department to learn the Hawaiian language and history so that we can do justice to the literature of the state. While the institution deserves the grief it gets, not enough was said about the professional pressures put on academics to ignore the local and to study "national" or international literatures. The university, like the press, is a national, not a local institution, for better AND for worse.

I'll close with a poem printed in the conference guide (which includes essays and poems). It's by Joe Tsujimoto, who looks local, but whose accent gives him up as a New Yorker--a katonk, or mainland Asian-American. The title is "Lucky Come Hawaii" which is based on the expression used by members of the 442nd in World War II, most of whom were from Hawaii: "Lucky We Live Hawaii." The identity issues are rife here:

As an American
with an Oriental face
whelped in Manhattan
on the edge of Harlem
in subways
to school in the Bronx
or fixing teletype machines on Broad St.
next to All
I've been asked "What country you from?"
"What language do you speak?"
and my eyes cloud over
like concrete. So I say
"What country YOU from?
What language YOU speak?"
since everyone speaks with an
accent.

Here, in the islands
I am invisible.
Till I speak.
Then, "Eh, brah,
you one katonk, yuh?
I thump my chest like Tarzan.
"yea, brah. Married one local girl
who wen grad from
Parrin'ton High School.
That kind."
Smiling, he looks at me
with dolphins in his eyes.

Across the flightline of the Maui airport
I walk from the plane
reading Lonesome Dove.
Eyes following mine.
They appear at the baggage carousel
to my left. Knowledgeable eyes
in a middle-aged,
mainland face, perhaps from Texas.
He smiles over our secret
nods in approval at my
perseverance.
The local boy learning to read.
High culture.

I sit in the lobby of the old
Kaiser Hospital
my newborn baby warm in my arms
next to two old ladies--very old
who coo "Oh, how adorable!"
"An angel from heaven!" "Look at those
cheeks!"
"They're like sunshine!" You must be
the happiest parent!"
when I stand to introduce my wife
newly come from signing documents. "And
here's the mother," I say.
Hair flashing, they look at each other
aghast--
when one says
"But we thought you were the mother."
Enough for now. Hope this answers your questions. Susan Schultz

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12. **Hans-Joachim Rieke**

German poetry

Fri 18 Mar 1994

Susan and others, for lack of time, but in order to make a start, here is a poem by a contemporary German poet (born 1953) who is one of a few experimental writers. Her name is Sabine Techel, she lives in Berlin

ES KUENDIGT SICH AN (there is no "Umlaut" in ASKI)

Bevor alles faellt kannst du
das Knirschen der Zaehne im Apfel und das
Reiben rutschenden Porzellans hoeren das
Schleifen der Wolken auf dem Hausdach
das Klappen der Fluegel vor dem Angriff
bevor einer zu gurgeln anhebt kannst du
traeumen wie er unters Waschbecken rutscht
um die Ecke einen schlimmen Blick durch den Zaun
es ist jetzt Zeit fuer kalte Haende
was nicht schlimm ist wenn man immer welche hat
und was schlimm ist will auch gelernt sein.
Die Kaelte wird noch heller
Im Laecheln steht wie einer weggeht

Wofuer es zu spaet ist lassen wir spaeter sein
Fuer Eile ist immer noch Zeit

Here is a semantic translation (I made this quickly, so its not authorized, nor very elaborate, just to give you an idea):

IT ANNOUNCES ITSELF

Before everything falls you can
hear the grinding of teeth in the apple and the
rubbing of sliding porcelain the
cloud's slurring on the roof
the clapping of wings before the attack

when one is on the threshold of gargling you can
dream how he slides under the sink
round the corner a bad look through the fence

it's time now for cold hands
which isn't bad if one always has some
and what is bad needs practice too.

The cold becomes even lighter
In the smile is written how one leaves
What is too late we leave (to be) later
There is always time for haste

More to follow
Hannah

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13. **Robert Drake**

french poetry in translation: reviewer wanted

Fri 18 Mar 1994

friends--

I'm looking for someone to review several recent publications of French poetry-in-translation. I am, sadly, not qualified to judge the quality of the translations... Phenomenal rewards in fame and karma, minimal demands on time... email direct to me and many thanks in advance

apologies in advance to the list-master, if this is in violation...

luigi-bob drake

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14. **Charles Bernstein**

Today at Notre Dame

Sat 19 Mar 1994

--Boundary (ID ULXsWHY1O+DzRJHThvR/1A)

Date: Fri, 18 Mar 1994 16:03:45 -0500

From: [REDACTED] (Stephen Fredman)

