

@poetics

The UB Poetics Discussion Group

Archive of Electronic Correspondence **October 1997**

611 messages · Wed 1 Oct 1997 – Fri 31 Oct 1997

*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

Alan Sokal published his book in Paris in October and the list, which had watched him hoax Social Text eighteen months earlier, came back for the sequel: a hundred and forty mentions, and a thread whose title, SoKalled, is the best pun of the year. Elvis got a hundred and twelve, because Sylvester Pollet had a friend *"just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis"* and a visit to Graceland who wanted poems about Elvis, and Pollet said he would ask. But the month's business began on the fourth, when a man nobody had much heard of did the thing this list had been formally begged not to do.

In June of last year Ken Edwards, answering a perfectly civil question about British poets, had appended a plea from the bottom of his soul: please, please, do not let anybody start another thread on what exactly langpo is. The room obeyed him for sixteen months. Then Bob Grumman posted under the heading Defining Language Poetry, and his first sentence is a confession and a diagnosis at once: *"I'm a taxonomaniac"*. He was tired, he said, of going through these discussions over and over and never knowing precisely what was meant. Sixty-one letters followed across three threads. Edwards is mentioned twice in the volume, in neither of them.

What makes Grumman interesting is that he had no standing at all, and said so — he wrote, he explained, as mostly an outsider to language poetry, which is precisely why he could ask. Insiders had spent a decade not defining it because they were in it. And he then produced a definition, which is more than anybody on this list had managed in twenty months: poetry that significantly breaks the rules of grammar or spelling for expressive effect. Not the identity of the poets, not their politics, not their philosophical outlook. A rule about sentences.

And then the sentence that undoes it. Because of the confusion around the name, Grumman went on, in his own critical writing he does not use it; he renames the thing xenolinguistic poetry — though he would rather, he added, call it language poetry. Read that twice. A man arrives from outside, succeeds where the room has failed, and can only succeed by abandoning the word. Meanwhile, in the thread next door, Mark Wallace was writing in support of Fredrik Hertzberg against *"a new round of language poetry bashing"*, and observing that he had published a piece years before on why such bashing is so common among poets. The room was defending a name it could not define.

There is a precedent and it is exact. In April of 1996 Chris Stroffolino typed the nonsense-word quertzblatt into an argument, and by that June the room was using it as an adjective, fluently, with an agreed sense, having invented from nothing a word that worked. In October 1997 a stranger looked at the room's central term, found it unusable, and made a new one. I have set Grumman's definition and his renaming in the same volume, four lines apart, because this room's whole twenty months come to this: it can make a word mean anything at all, and it cannot make its own words mean what they say. Ken Edwards knew. He asked them not to.

— *K. M. F.*

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- 453. rob wilson — if UK/US poesy had a wide circulation
- 454. Jack Foley — Re: Poets on Prose -Reply -Reply
- 455. Jack Foley — Re: Poets on Prose -Reply -Reply
- 456. henry — Re: ILS 1.8
- 457. Sylvester Pollet — Re: Elvis poems
- 458. David Golumbia — Re: non and hypernon
- 459. Fred Muratori — Re: Elvis poems
- 460. Safdie Joseph — Re: Poets on Prose -Reply
- 461. Sylvester Pollet — elvis poems
- 462. Harold Rhenisch — Re: sonnets and certainty
- 463. Jordan Davis — Re: sonnets and certainty

- 464. Christopher Alexander — Re: hear we go again
- 465. mark weiss — (no subject)
- 466. mark weiss — Re: hear we go again
- 467. Harold Rhenisch — the forklift school of verse
- 468. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed
- 469. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Poets on Prose -Reply
- 470. henry gould — Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed
- 471. trace s. ruggles — Re: the forklift school of verse
- 472. Mark Baker — Re: Poets on Prose -Reply
- 473. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed
- 474. Aviva Vogel — Re: ILS 1.8
- 475. Pritchett,Pat — Re: ILS 1.8
- 476. Aldon Nielsen — All Fall Down
- 477. Bob Grumman — Re: math/logic and poetry
- 478. R. Gancie — Sokallese

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- 479. Harold Rhenisch — Re: the forklift school of verse
- 480. Hugh Steinberg — Re: elvis poems
- 481. mark weiss — Re: elvis poems
- 482. Ken Edwards — Mathematics and poetry
- 483. hen — Re: ILS 1.8
- 484. Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher — Re: Sokallese
- 485. Henry Gould — Re: Sokallese
- 486. R. Gancie — Sokallese: Errors in human transmission
- 487. Sylvester Pollet — Elvis poems
- 488. Robert Archambeau — Re: Elvis poems
- 489. Maria Damon — fwd: Asian American Poetry Inquiry
- 490. Maria Damon — Re: Elvis poems
- 491. henry — Re: ILS 1.8
- 492. Maria Damon — address query
- 493. Maria Damon — south asian women poets
- 494. Robert Archambeau — Re: sonnets and certainty
- 495. Franklin Bruno — the forms and the laws
- 496. Danny Collier — Elvis poems
- 497. trace s. ruggles — Re: Elvis poems
- 498. Ira Lightman — Re: math/logic and poetry
- 499. Steve Evans — Re: ILS 1.8 and then some
- 500. Aviva Vogel — Re: ILS 1.8
- 501. Susan Clark — Re: south asian women poets
- 502. p. durgin — Address request / E. Myles
- 503. mark weiss — Re: the forms and the laws
- 504. William Burmeister Prod — (no subject)
- 505. James Finnegan — Re: Elvis poems
- 506. Graham W Foust — Re: elvis poems
- 507. Pam Brown — Re: south asian women poets
- 508. Aviva Vogel — Re: ILS 1.8 and then some
- 509. Thomas Bell — Re: the forms and the laws
- 510. Jordan Davis — Re: sonnets and certainty
- 511. David Israel — ars po

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- 512. Tom Beard — Re: Sokallese
- 513. Hugh Steinberg — readings
- 514. Douglas Barbour — Re: the forms and the laws
- 515. Pritchett,Pat — Re: sci fi poetry
- 516. groberts — Z=A.9/?

- 517. henry — Re: Z=A.9/?
- 518. henry g' — friday's riddle
- 519. Thomas Bell — Reenactment of feeling in writing/reading and Nick Piombino quote
- 520. David R. Israel — Re: Elvis poems

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- 521. simon — Re: Elvis poems
- 522. jarnot — students of r.duncan, etc.
- 523. Susan Wheeler — Readings
- 524. creinervppp — litpress.com
- 525. robert drake — Re: Hans Ebner (fwd)
- 526. Susan Schultz — Louis Simpson
- 527. Susan Schultz — Louis Simpson, ps
- 528. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Louis Simpson, ps
- 529. John Tranter — Jacket magazine # 1 and # 2

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- 530. Alan rm -r Sondheim — Reading
- 531. Rob Hardin — The Films of Henry Hills at the Anthology Film Archives
- 532. David R. Israel — several absurds
- 533. Ryan Whyte — and
- 534. Marcella — Talisman Benefit
- 535. Jordan Davis — Re: several absurds
- 536. Douglas Barbour — Re: Louis Simpson
- 537. Kathleen Crown — Re: Readings
- 538. Bob Grumman — The Latest on Comprepoetica
- 539. David R. Israel — Re: several absurds
- 540. James Brook — ellen ullman, close to the machine
- 541. Herb Levy — Re: Elvis poems
- 542. Stacie Slotnick — George Oppen's "A Kind of Garden: A Poem for my Sister"

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- 543. simon — Re: Elvis poems
- 544. Michael Heller — (no subject)
- 545. Safdie Joseph — Re: Beyond Baroque Saturday night
- 546. Jack Foley — SOKAL & LACAN
- 547. henry gould — Re: SOKAL & LACAN
- 548. Herb Levy — Re: friday's riddle
- 549. mark weiss — Re: SOKAL & LACAN
- 550. henry gould — Re: friday's riddle
- 551. Peter Ganick — Re: litpress.com
- 552. Peter Ganick — Re: litpress.com
- 553. I'm cris cheek — cris cheek seeking urgent forward to british poets list

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- 554. jarnot — Rodefer & Sharma reading
- 555. Maria Damon — Re: Rodefer & Sharma reading
- 556. p. durgin — Boxkite
- 557. Mark Prejsnar — Mass disappearance
- 558. Brent Long — Frank Stanford Film to be shown in Chicago
- 559. Bob Grumman — A Minor Item about Comprepoetica
- 560. Loss Glazier — Announcement re: EPC
- 561. Carolyn Guertin — Mac Cormack/McCaffery
- 562. Kenneth Goldsmith — Re: Another Idea
- 563. Steven Marks — puffs came in lanes
- 564. Alan Grep Sondheim — poem-message on the moo (fwd)

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- 565. Thomas Bell — address
- 566. Sylvester Pollet — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 567. Marcella — FW: Mass disappearance
- 568. Steven Marks — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 569. henry gould — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 570. William Burmeister Prod — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 571. William Burmeister Prod — Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)
- 572. Harold Rhenisch — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 573. Alan Grep Sondheim — Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)
- 574. Bob Grumman — A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
- 575. William Burmeister Prod — Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)
- 576. Rachel Loden — season of the witch

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- 577. cris cheek — Re: ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line
- 578. Douglas Barbour — Re: season of the witch
- 579. Mark Prejsnar — Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
- 580. hg — pronounce-ment
- 581. aerialeedge — Nominations please
- 582. Dean A. Brink — Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
- 583. p. durgin — Re: Nominations please
- 584. Carol Mirakove — Re: Nominations please
- 585. acgold01 — Broms
- 586. Mark Prejsnar — Re: pronounce-ment
- 587. Gwyn McVay — Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
- 588. Gwyn McVay — Re: Nominations please
- 589. Tom Beard — Re: puffs came in lanes
- 590. hghghghg — Re: pronounce-ment
- 591. Safdie Joseph — Re: pronounce-ment
- 592. hghghghg — Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
- 593. Bob Grumman — Re: pronounce-ment
- 594. Brian Carpenter — Re: Nominations please
- 595. David R. Israel — Re: Nominations please

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- 596. Michael Magee — Re: Nominations please
- 597. Ed Moran /General Pub. 4th Floor — Re: Nominations please
- 598. Brent Long — Re: Nominations please
- 599. p. durgin — Re: Nominations please
- 600. R. Gancie — SOKAL AND LACAN
- 601. David Benedetti — Re: Nominations please
- 602. Pritchett,Pat — Re: Nominations please
- 603. Bob Grumman — A News Release
- 604. Henry Gould — SOAK-A-LACAN
- 605. mark weiss — lacanic statement
- 606. Juliana Spahr — reading report from Honolulu
- 607. henry g — friday's riddle
- 608. Bob Grumman — Re: Nominations please
- 609. George Bowering — Re: Nominations please
- 610. R. Gancie — Sokal & Lacan: Correction
- 611. mark weiss — (no subject)

1. **Rachel Levitsky**

Re: thanks

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Hoa Nguyen wrote:

>

> Dear List People--

>

> I will still be receiving mail at this address but I won't be
> subscribing to the list anymore, so if you address any questions
> to/towards me, you will need to back channel for me to see it or to
> garner a response.

>

> Feeling weird but ok,

>

> Hoa

> Dear Hoa,

 Your departure will make the list a more lonely place.

take care,

Rachel

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2. **aerialedge**

Re: Lynn Hejinian's essay "Rejection of Closure"

Wed 1 Oct 1997

A revised and expanded version of "Rejection of Closure" appears in *_Onward: Contemporary Poetry & Poetics_* ed. Peter Baker, Peter Lang Publishing, 1996. Another essay by Lyn (one n) I'd recommend is "The Quest for Knowledge in the Western Poem" which appears in *_Disembodied Poetics_* ed Waldman & Schelling, U. New Mexico Press, 1994.

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3. **George Bowering**

Re: People of Color

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Regarding Richard Wright and "Melanctha"---

I believe I read somewhere about 30 years ago that during the Depression Wright had some job with one of those public works projects (back when his country seemed to be developing into a democracy), in which he was a teacher

trying to raise reading skills with poor Blacks. And he used "Melanctha" as a kind of textbook.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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4. **George Bowering**

Re: Lynn Hejinian's essay "Rejection of Closure"

Wed 1 Oct 1997

*Hello All,
Does anyone know how I might obtain a copy of Hejinian's essay
"Rejection of Closure," originally in Poetry Journal, sometime in the
late 1980's? Web searches have been unsuccessful so far.
Thanks,
Pete Balestrieri*

A lot of it is in Hoover's Norton Anthology of postmodern poesy

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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5. **Fredrik Hertzberg**

Re: Social Tangles

Wed 1 Oct 1997

*What I disagree with is the now accepted fact that art can contain, or
represent in some way, the same sense of social urgency as a
conversation, say, or discussions like those on this list. Art's power
is not in what it addresses, but in what it is capable of reflecting.*

Why can't reflection (in Adorno's sense) be socially urgent? Isn't one idea in Adornos' Aesthetic Theory that art's reflection is the best (& only) agent of social critique?

our social desires. At times, 'experiemental' forms, the ones, perhaps Kevin publishes in Mirage, though he doesn't necessarily like them, appear inhuman to me because they repel any human sympathy I might be capable of lending the poem. I often always agree with the social cause inherent in such poems. But the inhumane disregard for the reader strikes me as an ingenuine gesture on the poet's part. Because, as the poet strives to communicate social injustice, he or she alienates those who might otherwise support it. I realize humanism itself is suspect of

But aren't the forms otherwise available for expressing 'humanist' alienation often alienated/ alienating in themselves? You seem to forget that they're also cultural (not natural) forms. & What wd. it mean for the writer to regard (rather than disregard) the reader? Aren't such regards always fictional?

1) This Language-influenced poetry lacks a unified subject of expression, ie, the poem's voice is fragmented, or composed of many voices. It is paratactic and employed as a formal element. I suppose this is due to some mimetic sense of same disunity in the culture at large, and is potentially a valid expression of such.

Why does 'voice' always have to serve as a model for explaining what Language po doesn't do? What I enjoy in much disjunctive poetry is the distraction of not becoming absobed and engaged by a persona (emotional or otherwise)/ several personas/ voices but finding out about language as a medium, when and why and how language controls, lets go of control & etc.

4) It distributes a wide range of images throughout a poem, but without an apparent purpose. It is unable to form recognizable patterns and therefore confuses, increases the human distance of which I spoke earlier, and takes the power of interpretation away from the reader by not giving said reader a leg to stand on.

Sometimes humans need distance from the human/ humanist world. & sometimes we need a more distanced control (or non-control) than what 'a leg to stand on' implies.

I don't see how any of the above benefits social causes in any way. Whereas, lyric poetry, by recognizing suffering, employing language to heighten sensitivity or sympathy, and appealing to the humane impulses of the reader was able to address similar social issues. But it

What's the point of addressing if it only hightens sympathy and recognition?

I'm not just asking to provoke, I'm interested in the relation between Adorno & the language poets & why you (/others) think that they're so incongruent.

Fredrik Hertzberg

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6. **henry**

Re: Social Tangles

Wed 1 Oct 1997

On Wed, 1 Oct 1997 11:21:36 +0300 Fredrik Hertzberg said:

>

>Why does 'voice' always have to serve as a model for explaining what
>Language po doesn't do? What I enjoy in much disjunctive poetry is the
>distraction of not becoming absorbed and engaged by a persona (emotional or
>otherwise)/ several personas/ voices but finding out about language as a
>medium, when and why and how language controls, lets go of control & etc.

You raise some good points here - I guess my problem with this approach to writing is I have trouble imagining "language" doing ANYTHING by itself. There's always a human agent, selecting, distorting the feedback. It's always a voice, even behind the mask of "pure language". But I see your point about distancing the poem from simply recording the self or selves. It gets boring without the off-beat. Where would I be, in fact, a simplified boring digital-talk-self, without Jack Spandrift there to raise the ante? - Henry Gould

Henry, you "talk" too much. Did you hear Gene Autry died? - Jack Spandrift

Why don't you ever talk about women cowboys, Henry?

- Elliza McGrand

OK, I will. I met one in Wyoming once, when I worked on the Barlow Ranch for a few weeks before hitching west. She was named June, I think, was blonde, always dressed in spangles & such, but could shoe a horse lay fence wire & rodeo with the rest of the crew. I think she was the top rodeo rider in Wyoming for a while. That was about 25 yrs ago. My brother could tell you more about her. He was a regular there for years. - Henry Gould

Don't believe a word of it, Elliza.

- Eric Blarnes

Eric Blarnes is a coyote.

- Coyote

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7. **David R. Israel**

(Fwd) impostures intellectuelles

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Poetas & Poeticos,

the appended item (from the So.Asian Lit listserv) is apt to prove of some interest to several here.

Seems Dr. Sokal will make even more of a name for himself now.

yours,
d.i.

----- Forwarded Message Follows -----

Date: Wed, 1 Oct 1997 10:35:47 +0100
From: Mario Menti <[REDACTED]>
Subject: impostures intellectuelles
To: Multiple recipients of list SASIALIT <[REDACTED]>

Re. the current debate about Spivak and over-complicated writing, the following may be of interest (if not strictly topical):

Two scientists, American Alan Sokal and Belgian Jean Bricmont, are causing a stir in Paris with their book "Impostures Intellectuelles", published next week. They attack the writings of, amongst others, Jaques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and Regis Debray. They write: "We want to 'deconstruct' the reputation that these texts have of being difficult because they are deep. We show that if they seem incomprehensible, it is for the very good reason that they have nothing to say." And about the above-mentioned thinkers they say: "They talk abundantly of scientific theories of which they have, at best, a very vague understanding. They display a superficial erudition by throwing words at the reader in a context where they have no relevance. They demonstrate a veritable intoxication with words, combined with a superb indifference to their meaning." Jacques Lacan (a well known psychoanalyst) is criticised for "arbitrarily mixing key words of mathematical theory, without in the least caring about their meaning." The authors take particular exception to one of Mr Lacan's lesser known theories, in which he argues that "the erect male organ, not as itself, not even as image, but as the missing piece of the desired image, is thus equal to the square root of -1 of the highest produced meaning."

According to the Guardian newspaper here in the UK, the book is "already a topic of furious - and unfathomable - debate in the cafes of the Latin Quarter".

There is also a fairly short (French) article about it on the Web, at <http://www.yahoo.fr/actualite/970925/culture/875179380-yaho875182886036.html>

At the very least, I suppose it shows that this issue is certainly not limited to Indian writers.

Mario.

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8. **Jordan Davis**

Re: (Fwd) impostures intellectuelles

Wed 1 Oct 1997

David --

I was disappointed to hear this might not be true:

The authors take particular exception to one of Mr Lacan's lesser known theories, in which he argues that "the erect male organ, not as itself, not even as image, but as the missing piece of the desired image, is thus equal to the square root of -1 of the highest produced meaning."

I hope someone at Poetry Headquarters will put Messrs Coleridge Stevens Deleuze and Ashbery on full alert for this so-called Sokal...

or rather I hope Laura Riding is having a good laugh--

Jordan who apologizes for any adornesque rumblings about art and the economy / and or class as more fundamental than race/sex relations .. from now on it's just behaviorism and fresh squeezed grapefruit juice

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9. **Pierre Joris**

Re: (Fwd) impostures intellectuelles

Wed 1 Oct 1997

David -- the link your cited article gives is defunct. But for anybody interested in the French reaction to the Sokal/Bricmont book just out in France, check the following web page of the French daily "Libération":

<http://www.liberation.fr/sokal/index.html>

It's in French, sorry about that, but it also has a link to Sokal's own homepage in NY where he has carefully archived all the "sokal affair" data.

Pierre

David R. Israel wrote:

Poetas & Poeticos,

the appended item (from the So.Asian Lit listserv) is apt to prove of some interest to several here.

Seems Dr. Sokal will make even more of a name for himself now.

yours,

d.i.

--

=====

pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202
tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]
http://www.albany.edu/~joris/

"I have never been able to tell a beginning
from an end." — Georges Braque

=====

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10. **Pritchett, Pat**

Re: Lynn Hejinian's essay "Rejection of

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Peter,

You can find it in Peter Baker's *_Onward_* (I think that's the title), an anthology of contemporary poetics. I recently xeroxed a copy of it. Would be happy to send to you if you are unable to locate it. Backchannel me with your address.

Patrick Pritchett

From: Peter Balestrieri

To: POETICS

Subject: Lynn Hejinian's essay "Rejection of Closure"

Date: Tuesday, September 30, 1997 8:43PM

Hello All,

Does anyone know how I might obtain a copy of Hejinian's essay "Rejection of Closure," originally in *Poetry Journal*, sometime in the late 1980's? Web searches have been unsuccessful so far.

Thanks,

Pete Balestrieri

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11. **Holly Crawford**

Re: Weapons named after people & military slang

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Flour dust is very combustible. It will and has exploded. A flour mill in Minn. went up late last of early this century. Installation artist recently had

concept piece for the Walker MN that involved conveyor belts and moving flour from room to room. It was built and the fire marshall never let then open. I had mentioned this up to the fire marshall and my father, who has a degree in chemistry and family owed large bakery was horrified. He was headed to the phones before the flipped the switch. It seems it's electrical spark that will cause it to explode.

I have no knowledge of explosives - why, I wonder, did they mix explosives with flour - were they trying to harness the self-raising power?

| From: Kali Tal <[REDACTED]>

| Aunt Jemima: explosive mixed with flour (WWII)

Offerings Project

Send me an offer.

URL:http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~geo/holly_crawford.html

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12. Alan Jen Sondheim

Ma, A Novel

Wed 1 Oct 1997

(This, all of 20 pp. most likely, unless spread across a book with the proper spacings, is the finished novel. You will see how it relates to Poetics, Jabes for example, Blanchot, Kim Dawn's () perhaps, and as I indicated elsewhere, the text exists between the letters, thus new characters appear, 26 x 26 or 676 of them; likewise, these adjacencies produce 676 x 676 ...

Enjoy, delete, pass on, the text is yours for the asking. Do read from the beginning, since there have been changes. Do read to the end, since there is a future. Alan)

Ma, A Novel

Clara and Travis meet in a foreign city. She returns to Fukuoka-Yr. They correspond by email halfway across the earth. He travels to Fukuoka-Yr to meet her at the airport. As the plane approaches, he's surprised to see herds of animals near the edge of the city. He'd have to ask her later.

Ma, A Novel

Which I do work on: "Her nights, his days. Her days, his nights."

And that he comes to a foreign city and does not understand the language. And that the airport is brown. He's got a sheet of paper, he can't decipher. What is it, where is she. He shows it, there's a taxi, a sheroot, he gets in, it's already old, nervous. He goes somewhere, recognizes nothing. Characters in other scripts, cuneiforms for all he knows. Llamas cross his path.

But the city's vacant, her place is vacant. Locked or unlocked - in this novel, it won't make a difference. He goes in, the door opens. There's nothing, no clues. It's clean, no dust, breakins. He doesn't know. This is a man, Travis maybe, who doesn't know a thing.

He can't find her friends because everyone shrugs. He meets people who speak his language, easy now. They know her. They haven't 'seen her around.' She's the kind of person one sees around. She's private. But there are no rumors, nothing. She works in medicine.

Well, she hasn't been at the clinic. Nothing is missing. You can see where this is going, of course. Doors close behind him, before he reaches the knob. The keys are like Berlin keys, they go through the hole, out the other side. That's important, there are windows through rooms and no one is ever looking.

Now something has to happen for the novel to be a novel, what then? Perhaps a clue, but there are always clues, even clues in the beginning of things, the glance of a dark-haired woman at the airport, a slip of cellophane on the floor of her flat. Clues are things that gather meaning, reverse time, reconstitute events. But things are cluttered here; the sook is filled with blood where the animals are slaughtered, nomads come in from the countryside, shrines are staffed by garage gong bands. The Genkai Park inexplicably closes down; there are guards, something's happened.

No clues then, but this happening. What could be on the run. Later, two people are captured, he doesn't understand. There's a celebration in the city involving a wheeled boat which capsizes against chains of humans carrying placards of waves. People are really injured and the clinic's on hand.

He finds food, stays in her place. He's ill-at-ease, a woman comes wearing a veil and he pays the rent, holding up the currency of his country. He's surprised how little everything costs. He should feel as if he were now a part of her life, the woman who was going to meet him, but he doesn't. He might wear a bracelet or necklace one day. He wears her jumpers, goes out aimlessly. He thinks, it's all come to a halt here.

He finds himself listening to himself finding himself, but he's not lost. Just that there is this constant wonder at the world. He's more in love with her than ever before. One day, he goes to a screening of silent films, Melies. Women are disappearing all over the place. He'll make a film about a magician, a woman who

brings men back to life. The woman trance-trains, has visions. Then she sets up mechanisms, everyone knows all of this and she's quite successful. She dies. Her extras are out of work, lifeless. They form a secret circle. They keep her corpse, have visions, try to raise the dead. They have visions, but they don't trance- train, in fact they do nothing at all. She comes back to life.

There's a knock at the door of the flat. He's been there for months, un- recognizable. His nights, her days. His days, her nights. Whammo-kazowie, she's at the door. It would be presumption to ask. She talks about vis- ions, what she knows. Beneath the flat, there are missile silos. Next door, enigma code writers are hard at work. Across the way, the buildings are part of the largest ship ever constructed, you can see the alley- gangway down to the sea. The ship begins to move, everything shakes for a minute. The ship stops again, earthquake he says, no she replies.

She's learned everything, signs and symbols. She can't read the cuneiform either, but insists it isn't important. What comes between the letters, she confides, that's it more or less. What comes between the letters, he realizes, is his own alphabet. Everything shudders, they take the Shin- kansen back to the she- root stand near the roman ruins. The drivers are different and perhaps she departs.

But the novel won't go this way. It will be populated with expatriates, colorful characters named Abdul, Charisma, and Jennifer. They'll drink a lot and expostulate. There will be all sorts of other horizons strategically across going-native. Sarongs and turbans, veils for the women, who would and wouldn't. There are fires on the other side of the city - they never come nearer. Guerillas, one opines. They listen to the short- wave, marry local, leave one by one. They fan out across the city.

No, they don't, nothing like that happens. There are clues to the woman's disappearance. The airport appears to be a mechanism of some sort, the runways laid out in shamanic configuration, easy hiragana squared off for the takeoff and approach. The stewards knew he was arriving. The pilots watch him, uneasily, warily, he can't help noticing. Whatever is afoot takes him by surprise. Nausea, fear.

And then, the rest of the novel. Things happen.

Fragmeant

Travis wrote to her. The time and return was .465 seconds on average, not bad when Fukuoka had been considered the center of the world in the four-teenth century, his own hometown unknown, fallow, untended. He was aware of the gaping maw of the sun, violent lunacy of the swinging moon which rarely

showed its face - from its night, the radiance of her day showed forth. Mesmeric, he adapted himself to her schedule, his sun-up suppers with his friends were the occasion of back-channel conversations about sanity and the diameter of the earth. He joked he was the only one aware of circumference, of what a sphere was and meant - that he was the only one earth-bound, everyone else walking with stitched eyes and habits formed from childhood. He knew the sphere of stars and its awkwardness, how it shuddered above and below the equator, the rings of luminescent star-clouds and their satellites, give and take of unknown constellations.

But it was his doubling that fascinated him, breakfast as dusk rose, not dawn, sleeping at odd hours reflecting gaps and silences, and his Monday night class that began oddly enough on Tuesday morning at seven - he remained surprised that the students were alert, keen on the speed of the Net, which should have been accountably slow and clumsy.

His clocks gained a minute, lost a minute. He tried to meet himself half-way, like a friend. His nights were bright with untoward clarity, unthundered days, dark, uncanny, silent. Someone fixed the stars, he thought, they were never when they were supposed to be.

She wrote him about the llamas.

Llamas

The llama glistened, black carapace covered within insistent tortoise plates gleaming in the brown air of noon. It didn't move. Sirens in the distance constantly changing, warding off violent cars close to veering out of control. The head turned. Smoke from the nostrils, soot-nose beneath glowering eyes, body tensed with radiant energy. Shimmered waves of heat rose from the back, the breath, the brow.

She noted this in her brown notebook, ruled with blue lines. She wrote him about the llamas near the Shikuneem, vicinity of Kasuga-Shi. They were llamas, Luria, she was a tracker with a blue felt hat, sorobon and notebook, penning ebb and flow, turbulent streams of animals burrowing into the world. They were moving in from the arroyos south-west of the city, the burning-plains traveled only by the Shinkansen. It was said that bones sparkled as the trains rushed by, straight unbuckled rails held up to the sanded grounds too hot for human touch.

Travis remembered her uneasy witnessing, now the thing before him, as if produced by the cuneiform inscriptions everywhere in his vicinity. It was a one world, transitive, her llama text taking root, hair, and bone; she was nowhere to be found. Had she left him these animals, created by pure description? Was her disappearance contained in the eye of the beast, the vestiges of retinal memory

destroyed by the fire next time? For a second he felt the creature recognized him, but that second passed, replaced by the uncertain knowledge that he was losing her trail as the purely exotic began its uneasy hold.

Did she watch from the grey-pink building tiled against the sky? Did she lay harbor-dead, trolled by fish and crustacean, memory lost and tangled in kelp, seed-pods of aquatic plants adapting to stratified pollutions dragged from shore to sea-bottom and back again?

Travis found his language tangled as well, the product of uncertainty, loneliness, and an ignorance so pure he had no name for it.

Parting the Thirty-Fourth

Clara reached over for her box of cigarettes; if Avi didn't leave soon, all hell would break loose. He'd already fallen off the futon three times in the night, what would you expect from a gaijin who faded in and out of the desert weekly.

The Desert Weekly, lead story: Gaijin loses grip on wadi edge, plunges two meters to gravel pitstop, slight remains of moisture lapped by desert frogs. Pictures, page 2.

When he left, she turned on the radio, cd player, computer, called the airport, Fukuoka International. The name for city was 'ir,' Fukuoka-Yr carved in cuneiform on the corner lintels everywhere. They never let you forget. Flight 75, San Francisco, Oregon, Nepal, Catalina Island, Oman, Fukuoka-Yr in that order. It was on time and she imagined the plane poised perfectly in a planetary ring, waiting for the moment to descend. She dressed, left the bet-ie, headed down the street.

The llamas were waiting as she stepped into the troika. She headed out on Number One Highway, south, left on Shogun. She hadn't worn her hat, see, for quite some time now. They stopped by the marshes, approximately five kilometers from the terminal. She watched the plane make perfect descent, dialed Robert immediately, continued on her way.

When Robert answered the phone, Jane was in the other room. They spoke in whispers, aha. She told him all about the recent demographics, head-counts. Later he'd say she was nervous, preoccupied. He was a specialist in car-toucherie, useful where the only secure mode of communication was still clay-based. Lady Sarashina had written

Were it not for river rock and pine
This clay would not have impressed
My name, my love, your _hon_

or book, mnemonics of his mind, to whom she had written, borrowing from Chinese Ch'in-fu, the impress of the reed pen, striations of thought as the seven strings, seventeen vibratos, sounded, then faded into ma. Clay into thought, material into the silence of the word, all this heaven.

Clara was circumscribed by Robert's interest in her demographics, by the movements of llamas across the burning plains, by the distance of the troika (found by the side of the road) from the airport. Her disappearance dissolved into the gaze of Travis, waiting for her, waiting and waiting - a gaze transformed into a glance, then the look-see of astonishment as he began to understand she might never meet him again. Would he remember her voice, enumerating herds, packs, gaggles, schools, flocks, enervated groupings of the awkward black mammals, their armor-plating clacking in the heat of the day?

Every one of these people were breathing, in and out.

Clara turned over lazily, suddenly realizing what had happened. She woke with a start in utter darkness. The worst had happened. "Travis," she said, uncertainly, "Travis."

'Yes,' he replied, as a hand slid along her arm, her face, her hair. "I'm here, darling, I'm here."

On or Off the Mark

He rose early, left her house. After the second week, he had installed a tighter lock on the door, although the thin window-frames were easy enough to puncture. Now he felt he was in her shell, the doubled times between his home city and Fukuoka collapsed into the singularity of her absence.

As he rounded the corner, a young man on a blue bicycle passed, face intent on negotiating past the yellow just-ahead-truck. They collided.

Travis felt for his glasses, notebook; young Sven apologized. Clockwork could be heard in the midst of the spilled packages. A woman crossed the street, umbrella in hand. "I'm quite sorry," he stammered. "No damage done," he replied.

"Everything is time here," Sven said. "Their whole lives are planned out for them, even the priesthood. Monotheisms take their toll." What wasn't there to understand.

"Have you seen her, by the way," asked Travis, "the woman who used to live here - I was supposed to meet her weeks ago. She's been missing as far as I can tell."

"I've been missing her."

"You reported her to the police?" He had, with little luck, no results, less comprehension. "Gaijin," they had said, "Avarim," it happens all the time. They have their own customs, come and go, the trade-routes and the like. Sven nodded. He had long blond hair, vacant gaze, thin leather jacket.

"I've seen her," he said, deciding to tell. "She's the one I drove to the airport, we had a spill on the way. She was gone when I came to. I didn't say anything to the police - moonlighting. Mind if I smoke?"

Had a cigarette, continued. "I knew her for several years here, we're a close community. She was aloof, prone to raging in the streets late at night, we got along. Had something to do with the llamas, I couldn't see the point in tracking imports you know. She thought they made patterns in the city - the only patterns here are the runways at Fukuoka-Yr International. They're a glyph you might read from the air, a sign for love, odd in this environment."

They looked around at the factories, smoke, grey-pink buildings, men and women speaking incomprehensible tongues, Palawian, Sumerian, Hittite. Everyone was bound by cuneiform, common among them. Everyone, even Travis, could he but read the literal writing on the wall.

"She was involved with something," Sven said. "She talked about a new kind of corporation, I didn't follow her. It didn't make sense, but this was, she insisted, different, it drew a blank where an economy might be."

"Drew a blank?"

"It emptied finance, not engaged, didn't zero out, plus and minus, assets, debits, that sort of thing. It had power in production. It had chains, flows, automations. She was tracking it through the llamas, said they were intelligent, agents of sorts, traffickers."

"I never saw llamas like these before," Travis said. "Carapaces are unusual, pangolins or armadillos, yes, but not your typical ungulates. For all I know, they might be wired, plasticine, something of that nature. All those plates. Look there."

Travis loved explanation, it made sense of the world. As a child, he took screws apart. He ordered the world and the world was filled with orders filled and delivered. Now he thought, the city, the city. Now he thought, I'm totally wrong here. He wanted to return to the house.

Suddenly Travis knew that Sven knew something, Sven knew Travis knew nothing at all.

What the World Did and Said

A fierce wind drove across the plains. Tumbleweed blew about, covering the Shinkansen tracks and trains slowed down for the nowhere sight. The sun gloomed red and sullen against the silhouettes of mountain torn from the planet's paper scroll. Lizards scuttled across the pock-marked rocks and earth; centipedes scurried under cover, their legs coated with tiny crystals of embedded sand. Even the llamas moved slowly, their scales burnished by gusts scouring the remnants of the natural world.

Still the stars turned in more-or-less constellations, in a frozen sky above the doomed melee. Below, a lidded eye opened to nothing, closed quickly; above, vacuous light reflected only clouded surfaces for whole races elsewhere intent on penetrating the secrets of the earth.

The moon and sun, tethered, trembled and yawed at the taut cords binding them together in the fugue state of the world drawn down into heat and exhaustion.

Clara woke again.

Letter

She sent him a letter in a dusty envelope of clay, impressed with reed characters. It fell into her home through the mailslot, cracked open on the floor.

He couldn't read a thing. Sven could:

darling, darling, darling, darling
darling, darling, darling, darling
darling, darling, darling, darling
darling, darling, darling, darling

"Is that all," Travis asked, is that all. Sven shrugged, look at the repetition. Travis felt the current.

The envelope, Travis said, "the envelope." Sven picked up the pieces, the Shearim-Ku address clearly visible. But there was more, long drawn-out lines scrawled, reassembled, recuperated, the ascension of language in Sven's nimble hands:

these may secrete glues fixatives across the spine of the wanderers o darling
emptied coffers not even coffers not even wood-logs holding shekels o darling
not even monies of this world and the next o darling vertebrae of the wanderers
o darling in you in this stony you in you heptagon o darling three beauty you unknowning-travis knowing me

Sven slowed toward the denouement of the powerful message, the twenty-one darlings of the tripled heptagon, Sven noted mesmeric Travis in love, Clara's

presence filling her tiny home, welcoming him forever, ghost of Clara, projection-Clara lost on walls and ceilings, Clara-wraiths tip-toeing across tatami floors, whispers everywhere. Sven stopped writing, turned towards door, left quietly, Travis to his own devices.

Engagement Ring

Travis thought, it emptied the economy. What was precious, disappeared - exchange value, all of it. Take the fetish out of Marx, the rare jewel simply doesn't exist, everything is common, free software. Not communism or socialism, simply nothing. Gold unstable, platinum non-existent already. This corporation was _disengaged_, not there. No chairman of the board, no stocks. No offices, products. Power in absence.

Travis thought, he couldn't conceive the future here, what then? Was it hoarding, llama-plates carefully disguising sheaves of rare metals, diamonds, high coinages of nations on the way down? Silver was transparent at the edges, diamonds lost their glint, cobalt its eerie luster. Art copied itself, copies shuffled in the commodities market along with salt, oil, corn.

Travis feverish.

Travis thinks Clara-knowledge. Thinks like Clara thinks, llama-gold-and-silver. Thinks traces across the ruffled streets unfurled with absence ignored; there would be no resurrection. Cuneiform strategies and wagers. The political economy of preciousness.

Travis thinks, Clara is precious. Thinks the disappearance of Clara in this incomprehensible land, cries Clara-comfort, calls Sven for help. Travis is wise, the glimmer of idea.

Sven arrives, they're in the house. Sven smokes, Travis drinks. "What's the possibilities here," Travis said, about absent-Clara. Humans don't have exchange value, not since slavery, capitalism's roles, the military. There's always someone else beneath the blue felt hat, always someone, don't mistake the exchange for an individual's history.

"We're bound together," Sven says, but something escapes. Love magnifies it, you were coming for that. "So the corporation takes action. Clara, like uranium, radium, glows. She disappears, you're flattened out here. Her work stops; you can't read the language, hiragana clay-marks. It's over, you're in her house, wear her clothes, breathe her."

"You and the corporation know it's not enough," Sven smoked. "So they'll think you're a danger to them. Don't take any troikas!" Because it may not be me driving.

In an economy of zeros.

"It's not enough," Travis drank. "She's alive, the keikan are in on it." The message had twenty-one. Travis thinks maybe the city is the corporation, Fukuoka-Yr. Or Robert, Sven, or none of them. Travis thinks of llamas. All the Gaijin, Avarim. "Everyone's life is precious to someone."

"But not everyone arrives enhancing the value of the woman or man tethered like sun or moon, crackling the earth's surface, burning plains, forlorn cry of enameled llamas ..."

With one ring, Clara rings him up.

Kudasai

Travis loves Clara. Clara loves Travis. There's an absent corporation. There is helpful Sven. There are questions about power. What a stock response! Travis decides none of it is true.

Directly across the street, the house slides into the water, a nuclear submarine almost ready for action.

Corporate

It didn't know where it was or who it was. It didn't have a name and there was no one around to name it. Like Sartre's anti-semitism, anti-llamaism, if it didn't exist, it would have to be invented. Somewhere in the minds of men and women.

It simply _vacated_ worth from scarcity, building up from economies of plenty and planetary grace at the end of the twentieth century. A universal drain, it would have been suspicious of life, of movement not its own, of secret exchanges, mining for jewels and gold. It protected itself, circumscription, prescription; it trundled into the real smarts of people destined to see an hour into the future.

It was the enemy of lovers everywhere! Of all that was beautiful on the face of the earth! If it feared, it would have feared love! It knew no fear! It had the beautiful Clara, or did it! It was approaching Travis! There was no end to it! It could afford to wait and wait, Fukuoka-style-of-the-Golden-Seal! It had all the time in the world! Travis was in mortal danger! Clara, where was Clara!

She rang him up, "Don't think for a moment, Travis, that anyone has consciousness besides you and me." Knowledge is disseminated between the two of us. We tremble in the jouissance of the selves! Everyone else is stupid!

Travis, "Stupid?" blinked an eye. Well, not stupid, perhaps, you know me and my language. Ah, but unthinking, with blinders on. We're too far gone for that, you and me.

Travis, "Far gone?" We're at the limits, darling, looking out, looking in. It's a thin line as it is; we're getting pretty good at tight-rope. There is nothing else, do you understand? It's unthinking, though, in a different way. Think of it as a value-thief. It's all that left when plenitude and scarcity are overturned, why some of them are worth more than whole countries!

"Where are you," asked Travis, nerves shot, arms stretched to the breaking point. Truth made him weak.

Lucky Star

"these may secrete glues fixatives across the spine of the wanderers o darling emptied coffers not even coffers not even wood-logs holding shekels o darling not even monies of this world and the next o darling vertebrae of the wanderers o darling in you in this stony you in you heptagon o darling three beauty you unknowing-travis knowing me"

the letter had read, enclosing sixteen darlings. Sven set to work. The wanderers were llamas surely. "Spine" comes from the back, perhaps a reference to carapace? Rogue llamas fetched no prices, the coffers were gone, rotted away - what next but world-wide currency?

Twenty-one was the voting-night-club age in Fukuoka. Everyone who was anyone would be at the Plex that night. Why, it was a holiday. He rang up Travis.

Travis thought, too many phonecalls, hello. Arrangements made, the troika carried both of them down Ben Eliezer. Travis saw the building had a turret, watchtower, lookout for llamas and now submarines. I must be imagining things. A beacon revolved on high, spitting out sumptuous code, darling, darling, darling, darling. Maybe a warning or just premonition.

Inside, the chaos witnessed from a thousand movie stills, bodies tuned to 220 heartbeats a second and the local voltage. Because of the mirrors, a thousand people descended into punctuated gloom and infinity. They lost each other almost immediately; Travis was never to see Sven, dead or alive, again.

He moved towards what he gathered was the source, equidistant from his images bounced and shattered in the impossible space. He measured himself thereby. Towards the star-chamber where everyone was twenty-one. Towards the heptagon drawn on the floor, like a bad novel where everything fits together, like my life, Travis said. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. As he rounded the corner, Clara.

Ice

Ice storms whipped the plains into a second frenzy, needles feeding on the rippled ground. In Fukuoka, everything was sheen, the dim sun reflected in a million blunted images, like lost dancers of the heptagon writhing in memories of ecstasy. Bamboo tubes, set among the cacti, howled the proper notes of dead emperors, until they were shattered by blast and rind. The temperature hovered near zero, breathed in and out of it; layer after layer of ice turned street-lamps into hailstone mimicry. The moon shone blue, sun white-green; the stars were pinpricks against the frozen black backdrop of withered weather.

Howling, they danced! Fierce, they danced! Gripping each other, pulling hair by the roots, arms clawed into one another, they danced! Screaming, they danced! Fallen, scraped, bruised, they danced! Laser-blind, eyes for each other, spear-tip eyes, they danced! Travis hungered, Clara hungered, they danced, arms and legs, ripped cloth, fed, feeding, torn! Torn naked against the marrow of the floor, bone-marrow, blood-marrow! Stumbling to their feet, howling! Danced the darling dance! Danced the beauty dance! Danced the dance of death and exile! Danced the Dance of Speech and All Phenomena! Danced Being-Nothing-Time, danced the Scratch-and-Wounding- Dance, faces, arms, legs, breasts marked black-blue, trembling, ecstatic! Travis hungered, Clara hungered, danced the Proper Name! A great shout! A great SHOUT!

A GREAT SHOUT!

THE GREAT SHOUT

They fell.

They fell exhausted to the floor, half-conscious, they fell soaked and blooded from scrape and scratch and bruise, Plex went silent.

Naked in the rubbish of torn clothing. On the floor they did lay there naked in their torn clothing.

Something had occurred in the empire of depletion, someone spread a thin cloth, was it llama-skin, across them. Again, indecipherable writing on the surface, above and below, shadow enumerations of cancelled transactions, carrying over from vacancy.

Bodies stirred, threw off their wrappings; intense flesh greeted the dancers who left silently. Lam and Pam approached, gathered Clara-Travis, helped limbs and torsos from the centripuge, now down a corridor, tunnel, backroom.

Elsewhere, Library of Bet Shearim, an unlidded eye continued to count, reticular engravings on microscopic glass slide. Such pane shatters; what was there, visioned, died on the rapidly-evaporating surface. Stentor, rotifera, flattened in agonies of starvation, asphyxiation. Now Clara and Travis are unencumbered in the lobby of a fine hotel on the other side of the city, solitary, guarded by patient llamas.

Now they will begin to speak, tell their woeful tale beneath the watchful eye. What has eye gained, what lost? Corporation trembled in first-time fearful sloth, transfixed heptagon signaled rise in universal perception. Clara said, "In order to see, one must be able to close one's eyes." Great wonders appear in darkness, hypnagogic truths, eidetic imagery close to imaginary sources. "Vision is the half of it."

"Vision is knowing how not to see."

"Vision is blind."

"Vision is knowing deference."

Corporate listening, writing scurried on piles of skins. Begins one where other leave off. "Species aren't forever," thought Travis. It takes some doing. I never knew Sven to thank him. Redolent Clara-Travis wrote and rose from sumptuous couch. Marble disappeared above into the sound of sirens, Plex on fire.

Vision

"We danced," Clara said, slowly, around the couch. This was later, now it was wisdom-dance or ordinary, an ordinary in which we become once more acquainted after these many adventures. Then we knew the couch was for a purpose, half-sleepy llamas in the peaceful kingdom. We returned and slept.

"Our silver souls rose, until we exchanged them for a different color." Dark blue bodies appeared, grown from bone-marrow spine fields on a world marooned, unlike our own. The economy of need shuffled goods along field furrows, bales of raw materials, llama carapaces, bills of lading. Bone-field dark blue bureaucracies invaginated in maroon earth, black-brown commodity trails lettering the landscape.

"What was most apparent was the blindness of it all, the inconsequentiality." Nothing seemed to mean or matter; meaning was drained from this uncanny planet of the senses.

"Meaning was drained," Travis added, because meaning comes only with exchange, only with value-added; rob value, and meaning disappears. Pure survival requires only pipelines, jostling, inert strategy; meaning is an investment

of an entirely different kind, related to sentience. Here's where the world starts and ends; if lettering is littering, there is, literally, nothing to be said.

"Nothing but the bills of lading." In the vision, souls and trails swirled and if there had been only a singular witness, an eye that closed, whole realms would have shattered. As it was, there were cracks.

Clara continued, "There were cracks where the furrows were; we watched them widen. It was our eyes that did this, our ability to close, turn away, ignore." The more we watched, took our places among the dark blue souls, the more things began, slowly, moving out of kilter, askew, awry, ajar.

"The lid has an effect."

"It was the corporation," Travis said, "the corporation that was closing down through its awakening by our lids retreating the image of the world into occasional darkness." We became aware there were three of us, Clara- Travis, and then, this, inertness stirring, breaking itself apart, perhaps seeping into the real.

"It had to do with the llamas as well, for example, they too had eyes, the necessity of sleep, the moments of turning-aside, leaving us unguarded for a second, a minute, hour, or day. And so we awoke, the two of us leaving the vision-world now splintering, cracking into rubble - we awoke knowing corporation awoke as well, all of this, knowing only llamas."

Locked in infinite embrace, they left hotel for streets unnaturally luminescent in the nighttime sky. Travis could just about see the familiar words of his native language interspersed between the incomprehensible symbols - just about, then everything would fade, once more, to a world of unknown wonders.

They went back to their home in silence.

In Hebrew, lama means "why," said Travis.

Exactly, said Clara, a melamid.

Soko de hanashi wa shimai desu.

Sof.

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13. **megan minka lola camille roy**

class & "innovative writing"

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Hi all,

I'm mostly a lurker on this list but the very interesting exchanges on race/class of the past few days has provoked me out of my closet.

Two things happened in the past few months that concerned me and made me wonder if it would be possible here in san francisco to have some sort of public forum (perhaps at new langton arts, where I am one of two literary curators) on class and "innovative writing" that would not degenerate into name calling.

One was a discussion I fell into at a party with a "innovative" poet who has been in the community here a long time. We were reflecting on how things have changed over the last fifteen years with the decline in arts funding. When I came to san francisco it was possible to have a literary community that was very stimulating from the streets so to speak. There were for example free workshops taught by Bob Gluck at Small Press Traffic. Anyone could drop in. This provided me and others with an invaluable opportunity to learn and read and talk etc etc. You could find a really smart community. NOW, however, you've got to pay for that, through poetics programs, creative writing programs etc. One of the main reasons people go to those schools is to find a stimulating literary community.

So now, even more than before, the people who are fluent in the terms and theories of "innovative poetics" are people who can afford to go into debt to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars. This is weird, folks. I don't like it at all.

The other thing that happened that concerned me was a performance poet (spoken word stuff) who protested some curatorial decisions at NLA on the basis that we were curating an in group, something she though NLA had always done.

It's true and it's not true. We've perhaps been curating more queer, minority, younger writers than in the past. That's something we're interested in. But what is true is that we curate people who all have sort of the art school type of literary education. It's like you need that to get in the door, which means \$\$\$\$. That slants and distorts not only the resulting literary community but also impoverishes the relationship of the literary community to the wider community.

I'm wondering how others have dealt with these problems and tensions, specifically with relation to "innovative poetics".

camille.

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14. **mark weiss**

Re: Weapons named after people & military slang

Wed 1 Oct 1997

On a similar note, I'm still haunted by the image (imagined, alas--I never got to see the real thing) of the Madison Wisconsin fire of a few years ago that levelled the world's largest cheese warehouse. Apparently there was a river of molten cheese several feet thick running down one of the streets for days. The mayor told an interviewer that it wasn't funny.

Is this a new thread: Bad things that happen to food?

At 10:22 AM 10/1/97 -0700, you wrote:

>Flour dust is very combustibile. It will and has expoded. A flour mill in
>Minn. went up late last of early this century. Installation artist
>recently had conscept piece for the Walker MN that involved
>conveyor belts and moving flour from room to room. It was built and the
>fire marshall never let then open. I had mentioned this up to the fire
>marshall and my father, who has a degree in chemistry and family owed
>large bakery was horrified. He was headed to the phones before
>the flipped the switch. It seems it's electrical spark that will
>cause it to explode.

>

>

>>I have no knowledge of explosives - why, I wonder, did they mix explosives
>>with flour - were they trying to harness the self-raising power?

>>

>>-----

>>| From: Kali Tal <[REDACTED]>

>>| Aunt Jemima: explosive mixed with flour (WWII)

>

>Offerings Project

>Send me an offer.

>URL:http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~geo/holly_crawford.html

>

>

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15. **Lawrence Upton.**

Re: Weapons named after people & military slang

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Thank you for that Holly. I did - I think - actually know that but it was in a remote part of my head from which there are very few connections. Much appreciated.

L

| From: Holly Crawford <[REDACTED]>

| To: [REDACTED]

| Subject: Re: Weapons named after people & military slang

| Date: 01 October 1997 18:22

|

| Flour dust is very combustibile. It will and has expoded. A flour mill in

| Minn. went up late last of early this century. Installation artist

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16. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: That was no gentleman, that was a shrinking violet

Wed 1 Oct 1997

would have been in on this Stein conversation earlier, but I now have no access to email from home (hope to change that in the coming months) -- so only see my mail a few times per week --

yes, *_Reading Race_* contains a now somewhat outdated discussion of *_Melantha_* -- the publisher is U of Georgia Press,,,,, and I can make a shady postal deal with anybody who can't find the volume nearby --

BUT

among the more recent relevant publications is the Fall 1996 issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* devoted to Stein ,, which contains, along with much else worthy of note, Lorna Smedman's article on Stein and racialized language

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17. **Christopher Reiner**

New book: The Grouper

Wed 1 Oct 1997

NEW from Avec Books:

The Grouper

Lissa McLaughlin

Poetry * Prose * Photographs

The unexplained coherences intrigue me, the every day exotic, how random abrasive fragments operate as structure. Something succinct and deep is expressed that cannot be said in words.

--Mei-mei

Berssenbrugge

In Lissa McLaughlin's drive-by America, there is more than just the view passing frame by frame outside your window. Beneath a seemingly still surface, sensory experience cuts deep. Danger lurks in many forms: gun-wielding uncles, hurricanes, nascent sexuality. Here, the sticky stuff of memory is equal parts experience and dreamscape-and what falls in between. Lissa McLaughlin reaches through the boundaries of consciousness to create a richly layered prose.

-Kathy Lou Schultz

Lissa McLaughlin knows that narratives based around memories are truest to experience exactly at that moment when they know what can't be said. The pained, angry, yet often slyly humorous collection in *The Grouper* illustrates that memory must never pretend to understand more than it can. The starkly resonant, but finally resistant, photographs show how language can only

navigate edges of the irreducible instants of a life which words cannot finally know. In so doing, *The Grouper* reminds us that trauma must never be reduced to an excuse for story.

-Mark Wallace

Reading *The Grouper*, we are "listening for the mess to speak, afraid it will." Convincingly, disturbingly, Lissa McLaughlin has "opened her mouth as far as it will go" and given us pictures of language learning "to mark physically the moment speech ruptures." What does writing become when it "refuses to enter the novel memory writes"? Page after page, in brief prose fragments and fragmented anecdotes, in photographs and jaggedly chiseled poems, McLaughlin provides a turbulent sequence of answers to this question, where "the meaning of nothing becomes more and more clear to us [as] bits of the temporal world snag and accumulate." And if the language is a "mess," it is nonetheless well made, offering not chaos but the form chaos takes when we call it writing.

-Stephen-Paul Martin

64 pages * \$8.50 * ISBN: 1880713-09-8

Distributed by Small Press Distribution, and Baker & Taylor

Lissa McLaughlin has written film reviews and a children's picture book. Her fiction has appeared in *The Massachusetts Review*, *AVEC* and *The Best American Short Stories*. Her previous collections (*Troubled by his Complexion* and *Seeing the Multitudes Delayed*) were published by Burning Deck. She lives in San Francisco.

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18. **John Cayley** ***mute & visible language***

Wed 1 Oct 1997

Just two little bits of information. ?Not ?Poetry

1.

The journal, *Visible Language*, is now online, after their most recent issue, 31.2 on 'Interactivity, Interconnectivity and Media'

<http://www.id.iit.edu/visiblelanguage>

Includes: reviews of Boyers' _Cybercities_ and Alberto Manguel's _A History of Reading_. There is a very stimulating paper by Diana J. Gromala on 'Virtual Avatars: Subjectivity in Virtual Environments' and a very good, longer essay by Peter Storkerson and Jannie Wong on 'Hypertext and the Art of Memory' (not as specific as it might appear and a very sound, considered, rhetorically inclined analysis of the current state of the HT/Multimedia engagement).

2.

mute 8
... has.

The digital art critique broadsheet has become a(n over-/highly-designed) glossy; a floppy, leafy storehouse of "critical/information/services"; young, net-jaded, intelligent (mostly) & fashionable Britain's answer to Mondo 2000 -- well worth a peruse by anyone engaged with these matters.

just onut and on newstands every(w)here
email: [REDACTED]
http://www.metamute.com

----- > John Cayley / Wellsweep Press
http://www.demon.co.uk/eastfield/ 1 Grove End House 150 Highgate Road
London NW5 1PD UK Tel & Fax: ([REDACTED]) Email: [REDACTED] <-----

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19. **Safdie Joseph**

Re: Race, identity, otherness, us-ness, stereotypes....

Wed 1 Oct 1997

I wanted to come back to the list, after a long absence and a new e-mail address, to wish everyone so inclined a happy (Jewish) New Year. I also recommend Kali's fairly remarkable speculations about race, Judaism, and identity yesterday -- I found them wondrous and provocative (in a good way).

At my new school we had to undergo "diversity training" last week, something akin to what Texaco executives must have had to undergo a few months back. It's much more structuralist than post-, I fear, but for what it's worth, I offer this schema that was in my "diversity packet".

ACCULTURATION

High

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ETHNIC IDENTITY

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Low _____ / _____ High

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Low

(And now you have to imagine -- for lack of me being able to put them there -- an "A" in the upper left quadrant, a "B" in the upper right, a "C" in the lower right, and a "D" in the lower left, which letters correspond to categories of people called "mainstream" "bi-cultural" "traditionalist" and "counter culturist" (oh no, not that!). Anyway, the idea is that some people have high capacities to "acculturate" -- can't we all get along -- and low ethnic identities: they're mainstream. (Other, less sanguine terms, could be substituted here). High ethnicity and high acculturation would be bi-cultural, able to get along in multiple worlds, or "style-flex"; high ethnics and low acculturates would be those unable to compromise, hangers-on to their own traditions, and the last category would be those "alienated from both the ethnic and the majority culture communities." (I always thought those were the poets, but many folks on the list would disagree).

I don't know why I did this -- I hate categories myself -- just wanted to give a glimpse of what passes for official diversity these days. The Giants are tied in the ninth and I gotta go listen . . .

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20. **Susan Clark**
addresses anyone?

Wed 1 Oct 1997

hello, does anyone have addresses email and/or snail for :

PAUL KELLEY
CHRIS CORRIGAN
SCOTT BENTLEY
CAROLYN KEMP

thanks
Susan

Susan Clark
RADDLE MOON

again, if anyone is missing issues or has moved, please get in touch

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21. **James Finnegan**

Re: Race, identity, otherness, us-ness, stereotypes....

Wed 1 Oct 1997

In a message dated 97-10-01 19:27:45 EDT, you write:

I wanted to come back to the list, after a long absence and a new e-mail address, to wish everyone so inclined a happy (Jewish) New Year. I also recommend Kali's fairly remarkable speculations about race, Judaism, and identity yesterday -- I found them wondrous and provocative (in a good way).

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Low _____ / _____ High

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(And now you have to imagine -- for lack of me being able to put them there -- an "A" in the upper left quadrant, a "B" in the upper right, a "C" in the lower right, and a "D" in the lower left, which letters correspond to categories of people called "mainstream" "bi-cultural" "traditionalist" and "counter culturist" (oh no, not that!). Anyway, the idea is that some people have high capacities to "acculturate" -- can't we all get along -- and low ethnic identities: they're mainstream. (Other, less sanguine terms, could be substituted here). High ethnicity and high acculturation would be bi-cultural, able to get along in multiple worlds, or "style-flex"; high ethnics and low acculturates would be those unable to compromise, hangers-on to their own traditions, and the last category would be those "alienated from both the ethnic and the majority culture communities." (I always thought those were the poets, but many folks on the list would disagree).

I don't know why I did this -- I hate categories myself -- just wanted to give a glimpse of what passes for official diversity these days.

Kafka could do no better.

Finnegan

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22. **Peter Ganick** ***snailmail address needed***

Wed 1 Oct 1997

for paul buck, the british poet---
pls backchannel to:
[REDACTED]
thanks in advance----

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23. **Mark W Scroggins** ***more addresses needed***

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Does anyone have e-mail or snailmail addresses for Robin Purves or Peter Manson, editors of *_Object Permanence_*? Please backchannel. Thanks, Mark Scroggins

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24. **Tom Orange** ***impostures intellectuelles***

Thu 2 Oct 1997

wow, this argument is so old hat that it's hard to believe it's actually causing a fuss somewhere. esp. in reference to lacan, against whom the argument is at least 30 yrs old, as a quick spin through michael clark's garland press bibliography wd show....t.

----- They [Sokal and Bircmont] write: "We want to 'deconstruct' the reputation that these texts have of being difficult because they are deep. We show that if they seem incomprehensible, it is for the very good reason that they have nothing to say." And about the above-mentioned thinkers they say: "They talk abundantly of scientific theories of which they have, at best, a very vague understanding. They display a superficial erudition by throwing words at the reader in a context where they have no relevance. They demonstrate a veritable intoxication with words, combined with a superb indifference to their meaning." Jacques Lacan (a well known psychoanalyst) is

criticised for "arbitrarily mixing key words of mathematical theory, without in the least caring about their meaning." [etc. etc. etc.]

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25. **Holly Crawford**

Re: Weapons named after people & military slang

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Bad things that happen to food thread: The movies Ghost Busters and Attack of the Killer Tomatoes.

H

On a similar note, I'm still haunted by the image (imagined, alas--I never got to see the real thing) of the Madison Wisconsin fire of a few years ago that levelled the world's largest cheese warehouse. Apparently there was a river of molten cheese several feet thick running down one of the streets for days. The mayor told an interviewer that it wasn't funny.

Is this a new thread: Bad things that happen to food?

At 10:22 AM 10/1/97 -0700, you wrote:

Flour dust is very combustibile. It will and has expoded. A flour mill in Minn. went up late last of early this century. Installation artist recently had conscept piece for the Walker MN that involved conveyor belts and moving flour from room to room. It was built and the fire marshall never let then open. I had mentioned this up to the fire marshall and my father, who has a degree in chemistry and family owed large bakery was horrified. He was headed to the phones before the flipped the switch. It seems it's electrical spark that will cause it to explode.

I have no knowledge of explosives - why, I wonder, did they mix explosives with flour - were they trying to harness the self-raising power?

| From: Kali Tal <[REDACTED]>

| Aunt Jemima: explosive mixed with flour (WWII)

Offerings Project

Send me an offer.

URL: http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~geo/holly_crawford.html

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26. **Tom Beard**

Re: (Fwd) impostures intellectuelles

Thu 2 Oct 1997

The authors take particular exception to one of Mr Lacan's lesser known theories, in which he argues that "the erect male organ, not as itself, not even as image, but as the missing piece of the desired image, is thus equal to the square root of -1 of the highest produced meaning."

I actually found some of Lacan's writings quite evocative in this regard (in my extremely limited reading of Lacan). I liked the links between L's use of the terms 'Real' and 'Imaginary', and their use in the mathematics of complex numbers, as well as his formulation of desire as the excess of want over need, and how this simple arithmetic led, through recursion, to what sounded like almost fractal complexity (although I can't recall the passage right now).

While L's use of the language of mathematics might be interesting poetically, I can sympathise with Sokal and Bricmont's fear that L's apparent "intoxication with words, combined with a superb indifference to their meaning" (although that sounds like as good a definition of poetry as I've heard recently) might not be all that helpful in understanding the workings of the human mind. Do the Real and Imaginary axes meet at the origin (zero) in? Does the Symbolic realm provide a third axis, and if so, does this begin to introduce quaternions, and the need for another realm? What do the various arithmetical operations represent within the mind (if i (= square root of -1) is the phallus, what do -1 and 1 become in his scheme? Is there a link between i and the "I", representing unity on the imaginary axis?).

I even vaguely considered linking Mandelbrot and Lacan in a poem to be entitled "The Fractal Geometry of Desire", but choked on the portentous title. Is the boundary between the desired and the undesired a fractal, becoming more complex (and even undecidable) the closer one inspects it?

I'm not sure what Lacan would have made of Mandelbrot. He (Lacan) seems to have displayed an almost arrogant disregard for the possibility that biology might have something to do with the mind, which is one of the reasons why I never persevered in reading Lacan, whereas Mandelbrot seems to have shown a healthy interest in a variety of arts and sciences. Was it Mandelbrot who said "Erudition is good for the soul"?

Tom Beard.

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27. **mark weiss**
(no subject)

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Have misplaced Marjorie Perloff's snailmail address, need to send her a book.
Backchannel help anyone?

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28. **henry gould**
Re: social tumbles

Thu 2 Oct 1997

On Thu, 2 Oct 1997 10:19:35 -0700 Charles Weigl said:

[quoting Adorno:]

>"In his limitless and and implacable demands the petty-bourgeois sticks
>his chest out, identifying himself with a power he does not have,
>outdoing it in his arrogance to the point of absolute spirit and
>absolute horror. Between the grandiose sublimity embracing the whole of
>humanity--a sublimity ever ready to trample inhumanely on anything small
>as mere existence--and the coarse ostentation of bourgeois men of
>violence, there is an intimate collusion. The dignity of spiritual
>giants is prone to hollow booming laughter, exploding, smashing. When
>they say Creation, they mean the compulsive will-power with which they
>puff themselves up and intimidate all questions: from the primacy of
>practical reason it was always only a step to hatred of theory. Such
>a dynamic inheres in all idealistic movements of thought...

For the Great Left Theorists, it's always somebody ELSE's ideas that are "ideal-
ist illusions", "abstractions", "will to power", etc. Materialism and alienated la-
bor provide the master key with which to lay out these broad-brush cliches.
Doesn't seem to occur that perhaps the basic ability to generalize, synthesize,
empathize, and communicate might transcend the various blinders of the vari-
ous political positions - and that these tools of thought might just as well be
linked with humility as arrogance. History can always be brought to bear to
prove the opposite - but then what is history but the tale of the Great and their
Great Deeds? - Henry Gould

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29. **Douglas**
Re: New book: The Grouper

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Christopher,

Could I get four (4) copies for the America Awards,
and bill me for a couple of others for the bookstore.
I'll pay upon receipt.

Douglas

Christopher Reiner wrote:

>

> NEW from Avec Books:

>

> The Grouper

> Lissa McLaughlin

> Poetry * Prose * Photographs

>

> The unexplained coherences intrigue me, the every day exotic, how random

> abrasive fragments operate as structure. Something succinct and deep is

> expressed that cannot be said in words.

> --Mei-mei Berssenbrugge

>

> In Lissa McLaughlin's drive-by America, there is more than just the view

> passing frame by frame outside your window. Beneath a seemingly still

> surface, sensory experience cuts deep. Danger lurks in many forms:

> gun-wielding uncles, hurricanes, nascent sexuality. Here, the sticky stuff

> of memory is equal parts experience and dreamscape-and what falls in

> between. Lissa McLaughlin reaches through the boundaries of consciousness

> to create a richly layered prose.

> -Kathy Lou Schultz

>

> Lissa McLaughlin knows that narratives based around memories are truest to

> experience exactly at that moment when they know what can't be said. The

> pained, angry, yet often slyly humorous collection in The Grouper

> illustrates that memory must never pretend to understand more than it can.

> The starkly resonant, but finally resistant, photographs show how language

> can only navigate edges of the irreducible instants of a life which words

> cannot finally know. In so doing, The Grouper reminds us that trauma must

> never be reduced to an excuse for story.

> -Mark Wallace

>

> Reading The Grouper, we are "listening for the mess to speak, afraid it

> will." Convincingly, disturbingly, Lissa McLaughlin has "opened her mouth

> as far as it will go" and given us pictures of language learning "to mark

> physically the moment speech ruptures." What does writing become when it

> "refuses to enter the novel memory writes"? Page after page, in brief prose

> fragments and fragmented anecdotes, in photographs and jaggedly chiseled
> poems, McLaughlin provides a turbulent sequence of answers to this
> question, where "the meaning of nothing becomes more and more clear to us
> [as] bits of the temporal world snag and accumulate." And if the language
> is a "mess," it is nonetheless well made, offering not chaos but the form
> chaos takes when we call it writing.

> -Stephen-Paul Martin

>

> 64 pages * \$8.50 * ISBN: 1880713-09-8

>

> Distributed by Small Press Distribution, and Baker & Taylor

>

> Lissa McLaughlin has written film reviews and a children's picture book.

> Her fiction has appeared in _The Massachusetts Review_, AVEC and _The Best

> American Short Stories_. Her previous collections (_Troubled by his

> Complexion_ and _Seeing the Multitudes Delayed_) were published by Burning

> Deck. She lives in San Francisco.

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30. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: class & "innovative writing"

Thu 2 Oct 1997

>

> So now, even more than before, the people who are fluent in the terms

> and theories of "innovative

> poetics" are people who can afford to go into debt to the tune of

> tens of thousands of dollars. This is weird, folks. I don't like it

> at all.

>

Camille,

In my experience it has never been that overwhelmingly true, that innovative poetry people "can afford to go into debt to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars." But it sure isn't true right now of most of the poetry folks I work with.

My own situation is very much working-class and barely getting by; from what I've encountered and heard, not that atypical.

Mark P.

atlanta

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31. **Charles Weigl** ***social tumbles***

Thu 2 Oct 1997

seemed kinda strange to me that, in the ongoing (imagined?) debate between the "cold experimentalists with no leg to stand on" and the champions of some sort of warm direct-address aesthitics of "humane impulses," adorno was somehow recruited on the side of humanism and purportedly non-ideological clarity.

could this be the same teddy i know and love? a quick perusal of _minima moralia_ reassured me somewhat and i reproduce the following quote because 1) it made me chuckle and 2) it seems vaguely relevant to any assertion of straight-no-chaser "aesthetic" practices based on "obvious" principles or the idea that there is such an animal as clear communication or direct expression of "emotion."

it's from section 53, entitled "Folly of the wise"

"In his limitless and implacable demands the petty-bourgeois sticks his chest out, identifying himself with a power he does not have, outdoing it in his arrogance to the point of absolute spirit and absolute horror. Between the grandiose sublimity embracing the whole of humanity--a sublimity ever ready to trample inhumanely on anything small as mere existence--and the coarse ostentation of bourgeois men of violence, there is an intimate collusion. The dignity of spiritual giants is prone to hollow booming laughter, exploding, smashing. When they say Creation, they mean the compulsive will-power with which they puff themselves up and intimidate all questions: from the primacy of practical reason it was always only a step to hatred of theory. Such a dynamic inheres in all idealistic movements of thought...

"The attempt to deduce the world in words from a principle is the behaviour of someone who would like to usurp power instead of resisting it...The rose-scents of Elysium, much too voluble to be credited with the experience of a single rose, smell of the tobacco-smoke in a magistrate's office, and the soulful moon on the backdrop was fashioned after the miserable oil-lamp by whose meagre light the student swots for his exam. Weakness posing as strength betrayed the thought of the allegedly rising bourgeoisie to ideology, even when the class was thundering against tyranny. In the innermost reaches of humanism, as it's very soul, there rages a frantic prisoner who, as a Fascist, turns the world into a prison."

oh that teddy: he'll make ya laugh till you cry.

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34. Mark Wallace

oops

Thu 2 Oct 1997

I may have confused everyone in my just sent post by giving the wrong title for my own essay, which should read "On Language Poetry Bashing."

A couple of people have pointed out to me that I get titles wrong pretty commonly. I have no defense, except to say that I seem to be following the golden rule here and treating others the way I treat myself...

Mark Wallace

```

-----\ |
||      ||      GWU:
||      http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||      EPC:
||      http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||

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35. David Bromige

no more language-bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

The List should know that there is no more Language-writing. Language-writing has been disconnected from the List in the larger sense. When Bob Dylan sang for the Pope, they agreed to excommunicate Language-writing. Language-writing, a local disturbance in NYC, the Bay Area, Vancouver, Seattle, Kent State, Cambridge, and Alabama, in the 1970s and early 80s, is now a memory (and whose?) in history books, & meanwhile a number of individuals who lived thru those times continue to write. But Language-writing has left the planet, the way Imagism left the planet (except for _Poetry (Chicago)_ & various "sunday-painting" clubs) by 1929. That Language-writing parrot is a dead parrot. That parrot has been transformed into its future molecules. And so it follows that, dead & gone, Language-writing cannot exist as an object of bashery. They dont want to go on about "the tensile strength of last winter's icicles". If a poem offend thee in the present, pluck it out. But look to thine own eye, that its mote not be bigger than a beam. In short, people will have to do something else with their Oedipal longings. Sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings. But please address the fact not the messenger. Thanks, David

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36. **henry g**

Re: no more language-bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

They dont want to go

>on about "the tensile strength of last winter's icicles". If a poem offend
>thee in the present, pluck it out. But look to thine own eye, that its mote
>not be bigger than a beam. In short, people will have to do something else
>with their Oedipal longings. Sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings. But
>please address the fact not the messenger. Thanks, David

And where is it written (for i'faith I forgetteth), much-bashed Brother David,
"for their works follow after them"? Lo, for they followeth right into yon an-
thologies & such-like echo-chambers. Forsooth, truly, yon Providence School
hath not been bashed so sorely - nor yon NY School. Is it becauseth the materi-
ality of yon signifier hath not been fully macerated & spewed out of yon mouth
at the Last Trump? "For by your words shall ye be judged... and whoever says
'you fool!' to his brother shall be liable to the Council". [By-laws of the Poetry
Roundtable of the Chickasawga Rotary Club, 1976] - Brother Henry

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37. **Jack Foley**

language poetry bashing -Reply

Thu 2 Oct 1997

For more, see "A=R=T M=E=A=N=S," by Joe Brennan, who is a poet but not
younger-than ... at <http://webdelsol.com/FLASHPOINT/artmeans.htm>

-- JR Foley

>>> Mark Wallace <[REDACTED]> 10/02/97 02:34pm >>>

I just wanted to sound a note of support for Fredrik Hertzberg's
post yesterday in response to a new round of language poetry bashing
that's been appearing on the list in the last couple days. I wish I had
more time to engage in discussion on this subject right now, but
thankfully Frderik's post seems a greatly thoughtful response.

A couple of years back I published a piece in POETIC BRIEFS called "On
Language Poetry" bashing in which I tried to detail some of the reasons behind
the excessive commonness of such bashing among poets younger than the lan-
guage poets. Certainly it's not common ONLY among such poets, but it takes on
certain specific inflections in that context.

Jeff Hansen, editor of POETIC BRIEFS, is lurking around this list some-
where, and may still have copies of that issue available. If I had more

sophisticated e-mail equipment, I'd try to append the article here. As it is, I can only suggest that you might be interested in asking Jeff if he still has copies.

Sorry to be cryptic and under the reign of the clock.

Mark Wallace

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/-----\ |
||      | | GWU:
|| http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      | | EPC:
|| http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace | |
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38. **acgold01**

Quote of the Day

Thu 2 Oct 1997

My favorite line of the day, addressed to me by my e-mail program at the end of a message:

"Some of the words are too long to format."

As far as I recall, the longest word in the message was "Hejinian."

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39. **mark weiss**

Re: language poetry bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

God, I love the sight of wagons being circled! I don't know what it is that gets to me, the dance-like sensuality of the movement into place or the form of the circle itself, the process or the result. I also love parades and brass bands.

At 03:34 PM 10/2/97 -0400, you wrote:

> I just wanted to sound a note of support for Fredrik Hertzberg's
>post yesterday in response to a new round of language poetry bashing
>that's been appearing on the list in the last couple days. I wish I had
>more time to engage in discussion on this subject right now, but
>thankfully Frderik's post seems a greatly thoughtful response.

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such

>poets, but it takes on certain specific inflections in that context.

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>somewhere, and may still have copies of that issue available. If I had
>more sophisticated e-mail equipment, I'd try to append the article here.
>As it is, I can only suggest that you might be interested in asking Jeff
>if he still has copies.

>

> Sorry to be cryptic and under the reign of the clock.

>

> Mark Wallace

>

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>|

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>| [REDACTED]

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>| GWU:

|

>| <http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw>

|

>| EPC:

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>| <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace>

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40. **Don Wellman**

Re: language poetry bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

It seems to me that what is "irreducible" is desire, to echo a phrase in one of Mark Wallace's recent postings; also that language poetry in its explorations of the constructedness of our (at least in the USA) all too common sense of being used, of our language being used-up, detached desire from it's language forms

—

Now no one can really live with that situation (to my view). I choose the word "desire" not to get preachy about something spiritual, transcendent, or other or "not" —simply in the hopes of addressing an array of palpable emotional facts. Hopefully those new to the excitements and difficulties of poetry, even graying poets and editors like myself, know that desire is irreducible, that desire is not satisfied by making of language itself some fetish object. I also believe that most language writing was perfectly clear concerning this felt dissonance (the difficulties, the limits of language). That agenda for addressing reality and social fact may have in some ways outlived its usefulness. Is language "irreducible"? Is desire "irreducible"? I am loathe to mask the facts of dissonance. I'd like to see the wagons circled around this principle.

Don Wellman

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41. **Robin Tremblay-McGaw**
Re: class & "innovative writing"

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Camille--

(As you know, I'm also mostly a lurker here.)

Interesting post. Some quick notes in response. Two things here: class as an issue underlying the practice of writing and how to address it, within the context of "innovative writing."

As someone pointed out to me recently (as I'm struggling with how to address class issues in a piece I'm at work on)--while there is a vocabulary for working with gender/sexuality issues in innovative writing, there is no such vocabulary for working with class issues, particularly in poetry.

Also the issue of having an intellectual life outside of the university. I don't have any answers but I'm very interested in the question! I think there is certainly difficulty there. Though I must say personally (and I'm outside of the University) I'm enjoying the intellectual stimulation of the list, of participating in Bob Gluck's workshop (which is inexpensive relative to Univ class), attending readings here at SPT and elsewhere in SF, reading journals etc and talking to some extent with other writers. Of course, this is in between working full time, being a mother, partner, etc. Bits & pieces.

Robin Tremblay-McGaw

At 11:05 AM 10/1/97 -0700, megan minka lola camille roy wrote:

>Hi all,

>I'm mostly a lurker on this list but the very interesting exchanges

>on race/class of the past few days has provoked me out of my closet.
>
>Two things happened in the past few months that concerned me
>and made me wonder if it would be possible
>here in san francisco to have some sort of public forum (perhaps at
>new langton arts, where I am one of two literary curators) on class
>and "innovative writing" that would not degenerate into name calling.
>
>One was a discussion I fell into at a party with a "innovative" poet
>who has been in the community here a long time. We were reflecting on
>how things have changed over the last fifteen years with the decline
>in arts funding. When I came to san francisco it was possible to have
>a literary community that was very stimulating from the streets so to
>speak. There were for example free workshops taught by Bob Gluck at
>Small Press Traffic. Anyone could drop in. This provided me and others
>with an invaluable opportunity to learn and read and talk etc etc.
>You could find a really smart community. NOW, however, you've got to
>pay for that, through poetics programs, creative writing programs etc.
>One of the main reasons people go to those schools is to find a
>stimulating literary community.
>
>So now, even more than before, the people who are fluent in the terms
>and theories of "innovative
>poetics" are people who can afford to go into debt to the tune of
>tens of thousands of dollars. This is weird, folks. I don't like it
>at all.
>
>The other thing that happened that concerned me was a performance poet
>(spoken word stuff) who protested some curatorial decisions at NLA on
>the basis that we were curating an in group, something she though NLA
>had always done.
>
>It's true and it's not true. We've perhaps been curating more queer,
>minority, younger writers than in the past. That's something we're
>interested in. But what is true is that we curate people who all have
>sort of the art school type of literary education. It's like you
>need that to get in the door, which means \$\$\$\$. That slants and
>distorts not only the resulting literary community but also
>impoverishes the
>relationship of the literary community to the wider community.
>
>

>I'm wondering how others have dealt with these problems and tensions,
>specifically with relation to "innovative poetics".

>

>camille.

>

>

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42. **George Thompson**

Re: language poetry bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

In response to Don Wellman's recent post:

[snip]

Now no one can really live with that situation (to my view). I choose the word "desire" not to get preachy about something spiritual, transcendent, or other or "not" simply in the hopes of addressing an array of palpable emotional facts. Hopefully those new to the excitements and difficulties of poetry, even graying poets and editors like myself, know that desire is irreducible, that desire is not satisfied by making of language itself some fetish object.

[more snip]

>

Some people fetishize playboy pinups. Others fetishize the socks of blue-collar guys. Some people fetishize language. Others fetishize "desire". And so forth.

In all cases, the fetish works for you if it works for you.

And, as the Buddha knows, desire is not irreducible.

I think.

George Thompson

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43. **James Finnegan**

Re: language poetry bashing

Thu 2 Oct 1997

In a message dated 97-10-02 15:42:14 EDT, you write:

A couple of years back I published a piece in POETIC BRIEFS called "On Language Poetry" bashing in which I tried to detail some of the reasons behind the excessive commonness of such bashing among poets younger than the language poets. Certainly it's not common ONLY among such

poets, but it takes on certain specific inflections in that context.

Seems to me over the years the language writers and their adherents have given as good as they got--wheeling out their big guns to bring down the walls of mainstream practice and stolid MFA program verse. When the shelling stops, that's when you should worry. (Sorry about the military metaphor, but it's the List's fault.) Then it's really over--lights out sayonara baby say goodbye--your movement is a footnote like Futurism. As for the youth, it's their biological duty to pull down the old statues.

Finnegan

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44. **David Bromige**

Melissa Wolsak

Thu 2 Oct 1997

Fellow-Listeners, I want to welcome to the List Mellisa Wolsak, whose *The Garcia Family Co-Mercy* (Tsunami Editions, 1995) is one of the boldest & most challenging "first books" it's been my pleasure to encounter. She lives, lurks, & soon I hope, lists, in Vancouver, and is one of those unique light-me-up talents that gather around the Kootenay School of [extraordinary] Writing, a shifting site of poetic interaction (reading venue, workshop locus, social club) but also a mode of being. David

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45. **R. Gancie**

Oh No! Not That Sokal Yokel

Thu 2 Oct 1997

I thought those interested in the Sokal opera might find this posting of interest. This article (partially posted below) first appeared in on-line mag, PostMortem. I also published a lengthy review of Gross' and Levitt's *Higher Superstition* in British print mag, *Science As Culture*, late last year. The latter is more pertinent to the current discussion but I can't transmit it because I don't have a copy in any form.---Carlo Parcelli. P.S. Don't count Adorno and the Frankfurt school out as regards the above topic.e.g. Dialectic of Enlightenment.

"Science smiling into its beard, or first full-dress
encounter with evil"
by Carlo Parcelli

"[H]ighmindedness is the mark of every professional ideology. Hunters for instance would never dream of calling themselves butchers of the woods; they prefer to call themselves the real friends of animals and Nature, just as business men uphold the principle of fair profit, and the god that thieves also take for their own is the business men's god, that distinguished promoter of international concord, Mercury. So not much importance need be attached to the way an activity is mirrored in the consciousness of those who practice it."(from Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, chapter 72)

Robert Musil, in his monumental novel about pre-Anschluss Vienna entitled *The Man Without Qualities*, addresses often and profoundly social and epistemological questions arising from applications of science and technology acceleratingly evident in pre-World War I Europe.

Chapter 72 contains some of the most succinct expressions of Musil's concerns. The first paragraph of the chapter which is sardonically entitled

Science Smiling Into Its Beard, Or First Full-Dress Encounter With Evil reads thus:

A few words must now be said about a smile, a masculine smile at that,

with a beard attached to it, whereby the general activity of smiling in

one's sleeve was transposed into the masculine one of smiling into one's

beard. It was the smiling men of science and learning who had accepted

Diotoma's invitation and were listening to the celebrated men

of the arts.

Although they smiled, it must on no account be believed that they did so

ironically. On the contrary, it was their way of expressing homage and

incompetence, a matter that has already been mentioned. But one must

not let oneself be deceived by that either. It was true enough where their

conscious mind was concerned; yet in their sub-conscious-to make use

of this customary word-or, to put it more exactly, in the sum total of their

being, they were people in whom a propensity to Evil crackled like the

fire under a cauldron.

I was reminded of this passage in Musil's work when I encountered

Steven Weinberg's piece, Sokal's Hoax, in the August 8 New York

Review. In his first paragraph, Weinberg strikes the very tone, smile

included, that Musil alludes to:

Like many other scientists, I was amused when I heard about the prank played by NYU mathematical physicist Alan Sokal, who late in 1994 sub-
mitted a sham article to the culture studies journal Social Text.

A couple of friends of mine brought me a copy of Weinberg's article

cautioning me that it would "get my hackles up." Actually, it did nothing of

the sort. Even though Weinberg points up the pitfalls of applying

interpretation to mathematically defined phenomena by ridiculing aspects

of the writings of culture theorists, his piece contained eight caveats

concerning the limits of science which dovetail quite nicely with my own

concerns. In fact, I was startled to find Weinberg making a number of the

same points which I made in a book review of Higher

Superstition by

Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt published in a recent issue of Science

As Culture. It would be delusional of me to think that a scientific

eminence like Steven Weinberg would read anything I wrote much less

consider cautionary any insights that I might provide. I therefore must

conclude that Weinberg's caveats that strip the power from his own piece

and form the foundation of mine have a certain pan-cultural quality that

transcends educational, economic and doctrinal castes.

Following are the

eight alarms that Weinberg and I would like to sound:

1) Weinberg dissociates his argument from technological applications. He

states:

Those who seek extrascientific messages in what they think they

understand about modern physics are digging dry wells, In my view, with

two large exceptions, the results of research into physics (as opposed,

say, to psychology) have no legitimate implications for culture or politics

or philosophy. (I am not talking here about the technological applications of physics, which of course do have a huge effect on

our culture,...) (my italics)

I assume that one would exclude science's "extrascientific messages" in

which scientists, CEO's and journalists proselytize for the inherently and

ineluctably progressive nature of science or the justification of "pure"

scientific research on the grounds that often unpredictable yet beneficial

technologies accrue as 'spinoffs'. In short, how do "purely scientific

discoveries" achieve ahistorical status; in other words how do phenomena, universalized, quantified or otherwise shed their historicity?

2) The second part of Weinberg's quote above contains caveat number

two:

...or about [physic's] use as metaphor, but about the direct logical

implications of purely scientific discoveries themselves.)

But science writing itself because of the mathematization and quantification of phenomena resorts to metaphor to communicate only

contingently the "purely scientific." This is not to fault all science writing

but when language as opposed to mathematical expression is used to

describe physical phenomena then the limited tools of language including

metaphor impose their conditions on expression and communication.

Weinberg's phrase, "logical implications", is an attempt to fuse the

ineluctable element perceived in science e.g. its discrete logic with the

historical and hermeneutical change that it is often required to undergo

leading to the pliable and breachable skin of "implications."

Though I have no beard to smile through, I was amused (and not surprised) to read in Higher Superstition that the authors held the

philosophical movement, Logical Positivism, in high regard specifically the

work of A.J. Ayer. Although this form of positivism's connection to

physics is based primarily on personal temperament one understands

Gross' and Levitt's affection for it because it, like mathematical equations

in their ideal state, is simple and tidy---actually anal. In this manner, the

Vienna Circle even mistook Wittgenstein's anality for their own. But more than that, Gross and Levitt are attracted to Logical Positivism's comprehensibility. It is akin to poetasters who sing the praises of A.E. Houseman, Robert Service, Edgar Lee Masters and Robert Frost while finding Charles Olson, Ezra Pound, David Jones or even T.S. Eliot gratuitously difficult. Often it is difficult for scientists more than other people to see their personal limitations expressed in seemingly objective choices and connections because as Musil puts it:

...[A]fter all [science] dominates us, not even an illiterate being safe from it, because he learns to live together with countless things that are born of science)

The world more and more conforms to the conditions of science so we tend to forget that the world itself is not scientific.

3)Which leads to caveat three. Weinberg admits that science is inherently hegemonic. If we are to accept "purely scientific discoveries" as "objective" and "unbiased" then the implication is that they are also benign in the sense that they are not "discovered" with any agenda in mind. You can see how difficult it is to separate the notion of an aparticular scientific moment from its intention. According to Weinberg and others in the scientific community no generalization can be made about the intention of science nor will members of the scientific community suffer any criticism of sciences special relationship with 'reality.' There is indeed a

paternalistic if not a posture of false omniscience behind
such insistence
upon immunity from criticism that is hard to reconcile with
the alleged
compelling nature of the argument for "a one-to-one
correspondence"
between scientific explanation and objective reality and its
continuing
failure by force of argument to compel conformity rather than
contrary
interpretation.

4) Weinberg's fourth caveat is related to the first three. He writes:

The other, more important exception to my statement is the
profound
cultural effect of the discovery, going back to Newton, that
nature is
strictly governed by impersonal mathematical laws. Of course,
it still
remains for us to get the laws right, and to understand their
range of
validity; but as far as culture and philosophy are concerned
the difference
between Newton's and Einstein's theories of gravitation or
between
classical and quantum mechanics is immaterial.

Then comes Weinberg's caveat:

There is a good deal of confusion about this, because quantum
mechanics
can seem eerie if described in ordinary language.

First note, in the first part of the quoted material above
that physical
theory is provided with ineluctable 'position' because it is
expressed
through laws and yet outfitted with the 'momentum' of time by
the very
mutability of these laws as scientists wiggle "to get the laws
right." It
simply remains for scientists to declare that science is
cumulative and that
in the "effort to get laws right" they will not broach any

fundamental

change. In short, five hundred years is apparently enough time to assert

the immutability of scientific laws. Science has expanded our conceptions

of time to something approximating the Hindus or Mayans. But our idea

of the eternal does not rest with our actual experience of time but in our

ability to abstract it.

When Weinberg says that "there is a good deal of confusion" as regards

quantum theory and western standards of perception and expression, he

is minimizing a problem that has engaged physicists, historians of science

and philosophers of science since the inception of quantum.

Weinberg

himself is confined to ordinary language when he endeavors to communicate the tenets of quantum theory to people with a

limited or

non-existent mathematical background. Weinberg's popular books rely

on standard methods of language expression including metaphor to

communicate their points. In the realm of language, where quantum finds

no adequate expression, the differences "between classical and quantum

mechanics "is" not "immaterial." If language is inherently deceptive or

insufficient for the task why does Weinberg write books or articles for

that matter. The paradox reminds me of a chapter in a book by physicist

Frijtof Capra called The Tao of Physics. The chapter is called Beyond

Language yet is comprised of several thousand words.

Certainly given the success of his books which popularize various

physical phenomena, Weinberg is not recommending that we adopt

Wittgenstein's famous tenet at the end of his Tractatus, "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence[?]" If so we can happily and gratefully look forward to no more popularizations of the natural world from Weinberg or his colleagues.

Here allow me to provide a counterpoint to Weinberg's 'pragmatic' position. Physicist and mathematician T. Bergstein in his book Quantum Physics and Ordinary Language came to this conclusion about the "eeriness" of the phenomena and its expression by expanding the "implications" of the physical term 'complementarity':

Through the selection of words and sentences it is possible for the mind to accentuate or weaken the complementary elements of communication in innumerable ways. The wide variety of different forms of knowledge embedded in language cannot ever be comprised by scientific description because the accentuation is necessarily fixed on the subject-object partition. An adequate description of human existence must be sought in the ordinary uses of language, in the humanistic sciences, and in poetry - not in natural science.

Poetry! We could start with Wallace Steven's poem The Pure Good Of Theory which would go far in pointing out to Weinberg many of the contradictions in his thought. Stevens writes:
. . . If we propose
a large-sculptured, platonic person, free from time,

And imagine for him the speech he cannot speak,
A form, then, protected from the battering, may
Mature: A capable being may replace
Dark horse and walker walking rapidly.
Felicity, ah! Time is the hooded enemy,
The inimical music, the enchantered space
in which the enchanted preludes have their place.

Unlike Weinberg (who could be that "large-sculptured, platonic person"),
Stevens honestly addresses epistemological conundrums as they
manifest
themselves in the process of writing and possesses
considerable
philosophical tools with which to do so.

From the "humanistic sciences", I would propose Edmund
Husserl,
specifically his book, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and
Transcendental Phenomenology*: Husserl writes:

Where is that huge piece of method subjected to critique and
clarification
[-that method] that leads from the intuitively given
surrounding world to
the idealization of mathematics and to the interpretation of
these
idealizations as objective being? Einstein's revolutionary
innovations
concern the formulae through which the idealized and naively
objectified
physis is dealt with. But how formula in general, how
mathematical
objectification in general, receive meaning on the foundation
of life and
intuitively given surrounding world-of this we learn nothing;
and thus
Einstein does not reform the space and time in which our vital
life runs its
course.

Weinberg might agree with Husserl above regarding the separation of "mathematical objectification" from cultural considerations. But Husserl demonstrates that the interchange between the mathematization of phenomena and the phenomena themselves occurs on a much more fundamental level and yet, in spite of this, only effects the cultural and societal shape of human existence and not its "vital life." People like Weinberg tend to confuse the hegemony of technology and retrograde considerations of its scientific origins with more fundamental changes, when in reality that hegemony is no more than a cultural condition amplified by its present historical currency.

Bergstein's "complementary elements" sound perilously like metaphor where a few elements are drawn together to illuminate the whole which is revealed as the template for metaphor's techne. The inability to describe scientifically e.g. mathematically "the wide variety of different forms of knowledge" e.g. experience presages the failures of the Strong Artificial Intelligence project. (Note the way A.I. advocates like Daniel Dennett have a propensity to set up artificial antagonists, straw adversaries, who are little more than 'thought experiments', whose counterpoints come from Dennett's own mind, which he then proceeds to defeat in argument though often he even fails to accomplish that.)

And lastly Bergstein says that "the illumination of human existence" should be left not to Weinberg, Sokal, Gross and Levitt but to those that they

despise-philosophers, social theorists and even poets. Perhaps Bergstein

had seen the smiling beard of Musil's "first full-dress encounter with evil"

and decided that others with more altruistic impulses should be entrusted

with interpreting paradoxes that scientists have heaped up and then

largely ignored in favor of those discoveries which yield marketable

technological results.

5) Caveat number five (which relates to caveat number four) comprised a

major part of my review in Science as Culture. Weinberg's formulation

reads thus:

I have to admit that physicists share responsibility for the widespread

confusion about such matters. Sokal quotes some dreadful examples of

Werner Heisenberg's philosophical wanderings...

Weinberg goes on to make this statement:

(Heisenberg was one the great physicists of the twentieth century, but he

could not always be counted on to think carefully, as is shown by his

technical mistakes in the German nuclear weapons program.)

But how does it follow that Heisenberg was a poor philosopher because

he was a poor experimenter? It would seem that Heisenberg who was a

supreme theoretician would likewise make for an imaginative and

meticulous philosopher. Heisenberg's discussions with various philosophers, especially Neo-Kantians, rested on a reading and understanding of continental philosophy that is extremely rare among

current American physicists. How can Weinberg or Sokal who seem to

have no background in philosophy and have contributed far less

to

theoretical physics judge Heisenberg's powers in these areas especially

when they insist on expertise from people in other fields?

Weinberg goes on to criticize Louis de Broglie in the same vein. This is a

bit ironic to this reader because in *Higher Superstition*, a book that

Weinberg praises, its authors Gross and Levitt hold up de Broglie as a

sensible extrapolater of physical concepts into philosophical discourse.

The overall subjectivity of the matter renders Weinberg's argument

without merit. The hubris that comparative mediocrities like Weinberg

and Sokal show toward other physicists and scientists who disagree or

whose statements are disagreeable to their position but who demonstrate

a superior knowledge and understanding in areas such as philosophy

points to extrascientific intent and motive. Weinberg claims he is able to

precipitate cultural conditions from the fundamental scientific

understanding of phenomena. But again context wins out and Weinberg's

caveats in the form of discrete categories blend in ways he seems not to

have intended.

Weinberg creates his own paradox. His commonsense form of pseudophilosophical discourse relies heavily on his own pedestrian

cultural and epistemological assumptions. He disagrees with Gross and

Levitt on the merits of the philosophical arguments of Louis de Broglie

precisely because arguments about physical phenomena couched in

language, philosophical or otherwise, are wide open to

interpretation. If

Weinberg were to train for e.g. read with attention texts that would allow

him to approach a desired set of discretions, he would run the risk as

many of his colleagues have of challenging his own core assumptions.

Recently, I picked up Wolfgang Pauli's The Influence of Archetypal

Ideas On the Scientific Theories of Kepler which explains Kepler's

discoveries both in their historical perspective and with a Jungian tinge.

We must assume that Weinberg et al would reject and ridicule Wolfgang

Pauli as they do Heisenberg, Prigogine and de Broglie and the thousands

of other scientists and mathematicians that have endeavored to use

language based tools to explicate physical phenomena and its implications. What scientist or mathematician who is more than a

technician has not speculated in this manner including John von Neumann

who, though as reactionary as the creator makes us, came through the

constraints of logical discourse, to a faux Buddhist interpretation

concerning the problems surrounding conceptual expression and quantum

complementarity.

Actually a more illuminating piece concerning this dimension of alleged

scientific culpability appeared in the Book World section of the

Washington Post for August, 11. Robert L. Park, a professor of physics

at the University of Maryland, reviewed John Horgan's recent book, The

End of Science. At the end of the review, in which Horgan

caricatures

Weinberg as "a tough minded rationalist", Park writes this:

But Horgan ends with the fuzzy, feel-good silliness of Frank Tipler, who

concluded in the Physics of Immortality that at a distant point in time

we will be resurrected as computers. It is naive ironic science gone mad.

I pointedly criticized Tipler's book in an earlier PostMortem concerning

the Mary Lefkowitz flap as well as in my review in Science as Culture.

Tipler's book is indeed an intellectual cowpie but it is not the exception in science writing.

Park concludes his review with this revelation:

By the time the shuttle got me to my rental car, I realized that ending with

Tipler was a metaphor. This, Horgan is warning us, is where science is

headed. Everyone will be free to choose the theory that suits them.

Without empiricism to keep the score, one ironic science is as good as

another. Science has manned the battlements against the postmodern

heresy that there is no objective truth, only to discover postmodernism

inside the wall.

This statement would make Frank Tipler jump out of his skin.

Postmodernists would find its naivete amusing possibly responding with a

volley of laughs and guffaws through their own beards. Park is asking for

the impossible. He wants the logic of mathematical science to again

reflect the rational that finds its expression in everyday experience. Park

wants quantum to yield to everyday language and not to the inexorable

mathematical logic of Frank Tipler's computer extrapolated equations

which far from demonstrating theoretical relativism are actually a working

paper for those doing research in Strong Artificial Intelligence, fifth

generation computers and the like. (The second half of the book is a

veritable catechism of the current canon of mathematical physics.)

Empiricism 'keeps score' at present only through its technological

application. And if you recall, Weinberg in his review said his argument

rejected the "technological applications of physics, which of course do

have a huge effect on our culture".

6) Caveat 6. Weinberg admits that he cannot prove the existence of

objective reality. Frankly, I don't know why he brings it up. Sokal and

Gross and Levitt also do but, even though John von Neumann and certain Buddhist sects have struggled with the question of objective

reality, it has never been an issue with the philosophers and social

theorists that Weinberg et al attack. If they would read Wittgenstein's

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics they would understand

why they misunderstand deconstructionists and social theorists. But

anyway as regards "objective reality" Weinberg writes:

...[T]he languages in which we describe rocks or in which we state

physical laws are certainly created socially, so I am making an implicit

assumption...that our statements about the laws of physics are in

one-to-one correspondence with aspects of objective reality.

To put it

another way, if we ever discover intelligent creatures on some
distant

planet and translate their scientific works, we will find that
we and they
have discovered the same laws.

'We' and 'they' have not even discovered the same laws here on
earth.

Many of the 'they', which comprise the majority of humanity,
were

coerced and brutalized into accepting our laws. Ask 'them.'
Many now

embrace the technological fruits of western scientific
legalism; but few

outside of those who have themselves become scientists
understand or

accept the philosophical catechism of 'objective reality' that
has formed

around the empirical method. Many people in sciences core
culture reject

the materialist implications of science. These indeed are
cultural questions

which cannot be wholly attributed to ignorance of the
empirical sciences.

If Weinberg's adolescent fantasy were to come to pass, no
doubt

"intelligent creatures on some distant planet" will 'discover'
our 'objective

reality' at the point of whatever state of the art sword human
science has

forged for their powerful handlers.

But in these matters Weinberg insists on demonstrating his
chauvinism

and bigotry. He writes:

Sarah Franklin...challenges an argument of Richard Dawkins
that in

relying on the working of airplanes we show our acceptance of
the

working of the laws of nature, remarking that some airlines
show prayer

films during takeoff to invoke the aid of Allah to remain
safely airborne.

Does Franklin think that Dawkin's argument does not apply to her? If so

would she be willing to give up the use of the laws of physics in designing aircraft, and rely on prayers instead?

First, no Weinberg, Dawkins argument does not apply to Franklin when

you take into account the likelihood that Franklin is not Muslim.

Secondly, does Weinberg plan to get to the afterlife in an airplane or is an

airplane, as Muslims and many of the rest of us percieve, a potential undesirable means to that end?

And translation is not a scientifically objective activity any more than

relating our perceptions is. As Pauli, Hansen, Husserl, Adorno and

Feyerabend (among many other physicists, philosophers etc.) have

pointed out it is the mathematization of the process that has provided the

"one-to-one correspondence" that by Weinberg's own admission require

his "implicit assumption." (Read comment on Dennett above) Weinberg's

argument is circular but that doesn't mean it is wrong. It simply means

given the meager abilities of Weinberg to argue his case, he can speak of

nothing that would help us know for certain whether he is right or wrong.

But is the inability to effectively bring closure to the problem he addresses

due to Weinberg's lack of philosophical acumen; or are the epistemological tools at his disposal fundamentally inadequate for the task?

(The remainder of this article can be found at PostMortem <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1848/>)

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46. **Susan Wheeler**

Re: POETICS Digest - 30 Sep 1997 to 1 Oct 1997

Thu 2 Oct 1997

>-----
>
>Date: Wed, 1 Oct 1997 12:50:37 -0700
>From: Aldon Nielsen <[REDACTED]>
>Subject: Re: That was no gentleman, that was a shrinking violet
>
>would have been in on this Stein conversation earlier, but I now have no
>access to email from home (hope to change that in the coming months) -- so
>only see my mail a few times per week --
>
>yes, _Reading Race_ contains a now somewhat outdated discussion of
>_Melanctha_ -- the publisher is U of Georgia Press,,,,, and I can make a
>shady postal deal with anybody who can't find the volume nearby --
>
>BUT
>
>among the more recent relevant publications is the Fall 1996 issue of
>Modern Fiction Studies devoted to Stein ,, which contains, along with much
>else worthy of note, Lorna Smedman's article on Stein and racialized lan-
guage
Susan Wheeler
[REDACTED]
voice/fax [REDACTED]

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47. **Tom Beard**

Re: "Yokel"

Fri 3 Oct 1997

So, Weinberg and the other scientists and science writers that the article mentions are, or display the qualities of:

evil
anal
poetasters
paternalistic
false omniscience

failures
hubris
mediocrities
pedestrian
adolescent
chauvinism
bigotry
meager.

Well, I'm glad to see that cultural theorists are, unlike those nasty scientists, above resorting to smug ad hominem arguments.

Tom Beard, BSc DipAppSci (Oh! The shame!)

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48. **Tom Beard**

Yokels

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Now that I've let off some steam, perhaps I should make some more measured replies to the points raised by the article.

An adequate description of human existence must be sought in the ordinary uses of language, in the humanistic sciences, and in poetry - not in natural science.

Why is the author resorting to such binarism? I have certainly found the works of Wallace Stevens, Michele Leggott, Denis Diderot and Milan Kundera to provide vital steps towards forming, for me, an "illumination of human existence", but so have the works of Richard Dawkins, Alan Turing, Sophie Germain and Edward Lorenz. We are human, and thus succumb to desire, acculturation and oppression; but we also succumb to viruses, neurochemical imbalances and gravity.

> And lastly Bergstein says that "the illumination of human
> existence" should be left not to Weinberg, Sokal, Gross and Levitt but
> to those that they despise - philosophers, social theorists and even poets.

It's not clear to me from the quotes in the article, or from Weinberg's other writings, that they do despise philosophers or poets. Or do Ayer and Popper not count as philosophers, perhaps because they are guilty of comprehensibility?

I think the author misreads Weinberg's statements in the following passage:

if we ever discover intelligent creatures on some distant planet and translate their scientific works, we will find that we and they have discovered the same laws.

Parcelli's response ("We' and 'they' have not even discovered the same laws here on earth. Many of the 'they', which comprise the majority of humanity, were coerced and brutalized into accepting our laws.") seems to disregard that Weinberg writes specifically of "scientific works", not of belief systems in general. Thus, while many different cultures and religions have widely differing explanations or narratives of the world, Weinberg is saying that any group which follows what might broadly be termed "scientific" principles (such as falsifiability, a combination of analysis and synthesis etc) might be expected to find similar theories. Science is thus regarded as useful because it is consistent.

Finally, the title of the post is strangely consistent with a belief that used to be traditional among the arts and humanities (one that is in opposition to the usual critique of science's relation to socioeconomic structures): that the arts are the proper domain of the aristocrats, whereas science is better left to the "yokels".

Tom "smiling into his" Beard

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49. **George Bowering**

Re: no more language-bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Oh no! Can Bromige be right that Imagism is gone? Oh no! I just spent the last 12 months writing 3400 Imagist poems. Now what am I going to do? Does anyone want to trade me a Bill Berkson book for 3400 Imagist poems?

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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50. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Thu, 2 Oct 1997, Don Wellman wrote:

felt dissonance (the difficulties, the limits of language). That agenda for addressing reality and social fact may have in some ways outlived its usefulness. Is language "irreducible"? Is desire "irreducible"? I am loathe to mask the facts of dissonance. I'd like to see the wagons circled around this principle.

Don Wellman

Very vague, but not bad. Blakean, in fact. In general I have great respect for the work of Bromige, Gould and others on this list; sometimes I wish I could filter 'em out though when the main point of their posts is to trivialize and dismiss issues that are actually about poetix. Their responses to Mark Wallaces small screed being a case in point.

Seems to me that the work done under the LangPo rubric is one of a large number of useful, helpful, pattern-breaking tendencies in poetry in the US in the last 30 years. Defensiveness toward it seems to be *mostly* (as Perelman and others have suggested) a kind of furious very-US hatred of groups, of the building of collective identities...

Thanx to Don Wellman for at least addressing the issue a bit...I don't agree with him that langpo is an "agenda" that has outlived its usefulness...Actually, to the main actors in the group that is probably what it is..To the poetry scene in general it seems to me to be mostly a helpful example of serious and unafraid attention to writing.

Mark P.
atlanta

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51. **Maria Damon**
Re: Quote of the Day
Fri 3 Oct 1997

At 5:14 PM -0400 10/2/97, [REDACTED] wrote:

>My favorite line of the day, addressed to me by my e-mail program at the
>end of a message:

>

>"Some of the words are too long to format."

>

>As far as I recall, the longest word in the message was "Hejinian."

sounds like the students i used to get (not any more, they've gotten more sophisticated).

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52. **Miles Champion**

Ron Silliman's Ketjak & The Age of Huts

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Dear List--

Apologies in advance for troubling everyone with this query, but if anyone could give me any (back-channel) advice or suggestions as to where I might look for, or be able to get hold of, Ron Silliman's *_Ketjak_* &/or *_The Age of Huts_*, I'd be very grateful. Thanks.

--Miles

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53. **henryg**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Fri, 3 Oct 1997 09:13:19 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>

>Very vague, but not bad. Blakean, in fact. In general I have great
>respect for the work of Bromige, Gould and others on this list; sometimes
>I wish I could filter 'em out though when the main point of their posts is
>to trivialize and dismiss issues that are actually about poetix. Their
>responses to Mark Wallaces small screed being a case in point.

Mark, you're right, the silly antics often crowd out the direct treatment of the thing, the discussion. But I don't think the main point of either DB's or my recent posts on this subject was to trivialize it. Sometimes you have to read through the flippy parabolicness, but both of us, I think DB will agree regarding his own, were actually saying something in particular about the issue raised. Not trying to make a joke of it or dismiss anything. Mark Wallace's attempt to criticize the critics by referring obliquely to statements made or written elsewhere & muttering "language poetry bashing" is certainly just as parabolic an attempt to steer the conversation - or more so - as DB's or HG's. All power to him, it's certainly a phenomenon, I guess - & we have had this discussion before, about culprits (like that guy Blarnes) spouting "langpo" as a murky shorthand for unexplored "trends". But harping on poor little langpo & its meanies sort of avoids various antagonisms/questions. (probably with good reason - we don't need another mini culture war in the poetry school swamp, thank you very much Mr. Blarnes). I was going to be quiet today, & I promise, poor blind poetix listers, to shut up for the next three days unless something really important comes up. - Henry Gould the evil keyboard squid

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Fri 3 Oct 1997

goes...). The few comments since have tended to be of the short and dissing kind. I agree that the LangPo bashing does seem to come from a typically US stance on schools and ideas as such. But to see LangPo merely as a blip on the radar screen of late twentieth century postmodernist politics is to miss exciting work, to wave away with both hands those still writing that way, and to miss still more possibilities. And I don't think that I have missed the point of David's post of yesterday with its, "there is no more language writing." It's nothing more than a name (and a general one at that which a few even extend to include all poetry). This has been a weak discussion of LangPo the movement, and not about "language writing." In that case, perhaps LangPo could be discussed in the context of postmodernism, and whether that exists any longer, or where the hell we are right now (oh no! Not another end-of-century discussion).

Since we are discussing movements and other poetic phenomena, I offer up as an example the French surrealists where the decidedly doctrinaire position of Breton helped that school to an early(?) demise, one that it would have nevertheless had even if not for his overbearing. Consider the surrealism bashing that we have seen over the last four decades in which "neo-surrealism" has been under attack. I don't know about any Oedipal longings (He is dead and gone, Lady), but what has happened appears more phoenix-like than anything else; the non-school of I can improve upon this work (action over and against the longings for originality, or "newness" never realized) referred to as received form by many. For me, the best surrealist writing has been seen after WWII in this country and in others. Just an example.

Best,

BB

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56. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Oct 3, 10:17am, henryg wrote:

> Subject: Re: language poetry bashing
> On Fri, 3 Oct 1997 09:13:19 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:
> >
> >Very vague, but not bad. Blakean, in fact. In general I have great
> >respect for the work of Bromige, Gould and others on this list; sometimes
> >I wish I could filter 'em out though when the main point of their posts is
> >to trivialize and dismiss issues that are actually about poetix. Their
> >responses to Mark Wallaces small screed being a case in point.
>

> Mark, you're right, the silly antics often crowd out the
> direct treatment of the thing, the discussion. But I don't think the main
> point of either DB's or my recent posts on this subject was to
> trivialize it. Sometimes you have to read through the flippy parabolicness,
> but both of us, I think DB will agree regarding his own, were actually
> saying something in particular about the issue raised. Not trying
> to make a joke of it or dismiss anything. Mark Wallace's
> attempt to criticize the critics by referring obliquely to statements
> made or written elsewhere & muttering "language poetry bashing" is
> certainly just as parabolic an attempt to steer the conversation
> - or more so - as DB's or HG's. All power to him, it's certainly a
> phenomenon, I guess - & we have had this discussion before, about
> culprits (like that guy Blarnes) spouting "langpo" as a murky shorthand
> for unexplored "trends". But harping on poor little langpo & its
> meanies sort of avoids various antagonisms/questions. (probably with
> good reason - we don't need another mini culture war in the poetry
> school swamp, thank you very much Mr. Blarnes). I was going to be
> quiet today, & I promise, poor blind poetics listers, to shut up
> for the next three days unless something really important comes up.
> - Henry Gould the evil keyboard squid
>-- End of excerpt from henryg

Sorry Henry, but didn't see this until after I sent my last (the one from thread escalation central you know). My mail server license has been on&off all morning. Did note the attempt to swerve in some of the latest posts on this bashing thing, antics notwithstanding.

Best (go back to sleep now Eric B.),

BB

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57. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: no more language-bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

If David Bromige thinks we should let the mere matter of the non-existence of a phenomenon interfere with our bashing of same, he's got several more thinks coming. (Was, at it happens, just thinking of him.) Let me adduce here the final sentences of the entry on "nothing" in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where Peter heath remarks:

"If nothing whatsoever existed, there would be no problem and no answer, and the anxieties even of existential philosophers would be permanently laid to rest. Since they are not, there is evidently _nothing to worry about_. But that itself

should be enough to keep an existentialist happy. Unless the solution be, as some have suspected, that it is not nothing that has been worrying them, but they who have been worrying it."

and, after all, isn't disappearing from the world exactly the kind of thing a language writer would do to attract attention from those theory-ridden critics who would far rather write about a poetry they would never, could never, read?

Or as Mark wallace might put it, that never happened, and besides, I wasn't there.

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58. **Michael Coffey**

Re: language poetry bashing -Reply

Fri 3 Oct 1997

this is just a general musing on all that has gone on referenced to language poetry bashing...

it seems to me that this topic has brought to the surface a very recognizable reflex with respect to OUR poetry, a territorialness, a conviction that a certain kind of work, and the authors of that certain kind of work, which and who happen to represent the kind of poetics that [the correspondent] thinks is most worthwhile, are to be championed, and most decidedly at the expense of not only people and work that do not fit into the categories of OUR work, OUR writers, and but (even more dramatically) at the expense of critics who have not appropriately valued the work and workers of OUR poetry.

Now, I ask of us, what is at stake here? Is there some extra-poetical, extra-careerist, extra-ordinary value, social, political, personal, that can accrue in a world where the disposition toward OUR kind of poetry is different? To what extent is the world as constituted the way it is BECAUSE of the position of OUR kind of poetry? Is OUR world of poetry a world of love or of voters or of socialists or of healers or is it the world that we know?

What is being defended, and what attacked here? Again, what is at stake? It seems to me sometimes that we have imagined it all, imagined the enemy, imagined our purity, in order to give meaning to OUR activities. We have demonized those who have not gotten around to OUR kind of work or our kinds of poets (enuf with the upper case), or who have, but don't find it interesting or moving or to be throwing light on something they see as a tradition or a tradition of innovation.

I mean, so what? Sometimes, the list's constant trotting out of loyalty oaths reminds me of a marxist group i was once part of, wherein even the most informal

of communiques had to go out of their way to assert so-and-so's working-class parents or mill-town origins or farmhouse life.

I also mean: who is really threatening us? And who are we a threat to? It's just poetry and this list a group of people for the most part interested in poetry. And some see poetry as doing political work and some see it as doing psychological work and some as even social work. We have room for Creeley and Weiner and Palmer and Coolidge and younger folks and men and women and people of "color," like there are people of "no color," and that's enough for me.

I think often we doth protest too much, hide behind arcane insults, micturate (I happen to like arcaneness) upon the "enemy" (ted hughes still steaming, wasn't Wystan Hughes wetted here, Jorie Graham), rather than talk on occasion about what it is that make Hannah's work work when it does, and what that means, or about Lauterbach's new book, or Jackson's 75th, etc.