"Intersections of the Lyrical and the Philosophical" is part of the Henkels Visiting Scholars Series at the University of Notre Dame and sponsored by the English Department and the Program of Liberal Studies. The speakers, Ross Feld, Norman Finkelstein, Michael Heller, and Michael Palmer are top-notch critics of twentieth-century American poetry, who are also poets (and, in the case of Ross Feld, a novelist). On the creative writing side, there will be a poetry reading by Finkelstein, Heller, and Palmer Sunday night, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium, with a reception to follow in the Library Lounge. Also, there will be a creative writing workshop, with all four writers in attendance, in the Library Lounge on Tuesday, March 22, from 12-1 p.m. The conference proper will consist of interrelated talks on modern American poets, looking at how the poets have responded to the often countervailing claims of lyricism and philosophy. All of the talks will occur in 136 DeBartolo: at 4:15 p.m., March 21, Michael Heller will speak on George Oppen and Wallace Stevens; at 8:00 p.m., March 21, Norman Finkelstein will speak on William Bronk and Robert Duncan; at 4:15 p.m., March 22, Ross Feld will speak on George Oppen and Robert Duncan; and at 8:00 p.m., March 22, Michael Palmer will deliver a response to the other papers. These talks should be something quite special, since the speakers have been working on them for the past year. The conference has generated a lot of interest around the country, and we're expecting some visitors to join us from neighboring states. The conference papers will be published in a special issue of the journal SAGETRIEB, for which submissions are solicited.

--Boundary (ID ULXsWHY1O+DzRJHThvR/1A)--

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15. **susan**

Re: German poetry

Mon 21 Mar 1994

Hannah--The poem is intriguing. Just a couple of questions: 1) What is experimental about "experimental German poetry" these days? 2) How are poets responding to reunification and to right-wing violence, if they are? Thanks for sending. Susan S.

16. **Kristen Prevallet**
spirit world=numerous world

Mon 21 Mar 1994

Well I know it has been a week since Steve posted a message asking Tom Mandel to elaborate on the "definition of the 'spirit world' that is also the 'numerous' one", but I have been pondering the question and would now like to offer a reply. I suppose I should give a context, since it happened so long ago: Tom found the Kierkegaardian source for an Oppen poem, and concluded by saying "A very complex metonymy of text to human/legendary figure, to the social (war) questions of the moment of the poem and the 20th century is the metonymic whole being pondered; how to live in a spirit world (and *that* one is the "numerous" world) when one is ineluctable alone and confronted w/it at all times."

I am not sure what to say about Oppen, but I do think that the *numerous world* that includes all matters of both history and spirit, each existing by their own right of articulation and presence in the world, is a fitting way to talk about Charles Olson.

Some of us in Buffalo are lucky to be reading Olson for a seminar that Robert Creeley is teaching, and thinking about how Olson imagined a SYSTEM that would contain, well, his BEING--a re-imagination, that is, of the KNOWN world. As far as this question of the spirit goes, I would propose that in Olson one cannot say that 20th century social and political shifts are the only proofs that the world is numerous. I mean, there are historical shifts (like World War II, like the social changes of Gloucester); there are personal shifts (like ruptures of death and longing); there are spiritual shifts (like the moment that the formless, the unnamable are given a SPACE to work their mysteries); and one cannot say that one of the above (of course there are many more) is more inherently significant than any other-- cannot say that there is only history, only language, because being NUMEROUS the world contains multiples-- The world is NUMEROUS, that is, in how it, in all of its complexity and all of its MYSTERY effects us as HUMAN and how we, in turn effect the world. So the spirit does have a place in the numerous world, if only because as yet, we do not know the bounds of our imagination, nor have we yet named the strangeness of all it contains.

I know the Maximus poems are one of those books "we all have on our shelf" so I won't quote too much except, this:

I looked up and saw
its form
through everything
-it is sewn
in all parts, under
and over

(II.173 The Maximus Poems)

Kristin Prevallet

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17. **Hans-Joachim Rieke**

Re: German poetry

Sat 26 Mar 1994

Susan, sorry for the long delay. My child has been ill and I am working under high pressure, so I haven't had the power to hook into the net for a few days. I cannot answer your questions offhand, but am planning to write a little more extensively on German poetry for the list in a few weeks time, when some of the projects I am working on are properly set on their way and the two courses I will have to teach starting April 15th are organized and planned. Generally there are a few experimental poets in the line of Sabine Techel - whose other poems in the collection aren't quite as good. Literary studies in Germany say that because of the War and the Holocaust German literature has been preoccupied with moral and political problems. There are interesting poets in the past though which can and do serve as models for a more experimental poetry that seems to be supported by one of the most important publishing houses right now (Suhrkamp). (Sabine Techel, Thomas Kling et al.) Besides Dada there is of course Celan, then Ingeborg Bachmann and Unica Zürn - Austrian I believe - (who wrote complicated anagrams, and was rediscovered in the last few years). The fall of the wall is another problem for some writers from the east. Their topic - if it was dissident before - has changed so dramatically that a lot of them are in a kind of crisis; plus: one of the most interesting ones - Sascha Andersen - was discovered to have been a Stasi-informant. Worrying who was and who wasn't has preoccupied much energy of German writers in recent years. There is an interesting literary scene in Austria (one of them has translated a few poems by Bernstein - and a very interesting scene in Scandinavia which is translated into German and influential. In Scandinavia the student movement was also a radical cultural movement for experimental writing. Some names: Inger Christensen (systempoetry), Paal Helge Haugen (dotnovel), Jan Erik Vold, Eldrid Lunden (minimal poetry), etc. More soon Best Hannah

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