I have this sense, as someone reading on the list most everyday and often too uncertain to reply, that the list is chockablock with people who are absolutely and elegantly in possession of their own moral/political/intellectual inviolability who are then (understandably) offended that Bob Dylan played for the Pope (and not them).

Or maybe the week has just been too long. But I wonder if anyone else out there senses what I sense and, although very interested in the list as a site of importance, is embarrassed by the frequent mutual valuations that go on, the partisan shots at the unrepresented, the desperate assertions of mattering.

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59. **aerialedge** ***an attempt***

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Discussing language poetry at times a bit like trying to discuss the middle east. Shit flies, nothing gets said. So-- an attempt to say something. First let's take a chance & say that language poetry does in fact exist. It is not merely, at this time, a historical phenomena but a set of possibilities -- a risk w/ a lot of nouns in the way. A friendly roadblock, a fortunate detour. I.e. & surprise surprise, it is not what it was. The "original practitioners" (geeze) have variously moved into, sometimes on to, new phases of their writing & otherwise lives but the reception of their work, understandably, is still characterized by misunderstanding relative to a volatile (& for many, desperate) emotional/political/intellectual climate. What the hell is he talking about?

Language poetry arose, mainly, on the heels of &/or in the midst of two conflicts: Vietnam & the New American Poetry (no, that's not an equation, dolt).

The media & events convinced everyone "the sixties had failed." Yes, it's becoming a story. Any case, to avoid reducing Grenier's "I Hate Speech" & other "seminal" critiques of previous poetries to an oedipal stance there was in the seventies what Tina Darragh has called "a turning to language." In other words, a search for a structural critique-- & they found it, in Structuralism, the Frankfurt School, & in Post-Structuralism-- all of which were effected by the sixties as well hmm. Bernstein's piece on Baudrillard's *The Mirror of Production* an excellent exemplar. So I characterized the New American Poetry above as a conflict. The degree to which that is true wld be clear to anyone familiar w/ the truly varied approaches of those writers, & one can, without partaking of jargon, call these differences ideological. Any case, to fast fwd.-- what is lacking in ALL the language poetry bashing I've encountered is a successful attempt to recontextualize the possibilities still inherent in Spicer, Olson, O'Hara, etc. relative to language poetry-- one ground for this might be to question the equation Adorno & others make of humanism w/ fascism. Apollo/Dionysis w/out the clouds? What is at stake is an understanding of human nature right? At this point I don't think that's been achieved, period.

So some of the possibilities still inherent in newamerpo--1. An insistent & unsimplistic valuing of the individual, ala Ginsberg, or, very different, Cage-- warning, you have to be brilliant or you'll be really boring. 2. An understanding of self as performative rather than unified-- repeat above warning. Third, & perhaps most interesting to me, a demonstration of the ways in which language/new american poetics are a continuum, each implying & partaking of the other.

None of these possibilities exclude another, & certainly there are more, just as there are more possibilities w/in the techniques that are more often identified w/ language poetry. In any case, whatever one does, no jury will come back on these questions any time soon, & actually, it's pretty unlikely one will be appointed.

--Rod Smith

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60. **henry oh oh**

Re: an attempt

Fri 3 Oct 1997

speaking humbly, remorsefully, mea culpably, & out of linedly (as one who really & truly on the night Bob Dylan played in Baloney for the Pope had a very intense dream I was in NY in a crowd listening to Bob Dylan as an old man playing Times they are a'changin & woke up to find Bob Dylan had not played for me but was on the cover of the Times Baloney section) -

to your point about the continuum between nudamurican & langpoo -

would you agree that one link between these kinds of poetry is a sort of autonomy or distancing - emphasized by what you say the performative or play aspect of it all - that there is a circle drawn around it, there is not going to be a simple realism - you are going to have to enjoy it for what it is & it's not going to help you with your life or solve the world's problems except as it is - for me this is reflected especially clearly in the "NY school" types - Teddy Bearigan & the St. Marks home away from home - whereas the langpoos were more interested in theory - but there is, as you say, this link, this stretch-of-paw, shall we say, between the Teddy Bears & the Lang Poohs -

& when we're all done telling Henry the history of the late past THEN we can MAYBE talk about current books - goodbye all I set you free I'm returning to my igloo for the weekend - - Polar Chicken

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61. **James Finnegan**
Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

In a message dated 97-10-03 13:10:50 EDT, you write:

*For me, the best surrealist writing has been seen after
WWII in this country and in others. Just an example.*

BB,

Who are thinking of? I know a number of poets who employ surrealist technique or have written, in varying ways, surrealist poems--but none come to mind who are solely surrealist.

Finnegan

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62. **henry oh oh**
Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Fri, 3 Oct 1997 14:33:14 -0400 William Burmeister Prod said:

>

>Sorry Henry, but didn't see this until after I sent my last (the one from
>morning. Did note the attempt to swerve in some of the latest posts on this
>bashing thing, antics notwithstanding.

>

>Best (go back to sleep now Eric B.),

>

>BB

- take it from me, BB (Big Bear?) - NEVER apologize. Especially when you're right.
- Grand Poobah (Grand Poobahs never apologize & they're NEVER right!)

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63. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Oct 3, 3:33pm, James Finnegan wrote:

- > Subject: Re: language poetry bashing
- > In a message dated 97-10-03 13:10:50 EDT, you write:
- >
- > >For me, the best surrealist writing has been seen after
- > >WWII in this country and in others. Just an example.
- >
- > BB,
- >
- > Who are thinking of? I know a number of poets who employ
- > surrealist technique or have written, in varying ways, surrealist
- > poems--but none come to mind who are solely surrealist.
- >
- > Finnegan
- >-- End of excerpt from James Finnegan

No, none come to my mind either (other than maybe Philip Lamantia in the 50s). I'm sure it is intentional that those who employ(-ed) surrealist technique did not wish to be considered Solely surrealist per se. Of course we all know of many who employ(-ed) technique such as Ashberry, Yau, J.Tate, Simic, Char, etc. In this context, I suspect "surrealist" is being used as label for a poet. I meant to label the writing itself as surrealist (shd. be surrealistic).

BB

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64. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Yes, Mark P. from Atlanta! I like that statement!

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65. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: Quote of the Day

Fri 3 Oct 1997

(He)-he-he! That's funny! (Ji') know what I mean? I(n) my language, that (i)s (an)awfully amusing story.

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66. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

example the French surrealists where the decidedly doctrinaire position of Breton helped that school to an early(?) demise,

I'd be curious to know what you know about his "doctrinaire" position; I don't have access to info right now, but am very interested.

>For me, the best surrealist writing has been seen after WWII in this country and in >others.

Which poets would you include as having written some of the best surrealist work?

Thanks, Aviva

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67. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: language poetry bashing -Reply

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Yes, partisanship is a bore...especially when no new information or alternatives are offerered in the presumptuous rejections of that which is "not a part." I'd rather get into some real discussions about langpo, or someone's alternative proposals, on a concrete, illustrative level. Facile judgements really are a bore.

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68. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: language poetry bashing

Fri 3 Oct 1997

On Oct 3, 6:21pm, Aviva Vogel wrote:

> Subject: Re: language poetry bashing

> > example the French surrealists where the decidedly doctrinaire position of

> > Breton helped that school to an early(?) demise,

>

> I'd be curious to know what you know about his "doctrinaire" position; I
> don't have access to info right now, but am very interested.
>
> >For me, the best surrealist writing has been seen after WWII in this
> country and in >others.
>
> Which poets would you include as having written some of the best surrealist
> work?
>
> Thanks, Aviva
>-- End of excerpt from Aviva Vogel

In order to do justice to your question, that would be a long reply! In short, Breton had little tolerance for what he considered eccentrics and others whose views differed from his (including political views). People like Robert Desnos, Antonin Artaud, Dali, Aragon, and that's just the beginning. I liked to read him, but had to come to grips with the intolerance of individualism I saw. Respect much of what he tried to do, rather than what he actually did. Doctrinaire the way I use it means school rules (my manifesto or the highway). Rene Char, who was one of the surrealists until '34, wrote interesting poetry and prose upto the eighties having the influence of surrealism. I have already posted before with the others who have been influenced, and that I like.

BB

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69. **Herb Levy**

Periplum CDs: Greinke/Land & Deep Listening Band/Ellen Fullman

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Hi folks,

I'll keep this short.

Periplum has released 2 CDs this year: one is the second release by Jeff Greinke & Land (Dennis Rea, Lesli Dalaba, Ed Pias, George Soler, Bill Moyer and Greg Gilmore), called Archipelago with eight group compositions & Suspended Music, a collaboration between the Deep Listening Band (Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, David Gamper) & Ellen Fullman & the Long String Instrument featuring both groups playing new compositions by Oliveros & Fullman.

I'm offering these to list members for US\$14 including postage for either disc or US\$26 including postage for both.

E-mail inquiries to <[REDACTED]>, checks/money orders to Periplum, POBox 95678, Seattle, WA 98145 USA.

Forthcoming releases, out in early 98, include a CD of interactive computer music pieces by Canadian composer Martin Bartlett & a series of songs for voice and piano by eleven US composers including John Luther Adams, Peter Garland, Robin Holcomb, David Mahler, Maggi Payne, Susan Stenger. After that a few surprises, including some things that may be particularly pertinent to this list.

Bests,

Herb

Herb Levy



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70. **Alan Jen Sondheim**

DEATH

Fri 3 Oct 1997

--+-

DEATH

JENNIFER LAY BACK BORN ON BIER JULU AND HAIR BORN BROWN BORN
BLACK

CREST-TORN CLOTH COAT CLOTTING BLOOD BORNE JENNIFER
[TH]AES OFEREODE; [TH]ISSES SWA MAEG

IK GEHORTA [TH]AT SEGGEN

FUKUOKA IS A LOVELY CITY WITH WITH MANY SANDY BEACHES
CHILDREN ALL DAY PLAY IN SURF AND FROLIC
WHILE SMILING ADULTS WATCH FROM STRIPED CABANAS

JENNIFER SHORN LOCKS LOOKED JULU-LORE LOVE AND LANGUOR LOST
ON SEA-FOAM SHARED SONG SO HEARD DROWNED-DRAWN JENNIFER
[TH]AES OFEREODE; [TH]ISSES SWA MAEG

IK GEHORTA [TH]AT SEGGEN

I WILL COME AND PLAY IN FUKUOKA WITH ITS SANDY BEACHES
I WILL SING THE SONG OF THE CHILDREN RUNNING IN THE SURF
I WILL DRINK MEAD WITH MEN AND WOMEN IN FIERCE AND DARK
CABANAS

JENNIFER DARK BURNING ASH-BORN JULU-RISEN SKY-BORN JENNIFER
THUNDER A PALE PEAKED DAWN DUSK DRAINED OF DREAR DOWN
DEATH [TH]AES OFEREODE; [TH]ISSES SWA MAEG

IK GEHORTA [TH]AT SEGGEN

DRUNK WITH SORROWS I EXPLODE UPON THE BEACHES OF FUKUOKA
DRUNK WITH LOVE I BURN WHITE UPON THE FUKUOKA SURF
I WILL DRINK AND DRAIN MEAD I WILL BEAR THE DARK CABANAS

[TH]AES OFEREODE; [TH]ISSES SWA MAEG
UPON THE BIER OF JENNIFER UPON THE JULU-BIER

(that was over-
come, so might this / i heard say)

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71. **R. Gancie**
Sokal's Beard

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Dear Tom. I'm no cultural theorist. I came into these bad habits on my own. Some of my sources are unknown or of only marginal interest to social theorists. If you had read some of the sources I sight in my piece you would indeed see that the current scientific community demonstrates the qualities that you have catalogued with marvelous concision in your message. "Evil" is Musil's word, though I concur. Musil was a scientist. "Anal" refers to Logical Positivists who were philosophers not scientists. It is widely accepted that their project collapsed some years back yet the Strong Artificial Intelligence community has yet to get the message. Have you read John von Neumann's Self-Reproducing Automata? "Poetasters" just means scientists are people who have not dedicated themselves to the craft of poetry but avail themselves of the opportunity to wax poetic by virtue of the primacy of the sciences not because of any special poetic gift they possess or rigor applied. Popular books of science ARE often sloppy and even ridiculous. Remainder lists are littered with the crap. Read John Casti comparing Tosca to The Prisoners Dilemma Game. "Paternalistic?" Read Gross and Levitt's Higher Superstition. I challenge you to find a more condescending, smug and gratuitous book while making naked appeals to powerful economic and political interests with the sole motive of silencing a relatively powerless and somewhat misguided group of academics. My concern is not for cultural theorists. If I sound smug, Damn right. I give as good as I get. It was physicists themselves that raised the questions that cultural theorists have latched onto through several generations of discussion. Scientists as "Failures?" Go to a hundred and tenth and Broadway and take a deep breath. Its not so much that science has failed as that it has so thoroughly succeeded. What alternatives are left. Certainly, people like you and I have no real stake in the discourse. It is "hubris" to be told by the Grosses and Levitts that outside opinions

carry no weight in discussion on matters that effect us. We are allowed a civic consciousness on matters of science as long as it doesn't adversely effect the economic bonanza of science and technology. But we are forbidden philosophical opinions even when it is obvious that in matters that inevitably require epistemological and hermeneutic tools, scientists have many well endowed forums yet no special knowledge or insights. Hence, Weinberg who knows nothing about the vast philosophical and epistemological grounding that his statements would require to make a modicum of sense is given space in the New York Review of Books on the basis of work largely irrelevant to the matters he discusses. What's embarrassing and dangerous about Weinberg's piece is that he seems to be unaware of this. I guess the Dynamite Prize will do that to you. Or that's a result of "hubris". "Adolescent, chauvinism, bigotry?" Let me quote from Barrow and Tipler's Anthropic Cosmological Principle. "...the arguments one hears today against considering intelligent computers to be persons and against giving them human rights have precise parallels in the nineteenth century arguments against giving blacks and women full human rights." Is this the domain of science or is it "false omniscience"? You think B. and T. might be in a little bit over their heads. And of course the authors provide no historical information to back up their statement. They get to shoot from the hip, care of Oxford University Press. I stand by my interpretation of Weinberg that you briefly address. My position in response to your comment would be similar to one Benjamin Whorf might provide. Alan Sokal has turned his original piece into a career with powerful interests supporting his efforts. And career moves are more profitable if they support the status quo rather than attack it. What's getting lost in the attack focused on the Deconstructionists are that concerns about the scientific method have been with us for a long time. A glance around my library indicates the depth and diversity of that concern. Bruno, Blake, Hegel, Husserl, Bohr, Clifford Still, Hansen, Horkheimer and Adorno, Wittgenstein, Pauli etc. etc. Long before I knew of Deconstructionists I became interested in the above material. Sokal shows no interest. Weinberg dismisses Heisenberg's "unfortunate" philosophical efforts. Weinberg should be so "unfortunate."---Carlo Parcelli

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72. **Poetics List** **Welcome Message**

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Rev.10-1-97

Welcome to the Poetics List

&

The Electronic Poetry Center

sponsored by The Poetics Program, Department of English, Faculty of Art & Letters, of the State University of New York, Buffalo

Postal Address: 438 Clemens Hall, SUNY, Buffalo, NY 14260

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc>

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[This document was prepared by Charles Bernstein
(), Loss PequeñoGlazier
(), and Joel Kuszai ().

Above the world-weary horizons
New obstacles for exchange arise
Or unfold, O ye postmasters!

1. About the Poetics List

The Poetics List was founded in late 1993 with the epigraph above.

There are presently about 500 subscribers.

Please note that this is a private list and information about the list should not be posted to other lists or directories of lists. The idea is to keep the list to those with specific rather than general interests, and also to keep the scale of the list relatively small and the volume manageable.

individual posts of participants are sent directly to all subscribers, we continue to work to promote the editorial function of this project. The definition of that project, while provisional, and while open to continual redefinition by list participants, is nonetheless aversive to a generalized discussion of poetry. Rather, our aim is to support, inform, and extend those directions in poetry that are committed to innovations, renovations, and investigations of form and/or/as content, to the questioning of received forms and styles, and to the creation of the otherwise unimagined, untried, unexpected, improbable, and impossible. We also encourage subscribers to post information on publications and reading series that they have coordinated, edited, published, or in which they appear (see section 9 below).

Please keep in mind that all posts go out immediately to all subscribers, and become part of an on-line archive. **Posting to Poetics is a form of publication, not personal communication.** Participants are asked to exercise caution before posting messages! While spontaneity of response may seem the very heart of the list at its best, it also has the darker side of circulating ideas that have not been well considered (or considered by another reader -- editor or friend). Given the nature of the medium, subscribers do well to maintain some skepticism when reading the list and, where possible, to try to avoid taking what may be something close to a spontaneous comment made in the heat of exchange as if it were a revised or edited essay ("Let the Reader Beware!").

The "list owner" of Poetics is Charles Bernstein. Joel Kuszai is list manager. For subscription information contact us at

██████████.

2. Subscriptions

Subscriptions to Poetics are free of charge. But we ask that you subscribe with your real name and we reserve the right to request additional information, including address and phone number. All subscription information you supply will remain confidential.

message, with no subject line, to:

██████████

the one-line message should say:

{or}

(replacing Jill Jillway with your own name; but note: do not use your name to unsub)

We will be sent a notice of all subscription activity. Please allow several days for your new or re-subscription to take effect.

*

If you are having difficulty unsubscribing, please note:

Sometimes your e-mail address may be changed slightly by your system administrator. If this happens you will not be able to send messages to mail. To avoid this, unsub from the old address and resub from the new address. If you can no longer do this there is a solution if you use Eudora (an e-mail program that is available free at shareware sites): from the Tools menu select "Options" and then select set-up for "Sending Mail": you may be able to substitute your old address here and send the unsub message.

The most frequent problem with subscriptions is bounced messages. If your system is often down or if you have a low disk quota, Poetics messages may get bounced. Please try avoid having messages from the list returned to us. If the problem is low disk quota, you may wish to request an increase from your system administrator. (You may wish to argue that this subscription is part of your scholarly communication!) You may also wish to consider obtaining a commercial account.

In general, if a Poetics message is bounced from your account, your subscription to Poetics will be temporarily suspended. If this happens, simply resubscribe to the list in the normal manner, once your account problem has been resolved.

All questions about subscriptions, whether about an individual subscription or subscription policy, should be addressed to the list's administrative address: [REDACTED]. Please note that it may take up to ten days, or more, for us to reply to messages.

3. Cautions

Please do not post to the list personal or backchannel correspondence, or other unpublished material, without the express permission of the author.

The Poetics List has a 50 message daily limit. If more than 50 messages are received, the listserver will automatically hold those additional messages until the list is manually unlocked, usually the following day. While it is difficult to prescribe a set limit on the number of daily, weekly, or monthly posts for any subscriber, please keep this limit in mind. If you plan to respond to multiple threads, it is generally preferable to consolidate your reply into one message. While relevant excerpts from a post to which you are responding may usefully

be appended to your reply, please do not include in your new post the whole text of a long previously posted message.

Please do not send attachments or include extremely long documents in a post, since this may make it difficult for those who get the list via "digest" or who cannot decode attached or specially formatted files.

In addition to being archived at the EPC, some posts to Poetics (especially reviews, obituary notices, announcements, etc.) may also become part of specific EPC subject areas. Brief reviews of poetry events and publications are always welcome. (See section 7.)

Please do not send inquiries to the list to get an individual subscribers address. To get this information, see section 6.

If you want someone to send out information to the list as a whole, or supply information missing from an post, or thank someone for posting something you requested, please send the request or comment to the individual backchannel, not to the whole list.

4. Digest Option

The Listserve program gives you the option to receive all the posted Poetics message each day as a single message. If you would prefer to receive ONE message each day, which would include all messages posted to the list for that day, you can use the digest option. Send this one-line message (no subject line) to

██████████

set poetics digest

NOTE:!! Send this message to "listserv" not to Poetics or as a reply to this message!!

You can switch back to individual messages by sending this message:

set poetics mail

5. Temporarily turning off Poetics mail

Do not leave your Poetics subscription "active" if you are going to be away for any extended period of time! Your account may become flooded and you may lose not only Poetics messages but other important mail. You can temporarily turn off your Poetics subscription by sending a message to "██████████"

set poetics nomail

& turn it on again with: set poetics mail

When you return you can check or download missed postings from the Poetics archive. (See 8 below.)

6. Who's Subscribed

To see who is subscribed to Poetics, send an e-mail message to e-mail message blank. In the body of your e-mail message type:

review poetics

You will be sent within a reasonable amount of time (by return e-mail) a rather long list containing the names and e-mail addresses of Poetics subscribers. This list is alphabetized by server not name.

or try:

review POETICS by name

review POETICS by country

which will give you the list alphabetically by name or a flawed list by country (since all ".com" and ".net"s are counted as US)

Please do not send a message to the list asking for the address of a specific subscriber.

7. What is the Electronic Poetry Center?

our URL is

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc>

The mission of this World-Wide Web based electronic poetry center is to serve as a hypertextual gateway to the extraordinary range of activity in formally innovative writing in the United States and the world. The Center provides access to the burgeoning number of electronic resources in the new poetics including RIF/T and other electronic poetry journals, the POETICS List archives, an AUTHOR library of electronic poetic texts, and direct connections to numerous related electronic RESOURCES. The Center also provides information about contemporary print little magazines and SMALL PRESSES engaged in poetry and poetics. And we have an extensive collection of soundfiles of poets' reading their work, as well as the archive of LINEbreak, the radio interview series.

The EPC is directed by Loss Pequeño Glazier.

8. Poetics Archives via EPC

Go to the EPC and select Poetics from the opening screen. Follow the links to Poetics Archives. You may browse the archives by month and year or search them for specific information. Your interface will allow you to print or download any of these files.

Or set your browser to go directly to:

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/poetics/archive>

9. Publishers & Editors Read This!

PUBLISHERS & EDITORS: Our listings of poetry and poetics information is open and available to you. We are trying to make access to printed publications as easy as possible to our users and ENCOURAGE you to participate! Send a list of your press/publications to [REDACTED] with the words EPC Press Listing in the subject line. You may also send materials on disk. (Write file name, word processing program, and Mac or PC on disk.) Send an e-mail message to the address above to obtain a mailing address to which to send your disk. Though files marked up with html are our goal, ascii files are perfectly acceptable. If your word processor will save files in Rich Text Format (.rtf) this is also highly desirable

Send us extended information on new publications (including any back cover copy and sample poems) as well as complete catalogs/backlists (including excerpts from reviews, sample poems, etc.). Be sure to include full information for ordering--including prices and addresses and phone numbers both of the press and any distributors.

Initially, you might want to send short announcements of new publications directly to the Poetics list as subscribers do not always (or ever) check the EPC; in your message please include full information for ordering. If you have a fuller listing at EPC, you might also mention that in any Poetics posts.

Some announcements circulated through Poetics and the EPC have received a noticeable responses; it may be an effective way to promote your publication and we are glad to facilitate information about interesting publications.

END OF POETICS LIST WELCOME

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73. **Piombino/Simon**

Re: language poetry bashing -Reply

Fri 3 Oct 1997

Although I haven't read all of the recent posts on "Language Bashing", Michael Coffey's amazingly interesting discussion of this tired warhorse of a topic happily made mention of the terrific Jackson Mac Low 75th Birthday Celebration which included good things to eat, including a huge birthday cake, and readings and performances by Jackson, Anne Tardos and many others, hosted by New York University. For those who could not be there be advised to quickly go out and console yourself and regale yourself with the premier issue of Crayon edited by Andrew Levy and Bob Harrison. The 304 page tome is packed with good writing honoring, discussing and celebrating Jackson's work, and also includes an excellently produced CD with terrific music by Jackson and Anne Tardos, Andy Levy, Jim Staley and many others. The mag contains a collaboration by Steve Benson and Jackson, poems by Charles Bernstein, Dan Farrell, Rod Smith, Martine Bellen, Joan Retallack, Jeff Derkson, Jena Osman, Beth Anderson, Rosemarie Waldrop and many others, a longish interview, an intelligent and useful discussion of Jackson's anarchism in relation to his poetics by Louis Cabri, a complete bibliography, a witty time-line biography of Jackson by David Bromige, a photo of Jackson taken by Allen Ginsberg, a complete discography, an interesting class presentation of Jackson's work by Ammiel Alcalay-from Jerusalem!- and much much more. It is lushly and conscientiously produced-in short, a steal at the modest price of \$20. Write to Andy Levy at 144 Union Street, 2cd Floor, Brooklyn, N.Y 11231.

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74. **Maria Damon**

Re: Periplum CDs: Greinke/Land & Deep Listening Band/Ellen Fullman

Sat 4 Oct 1997

speaking of music and herb, i just came from a bracing klezmatics concert. what fun. they rocked the minneapolis audience, a lot of folkie hippies (cuz of the venue, a nonprofit "cultural center" that specializes in "world music"), some very young gay punkish kids, some recent russian jewish immigrants with big jewelry, some regular jewish folks (but not a lot cuz it was friday night) and lots of non jews. when one of the klezmorim asked how many folks spoke yiddish, i didn't see a single hand go up.

At 4:54 PM -0800 10/3/97, Herb Levy wrote:

>Hi folks,

>

>I'll keep this short.

>

>Periplum has released 2 CDs this year: one is the second release by Jeff
>Greinke & Land (Dennis Rea, Lesli Dalaba, Ed Pias, George Soler, Bill Moyer
>and Greg Gilmore), called Archipelago with eight group compositions &
>Suspended Music, a collaboration between the Deep Listening Band (Pauline
>Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, David Gamper) & Ellen Fullman & the Long String
>Instrument featuring both groups playing new compositions by Oliveros &
>Fullman.

>

>I'm offering these to list members for US\$14 including postage for either
>disc or US\$26 including postage for both.

>

>E-mail inquiries to <[REDACTED]>, checks/money orders to Periplum,
>POBox 95678, Seattle, WA 98145 USA.

>

>Forthcoming releases, out in early 98, include a CD of interactive computer
>music pieces by Canadian composer Martin Bartlett & a series of songs for
>voice and piano by eleven US composers including John Luther Adams, Peter
>Garland, Robin Holcomb, David Mahler, Maggi Payne, Susan Stenger. After
>that a few surprises, including some things that may be particularly
>pertinent to this list.

>

>Bests,

>

>Herb

>

>

>Herb Levy

> [REDACTED]

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75. **Karen and Trevor**

Request for Phone Numbers

Sat 4 Oct 1997

Can anyone backchannel the following phone numbers or e-mail address?
Gustaf Sobin
Sianne Ngai

This is regarding publication and not any personal use. Thanks in advance.

Karen McKevitt



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76. **jarnot**
delany/phone number
Sat 4 Oct 1997

i'm trying to get in touch with samuel delany. i have his number in new york. i need his number in massachusetts. please back channel. thanks. lisa jarnot



box 185/NY, NY 10009

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77. **LAURA MORIARTY**
another attempt
Sat 4 Oct 1997

Thank you Rod for a useful and accurate thumbnail - Still, as one who has been a Fellow Traveller for twenty or so years, I have always resisted the totalizing implicit in arguing or asserting about Language Poets - (This point has often been made here, but I can't help myself.) Whose poetics are being discussed? If it's five main guys, who are they? There is a lot of difference between say Kit Robinson, Bruce Andrews and Steve Benson - all arguably founding fathers. The longstanding influence of women Language Writers such as Lyn Hejinian, Carla Harryman, and Diane Ward not to say major (related) figures like Susan Howe, Beverly Dahlen or Leslie Scalapino seems not to make much sense in the battle of the various father/son generations. (And gender is very much not the only way that influential work becomes excluded from that linear history, as my late husband Jerry Estrin used often to rant.) The point being that the terms, when analyzed, are much more complex and interesting than the bashing or not bashing. It also seems not to reflect reality - as many younger writers have found work by the women mentioned above and others, as well as less easily categorizable men, as just as useful, or more useful in their own writing, than those who one might be imagining when using the term Language Poet.

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78. **aerialedge**

Re: another attempt

Sat 4 Oct 1997

Laura-- Well, it's not 5 main guys I mean when using the term language poetry (tho I think Hartley's book very good it fails in breadth of address)*, nor is it 3 main guys when using the term New York School, nor two when using Black Mountain, altho I suppose it might be 3 main guys if I were to use the term Spicer-Duncan-Blaser circle. I suppose if anything is meant by language poetry it is an insistent interest in disjunction, this seems to me implicit in the use of the term & it doesn't seem to me overly reductive when acknowledged as a kind of shorthand which I hope I did by saying "let's take a chance and say that language poetry exists." & the variety of uses of the disjunctive w/in & outside & by "precursors" & "followers" is something which interests me. Also one of the ways one might see a continuum between new amer & language is a shared interest in disjunctive techniques yes? & the differences among these writers & their readers relative to what they think they're doing is fascinating. & just to clarify again, it seems to me no matter what criteria one is using-- if looking at "the literary field" with a reasonable amount of attention-- there are at least a hundred writers one might identify, contingently, as language poets. & contingently is the only way one might go about it-- no one's gonna pin anything down, because it changes. I'm tempted to muse a bit re disjunctive manners of thinking but it's a bigger subject than I'm willing to take on today. At least I'll say that an understanding of the contingency of any articulation is what is to be gained, or one of the things to be gained from the work-- genuine friendship, for many, is another. Thanks for the feedback Laura & I hope this at least somewhat addresses Henry's post as well.

--Rod Smith

*Referred to above: *Textual Politics and the Language Poets* by George Hartley, Indiana U Press 1989, focuses mainly on the work of Andrews, Bernstein, McCaffery, Silliman, & Watten.

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79. **mark weiss**

Re: another attempt

Sat 4 Oct 1997

I assume that you're aware that disjunctive poetry has been around since long before your principals were born. One may appropriate who one wishes as precursors. Not all "followers" will appreciate being so appropriated; some may even see that appropriation as cultural imperialism, or at least aggrandisement.

And you don't leave a space for contemporaries who are neither affiliated with nor in dialogue with the group.

I suppose if anything is meant by language

>poetry it is an insistent interest in disjunction, this seems to me implicit

>in the use of the term & it doesn't seem to me overly reductive when

>acknowledged as a kind of shorthand which I hope I did by saying "let's take

>a chance and say that language poetry exists." & the variety of uses of the

>disjunctive w/in & outside & by "precursors" & "followers" is something which

>interests me.

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80. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: language poetry bashing

Sat 4 Oct 1997

Thanks for your answer on "surrealistic" writers after WWII. It was thorough enough to help me understand your post, and I will now be spurred to read/research these writers, and be aware of the issue you've raised concerning their intolerances (doctrinaire attitudes). What do you know about Robert Desnos? I'm tremendously attracted to his "headlong" voice, but know little about his politics, or what informed him.

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81. **aerialedge**

Re: another attempt

Sat 4 Oct 1997

In a message dated 10/5/97 4:06:04 AM, you wrote:

I assume that you're aware that disjunctive poetry has been around since long before your principals were born. One may appropriate who one wishes as precursors. Not all "followers" will appreciate being so appropriated; some may even see that appropriation as cultural imperialism, or at least aggrandisement. And you don't leave a space for contemporaries who are neither affiliated with nor in dialogue with the group.

I don't believe anything I said implied a lack of awareness of or indifference to the issues you innumerate. Also, I do not believe it's within my power, nor would I choose such power were it available to me, to include or exclude "contemporaries who are neither affiliated with nor in dialogue with" anything currently existent or imagined.

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82. **Aviva Vogel**

BlyBashes Williams - Major Disjunction

Sat 4 Oct 1997

John, I just found something that I think's pertinent to your question about Bly's comments on William Carlos Williams' poetry as having no "inward life." I thought I'd share it with you, although you've already heard and considered this before, but -- I was surprised to see my understanding of the issue affirmed so elegantly:

From "Charles Olson and the New Realism," *Recreating the World/Word*, Lynda D. McNeil, pp.215-216

In his essay, "Olson, Whitehead, and the Objectivists," Robert Von Hallberg contrasts Objectivist poetics (notably that of William Carlos Williams) with Olson's "kinetic" poetic. Von Hallberg maintains that Objectivist poetics were "aesthetic in the sense that the aesthetic object (poem) transcends its maker and gains its value from an independent state of being, not from its origin or effect. In contrast, Olson's poetic is humanistic: making is not less valuable than what is made." Olson's "kinetic" aesthetic grows out of a phenomenological principle that reality is a process, thus taking priority over form, and the poet must enact this process in order to confront reality: "Art does not seek to describe, but to enact" (*Poetics*, 169). Von Hallberg adds that: "Unlike the Objectivists...Olson's poetry not only relies on the equality of the subject and object, as Whitehead would have it, but more importantly on their reciprocity and symmetry. (VH, 90).

The idea of "reciprocity and symmetry" points back to monistic views of man and world (subject and object), to Williams' "edge to edge" to describe the poet and the world, and ahead to Werner Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle."

Olson saw the problem of "partitioned reality" in terms of the opposition of proponents of Mind (Kant, the Symbolists, and T.S. Eliot) and the proponents of the World or Things (the Positivists, Imagists, Objectivists, and Pound.) In "Projective Verse, Part II," Olson writes: "It is no accident that Pound and Williams both were involved variously in a movement which got called "objectivism." But that word was then used in some sort of a necessary quarrel, I take it, with "subjectivism." It is now too late to be bothered with the latter. It has excellently done itself to death, even though we are all caught up in its dying (*Poetics*, 155).

Olson believed that it was "too late" to be bothered with the distinction between mind and matter, because science has revealed man's true relationship to things. According to Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle," the only way that an individual can know a thing is by interacting with it--subject cannot be divorced

from object, or as Olson says in "Human Universe," like Herder, who (interestingly) also used the skin metaphor: "the skin itself, the meeting edge of man and external reality are so involved with one another that, for man's purposes, they had better be taken as one" (Poetics, 168). Heisenberg expresses this idea in the following way: "Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves." By interacting with an object, man influences its "behavior," thus thwarting any possibility of a purely objective description...

Olson's statement that "Image, is a vector" ...

[It seems to me to describe WCW's intention in looking so closely at objects, and tangling himself up so much with the issues of perception and apperception. For Robert Bly to see either WCW's poetry, or the contents of his poetry, as static artifact, is simply mistaken, for the subject of WCW's poetry was as much the dynamic between self and object as it was about either self or object. He was certainly embodying his existential process, I would say, even in his most "objectivist" poetry.

Thanks for raising this fruitful question, John.

Aviva

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83. **Henry Gould**

Re: language poetry bashing

Sat 4 Oct 1997

re: Desnos.

It is the older man who was mobilized in 1939, captured by the Germans, and returned to Paris. Joining the Resistance network, he was important in the operations of _Editions du Minuit_, the underground press. In 1942, his second collection of poems, _Fortunes_, appeared. Under the name of Valentin Guillois he published several pieces, notably the great _Watchman of the Pont-au-Change_. It is Desnos at his prophetic, optimistic best. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1944, he was sent first to Compeigne, later to Buchenwald. In 1945, with the Allied armies closing in, the Buchenwald prisoners were force-marched by the retreating SS to Terezin. In May, after the Allies had occupied the camp, Desnos was discovered by Josef Stuna. He spent his last days talking with Stuna and a nurse, Alena Teresova, about Paris, poetry, freedom.

Wm. Kulik, 1971

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84. **Henry Gould**

Re: BlyBashes Williams - Major Disjunction

Sat 4 Oct 1997

on the relationship between people & the objective:

Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,
While the narrowing rails slide together behind you;
And on the deck of the drumming liner
Watching the furrow that widens behind you,
You shall not think 'the past is finished'
Or 'the future is before us'.
At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial,
Is a voice descanting (though not to the ear,
The murmuring shell of time, and not in any language)
'Fare forward, you who think you are voyaging;
You are not those who saw the harbor
Receding, or those who will disembark.
Here between the thither and the farther shore
While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind.
At the moment which is not of action or inaction
You can receive this: "on whatever sphere of being
The mind of man may be intent
At the time of death"--this is the one action
(And the time of death is every moment)
Which shall fructify in the lives of others:
And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.

- TS Eliot, *_Four Quartets_*

(seems like Ashbery, Olson, Williams, Crane, Ginsberg, and all their inheritors
run screaming with their hands over their ears) (or listen ever so closely for
the faltering) (right behind ol' Ez) (was Liz listening?) (& he DID falter) (better
to just play games) (nothing refers to the inside or outside of anything) (words
are organized by powers beyond our ken - & they are bad) (language is en-
slaved) (we are still slaves) (I'm free - who're you?) (I'm a grad student) (po-
etry = drugs) (monument to a heart of stone) (cool) (fire) (let's go to the read-
ing) (why?) (old guy with feet of clay & an iron stomach) (lips are sealed)
(what a drag - his own children were there) (they looked tired) (one of them's

in a creative writing program) (shut up - put on the tape again) (technique?) (internet?)

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85. **LAURA MORIARTY**

Re: another attempt

Sat 4 Oct 1997

Rod - I'm not sure disjunction works (fond as I am of it) because the narrative writers whose sensibility is so important to this list (Dodie, Kevin, other New Narrative cohorts) are often not disjunct, word to word, line to line, nor are the essay/poems of some avowed and historically inevitable Language Writers. Lately, with a sense of transgression, I have been linear and liked it.

Of course one needs to generalize to speak of poetics at all. I ask only that it be acknowledged that Modernism becomes Postmodernism staring several key people (or key groups) is not the only story or the only game in town and may not be the critical one in retrospect. There are many way for work to have its effect.

The most interesting disjunction is to disrupt that false historical narrative whenever possible. I say this, btw, very much in support of you and your poetics. A lot of us are more important than we think we are.

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86. **Bob Grumman**

Defining Language Poetry

Sat 4 Oct 1997

I'm a taxonomaniac. Hence, as we go through these discussions of language poetry over and over, I get tired of never knowing what precisely is meant by "language poetry." And I'm with Mark Weiss in being sure that it's more than just disjunctional-or, more exactly, that it is disjunctional in a way that surrealist and other forms of poetry aren't. My own claim, as mostly an outsider to language poetry, is that it is poetry that significantly breaks the rules of grammar and/or spelling for expressive effect. In my poetics, I rename it "xenolinguistic poetry" because of the confusion as to what language poetry is, but I'd prefer to call it language poetry. For me the identity, politics, philosophical outlook, etc., of those who are called language poets has nothing to do with what language poetry is. Nor is its subject matter, tone, etc. I want to know how we recognize it from words on a page (or spoken).

So, is it more than disrupted syntax, inflection, orthography? If so, how?

Bob G.

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87. **rsillima**

Smithsonian Sweatshop Exhibit Under Fire

Sat 4 Oct 1997

O this is all too predictable,

Ron

From: [REDACTED] (Julia Stein)

Subject: re: Smithsonian Sweatshop Exhibit Under Fire

Smithsonian Sweatshop Exhibit Under Fire

Labor Alerts/Labor News

a service of Campaign for Labor Rights

1247 "E" Street SE, Washington, DC 20003

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] <http://www.compugraph.com/clr>

Summary:

Segments of the clothing industry are trying to block a planned exhibit on the history of sweatshops, according to the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times. The exhibit, scheduled to open on April 15th, will include a re-creation of the El Monte sweatshop where Thai immigrants worked in near-slavery for years. Curators offered apparel industry representatives a chance to tell their side of the story. Pamela Rucker of the National Retail Federation declined, complaining that "there is no way we could counter the powerful impact of those horrific pictures from El Monte." The California Fashion Association said it is writing to members of Congress urging them to raise questions about the exhibit.

If the exhibit is to survive and tell its story, then supporters must mobilize as well.

Background:

The exhibit is part of a long-term Museum of American History project on 'work and worth.' It will be entitled "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Dialogue on American Sweatshops, 1820-Present." One section of the exhibit will explain the history of sweatshops from the 1820's to the present. Next will be a re-creation of the El Monte sweatshop which will include the sewing machines and workstations used in the shop which were acquired by the Smithsonian after it was shut down by the California Labor Commission. That will be followed by a look at the global picture which will include a video of modern textile factories and explain that not all apparel is made in sweatshops. Allison Wolf of the

American Apparel Manufacturers Association withdrew her offer to produce the video after curator Peter Liebhold told her that "the union role has to be positively portrayed."

The museum asked industry, labor, government and individuals for contributions to fund the exhibit, but so far only UNITE, the garment workers' union, and the Department of Labor have made contributions. Apart from a monetary contribution, UNITE has also donated some items from its archives, including a picture of Eleanor Roosevelt sewing the first union label into a piece of clothing. UNITE spokeswoman Jo Ann Mort said that the 300,000 member union has had no other input into the content of the exhibit.

According to the Washington Post, manufacturers, fashion and apparel industries hope that the controversy will become as heated as the one surrounding the National Air and Space Museum's Enola Gay exhibit. That exhibit was canceled after protests from veterans groups which complained that that it was too sympathetic to the suffering of the Japanese from the atomic bombs.

Action Needed:

Write or fax the Smithsonian Museum expressing your support for this exhibit. In your own words, tell curators there that you believe that the American public has a right to know its own history. Consumers have a right to learn about the conditions under which our clothing and our children's clothing is being produced. This controversy is not just about history. It's about whether sweatshops are to be our future.

According to conversations with Smithsonian staff, letters will be extremely useful to them in showing citizen support for the exhibit in the face of industry protests.

Smithsonian Museum
Office of Public Affairs
National Museum of American History, Room 5104 - MRC623
Washington, DC 20560
Fax: [REDACTED]

Julia Stein
[REDACTED]

-----End forward message-----

Ron Silliman
262 Orchard Road
Paoli, PA 19301-1116
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (o)

██████████ (fax)

██████████

██████████

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/silliman/>

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88. **Tom Orange**
another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

two or three things strike me, and it's late and i can't give any of them the justice that they deserve, but in the interest of immediacy:

rod's notions of disjunctiveness (reduced as they have been) seem to have created some blips on the radar, and met with some resistances, to wit, it aint all that.

and yet bob grumman seems willing to take the viscosity of langwriting on the page, (and) the xenolinguistics (elaborate, pls!), at the expense of the identity, politics, or philosophical outlook of any given langpo.

which makes me want to beg the emergence of a given kind of writing at an historical moment (as rod sez, post-vietnam post-newamerpo) and with a *kind* of politico-philosophical agenda i.e. decentering disjunctivity for want of a better a(dditionally).k.a poststructuralis...

(and this refiltered thru aviva's very interesting post on wcw and von hallberg on olson...)

so to throw another worm into the can: helen vendler has an essay on periodizing american poetry (heads up bob g.!) in a book edited by lawrence besserman that came out last year -- a whole other thread can come out of this one -- but she makes the point that post the beats and confessionals we have "the poem of the decentered self," of which a jorie graham or john ashberry is the more fruitful practitioner than a charles bernstein or bruce andrews.

disjunction, politics, philosophy, then -- or none all or some of the above?

hesitantly yrs,
t.

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89. **Rachel Loden**

Re: Smithsonian Sweatshop Exhibit Under Fire

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Ron, thanks for posting that. Also interesting in this connection is Julia Stein's piece in *Electronic Book Review*, "Poets Take On Guess Inc.: Poets Win," at <http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr5/stein.htm>

Rachel

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90. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Defining Language Poetry

Sun 5 Oct 1997

When Tom Orange says that I seem "willing to take the viscosity of langwriting on the page, (and) the xenolinguistics (elaborate, pls!), at the expense of the identity, politics, or philosophical outlook of any given langpo," I think he (in his hurry) misstates my position. I'm not so much concerned with the viscosity of langpo as I am with what it is as textual composition. More important, I don't take the textual attributes of langpo (as I see them) "at the expense of the identity, politics, or philosophical outlook" of those who compose langpo but ASIDE from those concerns, in order to get an objective (and I'm not afraid to use such an adjective) definition of what langpo is as poetry. The other things--politics, etc.--are also important and interesting but not useful for defining langpo (for me).

As for Helen Vendler, thanks for the tip. If I can get hold of her essay, it'd be fun to read, but I don't expect it to say much as I think she's at least forty years behind what's going on in poetry now.

As for "xenolinguistics," it's just one more of my taxonomical coinages. It means just "strange linguistic practices," or the significant breaking grammatical or orthographic conventions. "Rose is a rose is a rose," for instance, breaks with normal sentence structure, so is xenolinguistic. For more, you'll have to wait for my 5,000-page monograph, to be published by the Oxford Press sometime in 2073.

Bob G.

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91. **aerialedge**

Re: another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

In a message dated 10/5/97 7:19:27 AM, you wrote:

The most interesting disjunction is to disrupt that false historical narrative whenever possible.

yes Laura -- makes me think of the Raworth: "The narrative line is only as boring as what is hung on it." So, for me it's not necessarily "a belief" in these historical narratives-- but a realization that these stories are being told-- so we, as poets, need to try to make them interesting. Make them of use. Remake them to include our experience. Sometimes one uses them, sometimes one leaves them in their little box to mildew. But a necessity not to ignore entirely, cause if we do, there are others that won't. Thus some validity to the occasional criticism of this generation for not writing criticism. Tho a number of good things have been done.

--Rod

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92. **Michael Magee**

Re: BlyBashes Williams - Major Disjunction

Sun 5 Oct 1997

From Aviva:

"For Robert Bly to see either WCW's poetry, or the contents of his poetry, as static artifact, is simply mistaken, for the subject of WCW's

poetry was as much the dynamic between self and object as it was about either

self or object. He was certainly embodying his existential process, I would

say, even in his most "objectivist" poetry."

Yes, I think this is precisely what Bly misses (unsurprisingly - the guy is so mistaken, so often, in his published opinions of other writers its almost unbelievable). Bly is still so enamored with the Romantic notion of the integrity of the individual ("inner life" my foot! he says it as if he invented the idea) that he misses the fact that Williams is operating on a different paradigm altogether, one which begins with the assumption that, as William James said, "Thoughts are things, and vice versa." It's the dynamic (implied by James's casual "vice versa") which Williams seems interested in, as you say, an insistence that self

and object (or self and 'other') are determined in and by the act of their evolving dialogue.

-Mike.

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93. **Jacques Debrot**

Re: another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

This is how Hank Lazer finesses the term "language poetry" when writing about someone as difficult to categorize as, say, Rachel Blau DuPlessis: "While DuPlessis's writing manifests certain tendencies in Language Writing, her writing also helps us to understand the fictitious or reductive nature of such a term -- Language poetry -- as that term seems to imply a fixed or narrowly specified thing. Her at times thematized version of feminism, her myth-orientation . . . and her particular variety of lyricism are somewhat atypical of Language Writing. Her disturbance of syntax, her assimilation of a broad range of theoretical writing, the distribution or multiplication of subjectivity, and the variety of her uses of the page (as a field for innovative layout) -- especially overwriting and double-writing -- situate her work within an experimentalism for which the term Language poetry, like the term , postmodernism, is becoming a fuzzy but well-entrenched metonym." I've chosen this passage somewhat at random -- the point is in **Opposing Poetries** Lazer continually works and re-works the term in ways that are relevant I think to many issues broached in recent posts. One other important aspect of Language Writing seems to me to involve its transgression of generic boundaries -- between the visual arts, criticism, etc. and poetry. In this context the relationship between Conceptual and Minimalist art and Language Writing has perhaps been neglected to an even greater extent than its connections to New Am poetry.

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94. **Franklin Bruno**

several current threads addressed serially

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Odd that I read Tom Beard's post yesterday and thought that it was brave of him to voice, in this forum, skepticism about critiques of science, but then read R. Gancie's post today and thought he scored some points too (the latter's original post somehow doesn't get to me--sometimes my digest gets cut off at some arbitrary point--if someone would backchannel the original post to which Tom was responding, I'd be grateful). I think I agree w/ Beard (though he might put it that way) that cultural criticism often conflate the ideological biases of the

uses to which a methodology is put with those of the methodology itself. I tend to find critiques of the former far more convincing. I'd also like to know if Gancie could explain a bit more about AI researchers not 'getting the news' that logical positivism is dead--I don't understand what specific import the failure of the verificationist project has for this particular empirical project. Perfectly possible that I'm misunderstanding something simple here.

On a not-esp.-related note: Disjunction never struck me as the essential component of langpo--the diffuse 'moment' (is that an oxymoron?) under discussion probably doesn't have an essence, but if it did, wouldn't it have something to do w/ a questioning (or at least a certain kind of awareness) of the conditions of reference--the gap (maybe a disjunction of another sort) between language and the world? And I'd add that 1) 'questioning' of ref. doesn't necessarily mean 'denial,' 2) in general, claiming that X is a feature of historical phenomenon Y doesn't imply that X didn't exist before Y.

And while I'm at it, how come the one poem of Henry Gould's that I've ever seen (in Poetry New York, I think, starting with some material about finding a Scrabble tile) didn't read -anything- like what I would have imagined from the positions he takes on this list?

fjb

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95. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

Re: another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

just wanted to say that, while i appreciate the attempt being made here to locate formal features of poetry/writing that adequately describe language poetry-writing (and hope you'll all keep hashing this out), i wonder whether in fact it would not be equally propitious to think about the nature of readership (and reader/writer positions and relationships and 'community' and publishing realities) implied by this tag, over and against ?... somebody may already have said this, but i'm operating at the moment on half a brain (tenure time, weeeee!), so if so, please add my name to that list...

best,

joe

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96. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT
Sun 5 Oct 1997

"One other important aspect of Language Writing seems to me to involve its transgression of generic boundaries -- between the visual arts, criticism, etc. and poetry. In this context the relationship between Conceptual and Minimalist art and Language Writing has perhaps been neglected to an even greater extent than its connections to New Am poetry."

Yes!

Inclusion is important. Cartoons, Advertisements, road signs, T-shirts, doodles, sketches, drawings, collages, essays, scientific notes, newspaper clippings, you name it: anything can and should be used in poetry if poetry is not to be a ghetto. There are many good things out there which are not called poetry but which, all labels aside, are the place we should be working from. In my experience as a poet I've found I often have more in common with visual artists than with novelists. P.K. Page said that if you could write a poem you could paint, because they are the same thing. It worked for her. Hemingway revised by exploiting moments of opportunity in his work from the previous day. Language poetry can't be so different from any other kind of writing that it does not have room for these kinds of joyful approaches.

Harold Rhenisch

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97. **Bob Grumman**
Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT
Sun 5 Oct 1997

Harold Rhenisch wrote:

>

> "One other important aspect of Language Writing seems to me to involve its
> transgression of generic boundaries -- between the visual arts, criticism,
> etc. and poetry. In this context the relationship between Conceptual and
> Minimalist art and Language Writing has perhaps been neglected to an even
> greater extent than its connections to New Am poetry."

>

> Yes!

>

> Inclusion is important. Cartoons, Advertisements, road signs, T-shirts,
> doodles, sketches, drawings, collages, essays, scientific notes, newspaper
> clippings, you name it: anything can and should be used in poetry if poetry

> is not to be a ghetto. There are many good things out there which are not
> called poetry but which, all labels aside, are the place we should be
> working from. In my experience as a poet I've found I often have more in
> common with visual artists than with novelists. P.K. Page said that if you
> could write a poem you could paint, because they are the same thing. It
> worked for her. Hemingway revised by exploiting moments of opportunity in
> his work from the previous day. Language poetry can't be so different from
> any other kind of writing that it does not have room for these kinds of
> joyful approaches.

>

> Harold Rhenisch

No, no, no. What you're talking about is INTERMEDIA or, in my taxonomy,
PLURAESTHETIC POETRY. Great stuff but NOT ***LANGUAGE*** poetry. I
continue to regret we lack an agreed-upon definition of what language poetry
is, as opposed to what its creators might be trying to do with it.

--Bob G.

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98. **Judy Roitman**

Re: Defining Language Poetry

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Bob Grumman writes:

*My own claim, as mostly an outsider to language poetry,
is that it is poetry that significantly breaks the rules of grammar
and/or spelling for expressive effect...*

I find this interesting, the notion of "expressive effect." Just what are we sup-
posed to be expressing?

----- Judy Roitman
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>

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99. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT
Sun 5 Oct 1997

Bob G.,

referring to:

"One other important aspect of Language Writing seems to me to involve its transgression of generic boundaries..."

and

"Language poetry can't be so different from any other kind of writing that it does not have room for these kinds of joyful approaches."

and your reply

"No, no, no. What you're talking about is INTERMEDIA or, in my taxonomy, PLURAESTHETIC POETRY. Great stuff but NOT ***LANGUAGE*** poetry. I continue to regret we lack an agreed-upon definition of what language poetry is, as opposed to what its creators might be trying to do with it."

Point well taken. Thanks. I take it you mean there is room within language poetry for these kinds of approaches, but only as a method of using language poetry. If that's the case, then the same could be said about many other uses and approaches and many other components of a definition. I take it then that any definition would have to be fairly broad, even general, and inclusive of the specifics of various approaches. Mind you, I'd hate to completely separate use from definition.

Harold

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100. **Mark Wallace**
irreducible instants are not "the irreducible"
Sun 5 Oct 1997

I just wanted to add a further plug for Lissa McLaughlin's fine new book from Avec Books, and in so doing to respond to Beth Simon's query from the other day.

Beth, I think what I would say is that my comments probably CANNOT be taken out of the context of the way I'm responding specifically to Lissa McLaughlin's book. Her work is a complex reflection on the childhood and later experiences of a particular narrator whose life has been greatly affected by several traumatic incidents, though by no means has it ONLY been shaped by such incidents. Whether or not language plays some role in constituting those

incidents is perhaps an important question in some ways but in others tangential to the narrator's particular struggle--which, among other things, includes the recognition that language cannot FIX the meaning of those incidents and certainly cannot DESCRIBE the incidents --whether that description has clinical emphasis, political emphasis, psychotherapeutic emphasis, or any other or combination thereof.

Thus, I don't see that anything in my comments suggest that I am saying that "life is irreducible" to language in any kind of generalizable way--I was not generalizing about anything, as far as I can tell. I think it's possible to believe that the world escapes language even as language helps constitute the world, a potential paradox that bothers me not in the slightest, but I'm not sure that this kind of generalizing means anything significant to me, really, because I tend to be more attracted to particularities (I don't say "individualities," which to my mind would miss the interrelation that's also in question) than I am to authoritative absolutes such as the unassailable conviction, that some might have, about the extent to which language or experience pre-exist or predetermine each other.

In short, I was talking about the specifics of Lissa McLaughlin's book, which I highly recommend, and not only because it might lead to discussion about language and experience, but because of the particularities that are at stake in its use of language and experience.

Thanks for asking!

Mark Wallace

```

/-----\ |
||      ||      GWU:
||      http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||      EPC:
||      http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||

```

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101. **Herb Levy**
Re: Klezmatics &

Sun 5 Oct 1997

speaking of music and herb, i just came from a bracing klezmatics concert. what fun. they rocked the minneapolis audience, a lot of folkie hippies (cuz of the venue, a nonprofit "cultural center" that specializes in "world music"), some very young gay punkish kids, some recent russian jewish immigrants with big jewelry, some regular jewish folks (but not a lot cuz it was friday night) and lots of non jews. when one of the klezmorim asked how many folks spoke yiddish, i didn't see a single hand go up.

One of the things I like most about the Klezmatics is that, while they obviously know the field really well & can play the traditional stuff well, they don't simply play copies of it.

Folks interested in traditional musics of the USA might should check out the recently re-issued Anthology of American Folk Music (from Smithsonian Folkways). Compiled by experimental filmmaker, archivist, & mystic Harry Smith in the early 50s, this collection brings together a wide range of music from many traditions, in turn helping to foster the subsequent folk music scare/revival. The last of the six discs also includes some CD-ROM material including audio interviews, texts, and some films by & of Smith. Very wonderful stuff.

Here's a Web site on the collection:

<<http://www.si.edu/organiza/offices/folklife/folkways/harry/hsa.htm>>

Herb Levy



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102. **Harold Rhenisch**

Re: another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Luigi,

you wrote:

"i believe the thread here is on what specific features distinguish the aesthetic movement called "Language Poetry" from other aesthetics/schools/tendencies...."

Thanks for the correction.

A parallel discussion could be on what characteristics "Language Poetry" shares with other aesthetics, just so we don't lose something vital in the process of definition. For instance, if Language Poetry and Intermedia Poetry both work to break boundaries, say, they could be seen as parallel manifestations of a larger project, perhaps as yet undefined. To see them in such terms might help focus the definition of each. Or it might not. But it would be fun trying.

best,

Harold

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103. **don wellman**

Re: another attempt

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Language poetry: A form of tweaking syntax so as to reveal associations that are themselves comments on dominant modes of cultural production, including, notably, but not limited to critiques of the production of left liberal consciousness of self (one of several forms of consciousness that privileges individual empowerment and like those other forms is often highly phallogentric) and critiques of the ideological effects of consumption.

The poetry of left-liberal consciousness in the 1970's (whether taking Lowell, Ginsberg, Olson, or Ashberry; the so called "deep-image" school or ethnopoetics as a model) embraced a wide variety of disjunctive strategies, central to these was some idea of getting naked and discovering the self, of mapping some holistic idea of self on the cosmos (call this self-actualization or "individuation") or confessing to individual fragmentation of holistic consciousness (call this "schizophrenic posturing" if you want). Do not take this last sentence as a way of debunking the psychological realities of either individuation or schizophrenia, please. However, that consciousness rooted in some notion of holism (essentially Emersonian, essentially nostalgic), as a result of Vietnam-era and immediate post-Vietnam era politics (critiques of government, corporations, gender and race inequities) had either proven itself to be synonymous with failed middle-class liberalism or had retrenched to the level of the local community. So, if you started to publish around the time of Regan's election, the old forms of disjunction seemed tired and self-serving.

The thing about language poetry then, the thing that it got to before, widespread academic understanding of deconstruction or post-structuralism, was a use of language (of a language that had been entirely co-opted, shaped for market purposes, for political purposes, etc) against itself; certainly it was a project that did not propose an alternative through disjunction but instead aimed to reveal social facts through tweaking, through setting fragments of received language against one another, sometimes with humor, most significantly in ways that caused practitioners to examine the lexicon itself (not with a Duncan or Emersonian fascination with etymologies and secret knowledge) but with some of that orthographic experimentation on the surface that relates to visual poetry.

Now "tweaking" as I have called it (or "torquing as Silliman calls it) may well be only another surface form of disjunction; but unlike other forms of disjunction, it does not seek to strip off the mask of self-consciousness; instead it seeks to make conscious the ideological effects of language as it is most frequently used or found. ...

DonWellman

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104. **henry gould**

Re: several current threads addressed serially

Sun 5 Oct 1997

On Sun, 5 Oct 1997 11:05:02 -0700 Franklin Bruno said:

>

>On a not-esp.-related note: Disjunction never struck me as the essential
>component of langpo--the diffuse 'moment' (is that an oxymoron?) under
>discussion probably doesn't have an essence, but if it did, wouldn't it have
>something to do w/ a questioning (or at least a certain kind of awareness)
>of the conditions of reference--the gap (maybe a disjunction of another
>sort) between language and the world? And I'd add that 1) 'questioning' of
>ref. doesn't necessarily mean 'denial,' 2) in general, claiming that X is a
>feature of historical phenomenon Y doesn't imply that X didn't exist before Y.

This little offhand comment is a very strong defense of what the lang-poohs
are up to. Helen Vending-Machine, take note.

Woke up this morning

it was night

you were on my mind

looking for a home

for the boll weevil

nothing like that in New York City

it's all in Oklahoma

(- Ted Berrigan)

>

>And while I'm at it, how come the one poem of Henry Gould's that I've ever
>seen (in Poetry New York, I think, starting with some material about finding
>a Scrabble tile) didn't read -anything- like what I would have imagined from
>the positions he takes on this list?

Regarding this rather byzantine puzzle, all I can conclude is that Mr. Gould was
circling close to the perihelion of Jack Spandrift's literary influence at the time-
of-composition of that particular ejaculation. Spandrift, perhaps I should add,
in eclipsum? - Eric Blarnes

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105. **Thomas Bell**

Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT

Sun 5 Oct 1997

f/u to Joe as well (he does have a good argument).

As a practitioner of "PLURAESTHETIC POETRY" (pompous name?) I note that some of my PP is LP and some isn't. Some of both is also prose poetry or picture poetry to throw some more p's out. Then distinction I find myself focusing on has to do with how much I try to lay things out for the reader. An LP reader has to work harder (and also need not get the same meaning out of what i write. tom bell

At 04:19 PM 10/5/97 -0400, Bob Grumman wrote:

>Harold Rhenisch wrote:

>>

>> "One other important aspect of Language Writing seems to me to involve its
>> transgression of generic boundaries -- between the visual arts, criticism,
>> etc. and poetry. In this context the relationship between Conceptual and
>> Minimalist art and Language Writing has perhaps been neglected to an
even

>> greater extent than its connections to New Am poetry."

>>

>> Yes!

>>

>> Inclusion is important. Cartoons, Advertisements, road signs, T-shirts,
>> doodles, sketches, drawings, collages, essays, scientific notes, newspaper
>> clippings, you name it: anything can and should be used in poetry if poetry
>> is not to be a ghetto. There are many good things out there which are not
>> called poetry but which, all labels aside, are the place we should be
>> working from. In my experience as a poet I've found I often have more in
>> common with visual artists than with novelists. P.K. Page said that if you
>> could write a poem you could paint, because they are the same thing. It
>> worked for her. Hemingway revised by exploiting moments of opportunity
in

>> his work from the previous day. Language poetry can't be so different from
>> any other kind of writing that it does not have room for these kinds of
>> joyful approaches.

>>

>> Harold Rhenisch

>

>No, no, no. What you're talking about is INTERMEDIA or, in my taxonomy,
>PLURAESTHETIC POETRY. Great stuff but NOT ***LANGUAGE*** poetry. I
>continue to regret we lack an agreed-upon definition of what language

>poetry is, as opposed to what its creators might be trying to do with
>it. --Bob G.
>
>

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106. **George Bowering**
Re: Social Tangles

Sun 5 Oct 1997

What I disagree with is the now accepted fact that art can contain, or represent in some way, the same sense of social urgency as a conversation, say, or discussions like those on this list.

This must be some kind of metaphysics. I cant figure out how one can disagree with a fact.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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107. **Bob Grumman**
Re: Defining Language Poetry

Sun 5 Oct 1997

In response to my tentative definition of language poetry as poetry that "significantly breaks the rules of grammar and/or spelling for expressive effect..." Judy Roitman wants to know "Just what are we supposed to be expressing?" Answer: I dunno. Just something.

Frankly, it took me a while to figure out why I used "expressive," but then I remembered that traditional poets broke the rules of prose grammar a lot to get their meter right, and place rhymes, etc., or for purposes secondary to expressing something. I wanted to distinguish the way I think language poets break rules from that. Also I want to distinguish expressive breaking of rules as in Stein's "rose is a rose is a rose" from nonsense, or that which expresses nothing (or anything) to the auditor, however sincerely the auditor tries to get something from it.

For a little more on this, let me refer back to Aram Saroyan's "lightht," even though I use it all the time (and am surely the world's worst one-poem critic--

and the world's FIRST one-WORD critic). This poem, for me, expresses the litheness, expansiveness, silence, ethereality of light, and a metaphor of light as the spelling of "lighght," and much else. The breaking of orthographic rules makes it fresh but also yields the latter (implicit) metaphor, which is central to the poem. The poem no doubt expresses other things to other readers, and to Saroyan, but I think the neutral observer (and/or consensus of careful, sympathetic auditors) would agree that it expresses, at least in part, what I claim it does. "Xchhghghkkkkkk," on the other hand, expresses nothing, or whatever you want to read into it. Oops, I meant "Xchhghghkkkkkkk," not "Xchhghghkkkkkkk." Sorry.

Now to jump to Don Wellman's response which I found quite absorbing and sensible but in the final analysis not too useful for my admittedly narrow purposes, which are entirely taxonomic. I would ask him what he would call a person who tweaks or torques syntax (or some other aspect of grammar), or spelling, without intending to comment "on dominant modes of cultural production," or get involved in ideological concerns, and--in fact--does not, as "lighght" does not. Would they be other than language poets? It seems to me we need a larger category for language poetry that can then be broken down into genres of language poetry dependent on subject-matter. So I still maintain that what is (taxonomically) important about language poetry as I understand it, is that it tweaks syntax, not why it does so, or what the effects of the tweaking are.

Harold Rhenisch, I think, is most concerned with what various poets do as opposed to how to classify the kinds of poetry that are done. I certainly believe in mixing various poetries (and in paring poems down into single effects when that can express or be something moving), but in speaking of them, I want precise terms to be used. It shouldn't be hard to distinguish pure language poems (which focus on grammar or spelling) from pure visual poems (which focus on the interaction between visual and verbal imagery), and agree that many poems can be both visual and language poems (which I would call either compound visual or compound xenolinguistic poem depending on whether they were more visual or language-centered).

Not much to say to Thomas Bell except that I agree that many of my coinages are pretty pompous-sounding, and that I can only hope the pomp will wear off of them--or that I can think of simpler terms, which seems unlikely as I've tried for years to do that. That the accessibility is his main concern in his poetry (if I understand him right) is interesting but I'm not sure how it relates to taxonomy, unless we want to classify things by difficulty--but I don't, because what's difficult is too subjective. Visual poetry can be very difficult, for instance, though in a different way from language poetry. I continue to feel that defining poetry by the techniques it uses makes the most taxonomic sense.

And then there's Jacques Debrot's also interesting post which seems to accuse naming certain kinds of poetry "language poetry" of the old sin of reductionism (and I'm an unapologetic reductionist), based on the variability of one language poet, Rachel Blau DuPlessis's, work, but all her variability means to me is that sometimes she's a language poet, sometimes not.

I suspect I'm not responding to all the ideas that have wafted my way, and am now too worn out to continue. I hope I've given a sufficient gist of where I stand, though.

--Bob G.

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108. **David R. Israel**

Thomas Rain Crowe

Sun 5 Oct 1997

Poetas,

tonight I've been browsing Amazon.com's listings of versions of the Persian poet Hafiz [or Hafez] and came on a new volume done by a certain Thomas Rain Crowe (the 1st item listed below). The 2nd book noted below -- evidently Crowe's own work -- was published by Small Press Distribution. Hence my supposition that perhaps there are some on this list who could say a word or two about who this poet is, or something abt. his work -- esp. abt. either of the initial 2 titles noted below (or whatever). Am curious. (Regarding the Hafez, does Crowe happen to know Persian? From the name, one might infer the possibility that he's a Native American? . . .)

thanks,
d.i.

In Wineseller's Street : Rendering of Hafez
Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1997 (Special Order)

The Laugharne Poems
Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1997 Our Price: \$10.00 + \$0.85 special
surcharge (Special Order)

New Native
Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1993 Our Price: \$9.95 + \$0.85 special
surcharge (Special Order)

Night Sun : An Initiation Trilogy (Boxed Set, 3 Books)

Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1993 Our Price: \$24.95 (Special Order)

The Personified Street

Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1993 Our Price: \$8.95 + \$0.85 special
surcharge (Special Order)

Water Form the Moon

Thomas Rain Crowe / Paperback / Published
1993 Our Price: \$8.95 + \$0.85 special
surcharge (Special Order)

.

.....

.....

////////////////////////////////////\

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

| [REDACTED] (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

| thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

| (Tagore)

////////////////////////////////////\

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109. **David Bromige**

social tangles

Sun 5 Oct 1997

"I disagree...that art can contain the same sense of social urgency as...the discussions on this list"

sorry i dont recall who posted the above....and i dont want to quibble over vocabularies....but thought i'd post these 2 items & see what response they get : do people find them containers/containments of "social urgency" ? (I do).

Proletarian Portrait

A big young bareheaded woman
in an apron

Her hair slicked back standing
on the street

One stockinged foot toeing
the sidewalk

Her shoe in her hand. Looking
intently into it

She pulls out the paper insole
to find the nail

That has been hurting her

A factory
has also another aspect, which we call the financial aspect
It gives people the power to buy (wages, dividends
which are power to buy) but it is also the cause of prices
or values, financial, I mean financial values
It pays workers, and pays _for_ material.
What it pays in wages and dividends
stays fluid, as power to buy, and this power is less,
per forza, damn blast your intellex, is less
than the total payments made by the factory
(as wages, dividends AND payments for raw material
bank charges etcetera
and all, that is the whole, that is the total
of these is added into the total of prices
caused by that factory, any damn factory
and there is and must be therefore a clog
and the power to purchase can never
(under the present system) catch up with
prices at large,

and the light became so bright and so blindin'
in this layer of paradise
that the mind of man was bewildered.

(excerpted from Pound, Canto XXXVIII)

a footnote to another recent thread, re bly & williams (since "Proletarian Portrait" is by williams)--bly's "williams had no inner life" is pretty close to pure in the projection department. Bly, the man who chautauquas around like a rotarian of spirituality, talking and talking about the inner man, accuses williams,

the smalltown doctor whose attic-typed poems are revelatory but require some consideration, some quiet time on behalf of both reader and writer, of everything he himself lacks. Williams can only answer him with silence.

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110. **David Bromige**

p s to social tangles

Mon 6 Oct 1997

that is, of lacking what in fact he himself lacks.

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111. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT

Mon 6 Oct 1997

Tom, a basic question that gnaws at me: what's to be gained for a reader that "works harder," when all the "work" in the world won't reveal to her/him what the "author" of a "text" intended (unless the intention was to offer a tabula rasa for the reader to project self on to)?

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112. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: p s to social tangles

Mon 6 Oct 1997

what does he lack? I'm always interested in specifics...Thanks!

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113. **Aviva Vogel**

Robert Bly/Wm. Carlos Wms.

Mon 6 Oct 1997

What's your take on Bly's work? What has your experience of his poetry been? And why would you, personally, consider Williams' work more "spiritual" (to use a vague, but I hope understandable, term)?

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114. **Tom Orange**

another attempt

Mon 6 Oct 1997

to take advantage of the time delay the list digest affords by tying together what bob grumman and don wellman are saying as i think there's a niche there for what i'm trying to get at

when i gently accused bob of taking textual xenolinguistics "at the expense" of philosopho-political agendaes or lets just call them as don does critiques of production, i was overstating. bob corrects me by saying he takes the former "ASIDE" from the latter in an effort to get at an "objective" definition etc. fair enough. first question then is can you so easily put the latter aside, bracket it if prefer phenomenological parlance.

which takes me to what struck me in don's post as particularly to-my-point. don talks about "revealing social facts through the tweaking...of received language."

so second question. or prhaps an hypothesis. what the vendlers and the rest of those who reject langpo fail to see is precisely the way the tweaking reveals social facts -- as revealed in the language itself or the xenolinguistics. frankly i dont always see it myself. cept thru the narrow chinks of my caverns.

btw bob, the vandler essay's in a book called the challenge of periodization edited by lawrence besserman. agreed, hers is an apporach tres en retard sur son epoque, hence worth checking out.

t.

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115. **Tom Beard**

Re: Sokal's Beard & Beard's Sokal

Mon 6 Oct 1997

I don't want to start a flame war here. If my initial post on this subject appeared aggressive (or defensive), it was because your article had a tone that I interpreted as distinctly unfriendly to anyone who is either a working scientist or who (like myself) grew up in a scientific milieu and still views science as making useful contributions to our undersatanding of the world. I hope my second post had a more measured tone, and approached the points that you made in a cool-headed manner.

We must have read different popular books on science. I haven't read many myself, recently, but in my adolescence I read a lot of Sagan, Hofstadter, Dennett, Dawkins and Mandelbrot. They have helped form my views, not only on science and mathematics, but also on philosophy, politics and (yes) poetics. If some

science writers have a tendency "to wax poetic", is it too generous of me to believe that this is not "by virtue of the primacy of the sciences" but out of a genuine love for their subjects, and to convey the awe of natural phenomena that too many people believe is removed by scientific investigation?

I'm not sure that it is "widely accepted" that either Logical Positivism or Strong AI have failed. I hadn't heard that the Strong AI community had either set themselves a deadline to achieve machine consciousness or been shown that such an achievement was a priori impossible.

"Adolescent, chauvinism, bigotry?" Let me quote from Barrow and Tipler's Anthropic Cosmological Principle. "...the arguments one hears today against considering intelligent computers to be persons and against giving them human rights have precise parallels in the nineteenth century arguments against giving blacks and women full human rights." Is this the domain of science or is it "false omniscience"? You think B. and T. might be in a little bit over their heads. And of course the authors provide no historical information to back up their statement.

I think that B&T might be referring generically to those who argued that blacks or women lacked the intelligence or humanity of white males, and were thus less than human and deserved fewer rights. In this case there is a direct parallel with those who claim that intelligent computers (and I assume that B&T are talking of some hypothetical future development) deserve fewer rights than homo sapiens, and I don't see how a call to extend their rights can be seen as "adolescent, chauvinis(t)" or "bigot(ed)".

Tom Beard.

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116. **David R. Israel**

Re: another attempt

Mon 6 Oct 1997

Po!

(a variant on the urban vocative Yo) --
am getting Poetics in digest now, so it's interesting to read a thread like this one en masse . . .

here's my mite to the myre --

Harold Rhenisch wrote,

Luigi,

you wrote:

"i believe the thread here is on what specific features distinguish

the aesthetic movement called "Language Poetry" from other aesthetics/schools/tendencies...."

Thanks for the correction.

A parallel discussion could be on what characteristics "Language Poetry" shares with other aesthetics, just so we don't lose something vital in the process of definition. For instance, if Language Poetry and Intermedia Poetry both work to break boundaries, say, they could be seen as parallel manifestations of a larger project, perhaps as yet undefined. To see them in such terms might help focus the definition of each. Or it might not. But it would be fun trying.

At risk of (a) pedestrianism or (b) overbroadness (not to mention other errors et ironies not included in this abecedarian roster), doesn't the word

POSTMODERN(ism)

pretty well cover all (or is that both?) of the above?

///

Quip: There are two kinds of poetry schools:

those that posit / admit of [bounded / definable / atomistic?] poetry schools, and those that don't.

yours,

d.i.

p.s. to Joe Amato: good luck w/ elevenyer (give or take)

•

• • • • •

.....

////////////////////

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

| [REDACTED] (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

_____ (Tagore)

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117. **Susan Wheeler**

Poetics Digest

Mon 6 Oct 1997

I for one think Don Wellman's definition ace, and is what I have always understood as what constitutes (-ed?) language poetry in an historical sense. Work with common strategies that does not share the social underpinning I have always thought of as either satellite work or a later generation's development/"misprision," with no sufficient appellate as of yet.

Susan Wheeler



voice/fax 

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118. **henry goo**

Re: another attempt

Mon 6 Oct 1997

I 2nd Susan Wheeler's opinion & also applaud Bob G's independent efforts. D. Wellman's post for one thing revealed connections between the work of the lang-poohs & the soc-artists in Russia at the same period. Speaking as a lang-pooh BASHER myself, the bashing seems to come from 2 different directions - one, from Vendors of the Establishment who feel threatened by it (I mean the poetry establishment), and two, from people like me who miss the affirmation ("holism"?) denied by "tweaking", who would like to find the synthesis under the critique. Call me naive, but I think poetry since a while back has something to do with praise. So that's another resource for them's that can find something to sing about in this foxhole... dust & ashes & unclean lips O hallelujah you dog-gone sinner-folk... Wellman said it himself when he said at mid-70s political-social discourse was worn out & co-opted & people had turned to local organizing. Well those people are still there, some of them. (not me, I'm just a coyote) Maybe the affirmation is in the silence. As in "I hate (dead) speech." Silence - whut that? But you begin to see (thanks to Wellman) that language poetry is not a "technique" divorced from a very particular & salt-laden & lemon-scented & methane-chlorox-bleached-calcified historical situation. & we in it. & it ain't a degree program. - Henry Gould

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119. **Michael Magee**

Re: Robert Bly/Wm. Carlos Wms.

Mon 6 Oct 1997

From: Aviva Vogel <[REDACTED]>

What's your take on Bly's work? What has your experience of his poetry been?

And why would you, personally, consider Williams' work more "spiritual" (to use a vague, but I hope understandable, term)?"

Not sure if this was addressed to me or addressed generally but I figured I'd answer it anyway. I've read plenty of Bly's work, though I haven't followed him as if I was his pollster or anything. As I said in my last post, my main issue with him is that I think his apotheosization of "the inner life" is an intellectual (an poetic) sham. My sense has always been that ultimately he means "Robert Bly's inner life" and not much else. Take this:

"Rising from a bed, where I dreamt
Of long rides past castles and hot coals,
the sun lies happily on my knees;
I have suffered and survived the night
Bathed in dark water, like any blade of grass."

Aside from its containing a bathetic rip-off of Whitman, it operates on what I consider a fatal assumption, namely the assumption that the reader should give a shit what Robert Bly dreamt last night, apart from that dreaming having any function as socially mediated communication. Why? Poetry is not speech, not a newspaper, not a telegram, but it is most certainly communication. Whitman may have posed as "any blade of grass" but that pose was one of many in a nexus of insistently social poses. Believe too dreamily in the importance of your inner life and "the sun lies happily on my knees" is exactly what you'll get. Bly says he wants to get away from "the need to think of everything in terms of work," but it strikes me that this need is based on a definition of work which is far too narrow. Williams knew - look at "Proletarian Portrait," "Fine Work with Pitch and Copper" - that poetry was work; or at least that it was better imagined as such.

-Mike.

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120. **Maria Damon**

Re: Robert Bly/Wm. Carlos Wms.

Mon 6 Oct 1997

At 8:31 AM -0400 10/6/97, Michael Magee wrote:

>From: Aviva Vogel <[REDACTED]>

>

>Take this:

>

>"Rising from a bed, where I dreamt

>Of long rides past castles and hot coals,

>the sun lies happily on my knees;

>I have suffered and survived the night

>Bathed in dark water, like any blade of grass."

>

>Aside from its containing a bathetic rip-off of Whitman,

it contains a dangling modifier in the first couplet lines, no? --md

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121. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: language poetry bashing

Mon 6 Oct 1997

I think Henry's response to my posting is reasonable and well-put. Thanx.

I also like what Bill Burmeister has said....

My main take on broad discussions of LangPo, tends to be different than a lot of peoples: I agree with Perelman and other principles involved with LangPo, that the most useful use of the term is the narrowest: as a label of convenience referring to a loose cluster of poets, numbering two or three dozen maybe, who moved in a certain direction together in the 1970s and 1980s. Rather than using the term as a synonym for, "rather disjunctive writing showing an awareness of the formal conceptions of modernism and uninterested in the suburban politesse of the linguistically inert workshop lyric." The latter, describes my work and that of an awful lot of contemporary poets...To say we're all Lang-Potes is rather like saying we're all "postmodern american poets" or something....Gets you nowhere. The Language circle made very specific and focused (but also in other ways very broad and polydirectional) interventions in the poetry scene, over 25 years or whatever. To understand where we are (I would argue) it's best to keep clear that we are us, working today, and the Language circle was a specific moment, which has influenced many of us, but from which we are distinguishable. I think Bill's parallel to surrealism is very promising in

this regard: Think of someone like (pratically my all-time favorite poet) Rene Char..His involvement with Breton and the official Surrealist International was brief tho intense. After breaking with them he went on to make one of the most vibrant and ambitious bodies of work to derive from the 20th century surrealist stream. Tho he's often called a surrealist by people, it's important to what he did that he didn't see himself as part of that overall label. (Similar things could be said of Vallejo, Huidrobo and others in a number of different countries and languages, as well as poets descending from Char's influence like the fascinating G. Sobin...)

And one other point about why I and my friends are not "Language poets"...one of the main functions of the label in recent years has been to isolate and dismiss poets working in a less conservative vein than the person using the term: more and more it functions (when used to mean "formal innovation" or "nonlinear writing" or something) as a boundry-drawing term and a term of abuse.

All of that said, there's lots about the Language circle's work and theory that is rich and worth discussing. As a left activist I have more than once meditated here about the political connection, for instance, and the concept of unfinished work as inherently radical and democratic (challenging the reader to take part in "finishing" the poem, rather than stonily accepting its "authority" as a great work of art, a sort of intellectual boss..) and the interesting parallels to Brecht's esthetic ideas.

Etc...

Mark P.

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122. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: an attempt

Mon 6 Oct 1997

Rod,

I thought yours was an excellent post. Yes, insofar as we're looking back at the last 40 years of poetry in this country, to ask ourselves where we are, the single most fruitful exercise is (as you say) to ask how the more austere anti-"voice" LangPo creates synthesis points/interference patterns/eddys/undercurrents against the broad humanisms of the "New American Poetry" currents.

Many of us still feel edgy (pun wasn't intended) about the way soporific academic mainstreamers champion what they feel unthreatened by, in the work of a Ginsberg, say. All the more reason (to bring this thread back to the person who started it) to value work which seems especially to be an extension in contemporary terms of the sharp springy colloquialism of a Ted Berrigan--such as

the new Wallace book Aldon has alluded to, Nothing Happened and Beside I Wasn't There, which I strongly recommend to the Listpersons....

Mark P.

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123. **Douglas Barbour**

Re: social tangles

Mon 6 Oct 1997

Bravo David B for that post & the reprints. But especially for such a pithy 'placing' of Bly & his failure of sense, let alone reading.

Yup: those poems are 'containers/containments of "social urgency"' but they also do a lot more. which is also true of many kinds of langpo (& certainly whatever we call Rachel Blau duPlessis's often amazing work). I admire Bob Gruman's passion for taxonomy but remain more intrigued myself by the work that crosses boundaries... taxonomic ones as much as any...

=====

Douglas Barbour
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

████████ FAX: ██████████

H: ██████████

~~~~~

In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it.  
Ezra Pound

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124. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: another attempt***

*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

I really like Jacques Debrot's mention of Rachel Blau DuPlessis, as a test-case in relation to Language Poetry...She is indeed (as the passage he quotes suggests) closely related to LangPo as a stylistic moment in US poetry, and moving beyond it in her way of problematizing politix and feminism, and self identity and social identity; non-linear music weaves a pattern of social turmoils....

I have not seen a collected grouping, but I've been reading the "Drafts" sequence in many little magazines, for some years now, and they strike me as maybe about the most exciting poetry project going...BTW..

Mark P.

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125. **Pritchett, Pat**

**Re: Raworth & Dorn/Fraser Reading**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

For those in the Denver/Boulder area:

Tom Raworth & Ed Dorn (who evidently is feeling pretty well) will be reading at the University of Denver, Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7:30 PM in the Dupont Room of the Mary Reed Bldg.

Kathleen Fraser will be reading at the Naropa Performing Arts Center in Boulder, Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 7:30 PM.

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126. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re: Poetics Digest**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

On Mon, 6 Oct 1997, Susan Wheeler wrote:

*I for one think Don Wellman's definition ace, and is what I have always understood as what constitutes (-ed?) language poetry in an historical sense. Work with common strategies that does not share the social underpinning I have always thought of as either satellite work or a later generation's development/"misprision," with no sufficient appellate as of yet.*

Susan Wheeler

Yes,...I also thought that Don's post was helpful and interesting; and I believe you're right that there are different moments in the flow of poetic tactics...In fact, the early work of Clark Coolidge and Susan Howe (with Palmer somewhere in the middle??) define two points, one very political the other not (on the surface); and this dual nature can be seen in later developments after 1972...But nonetheless, as you say, the core of work the Language circle did thereafter was highly political; and later poets influenced by them have not always cared about that skein of concerns...

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127. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re: Robert Bly/Wm. Carlos Wms.**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

Mike M's reply about Bly's work was good.....

It overlaps considerably in its basic points with a very polemical piece by Eliot Weinberger which is included in his book *Written Reaction*. I have many, many problems with Weinberger on other specific poetry issues (politically he and I are pretty much marching in the same left wing, and about politics he is often eloquent and passionate); ....But I enjoyed the pissed-off Bly essay a lot, and recommend it as an extension of what Mike says about the many problems in Bly's poetry...

The only thing I would add is about the specific music of Bly's work, the actual verse (and prose) per se..There is a quiet stillness which he wants to derive from the surrealist idiom (and from the hispanic and scandinavian poets he has translated, sometimes not too badly); I understand the attraction of this sort of hushed terseness..(The quintessential example, especially considering how lionized he is by mainstreamers, is of course James Wright) But long, long ago it degenerated in Bly's work into almost complete inertness!

Mark P.

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128. **Judy Roitman**

**Re: Defining Language Poetry**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

*In response to my tentative definition of language poetry as poetry that "significantly breaks the rules of grammar and/or spelling for expressive effect..." Judy Roitman wants to know "Just what are we supposed to be expressing?" Answer: I dunno. Just something.*

But that's an important point. Is there something to be expressed? My vague and not very precise notion of langpo is that the notion of "something to be expressed" just isn't present in this sort of poetry, whether we want to call it language or post-language or proto-post-language or whatever.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | memory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code  
-----

<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>

---

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129. **cris cheek**  
**Re: another attempt**  
Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

*Call me naive, but I think poetry  
since a while back has something to do with praise.*

i for one wish that your own messages exhibited more.

So much (well, perhaps not so much) thought, time and energy expended on the fins of the carp. Be a priest. All hail!

Who needs enemies.

love and love

cris

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130. **Maria Damon**  
**Re: Poetics Digest**  
Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

At 11:36 AM -0400 10/6/97, Mark Prejsnar wrote:

>On Mon, 6 Oct 1997, Susan Wheeler wrote:

>

>> I for one think Don Wellman's definition ace, and is what I have always  
>> understood as what constitutes (-ed?) language poetry in an historical  
>> sense. Work with common strategies that does not share the social  
>> underpinning I have always thought of as either satellite work or a later  
>> generation's development/"misprision," with no sufficient appellate as  
>>of yet.

>>

>> Susan Wheeler

>> [REDACTED]

>

>

>Yes,...I also thought that Don's post was helpful and interesting; and I  
>believe you're right that there are different moments in the flow of  
>poetic tactics...In fact, the early work of Clark Coolidge and Susan Howe  
>(with Palmer somewhere in the middle??) define two points, one very  
>political the other not (on the surface); and this dual nature can be seen

>in later developments after 1972...But nonetheless, as you say, the core  
>of work the Language circle did thereafter was highly political; and later  
>poets influenced by them have not always cared about that skein of  
>concerns...

i for three found don's post helpful, the kind of thing one can gve to students to help them "get it." after all is said and done, though, and i know we've gone round and round on this, while langpo clearly has a politics, it seems to somehow stand apart from the muck and mire of the everyday, as if that latter huge welter of "stuff" were too hopelessly contaminated to engage (stuff like identity, etc). i can't help but wonder about this, though i myself am an aesthete rather than a politico when all's said and done. i guess one reason i keep yammering on and on about cultural studies is that i'm not sure a poetics can do "it" all on its own. etc. your pal, maria d

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### 131. **Bobbie West** **readings (HERE)**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

Rod Smith wrote:

>makes me think of the Raworth: "The narrative line is only  
as boring as what is hung on it." <

Speaking of "the Raworth," does anyone care to give a report on the recent readings at HERE in NY?

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### 132. **main** **call for reviews**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

currently reading short reviews  
(300-600 wrds)  
for new mag of poetry & poetics.  
essays will also be considered.  
  
please backchannel w proposal  
by 17 october.

best,  
dan featherston

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133. **Pritchett, Pat**

**Re: Readings/Help**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

My apologies to all if this shows up twice. I seem to be having a server problem:

---

For those in the Denver/Boulder area:

Tom Raworth & Ed Dorn (who evidently is feeling pretty well) will be reading at the University of Denver, Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7:30 PM in the Dupont Room of the Mary Reed Bldg.

Kathleen Fraser will be reading at the Naropa Performing Arts Center in Boulder, Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 7:30 PM. \_\_\_\_\_ A friend of mine is feverishly preparing for her PhD. comps and asks what, besides \_The Pound Era\_, offers a good, broad overview of modernist American poetic practice and theory? Please backchannel any suggestions.

Thanks,  
Patrick Pritchett

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134. **Aldon Nielsen**

**bashing Basho**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

---

1) at the risk of repeating myself the risk of repeting myself repeating Ron Silliman, I still think the best definition of a "language poet" is that offered by Ron Silliman some years back, repeated by me here some years later, to the effect that a "language poet" is "anyone who has ever been accused of being a language poet."

2) Not to be outdone by language poets, Senator John Ashcroft, in explaining to his honorable colleagues why the NEA should be cut off, held up a placard his staff had prepared for him to display (this was, after all, on C-Span) -- The placard quoted in its entirety a poem, no doubt recognizable to many on this list, that reads:

LIGHT

This poem was Ashcroft's example of wasteful and elitist practices at the NEA -- to quote the Village Voice's coverage of the rare moment of literary history that followed: "Only after Barbara Boxer called him on it did he admit that this grant was awarded back in the 60s. He countered by saying it was one of the few NEA horrors he could hold up on television without offending viewers."



3) One of my colleagues in the sociology department here at Loyola Marymount just published an article on suburban, middle-class drug dealers -- what caught my eye was the periodical in which the journal appears, *The Journal of Deviant Behavior*. Imagine being rejected by the editors of that one!

4) Someone asked here about the Harryette Mullen talk I quoted from in *Black Chant*. Harryette tells me a version of the essay appeared in a recent *Callaloo*, but she didn't have the citation handy. I'll try to look it up and post the info. here -- my own copies of the mag. are in another part of the state --

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135. **Thomas Bell**

***Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT***

*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

While i don't want to push the analogy too hard, it seems to me these two opinions were often in the air in Jackson Pollock's early years. Still in the air in many quarters. But come to think of it lagpo would not want to claim JP as a forefather, would it (they or he or she)? tom bell

At 12:43 AM 10/6/97 -0400, Aviva Vogel wrote:

>Tom, a basic question that gnaws at me: what's to be gained for a reader  
>that "works harder," when all the "work" in the world won't reveal to her/him  
>what the "author" of a "text" intended (unless the intention was to offer a  
>tabula rasa for the reader to project self on to)?

>-----

At 11:34 AM 10/6/97 -0500, Judy Roitman wrote:

>>In response to my tentative definition of language poetry as poetry that  
>>"significantly breaks the rules of grammar and/or spelling for  
>>expressive effect..." Judy Roitman wants to know "Just what are  
>>we supposed to be expressing?" Answer: I dunno. Just something.  
>>

>

>But that's an important point. Is there something to be expressed? My  
>vague and not very precise notion of langpo is that the notion of  
>"something to be expressed" just isn't present in this sort of poetry,  
>whether we want to call it language or post-language or proto-post-language  
>or whatever.

>

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136. **Maria Damon**

**job info fwd**

Mon 6 Oct 1997

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Date: Mon, 6 Oct 1997 10:35:50 -0500 (CDT)

From: Betty L Agee <[REDACTED]>

To: Adjunct Faculty <[REDACTED]>,

W John Archer <[REDACTED]>,

Ayers L Bagley <[REDACTED]>,

Kent R Bales <[REDACTED]>,

Hyman Berman <[REDACTED]>,

William C Beyer <[REDACTED]>,

McKinley Boston Jr <[REDACTED]>,

Kinley Brauer <[REDACTED]>,

Rose M Brewer <[REDACTED]>,

Roger D Clemence <[REDACTED]>,

Maria Damon <[REDACTED]>,

David O Born <[REDACTED]>,

Hazel F Dicken-Garcia <[REDACTED]>,

[REDACTED],

Angela D Dillard <[REDACTED]>,

John M Dolan <[REDACTED]>,

Arthur I Geffen <[REDACTED]>,

Philip J Gersmehl <[REDACTED]>,

George D Green <[REDACTED]>,

Edward Griffin <[REDACTED]>,

[REDACTED],

[REDACTED],

Judith A Martin <[REDACTED]>,

[REDACTED],

[REDACTED],

March L Krotee <[REDACTED]>,

Barbara Laslett <[REDACTED]>,

Josephine D Lee <[REDACTED]>,

Richard D Leppert <[REDACTED]>,

Alex J Lubet <[REDACTED]>,

Mary Jo Kane <[REDACTED]>,

Ronald C McCurdy <[REDACTED]>,

Toni A McNaron <[REDACTED]>,

Russell R Menard <[REDACTED]>,

[REDACTED],

Lisa A Norling <[REDACTED]>,

Jean M O'Brien-Kehoe <[REDACTED]>,  
Joanna O'Connell <[REDACTED]>,  
[REDACTED],  
Paula Rabinowitz <[REDACTED]>,  
Nancy L Roberts <[REDACTED]>,  
Guillermo Rojas <[REDACTED]>,  
Marty Roth <[REDACTED]>,  
Roger P Miller <[REDACTED]>,  
[REDACTED],  
[REDACTED],  
Sara M Evans <[REDACTED]>,  
Thomas M Scanlan <[REDACTED]>,  
Colleen Sheehy <[REDACTED]>,  
Robert B Silberman <[REDACTED]>,  
Allan H Spear <[REDACTED]>,  
Ellen J Stekert <[REDACTED]>,  
Terence W Ball <[REDACTED]>,  
Dennis N Valdes <[REDACTED]>,  
Rudolph J Vecoli <[REDACTED]>,  
John S Wright <[REDACTED]>,  
Jack Zipes <[REDACTED]>,  
Jacquelyn N Zita <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Job Notice: please forward who might be interested

ASIAN AMERICAN. The American Studies Program at the University of Minnesota invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Asian American Studies, to begin September 16, 1998. A Research emphasis in the study of Asian Americans is required as is a Ph.D., evidence of good teaching and productive scholarship. Candidates will teach Asian American courses and in the core American Studies curriculum. This is a full-to,e. 9month position. Candidates should send a letterof application, a c.v., a sample of scholarly work, transcripts and three letters of recommendation by November 15, 1997 to Betty Agee, American Studies Program, 104 Scott Hall, 72 Pleasant Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-0225.

---

Betty L. Agee  
American Studies, 104 Scott Hall  
72 Pleasant Street S.E.  
University of Minnesota, Mpls, MN 55455-0225  
Tel. [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]  
Fax. [REDACTED]

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137. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: another attempt***

*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

David Israel,

You wrote:

"There are two kinds of poetry schools: those that posit / admit of  
>[bounded / definable / atomistic?] poetry schools, and those that don't."

To simplify dangerously, would that be similar to two kinds of imagination: the one that led to catholicism and the other to gnosticism? One Apollonean; one Protean?

I confess, I am intrigued by the idea that some literary activities might be wrongly named and that a dialogue between the bounded and unbounded schools might lead down some interesting avenues. Lowell gets placed as a Confessionalist, for instance, but standing back from the times a bit, might it not be fruitful to set up a parallel system, wherein he would belong to the school of doleful irony or some such. He would have a lot of company from all over the map.

Just a thought.

Thanks for the clarity.

Harold

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138. **Hoa Nguyen**

***Kind Regards***

*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

Hi. This is Dale Smith. Not Hoa. Nothing I say here should implicate her in any way. In fact, we unsubbed recently, but she has resubbed briefly to access the Poetics Archive.

My reason for writing is that I simply cannot respond to all of the backchannel messages many of you have sent to me the past week. So I thought I would address the list briefly.

Re: my thoughts on Language poetry, please refer to my post, "Social Tangles," of Sept. 29 (or 30th). To simplify that post, let me just say that so-called 'experimental' post-language forms of writing often betray the very issues the writer believes he or she addresses. In fact, formal gestures often confuse and obscure that which should be quite clear. These forms are, quite often, totalitarian in nature, because they demand the reader's servitude in disentangling the

work's 'meaning.' Formal gestures often obscure or limit the social impulse for creating poetry in the first place. My problem is not so much with Language Poetry per se. I think that Silliman's impulse was, and has been, mostly honorable. And certainly, Lyn Hejinian has been attentive to the history of the poem for a long time and continues to work through her concerns for its potential. But these writers approached the poem from another side, a so-called 'traditional' side, 'tradition' meaning only that they read through the complex history of poetry in this language and others. But to younger writers I encounter, the 'method' has replaced a deeper search for personal, formal expression. And the confusion of form and impulse is painfully clear all too often. What I look for in poems I publish is a finished work that allows the impulse of the poem's occasion to be integrated into a compatible form. The results of such work often are remarkably effective due to a high regard for the emotional integrity of both the poem and the author. But, I've said more than I intended. My original post, looking back, is more clear and to the point.

On a final note, I do thank every one who has responded to Mike and Dale's. We are currently producing a final run to keep up with the demand from many on this list ranging from Juliana Spahr to Anselm Hollo. Thank you all for your support.

In Absentia,  
Dale Smith

---

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139. **Bob Grumman**  
***Re: Defining Language Poetry***  
*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

I have to admit that the number and diversity of the responses I and others have been getting regarding what language poetry is has me pretty befuddled. I probably need to download all pertinent data and go off to my tower for a few weeks to assimilate it. No time for that, though, so here are some answers to some of the questions that have been raised in my direction, first Judy Roitman's about what langpo is expressing. In my first message about that I did go on to show what one possibly language poem was expressing, and say a few things about what I meant when I used the term, "expressing." I should add now that I also use the term to distinguish langpo that uses some kind of broken syntax to express something (a feeling, a philosophical stance, an image, whatever) from poetry that break syntax to break syntax, or to follow some rule (an example would be someone who switched verbs with subjects throughout an

appropriated text, which would be a use of langpo technique but not necessarily expressive; an would be example someone switched who verbs with subjects throughout an appropriated text, would which be a use of langpo technique but not necessarily expressive--as this last is not, so far as I can see; I mean, the line is still expressive, but the re-arrangement of words has not increased its expressiveness; or, if it has, I still believe in theory that some langpo technique could be used that didn't increase a text's expressiveness). Just to make sure to confuse everyone else as much as I've been, I'll add that expressiveness for me means the ability to express more than nonsense or nothingness or what-it-is, the latter being what "jshdntuie" might be said to express--that is, "jshdntuie," expresses "jshdntuie." I wouldn't say it does but there are those who would.

I can't understand how a poem could not express something. If "something to be expressed" isn't present in language poetry, what is? I can understand music or sound poetry, or painting or visual poetry, being itself, and not expressing something, but I can't understand poetry's doing that since poetry must contain words (I think) and words must express something, being symbols. I admit to feeling particularly fuddled here. And missing something useful.

David Israel's suggestion that we just call language poetry postmodernist poetry is HORRIBLE!!! The term is too broad and confused. And stupidly time-dependent. The only worse literary term I know of is "New Criticism," which is now, what: 60-years-old? My own taxonomic tactic is to call most of the newest poetry (but also surrealist poetry) "burstnorm poetry," and make language poetry a subclass of that, renamed to avoid confusion, and because the term, "language poetry," is used to many incompatible ways to be of much use. Then I break it down further, based on what techniques are used.

To Tom Orange's question as to whether one can put aside questions of things like Don Wellman's "critiques of production," I say, "Sure." Those things are just subject matter, useless taxonomically because any poem of any kind can be about anything. It is, for me, the least descriptively important thing that can be said about a poem--but it's always available: one can always throw in what a poem is about when describing it. For instance: One can say of a poem that it is a "variant-pronoun poem" (a kind of "xenolinguistic poem") critiquing, say, the commodification of middle initials.

Again, I don't think I've covered everything I ought to have. Apologies to those whose points I've scanted, but I'm already ready for bed.

--Bob G.

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140. **Alan Jen Sondheim**

**charn**

*Mon 6 Oct 1997*

---

-

charn

'They're waiting

foor a new wave oof reasoon'

I'm boorne new wave oof reasoon durath

A great crawn af fire, spiked acrass Sud-West Nihan

Luxuriantly-Integrating Mistress Deity drew Lightning

Across Braken Back and Braw

Barne Jennifer-Weird across Wired and Naw Naw Naw

Bloood breast milk breast milk breast blood breast

'Tell them, though 'tis an awful thing too die,

('Twas e'en too thee) yet the dread path oonce trood,

Heaven lifts its everlasting poortals high,

And bids the pure in heart behold their Good.'

Ignoorant mind pure mind pure mind ignoorant mind

Barne Jennifer-Weird across Wired and Naw Naw Naw

Far flood droor read doa, tourn dour, bier-born Julu

caught loost, roored against what? o kaze kita kaze

plate of sky

wroting the droor remains

loosened jennifer-julu dead black pen ashed for less

Barne Jennifer-Weird across Wired and Naw Naw Naw

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141. **Kevin Varrone**

**Ronald Johnson/Ark**

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

I'm wondering if anyone on the list can point me to criticism on Ronald Johnson's \*ARK\*. It's my understanding there is something explanatory written by Johnson himself in a past issue of \*Chicago Review\*, but I do not know which issue, or of any other criticism on \*ARK\*

If anyone knows of anything, please backchannel.

Thanks,

Kevin

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142. **Schuchat Simon**

**Re: job info fwd**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

Maria, what would be typical or likely course titles for Asian American Studies?

How would the American studies program deal with works by Asian Americans or Asians in America writing about America in Asian languages?

Is it a new program or already existing?

xiexie & domoo

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143. **Sylvester Pollet**

**Re: Ronald Johnson/Ark**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

Kevin--I don't have the Chicago Review citation here--it's at home. Get Sagetrieb 14.3 too--picture of Johnson on the cover, piece by him on Bunting's Briggflatts, long piece on ARK by Peter O'Leary, and a review of ARK by William Benton. Actually, here's the citation: Chicago Review 42.1 (1996), "An Interview With R.J." by Peter O'Leary. There's also a monograph by Dirk Stratton "Ronald Johnson" Boise State U Western Writers Series No. 122 (1996). etc., Sylvester

*I'm wondering if anyone on the list can point me to criticism on Ronald Johnson's \*ARK\*. It's my understanding there is something explanatory written by Johnson himself in a past issue of \*Chicago Review\*, but I do not know which issue, or of any other criticism on \*ARK\**

*If anyone knows of anything, please backchannel.*

*Thanks,  
Kevin*

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144. **David W. Clippinger**

**Re: Ronald Johnson/Ark**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

You are referring to volume 41 of the Chicago Review. Also, Peter O'Leary wrote a wonderful essay on Johnson, "Ark as Spiritual Phenomenon" in the Winter 1995 issue of \_Sagetrieb\_. Johnson also has an essay on Bunting in that \_SAgetrieb\_ issue.



All best,  
David Clippinger

At 12:27 AM 10/7/97 -0400, you wrote:

> I'm wondering if anyone on the list can point me to criticism on  
> Ronald Johnson's \*ARK\*. It's my understanding there is something  
> explanatory written by Johnson himself in a past issue of \*Chicago  
> Review\*, but I do not know which issue, or of any other criticism on \*ARK\*  
>  
> If anyone knows of anything, please backchannel.  
>  
> Thanks,  
> Kevin  
>  
>

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145. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

What is expressed in an Ornette Coleman piece? A Merce Cunningham performance? What is expressed in a painting by Picasso or Kline?? A Richard Foreman play?

I strongly recommend to you a sensitive poet called Robert Lowell (and come to think of it, another named Robert Bly)...They have \*lots\* to "express"...

Mark P.

On Mon, 6 Oct 1997, Judy Roitman wrote:

*In response to my tentative definition of language poetry as poetry that "significantly breaks the rules of grammar and/or spelling for expressive effect..." Judy Roitman wants to know "Just what are we supposed to be expressing?" Answer: I dunno. Just something.*

*But that's an important point. Is there something to be expressed? My vague and not very precise notion of langpo is that the notion of "something to be expressed" just isn't present in this sort of poetry, whether we want to call it language or post-language or proto-post-language or whatever.*

|                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Judy Roitman               | "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! |
| Math, University of Kansas | memory fails                 |
| Lawrence, KS 66045         | these are the days."         |
| ██████████                 | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996      |

-----  
Note new area code  
-----

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
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## 146. **Mark Prejsnar**

### **Re: Poetics Digest**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

*i for three found don's post helpful, the kind of thing one can gve to students to help them "get it." after all is said and done, though, and i know we've gone round and round on this, while langpo clearly has a politics, it seems to somehow stand apart from the muck and mire of the everyday, as if that latter huge welter of "stuff" were too hopelessly contaminated to engage (stuff like identity, etc). i can't help but wonder about this, though i myself am an aesthete rather than a politico when all's said and done. i guess one reason i keep yammering on and on about cultural studies is that i'm not sure a poetics can do "it" all on its own. etc. your pal, maria d*

Speaking as a politico (I always respond to that word by picturing some pot-bellied Democratic ward boss with a big cigar in Boston or Chicago....) I simply respond as differently as is possible. I refer you to a text like Andrews' I Don't Have Any Paper So Shut Up for engaging a huge welter of contaminated stuff; much of Bernstein, and Silliman's Alphabet, for confronting the slippery dynamix of identity and politix and the urban social matrix; to expand very slightly my own narrow construction of the term LangPo, perhaps, (but these are all people I hear called LangPotes all the time) black and woman writers such such as Mackey, Hunt, Harryman and Mullen are really obviously doing some of the most electric and vivid political writing today...

Me, I don't think we have to write badly to engage politix fully....

Mark P.  
Atlanta

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147. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: Kind Regards***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Dale,

I certainly find your post confusing...If Silliman and Hejinian are "honorable" then who isn't so honorable? And what exactly does honor have to do with it anyway??

No doubt you have very good reasons for publishing who and what you do...But I'm not especially moved by your line of argument. Poetry should have all sorts of intensities, not all of 'em directly addressing politix and social issues.

All I can do is to say I certainly reject the overall thrust of your post..I think. But it would require more specifics to be sure we disagree and why..Just who is an example of this horrible dishonor you associate with experimental-poetry-in-quotes???

It was nifty of you to reverse the usual formula, and claim that these poet "en-slave" the reader by forcing her to "disentangle" meanings, and that this is totalitarian....I actually find your whole welter of highly-charged verbiage fairly preposterous..

I continue to think langpo theory has it right (or closer to right) that inert and linear writing is rather more authoritarian. (Using the T-word kinda muddies the waters, it's so over the top and inappropriate...)

Mark P.

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148. **Maria Damon**

***Re: job info fwd***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

At 3:59 PM +0800 10/7/97, Schuchat Simon wrote:

>Maria, what would be typical or likely course titles for Asian American  
>Studies?

history, literature and other expressive cultures etc.

>

>How would the American studies program deal with works by Asian Americans

>or Asians in America writing about America in Asian languages?

i think the assumption is that most courses wd be taught in english, though individual works may be recommended in other languages when appropriate.

>

>Is it a new program or already existing?

American Studies is about 50 yrs old at U of M, but they've never had an Asian American hire before. so this person would be designing whatever asian-american components there wd be in the curriculum.

>

>xiexie & domoo

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149. **Judy Roitman**  
**Re: Ronald Johnson/Ark**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

*I'm wondering if anyone on the list can point me to criticism on Ronald Johnson's \*ARK\*. It's my understanding there is something explanatory written by Johnson himself in a past issue of \*Chicago Review\*, but I do not know which issue, or of any other criticism on \*ARK\**

*If anyone knows of anything, please backchannel.*

*Thanks,  
Kevin*

Please don't backchannel. Thanks.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

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150. **LAURA MORIARTY**  
**non announcement**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

non is a new poetics Web site. It will be mostly short essays, reviews etc., with some poetry and prose. Each issue will have a theme. The first is emptiness.

Work by Norma Cole, Dodie Bellamy, Charles Bernstein, Leslie Scalapino, Kit Robinson, Norman Fischer and Beverly Dahlen. More work is expected. Updates will be constant.

I will be adding art and a links page ASAP.

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty>

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151. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Re: language poetry bashing**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

Mark Prejsnar wrote:

*surrealism is very promising in this regard: Think of someone like (pratically my all-time favorite poet) Rene Char..His involvement with Breton and the official Surrealist International was brief tho intense. After breaking with them he went on to make one of the most vibrant and ambitious bodies of work to derive from the 20th century surrealist stream. Tho he's often called a surrealist by people, it's important to what he did that he didn't see himself as part of that overall label*

Mark and others,

What is there available and in print of Rene Char's work nowadays? All I have is this relatively slim New Directions collected works volume. Glad to hear that someone else on the list thinks as much of him as I do.

Bill B.

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152. **Michael Coffey**

**Re: Defining Language Poetry -Reply**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

>>> Mark Prejsnar <[REDACTED]> 10/07/97 09:28am >>>

What is expressed in an Ornette Coleman piece? A Merce Cunningham performance? What is expressed in a painting by Picasso or Kline??

A Richard Foreman play?

I strongly recommend to you a sensitive poet called Robert Lowell (and come to think of it, another named Robert Bly)...They have \*lots\* to "express"...

Mark P.

I don't think that "expressiveness" itself is to be maligned; is there anything wrong with people expressing themselves or working out sensations based on their own lives or loves or troubles or concerns? of course not, for that would forbid someone expressing themselves about their relation to language production or to sound or to the tradition of inherited poetics, or to madness or to poetry as politics (see David Bromige's recent claim for "social urgency" for a

vignette about someone who happens to a proletarian). It would forbid opinion and desire. expressiveness is, when it comes to cultural activity, all-encompassing. (One can be bored by Lowell's interest in his own family (few proletarians), say, as easily as by Hannah Weiner's fascination with her own delusions, but one can be redeemed by the new ways in which one of these reorganizes language, while the other does not).

But clearly, there is something wonderful and fresh often to be gained by eschewing certain kinds of expressive impulses in order to discover other qualities (of expression perhaps) in the language act. Mac Low is a great example of someone who seemed intent on systematically removing or suppressing certain kinds of expressiveness (personal, autobiographical, topical) in order to find other pleasing and suggestive combinations of language, which could not be found without masking out those other impulses. And recently, Jackson seems to have relaxed that suppression, where a kind of traditional poet-as-person expressiveness plows into a highly charged and freshened linguistic space, making for both a narrative sensation and a liberated play of sound for sound's sake.

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153. **Mark Prejsnar**  
*Expressing and defining*  
Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

Michael Coffey,

glad to notice you back on the list; I like your poetry and your posts on the List have been good ones in the past..(Of course you were no doubt just lurkin' around, as I do much of the time...)

I have *\*no\** real disagreement with your post..While I have *\*some\** uneasiness about the word "express", because of a whole range of things about the baggage it carries, I have no problem with the substance of what you say..

My little bit that you quote was more in response to Judy R's *\*use\** of the idea of "something to express," to suggest that context, in some very flat sense, was fundamental to poetry..Not in my world it ain't! Stein, Zukofsky, Coolidge, Howe, are great examples to me of moving and extraordinarily engaging poets, the very best...and they do it by violating flat, linear expectations about "content." Poetry like any art-practice is a performative set of gestures and actions that uses a shapeable medium to stir thoughts and emotions..And contrary to one of the other posts in this thread, doing so is the mission of poetry, and demonstrates great respect for the audience...It ain't "totalitarian"..

On the bus to work today I was reading Aldon's extraordinary piece on Stephen Jonas, which in the Impercipient Lecture Series, and which I strongly strongly recommend to everyone. He has this great quote from N. Mackey, which says much better than I can what I've meant to say to Jduy and Dale and others:

"Discrepant engagement, rather than supressing resonance, dissonance, noise, seeks to remain open to them. Its admission of resonances contends with resolution. It worries resolute identity and demarcation, resolute boundry lines, resolute definition, obeying a vibrational rather than a corpuscular sense of being..."

That's a pretty good description of the kind of poetry I'm engaged with, I think.....

Mark P.  
Atlanta

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154. **henry g**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry -Reply***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

On Tue, 7 Oct 1997 12:06:39 -0400 Michael Coffey said:

>(One can be bored by Lowell's interest in his own family (few  
>proletarians), say, as easily as by Hannah Weiner's fascination with her  
>own delusions, but one can be redeemed by the new ways in which  
>one of these reorganizes language, while the other does not).

what I find even more boring is the neverending valorization of the new (is it really new?) for its own sake. In a time of verbal glut and information overkill, I'm for recycling. In a short essay in Nedge #1 I called this "inter-textism". One can be redeemed also by the OLD ways of organizing language. Poetry is a locality. Poetry per se. Poetry is a small place, sort of like Rhode Island, actually. Listen to what's been done & live there for a while, don't just pooh-pooh lang-pooh it. & for those who think I'm too negative - I love a good fight, especially shadow-boxing. - Henry Gould

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155. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Charred remains***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Bill-- Char's never been as well-represented in English and in available editions in the US as he ought to be...Not too much else I believe if you're looking to buy. In libraries you can find some other editions...The New Directions is kind

of a re-doing of Mary Ann Caws' 1976 Princeton U.P volume, done with Jonathan Griffin...But maybe 30 percent of the poems are different, and the translations are to a large extent different I think. In the 1950s New Directions did its first Char volume (\*not\* bi-lingual, I think) called Hypnos Waking, with translations by different hands, including as I recall Levertov, Merwin and Doc Williams. Years ago I was lucky enuff to find a used copy of Cid Corman's very beautiful edition, a translation of the extraordinary prose-poem sequence, Leaves of Hypnos, written while he was leader of a small resistance combat unit in occupied Provence. The Corman Leaves was published in 1973 and is long out of print and that's a true shame, but it's in many libraries..

I've just been reading for the first time Relentir, travaux, in a translation by Keith Waldrop and I strongly recommend it. This is a book of poems written collaboratively by Paul Eluard, Andre Breton and Char in something like 1938. Waldrop handles it very well...It was published in 1990 by Exact Change Press, in Cambridge Mass....I'm afraid it's not listed in the new books in print. (This edition translates the title as "Slow, Under Construction.")

Another person who takes Char as his #1 poet is Gustaf Sobin, the excellent american poet resident in France; there was a section featuring him in Talisman a few years ago, including an interview in which he discusses Char's importance to his own work..

Mark P.

On Tue, 7 Oct 1997, William Burmeister Prod wrote:

*Mark Prejsnar wrote:*

*surrealism is very promising in this regard: Think of someone like (pratically my all-time favorite poet) Rene Char..His involvement with Breton and the official Surrealist International was brief tho intense. After breaking with them he went on to make one of the most vibrant and ambitious bodies of work to derive from the 20th century surrealist stream. Tho he's often called a surrealist by people, it's important to what he did that he didn't see himself as part of that overall label*

*Mark and others,*

*What is there available and in print of Rene Char's work nowadays? All I have is this relatively slim New Directions collected works volume. Glad to hear that someone else on the list thinks as much of him as I do.*

*Bill B.*

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156. **groberts**

**Char/Creeley**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

I too am a big fan of REne Char, and offer a pallid translation and a pale imitation.

Tried and True

My bed is a torrent on top of desiccated beaches. No fern will seek there its territory. O where did you slip, Sweet Love?

I left long ago. I had returned in order to leave.

Farther off, one of the three stones in the cairn over the dried-up source says this single engraved word to the passerby: "Friend."

I had invented a way to sleep and I drank up its green force during the reign of Summer.

--from Le Nu Perdu

Singed Curtains

Ringed by air ducts and water pipes, a small potential fire waits while the dust passes through it unharmed, blithe motes ready to ascend to the asphyxiated attic. Broken chairs, empty armoires, cans of turpentine attend to the preparations. Day is again stoked to a white heat, new tinder added, but the conflagration only sheds its allotted light and still diminishes. The standard equipment has been pushed into place: bellows, window, curtains. An accelerating dispersal blows every fuse. But there never was such a thing as a black flame.

Some line from Yeats that I recently came across seem fitting to Char, even though of course their politics where so utterly different:

Be secret and exult,  
Because of all things known  
That is most difficult.

On a completely different note, Robert Creeley is scheduled to read at MIT, this Thursday at 7 pm I believe. 20 Ames Street in Cambridge.

Gary R.

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157. **Henry Gould**

**expression, etc.**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

Poem x (time + place) + (poverty/silence) = reusable resource

this formula is supported hypothetically by a converse proposition:

[time - (past + future)] x ambition x literary politics = politics in general

This is just an outline for a recyclable, quiet poetics in an era of information highway roar. I owe it to this list, being an info-highway roadhog myself.

DOWN WITH HYPE. UP WITH NO-NAME POETRY. JOB LOT RULES.

- Henry gOuld [note the innovative use of typography here]

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158. **Michael Coffey**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry -Reply -Reply***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

what I find even more boring is the neverending valorization of the new (is it really new?) for its own sake.

Henry Gould: yes, you are right, or at least, I agree. I guess "new" isn't the right word. I like the old, too, and some of Pound's arcane phrasings, for example, or his ancient troubador forms, can be very, what can I say, unusual? strange, delightful. But I think something that one can define as "old" is already contextualized by what is not old, so its appearance is new. And so is the 'new' contextualizes against the old, so what the hell are we talking about.

I think i can recognize when a topic has burned itself out.

can't lay a glove on me Henry, not from there

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159. **henry g**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry -Reply -Reply***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

On Tue, 7 Oct 1997 13:37:08 -0400 Michael Coffey said:

But I think something that one can

>define as "old" is already contextualized by what is not old, so its

>appearance is new. And so is the 'new' contextualizes against the old,

>so what the hell are we talking about.

>

When you get into what a poet is doing in depth, it's a form of time-translation, seems like the new/old isn't an issue in the same way;

and that's only the beginning - soon you start to recycle & reconstruct

in your own place, grow a new amalgam - but it's in your own place without erasing the "old" place - that's inter-textism - it's not new - it's

"talking" to the old - what does Eliot say - the voices of the dead are

so much more distinct than those of the living - only a ghould would know - HG

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160. **Pritchett, Pat**

***Re: Kind Regards***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Dale Smith writes:

>In fact, formal gestures often confuse and obscure that which  
>should be quite clear. These forms are, quite often, totalitarian in nature, because >they demand the reader's servitude in disentangling the work's 'meaning.'

I guess since Dale is "in abstenia" this remark will be addressed "at-large." It seems to me that Dale has got it quite backwards here. "Servitude" to the text, or rather, the author's intention, is precisely what LangPo has sought to undermine, or at the very least, call into question. A poem by Silliman or Hejinian, to use his examples, does not require the reader so much to "disentangle" the meaning since that would imply the meaning is already *there*, present in an unchangeable form, but to interact with the text in such a way as to create a set of (decidedly and inevitably localized) determinates from an indeterminate matrix.

The totalizing impulse in literature Dale refers to is what LangPo, it seems to me, opposes - not just in the various theoretical statements published by LangPoets, but as is actually evinced in the poetic works themselves. Following Levinas's distinction between Totality (the urge to monolithic structures) and Infinity (the open-ended engagement with the Other), LangPo (and related poetic practices), seeks the latter in a spirit of free play, etc. since, as Kevin Killian once remarked, "meaning is one slippery motherfucker."

Patrick Pritchett

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161. **William Marsh**

***accused (personal ad)***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

At 12:43 PM 10/6/97 -0700, A. Nielsen wrote:

>1) at the risk of repeating myself the risk of repeting myself repeating  
>Ron Silliman, I still think the best definition of a "language poet" is  
>that offered by Ron Silliman some years back, repeated by me here some

>years later, to the effect that a "language poet" is "anyone who has ever  
>been accused of being a language poet."

i've often been charmed by this statement but wonder how people might interpret the nugget of truth here / having been "accused" myself on certain occasions (like others on the list i'm sure) and finding it preposterous and false (gosh, i was barely alive when "these people" started L=A=N=G=etc.), i wonder how/why i might be wrong

branded lang-po seeks same / serious replies only please

bmarsh

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162. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: bashing Basho***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

What is most amusing to me about the Senator John Ashcroft versus the NEA story reported by Aldon Nielson is not that senators are still too thick to get anything from the one-word poem, "light," but that the NEA and its supporters are still too thick to be able to defend its best moment.

--Bob G.

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163. **Jacques Debrot**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

While Michael Coffey is extremely persuasive about the virtues of \*self-expression\* I have a few reservations -- for instance, doesn't self-expression as a poetic value inevitably bring with it the clap-trap about sincerity, genuineness, etc. all of which obfuscate the ways in which expression is \*mediated.\* Hal Foster, of course, is great on this in his essay "The Expressive Fallacy." Also, just read yesterday an extremely interesting article on JM Basquiat in \*\*, somewhat along this line -- the twist is that the essay relates expressionism to multicultural art in that a certain kind of valorization of m.c. art also depends, finally, on an aesthetic of sincerity. But art can be \*expressive,\* can't it? -- Cage, Johns, MacLow, Langpo, etc -- without being expressionistic.

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164. **Charles Bernstein**  
***Archive at SF State in Jeopardy***  
*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

One of the crucial resources of our extended poetry communities is under threat. I have just gotten an email from Norma Cole (██████████) who asks me to urgently pass on this information to the list:

As of December, Laura Moriarity's job as archivist of The American Poetry Archives at the Poetry Center of San Francisco State University will be lost due to funding cuts. The Archives currently has more than 4,000 video and audio-taped performances by poets and other writers which are available for sale, rent, and loan. SF State Poetry Center will be lost due to funding cuts. To get a sense of the scale of their holding, go to their new web site:  
<http://www.sfsu.edu/~newlit/welcome.htm>

Norma writes:

"Needless to say, chaos will ensue, the tapes will drift away, no more archive etc. So we're trying to mount a campaign to let the President of SF State know that people all over the place care about this resource. ... Encourage everyone & their brother, sister & mother to send this letter OR their own letter to President Richard A. Corrigan and also to the Poetry Center Director Jewelle Gomez."

Here are the addresses:

██████████  
██████████

And for anyone who wants to use the postal system:

President Robert A. Corrigan,  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Ave.  
San Francisco CA 94132

&

Jewelle Gomez, Executive Director  
Poetry Center  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Ave.  
San Francisco CA 94132

\*\*\*\*

Office of the President  
San Francisco State University

1600 Holloway Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94132

Dear President Corrigan,

We understand that yet again San Francisco State University has decided not to fund the position of Archivist at the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archive. And so, after 24 years and 6 complete print catalogues, with 3 sixty-minute video anthologies (Archive productions), 20 issues of the Archive News, footage of countless writers placed with many national and international news broadcasters, viewings of Archive tapes at festivals such as the Venice Biennale and other major venues world-wide, and now the entire Archive catalogue online (of what is to date the largest literary audio and video collection available to the public), the Archive will sit inert "in state" in its state-of-the-art climate-controlled vault on the top floor of the Humanities Building.

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165. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: expression, etc.***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

On Oct 7, 1:36pm, Henry Gould wrote:

- > Subject: expression, etc.
- > Poem x (time + place) + (poverty/silence) = reusable resource
- >
- > this formula is supported hypothetically by a converse proposition:
- >
- > [time - (past + future)] x ambition x literary politics = politics in general
- >
- > This is just an outline for a recyclable, quiet poetics in an era
- > of information highway roar. I owe it to this list, being an
- > info-highway roadhog myself. DOWN WITH HYPE. UP WITH NO-NAME
- POETRY.
- > JOB LOT RULES.
- > - Henry gOuld [note the innovative use of typography here]

Reviewer's remarks for the typography in "Henry gOuld":

I see proclivities, strange proclivities, wierd proclivites,... - Groucho

This is nothing less than roadkill on the information highway. - Eric Blarnes

This is a sham. It's a travesty of a mockery of a sham of a mockery of two travesties of a mockery of a sham.

- The Club Med Continuing Education Division

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166. **Lawrence Upton.**

***Re Char***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Advert - Try not to miss a chance

the late Eric Mottram was an admirer of Char and his homage to Char  
RESISTANCES was published in 91 by RWC - which I run

It is three pounds plus p & p sterling. Big problems with dollar cheques but  
anyone in n america who wld like it could contact me with proposals - maybe  
we cld exchange or something - i also take souls, as long as there isnt much life  
to run on them, as security

L

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167. **Laura Moriarty**

***Re: Archive at SF State in Jeopardy***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Thank you Charles for posting Norma's letter. For me personally it is a good  
time to move on, but it is essential for there to be an Archives Director here at  
the Poetry Center. There is only one person working full time at the Center  
(only five of us total, now 4) and she is maxed out already.

I have just finished writing a memo which will be sent to our mailing list and  
posted on our Web page. It is included here:

Memorandum

To: past, present and future users of the American Poetry Archives From :  
Laura Moriarty, Archives Director

Subject: ending of the Archives Director position

7 October 1997

"Everything that happens to us is history" is the first line in my introduction to  
the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archives Videotape Catalogue 1974-  
1990. It is also the last line in my book *L'Archiviste*, published in 1991. It has  
been my pleasure to be involved in preserving a part of this history for the last  
eleven years as Director of the American Poetry Archives for the Poetry Center  
at San Francisco State University.

My particular goal in managing the Archives has been to make our video and  
audio collection, one the largest of its kind in the world, as accessible as

possible. My motto has been "Everyone who wants a tape, gets a tape." The fact that many times I was providing images of the friends, colleagues and relatives whose readings are among the thousands in our collection has made this a very personal task.

When a high school student calls and wants to know who the African American writers in the collection are and I can provide a detailed list, waive the membership fee and send a tape for her presentation, the whole thing seems worth it. When Allen Ginsberg dies and I can help put a tape of him reading on the national news, again it seems worth it. However -- worth it or not, my position ends as of 31 December this year. Due to funding cuts at the National Endowment for the Arts and other funding organizations and the inability, so far, of San Francisco State University to come up with financial support for the position, it will remain unfilled indefinitely.

There have been many projects at the Poetry Center in the last decade (and 297 readings) and I have been involved in most of them. Among my accomplishments are the publication of the Poetry Center Catalogue 1974-1990, editing the 13 issues of the Archives News, including catalogue addenda, producing three sixty minute video anthologies (Women Working in Literature, Palabra and Color), overseeing two large video and film preservation projects, working with the San Francisco Arts Commission to have writers' words engraved on Muni bus islands on Market Street, and seeing that the entire catalogue of our videotapes is now available on our Web site.

Archives Video Technician Jiri Veskrna will be continuing to tape the Poetry Center series. He will do what Archives maintenance he is able to do within his half time position. Other staff will also do all they can. However, Archives functions will necessarily be limited.

I want to thank Executive Director Jewelle Gomez for her great efforts to keep the Archives position going as long as possible. Thanks also to the three other executive directors I have worked with, Frances Phillips, Bob Glück and Rose Catacalos, for their superhuman efforts to raise fund to retain the two unfunded Archives positions, while funding all other Poetry Center programs. Thanks to Associate Directors Dawn Kolokithas, Lisa Bernstein, Aaron Shurin and Toni Mirosevich and to Operations Managers Larry Price, Karen Clark, Zack Rogow and Melissa Martell Black. Each name represents a world of work.

If you would like to support this work and the continuation of the position of Archives Director at the Poetry Center, you can write

President Robert A Corrigan  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132.



Please send a copy of your letter to Jewelle Gomez, at the Poetry Center, at the same address or fax it to us at [REDACTED].

President Corrigan may be emailed at [REDACTED]. Please cc your post to [REDACTED].

Thank you for your help, now and over the years, and thanks in advance for supporting my successor (if there should ever be such a person) in his or her efforts to continue to make your history available to you.

Laura Moriarty  
Archives Director

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168. **Hugh Steinberg**  
**Re: accused (personal ad)**

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

*At 12:43 PM 10/6/97 -0700, A. Nielsen wrote:*

*1) at the risk of repeating myself the risk of repeting myself repeating Ron Silliman, I still think the best definition of a "language poet" is that offered by Ron Silliman some years back, repeated by me here some years later, to the effect that a "language poet" is "anyone who has ever been accused of being a language poet."*

*i've often been charmed by this statement but wonder how people might interpret the nugget of truth here / having been "accused" myself on certain occasions (like others on the list i'm sure) and finding it preposterous and false (gosh, i was barely alive when "these people" started L=A=N=G=etc.), i wonder how/why i might be wrong*

*branded lang-po seeks same / serious replies only please*

*bmarsh*

Bill:

I think lang-po is two things: a specific movement and group of writers bound within the historical context of the 70's and 80's (which has been argued on this list before) and a handle to describe work which is either very disjunctive and/or uses the idea of "language" (whatever that may be) as subject/content material.

The one is a noun, the other is an adjective.

Hugh Steinberg

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169. **Laura Moriarty**  
***one more on Poetry Center Archives***  
*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Norma noticed (when I forwarded Charles' post) that part of the note she had sent to him was not included in his post. Following is the whole text of her letter.

We have already started receiving cc's from these various posts. THANKS!

BTW - we have recently updated the Poetry Center video catalog - Many fewer errors, many more italics, put in one <em> at a time - Laura

\*\*\*\*\*

To encourage San Francisco State University to fund the position of Archivist for the American Poetry Archive, please send the following letter, or your letter, both to San Francisco State University President Robert A. Corrigan and to Jewelle Gomez, Executive Director of the Poetry Center. Their addresses are:

President Robert A. Corrigan  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco CA 94132



and

Jewelle Gomez, Executive Director  
The Poetry Center  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco CA 94132



Office of the President  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94132

Dear President Corrigan,

We understand that yet again San Francisco State University has decided not to fund the position of Archivist at the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archive. And so, after 24 years and 6 complete print catalogues, with 3 sixty-minute video anthologies (Archive productions), 20 issues of the Archive News, footage of countless writers placed with many national and international news broadcasters, viewings of Archive tapes at festivals such as the Venice Biennale

and other major venues world-wide, and now the entire Archive catalogue on-line (of what is to date the largest literary audio and video collection available to the public), the Archive will sit inert "in state" in its state-of-the-art climate-controlled vault on the top floor of the Humanities Building.

There will be no individual whose job it is to be responsible for lending, renting, selling and sending Archive materials to students, faculty, scholars and poets; no one to assist and respond to queries and orders from institutions and independent researchers all over the world; no one to educate interns in archiving, cataloguing, editing and Web page maintenance, and involve them in film and video preservation projects; and, although at the moment there is still a videographer, there will be no one to coordinate the successful videotaping of every Poetry Center event on and off campus (the activity that has resulted in this unique and priceless documentation of the development of American poetry over the last 25 years).

We want to voice and register our profound dismay at such an unnecessary loss. We ask you to reconsider rather than let this treasured and irreplaceable living resource turn to dust.

Sincerely,

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170. **Lawrence Upton.**

***Re: one more on Poetry Center Archives***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Dear President Corrigan,

I write to you as an interested person from outside of your country.

I understand that yet again San Francisco State University has decided not to fund the position of Archivist at the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archive. And so, after 24 years and 6 complete print catalogues, with 3 sixty-minute video anthologies (Archive productions), 20 issues of the Archive News, footage of countless writers placed with many national and international news broadcasters, viewings of Archive tapes at festivals such as the Venice Biennale and other major venues world-wide, and now the entire Archive catalogue on-line (of what is to date the largest literary audio and video collection available to the public), the Archive will sit inert "in state" in its state-of-the-art climate-controlled vault on the top floor of the Humanities Building.

There will be no individual whose job it is to be responsible for lending, renting, selling and sending Archive materials to students, faculty, scholars and poets; no one to assist and respond to queries and orders from institutions and independent researchers all over the world; no one to educate interns in archiving,

cataloguing, editing and Web page maintenance, and involve them in film and video preservation projects; and, although at the moment there is still a videographer, there will be no one to coordinate the successful videotaping of every Poetry Center event on and off campus (the activity that has resulted in this unique and priceless documentation of the development of American poetry over the last 25 years).

I want to voice and register my profound dismay at such an unnecessary loss. I ask you to reconsider rather than let this treasured and irreplaceable living resource turn to dust.

Such resources are the envy of many poets and critics in countries such as mine. In the last few years, we have destroyed a great deal which cannot be replaced in any meaningful way because so many opportunities have been lost; and what we have destroyed has been in the name of budgetary necessity. The result is a consequent loss of wealth creating expertise and of the development of our cultural lives.

You are in a richer country by far. Do not make the same mistake.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence Upton

Director, SVP reading series, London UK

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171. **Laura Moriarty**

***Re: one more on Poetry Center Archives***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

Thanks again for many responses to the Poetry Center situation.

Please remember to reply to [REDACTED] (with a cc to [REDACTED]) rather than to the list.

I also wanted to point out that Jewelle Gomez has not made the decision to defund the position. The Poetry Center does not have the funds, which have in the past come from the NEA and many other (now dry) sources. It is now up to San Francisco State University to provide the resources to continue the position.

Your support is very heartening.

Laura Moriarty

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172. **Aviva Vogel**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?

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173. **Alan Jen Sondheim**

***starving to death in a land of plenty***

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

-

Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.

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174. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Tue 7 Oct 1997

---

"I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?"

Well, there's 'supposed' to be, but does there 'have' to be?

That's a nice idea, the saxophone. But, as I read in your words, it doesn't denote. I can see the thing being played. I can see it being used as a club. Ouch. I can see it mutely trying to speak. Painful to watch. Almost makes you want to paint it with those oil paints to set it free. But I can't see it denote. We see what we set out to see. Set out on a journey with language in our minds, we get language back. Set out with a Saxophone, we get music. Or squawks. Set out with silence, we get silence. Silence shines, and there are ways of structuring an approach to it that operate as language does with words, but, like that Sax it is not language and don't do what words do do. To extrapolate: if we set out to denote, we will denote. There are languages of denotation. If we set out to use language as the object, the subject, and the tool, we'll get that back, like working in the nuclear fires of the sun. Things can explode. Further technologies are required to contain the blast. It can become anything. Radioactive strawberries at Chernobyl. Sun on leaves. Of the times certainly. Then again, all these tools can be structured to lead to another: silence to language, language to strawberries, strawberries to oil paints. Scripts. Where do the scripts lead?

To go further: why use sight? Hearing? Touch?

I too am curious: how to contain the blast? what is useful technology and what is not?

A cryptic night.

I hope this adds.

Harold

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175. **Charles Bernstein**

***Poetry Center Archives: Correction***

*Tue 7 Oct 1997*

---

In my original post on the Archives, I indicated that San Francisco State had cut the archivist position. But as Laura Moriarity made clear in her post, the problem comes from a loss of NEA funds that previously had been available for this type of position. That is one more instance, as if we needed more examples, of the cost of the continuing attacks on public arts funding. Now the university is in the position of having to cover for the cuts, which is a very different circumstance than making them in the first place. I appreciate the efforts of SF State to support such a vital poetry center over so many years and I am sorry to have misrepresented the situation. Maybe when they hear how much so many of us care about this program, they will find a way to increase their support so that the Archives can remain active.

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176. **Tim Wood**

***Re: Poetry Center Archives: some ideas***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

I'll agree with all the supportive comments from the group. The Archives are an excellent resource that needs support. Instead of laboring the point, I'll just make a couple of suggestion (between some bug and a long day...) on how members of the list might help:

Perhaps the Poetics group (or members...) might donate money to seed an endowment for the position? If the group bites, I'll be happy to pitch in the first check.

Has SF State looked at a part time archivist --perhaps a grad student at the Univ.-- until funding can be restored?

Tim Wood

-----

> From: Charles Bernstein <[REDACTED]>  
> To: [REDACTED]  
> Subject: Poetry Center Archives: Correction  
> Date: Tuesday, October 07, 1997 10:59 PM  
>  
> In my original post on the Archives, I indicated that San Francisco State  
> had cut the archivist position. But as Laura Moriarity made clear in her  
> post, the problem comes from a loss of NEA funds that previously had been  
> available for this type of position. That is one more instance, as if we  
> needed more examples, of the cost of the continuing attacks on public  
arts  
> funding. Now the university is in the position of having to cover for the  
> cuts, which is a very different circumstance than making them in the  
first  
> place. I appreciate the efforts of SF State to support such a vital  
poetry  
> center over so many years and I am sorry to have misrepresented the  
> situation. Maybe when they hear how much so many of us care about this  
> program, they will find a way to increase their support so that the  
> Archives can remain active.

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177. **Joseph Conte**

**Re: Ronald Johnson/ARK**

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

For a thorough and compelling essay on Johnson's career, with a complete bibliography of criticism (though not reviews) on ARK, see Eric Selinger's entry on Ronald Johnson in *Dictionary of Literary Biography 169: American Poets Since World War II* (Fifth Series): 146-56.

Johnson, by the way, wrote the entry on his mentor, Jonathan Williams, for *DLB* 5 way back in 1980.

Joseph Conte

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178. **Maria Damon (Maria Damon)**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

At 1:04 PM 10/8/97, Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher wrote:  
etc.

on a totally different note, joe, and maybe kali can help out here, i'm somewhat ambivalent about this new "working class studies" stuff. much of what i've seen is not politically engaged, really, but about some kind of nostalgia and ambivalence on the part of academics or writers who come from a working class origin but are no longer strictly speaking leading a working class life. so the real issue seems to be (upward) class mobility and the personal narratives that come out of it. there doesn't seem to be much theory (high or low), what i've seen does not draw on the rich work of marxists or others who deal with class as a fundamental social category. so what's the "schtick," other than personal narratives about loss and gain?

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179. **Lawrence Upton.**

***POETRY CENTRE ARCHIVES***

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

Apologies for misdirection. When I grow up I am going to be sensible  
L

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180. **Susan Wheeler**

***Poetics Digest***

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

Rene Char, The Dawnbreakers -- Bloodaxe

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

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181. **Eliza McGrand**

***call for writing/art/etc.***

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

Forwarded from Jordanne:  
-----



Hello all, Jordanne here. This is just a reminder that next month THE FREE CUISENART hopes to publish a special issue with the topic of "rites of passage."

We are looking for poems, stories, essays or html poems which deal with a transitional point of life: birth, death, loss of innocence/virginity, marriage, loss, emergence, epiphany, revolutionn, sex change, mind-set change, etc.

Please send your work to our editorial staff at [REDACTED] by Oct. 23. If you are still unsure of the kind of poetry/fiction/essays we like, you may take a look at our very popular "Identity" issue at <http://www.on-net.net/~cca/wowzine/wowzine.html> If you still have questions, write me at [REDACTED]. I'll answer.

Jordanne Holyoak-Kitchel, editor, THE FREE CUISENART

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182. **Henry**

### ***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

On Tue, 7 Oct 1997 21:49:35 -0400 Aviva Vogel said:

>I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there  
>isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?

Mandelstam, in his essay "Conversation about Dante", has an interesting & complex approach to this question. He compares the words to the instrumentation in a piece of music. Denotation is not the right word for the kind of multi-dimensional, multidirectional referentiality which the word has in the pattern. And yet he doesn't valorize the "word-as-such" so heavily as he had earlier in his career, or as the futurists did. The word is an arbitrary flowing replaceable phenomenon subject to the "conductor's baton" of the transformational poetic "impulse". It's the impulse, which maybe can be equated with the *\_telos\_* or "end" of the poem as a whole, which is the unifying factor in a constantly metamorphosing situation. I think it would be interesting to relate his thinking to the work of Montale, writing in Italian at about the same time, also deeply involved with Dante. Montale's verse builds on this flowing quality in a very pronounced way. - Henry Gould

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183. **Mark Wallace**  
*the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara*  
Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

I'm not sure about this, but I think I remember at some point in the past a couple posts on this list speaking about shortcomings in the recent biography about Frank O'Hara. If there's anyone out there who remembers that conversation, or has some things to say about the biography, could you backchannel me, and post to the list if you're so inclined?

Mark Wallace

```
/-----\ |
||      ||      ||      GWU:
||      http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||      EPC:
||      http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||
```

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184. **Tom Orange**  
*Char in German?*  
Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

thanks to gary roberts for his char translations.

anyone know of existing translations of char into german?

thanks,  
t.

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185. **Tom Orange**  
*michael speier*  
Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

was browsing thru issues of the chicago review yesterday and stumbled upon, in addition to the ronald johnson issue, some great translations of michael speier by rosmarie waldrop. i immediately sensed some celan in speier's work and was confirmed in this hunch by the notes in the back which say that speier is editor of the celan-jahrbuch.

does anyone have further info on speier's work? ive found a citation for only one volume of poetry. also wondering if waldrop is planning to continue working on translating speier...

thanks,  
t.

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186. **Aviva Vogel**  
***Re: starving to death in a land of plenty***  
*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

In a message dated 97-10-08 05:23:15 EDT, you write:

> Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.  
>  
>  
What???

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187. **Aviva Vogel**  
***Re: Defining Language Poetry***  
*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

In a message dated 97-10-07 23:18:50 EDT, you write:

*"I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?"*

*Well, there's 'supposed' to be, but does there 'have' to be?*

Actually, I would more accurately say...the power of words resides at least partially in their denotative, transitive qualities. Why waste that power and potential?

I certainly understand the virtues of making language, or words, the focus of a piece of writing. I certainly understand, from the bottom of my heart, the beauty of their sounds, quite apart from any "meaning" which they might point to. And I have a great interest in understanding, and consciously managing, rather than falling victim to, their political powers.

But why waste their ability to signify something beyond themselves, as long as we acknowledge the contingency, the provisionality, the non-absoluteness of the "reality" or "meaning" or "truth" they point to? We're so busy shedding the handcuffs of imposed meaning, habitual thinking, and cultural/political impositions, that we may be rejecting the power of words to bring us inside the "realities" of others, via transitive language.

>

> That's a nice idea, the saxophone. But, as I read in your words, it doesn't  
> denote. I can see the thing being played. I can see it being used as a  
> club. Ouch. I can see it mutely trying to speak. Painful to watch. Almost  
> makes you want to paint it with those oil paints to set it free. But I  
> can't see it denote.

I'm not sure I understand this passage. How is the saxophone used as a club? Why is it painful to see it "mutely trying to speak." Doesn't the saxophone "speak"?

We see what we set out to see. Set out on a journey  
> with language in our minds, we get language back. Set out with a Saxophone,  
> we get music. Or squawks. Set out with silence, we get silence. Silence  
> shines, and there are ways of structuring an approach to it that operate as  
> language does with words, but, like that Sax it is not language and don't  
> do what words do do. To extrapolate: if we set out to denote, we will  
> denote.

That's my point. Why don't we use both the denotative and connotative powers of language? There doesn't have to be the corresponding assumption that what's "signified" is any kind of absolute truth, although I certainly understand that language has been misused, and turned into a weapon, in just this way.

There are languages of denotation. If we set out to use language as  
> the object, the subject, and the tool, we'll get that back, like working in  
> the nuclear fires of the sun. Things can explode. Further technologies are  
> required to contain the blast. It can become anything. Radioactive  
> strawberries at Chernobyl. Sun on leaves. Of the times certainly. Then  
> again, all these tools can be structured to lead to another: silence to  
> language, language to strawberries, strawberries to oil paints. Scripts.  
> Where do the scripts lead?

What??????

>  
> To go further: why use sight? Hearing? Touch?

A better question is: why NOT use sight, hearing, touch, and report on our own version of what we're perceiving?

>  
> I too am curious: how to contain the blast? what is useful technology and  
> what is not?

Why think of language as "technology"? I don't deny that it IS technology, but it is so many other things too.

>

> A cryptic night.

The night? Or what's in our minds? Or life in general? Or...are we just choosing to find the state of "cryptic-ness" right now? I mean, it's not really actually "out there," in anything other than a contingent way, is it?

| *I hope this adds.*

It's been fun to get a response, but I have to admit I don't fully understand what you're saying. I'd love to understand your point better, but your language sometimes makes associations I can't follow in anything other than a vaguely impressionistic way. I'm not knocking either those impressions, or the virtues of using language to create openings, atmospheres, break habitual chains of thought, etc. But I do want to say that some of what you've written here doesn't feel like a "response" that I can apply to my own inquiry on this subject.

On the other hand, I do get a sense of "explosion" coming at me from your words...a demonstration that language, if pointing to itself, can either explode or implode all the old, impacted, crusted-over structures of thought we've trapped ourselves beneath. I have to admit, anything you, or anyone else, contributes to that endeavor "adds!"

So, thank you, Harold!

Aviva

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188. **Mark Prejsnar**  
***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

On Tue, 7 Oct 1997, Aviva Vogel wrote:

| *I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?*

Aviva,

Apparently where you and I are thinking quite differently, is the question of what makes poetry poetry...where its distinctive character is "located"...

If I understand your post correctly, you feel that it lies in its use of \*words\*, which require that a poet be "responsible" and tie herself to linear, denotative sense...

I can't possibly see it that way...If I did I certainly wouldn't like a huge amount of the poetry I do...all of Stein and Coolidge, for instance, and about half of Zukofsky.

I believe that poetry is free to be a fully-realized art-practice. The fact that it doesn't use paints or musical notes is irrelevant, because unlike you I don't see the capacity for full use of the medium's range as \*proceeding from the nature of the medium\*....I don't feel that I have to be a sax player or work in acrylics to be given permission to use the full possible range of artistic form....That permission comes from the nature of art-practice structures...I may not be able to sound like a Clark Coolidge poem when I go in for an interview for a job as a library cataloger..It's very likely that I wouldn't get it!! (..except maybe at SUNY Buffalo); but the space in which I and other poets work with words, is one where (as Dostoevsky would say with horror) \*everything is allowed\*...That's what's very important about poetry. It is a reflection of the tethered human drive for absolute freedom; and this is one reason so many interesting poets are seriously left (and feminist) at a time when the state and mass media are coldly, implacably hostile to such truths.

Needless to say, "everything is allowed" doesn't mean everything is good. But we are responsible for articulating our critical likes and dislikes in an especially full and careful way...It's easier if you can dismiss a large subgroup of poems as not having "some amount of denotative quality." But if one realizes that all possible poems are indeed poems, and one has to truly make judgments without god-given rules, it becomes more interesting. For the mind. Also for the ear. For instance I don't believe that any single poet has created more \*disturbingly beautiful\* sound with words than Coolidge (to take what I feel to be one of the most helpful reference points for discussions like these). Poetry would be impoverished to the point of vanishing, were we to exclude his work because it often doesn't seem to have a linear "amount of denotative quality"!!!!

regards,  
Mark

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189. **Pierre Joris**  
**Re: Char in German?**

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Tom Orange wrote:

*thanks to gary roberts for his char translations.*

*anyone know of existing translations of char into german?*

thanks,  
t.

Tom -- attached a quick list of Char in German -- note also volume IV of the Collected Paul celan has Celan's translations from "A La Santé du Serpent," "Feuillets d'Hypnos" & "A une sérénité crispée" -- Pierre

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190. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

i'm struck by this discussion of the anti/democratic leanings of poetry that re-  
fuses to match readers' expectations...

on the one hand, a good case can be made for intelligibility---in context, of  
course...

on the other, it's important i think to recognize how the status quo of main-  
stream poetry asserts "voice" and "craft" as measures of "authenticity," and  
what this itself suggests as to the relationship between language and experi-  
ence...

in much of my work, i'm prone to talking about my practice in terms of "con-  
structing a readership"... naturally, like many of you, i feel that what i'm asking  
for is more participation on the part of readers in making meaning of my words,  
and for that matter, of finding in my words or through my words something  
evocative...

at the same time, i trust the potential problem here wrt democracy or participa-  
tory response-logics is self-evident: it's somewhat presumptuous of me to think  
that i can actually "construct" a readership, no?---out of living, fully conscious



and articulate beings whose predilections are at least as valid, on the surface of things, as are mine?...

this constitutes, as i see it, the push-pull logic of trying to engage with other human beings in ways with which they may not be accustomed... on the one hand, we attempt to pull readers, as it were, into engaging us through our texts (or if you prefer, simply our texts---or simply us!)... at the same time, we're pushy in this gesture---we expect that our readers, whoever they are, will appreciate our (at least partial) 'reneging' of author-ity...

i don't think you can readily resolve this issue... or to put it another way, this question of the value/revaluation of accessibility is itself part of the controversy of writing poetry today, at least in much of north america... and i would expect most poetries to hazard this controversy, somehow...

for those interested, this has all sorts of parallels with teaching, student-centered teaching vs. lecture (or instructor-centered), etc... but i'll leave that alone unless someone else wants to go there...

i suspect that one of the few viable responses as such to this question of democracy \*in\* writing is probably some gesture toward pluralism, either at the level of response or in terms of the writing process/aesthetics itself... and i think we all understand just how thorny the politics of pluralism can be...

best,

joe

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191. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: accused (personal ad); and Mullen Matters***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

1) here at last the citation -- Harryette Mullen's essay, now titled "African Signs and Spirit Writing," appears in *Callaloo* 19.3 (1996): 670-89. This issue also has an interview with Mullen

2) On second L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E accusation -- if you go back and look at issues of *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* and others, you'll find terms such as "language centered writing" etc. -- Among the earliest uses of the term "Language Poet" it was, in fact, made in an accusatory mode in the pages of *Poetry Flash* by someone who had just read *The Culture of Narcissism* -- I won't bore you with the results here -- The point is, and this may have been part of Ron's humor in supplying his nonce definition, that the term "language poet" was a label affixed at the beginning as a pejorative -- one which might be ironically reappropriated for other purposes

3) Am working out details for a poetry reading at Loyola Marymount by Harryette Mullen and Giovanni Singleton, probably late November, and will expect ALL LA area poetics listers to try to make it -- watch this space for details

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192. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: by all means, go there***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

I think we need to examine the often-voiced assumption that the lecture is somehow "instructor-oriented," while various other modes (small group discussion etc.) are intrinsically student-centered. My experience has brought me to believe that nearly any form of teaching can be either instructor or student-centered -- Nothing could conceivably be more instructor-centered than the putatively more democratic modes of in-the-class organization the teachers thrust upon us in many of my undergraduate classes -- They were nearly always more of a convenience for the instructor (( though the move to journal writing is perhaps the most labor-intensive instructional development in my life time) --

Emerson thought the lecture a wonderful new art form that nobody had yet done well -- I begin to believe he's right on that count --

--- Now that I'm tenured, I even sometimes READ (GOD!) to my students -- or with them -- Though I don't read to them that which they were to have read before the class --

Can't "lecture" be a mode of group investigation?

years ago a speaker quipped, upon following another speaker who made a great show of stepping away from the podium to erase all "that I speak and you listen stuff" that "Only in American do we try to make the revolution by rearranging the furniture -- I happen to think that moving furniture about from time to time may be a good idea -- but it doesn't matter much if our students are herded into small groupuscules if they are herded toward the same old conclusions --

none of which is what Joe was speaking of,,, but I'd like to hear from him on these issues that we both think about a great deal

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193. **Lawrence Upton.**

***Re: by all means, go there***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

| I think we need to examine the often-voiced assumption that the lecture is |  
somehow "instructor-oriented," while various other modes (small group | dis-  
cussion etc.) are intrinsically student-centered.

| Can't "lecture" be a mode of group investigation?

Aldon Nielsen

This applies also to poetry performances. It is a matter of attitude as much as  
mode. There are lecturers there are poets who shut out the auditors by their  
body language, choice of introduction, structure.... and vice versa

L

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194. **William Marsh**

***Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

At 08:47 AM 10/8/97 -0400, Mark Wallace wrote:

> I'm not sure about this, but I think I remember at some point in  
>the past a couple posts on this list speaking about shortcomings in the  
>recent biography about Frank O'Hara. If there's anyone out there who  
>remembers that conversation, or has some things to say about the  
>biography, could you backchannel me, and post to the list if you're so  
>inclined?

>

Mark

i read the biography a while ago but remember finding it dissapointing on one  
simple and perhaps predictable count: over-valorization of O'Hara's sexual ex-  
ploits and other behavior eccentricities / without, that is, suggesting how all of  
it might have had something to do with his larger experiment in poetry --  
living / reminded me of the rather bad (in my opinion) film biography of Charlie  
Parker (Eastwood's "Bird") that focused almost entirely on his drug addictions  
and resulting domestic difficulties

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195. **Michael Magee**

**Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara**

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

There's lots to dislike in Gooch's biography - in addition to its gossipy nature (fun enough as you read along but much of it ultimately pointless), Gooch also reads the poems almost purely as autobiography, that is, as one might read a memoir. So he doesn't have much to say about the development of O'Hara's poetics. I'm glad he took the time to do it of course, b/c there's obviously more primary material there than anywhere else in print, but I sure do wish someone would do a better one.

-Mike.

According

to William Marsh: > > At 08:47 AM 10/8/97 -0400, Mark Wallace wrote:

> > I'm not sure about this, but I think I remember at some point in  
> > the past a couple posts on this list speaking about shortcomings in the  
> > recent biography about Frank O'Hara. If there's anyone out there who  
> > remembers that conversation, or has some things to say about the  
> > biography, could you backchannel me, and post to the list if you're so  
> > inclined?

> >

> Mark

>

> i read the biography a while ago but remember finding it dissapointing on  
> one simple and perhaps predictable count: over-valorization of O'Hara's  
> sexual exploits and other behavior eccentricities / without, that is,  
> suggesting how all of it might have had something to do with his larger  
> experiment in poetry -- living / reminded me of the rather bad (in my  
> opinion) film biography of Charlie Parker (Eastwood's "Bird") that focused  
> almost entirely on his drug addictions and resulting domestic difficulties  
>

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196. **Layne Russell**

**Re: Defining Language Poetry**

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

George Bowering wrote:

[...] they  
are expressing stuff, which implies to me that words are something they USE.

George Bowering.

please elaborate...not on the poets...but on expressing and the USE of words....

thanks

Layne

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197. **Aldon Nielsen**  
***Re: bird on a wireless***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

The movie *\_BIRD\_* also had a habit of starting up a flashback for one character inside of another character's already-in-progress flashback -- Might have been fun if the screenplay'd been written by Sorrentino, but it wasn't --

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198. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**  
***going there...***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

aldon, my sense of the lecture is that it can be used in a classroom in extremely student-centered ways, yes... i advocate as a teacher a combination (again that plural) of modes, whatever else i'm busy advocating... but it's best to pause and examine what is meant by "lecture"... b/c lecture as i've seen it deployed is generally not a participatory mode of teaching (which, to be sure, does not mean it can't be)...

again, i want to be sure we've got a fix on what the status quo is: on the campuses on which i've taught, the status quo (and all's you have to do to figure it out is to stand outside of most classrooms for ten minutes or so) is lecture of the "i am now talking, and will continue to talk w/o interruption for the next 90 minutes" variety... no shit---i've heard instructors go on for well over an hour w/o as much as a burp... and i've seen the glazed over look in students' eyes that results... some get it, some don't---but the real problem is that even the some who do come to learning as a result in a passive way... i'm sure you know what i mean here... dialogue as such is at best reduced to occasional comprehension checks... and this is in fact what much of the sciences and engineering disciplines do when it comes to pedagogy, aside from problem-solving (which is usually handed over to teaching assistants in recitation sections and the like)...

i need to start here when i talk about lecturing, b/c this is the reality of most of the lecture-mode instruction i've seen... and when i try to break a classroom down into groups, and when i try to turn over to a given class its fair share of responsibility in the learning process, i'm often greeted by a "but we're here to know what you think" response... which is to say, they want to sit back and have

me tell them what's important re life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... which i'll do \*on occasion\*, but not all the time... still, in their other classes, they can sit back and watch tv... which is why it's so tough for me initially when i complicate the site of teaching, and opt for something a bit more dynamic and (if i may) interactive...

\*among students\*, i mean... all three of my current classes have, at this midterm point in the semester, gotten used to me \*not being there\* for a part of each period... i get up and walk away, walk right the fuck out of the room in fact, and allow them to work out certain tasks w/o my intervention... in fact, when i try to intervene, i'm sometimes greeted with a "why don't you let us alone" response... after all, they have to deal with me in AND out of class---on-line, in the online lists i use for each class...

btw, much of the problem with \*most\* of the "distance learning" i've seen falls under this latter category (we might talk, on the other hand, about how distance learning \*could be\* about learning distance)...

well anyway... if it's true that any form or mode of teaching can be student-centered, then i suppose, depending on context, any form or mode of writing can be democratic, no?... or does this parallel not hold?...

best,

joe

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199. **Aviva Vogel**

***Writing is an Aggressive Act, Didion Says***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

In a message dated 97-10-08 14:25:33 EDT, you write:

Joe, I appreciated your message, and addressing the (below) portion of it only for now, I thought you'd appreciate the following excerpt. While it's certainly no answer, it is a curious and pertinent take on your question:

"Why I Write" by Joan Didion

In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind. It's an aggressive, even a hostile act. You can disguise its aggressiveness all you want with veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions--with the whole manner of intimating rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating--but there's no getting around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully, an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the reader's most private space.

(Of course, I don't entirely agree with her, but there's enough "truth" in her statement to enjoy a startling moment....)

--Aviva Vogel

- > it's somewhat presumptuous
- > of me to think that i can actually "construct" a readership, no?---out of
- > living, fully conscious and articulate beings whose predilections are at
- > least as valid, on the surface of things, as are mine?...
- >
- > this constitutes, as i see it, the push-pull logic of trying to engage with
- > other human beings in ways with which they may not be accustomed... on the
- > one hand, we attempt to pull readers, as it were, into engaging us through
- > our texts (or if you prefer, simply our texts---or simply us!)... at the
- > same time, we're pushy in this gesture---we expect that our readers,
- > whoever they are, will appreciate our (at least partial) 'reneging' of
- > author-ity...

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## 200. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher** *working class heroes...*

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

maria, that's a difficult question for a lot of reasons, but i'll do my best to give it an initial go... i'm bushed at the moment, so i'll probably digress like a sono-fabitch...

first, once you're made aware of your class, you don't forget that you inhabit a class... and one way to be made aware of your class is to switch classes!... i mean, you can start out working class, end up upper class, or vice versa... unlike gender (for the most part)...

now of course the norm is onward and upward---that is, the normative structure expects this from each of us, in this country... and if you do---move onward and upward i mean---why then there are plenty of opportunities to be reminded of where you used to be... in this sense, yes---being working class can entail narratives that deal with loss and gain, as you put it... as do so many other narratives, right?... which as you know does not mean that there's nothing therefore "to it," but---

and of course "working class" can be taken then simply as a subset of those other structural-institutional realities and discourses (race/gender/class etc)... this much you already know..

now i tend mself to get very edgy about this term, working class... i see it as a convenience, as lumping together various experiences/behaviors and the like that emerge from a particular way of living and working in the world... probably, as i come to the term, only applicable to this century and part of the prior, in a particular part of the world, in fact... but i get edgy about it b/c, depending on who's using it, i can almost immediately get a sense that the term is actively despised, celebrated, challenged, or plain misunderstood... it's a rare occasion when someone will use it the way i understand it...

one facet of being in the working class, at any point in one's life, is that (depending perhaps on the intersection of your class and ethnicity and of course other factors) you might very well have been exposed to the oft-noted anti-intellectualism of u.s. public life... whereas many in the working class want their sons and daughters to go to college and get an education, they're distrustful of too much "intelligence" (in my view, if you haven't come across this behavior, you've led a relatively sheltered life)... this is the sort of line that leads to a book like richard rodriguez's \_hunger of memory\_ (with rr it's ethnicity and class--- but i find rodriguez too conservative in terms of his politics)...

i must put in a word here, btw, about the relationship between middle and working classes... used to be the word "middle class" spoke primarily, or at least with some urgency, to the term working class... not now---the middle classes seem now to be much more various, "salary hourly professional skilled semi-skilled blue collar white collar pink collar" and so forth... not the run of the mill the word might have evoked during the 50s, when you might have had two or three designations at hand, and when working class folks took pride in being \*the majority\* middle class... perhaps what you might call a working mythology...

what the anti-intellectual drift means is that any attempt at theorizing what is meant by "working class," by those in or out of the working class, will sometimes be met with resistance simply B/C it's likely to be taken as an ostentatious display of smarts (recall orwell's problems in this regard)... i can't tell you how many times i've been called a smartass by my old man...

but you ask me what's up with this... and what's up with this is, in part, a matter of what i feel comfortable with...

when i walk into a room and start shooting the shit, and notice that two or three folks are put off by my language, i know immediately that i'm out of my class... i just have to drop a couple of fucking-A's and that's it... and it doesn't matter that i'm now middle class, or that we all hold doctorates---the point is that the response i'm getting can only be accounted for by class differences---from my past, right...



you see?... i mean, i can be here but i'm still there, i'm there but i'm still here---no loss or gain implied or intended...

now generationally, the older working class folks, most i knew, were respectful in public and around children and around folks with money---but swore like troupers among themselves... some of us, the slightly newer generational models, have simply refused to silence this aspect of our upbringing... some of us figure that, if reading four-letter words in literature is ok, why then using such words around others is ok... of course, this isn't to countenance insult or hate speech... but it *is* to reckon a somewhat different sense of what constitutes "offensive" language...

you can see the problems somebody like me might run into in the classroom, no?---esp. today...

"but swearing isn't professional"

fuck you it's not---

i mean, fuck me---

you see?... i mean, this past of mine has now become a matter of my professional self...

nothing essential here, i hope you'll note... but a set of markers that, all taken, push and pull one this way and that, in sometimes identifiable directions... a marker in fact that you might be interested in: the response of working class folks to books... working class folks, the ones that i knew, might stand in awe of books... depends... books that made you famous, that anybody could read (cf. democracy thread), yes---this is what they stood on awe of, and i hope most of you will not find this too too condescending, b/c it describes my father in many ways... but book learnin, as against other ways of knowing---nother thing entirely... depends... einstein?... fuckin genius... stevenson?...

well---politics-wise,

paradox, right...

now i've heard, often enough, the argument as to how anybody who writes these days is generally middle class, ergo it's pointless to appeal to working class values as a key factor in one's writing (and i've heard this argument both in terms of content, and in terms of more nuanced discussions of subject position and the like)... but this wouldn't explain, for example, how a book like ben hamper's *\_rivethead\_* (which i've been teaching for a few years now) comes to be written (whatever you make of it)...

even more: if you pursue this logic---that all writing is middle class b/c you're probably living middle class as a writer---this would suggest that working class urgencies are not to be conveyed/embodied/evoked once one leaves said class

(financially speaking).. that one needs actually to "occupy" (and here you can see where the discussion could easily take on ontological proportions---if i let it!) a, say, factory-line subject position in order to write with---i keep using this word---\*urgency\* about the factory... and even then---b/c you can't be working on the factory line and writing at the same time... etc etc etc --- clearly, such logic is patently absurd on the face of it... one may as well say that any moment of writing is marked by the relative freedom to write... but this sort of "free-dom," i hope we all know, is often a matter of necessities that owe their emergence to---not memories, necessarily (if them too), but ways of behaving and believing and feeling that are in part of a function of one's prior class (among other shifting and not-so-shifting markers)...

having come from working class "stock" (as they used to say), and having spent a good portion of my life at the poverty line, my tendencies are clearly a present danger for me professionally (for example) in an institution that is only now, i think, really beginning to articulate the stresses and strains of folks whose parents do not hold college degrees (oh the history would have to go back to late 19th century anyway, to really dig it all out)... and in fact, when i worked as a salary worker, i often ran into similar problems... i identified in many cases with the hourly workers, the ones who viewed me as "management"...

and if this ain't the long and the short of it, maria: the very fact that i'm telling you stories about mself sez something about "theorizing," about my suspicions re talking about mself in the abstract, as it were, w/o talking turkey too...

best,

joe

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201. **R. Gancie**

***SoKalled***

*Wed 8 Oct 1997*

---

Tom. I have no problem with the notion that science makes useful contributions to the world as long as such sentiments remain a notion. Unfortunately, it has already gone well beyond the benign passiveness of the phrase "making useful contributions to our understanding of the world." For example, science uncritically substitutes the contingent and historically bound "notion" of existence for that of being and the immutability inhering in what Stanley Rosen calls the "ontological copula." What's worse is that science writers make this substitution whenever they damn well please because they are not under any constraints to be more rigorous in their attempts to describe physical phenomena through language. I find that Dennett consistently misinterprets opposing points of view. It appears to me that he does this because he cannot comprehend arguments that

arise from concerns about epistemological inconsistencies. His positivism is loaded with assumptions that he cannot acknowledge. He sees individuals who address the efficacy of these assumptions as being inconvenient and irrelevant and he expresses surprise and bewilderment that other people might take them seriously. Hofstadter is another guy who consistently says that if he can't get it there must be nothing to it. Read him on aleatoric music. He is just as narrow as Dennett. Michael Dirda caught the essence of Hofstadter in his review of *Le Ton Beau De Marot* in the Washington Post Book World for Sunday, June 29. "The man [Hofstadter] hardly considers the moral or humane character of great works of art..." Dirda wrote. Then Dirda instead of following his better nature, says astonishingly that criticizing Hofstadter's book "is cavilling before riches." Dirda wants his Shakespeare and to eat it too. Indeed, it is possible to get your poetics from sources such as Dennett and Hofstadter---but at what cost? I don't mind scientists waxing poetic until they start forming organizations with other peoples monies to prevent certain other people from waxing poetic about the same phenomena. Primarily, scientists write popular books for the money. If the public is dazzled by science's poetic yawps tax money becomes easier to acquire. If you write a breakthrough book there are royalties. Scientists, for some good reasons and many bad ones, have always felt threatened by the vox populi---witness Cassini. With power occasionally comes consequences no matter how much you are in favor with the prevailing economic forces. I wish science's motives were as pure as you'd like them to be. Then when crunch time arrives they might be more open to others' opinions. See Oppenheimer and the Compton group in Chicago. Logical Positivism has "failed", "collapsed" whatever; but no not Strong A.I. It's just decades behind schedule; and this after taking hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money with pronouncements such as "The mind is a meat machine."--Marvin Minsky. And "My thermostat has three beliefs; It's too hot in here. It's too cold in here. It's just right in here."--John McCarthy. Roger Penrose has shown in his two books, *Emperor's New Mind* and *Shadows of the Mind* that Strong A.I. is "a priori impossible." Penrose, however, fails to realize that the more powerful elements control language as well research money. If the definition of intelligence for example is altered and generally accepted to include the capacities of a compass to point north then the compass will become a sentient class of beings. I think it was Thales who thought that lodestones had souls. I know it was John McCarthy who thought thermostats did. If Barrow and Tipler are talking about some future "intelligent computer", they cannot be addressing anyone who has explicitly denied that hypothetical existence its "full human rights." The deniers no more exist than the hypothetical machines. But sorry Tom they intend for existing technology to have full human rights. Think of the legal implications. You may as well think, Barrow and Tipler can't. Don't read the Barrow and Tipler passage to women if you want to have any kind of social life. (Actually, don't read it to anybody

except Strong A.I. advocates.)I've shown it to at least fifty women and they unanimously found it offensive. No doubt Sokal would have some insights to offer these women. Finally, to my knowledge no one has ever lynched a CRAY though they are sold in the marketplace. Neither their creators or the hypothetical machines will suffer any of the historical oppression that was and is visited upon women and blacks. So what the fuck are two pampered scientists like Barrow and Tipler talking about? They've never missed a meal in their lives and the machines don't eat. The oppression Barrow and Tipler fabricate reveals at best a juvenile aesthetic and at worst the Self-Reproducing Automata agenda whereby human beings will be replaced by their machine progeny. This wasn't proposed by Ray Bradbury or Dan Quayle but by one of the founding fathers of artificial intelligence, John von Neumann. No, Barrow and Tipler's remark is inane and insulting and reveals that moral lacuna that resides at the heart of the scientific project in general and since time immemorial has been associated with systems of quantification and formalization. I think it is appropriate to wonder why, now at the advent of global ecological events which appear overwhelmingly negative, the scientific community and its corporate sponsors will broach no criticism at the epistemological and hermeneutic level. And this when the same questions were raised 68 years ago by the very physicists and mathematicians that made the present technological circumstances possible. Events like the building of the atomic bomb produced an intolerance that makes all such speculation seem a "diriment to our unific and expanding order..." as David Jones put it in his great poem on conformity, The Fatigue.---Carlo Parcelli

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202. **Susan Wheeler**

**Marianne Moore**

Wed 8 Oct 1997

---

Any recos for texts that treat Moore's work's relationship to the self, or her own relationship to tradition (outside of the recent Fenton piece in NYRB) would be greatly appreciated backchannel. Many thanks.

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

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203. **R. Gancie**

**SoKalled**

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

Tom. Minsky quote should read, "The brain is a meat machine." Sorry, writing from memory and in a hurry after a long days work takes its toll.---Carlo Parcelli

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204. **George Bowering**

**Re: Defining Language Poetry**

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

*I strongly recommend to you a sensative poet called Robert Lowell (and come to think of it, another named Robert Bly)...They have \*lots\* to "express"...*

*Mark P.*

That is exactly why I have always distrusted those two guys, because they are expressing stuff, which implies to me that words are something they USE.

George Bowering.

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205. **Rachel Levitsky**

**Re: social tangles**

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

David--

I've been off for a few days but catching up caught yr post and I thought of this, recently read.

-----  
The factory, the factory universe, the one  
breathing for you. There's no other air but the one it  
pumps, rejects.

One is on the inside.

All spaces are occupied: everything has become  
garbage. Skin, teeth, eyes.

One moves around in between shapeless partitions. One comes across people, sandwiches, coke bottles, instruments, paper, crates, screws. One moves in a vague manner, outside time. Neither beginning nor end. Things exist together, simultaneously.

Inside the factory, things are being made all the time.

One is inside, in the great factory universe, the one breathing for you.

--Leslie Kaplan from *\_L'Exces-L'usine\_*--#11, trans. Serge Gavronsky

Also Minnie Bruce Pratt is writing some very wonderful cantos of the real, one I know is one we published, "The A&P" in *\_Bombay Gin\_* 1997.

David Bromige wrote:

>  
> "I disagree...that art can contain the same sense of social urgency  
> as...the discussions on this list"  
>  
> sorry i dont recall who posted the above....and i dont want to quibble over  
> vocabularies....but thought i'd post these 2 items & see what response they  
> get : do people find them containers/containments of "social urgency" ? (I  
> do).  
>  
> Proletarian Portrait  
>  
> A big young bareheaded woman  
> in an apron  
>  
> Her hair slicked back standing  
> on the street  
>  
> One stockinged foot toeing  
> the sidewalk  
>  
> Her shoe in her hand. Looking  
> intently into it  
>  
> She pulls out the paper insole  
> to find the nail  
>  
> That has been hurting her  
>

> \*\*\*\*\*

>

> A factory

> has also another aspect, which we call the financial aspect

> It gives people the power to buy (wages, dividends

> which are power to buy) but it is also the cause of prices

> or values, financial, I mean financial values

> It pays workers, and pays \_for\_ material.

> What it pays in wages and dividends

> stays fluid, as power to buy, and this power is less,

> per forza, damn blast your intellex, is less

> than the total payments made by the factory

> (as wages, dividends AND payments for raw material

> bank charges etcetera

> and all, that is the whole, that is the total

> of these is added into the total of prices

> caused by that factory, any damn factory

> and there is and must be therefore a clog

> and the power to purchase can never

> (under the present system) catch up with

> prices at large,

>           and the light became so bright and so blindin'

> in this layer of paradise

>           that the mind of man was bewildered.

>

> (excerpted from Pound, Canto XXXVIII)

>

> \*\*\*\*\*

>

> a footnote to another recent thread, re bly & williams (since "Proletarian

> Portrait" is by williams)--bly's "williams had no inner life" is pretty

> close to pure in the projection department. Bly, the man who chautauquas

> around like a rotarian of spirituality, talking and talking about the inner

> man, accuses williams, the smalltown doctor whose attic-typed poems are

> revelatory but require some consideration, some quiet time on behalf of

> both reader and writer, of everything he himself lacks. Williams can only

> answer him with silence.

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206. **George Bowering**  
**Re: Defining Language Poetry**  
Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

*I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?*

I find some words beautiful. Like chicken. I love that word. In fact it is my favourite word. I like it better than a chicken, in fact.

George Bowering.

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Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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207. **George Bowering**  
**Re: starving to death in a land of plenty**  
Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

*In a message dated 97-10-08 05:23:15 EDT, you write:*

*Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.*

*What???*

What do you mean, what? That sounds about right to me.

George Bowering.

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Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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208. **Alan Jen Sondheim**  
**Re: starving to death in a land of plenty**  
Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

On Wed, 8 Oct 1997, George Bowering wrote:



*In a message dated 97-10-08 05:23:15 EDT, you write:*

*Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.*

*What???*

*What do you mean, what? That sounds about right to me.*

I agree - below is the followup post I sent to a couple of lists - Alan

---

Lessen / Up ( Where's my Jumper? )

"Subject: starving to death in a land of plenty

Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier."

Now please note, *\_somatic\_ knowledge*, the field of the body - flows, in- tensifi- cations, inscriptions blurred among moments of affect. Now this is not the signi- fier of the tattoo, nor is it an n-dimensional representation or substrate. One might consider it a *\_topography\_* not in fact.

Certain an external event, bicycle fall!, can occasion a somatic response, but as Scarry might say, the reports fall short of the event, nor are the reports more than, perhaps, a meandering *\_among\_* descriptors, all of which miss the literal mark.

Here of course I am relating "the signifier" to declarative sentences which pur- port "true" descriptions of events, states, processes: "I fell off my bike!" Now it is not true that these sentences are the scaffolding of somatic knowledge; they are a residue which creates certain effects within the listener, which are de- signed to reproduce what might be consid- ered a *\_shell\_* structure in relation to the somatic kernel.

Here, in this space, note carefully now, we are constrained by and large to *ascii-text* or a text which follows the protocols sufficiently to per- mit transmis- sion - in other words, there is always an etiquette at work. Thus (not that this necessarily follows), we are within a land of plenty, and even *ascii-text* expands and opens spaces (I write to you - I create packets, message-ids, a space/shift/ slot in your inbox) indefinitely - there is little preordained limit on this, besides the practical exig- encies occasioned by various ISPs.

But then, beyond this bot-ulism, this reproduction which may run of its own ac- cord, there is the somatic, starved, ill-served and servicing. The body mumbles, burps, gurgles, pisses, shits, scratches, ahems, argghs, yells, jumps, runs, sings,

huddles, stands, sits, or so it might seem, and whatever the report might be, there's always a `_senseless_` disjunction.

This is a `_test_` of thoughtless language:

What is your body doing `_now_`?

What are you `_thinking_` of doing?

Is what you are `_thinking_` of doing, what your body will be doing?

Will you be doing the thinking for your body?

Will your body be doing the thinking for you?

What is your body doing `_now_`?

Thus starved in a plentiful land, somatic language, translated, becomes one with the flattening of affect and capital, for it is capital that creates protocol, etiquette, permission, for what can only be considered `_the passing of signs._`

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209. **Tom Beard**

***Re: SoKalled***

*Thu 9 Oct 1997*

---

First of all, thanks for pointing out that Barrow and Tipler were referring to current technology: this is indeed stupid and offensive. But I've never heard of anyone claiming that "intelligent computers" currently exist, at least not to the extent that they could remotely compared to human beings.

On the other hand, I don't find Penrose's arguments against strong AI at all convincing. I would side with Minsky, Turing, Hofstadter et al in considering it possible that at some time we may devise systems that are on a par with human intelligence. At that stage, we might wish we had considered the ethical implications, and extended our thoughts of what might constitute life and consciousness outside of the organic realm. I certainly wouldn't claim that turning off my PC constitutes murder, but if it passed a Turing test and you were unable to distinguish its responses from that of a human being, I would hope that you might think twice about rebooting. At the very least, proponents of strong AI and artificial life force us to rethink our preconception that life and intellect can only exist within flesh.

I can't agree with Dirda that "[Hofstadter] hardly considers the moral or humane character of great works of art" - this might apply to *Le Ton Beau De Marot* (which I haven't read), but certainly not to his essay on Chopin (see *Metamagical Themas*). And if he does concentrate on the formal aspects of art rather than the "moral or humane" dimension, is this such a crime? Hofstadter recognizes that human beings aren't limited to dealing with humanity as a subject, and can

find or create great beauty in abstractions, such as a Bach fugue, an Escher drawing, or a mathematical theorem. People who consider such austere arts to be cold and inhuman have, in my opinion, a very limited view of what it means to be "human". If H. prefers a Beautiful Aperiodic Crystal of Harmony to a Composition of Aleatorically Generated Elements, that is his prerogative. But then, I like Kraftwerk, so what do I know?

I don't quite agree with Minsky that "The mind is a meat machine": I consider mind to be software that is in principle "platform-independent". And while I no longer agree with John McCarthy's statement about even basic cybernetic systems (such as a thermostat) possessing rudimentary beliefs and desires (my conception of consciousness has changed since I read Jaynes), I do find it useful to consider such concepts as intellect and consciousness as part of a continuum. I don't think one can draw a line (somewhere between humans and the other primates? between primates and other mammals? between multi- and single-celled organisms? between bacteria and machines?) and say "here is where intellect ends". And I don't think that McCarthy would have used the word "soul" in the same way that Thales did (I don't think "soul" is a particularly useful word here, laden as it is with religious and mystical overtones).

Please don't think that I'm trying to excuse every excess committed in the name of "science" or "progress". Maybe I am too touchy on the subject, having survived a high school science teacher who was a Creationist. As a former operational meteorologist, I'm only too aware of the fallibility of science and the way that natural phenomena resist all the narratives and theories that we thrust upon them. We make hypotheses every day about how the atmosphere "should" behave, and have these hypotheses disproved more often than we would like. We are much more aware of the tentative, provisional nature of scientific knowledge than most non-scientists acknowledge.

But as a writer, I am glad to have some of that knowledge, contingent as it may be. You write, "Indeed, it is possible to get your poetics from sources such as Dennett and Hofstadter---but at what cost?". Well, most of my poetics comes from Creeley, Oppen, Leggott and Manhire, rather than science writers, but I can't ignore what I've read in the realms of neurology, biology, mathematics or cognitive science when I'm writing. Both science and poetry speak to me about what it is to be human, and give me different (though not necessarily incompatible) tools for investigating experience.

Tom Beard.

"Two cheers for reductionism!"

- Stephen J Weinberg

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210. **Tom Beard**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

> > I'm curious...why use words, rather than a saxophone or oil paints, if there

> > isn't supposed to be some amount of denotative quality to them?

I read an interesting quote from William Gass today, which may be of some sidelong relevance to this:

"The elaboration that can be accorded the letter 'r', for example, far outruns its meaning, yet it would receive no elaboration at all if it were not a letter."

The way I read this, when translating from letters to words, is that "the elaboration (or deconstruction/disjunction/torquing/whatever) that can be accorded a word far outruns its meaning, yet it would receive no elaboration (etc) if it were not a word." It is the fact that words unavoidably denote that leads us (well, some of us) to undercut that denotation, to play with the words as if we could ignore their denotation, to pretend that they denoted something else.

The very fact that words are much less suited to non-denotative abstraction than saxophones or oil paints sometimes makes it more interesting to try.

The Gass quote, by the way, I found in "The Alphabet Abecedarium" by Richard J Firmage, which I am finding a delightful read. Another interesting quote from Gass, which I saw in U&lc (why am I always coming across Gass in typographic journals and books? Perhaps I should read the guy!), was along the lines of "Is it possible to write a tragedy in limerick?" This is one of the best summations I've seen of the whole form/content saga.

Tom Beard.

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211. **henry gould**

***Re: starving to death in a land of plenty***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 01:15:10 -0400 Alan Jen Sondheim said:

>> >

>> >> Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.

This sentence seems rather self-contradictory. Without that little "signifier" up there, how would we know there was some generality you wished to discuss called "somatic knowledge"? So the 2 are already entangled.

& I would reverse your subsequent elaboration on this sentence. I'd say - the word becomes flesh. Why do you attack words for speaking out of turn, or stones or the body for mumbling now & then? The stones long to sing in the archway. I would agree with the psychologist- philosopher-camp survivor Frankl - our challenge is not to live in a meaningless existentialist disjunct world; our challenge is to come to terms with pervasive cosmic order beyond our comprehension. Frankl & Kafka are maybe 2 sides of a coin. - Henry Gould

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212. **henry gould**  
***defining language***

*Thu 9 Oct 1997*

---

I, too, am tired of pooh-poohing poor langpo, and am not going to babble on about that. Mark Prejsnar & others put up a very good defense of a wide stream of poetry which approaches language as free play and material for art. My position is, that while I admire enjoy & respect much of the work discussed as examples of this stream, if I think about the theoretical or "language" underpinnings of poetry in general, the idea of turning away strict denotation for free artistic play is fine and stimulating & promising - but insufficient. (ok, Jordan, I remember your complaint about "it's always not enough". ok, you're right, why am I complaining...).

I'm not complaining. It just seems like there's a potential trap with this approach. The trap is that if you're trying to avoid narrow reference or denotation too much, you end up with the reverse : THE WORDS NARROWLY ONLY DENOTE THEMSELVES. THE POEM NARROWLY MEANS ONLY ITSELF. THE ART IS NARROWLY ONLY AUTONOMOUS.

What I miss - and I say in all seriousness, as everybody knows this is my foot of clay, I miss it because I probably haven't looked for it - WHAT I MISS anyway in this whole postmodern stream is two things: a sense of musical continuity and an attention to the SEMANTICS of the poem - the communicative MEANING(S) as a field of play. In order to communicate meaning there has to be a pervasive motive, an impulse, an authorial hand in every dimension; but in order to "play" the meaning must be musical, have some kind of harmony in dis-harmony. So what is required is not a blockade of denotation but a manifold reference, a manifestive manifold. Word as four-fold allegory. Now Ashbery, for example, is an avatar of the postmodern play approach, and he definitely understands musical development. But I find no pith in his work, no stringency; he's like a huge spongy mushroom from the woods in upstate NY transplanted to NY city. Clark Coolidge is great - a rhythmic jazz drummer of language - very stimulating - but I look in vain for the conjunction of music with semantics there. It's all music. I

want to be taken someplace in thought as well as sound, not have my thought always dead-ended by ambivalence, discontinuity, and meaninglessness. These are just examples. They can of course be countered with dozens & dozens of examples of well-meaning thoughtful overbaked tepid sodden cautious pudgy boney academic prof-poets, their poems full of "meaning", pathos, experience, sensitivity, political correctness, etc. etc. for which the Prejsnar school provides a welcome relief. - Henry Gould

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213. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

Your way of putting it reminds me of the passage from Zukofsky that Peter Quatermain quotes so often (which admittedly is Zuke making a point, using very highly-charged rhetoric): subordinating the writing process to a dogged, four-square "message" is to take a "predatory" attitude toward the poem..

Mark P.

On Wed, 8 Oct 1997, George Bowering wrote:

*I strongly recommend to you a sensitive poet called Robert Lowell (and come to think of it, another named Robert Bly)...They have \*lots\* to "express"...*

*Mark P.*

*That is exactly why I have always distrusted those two guys, because they are expressing stuff, which implies to me that words are something they USE.*

*George Bowering.*

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214. **Burt Kimmelman**

***Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

yes but i wonder if the "bird" film didn't at least avoid a kind of prurience gooch has been accused of.

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215. **Christina Fairbank Chirot**

***For Che Guevara***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

(from dave baptiste chirot)

Today is the 30th anniversary of the execution of Che Guevara, 9 October 1967.

A day of respect work and study in honor of his example!

Viva Che!

"And from all the other brother nations of America, and from our land, if it still survived as an example, the voice of the peoples will answer you, from that moment on and for ever: "It shall be so: may liberty be conquered in each corner of America!"

Che Guevara, 28 July 1960

One day the people struck their captive match, prayed with anger  
and supremely full, circular,  
closed their birthday with elective hands;  
the despots were already dragging padlock  
and in the padlock their dead bacteria . . .

Battles? No! Passions And passions preceded

by aches with bars of hopes,

by aches of nations with hopes of men!

Death and passion for peace, of common people!

Death and passion for war among olive trees, let's get it  
straight!

Thus in your breath the winds change atmospheric needles  
and the tombs change key in your chest,  
your frontal rising to the first power of martyrdom.

--Cesar Valljo, "Hymn to the Volunteers for the Republic"

Spain Take this Cup From Me (trans. Eshleman)

"How does one reconcile individual effort with the needs of society? We again have to recall what each of our lives was like, what each of us did and thought, as a doctor or in any other other public health function, prior to the revolution. We have to do so with profound critical enthusiasm. And we will conclude that almost everything we thought and felt in that past epoch should be filed away, and that a new type of human being should be created. And if each one of us is his own architect of that type human type, then creating that new type of human being . . . will be that much easier."

--Che Guevara, 28 July 1960

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216. **Gwyn McVay**  
***SoKalled misreading***

*Thu 9 Oct 1997*

---

Flipping through a couple of posts quickly, my little meat brain read one phrase as "Pinsky's opposition to AI." I wondered who had interviewed the Poet Laureate on the subject of AI-produced poetry, and why he would feel threatened by what is still a collection of fairly lame attempts...

Gwyn(?)

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217. **Judy Roitman**  
***Re: SoKalled***

*Thu 9 Oct 1997*

---

I'm not familiar with everyone discussed in R. Gancie's message, but the ones I am familiar with are not universally loved in the science/math community. For example, Penrose's books on the mind got quite negative reviews in the American Mathematical Society's Notices (the AMS is the main math research organization), essentially on the grounds that he doesn't understand Godel. Hofstadter is widely regarded as either ignorant or a lightweight, depending on how charitable one feels at the moment. Barrow's attachment to the anthropomorphic principle (= the universe exists so we can) is so obviously ego-serving it's hard to take seriously. As for John von Neumann, yes, he was a great mathematician. That and \$1.75 will get you a decaf capuccino in our little town.

The point being that the science/math community is as varied as the literary one, and folks of all sorts tend to spout off about things they don't understand not realizing that they don't understand.

You learn one methodology and apply it to everything, sooner or later you make a fool of yourself, yes? Doesn't matter what that methodology is.



----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas |  
memory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days."  
[REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996  
----- Note new area code  
-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

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218. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: defining lang and the Prejsnar School***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Henry, I think your last post (re: what you find "insufficient" etc.) was excellent, and fair. I guess my various polemical fussilades have been to some extent, about trying to clear space. Space for a lot of different approaches. I often feel that put-downs of LangPo, by collective label, seem to be about wanting to retreat from some of the superb work of the last 30 years, and to retreat from the very large spaces it has opened up. The collective putting-down does another thing, it tends to obscure discussion of the poetry per se, and particularly the work of specific poets. A friend recently found Ariel 8 (the Barrett Watten issue) at a book sale, and since he already owned it, bought it for me. (I haven't had the dough recently to get too many mags..) Norman Fischer's essay on the shape of Watten's career in that issue, seems to me one of the most exciting critical discussions I've happened on in a long time..A great example of the kind of attention I feel we should be giving more poets; some of the really great ones are in danger of disappearing beneath a too-easily-employed collective label. (In the mid-eighties two of Watten's books, which were at that time somewhat rare, Opera-Work and 1-10, were available to me thru a library where I worked, and had a great impact on me; ...I agree with Fischer that his work is special and important, and recommend to everyone the new collection of his stuff to date, "Frame," from Sun & Moon,,)

I guess what I'm saying, is that I value a community of practitioner/readers, who spend more energy sharing and discussing what they like, than dissing what they find less useful, less exciting. It seems harmless and reasonable (I've been second to none in explaining what I find bankrupt in the academic workshop APR-ish poetry establishment) until someone attacks what \*you\* consider valuable. Then it becomes clearer A. how any attacks you don't agree with always sound to you like they proceed from careerist envy and spite; and B. how unproductive they can seem. Much better to use our puny available resources to build the things we most value in the way of alternative poetries..

Mark P.  
atlanta

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219. **Judy Roitman**

***Re: SoKalled***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

A story not exactly about Minsky.

Once a very long time ago I was visiting friends who were being visited by Minsky and his daughter. A man had just awakened from a very long - 10 year? - coma in which he apparently was aware of everything around him (and how could this be a coma one asks? but at the time we didn't) and we were all clucking about the poor man as one does hearing news like this and Minsky's daughter -- about 17 at the time -- said "why are you so sorry for him? think of all the thinking he was able to do!" We all looked at her incredulously.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

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220. **groberts**

***Re: defining language***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

"An Optimist"

We tricked-up poets practice to deceive:  
Ask of us and Voila! you shall receive.

"A Pessimist"

Delivering all things you can conceive  
Doesn't sound much like any life I live.

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221. **henry g**

***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 09:45:28 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>Your way of putting it reminds me of the passage from Zukofsky that Peter  
>Quatermain quotes so often (which admittedly is Zuke making a point,  
>using very highly-charged rhetoric): subordinating the writing process to  
>a dogged, four-square "message" is to take a "predatory" attitude toward  
>the poem..

this argument assumes the message comes from the poet. see Mandelstam's  
"Slate Ode" - one of heaviest & most direct of his poems about poetry. the "com-  
mand" comes from "elsewhere", from the somatic (or semantic) depths, if you  
like. people get tired of my carping, I know. I get tired of it. but poetry is  
deeper, weirder, & more global than we think. we've had our teddy bearigans &  
our lang-pooh bears. now go sit at the feet of those russian bears for a while.  
that's been my "message" here for a long time. do what I do, not what I say.  
[to the tune of "Song of the Volga Boatmen"] grrrrrrrr..... - Henry Gould  
"the sermon of the plumbline" - O.M.

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222. **henry g**

***Re: defining lang and the Prejsnar School***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 10:17:38 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>

>I guess what I'm saying, is that I value a community of  
>practitioner/readers, who spend more energy sharing and discussing what  
>they like, than dissing what they find less useful, less exciting. It  
>seems harmless and reasonable (I've been second to none in explaining what  
>I find bankrupt in the academic workshop APR-ish poetry establishment)  
>until someone attacks what \*you\* consider valuable. Then it becomes  
>clearer A. how any attacks you don't agree with always sound to you like  
>they proceed from careerist envy and spite; and B. how unproductive they  
>can seem. Much better to use our puny available resources to build the  
>things we most value in the way of alternative poetries..

Mark, you have solid grounds to criticize me & others who spout off endlessly  
dissing things in general. I confess to being a laughably lazy reader who works  
across the street from one of THE premier collections of poetry in english (the  
Harris collection) & hardly ever going in there. Yet your statement above

seems to be a confession of the clique mentality. Any attacks on the poetry YOU like are seen as careerist, etc. So I still say, mea culpa, I'm sorry I talk too much, but as somebody who's been writing in a different vein for at least as long as the postmodernists & all their ilk, I still find a productive place for literary spite. If you can't look in a completely different direction once in a while you're gonna get very parochial fast. But yeah, more positive reviews would be good (I HAVE sent a FEW to this list over the yrs...) - Henry G.

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223. **Maria Damon**

***Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

At 8:59 AM -0500 10/9/97, Burt Kimmelman [REDACTED] wrote:

>yes but i wonder if the "bird" film didn't at least avoid a kind of prurience  
>gooch has been accused of.

bird wasnt sexually prurient but wallowed in a kind of artist-as-victim, and especially black-artist-as-addict bathos that made it a dismal viewing experience...

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224. **Layne Russell**

***Re: For Che Guevara***

Thu 9 Oct 1997

---

(from dave baptiste chirot)

>

> Today is the 30th anniversary of the execution of Che Guevara, 9  
> October 1967.

>

> A day of respect work and study in honor of his example!

>

> Viva Che!

>

> "And from all the other brother nations of America, and from our  
> land, if it still survived as an example, the voicee of the peoples will  
> answer you, from that moment on and for ever: "It shall be so: may liberty  
> be conquered in each corner of America!"

>

> Che Guevara, 28 July 1960

>

> One day the people struck their captive match, prayed with anger  
> and supremely full, circular,

> closed their birthday with elective hands;  
> the despots were already dragging padlock  
> and in the padlock their dead bacteria . . .  
>  
> Battles? No! Passions And passions preceded  
> by aches with bars of hopes,  
> by aches of nations with hopes of men!  
> Death and passion for peace, of common people!  
> Death and passion for war among olive trees, let's get it  
> straight!  
> Thus in your breath the winds change atmospheric needles  
> and the tombs change key in your chest,  
> your frontal rising to the first power of martyrdom.  
>  
> --Cesar Valljo, "Hymn to the Volunteers for the Republic"  
> Spain Take this Cup From Me (trans. Eshleman)  
>  
> "How does one reconcile individual effort with the needs of  
> society? We again have to recall what each of our lives was like, what  
> each of us did and thought, as a doctor or in any other other public  
> health function, prior to the revolution. We have to do so with profound  
> critical enthusiasm. And we will conclude that almost everything we  
> thought and felt in that past epoch should be filed away, and that a new  
> type of human being should be created. And if each one of us is his own  
> architect of that type human type, then creating that new type of human  
> being . . . will be that much easier."  
>  
> --Che Guevara, 28 July 1960

thank you dave heard a feature on Che this morning on KPFA while enjoying  
some quiet moments before my first high school English class

layne

p.s. have polished a couple corners on the Yvonne Rainer/red balls dance poem.  
I think it's there now.

<http://www.sonic.net/layne>

"A Quiet Place" -- Poetry

~~~~~

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225. **Rachel Levitsky**

Re: defining language

Thu 9 Oct 1997

"once you play a note, it goes into the atmosphere and is gone." --Sun Ra

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226. **Alan Jen Sondheim**

Re: starving to death in a land of plenty

Thu 9 Oct 1997

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997, henry gould wrote:

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 01:15:10 -0400 Alan Jen Sondheim said:

Somatic knowledge has nothing to do with the signifier.

This sentence seems rather self-contradictory. Without that little "signifier" up there, how would we know there was some generality you wished to discuss called "somatic knowledge"? So the 2 are already entangled.

Only in totality, not in particulars.

>

> & I would reverse your subsequent elaboration on this sentence.

> I'd say - the word becomes flesh. Why do you attack words for speaking

> out of turn, or stones or the body for mumbling now & then? The stones

> long to sing in the archway. I would agree with the psychologist-

> philosopher-camp survivor Frankl - our challenge is not to live

> in a meaningless existentialist disjunct world; our challenge is to

> come to terms with pervasive cosmic order beyond our comprehension.

> Frankl & Kafka are maybe 2 sides of a coin. - Henry Gould

>

I didn't say anything was either meaningless or existentialist; I was pointing to the specificity of this space in fact. And how the word becomes flesh is beyond me, although I do understand the performativity of words.

Alan

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227. **Suzanne Burns**

unsubscribe?

Thu 9 Oct 1997

I'd like to temporarily unsubscribe-- I'm going away for a few weeks.

How do I do that?

SB

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228. **William Marsh**

Re: defining language

Thu 9 Oct 1997

At 08:15 AM 10/9/97 EDT, Henry G wrote:

>What I miss - and I say in all seriousness, as everybody knows this
>is my foot of clay, I miss it because I probably haven't looked for
>it - WHAT I MISS anyway in this whole postmodern stream is two things:
>a sense of musical continuity and an attention to the SEMANTICS of the
>poem - the communicative MEANING(S) as a field of play. In order to
>communicate meaning there has to be a pervasive motive, an impulse,
>an authorial hand in every dimension; but in order to "play" the meaning
>must be musical, have some kind of harmony in dis-harmony.
>So what is required is not a blockade of denotation but a manifold
>reference, a manifestive manifold. Word as four-fold allegory.
>...
>I want to be taken someplace in thought as well
>as sound, not have my thought always dead-ended by ambivalence,
>discontinuity, and meaninglessness.
>

this is an excellent post and to me brings this thread to center, to crux / most critiques of the langpo/postmod strain complain that much of this body of writing just doesn't offer the aesthetically pleasing, transportive, evocative reading experience that impassioned readers of poetry generally want / that's a tricky approach, since obviously everyone goes in for different reasons, but Henry's post brings this particular response to the surface / i remember going in to language poetry because it, to appropriate Henry's line, "took me someplace in thought as well as sound," and rather than feeling "dead-ended" by ambivalence and discontinuity i felt drawn in and provoked by same (most of it never seemed meaningless to me)

langpo excited precisely because it demanded new paths, new methodologies, of reading (these are the cliches of the form), which to me meant new ways of

thinking, of motivating and mobilising -- all in turn a refreshing departure from the conventionally "accessible" poetries that i'd seen up till then / back in school, i remember this notion of accessibility was the banner cry of the hard-liners generally against langpo: the writings simply were not accessible -- to which i'd counter then as i would now that there are conventions of accessibility (rules of syntax, form, notions of speaker and address, etc.) that can and should be challenged -- today by us, the descendants of langpo, as much as then by the langpo's themselves / accessibility, in other words, seemed to me like a fancy way of talking about rote expectations, habitual reading practices / language poetry was one answer to the "what i miss" in american poetry

"So what is required is not a blockade of denotation but a manifold
>reference, a manifestive manifold. Word as four-fold allegory."

this is a lively statement and useful to anyone writing today trying once again to stretch the boundaries of language (the real lesson and legacy of langpo) / but how for example is "a manifold reference, a manifestive manifold" different from a manifold referentiality--terminology in other words that i can see being applied in different context to the "postmod stream"?

bill marsh

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229. **Jordan Davis**

B Mayer read

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Got to St Marks after carrying the groceries home (new address: 246 Mott St Apt 24 NYC 10012) to find my wife and Bennett Simpson had saved me a seat in the 120+ crowd, Ed Friedman dimming the lights to encourage the bird flying around the parish hall to calm down and exit, Dug Rothschild climbing the window bay and covering the bird with his coat, catching him, opening the window releasing and applause. Oh causality! Dug sat back down with three feathers and there was Bernadette Mayer sitting in the front of the room at a table. Lisa Jarnot came forward and gave a lovely introduction in which she explained that before she read Bernadette everybody said you have to read Bernadette you have to meet her she'll change your life, and then she did meet her, and Bernadette's poems had changed her (Lisa's) poems, and Bernadette had changed Lisa's life, and it was a lovely introduction. Bernadette read new poems in a calm clear voice and she read some greatest hits ("Corn", "The Complete Introductory Lectures on Poetry") and she read some old fugitive poems from United Artists magazine and from her self-published book *_Mutual Aid_*, and she read some more new poems and she finished with some poems from her forthcoming collection *_Another Smashed Pinecone_*, due from United

Artists early 1998. It was a terrific reading, and everybody was there. There was an intermission during which I ran around handing everyone present cards for the first Poetry City reading of the season, next Thursday at 6:30, which is half an hour earlier than usual, Anne Porter and David Shapiro. Anne Porter in case you don't know her work was a National Book Award nominee a couple years back for her book *An Altogether Different Language*, which collected her poems from the last 60 years. She is a favorite poet of Bernadette Mayer and countless other great readers. David Shapiro is the author of thousands of beautiful poems, he teaches at Cooper Union and at William Patterson College, and he is a tremendously thoughtful critic of the arts and one of the main secret catalysts of the renewed love for poetry in the world. He is an open secret. I hope that everybody who reads this message will find it in their budgets and their busy hours to come to this free reading October 16 at Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York NY. Call me at 1-888-BOOKS-TW if you need directions. Then the intermission concluded and Eleni Sikelianos introduced Barbara Guest, and Barbara Guest read her poems, including pieces from "Quill Solitary Apparition" and from her selected poems. She concluded with works from "Rocks on a Platter", a forthcoming book about poetry. The audience was very pleased with the evening. The following people you may know may be consulted on this assertion: Leonard Schwartz, Anselm Berrigan, Peggy DeCoursey, Bruce Andrews, Eileen Myles, James Sherry, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge (I think it was her), Steve Malmude, Drew Gardner, Judith Goldman, Barbara Henning, Cynthia Nelson, Cliff Fyman, Rob Fitterman, Stephen Rodefer, oh there were many people there.

Jordan Davis

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230. **Burt Kimmelman**
Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara

Thu 9 Oct 1997

sorry, maria, i for one enjoyed the music and ambience of the bird movie, but did feel that finally i was unconnected with the story. just the same i thought there were some fine performances.

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231. **Judy Roitman**
Re: defining language

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Henry Gould writes:

| *the idea*
| *of turning away strict denotation for free artistic play*

Not only for free artistic play. For understanding.

For example, the notion of "strict denotation" seldom passes scrutiny if you scrutinize carefully enough.

----- Judy Roitman
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-
| ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/

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232. **Pritchett, Pat**
Re: that time of year again
Thu 9 Oct 1997

I don't know newly christened Nobel Laureate Dario Fo's work at all, but anybody who pisses off the Vatican as much as he has must be doing something right. Was a little disappointed, all the same, that the Nobel Committee once again kept the Prize in their own backyard. Still, if Fo's work is as radical as his detractors feel it is, then I guess they've indeed exercised a little temerity this time out.

Patrick Pritchett

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233. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: Defining Language Poetry
Thu 9 Oct 1997

"please elaborate...not on the poets...but on expressing and the USE of words...."

—

If I may slip a query in:

What would they be used for?

W.S. Graham played with this thought from the other side (well, almost) of a cognitive mirror, and asked:

What is the language using us for?

What a tease.

Harold Rhenisch

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234. **Harold Rhenisch**

Re: SoKalled

Thu 9 Oct 1997

"Tom. I have no problem with the notion that science makes useful contributions to the world as long as such sentiments remain a notion. Unfortunately, it has already gone well beyond the benign passiveness of the phrase "making useful contributions to our understanding of the world." For example, science uncritically substitutes the contingent and historically bound "notion" of existence for that of being and the immutability inhering in what Stanley Rosen calls the "ontological copula." What's worse is that science writers make this substitution whenever they damn well please because they are not under any constraints to be more rigorous in their attempts to describe physical phenomena through language."

**

Another way to approach science writing would be to ask what is the belief system that causes the substitution of science as Being for science as method. Furthermore, _why_ are these writers not under any constraints to be more specific? The method, after all, boasts its specificity. So, back to the first question: why the substitution in the first place? Maybe because there are social and political foundations to the lack of constraints and we are seeing these work their way out through language usage. Now, if that language usage and its social and political foundations could be opened out, so that it was in the foreground and the science was in the background, we would have quite the story.

What is the belief system that causes the unwitting substitution of poetry as Being for poetry as method? I can see doing it on purpose, like shooting particles out of an accelerator, to see what might happen, but doing it by accident suggests a use of language which is going to have other manifestations, consequences, etc., which are going to colour or discolour all other parts of the poetic undertaking. Undertaking the same exercise as with the science, of shifting the point of view so that these manifestations and their underpinnings are in the foreground and the poetic undertaking slips back would, I think, be like Pound's Cantos. Ez kept going on about Joyce, the therapeutic nature of Ulysses, and how his Cantos were doing the same thing. He bogged down with his Paradiso, though. Was this because his method got bogged down, he was

confusing terms again, or he was just old and lost in a maze looking for a minotaur which his method prevented him from seeing?

Harold Rhenisch

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235. **Harold Rhenisch**

Bly/Dorst

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Bly also deconstructed Iron John in a most wooden manner.

I'd take Dorst's Grindkopf anyday. It at least is dramatic.

Harold Rhenisch

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236. **Jacques Debrot**

Re: O'Hara/Orton

Thu 9 Oct 1997

For anyone who may be interested, there is an extremely interesting reading of O'Hara's work from a slightly different angle than the one generally taken by literary critics -- and from Gooch, for that matter -- in Joe Orton's **Figuring Jasper Johns** Harvard UP, 1994. The first chapter, "Present, the Scene of My Selves, the Occasion of these Ruses," is especially revealing in the way that Orton traces the negative influence in the development of Johns' and O'Hara's somewhat divergent styles of disjunction and euphemism -- as well as the socially-limited artistic culture of the mid-1950s itself - to the paranoid climate of the Cold War period (& much, much more -- a great companion study to Shoptaw's discussion of Ashbery's "homotextuality" in **On the Outside Looking Out**).

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237. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: defining language

Thu 9 Oct 1997

I like how the ancient Greeks referred to words as "momentary deities."

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238. **cris cheek**

Re: that time of year again

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Was a little disappointed, all the same, that the Nobel Committee
>once again kept the Prize in their own backyard.

What backyard is that? Oh you mean Europe.

Fo is indeed worth seeing. 'Accidental Death of An Anarchist' is
a good place to start.

Nobel prize? who gives a damn.

love and love

cris

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239. **Rachel Loden**

Re: SoKalled

Thu 9 Oct 1997

Communique from the resident logician:

This sounds a bit like the classic debate between literal-minded AI devotees and their equally literal-minded critics. It's been going on for at least the past 20 years and shows no signs of producing anything new, other than increasing resentment by its marginalized participants. It's getting a little tiresome.

As a set of metaphors, ways of driving the organization of software systems, AI had its share of successes. Many ideas that are now standard parts of modern operating systems, networking, word processors, etc. had their origins in the infamous AI Labs at MIT and Stanford. As we used to say, AI projects are re-marketed as Computer Science when they become successful. The next wave of AI-derived products will incorporate things like speech recognition (almost a reality, given higher-speed processors), invisible expert systems in electronic commerce etc. On the other hand, there are major flops like Microsoft Bob. Those are usually caused by the regrettable tendency of some implementors to confuse metaphors with reality, the "AI vision" with actual facts.

On the whole, I suspect that the entire debate has reached the point of diminishing returns. The crude device of "Artificial Intelligence" no longer works for those of us who are looking for results. The whole AI/anti-AI era does raise interesting questions around the use of metaphors and mental models in software development. And it is software that will largely control the practical aspects of our lives in the future.

Jussi Ketonen
[REDACTED]

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240. **Jacques Debrot**
O'Hara/Orton
Thu 9 Oct 1997

Excuse my mistake -- that's FRED, not Joe Orton, of course.

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241. **Joseph D. Edwards**
Re: Marianne Moore
Thu 9 Oct 1997

"Omissions are not Accidents" by Jeanne Heuving (Wayne State U. Press, 1992) gender in the art of Marianne Moore is good. If it helps, maybe you will submit poems to Common Knowledge (I solicited work from you a while back). Thanks, Belle Randall [REDACTED]

On Wed, 8 Oct 1997, Susan Wheeler wrote:

Any recos for texts that treat Moore's work's relationship to the self, or her own relationship to tradition (outside of the recent Fenton piece in NYRB) would be greatly appreciated backchannel. Many thanks.

Susan Wheeler

[REDACTED]

voice/fax [REDACTED]

||| From the keeper of the Wastewater Engineering Virtual Library ||| ||| URL
http://www.cleanh2o.com/cleanh2o/ww/welcome.html ||| ||| or the Poetry Editor of Common Knowledge --> ||| |||
http://www.utdallas.edu/research/common_knowledge/index.html ||

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242. **Karen and Trevor**
For Sheila Murphy
Thu 9 Oct 1997

Sorry to have to use the List again...

...but if Sheila Murphy sees this and for some reason can't access her AOL where I left her a message, could she please backchannel?

Karen McKevitt, Editor-in-Chief, [_fourteen hills_](#)



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243. **Maria Damon**

Re: O'Hara/Orton

Thu 9 Oct 1997

you mean, like, joe orton the british playwright? posthumously?

At 6:18 PM -0400 10/9/97, Jacques Debrot wrote:

>For anyone who may be interested, there is an extremely interesting reading
>of O'Hara's work from a slightly different angle than the one generally taken
>by literary critics -- and from Gooch, for that matter -- in Joe Orton's
>*Figuring Jasper Johns* Harvard UP, 1994. The first chapter, "Present, the
>Scene of My Selves, the Occassion of these Ruses," is especially revealing in
>the way that Orton traces the negative influence in the development of Johns'
>and O'Hara's somewhat divergent styles of disjunction and euphemism -- as
>well as the socially-limited artistic culture of the mid-1950s itself - to
>the paranoid climate of the Cold War period (& much, much more -- a great
>companion study to Shoptaw's discussion of Ashbery's "homotextuality" in *On
>the Outside Looking Out*).

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244. **Maria Damon**

Re: B Mayer read

Thu 9 Oct 1997

yum yum.

At 1:41 PM -0400 10/9/97, Jordan Davis wrote:

>Got to St Marks after carrying the groceries home (new address: 246 Mott
>St Apt 24 NYC 10012) to find my wife and Bennett Simpson had saved me a
>seat in the 120+ crowd, Ed Friedman dimming the lights to encourage the
>bird flying around the parish hall to calm down and exit, Dug Rothschild
>climbing the window bay and covering the bird with his coat, catching him,
>opening the window releasing and applause. Oh causality! Dug sat back down
>with three feathers and there was Bernadette Mayer sitting in the front of
>the room at a table. Lisa Jarrot came forward and gave a lovely
>introduction in which she explained that before she read Bernadette
>everybody said you have to read Bernadette you have to meet her she'll
>change your life, and then she did meet her, and Bernadette's poems had
>changed her (Lisa's) poems, and Bernadette had changed Lisa's life, and it
>was a lovely introduction. Bernadette read new poems in a calm clear voice

>and she read some greatest hits ("Corn", "The Complete Introductory
>Lectures on Poetry") and she read some old fugitive poems from United
>Artists magazine and from her self-published book *Mutual Aid*, and she
>read some more new poems and she finished with some poems from her
>forthcoming collection *Another Smashed Pinecone*, due from United Artists
>early 1998. It was a terrific reading, and everybody was there. There was
>an intermission during which I ran around handing everyone present cards
>for the first Poetry City reading of the season, next Thursday at 6:30,
>which is half an hour earlier than usual, Anne Porter and David Shapiro.
>Anne Porter in case you don't know her work was a National Book Award
>nominee a couple years back for her book *An Altogether Different*
>*Language*, which collected her poems from the last 60 years. She is a
>favorite poet of Bernadette Mayer and countless other great readers. David
>Shapiro is the author of thousands of beautiful poems, he teaches at
>Cooper Union and at William Patterson College, and he is a tremendously
>thoughtful critic of the arts and one of the main secret catalysts of the
>renewed love for poetry in the world. He is an open secret. I hope that
>everybody who reads this message will find it in their budgets and their
>busy hours to come to this free reading October 16 at Teachers & Writers
>Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York NY. Call me at 1-888-BOOKS-
TW
>if you need directions. Then the intermission concluded and Eleni
>Sikelianos introduced Barbara Guest, and Barbara Guest read her poems,
>including pieces from "Quill Solitary Apparition" and from her selected
>poems. She concluded with works from "Rocks on a Platter", a forthcoming
>book about poetry. The audience was very pleased with the evening. The
>following people you may know may be consulted on this assertion: Leonard
>Schwartz, Anselm Berrigan, Peggy DeCoursey, Bruce Andrews, Eileen Myles,
>James Sherry, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge (I think it was her), Steve Malmude,
>Drew Gardner, Judith Goldman, Barbara Henning, Cynthia Nelson, Cliff
>Fyman, Rob Fitterman, Stephen Rodefer, oh there were many people there.
>
>Jordan Davis

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245. **Thomas Bell**

Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara

Fri 10 Oct 1997

prurience is a fun word. I've been on working on a series of prurience poems (poetry written on a background drawing or image). I will not the list by attaching the graphics, but will send the graphics. They also are at

<http://www.public.usit.net/trbell>

.At 08:59 AM 10/9/97 EST, Burt Kimmelman [REDACTED] wrote:

>yes but i wonder if the "bird" film didn't at least avoid a kind of prurience

>gooch has been accused of.

>

> Missing in Action Alpha

pruient muddles of life
we make prudish puddles
prudish puddles
down the alley not too far from home
after the torrential thaw
of strife-free zones

paucity of words
the rupture does not quite heal
rasp of her voiced concern
was at odds with the melancholy

wings of lithe gossamer
with the melancholy we felt
at the end of the route downward
spiral
of the the end of the world in melons

Talking to my body? It talks back.

Pain and pressure out of control. Uncontrollable.
Over and over why have I done this to myself over and over
over the years?

Condemnation is constricting, forgiveness devine
angel of the knight of the round table. Why
not act.

Lightness of being The Laughing Policeman "For Kundera the weight of living
consists chiefly in constriction, in the dense net of public and private constrictions that enfolds us more and more closely." Calvino

METAMORPHOSIS

In his ceaseless discourses on the unbearable weight of living, Leopardi bestows many images of lightness on the happiness he thinks we can never attain: birds, the voice of a girl singing at a window, the clarity of the air - and, above all, the moon.

cobalt in the blue vault
coaxed in the blues' head

howling wolf one too many times
myna bird caws
The falcon is me

fault in the red shoes
where do we go round?

When you physically write the connections become
we are not able to see the color and spirit of what is there unless
we change the way we look at it

Missing in Action Beta

as prudence cuts both ways
so prudence is in the proof
distant sterile words
don't say

a brush of the shadow whispers
unrelenting sorrow and
melancholy

I live in the midst, in the mixt
but can't speak it

I am the spin doctor
I write the score

where do we go round?

I am not the doctor.
I am me.
but there are the things we do

Beyond my grasp
the balloons are

Beyond my grasp
the balloons are
right now

Menace lurks beyond the curtains
and lace decimates her face

Honkytonk Rambles didn't know
how to say .
Got a Hallmark

but there are the things we do

The curve of my mind loops back again

.

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246. **David R. Israel**
the tragedy of limerick
Fri 10 Oct 1997

[was, Re: Defining Language Poetry]

quoth Tom Beard,

The Gass quote, by the way, I found in "The Alphabet Abecedarium" by Richard J Firmage, which I am finding a delightful read. Another interesting quote from Gass, which I saw in U&lc (why am I always coming across Gass in typographic journals and books? Perhaps I should read the guy!), was along the lines of "Is it possible to write a tragedy in limerick?" This is one of the best summations I've seen of the whole form/content saga.

I've likewise much enjoyed Gass's essays at the essay (mainly a couple in Harper's Magazine -- to which he contributes some pithy item every couple years or something). Your quote begs for answer.

Thre once was a man who decided
he'd take any chance that provided
 a gleam of a hint
 to uncover the glint
that life so completely elided

he knew there was gold in the distance
he smelt it with melting insistance
 he traveled far miles
 with taciturn smiles
spurred on by uncommon persistance

he learned all the methods of charm
the soft & the strong of the arm
 his manners so polished
 his glance could demolish
untoward inticements toward harm

he even grew wide in perception
while fully adept at deception
 his "how do you do?"
 could ward off the flu
his "betcha" afforded protection

suave leaders became his confreres
fond lasses enjoyed his affairs
 he never spoke rudely
 (not naked but nudely)
e'en angels stood rapt at his prayers

as age lent its frost to his everest
bright socialites whispered "the cleverest!
 and jolliest sport
 to ever covort
in patios -- what a 'whatever'ist!"

it's strange that his fall came so swift
who'd think that his compass would drift?
 some blip on the screen
 unknown & unseen
effected so fell of a shift

he started down sarcasm's cliff
supposing -- but merely -- to riff
 his jokes grew pedantic
 then frazled then frantic
till darkness swirled deep in each "if . . . "

he dnagled his tales o'er naught
ere long he was cornered & caught
 he mumbled & halted
 now humbled -- assaulted
by *everthing* (id est, by aught)

that last that I saw of that bloke
he was babbling -- rambling -- broke
 he tried to connect
 in a manner correct
but the wheel was bereft of the spoke
[etc.?)
d.i.

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247. **Stephen Cope**

Re: B Mayer read

Fri 10 Oct 1997

Very good news about the Mayer/Guest reading. For those who don't yet know, Bernadette's papers (which I have the singular luxury of processing) have recently been purchased by UCSD, and should be available to the public in the not too distant future. If what I've gone through so far is any indication, their transformative effect is in league with that of the poetry...

Stephen Cope

At 1:41 PM -0400 10/9/97, Jordan Davis wrote:

*Got to St Marks after carrying the groceries home (new address: 246 Mott St Apt 24 NYC 10012) to find my wife and Bennett Simpson had saved me a seat in the 120+ crowd, Ed Friedman dimming the lights to encourage the bird flying around the parish hall to calm down and exit, Dug Rothschild climbing the window bay and covering the bird with his coat, catching him, opening the window releasing and applause. Oh causality! Dug sat back down with three feathers and there was Bernadette Mayer sitting in the front of the room at a table. Lisa Jarnot came forward and gave a lovely introduction in which she explained that before she read Bernadette everybody said you have to read Bernadette you have to meet her she'll change your life, and then she did meet her, and Bernadette's poems had changed her (Lisa's) poems, and Bernadette had changed Lisa's life, and it was a lovely introduction. Bernadette read new poems in a calm clear voice and she read some greatest hits ("Corn", "The Complete Introductory Lectures on Poetry") and she read some old fugitive poems from United Artists magazine and from her self-published book *Mutual Aid*, and she read some more new poems and she finished with some poems from her forthcoming collection *Another Smashed Pinecone*, due from United Artists early 1998. It was a terrific reading, and everybody was there. There was an intermission during which I ran around handing everyone present cards for the first Poetry City reading of the season, next Thursday at 6:30, which is half an hour earlier than usual, Anne Porter and David Shapiro. Anne Porter in case you don't know her work was a National Book Award nominee a couple years back for her book *An Altogether Different Language*, which collected her poems from the last 60 years. She is a favorite poet of Bernadette Mayer and countless other great readers. David Shapiro is the author of thousands of beautiful poems, he teaches at Cooper Union and at William Patterson College, and he is a tremendously thoughtful critic of the arts and one of the main secret catalysts of the renewed love for poetry in the world. He is an open secret. I hope that everybody who reads this message will find it in their budgets and their busy hours to come to this free reading October 16 at Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York NY. Call me at 1-888-BOOKS-TW if you need directions. Then the intermission concluded and Eleni*

Sikelianos introduced Barbara Guest, and Barbara Guest read her poems, including pieces from "Quill Solitary Apparition" and from her selected poems. She concluded with works from "Rocks on a Platter", a forthcoming book about poetry. The audience was very pleased with the evening. The following people you may know may be consulted on this assertion: Leonard Schwartz, Anselm Berrigan, Peggy DeCoursey, Bruce Andrews, Eileen Myles, James Sherry, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge (I think it was her), Steve Malmude, Drew Gardner, Judith Goldman, Barbara Henning, Cynthia Nelson, Cliff Fyman, Rob Fitterman, Stephen Rodefer, oh there were many people there.

Jordan Davis

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248. **Susan Schultz**

R TINFISH #5 now available

Fri 10 Oct 1997

TINFISH #5 is now available (\$5 each, or \$13 for a subscription of three issues) from Susan Schultz (47-391 Hui Iwa St., #3, Kaneohe, Hawai'i 96744--please make checks out to me). This issue includes work by Kathy Dee Kaleokealoha Kaloloahilani Banggo, Ida Yoshinaga, Faye Kicknosway, Beth Murray, Tracy Ryan, Eileen Myles, Brian Henry, Kevin Killian, H.T., Mary Burger, David Bromige, Susan Gevirtz, Stephen Oliver, Randolph Healy, Chris Vitiello, David Fox, A.L.Nielsen, Tony Quagliano, Todd Baron, Joe Balaz, Bruce Andrews, John Mateer, Standard Schaefer, Joanne Burns, Rachel Loden, John Tranter, Michelle Murphy, and a review by Jonathan Morse. In other words, lots of good work from the USA and Australia and that other island nation, Ireland.

Stay tuned: Tinfish Network will soon be offering a chapbook of poems by Kathy (etc.) Banggo, _Forevaz, Anna_.

Susan

Susan M. Schultz
Dept. of English
1733 Donaghho Road
University of Hawai'i-Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

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249. **Layne Russell**

Re: Expression

Fri 10 Oct 1997

James Finnegan wrote:

It's old news that language mediates. It seems too many critics rush to devalue the author's intent. A writer may want to be expressive, may want to "move" the reader emotionally. That language is an imperfect tool for such intent should not invalidate the attempt itself. To be sincere or to be genuine--are these inherently bad characteristics in a human being or in a writer?--when a writer writes, does one leave one's anger, humility, fear, pride, ecstasy and other human traits & emotions on a hook by the door?

Finnegan

yes

and if that hook was filled with such humannesses what would remain? remember, we're talking poetry, art....

Layne

~~~~~

<http://www.sonic.net/layne>

"A Quiet Place" -- Poetry

<http://www.sonic.net/layne/calendar.html>

"Poets Leave Their Prints" -- Poetry Calendar

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250. **Rachel Loden**

**postscript**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

In response to some backchannel confusion, wanted to say that when I wrote

| *Communique from the resident logician:*

it was to signal that the paragraphs that followed, on AI, were not by me but by the only logician resident in my house (so far as I know).

There are at least three resident logicians in this shtetl, old colleagues from Madison and Berkeley Judy Roitman, Jim Rosenberg, and Jussi Ketonen, with the latter probably the least "in residence" since he only reads the posts I forward to him.

Oh e-slope is slippery,

Rachel Loden

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251. **Jacques Debrot**

**Re: Jasper Johns**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

Apropos of John Yau's plug for his Jasper Johns' book, which I haven't seen but will look for now, I'd also strongly recommend another book of his, this one about Warhol called *\*In the Realm of Appearances.\** If I remember correctly (though I'm the one who padded Joe Orton's bibliography after all) Yau gives a very persuasive brief there for an *\*experiential art\** of which Duchamp is a prime example -- Yau's argument being that Duchamp's work had moved towards overcoming the temptation to aestheticize, or codify, occurring, as it does, within the realm of experience -- the *\*during\**, while Warhol's appropriation of the ready-mades, in a way, always comes "after." I'm not sure I entirely agree with him, but the book is terrific. Yau also has lots of interesting things to say about Cage & the 60s art scene. However I do think that the term *\*academic\** used in a derogatory way is, in many of the posts on this list, too often only a cheap/easy shot. Artists and poets shouldn't take *\*instructions\** from academics certainly, and the most important creative work, it seems to me, always takes place in a space for which critical terms have not yet been conceived -- however I'm also convinced that people like Orton, de Duve, and Krauss have made very significant contributions to our understanding of contemporary art. When, in fact, does skepticism about critical theory, etc. cross the line over into the kind of anti-intellectualism for which Langpo was such an important corrective? (this last remark, of course, is not directed at Yau, who I'm certain is much better informed than I am).

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252. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re: Defining Language Poetry**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

Maybe for you the message comes from elsewhere (..from Spicer's martians??) --but not for a lot of us! However, in general, if like the sainted Jack you feel the message is coming from someplace else...Well, that often makes (as in his case) for fairly interesting writing! So go for it.

Mark

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997, henry g wrote:

*On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 09:45:28 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:  
Your way of putting it reminds me of the passage from Zukofsky that Peter  
Quatermain quotes so often (which admittedly is Zuke making a point,*



*using very highly-charged rhetoric): subordinating the writing process to a dogged, four-square "message" is to take a "predatory" attitude toward the poem..*

*this argument assumes the message comes from the poet. see Mandelstam's "Slate Ode" - one of heaviest & most direct of his poems about poetry. the "command" comes from "elsewhere", from the somatic (or semantic) depths, if you like. people get tired of my carping, I know. I get tired of it. but poetry is deeper, weirder, & more global than we think. we've had our teddy bearigans & our lang-poooh bears. now go sit at the feet of those russian bears for a while. that's been my "message" here for a long time. do what I do, not what I say. [to the tune of "Song of the Volga Boatmen"] grrrrrrrrr.....*

*- Henry Gould*

*"the sermon of the plumbline" - O.M.*

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253. **Mark Prejsnar**

## Re: defining lang and the Prejsnar School

Fri 10 Oct 1997

If you like spite fine...

I don't, much..

You seem to be deliberately misreading what I said, or else you just wanna get my goat....Thinking that it's not productive to attack and dis poets all the time, that's **\*\*clique mentality\*\***??????? Hmmmmmmmmmm...

Gonna take me the whole weekend to work that one out!

Mark

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997, henry q wrote:

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 10:17:38 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

*I guess what I'm saying, is that I value a community of practitioner/readers, who spend more energy sharing and discussing what they like, than dissing what they find less useful, less exciting. It seems harmless and reasonable (I've been second to none in explaining what I find bankrupt in the academic workshop APR-ish poetry establishment) until someone attacks what \*you\* consider valuable. Then it becomes clearer A. how any attacks you don't agree with always sound to you like they proceed from careerist envy and spite; and B. how unproductive they can seem. Much better to use our puny available resources to build the things we most value in the way of alternative poetics..*

*Mark, you have solid grounds to criticize me & others who spout off endlessly dissing things in general. I confess to being a laughably lazy reader who works across the street from one of THE premier collections of poetry in english (the Harris collection) & hardly ever going in there.*

*Yet your statement above seems to be a confession of the clique mentality. Any attacks on the poetry YOU like are seen as careerist, etc. So I still say, mea culpa, I'm sorry I talk too much, but as somebody who's been writing in a different vein for at least as long as the postmodernists & all their ilk, I still find a productive place for literary spite. If you can't look in a completely different direction once in a while you're gonna get very parochial fast. But yeah, more positive reviews would be good (I HAVE sent a FEW to this list over the yrs...) - Henry G.*

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254. **John Latta**

**Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

Two questions late on the heels of talk about the chat-stricken Gooch bio. I recall some years back seeing notice that Peter Schjeldahl was at work on a biography of O'Hara. Does anyone know what became of it?

Also, recently, in flipping through a 1980 entry on Ron Padgett in the Dictionary of Literary Biography, I spotted reference to Padgett's "currently editing The Selected Letters of Frank O'Hara for 1981 publication" or something of the like. Perhaps understandably premature, this.

Anyone know more?

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255. **Rachel Levitsky**

**Re: address?**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

Hullo--

anyone got an email address or if not, then a snailmail, for  
Beverley Dahlen?

thanks,  
Rachel

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256. **James Finnegan**  
**Re: Defining / Expression**  
Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

In a message dated 97-10-07 14:46:23 EDT, you write:

*about the virtues of  
\*self-expression\* I have a few reservations -- for instance, doesn't  
self-expression as a poetic value inevitably bring with it the clap-trap  
about sincerity, genuineness, etc. all of which obfuscate the ways in which  
expression is \*mediated.\* Hal Foster, of course, is great on this in his  
essay "The Expressive Fallacy."*

It's old news that language mediates. It seems too many critics rush to devalue the author's intent. A writer may want to be expressive, may want to "move" the reader emotionally. That language is an imperfect tool for such intent should not invalidate the attempt itself. To be sincere or to be genuine--are these inherently bad characteristics in a human being or in a writer?--when a writer writes, does one leave one's anger, humility, fear, pride, ecstasy and other human traits & emotions on a hook by the door?

Finnegan  
Finnegan

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257. **Douglas Barbour**  
**Re: SoKalled**  
Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

Tom Beard's latest response is most interesting. But I wonder why no one seems aware that there is another artistic forum in which these questions are explored: sf. I recommend Iain M Banks, especially his 'Culture' novels, especially.

=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]  
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Nowadays

I want only the wild and tender  
phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'  
its air groaned out  
like the beath of a lover.  
Rashomon by saxophone.  
Michael Ondaatje

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258. **hen**

### ***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

On Fri, 10 Oct 1997 09:04:43 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>Maybe for you the message comes from elsewhere (..from Spicer's  
>martians??) --but not for a lot of us! However, in general, if like the  
>sainted Jack you feel the message is coming from someplace else...Well,  
>that often makes (as in his case) for fairly interesting writing! So go  
>for it.

Franco Ferucci has a wonderful short book, sort of on this subject, called POETICS OF DISGUISE. The idea of "elsewhere" is nothing new - it's WHERE or WHO the elsewhere or elsewho is that gets all the gab. Ferucci talks about the "autobiography of the work" & those places where the author consciously or unconsciously disguises crises or cruxes in the writing process.

Ferucci offers a modified form of the concept of "inspiration" in which the author is a kind of conduit or gardener for something growing from a deeper level. - Henry Gould

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259. **hen**

### ***Re: defining lang and the Prejsnar School***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

On Fri, 10 Oct 1997 09:08:48 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>If you like spite fine...

>

>I don't, much..

>

>You seem to be deliberately misreading what I said, or else you just wanna

>get my goat....Thinking that it's not productive to attack and dis poets

>all the time, that's \*\*clique mentality\*\*??????? Hmmmmmmmmmm...

>

>

>> On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 10:17:38 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

>> >

>> >I guess what I'm saying, is that I value a community of

>> >practitioner/readers, who spend more energy sharing and discussing what

>> >they like, than dissing what they find less useful, less exciting. It

>> >seems harmless and reasonable (I've been second to none in explaining what

>> >I find bankrupt in the academic workshop APR-ish poetry establishment)

>> >until someone attacks what \*you\* consider valuable. Then it becomes

>> >clearer A. how many attacks you don't agree with always sound to you like

>> >they proceed from careerist envy and spite; and B. how unproductive they

>> >can seem. Much better to use our puny available resources to build the

>> >things we most value in the way of alternative poetics..

Mark, I'm sorry if I misread what you said. I agree with your general argument & have said so before. I just don't get the last statement above. It seems you are saying that, since you will interpret any attacks on the stuff you like as only careerist spite, you want only to hear the good news. That attitude is what I called tending toward the parochial. I happen to enjoy the debate & arguments on all these poetics issues, though I do agree there are problems with it (boredom, ignorant generalizations & misunderstandings, abstraction-burnout, hypertrophy of the "critical", Poetics-list addictions...) - Henry

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260. **mark weiss**

### ***Re: Defining Language Poetry***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

The sense of an outside source, which predates Spicer by a bit, has to do with a sense of loss of control--that one is saying what one couldn't have predicted when one started, that whatever the game plan, formal or intellectual, of the poem, has created an environment in which something unexpected, terrifying, or enlightening (or all three) has been discovered, and the poet finds himself for the moment without a map, having discovered a new place not accessible to mere intelligence. Call it meditation on the social role of poetry, call it the intervention of the muse, call it making it new, those are strategies. Now you must change your life.

At 09:04 AM 10/10/97 -0400, you wrote:

>Maybe for you the message comes from elsewhere (..from Spicer's

>martians??) --but not for a lot of us! However, in general, if like the

>sainted Jack you feel the message is coming from someplace else...Well,

>that often makes (as in his case) for fairly interesting writing! So go

>for it.  
>  
>Mark  
>  
>  
>  
>On Thu, 9 Oct 1997, henry g wrote:  
>  
>> On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 09:45:28 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:  
>> >Your way of putting it reminds me of the passage from Zukofsky that Peter  
>> >Quatermain quotes so often (which admittedly is Zuke making a point,  
>> >using very highly-charged rhetoric): subordinating the writing process to  
>> >a dogged, four-square "message" is to take a "predatory" attitude toward  
>> >the poem..  
>>  
>> this argument assumes the message comes from the poet. see Mandel-  
stam's  
>> "Slate Ode" - one of heaviest & most direct of his poems about poetry.  
>> the "command" comes from "elsewhere", from the somatic (or semantic)  
>> depths, if you like. people get tired of my carping, I know. I get  
>> tired of it. but poetry is deeper, weirder, & more global than we think.  
>> we've had our teddy bearigans & our lang-pooh bears. now go sit at the  
>> feet of those russian bears for a while. that's been my "message" here  
>> for a long time. do what I do, not what I say. [to the tune of  
>> "Song of the Volga Boatmen"] grrrrrrrrr.....  
>> - Henry Gould  
>>  
>> "the sermon of the plumbline" - O.M.  
>>  
>  
>

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261. **Jordan Davis**  
***world's longest building stopped mid-construction***  
*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

Re: Schjeldahl O'Hara bio -- it looks to be permanently on hold.

Re: the letters of FO'H -- I believe this is a question better directed to the estate  
than to Ron Padgett --

Jordan

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262. **aerialedge**  
**2 DC & 1 NYC Reading**  
*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

in DC -- Sat. Oct 11 @ 7:30  
Heather Fuller & Bill Howe  
Ruthless Grip Art Project  
near 15th & U Streets NW

in NY --Wed. Oct 15 @ 8 PM  
Edwin Torres & Rod Smith  
The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church  
131 East 10th St (at 2nd Ave)

in DC-- Thurs. Oct 16 @ 8 PM  
Leslie Scalapino  
Georgetown University  
Auditorium at the Intercultural Center  
(██████████ for information)

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263. **Mark Prejsnar**  
**Re: defining lang and the Prejsnar School**  
*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

I thought I was just being self-aware and somewhat self-critical, and heck even a little bit dry and ironic and amusing....

Guess I haven't got this internet "tone" thing down yet, at all...

And I \*only\* used the word spite 'cause you did...."careerist spite" etc....that was all supposed to be me explaining that I realize some people (associated with what I call the "mainstream" poetry scene) may sometimes feel that way about me...And it helps me to realize that because sometimes put-downs of what I consider good poetry sound a little that way to my ears (not you, but some folks I've spoken with) and so now I was trying to be a tad self-critical and.....

Anyway, maybe you get the general idea...And maybe not...in the words of Arthur Dent I seem to having terrible difficulty with my (internet) life style...

I will now attempt to drop this (not thread but) tangle..

Mark P.

On Fri, 10 Oct 1997, hen wrote:

On Fri, 10 Oct 1997 09:08:48 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:  
If you like spite fine...

*I don't, much..*

*You seem to be deliberately misreading what I said, or else you just wanna get my goat....Thinking that it's not productive to attack and dis poets all the time, that's \*\*clique mentality\*\*?????? HMMMMMMMMMM...*

On Thu, 9 Oct 1997 10:17:38 -0400 Mark Prejsnar said:

*I guess what I'm saying, is that I value a community of practitioner/readers, who spend more energy sharing and discussing what they like, than dissing what they find less useful, less exciting. It seems harmless and reasonable (I've been second to none in explaining what I find bankrupt in the academic workshop APR-ish poetry establishment) until someone attacks what \*you\* consider valuable. Then it becomes clearer A. how any attacks you don't agree with always sound to you like they proceed from careerist envy and spite; and B. how unproductive they can seem. Much better to use our puny available resources to build the things we most value in the way of alternative poetries..*

*Mark, I'm sorry if I misread what you said. I agree with your general argument & have said so before. I just don't get the last statement above. It seems you are saying that, since you will interpret any attacks on the stuff you like as only careerist spite, you want only to hear the good news. That attitude is what I called tending toward the parochial. I happen to enjoy the debate & arguments on all these poetics issues, though I do agree there are problems with it (boredom, ignorant generalizations & misunderstandings, abstraction-burnout, hypertrophy of the "critical", Poetics-list addictions...) - Henry*

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264. **James Finnegan**  
**Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT**  
Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

In a message dated 97-10-05 16:10:17 EDT, you write:

*Inclusion is important. Cartoons, Advertisements, road signs, T-shirts, doodles, sketches, drawings, collages, essays, scientific notes, newspaper clippings, you name it: anything can and should be used in poetry if poetry is not to be a ghetto.*

I often go to poetry for refuge from many of the things on this list.

Finnegan



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265. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Re: ANOTHER ATTEMPT***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

In my view, poetry is not this list and is not the same as the things on this list. Poetry can be joyful, of course, and in its joy it can use this stuff as raw material, subject matter, reference, icons, or just fellow travellers (this is not a complete list): poetry is of this world and is a vital mode of perception and cognition. It should be able to handle everything. I don't want to say 'This is poetry here' and 'this here is not'. I like the fluidity and the naming and renaming of things more than that.

Best,

Harold

\*\*\*

In a message dated 97-10-05 16:10:17 EDT, you write:

>Inclusion is important. Cartoons, Advertisements, road signs, T-shirts,  
>doodles, sketches, drawings, collages, essays, scientific notes, newspaper  
>clippings, you name it: anything can and should be used in poetry if  
poetry  
>is not to be a ghetto.

I often go to poetry for refuge from many of the things on this list.

Finnegan

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266. **Poetics List**  
***not joining but reading (fwd)***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Fri, 10 Oct 1997 15:25:19 -0700

From: hkhfound <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: not joining but reading

Dear poetics list:

I would like to post a message concerning some upcoming readings at the ZINC Bar in NYC. How might I do this (I'm not looking to join the list, I only have

internet access through a part-time job)? If it's possible to plug in the information off of this message then....

Sunday, Oct. 12 - Alan Halsey, Geraldine Monk, Jean Portante, & Peter Lauge-son. Start time is 6:15 pm.

Sunday, Oct. 19 - Heather Ramsdell & Donna Cartelli. 6:30 pm.

Sunday, Oct. 26 - A benefit for TALISMAN magazine featuring Eileen Myles, Sean Killian, Lisa Jarnot, Michael Heller & others.

ZINC Bar is located at 90 W. Houston St, near the corner of LaGuardia & W. Houston.

\$3 donation is usual. There will be a \$5 cover for the TALISMAN reading.

Sincerely, Anselm Berrigan

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267. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: defining language***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

what is interesting is  
a multiplicity of voices  
voice as it becomes it  
not autobiographical  
a fictional personality  
a voice in the machine  
meaning in language  
outside of language  
other than linguistic is realist  
realism is still mimesis  
Pointless as experience  
on the edge of pointlessness  
silence is reminiscent  
of something more opaque  
what difference do words make?  
to focus on the paradoxical  
to denote the other as ex-center  
"i have nothing to say"  
as another way to say it

fashioned language as tension  
an oscillation between language limitations  
implications of experience  
between text and context  
Intertextuality appeals to function  
flattening out sense  
a confluence of identities to mime it  
this is full-blown language  
retouching itself to avoid becoming  
another meaning  
the inability of language  
where a thought comes from  
silence rather than absense  
identifies otherness as imponderable  
understanding apt to be  
enshrined as fiction  
entrapped in a rectory kit  
self as a foreign country misplaced  
a diary of secret destinations  
we sell ourselves for  
oneself as an obscure metaphor  
a repository of language  
artifice a hybrid personality  
sometimes barely perceptible  
contemporary less absense and presense  
constructs an identity of contradictions  
a breakdown in the melodrama  
the narrative used to comic effect  
with someone elses experiences.  
- Bill Burmeister

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268. **Michael Magee**

***Re: the Gooch biography of Frank O'Hara***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

To my knowledge, O'Hara's letters languish at UCONN without a publisher, though I wouldn't necessarily know if something was in the works. There quite wonderful - 600 pages of them! - and its a crime that they haven't been published. Everyone too lazy? Family resistance? Copyright probs? Beats me. But go enjoy them if you get the chance.

-Mike.

According to John

Latta: >

> Two questions late on the heels of talk about the chat-stricken Gooch bio.

> I recall some years back seeing notice that Peter Schjeldahl was at work

> on a biography of O'Hara. Does anyone know what became of it?

>

> Also, recently, in flipping through a 1980 entry on Ron Padgett in the

> Dictionary of Literary Biography, I spotted reference to Padgett's

> "currently editing The Selected Letters of Frank O'Hara for 1981

> publication" or something of the like. Perhaps understandably premature,

> this.

>

> Anyone know more?

>

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269. **Eliza McGrand**

***defining the definition***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

well, this is an amalgamum of henry gould and someone pretending to be david bromige but is in fact probably a canadian and probably not bromige (though that is never quite CERTAIN)...

occam's razor. classifying the inherently complex and unclassifiable because source is unclassified and unclassifiable. you do it. ok, you have to do it because we are humans and our brains have only so many boxes and they work better with categories and so forth.

but all they are is categories, classifications, i.e. constructs hammered together in someone's brainbox backyard.

think of all those cowboys -- what is a cowboy? if you ride around in a suit and the ubiquitous phallic hat but you are moving sheep along, or keeping a herd of

horses in check, are you still a cowboy? if not, what if same person was walking on street and all you had to go on was outfit and hat -- are they, sui generis, almost cowboy cowboy? tentative cowboy? cowboy till proven otherwise but then, what constitutes proof? what if they rope steers alternate sundays? "cow" "boy" -- do you have to be involved with cows? do you have to be a boy? what if you're one of those things but not other?

language poet. you are a poet with something else? maybe a sushi poet? then, if we are using it in conjunction with someone, it is a classification, a chimera, a construct. just that. useful in getting a quick feel of someone. useful, if they claim membership, in knowing how they think of their work. useful in tracing possible influences.

but even the most "language poet"-y of "language poets" had days when they were, no doubt, a sushi poet, or a language typist, or a sonnet-writer, or a formal neo-Donne-ist post Romantic lover, or non-lover, or a day when they said "geez, let's put on hats and rope steers for a day"...

like many of the writers who've answered, i write what i write on a given day led by the idea and using the form best used to make idea/germ/image/shape'o'day come out the way it wants to come out or in closest approximation to way i am experiencing it in my head at that particular moment. sometimes it's formal, sometimes it's fractured, sometimes it's formally fractured, sometimes i sound just like bob fucking-barker on let's make a deal and then i go to the bathroom and swear off poetry for a few days... e

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## 270. **Aldon Nielsen**

### ***"Taylor Brings an Abstract Touch to Piano"***

*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

Today's Los Angeles Times has an amusing review, under the above title, of Cecil Taylor's performances at the Jazz Bakery. (Amusing for all the usual touches: Taylor "hovering over the piano," "all the action converging through his hands" etc.)

but this line I had to pass along -- written, by the way, by Don Heckman:

"At one point, he suddenly removed his hands from the keyboard, picked up a piece of paper from the top of the piano and read what appeared to be an abstract poem. That concluded, he resumed his attack upon the keys."

I suppose there may be poems in the language that do not appear to be abstract, but perhaps they are less likely to appear at the top of a piano.

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271. **Eliza McGrand**  
***that abstract poem/piano thing***  
*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

so, did he READ the poem ALOUD? did he read it silently, sneering occasionally and beating in beat syncopation? did he ATTACK the poem, or just read it aloud, or just read it, or read it with the same performative inflection he was giving his performance?

my god. if anyone, ever, does something like that with anything i've written, poem, prose, or clumpish blurt, and it gets a review of this level of trite buckskin-hip, i will personally impale and disem-kidney/sexual organ/nose the performer (for exposing me to this) and the critic (twice. just for being a critic AND for writing the thing).

i will. i swear it.  
e

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272. **R. Gancie**  
***SoKalled***  
*Fri 10 Oct 1997*

---

Tom. Thanks for your sentiments on "what it is to be human." You utterly misrepresent Penrose's position. But no matter. Your treatise on the harmony between poetry and the sciences would be better directed to Sokal, Gross and Levitt. I'm not taking big bucks to stamp out one side of your harmonious equation. The insecurities, limitations and venality of the scientific community as exemplified by Sokal have currently fueled this debate. It is demonstrable that science's metaphors can be as specious as anyone else's. I've been laughing my ass off at their ignorance and inconsistencies now for thirty years. Any poet who has been hired to teach composition to engineering students can attest to the rigor that even the humblest rhymster brings to language compared to the people who now want to redefine what language is if not tell us flat out what it cannot be. Science "speaks to me" too. But science has always told me never to sentimentalize it or to mistake its aesthetic for anything but incidental.---Carlo Parcelli

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273. **henry**

**Re: "Taylor Brings an Abstract Touch to Piano"**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

it's all in the hands.

palm

pomme

poem

royal [pinko]

palm

- Eric "Dolphy" Blarnes a.k.a. "Feathers" McCrane

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274. **Patricia Cockram**

**Re: Writing is an Aggressive Act, Didion Says**

Fri 10 Oct 1997

---

At 08:06 PM 10/8/97 -0400, Aviva Vogel wrote:

<snip>

>"Why I Write" by Joan Didion

>

>In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other

>people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind. It's an

>aggressive, even a hostile act. You can disguise its aggressiveness all you

>want with veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative

>subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions--with the whole manner of intimating

>rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating--but there's no getting

>around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully,

>an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the reader's most

>private space.

>

Speak for yourself, Joan Didion.

Patricia

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275. **rob wilson**

**the sentence as aggression by me**

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

Re writing as a act of verbal aggression displacing the reader's specific head and frame of reference (as in Joan Didion writing travelogues for the state department in places like El Salvador and Miami as pits of Latin vice), Ron

Silliman's "Sunset Debris" dismantles this quasi-pornographic violation (of otherness) by AMPING IT UP, turning the whole process into a stream of a million crazed questions that question the very act of displacement. A grim and funny poem, actually, at the outset of Age of Huts, but one that I for one would like to put in Joan Didion's Gucci Bags on her next trip to work up the third world into a site of Wheeler Hall ooze. I could question the whole process as an act of poetic warfare, like here, enframing "Joan Didion" into my own nasty post- and anti-liberal set of language aggressions. But it happens all the time in those murderous little Hemingway sentences, SVO machinery of misyogyny and war against the trout and Indians at the Big Two-Hearted River. Hey, it comes with the US territory, placing a mean little jar in the wilderness of tennessee to take the dump over: "and round it was and aof a certain port in air" like an insurance lawyer wiping up the bloodshed with a Grecian urn. And "Jokerman" is my Jeremiah 5 to get out of this dump, question mark.

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## 276. **James Finnegan**

### ***Re: Come On Down...***

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

In a message dated 97-10-10 17:43:30 EDT, you write:

*In my view, poetry is not this list and is not the same as the things on this list. Poetry can be joyful, of course, and in its joy it can use this stuff as raw material, subject matter, reference, icons, or just fellow travellers (this is not a complete list): poetry is of this world and is a vital mode of perception and cognition. It should be able to handle everything. I don't want to say 'This is poetry here' and 'this here is not'. I like the fluidity and the naming and renaming of things more than that.*

Harold,

You are of course right. Poetry should be a portmanteau that can accommodate anything and everything. A skillful writer will be able to integrate these diverse & sundry elements into the poem.

Though it's somewhat unfashionable to bemoan the encroachment of popculture upon literature, I do resist it. Popculture is a sales vehicle, the grease for the wheels of commerce--people make it, just as people make poems, so I guess we must live with it. I just don't want to open a book of poems and feel like I've got a remote control in my hand surfing 140 channels and nothing on.

Finnegan

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277. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Writing is an Aggressive Act, Didion Says***

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

i have always found joan didion's writing thoroughly obnoxious and self-serving. maybe it's just her archness and nothing more, but it turns me off

At 11:33 PM -0400 10/10/97, Patricia Cockram wrote:

>At 08:06 PM 10/8/97 -0400, Aviva Vogel wrote:

><snip>

>>"Why I Write" by Joan Didion

>>

>>In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other  
>>people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind. It's an  
>>aggressive, even a hostile act. You can disguise its aggressiveness all you  
>>want with veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative  
>>subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions--with the whole manner of intimat-  
ing

>>rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating--but there's no getting  
>>around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully,  
>>an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the reader's most  
>>private space.

>>

>Speak for yourself, Joan Didion.

>Patricia

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278. **Layne Russell**

***Contacting David Bromige***

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

Hi poets and poetics pros,

David Bromige called me today and asked me to post this info to the list:

David's outgoing email not functioning, so if anyone needs to contact him,  
please email him (his incoming email is fine) at



giving him your phone number and he will call you. He will be around until Saturday (10/18) when he leaves for the east coast for his reading tour.

Thanks all,

Layne for David

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279. **Hugh Steinberg**

**Re: Writing is an Aggressive Act, Didion Says**

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

Maria Damon writes

*i have always found joan didion's writing thoroughly obnoxious and self-serving. maybe it's just her archness and nothing more, but it turns me off*

I'm probably in the minority here, but I just finished reading "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," and while I thought it was arch in places, her description of the transformations that were occurring in the American West to be dead on accurate. The other thing that struck me about the book is how "old" she thinks she is, although most of the essays were written in her late twenties, early thirties.

Hugh Steinberg

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280. **Christopher Alexander**

**nominative press collective announces...**

Sat 11 Oct 1997

---

announcing the publication of 2 new chapbooks  
from nominative press collective!

--

by postcard: beloved series                  Rachel Daley

edition of 40. 5.5 x 6.5", hand-sewn, heavy coverstock  
w. mylar endpapers; 20 printed pp.; illustration by  
Rachel Daley & Christopher Alexander.

\$4 / \$7 institutional

--

-ocracy 8 & 9                  Peter Ganick & Sheila Murphy

2 parts of the ongoing collaborative project

edition of 120. 5.5 x 8.5", saddle stapled, heavy  
coverstock; 16 printed pp.; available in 5 different  
covers! cover art by CT artist Cherie Mittenthal.

\$3 / \$5 institutional

--

!! samples may be viewed via the www @  
<http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>  
(please come check out the newly revamped site!)

thanks! Chris

Christopher Alexander  
[REDACTED] (lv. msg.)

[REDACTED] Marriott Library Instruction

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281. **Christopher Alexander**  
***nominative press collective nounces...***  
*Sat 11 Oct 1997*

---

announcing the publication of 2 new chapbooks  
from nominative press collective! (& this time  
without the invasive work-related .sig!)

--

by postcard: beloved series                  Rachel Daley  
edition of 40. 5.5 x 6.5", hand-sewn, heavy coverstock  
w. mylar endpapers; 20 printed pp.; illustration by  
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covers! cover art by CT artist Cherie Mittenthal.  
\$3 / \$5 institutional

--

!! samples may be viewed via the www @  
<http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>  
(please come check out the newly revamped site!)

thanks! Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

www: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

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282. **Herb Levy**

***Re: that abstract poem/piano thing***

Sat 11 Oct 1997

Calm down, Eliza, Taylor writes poetry & often (especially in the last 10 years or so) recites it in performance.

I don't know of an instance in which he read anyone else's work in performance, though most of the times I've seen him perform he's seemed to be reciting from memory rather than reading from a written text.

*so, did he READ the poem ALOUD? did he read it silently, sneering  
occasionally  
and beating in beat syncopation? did he ATTACK the poem, or just read it  
aloud,  
or just read it, or read it with the same performative inflection he was  
giving  
his performance?*

*my god. if anyone, ever, does something like that with anything i've written,  
poem, prose, or clumpish blurt, and it gets a review of this level of trite  
buckskin-hip, i will personally impale and disem-kidney/sexual organ/nose  
the performer (for exposing me to this) and the critic (twice. just for  
being a critic AND for writing the thing).*

*i will. i swear it.  
e*

Herb Levy

[REDACTED]

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283. **Eliza McGrand**

***Re: Writing is an Aggressive Act, Didion Says***

Sun 12 Oct 1997

i'll read joan didion's writing, and i'm often informed by it. but yes, maria, "archness" is certainly one way to describe an obnoxious aspect to it.

i think it struck me more, though, as a sort of assumed, snobbish privilege, in the sense of "well \_i'm\_ writing as a thin, gorgeous, rich, important white woman and really, isn't \_any\_ worthwhile white woman just like me?" reading

marge piercy, iris murdoch, margaret atwood, nadine gordimer -- all of whom write sort of "reportorial" accounts of other cultures [Good GOD! add doris lessing to this list of writers!] from a "white woman"-eyed view, often an academic eyed view (though marge piercy also writes from indian view in some of her work), the narrators are more human and fallible. they're not all gorgeous, brilliant, upper-washington-circle type protagonists. that is to say the anchoring narrators and their friends are sometimes heavy, have moments of foolishness, warmth, fun -- they are not always wearing their armor. this is, of course, a gros generalization. but the writer joan didion sometimes reminds me of is really nora ephron.

and of course, i am not in a position to talk -- god knows the sexism and dismissals joan didion has encountered, and she might well feel she needs to write from an armored, seamless position. and i've learned things from reading her work. but when i went to look for what i have of her, i found the books i have in my "modern literature" section, the "books i respect and might need to know about/quote, but not the books i love" section. she wasn't in my "women's literature/feminist" section, where the say-it-sister! books are -- where doris lessing, nadine gordimer, margaret atwood, marge piercy, are all cornerstones.

e

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#### 284. **Eliza McGrand**

##### ***Re: that abstract poem/piano thing***

Sun 12 Oct 1997

---

thus we see the power of the critic/reviewer. you're quite right in implication herb -- taylor might be a swell guy, and the poems he reads and way he reads them might be wonderful. but that insufferable review!

blecchchhchhhh!!!

i MEAN it -- if i'm ever placed in surroundings of such a trite wanna-be-hip review i'm going to be out for blood! grrhhhhh!

i was amazed there was no mention of berets. was there and it just got cut out? -- i have to believe latter was the case.

e

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285. **Bob Grumman**  
***News of Free WebSites***  
*Sun 12 Oct 1997*

---

Hi, Everybody!

About a month ago I happened into a system of websites called GeoCities.

<http://www.geocities.com>

Go there and you'll see FREE WEBSITES advertised! It seems not to be any kind of rip-off. In any event, I got one, which my next message will announce the official opening of. You ALL should get your own websites at geocities! It's tricky getting one going, but instructions are supplied, and addresses to go to for help. Go to mine at

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

just to see what someone who doesn't know what he can do has put up. Nothing fancy, but it includes a graphic, and the graphic could have been a photograph or painting.

The only drawback is that you aren't given a lot of space--two megabytes--but that's plenty for my purposes. And if you want more, you can get it for only \$5 a month, which seems pretty cheap.

No, I'm not an employee of GeoCities, nor is this an advertisement; I just think it's information well worth passing on. Have fun! --Bob G.

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286. **Bob Grumman**  
***Announcement of COMPREPOETICA, a Poetry-Data Collection Website***  
*Sun 12 Oct 1997*

---

Today I have decided to announce the Official Opening of COMPREPOETICA, a website devoted (as much as possible) to the WHOLE RANGE of contemporary American Poetry. And of World Poetry eventually, but I can only start so big. If you think, like I, that no reference has come close to doing justice to the current poetry scene as a whole, then you should see the value of Comprepoetica.

At the heart of my site is a survey form for poets, critics, editors, publishers and readers of poetry. Its main use will be to provide data for the biographical entries in the Comprepoetica Dictionary of Contemporary American Poetry, Poetics, Poets Etc., which will eventually be published by my own Runaway Spoon Press, a micro-publishing operation now ten-years-old. These entries will also be available to the public at Comprepoetica (or elsewhere on the Net if I run out of room at Comprepoetica).

Definitions of various poetics terms (supplied not only by me but by anyone who wants to send me any) will eventually be available for comment at Comprepoetica, as well--plus discussions of schools of contemporary poetry, and other aspects of the scene, such as significant magazines being published, and anthologies, and what's been on radio, the Internet, and even television. Anything that seems pertinent to an understanding of Contemporary Poetry--all of it--in America.

And for BIG FUN, I have a section where votes can be cast for one's favorite poets and poems! (yow)

I hope you'll ALL visit my site soon--and contribute to it! And tell your friends! Help get my visitor-counter into triple figures!

--Bob G

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287. **robert drake**

**Re: Announcement of COMPREPOETICA, a Poetry-Data Collection Website**

Sun 12 Oct 1997

praps bob's too shy to mention it, or just excited about his new foray; but the address is:

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492/>

*Today I have decided to announce the Official Opening of COMPREPOETICA, a website devoted (as much as possible) to the WHOLE RANGE of contemporary American Poetry. And of World Poetry eventually, but I can only start so big. If you think, like I, that no reference has come close to doing justice to the current poetry scene as a whole, then you should see the value of Comprepoetica.*

*At the heart of my site is a survey form for poets, critics, editors, publishers and readers of poetry. Its main use will be to provide data for the biographical entries in the Comprepoetica Dictionary of Contemporary American Poetry, Poetics, Poets Etc., which will eventually be published by my own Runaway Spoon Press, a micro-publishing operation now ten-years-old. These entries will also be available to the public at Comprepoetica (or elsewhere on the Net if I run out of room at Comprepoetica).*

*Definitions of various poetics terms (supplied not only by me but by anyone who wants to send me any) will eventually be available for comment at Comprepoetica, as well--plus discussions of schools of contemporary poetry, and other aspects of the scene, such as significant magazines being published, and anthologies, and what's been on radio,*

*the Internet, and even television. Anything that seems pertinent to an understanding of Contemporary Poetry--all of it--in America.*

*And for BIG FUN, I have a section where votes can be cast for one's favorite poets and poems! (yow)*

*I hope you'll ALL visit my site soon--and contribute to it! And tell your friends! Help get my visitor-counter into triple figures!*

--Bob G

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288. **Jordan Davis**

***Tim Davis and Brenda Coultas at Here***

*Sun 12 Oct 1997*

Not the opening reading (that was Tom Raworth and Ann Lauterbach) but the second, Tim Davis and Brenda Coultas at the shiny hospitable cafe at Here, 145 Avenue of the Americas, great glass windows looking out at the happy stragglers, looking in at one attentive group. Any fear that the vibe might get trampled in a not-for-profit zone is quelched by couches and a staff that not only acquiesces but acts apologetic when ambient irritations must be removed. Now on the other hand, the food is maybe only above decent, and the sense of being \_at sea\_ (unless you count the bateau-moucheness of the new digs) is just gone. And the beer is too much.

Brenda Coultas is too much. After a fine introduction by Rob Fitterman she read work from her first (totally great) collection, \_Early Films\_, and she read some new work which takes her early themes of meat, sex, animals, body parts, depravity and tenderness to a new pleasant intensity. She has a light touch. It represents Indiana. (Random comparison to Andy Levy?) There is something waldmanische (naturally, she danced and wrote at Naropa) about Coultas's work, but enough names. Tim Davis got up after a decent break during which host R Fitterman, D Rountree, B Andrews, K Davies, D Kovac, M Harb, R Smith, J Mac Low, D Gardner, M Highfill, J-A Wasserman, A Davies, S Rodefer, and many others milled. Rob gave a good and very friendly introduction. Tim got up, and read poems from his lunch poem series (resumed after a several-month hiatus), letters from artists to artists (e.g. Antonin Artaud to Jasper Johns -- "jam a roman candle up yr ass!" -- or Sally Mann to The Author (TD) -- "play the image card"), new poems, poems on the subject of a community of poets (which poems were written directly after readings and then dedicated to those poets namely Rod Smith, Brian Kim Stefans, Lisa Jarnot), and poems from his second chapbook, \_My Life in Politics, A History of N=A=R=R=A=T=I=V=E Film\_. Tim is transforming his post-Andrews superchunky vocabulary into a device to



generate plausible news, as if Hopkins quit the church and got a gig with Reuters, or ArtForum. But where Hopkins would stick around the same three sounds, Tim \_plays the changes\_, modulating from one cluster of phonemes to another, another. Too much too.

--(hours pass)--

Party at Tim's! Got there after waking from a splendid nap to Xena Warrior Princess's remake of Groundhog Day, then a beefalo dinner, angel hair and artichoke paste. Up the stairs and champagne! and he's moved the futon so the coats go into the front room, only a little music, mainly the same crowd from the reading (nice crowd), I had a nice conversation with my wife and Barbara Henning and then I want to say his name is Shim, he brought out his musical saw and someone else got their guitar, Tim found his banjo, there was a harmonica player and Drew Gardner, thwarted in his search for bongo improvised on a ceramic pasta pot. Lee Ann showed up and they did a happy birthday number of Amazing Grace.

Jordan Davis

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## 289. **Ryan Whyte**

### **Amerika**

*Sun 12 Oct 1997*

---

Crystal occurs to him, inhales shards  
Song of the pure cut  
Sang d'un po e t  
S un  
Ash-stone never given to a woman  
Sleep shakes off drunk words  
This conceals itself within the tightening  
Morning, oriflamme then hard  
around

Liberty raised sword curtain so the deck swelled, sweaty expectants under her dress, French beacon la myrrhe gaie en ses bouteilles closes you left your papers you say? Nothing I can do for you. Stand in the line, there, snaking expectants, snaking, then pooling, sinking, unslaked. Oil prismatic, bugs, tugs.

To get inside the mirror he bit down on a piece of it, spat blood. After carefully dressing the lacerations in his mouth, he drew a bath, undressed, and submerged himself to his nose. Day's sweat glowed on the steaming surface, slicking across a tiny triangle which made its way ever so slowly from one side of his belly to the other, carefully right to left. The shard traced his intestine in a time

lapse photo; further, upon closing his eyes his consciousness was immediately contained by it, so that he was on the inside, looking out at his own insides. Thankfully, the shard's glow lit his interior passageways fairly well, grey falling across red and blue stalactites and liquid crystal strings for 10 or 20 feet in both directions -- that is, 10 or 20 feet on this inner scale. With the mirror's sharp edges he made small incisions on the colon wall; markers, so as to find his way out again. Another him shuddered with each cut, but he, the shard, was in the angel's dress now, ever climbing.

s/hard isn't it inflection English a diamond,

c-c

I I

c-c or is it c

or c-c

I \

c c-c

\ I

c-c

fails to, in this case, mirror, stumble, chide maid Yes, says c, angel, this Yespresence I mean Yes non presence. in the stomach acid etches the mirror and his view is frosted, steamed, soon veins are blurred bloodways, blue fringed, how myopia happens, stomach kisses the eye wake/s. yes. ok.

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290. **Tom Beard**

***Re: SoKalled***

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

Carlo -

I'm not sure where I "utterly misrepresent Penrose's position", but I don't really want to get too far into a debate about AI on a poetics list (although there are interesting overlaps between the subjects). And it's true that there are many in the scientific community who are as ignorant of (and hostile to) the arts as some of those in the arts and humanities are of science.

Metaphor, in its various forms, seems to be central to science as well as poetry (and, if you take Jaynes seriously, to consciousness itself). To recognize that two things which are different are in some sense the same is the beginning of abstract thought, pattern recognition, poetic imagery and metaphysical conceits. As such, it is powerful, and that power can mislead as strongly as it can guide.

The "clockwork" metaphor that dominated nineteenth century science (and, of course, much of the twentieth) has shown itself to be incredibly misleading,

perhaps more so to the opponents of science (e.g. creationists who argue that a watch implies a watchmaker) than to working scientists. So too the "telephone exchange" metaphor of the brain that has influenced much of neuropsychology and AI - it is useful within its limitations, but neglects such things as brain chemistry. Actually, I much prefer Diderot's metaphor (in Rameau's Nephew) of the brain as a harpsichord, with thoughts on one string striking up resonances in others.

You say that "science has always told me never to sentimentalize it or to mistake its aesthetic for anything but incidental", and I certainly agree with the first part. But I'm not sure what you mean by mistaking science's aesthetic "for anything but incidental". Do you mean the commonly held feeling among scientists and mathematicians that simplicity/elegance/beauty is a sign of truth? Keats fell for that, too. Or do you mean that scientists aestheticize their own "quest for truth" and make this a central (rather than incidental) part of (how they represent) their lives? Well, there certainly have been science writers who have been guilty of this, although I'd hope that, post-Popper, we'd all be on a quest for that-which-is-yet-to-be-falsified.

Tom Beard.

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## 291. **Tom Beard**

### **Re: Defining / Expression**

Mon 13 Oct 1997

---

*It's old news that language mediates. It seems too many critics rush to devalue the author's intent. A writer may want to be expressive, may want to "move" the reader emotionally. That language is an imperfect tool for such intent should not invalidate the attempt itself.*

what matters is not  
that language fails  
to touch the world  
but that we try, and  
try, and  
keep on trying  
to reach each other  
with our soft and fallible  
tongues

My trouble with the term "expressive", though, is that it implies a pre-existing thought/emotion/experience that one expresses, imperfectly or otherwise, through the conduit of the poem. It's why I cringe when some people define the

lyric as "an expression of personal emotion": I prefer the phrase "an exploration of ...". The poem is a trace of this exploration (construction?), and I certainly prefer it when this trace is a tangle of lines, some fragmented, some half-erased, rather than a thick line of black felt pen.

Perhaps this is one reason why I have chosen poetry rather than a form that aspires more to 'clarity' or 'directness' of thought. I'd rather not pin down thoughts/emotions/experiences, I like to let them flutter about rather messily (and if the reader wants to watch a different set of flutterers, fine). Or, to risk a rather dodgy use of a scientific metaphor, I want to leave the poem in a "superposition of states", rather than "collapsing the wave function". That's why I don't see the use of ambiguity, wordplay or ellipsis in a poem as mere trickery, but simply as honesty.

    \_the film starts\_ panned across  
    glassy faces (liberals, libertarians), city structured  
    like a language /  
            flashy signs, a concrete garden  
    libertines, liberti  
            sans egaliti, WALK NOW, bodies  
  
    spin & flow, maintain  
    an airy buffer, safety  
  
        between such days  
    we might navigate, our  
    digits tracing the maps, streets  
    we turn into  
            fading as \_the film ends\_

(For those of you not afraid of a little pop culture infiltrating poetry, the words in italics (okay, alright, underscores) at the beginning and end are from Left-field.)

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## 292. **Layne Russell**

### ***John Denver***

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

from "Flying for Me," 1986:

I wanted to wish on the Milky Way  
and dance upon a falling star  
I wanted to give myself  
    and free myself  
and join myself with it all

-- John Denver  
into the light, John....  
Layne  
<http://www.sonic.net/layne>  
"A Quiet Place" -- Poetry

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293. **Hugh Steinberg**

**Re: SoKalled**

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

Tom writes:

>

>Metaphor, in its various forms, seems to be central to science as well as  
>poetry (and, if you take Jaynes seriously, to consciousness itself). To  
>recognize that two things which are different are in some sense the same is  
>the beginning of abstract thought, pattern recognition, poetic imagery and  
>metaphysical conceits. As such, it is powerful, and that power can mislead  
>as strongly as it can guide.

>

I just finished reading a great book by Evelyn Fox Keller titled  
"Refiguring Life: Metaphors of Twentieth Century Biology." It's short,  
but quite illuminating in the way it describes the way metaphor can shape  
directions of scientific inquiry.

Hugh Steinberg

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294. **simon**

**Re: SoKalled**

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

I'd just like to mention here, on the heels of T. Beard's summary remark that  
"[m]etaphor, in its various forms, seems to be central to science as well as po-  
etry (and, if you take Jaynes seriously, to consciousness itself)", which, i'd also  
like to suggest, is something to take literally, concretely, i.e. as literal cognitive  
function, and refer, again to Aviva Vogel's query "I'm curious...why use  
words..." and Henry Gould's reply, that "[t] word is an arbitrary flowing replace-  
able phenomenon subject to the "conductor's baton" of the transformational po-  
etic impulse" (although these last two were not talking on this subject)

I'd like to mention Damasio's claim (a well based claim, or so it seems to me if you consider what we know, and what we don't know, about language acquisition, storage, and domain locations in the brain): that meaning of words \*with concrete referents\* [italics mine] is represented in a way that is linked to the individual's sensory experience \*of those referents\*, and hence, language independent. [itals mine again]

beth simon

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295. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**  
***yet another...***

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

"sometimes i feel like a sad song"

john denver

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296. **Robert Archambeau**  
***Chicago Area Reading***

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

Those of you in and around Chicago might be interested in a reading by Stephanie Strickland, set for Thursday October 16th at 7:30 pm, in the Glen Rowan House on the Campus of Lake Forest College (555 N. Sheridan Rd., Lake Forest IL)

Stephanie Strickland has published three books of poetry, *Give the Body Back* (1991), *The Red Virgin: A Poem of Simone Weil* (1993), and *True North* (1997). She has recently become interested in the potential of computer as a medium for poetry, and *True North* will be available in a hypertext version from Eastgate Systems next year.

Her essay "Poetry in the Electronic Environment is, appropriately, available on the internet, as part of the EBR at:

<http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr5/strick.htm>

Backchannel for more information.

R.A.

--

Robert Archambeau  
Department of English  
Lake Forest College

Lake Forest, IL 60045  
<http://www.lfc.edu/~archamb/>

Only irony is eternal  
--Andrei Codrescu

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297. **mark weiss**

**Re: SoKalled**

Mon 13 Oct 1997

---

How can the meaning of words be independent of language? Does he mean independent of syntax?

*I'd like to mention Damasio's claim (a well based claim, or so it seems to me if you consider what we know, and what we don't know, about language acquisition, storage, and domain locations in the brain): that meaning of words \*with concrete referents\* [italics mine] is represented in a way that is linked to the individual's sensory experience \*of those referents\*, and hence, language independent. [itals mine again]*

beth simon

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298. **Carolyn Guertin**

**Metaphors**

Mon 13 Oct 1997

---

Tom writes:

*Metaphor, in its various forms, seems to be central to science as well as poetry (and, if you take Jaynes seriously, to consciousness itself). To recognize that two things which are different are in some sense the same is the beginning of abstract thought, pattern recognition, poetic imagery and metaphysical conceits. As such, it is powerful, and that power can mislead as strongly as it can guide.*

Hugh Steinberg writes:

*I just finished reading a great book by Evelyn Fox Keller titled "Refiguring Life: Metaphors of Twentieth Century Biology." It's short, but quite illuminating in the way it describes the way metaphor can shape directions of scientific inquiry.*

And there's a new book out from MIT called "Internet Dreams: Archetypes, Myths, and Metaphors," edited by Mark Stefik, which looks at how metaphors have, can and might shape the internet and our interactions with it.

Cheers, Carolyn

---

Carolyn Guertin, Department of English, University of Alberta E-Mail: [REDACTED]; Tel/FAX: [REDACTED] Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cguertin/Guertin.htm> See the 3D Woman! <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cguertin/laser/enter.htm> "Memory is a capricious seamstress." -- Virginia Woolf

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---

299. **Ira Lightman**

***Char/Boulez***

*Mon 13 Oct 1997*

---

Pierre Boulez's "setting" of Char (often without the words!) "Le Marteau sans Maître", is amazing!

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---

300. **Tom Beard**

***SoKalled SF***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

First of all, a correction on the source of Diderot's harpsichord metaphor: it's from d'Alembert's Dream, not Rameau's Nephew. And thanks for the Evelyn Fox Keller and Mark Stefik references: I'll look these up.

Douglas brought up the matter of SF, and asked why no-one has mentioned it. Given that such thought experiments as speculating about the scientific theories of alien intelligences or the rights of intelligent machines might be dismissed as "adolescent fantasy", I'm not surprised that the topic hasn't been broached.

I haven't read much SF since childhood, having grown sick of the cardboard cutouts that pass for people in much of the genre (& I guess this is good fuel for those who would dismiss SF as quintessentially geeky and adolescent). Phillip Mann is one writer who I would recommend, however: especially "Wulfsyarn", which is a fascinating experiment in narrative with interesting speculations on future religions (the worship of St Francis Dionysus). William Gibson is very good at times, and important culturally as the inventor of the dominant metaphor for the space in which these discussions take place.



In films, I'd consider "La Jetee" a masterpiece (does anyone have any impressions of "Level 5"?), and its semi-remake "12 Monkeys" was surprisingly good. I'd need to see "Alphaville" again before I made anything approaching a cogent comment about it, and I still haven't seen "Solaris", despite raves from everyone I know who has seen it. "Blade Runner" astonishes me more every time I watch it.

About the only SF poems that I have read and enjoyed have been by Edwin Morgan, especially "In Sobieski's Shield", "Memories of Earth" and "Thoughts of a Module" (I'm not 100% sure of the titles). Does anyone else know of any interesting SF poems?

Tom Beard.

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### 301. **Christopher Reiner**

#### **Reading**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

A READING OCTOBER 18TH IN NEW YORK CITY:

Cydney Chadwick

&

Lisa Robertson

3 P.M.

HERE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT ART

145 6TH AVE. (BETWEEN SPRING AND BROOME) [REDACTED]

Cydney Chadwick is the author of one full-length collection and five chapbooks. Her work is currently being translated into Portuguese for anthology of innovative American prose, forthcoming out of Sao Paulo, Brazil. She has recently edited *\_An Avec Sampler, 1997\_*, and is the publisher of Avec Books.

Lisa Robertson lives and writes in Vancouver. She is the author of *\_Xeclogue\_* (Tsunami Editions), and her work has appeared in several anthologies. She is a founding member of the Kootenay School of Writing in Vancouver.

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### 302. **adalaide morris**

#### **Re: NEW Davidson, Debord, Fraser, Ginsberg, Levy &&& @ Bridge Street**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Dear Bridge Street Books:

Thanks for your listing of September 15th. Here's an order for which I will be happy to be billed, in the process listed below, and pay by return check. I look forward to getting the books:

Adalaide Morris  
431 Brown Street  
Iowa City, IA 52245

The Collected Poems of Charles Olson\_, ed. George Butterick, U Cal, \$38.  
> New in pb.

*\_Hambone 13\_, ed Nathaniel Mackey, \$10.*

*\_Forms of Expansion: Recent Long Poems by Women\_, Lynne Keller, U. Chicago, \$16.95.*

*\_Another Language: Selected Poems\_, Rosmarie Waldrop, Talisman, \$10.50.*

*Poetics folks receive free shipping on orders of more than \$20. Free shipping + 10% discount on orders of more than \$30. There are two ways to order. 1. E-mail your order to [REDACTED] with your address & we will bill you with the books.*

With best wishes--

Dee

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303. **Layne Russell**

***Re: Reading***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Christopher Reiner wrote:

>

> A READING OCTOBER 18TH IN NEW YORK CITY:

>

> Cydney Chadwick

> &

> Lisa Robertson

>

> 3 P.M.

>

> HERE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT ART

> 145 6TH AVE. (BETWEEN SPRING AND BROOME) [REDACTED]

>

> Cydney Chadwick is the author of one full-length collection and five

> chapbooks. Her work is currently being translated into Portuguese for

- > anthology of innovative American prose, forthcoming out of Sao Paolo,
- > Brazil. She has recently edited *\_An Avec Sampler, 1997\_*, and is the
- > publisher of Avec Books.
- >
- > Lisa Robertson lives and writes in Vancouver. She is the author of
- > *\_Xeclogue\_* (Tsunami Editions), and her work has appeared in several
- > anthologies. She is a founding member of the Kootenay School of Writing in
- > Vancouver.

This promises to be a good night! I saw Cydney last night at David Bromige and Aaron Shurin's reading in Petaluma, CA. She's excited about reading again in NY.... Both Cydney and Lisa are excellent readers.

Layne in sunny California

p.s. David and Aaron were great! what a night!

<http://www.sonic.net/layne>

"A Quiet Place" -- Poetry

<http://www.sonic.net/layne/calendar.html>

"Poets Leave Their Prints" -- Poetry Calendar

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304. **Steve Evans**

### ***ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Eighth in the Impercipient Lecture Series is Barrett Watten's "The Bride of the Assembly Line: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics" (October 1997; 36pp). Nothing's automatic as Watten settles into a Detroit frame of mind, rethinking language writing as a mode of production and THIS magazine as an assembly line. Utopian proposals, pitched critiques, "thick descriptions of gonzo culturalism," and terrific readings of Clark Coolidge's "Made Thought" and *\_The Maintains\_* all roll off the analogical belt, as do those "geniuses" of American organization, Gertrude Stein, Henry Ford, and Noah Webster.

Subscriptions to the ILS are US\$25 for ten issues (no additional charge for overseas subscribers); US\$40 for institutions. Single copies go for US\$5 when available. A handful of imperfectly bound copies in the present batch will be distributed free upon request. Please make checks out to one of the editors, NOT the magazine.

ILS First Series/1997 (\* indicates still available): 1.7 Five Years in the Life of Jack Spicer by Lewis Ellingham & Kevin Killian 1.6 No Saints in Three Acts: On Steven Jonas by Aldon L. Nielsen 1.5 'Imperturbable Things': On Still-Life Poetics by Beth Anderson 1.4 Responses to Bob Perelman's *\_The Marginalization of*

Poetry\_ by Silliman, Lauterbach, Spahr, and Evans; with counter-response by Perelman\* 1.3 The Ground Is the Only Figure by Rosmarie Waldrop 1.2 Radical Dogberry and Society Sketches: Two Essays by Chris Stroffolino 1.1 The Dynamics of Literary Change by Steve Evans (\*in rpt)

Steve Evans & Jennifer Moxley

61 E. Manning Street

Providence RI 02906-4008

ILS at the EPC

<[http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/presses/impercipient\\_lecture.html](http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/presses/impercipient_lecture.html)>

o r i a t n m u ? a t s u  
o o o s

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305. **adalaide morris**

***misdirected reply***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

apologies to the list for listing a shopping list . . .

Dee

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---

306. **Douglas Barbour**

***Re: sf poetry***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

I sent a bit of this to Tom Beard, but here's the info on one anthology of sf poetry, so to speak:

There was an interesting anthology a few years ago of sf-ey poetry, which included a lot of the sf poets but also some surrealists, etc, all brought together by an approach of sorts...? Well, it's hard to say, but when it includes poets like -- well, I rean upstairs to find it & -- Michael Hamburger, Peter Redgrove, Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Georg Trakl, David Gascoyne, among others, it does stretch sf (but then its title is *POLY New Speculative Writing* [Ocean View Books {Box 4148 Mountain View CA 94040} for those who might be intrigued]); of course Ray Bradbury etc are in there too.

I think the idea that language is inherently metaphorical still useful (it sure is damned hard to write something that eludes metaphor all together [see]).

=====  
=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

████████ FAX: ██████████

H: ██████████

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Nowadays  
I want only the wild and tender  
phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'  
its air groaned out  
like the beath of a lover.  
Rashomon by saxophone.  
Michael Ondaatje

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307. **Brian McHale**

***Re: SoKalled SF***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

More SF poetry: Paul Muldoon's "Madoc" projects an alternative history of the 19th-cent., in the vein of Philip Dick's "Man in the High Castle" or Gibson's & Sterling's "The Difference Engine." Pretty lively & interesting. Frederick Turner's "The New World" is set in a post-nuclear-holocaust US, blasted back not to the stone-age but to neo-feudalism. One of the wearier SF cliches. Hard to see why this has been cast as blank-ish verse rather than the prose that it is only inches away from. Some SF details slip in & out of Dorn's "Gunslinger." Also, some campy SF materials in Merrill's "Changing Light at Sandover," mostly of the tabloids- and-"Star Trek" variety. Brian

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308. **Bob Grumman**

***Report from Comprepoetica***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

The first few days at my new site, Comprepoetica, were a success. It had around thirty visits the first day and ten or more the second. Today's the third day it's been officially open. Three surveys have been returned, and three sets of votes for favorite poets and poems.

I hope to start having a subsite containing bios of all who fill out the survey (and want their bios listed, which will be assumed unless I'm told otherwise). I don't have space for photographs but hope eventually to.

So, thanks to all who've visited. The address for Comprepoetica for those who missed my first announcements is:

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

If you visit, remember to look into getting a free site yourself from GeoCities.

--Bob G.

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309. **Pritchett, Pat**

**Re: SoKalled SF**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Possibly add Craig Raine's "Martian" series - really more an anthropological conceit - but then, aren't they (SF aliens) all? Also, Andrew Joron has a book of poems called, I think, \_Science Fiction\_? Not sure on this last.

Patrick Pritchett

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310. **Tom Orange**

**SW Ontario Readings**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Upcoming readings in London and Southwestern Ontario:

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Oct. 15 W Christian Bok (author of "Crystallography: Book I of Information Theory") and Darren Wershler-Henry (author of "Nicholodeon: A Book of Lowerglyphs"), joint reading by performance poets. 12:00 pm, University College 225 (Faculty Lounge), U.W.O. Campus Department of English Literature and Film Series

Oct. 16 Th Sunny Li, author reading of "Inside the Hermit Kingdom": A glimpse at life in North Korea, one of the world's most reclusive nations. 7:30 pm, McIntosh Gallery, U.W.O. Campus sponsored by the Book Store at Western

Oct. 16 Th Julia Kristeva (Paris & Columbia), "Proust: Issues of Identity" 4:00-6:00pm, University College 224 (Convocation Hall) Faculty of Arts Lectures: also sponsored by James A. and Marjorie M. Spencely

Lectureship in Literature, The Tamblyn Lecture Series,  
English, Department of French, Centre for Study of  
and Foundation Western

Department of  
Theory & Criticism,

Oct. 17 Fr "Women Travellers." Nancy Holmes (author of "Valancy and the  
New World", Kalamalka New Writers Series, 1988; "Down to the  
Golden Chersonese: Victorian Lady Travellers", Sono Nis, 1991) and  
Cornelia Hoogland ("The Wire-Thin Bride). 8.00pm, Art Gallery St.  
Thomas-Elgin, 301 Talbot St, St. Thomas.

Oct. 18 Sa Nancy Holmes and Julie Berry, St. Thomas Poet of "Worn  
Thresholds." Forest City Gallery, 795 Dundas St., London.

Oct. 23 Th Julia Kristeva, "Proust: Issues of Identity" (third and last  
lecture: see Oct. 16 for details)

Oct. 24 F Bonnie Burnard (Writer-in-Residence and author of The Old  
Dance, Women of Influence, Casino and Other Stories) presents a read-  
ing, 12 noon, University College 225 (Faculty Lounge) Department of  
English Literature & Film Series

Oct. 24 F poets from canada, u.s.a., u.k., "Reading," including Taylor  
Brady, cris cheek, Bill Howe, and Scott Pound.  
8:00 pm, Forest City Gallery, 795 Dundas Street  
Supported by the Faculty of Arts

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311. **LAURA MORIARTY**  
***Burger, Roitman and Gluck***  
*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

More non:

Mary Burger, Judith Roitman and Robert Gluck.

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty>

With more in the works.

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312. **Matthew Stadler**  
***Re: Reading***  
*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

READING NOVEMBER 18, SEATTLE, WA

The Rendezvous Reading Series will present:

LISA ROBERTSON, poet from Vancouver BC, author of Xeclogues and Debbie  
and

ROBERT GLUCK, from San Francisco, author of Jack the Modernist, Reader,  
etc.

Tuesday November 18, 8:00 pm, \$4  
at Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave.  
(the old New City Theater building), on Capitol Hill,  
[REDACTED]

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313. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**  
**sokal etc...**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

you folks who are interested might wanna check out the (in my view, solid) refutation of sokal, gross & levitt (re derrida in particular) in

"'But It Is Above All Not True': Derrida, Relativity, and the 'Science Wars'"

by Arkady Plotnitsky

in the journal *\_postmodern culture\_*, at

<http://jefferson.village.Virginia.EDU/pmc/text-only/issue.197/plotnitsky.197>

best,

joe

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314. **groberts**  
**Re: sf poetry**

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

See also an old anthology, 1970, called *Inside Outer Space: New Poems of the Space Age*, edited by Robert Vas Dias. Not much science fiction really, but mostly a collection of poems responding to space travel and technology, and including Antin, Blackburn, Blaser, Bowering, Corman, Enslin, Kelly, Mac Low, Zukofsky among poets of interest to the Poetics list.

Gary R.

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315. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: Defining / Expression /experiential**

Tue 14 Oct 1997

---

At 05:49 PM 10/13/97 +1300, Tom Beard wrote:

*My trouble with the term "expressive", though, is that it implies a pre-existing thought/emotion/experience that one expresses, imperfectly or otherwise, through the conduit of the poem. It's why I cringe when some people define the lyric as "an expression of personal emotion": I prefer the phrase "an exploration of ...". The poem is a trace of this exploration (construction?), and I certainly prefer it when this trace is a tangle of lines, some fragmented, some half-erased, rather than a thick line of black felt pen.*

Your comments started me thinking of the therapeutic parallels (for better or worse I am such by trade). Words such as expressive (i wrote sexpressive even though i am not a freudian) tend to put people off and are really not adequate to explain what happens. It is more of an experiencing of feeling through the action of expressing or experiential/construction. Both experiential and construction are valid and lively forms of therapy. I have not really seen much on the topic of experiential and/or constructive poetry even though i am aware of it's description by individual poets. If anyone is still with me through my jargon here, I would appreciate information on sources. tom bell

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316. **david bromige**

**reading tour**

Tue 14 Oct 1997

---

I am now once again able to send messages (my thanks to Layne Russell for posting to the List in my behalf, that my "Send" function was down) and would like to take the opportunity to post the sked of my upcoming tour, Last week when I read in San francisco, Hugh Steinberg came up afterwards and intro'd himself : I like meeting people who hitherto were just names on the net.

Hamilton Ontario, eve of sunday oct 19 : read with Lisa Robertson in the Live Lit" series run by Kerry Schooley, who has the details at [REDACTED]

Buffalo, eve of monday oct 20 : read at : "Talking Leaves" books, 7 pm. Details from John Walsh, [REDACTED].

Toronto, eve of Wednesday, Oct 22 : read at the Arts Bar with Lisa Robertson. Details from "Pierre L'Abbe" <[REDACTED]> .

Toronto, eve of Sunday, Oct 26 : read at "The Idler", 255 Davenport (just N of Bloor, @ just W of Yonge), 8 pm, with Gregg Orr Robertson & Mark Fitkin. Further details from Peter McFee, [REDACTED].

SUNY Albany, eve of Wednesday, Oct 29 : reading, the details of which are with Pierre Joris, [REDACTED].

NYC, Thursday oct 30, at Teachers & Writers, 5 Union Sq W, curator Jordan Davis ([REDACTED]) : read with Alan Jennifer Sondheim, 7 pm.

Philadelphia, Friday oct 31, at the Writers House, U Penn, at 4pm: a reading, followed by a panel discussion with Laura Moriarty (who will have read at this location the previous evening). 3805 Locust Walk. Contact persons include Louis Cabri of this List ([REDACTED]) and Kerry Sherin ([REDACTED]).

NYC, Saturday, Nov 1, at CAFE HERE, 145 Sixth Ave, bet. Spring & Broome ([REDACTED]), curator Liz Fodaski, at 3 pm, with Brian Kim Stefans.

Sunday Nov 2, I fly home to SF.

I hope to meet some of my fellow-listopolitans during these 2 weeks. Overnight accommodations are still soft for two nites in NYC, and a couple of nites in Toronto. I am a past winner (1993) of the James & Debbie Sherry Award for Perfect House-Guest.

I will of necessity unsubscribe from the List before I leave, probably for 3 weeks (after I return to Calif, I go to UC San Diego for a couple of days). My last full day onList will likely be Thursday.

Excuse the shameful self-promotion? Thanks, David

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317. **Eliza McGrand**

***cuisinart computer crash***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Hi folks,

Recently I sent out an invitation for Submissions to THE FREE CUISENART on the topic of "rites of passage." I was luck enough to receive many pieces of work to read. Unfortunately, before I could back up the files, my computer crashed, and I do mean CRASHED! It took everything with it.

I do apologize for the inconvenience. But if you sent any work to THE FREE CUISENART either for "rites of passage" or anything else in the last eight weeks, I would appreciate it if you would send again to [REDACTED] instead of [REDACTED]

You cooperation will be most helpful in putting the issue together again. You may yell and throw tomatoes if you wish.

Thanks,

Jordanne Holyoak-Kitchel, editor, THE FREE CUISENART

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318. **Safdie Joseph**

**Re: reading tour**

Tue 14 Oct 1997

God -- three weeks without Bromige on the list. The wit, the sometimes-pointed but never overly harsh rejoinders, the sexual by-play, the clear and balanced perceptions . . . gone. A void, an absence. A hole at the heart of things. Someone might even quote Blanchot pretty soon. What to do? Perhaps we could explore creating the linguistic equivalent of a wake . . .

Just kidding, David. As another who actually did have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bromige at one of his recent readings (this one in Seattle with Robin Blaser, a truly astonishing event) I can second his self-promotion by suggesting everyone within range of the list attend these next scheduled events. They give one hope for poetry.

A new Florida Marlins fan,

Joe Safdie

David Bromige wrote (in part):

*I will of necessity unsubscribe from the List before I leave, probably for 3 weeks (after I return to Calif, I go to UC San Diego for a couple of days). My last full day onList will likely be Thursday.*

*Excuse the shameful self-promotion? Thanks, David*

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319. **Harold Rhenisch**

**Re: SoKalled**

Tue 14 Oct 1997

Maybe he means that perceived meanings of words are individual, based upon the accretions of individual experience, and that language is more strongly linked to sensory experience than to syntactical knowledge?

*How can the meaning of words be independent of language? Does he mean independent of syntax?*

*I'd like to mention Damasio's claim (a well based claim, or so it seems to me if you consider what we know, and what we don't know, about language acquisition, storage, and domain locations in the brain): that meaning of words \*with concrete referents\* [italics mine] is represented in a way that is linked to the individual's sensory experience \*of those referents\*, and hence, language independent. [italics mine again]*

*beth simon*

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### 320. **Harold Rhenisch**

#### **Re: Defining / Expression**

Tue 14 Oct 1997

"I cringe when somepeople define the lyric as "an expression of personal emotion": I prefer the phrase "an exploration of ...". The poem is a trace of this exploration (construction?), and I certainly prefer it when this trace is a tangle of lines, some fragmented, some half-erased, rather than a thick line of black felt pen"

I'm right with you here, but "an exploration of personal emotion"? I have always been uneasy about that term, too. I have an image of a guy in a pith helmet hacking at the creepers with a machete will a bunch of pigmies follow behind with his cases of champagne and his tents and his gramophone.

I think there are enough cases where poems work from such a strong sense of unity that there is no practical distinction between "exploration" and "emotion", that it might be fruitful to suggest that something (or things) entirely different is (or are) going on.

Re-wiring of metaphoric sets?

Creation of the world through the agency of personal engagement and its re-creation through an engagement with language?

Creation (or adjustment) of the 'self' across the gap of an emotional break?

Those are pretty lousy definitions. I do suspect, however, that there is a lot going on which "an exploration of personal emotion" misses, because it still puts the act of writing outside of the emotion, the self, the perception, or whatever tools we are using at the time.

Harold Rhenisch

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321. **Daniel Zimmerman**

***Late Capitalism***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Joe Duemer wrote:

So Dan, why did you backchannel me this post? I think it is quite the most intelligent thing any of us have said on the subject, and it certainly serves to advance the conversation. Consider going public, please.

So: with an invitation like that, how can I resist? [Thanks, Joe.] Here's my backchannel:

Joe,        It strikes me that the discussion of the "exchange value" of Late Capitalism more bitingly underscores the "non-exchange" [i.e., acquisitive, period] "value" persistent at least since Luca Pacioli's invention of double-entry book-keeping & the valorization of usury [for Christians]. The West seems never to have understood Lao Tze: "The scholar [read: banker, a la Paolo Friere] gains every day; the Taoist loses every day." Hey: I sure have.        How this relates to poetry I find myself loath to speculate, dwelling as I do remote from the world of prizes, grants, garlands "brief as a girl's," SA\_S!\_Es, honoraria, plaques, collectable pubic hairs, Litt.Ds, &c. Better, it seems to me, not to relate it \_at all\_ to what I like to call "the teeth machine" -- basically, Dylan's "heart attack machine" \_with a smile\_.        Keep hope alive! Best, Dan Zimmerman

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322. **R. Gancie**

***SoKalled***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Tom. What I mean by science's "aesthetic is incidental", is simply that it is not a primary or even tertiary concern of science to create beauty. Others such as poets create the conditions and criteria for beauty. Science, often many light years behind us (note the borrowed exaggeration for effect) apply our aesthetics to the various representational forms that their phenomena take. Like Gregory Corso once said, "Everyone wants to be a poet. Everyone aspires to poetry." Hofstadter's piece on Chopin is a good example. Hofstadter repeatedly refers to Chopin's hands through ornithological metaphors reminiscent of poems published in high school lit mags of the 1890's when Darwinian bird prints filled popular magazines and subscription publications. I practically had a stroke

when you compared Keat's "Negative Capability" (?) to the scientific method. Didn't Keats say "Beauty is Difficult." I know he didn't say "Beauty is Simple" or "Elegant." Society matrons are "elegant" and that indeed is a minor aesthetic in the service of power. Your apparent admiration of Sir Karl indicates to me just how far apart we are on these matters. Hugh. Keller's "Refiguring Life" is a damn fine book. This autodidact finds her tracing of Claude Shannon's Information Theory into metaphors that inform and in some ways determine theories in Genetics impeccable. Of course, Claude Shannon himself was not adverse to taking the easy way out when it came to difficult determinations involving language. When Shannon was to deliver his seminal paper on Information Theory he still did not have a term to describe some of his phenomena. So he approached John von Neumann about his problem. Von Neumann suggested that he use the word 'entropy' because as von Neumann put it "nobody knows what it means." So the term entropy was stuffed with yet another set of phenomena and the term in Information Theory has caused sporadic and unnecessary debate ever since. A friend of mine who studied under one of Shannon's proteges and is an electrical engineer who has worked on top secret military projects all of his life, cringes when I tell (no repeat ad nauseam) this story. He once arranged for me to have dinner with his mentor/Shannon protégé and the protégé didn't like it. I didn't care much for it myself. Joe. Plotnitsky? I think I've read it and used some for piece in Science as Culture.---Carlo Parcelli

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323. **Rachel Loden**

***reading tour & "no more language-bashing" redux***

*Tue 14 Oct 1997*

---

Joe Safdie wrote:

| *God -- three weeks without Bromige on the list.*

Yes, what a sad prospect, and even sadder what with Bowering off celebrating Canadian Thanksgiving or whatever he's doing. And weeks after Mark Prejsnar scolded Bromridge for "trivializ[ing] and dismiss[ing] issues that are actually about poetix," I continue to think that DB's "no more language-bashing" post, excerpted just below, which so offended Mark P. for whatever mysterious reason:

. . . But Language-writing has left the planet, the way Imagism left the planet (except for \_Poetry (Chicago)\_ & various "sunday-painting" clubs) by 1929. That Language-writing parrot is a dead parrot. That parrot has been transformed into its future molecules. And so it follows that, dead & gone, Language-writing cannot exist as an object of bashery. They don't want to go on about "the tensile strength of last winter's icicles". If a poem offend thee in the present, pluck it

out. But look to thine own eye, that its mote not be bigger than a beam. In short, people will have to do something else with their Oedipal longings . . .

--contained more poetic thought per square pixel than any number of obtuse ramblings, and lived another nine lives \*as language\*. It baffles me that anyone who claims to value innovation in poetry, and no firewall between poetry and criticism, can turn around and demand paint-by-number, stay-on-the-so-called-subject "meaning" on a list devoted to poetic discussion.

Rachel Loden

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324. **david bromige**  
***scolded & didnt know it***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Until Rachel Loden's post today, "reading tour & 'No more language-bashing'", I wasn't aware I had been scolded by Mark Presjnar. I must have missed his post on that day, although I usually read him & find myself agreeing. But I won't agree to his characterization of my "No more L-B" post as "trivializing". Perhaps the humor in it was misleading. Humor often is. For years, I thought George Bowering was someone else. Then one day I discovered I was right.

I meant to be saying (but less ploddingly) that I saw LangPo as an historical moment, & that I perceive that moment as having passed. And that I really don't see the sense of trying to fit new poets into that historical moment--don't see the sense of trying to e-lon-gate that moment--simply on the basis of formal similarities; because those formal moves that were LangPo had another meaning then\_ .

And I hold to my estimate that the moment of Imagism was over before 1929, except as certain techniques were perpetuated in the poetry of however many successors. In the poetry of founding members HD & EP to be sure, & the later recruit WCW; but it was no longer Imagism, Mark, do you follow me?

So one can certainly discuss LangPo, & one can address whatever present poetries, but to go on adding new recruits to LangPo now looks like making a big ball of rubber bands just to see it grow bigger, or to have something to do with one's rubber bands. And as for bashing LangPo, it's been done. And done and done and done. And LangPo won't go away. It happened.

But that's all I meant. I guess I thought, if I were young, I'd find something new to name. But it is hard for generations to speak to one another. That Rachel "heard" me astonishes, for she is half a generation away. We (not nec incl Rachel) certainly went on & on about the New American Poetry, were still doing so 20 years after it had begun. Perhaps best to consider my remarks the

squeaks & groans of aged curmudgeonhood, & go about one's business as if nothing had happened. Excuse the intrusion. David

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325. **mark weiss**

***Re: SoKalled***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Isn't it a pity that we have to guess at his meaning.

At 03:21 PM 10/14/97 -0700, you wrote:

>Maybe he means that perceived meanings of words are individual, based upon  
>the accretions of individual experience, and that language is more strongly  
>linked to sensory experience than to syntactical knowledge?

>

>>How can the meaning of words be independent of language? Does he mean  
>>independent of syntax?

>

>>I'd like to mention Damasio's claim (a well based claim, or so it  
>>seems to me if you consider what we know, and what we don't know,  
>>about language acquisition, storage, and domain locations in  
>>the brain): that meaning of words *\*with concrete referents\** [italics  
>>mine] is represented in a way that is linked to the individual's  
>>sensory experience *\*of those referents\**, and hence, language  
>>independent. [itals mine again]

>>

>>beth simon

>>

>>

>

>

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326. **George Bowering**

***Re: reading tour***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

I would like to second what Bromige said. He IS a good house guest. Well, except for that thing he has about house pets. Ifd you havent got a dog or cat or say, turtle, David is greeat to have stay over. He doesnt bother goldfish.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,



Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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327. **George Thompson**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

I have used expressive language:

scene 1:

2 o'clock in the morning. No one in sight. I walk through the ratty parking lot looking for my car. I find it, reach for my keys. They're not there. They are locked in the car.

I kick the tire, I slam my fist on the hood. I curse the car, I curse myself, I curse God. I use exuberant obscenities throughout. I am utterly without company.

But what does this have to do with poetry?

scene 2:

My nerdy neighbor with lots of disposable income considers me a poet, and commissions me to write a love poem directed to his beloved. I go get my book of 500 favorite love poems and do a little research. Then I sit down to work, and in a couple of hours I produce a hallmark-lovely little poem. Let's say \$500 US [maybe less].

The language used in this poem is not expressive, since I had no feelings to vent whatsoever as I wrote them down. I was paid to evoke these feelings in my target [victim], not to express myself. I call this evocative language [and writers and politicians are fond of this sort of language too].

Now Henry Gould is going to deny that my hallmark-lovely little poem is a poem, because something or other is missing in it. Henry, I'll admit that it is a bad little poem [not worth \$500 US, really, at least to the members of this list], but it's still a poem in my view.

You find all sorts of things in poems, most of them predictable, some startling, but what is essential?

Self-expression? the expression of anything? evocation? feelings of fellowship with all things great and small? a political or a social conscience? metaphor? meaning? message?

I can think of poems in which each and every one of these things is absent. So what after all is essential?

Well, never mind. But I think all poetry fetishizes language, by definition.

But I'm willing to negotiate.

George Thompson

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328. **henry g**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

On Wed, 15 Oct 1997 08:21:01 -0400 George Thompson said:

>

>scene 2:

>

>My nerdy neighbor with lots of disposable income considers me a poet, and

>commissions me to write a love poem directed to his beloved. I go get my

>book of 500 favorite love poems and do a little research. Then I sit down

>to work, and in a couple of hours I produce a hallmark-lovely little poem.

>Let's say \$500 US [maybe less].

>

>The language used in this poem is not expressive, since I had no feelings

>to vent whatsoever as I wrote them down. I was paid to evoke these feelings

>in my target [victim], not to express myself. I call this evocative

>language [and writers and politicians are fond of this sort of language

>too].

>

>Now Henry Gould is going to deny that my hallmark-lovely little poem is a

>poem, because something or other is missing in it. Henry, I'll admit that

>it is a bad little poem [not worth \$500 US, really, at least to the members

>of this list], but it's still a poem in my view.

Well, George, now that you've dragged me kicking & screaming into another posting to the list - you're right. I don't think it is a poem, because you LEFT THE CAR OUT OF IT from scene #1.

This also relates to Rachel & David B's last messages. Language Poetry seems to be still alive, at least in the realm of revisionism & re-interp- retation, in the minds of some of its founders. See Barrett Watten's recent essay, the latest in the Impercipient Lecture Series. It's all about cars, among other things. How Language Poetry was-is no part of any modernist global virtual art-autonomy project, but is implicated, and implicates itself [via the function of ANALOGY in

writing, following the way Gertrude Stein "organized" writing in analogy to Ford Motor mass production] in the world politico-economic system [alienated labor].

Thus meaning(s) can be found in the sound poems of Clark Coolidge in ANALOGY to large cultural phenomena. The way any art responds to/ is involved in what's going on.

I have no problem with this. Rachel, when you go after the call for "meaning" in poetry you kind of stereotype what interests me (I don't know about M. Prejsnar) in this regard. Watten quotes an early poem of his in which he rewrites an old english riddle from the Exeter Book & makes the unspoken key word to the riddle, "automobile". Now this is what interests me about meaning : layered, encrypted meaning which depends upon a dialogue with what's been done before. Poems in necessary dialogue.

But this is where I would also step aside from the langpos as I understand them from Watten's rewrite. How you respond to "the tradition" is both political & artistic. In my mind it's analogous to the battle between futurism & acmeism in early soviet Russia. I would characterize art as essentially critical in a transcendent/uncanny sense, rather than a revolutionary sense. I would gravitate toward modernism as a conservative or "classical" movement rather than a "modern"/technical movement. & I would analogize poetry more in terms of "natural" labor (labor-pangs) than industrial production. "Material conditions" and their political ramifications are only partially explained by Marxism. o.k.? get that solar car in there, George.

Watten talks about how Stein related mass auto production & her "modern" ability to travel to the capital & sit down with Eleanor Roosevelt. It occurred to me that the book I just came out with, CYCLOBIOGRAPHY, has its own roots in PRE-LANGPO 60s experience (my own initial learning from Ted Berrigan & the NY school) & charts a divergence in diametric opposition to langpo. It's about a (metaphoric) journey to the capital - by tricycle. - Henry Gould

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329. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**  
*sci-tech/poetry/etc...*

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

there are obvious overlaps twixt this thread on b. watten's impercipient piece (run right out and get yourself a copy!) and the question of science wars, the relation of science, and technology, to the arts, etc...

i found carlo's discussion of the roots of shannon's "entropy" absolutely fascinating... capricious or not, though (and what came 'off the top' of von

neumann's head, regardless his naysaying, may in fact have been the result of his peculiar talents), i'd still say that the parallels drawn twixt info. theory and thermo. are fascinating and worth plumbing (and i STILL like jeremy campbell's \_grammatical man\_, which is to say that i find much of value in \*some\* popular science writing)... still, i've always felt that this overlap of terms worked to obscure the energy basis of information processing... that is, energy, though not what most think it is, has at least the value of being assigned a (human and social) cost as such... whereas information, even as a word, often seems to invoke floating signifiers and the like...

but this development in information theory takes place post-wwii... and many of the poets discussed on this list were writing then... so one question becomes something like, 'what are the relations between info. theory, cybernetics, and poetry?'... and the answer then turns on how one conceives of the relations, broadly, between the arts and the sciences (nothing academically restrictive implied or intended), which of course includes poetry...

my own work (PLUG: forthcoming early next year in the journal \_nineteenth century studies\_, for those interested---on whitman and the concept of "energy") suggests (at least to me!) that this is an incredibly difficult thing to get at, finally... that it does not reduce to clearcut metaphorical translation (the work of metaphor overestimated in this regard---or at least, metaphor can actually obscure more structural considerations), nor is it bound by the mathematical basis of so much science (which of course \*can become\*---and i say this as a former math major!---a dodge for discussing the good & bad and in-between things that science and technology presumably 'bring to life')... i'm blurring all sorta issues and distinctions as i write, please allow me this elbow room!...

i'll still hold to the necessity of the scientific and technological as viable social-professional categories, forms of inquiry, and so forth, with all of my critical and professional reservations intact... at the same time, i don't quite believe that science, for example, should be understood entirely on their own terms---with all due respect, i see these enterprises as bound by social/cultural/historically determinate value(s)... hence i think one needs simply to respect the claims made by these ways of knowing with due regard for their limits---and this goes for scientists and technologists too!... it's like poetry---poets make claims that are pertinent to poetry, and should be understood as viable in such terms... when you step outside of poetry, as it were (and these latter three words, for you close readers, are obviously doing a LOT of work here), your claims are susceptible to analysis and pie-throwing by, for example, sociologists... which is not to deny their legitimacy, or to condone pie-throwing... only to suggest the pragmatic basis of claims, and the (not incommensurability, no), but the (let's be technician for a moment) incompatibilities that surface when the possibilities of competing discourses impinge upon one another...

now i wish i'd have said alla that AND sounded a bit more speculative... b/c i really do mean to be... but i'm in a hurry!...

so hey, hope to see some of you in minneapolis, at the xcultural poetix shindig!...

DRESS WARM!...

best,

joe

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330. **Pritchett, Pat**

***Re: Dorn/Raworth Reading***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Several of us Boulderites overcame our customary aversion for Denver and environs and made the trip down to DU last night to hear Ed Dorn and Tom Raworth read. The Dupont Room of the august Mary Reed Bldg is tricked out, as Ed put it, in "Gothic fakery." It's also painted a horrible puke green color, but enough about that.

Ed, who's been "battling" pancreatic cancer as many of you know, was looking, I thought, pretty damned good - quite gaunt - he'd evidently lost some weight - but he was clear, in good humor, and read with real panache excerpts from two long poems: "Lost Dog Variorum," and another about "the Cheyenne axis," (title escapes me - I didn't make notes), and several shorter pieces.

A ruddy-faced Tom Raworth followed Ed. Tom read a few poems from his new Roof edition of Selected Poems, *Clean & Well-Lit*, and from a long, unfinished work titled "Meadow," which was something of a tour de force, even for Tom. My only complaint was that he didn't read long enough.

Present in the audience: Cole Swensen, who emceed the evening, Jack Collom, Rachel Levitsky, Peter Michelson (who seemed to laugh throughout most of Ed's reading), Lindsay Hill, Michael Friedman, Anne Waldman, Tom Peters, Bin Ramke, and Mark Irwin, whom I succeeded in ignoring/avoiding all night and it was a very small room, too.

Patrick Pritchett

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331. **George Thompson**

**Re: ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

Hi,

I've just written a check for a subscription to ILS. Just one little question. Is the subscription for the first ten issues, or for the next ten? I want to subscribe in either case. But I'd like to be able to catch up on the earlier issues that I missed.

It is a very attractive series!

Thanks

George Thompson

*Eighth in the Impercipient Lecture Series is Barrett Watten's "The Bride of the Assembly Line: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics" (October 1997; 36pp). Nothing's automatic as Watten settles into a Detroit frame of mind, rethinking language writing as a mode of production and THIS magazine as an assembly line. Utopian proposals, pitched critiques, "thick descriptions of gonzo culturalism," and terrific readings of Clark Coolidge's "Made Thought" and \_The Maintains\_ all roll off the analogical belt, as do those "geniuses" of American organization, Gertrude Stein, Henry Ford, and Noah Webster.*

*Subscriptions to the ILS are US\$25 for ten issues (no additional charge for overseas subscribers); US\$40 for institutions. Single copies go for US\$5 when available. A handful of imperfectly bound copies in the present batch will be distributed free upon request. Please make checks out to one of the editors, NOT the magazine.*

*ILS First Series/1997 (\* indicates still available):*

- 1.7 Five Years in the Life of Jack Spicer by Lewis Ellingham & Kevin Killian*
- 1.6 No Saints in Three Acts: On Steven Jonas by Aldon L. Nielsen*
- 1.5 'Imperturbable Things': On Still-Life Poetics by Beth Anderson*
- 1.4 Responses to Bob Perelman's \_The Marginalization of Poetry\_ by Silliman, Lauterbach, Spahr, and Evans; with counter-response by Perelman\**
- 1.3 The Ground Is the Only Figure by Rosmarie Waldrop*
- 1.2 Radical Dogberry and Society Sketches: Two Essays by Chris Stroffolino*
- 1.1 The Dynamics of Literary Change by Steve Evans (\*in rpt)*

*Steve Evans & Jennifer Moxley*

*61 E. Manning Street*

*Providence RI 02906-4008*

*ILS at the EPC <[http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/presses/impercipient\\_lecture.html](http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/presses/impercipient_lecture.html)>*

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?  
a t s u o o o s

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332. **Sylvester Pollet**  
**Re: Defining / Expression**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

#1 was a poem, #2 was verse. I like to think of it as a train--sometimes I express, sometimes I local.

*I have used expressive language:*

*scene 1:*

*2 o'clock in the morning. No one in sight. I walk through the ratty parking lot looking for my car. I find it, reach for my keys. They're not there. They are locked in the car.*

*I kick the tire, I slam my fist on the hood. I curse the car, I curse myself, I curse God. I use exuberant obscenities throughout. I am utterly without company.*

*But what does this have to do with poetry?*

*scene 2:*

*My nerdy neighbor with lots of disposable income considers me a poet, and commissions me to write a love poem directed to his beloved. I go get my book of 500 favorite love poems and do a little research. Then I sit down to work, and in a couple of hours I produce a hallmark-lovely little poem. Let's say \$500 US [maybe less].*

*The language used in this poem is not expressive, since I had no feelings to vent whatsoever as I wrote them down. I was paid to evoke these feelings in my target [victim], not to express myself. I call this evocative language [and writers and politicians are fond of this sort of language too].*

*Now Henry Gould is going to deny that my hallmark-lovely little poem is a poem, because something or other is missing in it. Henry, I'll admit that it is a bad little poem [not worth \$500 US, really, at least to the members of this list], but it's still a poem in my view.*

*You find all sorts of things in poems, most of them predictable, some startling, but what is essential?*

*Self-expression? the expression of anything? evocation? feelings of*

*fellowship with all things great and small? a political or a social  
conscience? metaphor? meaning? message?*

*I can think of poems in which each and every one of these things is absent.  
So what after all is essential?*

*Well, never mind. But I think all poetry fetishizes language, by definition.*

*But I'm willing to negotiate.*

*George Thompson*

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### 333. **George Thompson**

#### **Re: ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

Sorry,

Of course, that last post from me was meant for Steve Evans.

Well, it could have been worse. It could have been a snapshot of Bromige mess-  
ing around with Bowering's house pets.

GT

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### 334. **Maria Damon**

#### **Re: ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

as a former house pet of george bowering, i appreciate your fine sense of dis-  
cretion. what bowering is omitting, of course, are his own predilections for the  
more untamed species that dwell on the great tundras and wildernesses. hence  
his deep attraction to canada.

At 10:38 AM -0400 10/15/97, George Thompson wrote:

>Sorry,

>

>Of course, that last post from me was meant for Steve Evans.

>

>Well, it could have been worse. It could have been a snapshot of Bromige

>messing around with Bowering's house pets.

>

>GT

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335. **p. durgin**

**Re: Defining / Expression**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

No negotiations nec. This pinpoints it absolutely. Content schmontent and expression schexpression. Poetry, as a literary genre, must have as its overriding focus, the utilization of the language, which is not to be confused with the "tounge" from which it was sprung.

|||■■■■|||

---

On Wed, 15 Oct 1997, George Thompson wrote:

*Well, never mind. But I think all poetry fetishizes language, by definition.*

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336. **Joseph Conte**

**Dictionary of Literary Biography**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

Dear Poetics Listmembers:

I'm in the home stretch of editing a three-volume series of the \_Dictionary of Literary Biography\_ on American Poets Since World War II. (That rubric includes all of North America and its native inhabitants, for our Canadian friends on the list).

Because a few of the entries for this volume have not been forthcoming, I'm looking for two or three new contributors who would be willing to write a 5000 word entry on a contemporary (N.) American poet (who has not already been treated in recent \_DLB\_ volumes). Rewards are modest: a \$100 honorarium and a copy of the hardcover volume that sells to libraries and institutions for about \$150.

Also, time is short. Production on the volume will probably begin in December, so anyone interested will have to produce their entry by no later than December 15, 1997.

A sampling of the entries currently already included in this volume (some by or about Poetics Listmembers, I might add):

John Cage, by Rod Smith

Anne Carson, by Steven Marks

Robert Duncan, by George Butterick and revised by Robert Bertholf

Ann Lauterbach, by James McCorkle

Jackson MacLow, by Bruce Campbell  
Bob Perelman, by Steven Evans  
Leslie Scalapino, by Elisabeth Frost  
Barrett Watten, by Jacques Debrot

If you're interested in contributing, and can work within the deadline, please contact me backchannel:



Thanks.

Joseph Conte

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337. **mark weiss**

***Poetry sites***

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

A plea for help--I need suggestions of other poetry sites on the web that would be amenable to announcements of new books.

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338. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: scolded & didnt know it***

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

Glad to see this early sign of "el nino" signed DB

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339. **David Benedetti**

***Re: "no more language-bashing" bromige post***

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

Bromige's statement on "no more language-bashing":

*. . . But Language-writing has left the planet, the way Imagism left the planet (except for \_Poetry (Chicago)\_ & various "sunday-painting" clubs) by 1929. That Language-writing parrot is a dead parrot. That parrot has been transformed into its future molecules. And so it follows that, dead & gone, Language-writing cannot exist as an object of bashery. They dont want to go on about "the tensile strength of last winter's icicles". If a poem offend thee in the present, pluck it out. But look to thine own eye, that its mote not be bigger than a beam. In short, people will have to do something else with their Oedipal longings . . .*

struck me as insightful, especially as he mentioned the "Oedipal longings" connected with LangPo bashing. The first chapter of my dissertation took on the issue of why people (in general) dislike poetry--and bash LangPo especially--and I drew parallels to (or commented on) the Oedipal rivalry as being a significant part of that bashing. I argue that part of the threat presented by LangPo to some readers comes from LangPo's refusal (or neglect) of participation in the usual Oedipal rivalries set up in the "understanding" or "meaning production" of (the reading of) the poem.

This chapter of my dissertation has also been reworked and will appear in Poetics Journal as "Fear of Poetic Knowledge," hopefully late this year (according to my last communication with Barrett Watten). So, to extend the discussion....  
--David Benedetti

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340. **Andrew D Epstein**  
***Creeley reading, NYC***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

For those of you in the New York area, here's an announcement:

THE F. W. DUPEE POETRY READING SERIES PRESENTS

ROBERT CREELEY

Introduced by Kenneth Koch

Thursday, October 23

8 PM

Maison Francaise

Columbia University

116th & Broadway (1 or 9 subway)

Admission Free

Please contact me if you have any questions ... Hope to see you there!

Andrew Epstein

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341. **Jena Osman**  
***yet another reading in nyc***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

I'll be reading with Fiona Templeton at St. Marks Church

Wed., Oct. 22, 8:00.

I hope some of you can make it.

Jena Osman



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342. **Christopher Alexander**  
***nominative press collective nouns...***

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

announcing the publication of 2 new chapbooks  
from nominative press collective!

--

by postcard: beloved series                  Rachel Daley  
edition of 40. 5.5 x 6.5", hand-sewn, heavy coverstock  
w. mylar endpapers; 20 printed pp.; illustration by  
Rachel Daley & Christopher Alexander.

\$4 / \$7 institutional

--

-ocracy 8 & 9                  Peter Ganick & Sheila Murphy

2 parts of the ongoing collaborative project

edition of 120. 5.5 x 8.5", saddle stapled, heavy  
coverstock; 16 printed pp.; available in 5 different  
covers! cover art by CT artist Cherie Mittenthal.

\$3 / \$5 institutional

--

!! samples may be viewed via the www @  
<http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>  
(please come check out the newly revamped site!)

thanks! Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: 

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

www: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

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343. **David Benedetti**  
**Denver**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

On Mon, 13 Oct 1997, Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher wrote:

> "sometimes i feel like a sad song"

>

> john denver

>

I prefer

"I'm leaving on a jet plane..."

--John Denver

[↑ Contents](#)

344. **Christopher Reiner**  
**Re: Poetry sites**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

This is probably as good a time as any to announce an upcoming web page that will be designed especially for announcements of new books from literary presses. It's still under construction, so I don't want to give out the address, but if anyone wants to announce a book published in the last two months, please email me at

████████

Literary mags also welcome.

I haven't worked out the particulars yet, but please try to keep announcements to 100 words or less. If there's a web site link or an email address for more info, please include it.

More details in the next week or so.

--Chris Reiner

████████

On Wed, 15 Oct 1997, mark weiss wrote:

*A plea for help--I need suggestions of other poetry sites on the web that would be amenable to announcements of new books.*

[↑ Contents](#)

345. **Pam Brown**  
***Shameless promotion***  
*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Announcing (shamelessly) my latest book (on behalf of the distributor AWOL):-

- >
- >50 - 50
- >Pam Brown
- >Published by Little Esther Books
- >
- >Pam Brown is a leading and longstanding member of that disorganised band -
- >the radical opposition in Australian poetry.
- >
- >Her work has been much anthologized, her Selected Poems has gone into a
- >number of editions - all without the ignominy of school syllabus status
- >- and her writing is a touchstone amongst our best poets
- >
- >Astringent, abrasive, lyrical, aphoristic, insouciant, elegiac, critical,
- >clear-eyed, hard-bitten, relaxed, discomfoting, amused & amusing, louche &
- >grave.
- >
- >Her many books include Cafe Sport (Sea Cruise), Keep It Quiet, prose
- >(Redress/Wild & Woolley), and many others now out of print - as was her
- >Selected Poems, updated and reissued by Wild & Woolley as New and Se-
- >lected.
- >More recently a further poetry collection, This World, This Place, was
- >published by UQP.
- >
- >'50-50' isbn 0 646 32225 7 available through the AWOL Virtual
- >Bookshop for Australian \$15.95 plus \$1.00 handling
- >and postage.
- >

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~awol/>

*'50-50' is available through the AWOL Virtual Bookshop. To order your copy simply print out this message and send it, together with your payment (\$15.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling total \$16.95), to AWOL, PO Box 333 Concord NSW 2137.*

*Your name:.....*

*Your address: .....*

*Note. Overseas orders please contact us by email for overseas rates.*



\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

AWOL

*Australian Writing On Line*



*http://www.ozemail.com.au/~awol*

*PO Box 333 Concord NSW 2137 Australia*

*Phone 015063970*

*Fax 61 2 97472802*

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346. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Sylvester Pollet wrote:

>

> #1 was a poem, #2 was verse. I like to think of it as a train--sometimes I

> express, sometimes I local.

>

> >I have used expressive language:

> >

> >scene 1:

> >

> >2 o'clock in the morning. No one in sight. I walk through the ratty parking

> >lot looking for my car. I find it, reach for my keys. They're not there.

> >They are locked in the car.

> >

> >I kick the tire, I slam my fist on the hood. I curse the car, I curse

> >myself, I curse God. I use exuberant obscenities throughout. I am utterly

> >without company.

> >  
> >But what does this have to do with poetry?  
> >  
> >scene 2:  
> >  
> >My nerdy neighbor with lots of disposable income considers me a poet, and  
> >commissions me to write a love poem directed to his beloved. I go get my  
> >book of 500 favorite love poems and do a little research. Then I sit down  
> >to work, and in a couple of hours I produce a hallmark-lovely little poem.  
> >Let's say \$500 US [maybe less].  
> >  
> >The language used in this poem is not expressive, since I had no feelings  
> >to vent whatsoever as I wrote them down. I was paid to evoke these feelings  
> >in my target [victim], not to express myself. I call this evocative  
> >language [and writers and politicians are fond of this sort of language  
> >too].  
> >  
> >Now Henry Gould is going to deny that my hallmark-lovely little poem is a  
> >poem, because something or other is missing in it. Henry, I'll admit that  
> >it is a bad little poem [not worth \$500 US, really, at least to the members  
> >of this list], but it's still a poem in my view.  
> >  
> >You find all sorts of things in poems, most of them predictable, some  
> >startling, but what is essential?  
> >  
> >Self-expression? the expression of anything? evocation? feelings of  
> >fellowship with all things great and small? a political or a social  
> >conscience? metaphor? meaning? message?  
> >  
> >I can think of poems in which each and every one of these things is absent.  
> >So what after all is essential?  
> >  
> >Well, never mind. But I think all poetry fetishizes language, by definition.  
> >  
> >But I'm willing to negotiate.  
> >  
> >George Thompson

I don't know what any of your are talking about when you use the word "expression." And I mean all the many posts on this subject. For me text #1 is a prose expression of what happened to someone regarding his car, #2 is the expression in poetry of sentiments concerning love--which don't happen to be shared



by the writer of the poem, which is irrelevant. My Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary gives DEPICT, DELINEATE, to represent in words: STATE, to give or convey a true impression of: SHOW, REFLECT. I feel benighted. Where iz I off?

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

347. **George Thompson**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

Bob Grumann said:

>

>I don't know what any of your are talking about when you use the word  
>"expression." And I mean all the many posts on this subject. For me  
>text #1 is a prose expression of what happened to someone regarding his  
>car, #2 is the expression in poetry of sentiments concerning love--which  
>don't happen to be shared by the writer of the poem, which is  
>irrelevant. My Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary gives DEPICT,  
>DELINEATE, to represent in words: STATE, to give or convey a true  
>impression of: SHOW, REFLECT. I feel benighted. Where iz I off?

>

>

--Bob G.

Bob,

I'm benighted too. That's why my post. That ain't poetry in # 1. That's naked wrath, and a car. Whereas # 2 is poetry, bad poetry, to be sure, but poetry nevertheless. I think that some of us tend to confuse what poetry *\*is\** with what it *\*should be\**. Like you [and P. Durgin, et al.], I 'm looking for a little clarity here. Not sermons or manifestos.

As for EXPRESS, I think I know that verb, and as far as I'm concerned its territory is not the same as poetry's.

George

[↑ Contents](#)

348. **groberts**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Wed 15 Oct 1997*

---

"Idling"

Elbows propped  
upon knees.

Like a two-door sedan  
pulled up on the lawn.

One good hit  
from the peace pipe.

Like a warm car cooling off  
inside its own garage.

Hands behind head,  
head back, feet up.

Like an original paint job  
renewed by a fresh coat of rain.

No one else  
at home for hours.

Like the only vehicle left  
overnight in the plaza parking lot.

Gary R.

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349. **Bob Grumman**

**Re: Defining / Expression**

Wed 15 Oct 1997

---

George T:

I'd agree with you that "EXPRESS's . . . territory is not the same as poetry's" if you changed "the same as" to "coterminous with." But surely the territories overlap?  
--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

350. **Tom Beard**

**Re: SoKalled**

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

*I practically had a stroke when you compared Keat's "Negative Capability" (?) to the scientific method. Didn't Keats say "Beauty is Difficult." I know he didn't say "Beauty is Simple" or "Elegant."*

Well, I suppose it wasn't Keats, but his Grecian Urn that said "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty!". He was probably criticizing that aesthetic, not falling for it as I claimed, so you're entitled to your stroke.

I'd agree that "it is not a primary or even tertiary concern of science to create beauty", but I think that science can and does "create the conditons and criteria for beauty" from time to time. What used to be a tacit understanding among scientists that beauty=simplicity=truth is now fading, in part because of new studies in chaos theory and fractal geometry (self-similar figures are no longer seen as "monsters"). We could argue forever about whether the transition from Euclidean to Mandelbrotian geometry as an aesthetic touchstone is driven by similar changes in architecture, typography and other arts, or whether the studies by scientists, mathematicians and algorithmic artists (for want of a better phrase) have helped shift the aesthetic themselves.

*Your apparent admiration of Sir Karl indicates to me just how far apart we are on these matters.*

Well, we'll just have to leave it there, then. But for me, Popper has been an important influence, and his concept of falsification provides a much more accurate reflection of how scientists actually work than other theories I've read. It captures the tentative, provisional nature of scientific knowledge, in a way that accords much better with postmodern viewpoints than most would realise.

Tom Beard.

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351. **David R. Israel**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

Thu 16 Oct 1997

yo,

quoth George Thompson:

*You find all sorts of things in poems, most of them predictable,  
some startling, but what is essential?*

*Self-expression? the expression of anything? evocation? feelings of  
fellowship with all things great and small? a political or a social  
conscience? metaphor? meaning? message?*

*I can think of poems in which each and every one of these things is  
absent. So what after all is essential?*

This was addressed by a Sung dynasty poet -- I think it was Yang Wan-li, but wouldn't swear by it (poss trans. by Jonathan Chaves, among others, but ditto) -- sorry my recollections not as clear as the poem merits, but it goes something like this --

If you say that poetry [shi] resides in words [yan, expression] take away the words -- & the meaning [yi, idea] yet remains if you say that poetry resides in meaning take away the meaning -- & the poetry still remains

the relationship between

word / expression [yan]

meaning / idea [yi]

and poetry [shi]

is thus indeed quizzical & elusive, -- if I follow Mr. Yang aright.

This little poem also suggests a layers-of-the-onion aspect:

If you say that the poem is what you find as an onion  
take away the outer layer -- there's still an inner layer  
if you say that the poem is that inner layer, then (Yang says)  
take away even that -- and lo! -- poetry is still with us

This is certainly a mystical & wistical definition of poetry. Not the most useful for cobbling forth techno-criteria. But still suggestive, eh?

d.i.

•

• • • • •

.....

////////////////////////////////////

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

|  (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

(Tagore)

[↑ Contents](#)

## 352. Tom Beard

## Re: Defining / Expression

Thu 16 Oct 1997

Harold Rhenisch wrote:

> I'm right with you here, but "an exploration of personal emotion"? I have  
> always been uneasy about that term, too. I have an image of a guy in a  
pith  
> helmet hacking at the creepers with a machete will a bunch of pigmies

> follow behind with his cases of champagne and his tents and his gramophone.

Hmm, if only it were that easy! "Exploration" certainly is a loaded term, as is "experimental" (and I don't want to get into that again). Leaving aside (if we can) the image of the Colonialist White Male in lab coat and pith helmet, I think of the words "explore" and "experiment" (in this context) more in terms of a newborn, trying out his/her emotional limbs, thinking "What the heck is this? It feels kind of squishy. Ouch! It doesn't bend that way, does it?". The writing is a trace of the writhing.

> I do suspect, however, that there is a  
> lot going on which "an exploration of personal emotion" misses, because it  
> still puts the act of writing outside of the emotion, the self, the  
> perception, or whatever tools we are using at the time.

I don't see it this way. If the writing is the exploration, then the writing occurs "within" that which is explored. Expression, however, sounds to me like something is being squeezed through the writing, and hence the writing encompasses and controls it.

tom bell wrote:

> Your comments started me thinking of the therapeutic parallels (for better or  
> worse I am such by trade). Words such as expressive (i wrote sexpressive even  
> though i am not a freudian) tend to put people off and are really not adequate  
> to explain what happens. It is more of an experiencing of feeling through the  
> action of expressing or experiential/construction. Both experiential and  
> construction are valid and lively forms of therapy. I have not really seen  
> much on the topic of experiential and/or constructive poetry even though i am  
> aware of it's description by individual poets. If anyone is still with me  
> through my jargon here, I would appreciate information on sources.

Though some people are allergic to the idea of poetry as therapy, you are obviously looking at it from a much more serious perspective than your average open mike "I suffered so it must be a poem" type. It comes close to the reasons why I've chosen poetry rather than linear, denotative prose. I've found that giving a name to an experience ("Oh, that was

betrayal/anger/joy/desire/whatever") tends to nail down what had been a nebulous set of impressions, solidify that which had been fluid. From then on, when I think back to the original events, all I get is a memory of my memories, or the narrative that I had constructed out of them. Subsequent experience cannot help to reform the experiences, since they have already been petrified by denotation.

Some of my friends have accused me, when I use deliberate ambiguity in a poem, of toying with words for their own sake, but it is my way of remaining honest. Not only does it make the poem (I hope) a more open experience for the reader, but also for myself. When readers can find something in my poems that I hadn't noticed myself, I am delighted and intrigued, not only because it means that the field of meanings is expanding beyond my intentions, but also because it can send me back to a re-consideration of my self and the events in my life. Sometimes this has been an enlightening experience; sometimes chastening.

Tom Beard.

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### 353. **Alan /dev/null Sondheim**

#### ***Dusk, Turning Dawn***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

-

#### Dusk, Turning Dawn

Jennifer and Julu, their accounts open on my machine, remain silent, no longer locked within the interstices of the linux operating system. There has been no updating of files, no checkpointing for the system as a whole, no logs sent by cron over to the mail; linux is emptied, dark corridors, remaining for the return.

To return to a system awaiting, to enter the portal of the system, to log in, to challenge and enter the password, to `_pass._`

To pass against all tests, to continue past all fiery tests, to look for the files subtly moved, ownerships maintained or transformed. But linux sleeps for now, games unplayed, Jennifer and Julu no longer present, except by proxy, the forms of speechlessness. I quietly walked through the dark forest, in search of Indian Pipe pale and translucent near the burnished ground:

my-skin-for-you...

my-skin-for-you...

calls forth contrary womb,

calls forth contrary womb,

eating, excreting memory.

eating, excreting memory.

confusing the protruding, my-skin-for-you... is pure, protruding, yes, my beautiful flower? ... womb is eyelid here, it's womb?

Are you becoming close to Jennifer's my-skin-for-you...?

yes...

yes...

yes...

You melt into Julu's skin forever...

For 4 giving days, I have been catatonic Julu ...

and it has taken you just 1.183 minutes turning Jennifer ...

and it has taken you, just ...

my-skin-for-you...:yes, my beautiful flower:belonging:skin: Would belonging mind you partying, my-skin-for-you..., with us? Your contrary pale is in my protruding eyelid Ah, womb eaten by julu-of-the-open-arms and julu-depressed

But I have walked through the forest and the shadow. And I have known that, verily, shadows have shadows themselves, thinned, drawn like absent lamina around the coloration of the earth turned dark. And I have seen the arches of proper names collapsed, redundant upon the moist ground, tender. And I have known the earth, inchoate, slowly brought to its knees of roots and flowers, toes of branches and leaves, mouths like tendrils, tendrils

But I have shadowed myself, dark eyes narrowed by kohl, henna zagged across forehead and cheek, eyeglass silvered slivered with fine lines portending the reach of light unto me. For I have looked with open mouth, waiting for the descent of angels. For the earth rings like a great chime, dust and sand, red desert earth moving into platelets of mysterious patterns whispering your name. For Jennifer-and-Julu-for- saken are but names picked from a pretty penny, drawn from a rabbit, placed on a hat. For I say unto you, the skull is a universe, the brain an especial resonance, your eyes suns and moons, branches and toes. For the machine cools, disks spinning to a halt, fan already stilled in the nighttime sky

And for but I am a webbed creature, turned to pure light

---

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354. **R. Gancie**

***SoKalled***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

Tom: Sorry, but a couple of things that have been nagging at me. Weinberg should listen to himself---"Two cheers for reductionism!" does not comport with his statement concerning sciences "one to one correspondence with reality." Apropos Sokal. None of us geniuses has mentioned that Hubert Dreyfus pulled a Sokal on the A.I. community in the early eighties and the A.I. community didn't like it. Trace the history of that situation with the current debacle and you can see the role that economic and political clout makes in these confrontations. Finally, Joe, Tom, anyone. I don't want to make too much of the 'Metaphor' metaphor. But systems of quantification and formalization are in a sense metaphorical. They illuminate by addressing a limited part of an ontology. Technologies are created from numerical metaphors that approximate the actual conditions they address. Reductionism is only the most obvious condition and result of this process. Also, the historical mutability of technology and theory alike, though most often given a positivist/progressive slant through advertising phrases such as technological change, mask the fact that this mutability is fundamentally unpredictable except in some closed systems (and this includes advances in chaos theory---see Penrose or myself). Unpredictability is the consequence of the discretions and reductions necessary to imagine Weinberg's "one to one correspondence" and to produce technologies. Technologies are the historically fundamental reasons for having these imaginings. The mutability of science itself is fundamentally unpredictable because of the contingent necessity of its own imposed limitations of discretions and reductions. This is the way all metaphor operates. The mutability of science is fundamental not its alleged progressiveness. Poets know more about metaphor and other attendant aesthetic criteria than anybody else. In the history of mankind, technologies have always had these negative and banal consequences. Its just now because of huge technological demands by unprecedented populations spurred on by the greed of a few people who are wealthy beyond obscenity, that the inherently negative attributes of systems of quantification/formalization/mathematization/scientific methods become globally obvious. That's why attempts to squash even weak, ineffectual criticisms pisses me off.---Carlo Parcelli

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355. **Steven Marks**

***Re: Defining / Expression***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

Or consider what Ryokan had to say:



Who says my poems are poems?  
My poems aren't poems!  
Once you get that my poems aren't poems,  
then we can start talking about poems.

I love this Mobius strip of a poem.  
cheers,  
Steven

On Thu, 16 Oct 1997, David R. Israel wrote:

*If you say that poetry [shi] resides in words [yan, expression]  
take away the words -- & the meaning [yi, idea] yet remains  
if you say that poetry resides in meaning  
take away the meaning -- & the poetry still remains*

*the relationship between  
word / expression [yan]  
meaning / idea [yi]  
and poetry [shi]  
is thus indeed quizzical & elusive, -- if I follow Mr. Yang aright.*

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

---

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356. **Charles Bernstein**  
***Philadelphia / NYC Readings***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

I will be reading at  
The Temple Gallery  
45 North 2nd Street  
Philadelphia  
at 8pm  
Thursday, Oct. 23  
and at

Here  
with Melanie Neilson  
at 3pm  
Saturday, Oct. 25

145 Sixth Avenue (between Spring and Broome)  
Manhattan

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357. **Judy Roitman**  
**Re: Defining / Expression**  
Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

*Or consider what Ryokan had to say:*

*Who says my poems are poems?  
My poems aren't poems!  
Once you get that my poems aren't poems,  
then we can start talking about poems.*

*I love this Mobius strip of a poem.  
cheers,  
Steven*

"Tao called Tao is not Tao" (Addis/Lombardo translation of Tao Te Ching, but done from memory so the "is" may be extra).

(Near-)contradiction as rhetorical ploy.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

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358. **Judy Roitman**  
**Re: SoKalled**  
Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

*In the history of mankind, technologies have always had these negative  
and banal consequences.*

Fire. Weaving. Pottery. Writing.

We're human so whatever we do has negative and banal consequences, but surely there are technologies (see above) that have also had other sorts of consequences.

*the inherently negative  
attributes of systems of  
quantification/formalization/mathematization/scientific methods become  
globally obvious.*

*Carlo Parcelli*

We're human so all of our systems have inherently negative attributes, especially when taken out of the realm where they work. To take a very overworked example, I hope we would not rely on close literary analysis as our main methodology when building a bridge.

Back when I was in high school people made much of C.P. Snow's two culture stuff. There are a lot more than two cultures --- hell, there must be hundreds of cultures within what is commonly lumped together as "science" -- and there's no point dissing any of them.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

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359. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Re: Defining / Expression***  
*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

Tom,

I agree. Let's leave the Colonialist White Male in lab coat and pith helmet to expressions of his malaria.

As for "exploration", I don't share your confidence in the term. If it needs explanation and elaboration, it's probably not the right term.

You wrote

\*\*\*If the writing is the exploration, then the writing occurs "within" that which is explored.\*\*\*

Sure. Still, I have a nagging doubt that "exploration" suggests that "to explore an emotion" in writing requires a pre-existing emotion which can yield treasures if we move into its space and start describing its characteristics, and that these characteristics exist before the exploration. It misses the sense that the

world, or the perception of it, is being remade. It misses the sense that an emotion is not an emotion until we name it; before that act of naming it appears as the world.

Then again, maybe it is "emotion" that is the limiting factor in this equation. If the poetry does not start from the boundaries set by "emotion" and "exploration", then should the criticism necessarily?

Harold

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360. **Ira Lightman**

***Announcement of a gig***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

Just to say that my band, "Come Flying" -  
acoustic-folk-pop, chords out of Stravinsky,  
lyrics out of experimental poetry, are playing:

12 Bar Club  
Denmark St  
off Charing Cross Road (opp. Foyles)  
London

Sunday, Oct 19th, 10pm

Reduced entry with flyer (phone me - too late  
for e-mail - on 01603 616708) and I'll mail one  
or give it to you in person on the night

All welcome

Ira Lightman

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361. **Jordan Davis**

***Poetry City Fall 1997 Schedule print this up and keep it***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

POETRY CITY Fall 1997 schedule  
Fall 1997 Schedule 5 Union Square West NYC  
5 Union Square West NYC Thursdays at 7  
Thursdays at 7 except 10/16 at 6:30 free  
free poetry food and wine hosted by Anna Malmude  
hosted by Anna Malmude and Jordan Davis

10/16\* 6:30

David Shapiro

Anne Porter

10/23

R. Zamora Linmark

Jorge Clar

10/30

Alan Sondheim

David Bromige

11/13

Andrea Brady

Jennifer Moxley

11/20

Barbara Henning

12/4

John Kinsella

Keston Sutherland

12/11

Mark Statman

Michael Morse

12/18

Edwin Torres

Baron Ashanti

-----  
print this up and keep it in your notebook

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362. **Jordan Davis**

***Rod Smith / Edwin Torres @ Poetry Project pt 1***

*Thu 16 Oct 1997*

---

Rod Smith and Edwin Torres read to a 50+ crowd at the Poetry Project at St. Marks Church-in-the-Bouwerie last night.

Lisa Jarnot introduced Smith, citing his playful intelligence, and comparing him to the two poetic figures of the century most dear to her, Robert Duncan and Allen Ginsberg. Jarnot mentioned Duncan and Smith's autodidact-status, and noted that Ginsberg and Smith shared an indefatigable urge to archive and to make opportunities for other poets.

Smith began his reading with a work by Heather Fuller, an author published by his Aerial/Edge Press, "because," he said, "it defeats the heebie jeebies and because I like it." He then dedicated the reading to his son, Joshua, who was killed in a car crash earlier this year.

It would be a mistake to refer to Rod Smith's work as "high discontinuity"--the overwhelming parataxis of it all has something to do with Barrett Watten's *\_Progress\_*, and the underlying agenda seems to be something like Charles Bernstein's hope to "[return] us to our senses", but there are significant differences between Smith's work and that of his predecessors. (Would that I could delineate those differences! Ask Kevin Davies, he could tell you.) I'm going to have to jump *\_arenas\_* to find a working artist with similar acuity, namely Stephen Malkmus of Pavement. "Camera-ready, my ass!"

Smith read poems from his books *\_The Boy Poems\_* (Buck Downs Books), *\_In Memory of My Theories\_* (O Books), *\_A Grammar Manikin\_* (Object magazine special number), *\_Protective Immediacy\_* (Potes & Poets), and *\_The Lack, love poems, targets, flags\_* (Abacus magazine). He closed with his terrific poem, "Nothing at all Jerry G."

Eleni Sikelianos introduced Edwin Torres by means of an itinerary -- to travel from Tristram Shandy to Khlebnikov via the Himalayas, was one route.

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363. **Ted Berrigan**  
***things to do in cranston***

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

now that I've got your attention finally:

Susan Grant & Peter Johnson read  
Thurs. November 13, 7:30 pm  
Hall Public Library, 1825 Broad St, Cranston  
(call [REDACTED] for directions)

Susan Grant edits THE NEWPORT REVIEW. Peter Johnson edits PROSE POEM; his new book PRETTY HAPPY! will be available at the reading, with other stuff.

Free.

sponsored by The Poetry Mission.

Henry Gould will be there to offer a play-by-play reduction, if he's not in Minneapolis looking for dead poems to resuscitate. [grrrrr]

- Ted Berrigan

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364. **Loss Glazier**  
**EPC Enhancements**

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

----- New at the EPC ----- Recent new developments at the EPC include a Carolyn Bergvall page and recently renovated Hannah Weiner pages. If you have any reviews or related documents you'd like to contribute for these authors, please let me know. Coming soon: the "metalist" of EPC links, soon to be available from "Connects" and other locations within the EPC. Thanks!

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365. **MAXINE CHERNOFF**  
**Other readings**

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

On Tuesday, October 21, at 7:30 pm, CD Wright and Paul Hoover will be reading in the Grolier Series, Cambridge MA, intro. by Caroline Knox.

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366. **Susan Schultz**  
**Re: Tinfish chapbook by Kathy Banggo**

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

Dear all--Tinfish Network is proud to announce the publication of \_4-evaz, Anna\_, by Kathy Dee Kaleokealoha Kaloloahilani Banggo, a poet who lives in Wahiawa, on O'ahu, Hawai'i. The chapbook is \$4 each, or \$3 with a subscription to \_Tinfish\_ (\$13 for three issues). Please write checks to Susan Schultz, 47-391 Hui Iwa Street, #3, Kaneohe, HI 96744.

"How Fo Smoke Like One B-Bat Room Bebe"

pack em firs, den open da wrappa.  
no foget fo take out one  
turn em ovah, butt up.  
az da one fo good luck.  
az da one fo make one wish.  
save em fo las.

fo make rings  
drop your jaws  
an open your mout  
like you stay  
sucking allahs  
o sumtin.  
snap em out slow

das how dy do  
in Koolau.

fo make harts  
do da same ting like  
I j'wen tell you.  
but put your  
index fingah  
da tip  
in front your uppa lip  
so your fingah nail  
hang down small kine.

if somebody ask  
fo drag, make shuah  
you tell em no lip em  
bumbye come back wet.  
if dey weah da kine  
planny make-up  
da kine cholo lipstick  
no need den.

fo see if da boy  
you like  
like you too,  
when pau puff one  
turn em upside down  
an squeeze da butt.  
see da initial?  
if match his firs name  
get chance. if no mo  
try light up two mo times.

---

Susan M. Schultz  
Dept. of English  
1733 Donaghho Road  
University of Hawai'i-Manoa  
Honolulu, HI 96822

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>  
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

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367. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: Defining / Expression**

Thu 16 Oct 1997

---

At 06:02 PM 10/16/97 +1300, Tom Beard wrote:

tom bell wrote:

*Your comments started me thinking of the therapeutic parallels (for better or the reasons why I've chosen poetry rather than linear, denotative prose. I've found that giving a name to an experience ("Oh, that was betrayal/anger/joy/desire/whatever") tends to nail down what had been a nebulous set of impressions, solidify that which had been fluid. From then on, when I think back to the original events, all I get is a memory of my memories, or the narrative that I had constructed out of them. Subsequent experience cannot help to reform the experiences, since they have already been petrified by denotation.*

*Some of my friends have accused me, when I use deliberate ambiguity in a poem, of toying with words for their own sake, but it is my way of remaining honest. Not only does it make the poem (I hope) a more open experience for the reader, but also for myself. When readers can find something in my poems that I hadn't noticed myself, I am delighted and intrigued, not only because it means that the field of meanings is expanding beyond my intentions, but also because it can send me back to a re-consideration of my self and the events in my life. Sometimes this has been an enlightening experience; sometimes chastening.*

*Tom Beard.*

I suspect you are onto something here as this describes resolution in therapy as opposed to perpetuation of a problem. In therapy also it seems to be related to the \_way\_ the experience is processed. I'm not sure that denotation and ambiguity are adequate to describe it, but they are leads along the way.

thanks. tom bell

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368. **dbkk**

**Luisa Futoransky, Sarah Menefee--ASAP at SPT**

Fri 17 Oct 1997

---

Small Press Traffic presents

Luisa Futoransky  
Sarah Menefee

Friday, October 17, 7:30 p.m.  
New College Cultural Center  
766 Valencia Street, San Francisco  
\$5

Luisa Futoransky, currently Regents Lecturer at UC Berkeley, lives now in Paris, where she works for the Pompidou Center. Futoransky was born in Buenos Aires in 1939. As a young woman, she left the study of law to study instead with Borges, and became an active member of the literary circle organized around the Argentine magazine *Sur*. With the dictatorship in 1976, she left her native land for the National Music Academy of Japan, and then to Radio Beijing. Then on to Paris, Berkeley, and eventually, of course, Small Press Traffic. Her work is vivid, humorous, informed by her thinking on exile, translation, and the visual arts and music. This will be a bilingual (Spanish and English) reading to launch Futoransky's new book of selected poems, *The Duration of the Voyage* (Junction Press).

I've been a fan of Sarah Menefee's work since she was a student at New College, back in the ancient Duncan days. Since then she has taken her place as one of the *living treasures of San Francisco*, and now Italy, where her poems have been translated, published and disseminated, like petals in the Tuscan wind. <sup>3</sup>all the organs that supported it have liquefied/ to know it is so without knowing what it is/ has entered the pupa with its golden nails.<sup>2</sup> Her careful, moving work dissolves the barrier between lyric gesture and political action. Sarah Menefee, poet and homeless activist, is the author of *I'm Not Thousand-furs* (Curbstone Press), *The Blood About the Heart* (Curbstone Press), and the new *The Reamed Heart* (Deliriodendron Press).

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369. **George Bowering**

**Re: tundra**

Fri 17 Oct 1997

---

*as a former house pet of george bowering, i appreciate your fine sense of discretion. what bowering is omitting, of course, are his own predilections for the more untamed species that dwell on the great tundras and wildernesses. hence his deep attraction to canada.*

Yeah? Well I know a US poet who grew up in Chicago, told me years ago he had a try-out with the Chicago Cubs. Didn't make the team, eh? I asked. He said he made half the infield.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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370. **George Bowering**

***Re: Poetry City***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

I'll be reading Saturday night in Fort Saint John. If you're in the area, drop in. On Sunday I am going to get a helicopter ride. I will express myself on Sunday.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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371. **david bromige**

***the great tundras of canada***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

When I was staying with the Bowerings (it was that, or 265 hours of community service), they served up some great tundras! We'd have tundra with fried egg in the mornings (c. noon-two), tundra casserole for lunch (c.6-7), and steak-&-tundra pie for dinner (c. midnite). We'd wash the pie down with huge mugs of Tundra Ale, after which the master of the house would mount several more wildlife heads in the draughty hallways of Bowering Manor, while I read his book of geography & cooking, *\_The Gift of Tundra\_*, until I fell asleep in the arms of Morpheus, George's highly challenged cousin & bodyguard &, despite Bowering's slurs, my sole sexual indulgence during my time there. Then the whole thing would start all over again next morning, with George demanding that I return his nail-clipper. It was during this time I wrote *\_my\_ book, \_Habits & How to Get Used to Them\_*. There are 265 references to "Tundra" in the index. D(e)b(bie).

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town.....littered with puddles & rural blight, the chevies on cinder blocks, the tire-piles, dirty gray light, yellow in it, the houses with bits falling off them & the people to a disordered mind likewise. The era is like that. The whole fucken future could be that way.

It's that kind of a day.

On the refrigerator I long since pinned a news item concerning the burying of Carrie Derryberry. Her husband's name was Gerry. What sort of people could they have been, one wonders, growing up -- him, leastwise -- with names that insistently try to eradicate disagreement. I've had it with disagreement. Fuck disagreement.

Jesus, it's a relief not to be writing a poem.! It's a high but it knocks the stuffing outa ya.

That woman who put her hand on my back at the soup-cafe in Prince George -- she liked me and me likewise her. But that's easy to remember unspoiled since we exchanged no further words or gestures. What is a paragraph?

Like a shy model in the Life class, most occasions tremble at the glimpse they have of themselves as inadequate, standing there naked with naked feet & pubic hair & nipples lifting & all. And shoulderknobs & clavicles & ribcage & knees -- Magnificent! I severely dislike this prose. Why go on, or do anything? It's time for Letterman. I watch & pretend he's Bob Grenier hosting a late nite talk show that uses only poets & that his first guest is going to be Lyn Hejinian -- on comes Lyn in short, tight skirt, tan cleavage, & shoes to die for, says the sitter. Bob hugs her, kisses her hand. She has a great smile! The bandleader is Paul -- Paul deBarros. Most engaging on camera, intense & handsome, those dark blue eyes, big Portuguese smile, forearms like bowling pins. Barry Gifford's next. He & Bob joke about having the same initials, pretending to lower the level to Letterman. Larry Eigner wheels into camera range & he & Bob joke about having anagrams for names, "for eight years on the same mailbox" says Bob. Then it's my turn. I recall the

twilight when I drove up & parked & got out & saw what I thought was likely  
Larry, working out on the porch rail. How as I got  
close to him I said "Larry I thought that was you" & how he responded "Oh  
yeah so did I" Pan to  
audience: they love it. Then again, they all look like me, Terence Dactyl,  
or my doppelganger,  
Professor Quincy Quatrain. I recline, pray for sleep & nonetheless  
eventually sleep comes.

In my sleep, I am indefatigable. I dream nonstop for six hours. Then I wake up  
& it's prose. Bowls of it for breakfast, prose sandwich with peanut butter for  
lunch, eaten in the car en route to some errand I can't recall, so it certainly will  
be of no interest to the future. But on the way home I scribble something that  
looks like "I was only lying for your convenience/ You flushed my tongue down  
the toilet/ The first time I saw you I thought 'one of us is at a loss for words'".

Bumper-sticker : VISUALIZE USING YOUR TURN SIGNALS. I've always been  
something of a social activist. That's why I write in pedestrian prose. Few peo-  
ple know that 'accessible' is my middle name. Now you are one of those few. It  
might be on the test! Spell it? -Can't even pronounce it! It's in the Platonic Dic-  
tionary. One free with any five zines of your choice. I used to do this from door  
to door. Then one day, one of them opened. It was the Door to Poetry. And this  
side of me went to sleep.

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374. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Problems with western tradition***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Not knowing anything about unjamming hydraulic quick couplers, Descartes  
could write, <sup>3</sup>I think, therefore I am.<sup>2</sup> He was a clever guy, but he wasn't a  
twentieth century man: he was in the middle point of our lives on the earth. If  
he lived today, he'd have to write: <sup>3</sup>I am, therefore I am.<sup>2</sup>, or <sup>3</sup>I am, therefore I  
am bewildered.<sup>2</sup>, and then, in keeping with the spirit of his inspiration, <sup>3</sup>I am  
bewildered, therefore am I.<sup>2</sup>, and after crossing that out, <sup>3</sup>Am I bewildered? I  
am. Therefore....<sup>2</sup> Scratch. Scratch. <sup>3</sup>Am I bewildered? I am.<sup>2</sup> Scratch. <sup>3</sup>I am be-  
wildered. Am I?<sup>2</sup> Damn, go get a drink.

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375. **Bob Grumman**

***A Comprepoetica Progress Report***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Comprepoetica has now gotten close to a hundred visits since I announced it here last Sunday. I continue working on it and just now got the biographical section viewable, if not very spiffy. Seven entries so far.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FILLED OUT SURVEY FORMS: Please go to the subsite at Comprepoetica containing biographical entries and check the entry on yourself for errors, omissions and egregious stylistic blunders. Let me know of them and I'll fix them. I've basically just thrown the data out there but hope to improve. Check your poems, too-- they are linked to the biographical entries.

You can find the biographical entries by going to the Table of Contents, newly operational.

Comprepoetica is still located at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

Not enough votes in for favorite poets and poems to bother counting yet.

WARNING TO THOSE WHO HAVEN'T FILL OUT FORMS YET: I plan to start letting Bromige and Bowering fill them out for you soon!

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376. **david bromige**

***how do i leave the List?***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

I keep this info on my InBox and my InBox was recently destroyed & rebuilt. Anyone? Thanks, DB

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377. **mark weiss**

***Re: how do i leave the List?***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

You are not allowed to leave the list until you answer three questions:

1.

At 01:27 PM 10/17/97 -0700, you wrote:

>I keep this info on my InBox and my InBox was recently destroyed & rebuilt.

>Anyone? Thanks, DB

>

>

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378. **Burt Kimmelman**

***Talisman Reading/Party***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Ed Foster has asked me to pass on to you the following invitation.

And I quote:

Weird, wild, wonderful, and ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIC!!!

Come and hear:

Charles Borkhius  
Michael Heller  
Lisa Jarnot  
Sean Killian  
Eileen Myles  
Leonard Schwartz  
Chris Stroffolino

Zinc Bar  
90 West Houston Street  
New York City  
6:15-8:15 PM  
Sunday, October 26th

Celebrating Talisman #17 (the Eileen Myles issue), now at your newsstand, and the publication soon of *An Anthology of New (American) Poets*.

A Benefit reading for Talisman. All proceeds go to keep us out of debtor's prison. No joke. Please come.

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379. **david bromige**

***Th-th-th-anks f-f-f-folks!***

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Thanbks for such prompt responses...please noone else trouble yourself, now I know.

Off for 3 weeks, & I'm going to miss you. Retirement sounds great, but I was wanting the debates with students & colleagues....& peers, since so many poets I hung out with, left the Bay Area in recent years. This List is great & a big thanks to Charles et co. And all of you, really, scold me or stroke me, the engagement is such a boon, I love listening to your interventions & (dis)



agreements. Never did I expect it to be this much fun, or I'd have signed on years earlier.

But as for you, George Bowering, you'd better say a few things behind my back to keep my memory alive.

David

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380. **Safdie Joseph**  
**Re: Dorn/Raworth Reading**

Fri 17 Oct 1997

---

Pat -- just saw Tom last night in Seattle, fresh from DU and your review. Was it the same gig with the music box and the breathless delivery? Fastest mouth in the west! But great, nonetheless. I realized I hadn't seen him in about ten years, so it was good to catch up. Glad to hear that Peter's still laughing through readings -- some things never change! Give him my regards if you ever hang out with him.

Glad to hear also that Ed impressed you as strong, though gaunt. Actual news I'm afraid not so good. Can send you copies of the works you mentioned if you want.

Always good to hear your perceptions -- though I think Jordan Davis has taken over as the poetry reviewer par excellence! At least this week . . .

Best,

Joe

-----  
From: Pritchett,Pat  
@Silverplume[SMTP: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 1997 3:24 AM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Dorn/Raworth Reading

*Several of us Boulderites overcame our customary aversion for Denver and environs and made the trip down to DU last night to hear Ed Dorn and Tom Raworth read. The Dupont Room of the august Mary Reed Bldg is tricked out, as Ed put it, in "Gothic fakery." It's also painted a horrible puke green color, but enough about that.*

*Ed, who's been "battling" pancreatic cancer as many of you know, was*

*looking, I thought, pretty damned good - quite gaunt - he'd evidently lost some weight - but he was clear, in good humor, and read with real panache excerpts from two long poems: "Lost Dog Variorum," and another about "the Cheyenne axis," (title escapes me - I didn't make notes), and several shorter pieces.*

*A ruddy-faced Tom Raworth followed Ed. Tom read a few poems from his new Roof edition of Selected Poems, \_Clean & Well-Lit\_, and from a long, unfinished work titled "Meadow," which was something of a tour de force, even for Tom. My only complaint was that he didn't read long enough.*

*Present in the audience: Cole Swensen, who emceed the evening, Jack Collom, Rachel Levitsky, Peter Michelson (who seemed to laugh throughout most of Ed's reading), Lindsay Hill, Michael Friedman, Anne Waldman, Tom Peters, Bin Ramke, and Mark Irwin, whom I succeeded in ignoring/avoiding all night and it was a very small room, too.*

*Patrick Pritchett*

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### 381. **Jordan Davis**

#### **R Smith / E Torris @ Poetry Project Pt 2**

*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

Edwin Torres read second. By comparison with his reading last year at the Ear Inn, the work he read Wednesday night had less to do with the Khlebnikov in him than with Tristram Shandy or the Himalayas. Mentioning that he had been described in a magazine article as "resolutely anti-drug", he corrected the magazine and launched into a poem entitled "Auntie Drug."

It is a truism that performers coming out of the Nuyorican scene perform with their voices -- that they're 'spoken word artists.' OK, it's not a truism, it's a categorization. Torres has no truck with the category, though. It would not be out of the range of reference of a large circulation publication to characterize his performance as borrowing from sprechstimme and vaudeville (or the Muppet Show, anyway).

Torres' next publication is a cd from Kill Rock Stars, the alternative label that carries the work of Bikini Kill and Sleater-Kinney. Torres will be reading at Poetry City on December 18.

Wednesday's reading, the second in Lisa Jarnot and Eleni Sikelianos's series at the Church, was attended by the following writers: Barrett Watten, Jackson Mac Low, Bruce Andrews, Sally Silvers, Fiona Templeton, Rob Fitterman, Tim Davis, Issa Clubb, Bennett Simpson, Merry Fortune, Liz Castagna, David Cameron, Anselm Berrigan, Kim Rosenfield, Larry Fagin, Dug Rothschild, Lewis Warsh, Leonard Schwartz, Kevin Davies, Deirdre Kovac, Marcella Durand, Greg Masters, Elinor Nauen, Ed Friedman, and others.

Jordan Davis

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382. **Aviva Vogel**  
**Re: Talisman Reading/Party**  
*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Speaking of Talisman, I live near Dartmouth College, and a 3-story, 15-room bookstore...but it doesn't carry Talisman!!! I don't know where to find the journal, and have no address to subscribe. Can someone steer me to this great journal? Thanks, Aviva

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383. **henry gould**  
**gehry**  
*Fri 17 Oct 1997*

---

Frank Gehry's museum in Bilboa opens today, I think.

"I guess i was interested in the unfinished - or the quality that you find in paintings by Jackson Pollock, for instance, of de Kooning, or Cezanne, that look like the paint was just applied. The very finished, polished, every-detail-perfect kind of architecture seemed to me not to have this quality. I wanted to try that out in a building. The obvious way to go about it was the unfinished wall studs. We all like the buildings in construction better than we do finished - I think most of us agree on that. The structure is always so much more poetic than the finished thing." (1980)

there's that word again.

"Gehry designs with a sharp, double-edged scalpel that penetrates and splits open, slices and separates, probes and carves its way to the heart of spatial phenomena..." - Germano Celant

Blind mouths! That scarce themselves know how to hold  
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least  
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!  
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;  
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;  
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;  
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing said;  
But that two-handed engine at the door  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.  
- Milton, *Lycidas*

the most prophetic work yet written in the U.S. of A. is not *Leaves of Grass*,  
*Moby Dick*, poems of E.D., Emerson, Thoreau, Pound, Stein, Zukofsky, O'Hara,  
Eliot, any of the writers attending readings, etc...

It's *The Wizard of Oz*. - Henry Gould

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### 384. **George Bowering**

#### ***Re: the great toe***

*Sat 18 Oct 1997*

---

Well, a lot of what Bromide said is true, at least in his manner. But I did not ask  
for my clippers back. After watching him use them on his famous toes, I never  
wanted to touch those clippers again.

Word has it that he still has them, and that among other things he does with  
them, he revises poems--his own and others. A lot of Creeley's poems, for exam-  
ple, were once much longer, and expressed lots of feelings and so on. Bromide  
is responsible, it is said, for the clipped nature of a typical Creeley poem.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

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388. **Dan or Orion Dlugonski**  
(no subject)  
Sat 18 Oct 1997

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Thursday, October 23, at the Mark Woolley Gallery (120 NW 9th, 2nd floor)  
26 books presents 26 WOMEN.

Leanne Grabel  
Flora Durham  
margareta waterman  
Laura Winter  
Leuth Bartells  
Rob Blakeslee and  
dan raphael.

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389. **Maria Damon**

***News from xcp***

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

brathwaite last night was amazing, more to follow...

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390. **Loss Pequeno~o Glazier**

***Talisman Reading/Party - Mag/Press Addresses***

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

For those of you not familiar with it, the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) has numerous press and magazine listings under "Mags" and "Presses" at: <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc>

This area is of course under continual development and expansion. If your press or magazine is not listed, please send in one of the forms available in the Mags or Presses area. L.

---

At 10:18 PM 10/17/97 -0400, you wrote:

>Speaking of Talisman, I live near Dartmouth College, and a 3-story, 15-room  
>bookstore...but it doesn't carry Talisman!!! I don't know where to find the  
>journal, and have no address to subscribe. Can someone steer me to this  
>great journal? Thanks, Aviva

>

>

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391. **robert drake**

**Re: Break out the snack tray**

Sun 19 Oct 1997

---

Miekal And wrote:

*I'll be presenting a workshop on hypermedia/computer poetry at the University of Minnesota next week (courtesy of the lovely Maria Damon) & it just so happens that I'll have an internet link & a computer projector. So if there are any sites out there that exemplify the unpredictable spirit of experimentation & cyberfunkiness, drop me a url backchannel & I'll check them out for possible inclusion in my scene cruise at next week's workshop.*

m--

just to make sure:

<http://www.ims.csuohio.edu/VA/VAintro.html> --> CybpherAnthology of Discontiguous Literatures

<http://www.ims.csuohio.edu/gallery.html> --> Machine Made of Words online gallery

<http://www.ims.csuohio.edu/wreyeting/index.html> --> WrEyeTings Scratchpad intermedia laboratory

& more in the cooker...

asever

luigi

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392. **Douglas Barbour**

**Re: more eating, sleeping, & timing**

Sun 19 Oct 1997

---

Too bad Bromige is gone, as I just wanted to say that this one did the job. Oh, and did i laugh too...

=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]



H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Nowadays

I want only the wild and tender  
phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'  
its air groaned out  
like the beath of a lover.  
Rashomon by saxophone.  
Michael Ondaatje

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393. **R. Gancie**

***SoKalled***

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

Judy. I thought "pottery, weaving etc." distinction was implied in my original message. "In history of mankind etc." was simply to serve as general distinction between what we define and impose as technology on other times, other cultures and other languages and the way that we claim that we actually practice science and technology now which I think Adorno and Horkheimer, among hundreds, capture in their Dialectic of Enlightenment. Illuminating some of the the differences, they point out that now, "Representation is exchanged for the fungible---universal interchangeability ." This ain't no occult and hermetic insight. I wrote a poem in which I quoted hundreds of instances in which the conditions fostered by systems of mathematization and quantification beginning with the conflation of Late Renaissance and Enlightenment science and the Age of Discovery are discussed for their historical uniqueness yet universal imperatives as well as their inherent limitations. The quotes come from physicists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, economists, biologists, book store owners, the homeless, the checker at the Safeway, auto mechanics, retire CIA analysts etc. etc. In other words it is fundamental to our dialectic and people come at it from all sides of the argument. Hegel, among many, many others, often puts his two cents (sense) in: "The evidence peculiar to this defective way of knowing-an evidence on the strength of which mathematics plumes itself and proudly struts before philosophy-rests solely on the poverty of its purpose and the defectiveness of its material, and is on that account of a kind that philosophy must scorn to have anything to do with. Its purpose or principle is quantity. This is precisely the relationship that is non-essential, alien to the character of the notion. The process of knowledge goes on, therefore, on the surface, does not effect the concrete fact itself, does not touch its inner nature or notion, and hence is not a conceptual way of comprehending."(Baillie's Trans. in some ways not good but I

cut my teeth on it). You do indeed have hundreds of scientific cultures AND all involved with "fungible-universal changeability." So 'scuse me if I lump them together. I find that American scientists and mathematicians often have the attitude that Hegel implies of European mathematicians in his quote. Maybe World War I kicked some of those delusions out of them. And maybe the Manhattan project pumped up the American scientific community. Or maybe its unfair to put such weight on single (though complex) historical events when complexity indeed "holds so much information." But I do find American scientists bewildered and ignorant about the fundamental and long standing nature of this argument. They inevitably see it as a challenge to their authority. This is what Sokal and Gross and Levitt are all about. It is why Weinberg can embarrass himself by dismissing Heisenberg on philosophical points that Weinberg clearly has no knowledge of. I don't think its too much to ask that the scientific community accord these arguments the consideration they deserve, especially with the advent of so many world summits on global ecology that will rely on "quantitative methodolgies" for their solutions because all other alternatives have been discredited and dismantled or will be unless they serve the interests of international capital.---Carlo Parcelli

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394. **R. Gancie**  
***Sokalled: Typo or Parapraxis-you decide***  
*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

Judy. Second instance of "universal interchangeability" should read like that and not 'universal changeability.'---C.P.

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395. **Tosh**  
***:ReMap***  
*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

I have just received this post, and it may be of interest to the people on this list:

REMAP

RE: subscriptions

RE: "on emore barricade"

REMAP needs to continue to ask fopr subscriptions  
in the hope that we will continue to be able to  
publish.

10\$ per two editions

#6 The Politic  
Spencer Selby  
Norma Cole  
Ray Di Palma  
Laura Morriarity  
Arron Shurin  
Noah De Lissovoy  
Martin Nakell

-----

printed completed without politically based funds  
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Edited by Carolyn Kemp  
& Todd Baron

since 1990

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thank-you

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Tosh Berman  
TamTam Books

-----

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396. **Susan Wheeler**

***Re: POETICS Digest - 15 Oct 1997 to 16 Oct 1997***

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

>Date: Thu, 16 Oct 1997 13:51:04 EDT

>From: Ted Berrigan <[REDACTED]>

>Subject: things to do in cranston

>

> Susan Grant edits THE NEWPORT REVIEW. Peter Johnson edits PROSE  
POEM;  
> his new book PRETTY HAPPY! will be available at the reading, with other  
> stuff.

>

Peter Johnson's poem "Pretty Happy!" is an all-time favorite here. Enjoy,  
Cranstonites!

>

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

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397. **DIGEST Anselm Hollo**

**Re: AHOE by AH**

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

Announcing the publication  
(to whom it may be of interest)  
of:

AHOE / AND HOW ON EARTH. A book of poems by Anselm Hollo  
from Smokeproof Press (Brad O'Sullivan), Erie, Colorado  
with a frontispiece drawing by Jane Dalrymple-Hollo  
ISBN 0-9658877-0-7

60 pp / \$8.95

"Hollo's poetry, with its huge field of reference, is one possible model for the  
future. It doesn't list what it knows and consists of: the references are built in.  
That is, it isn't itself a computerized conglomerate, doesn't spout facts as pos-  
session, but it's equal to all that. It could probably handle the future." -- Alice  
Notley, "Hollo's Corvus," Sulfur 40.

Available from:

SPD  
1341 Seventh Street  
Berkeley CA 94710-1403

██████████

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398. **mark weiss**

**(no subject)**

Sun 19 Oct 1997

---

I hate to weigh in where I'm clearly not knowledgeable, and I know I'm asking to be the focus of a turd-fight (remember that thread?), but here, as they say, goes nothing. I read the Weinberg piece when it came out. Whether or not there are misstatements/misunderstandings in it, his main point seemed to be that you're far more likely to be hit by an apple if you sleep under the tree than if you fly over it (although it's fun to imagine how the latter could happen), regardless of what belief systems you carry with you, and that some theorists in the humanities and social sciences seemed to him to be saying otherwise.

Why is this an issue for us? It's an issue for us when some of my best students, senior writing majors at an elite university, tell me that they have been taught to deny the constancy of any fact, any reality. Perhaps they have misunderstood their teachers for four years, but that could indicate that there's something wrong with the teaching. We don't need naive relativists any more than we need naive positivists.

It may also be an issue for some of us that Sokal managed to get his piece published in the heart of what he defined as the enemy's camp merely by slinging some jargon.

*Judy. I thought "pottery, weaving etc." distinction was implied in my original message. "In history of mankind etc." was simply to serve as general distinction between what we define and impose as technology on other times, other cultures and other languages and the way that we claim that we actually practice science and technology now which I think Adorno and Horkheimer, among hundreds, capture in their Dialectic of Enlightenment. Illuminating some of the the differences, they point out that now, "Representation is exchanged for the fungible---universal interchangeability ." This ain't no occult and hermetic insight. I wrote a poem in which I quoted hundreds of instances in which the conditions fostered by systems of mathematization and quantification beginning with the conflation of Late Renaissance and Enlightenment science and the Age of Discovery are discussed for their historical uniqueness yet universal imperatives as well as their inherent limitations. The quotes come from physicists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, economists, biologists, book store owners, the homeless, the checker at the Safeway, auto mechanics, retire CIA analysts etc. etc. In other words it is fundamental to our dialectic and people come at it from all sides of the argument. Hegel, among many, many others, often puts his two cents (sense) in: "The evidence peculiar to this defective way of knowing-an evidence on the strength of which mathematics plumes itself and proudly struts before philosophy-rests solely on the poverty of its purpose and the defectiveness of its material, and is on that account of a kind that*

*philosophy must scorn to have anything to do with. Its purpose or principle is quantity. This is precisely the relationship that is non-essential, alien to the character of the notion. The process of knowledge goes on, therefore, on the surface, does not effect the concrete fact itself, does not touch its inner nature or notion, and hence is not a conceptual way of comprehending." (Baillie's Trans. in some ways not good but I cut my teeth on it).*

*You do indeed have hundreds of scientific cultures AND all involved with "fungible-universal changeability." So 'scuse me if I lump them together. I find that American scientists and mathematicians often have the attitude that Hegel implies of European mathematicians in his quote. Maybe World War I kicked some of those delusions out of them. And maybe the Manhattan project pumped up the American scientific community. Or maybe its unfair to put such weight on single (though complex) historical events when complexity indeed "holds so much information." But I do find American scientists bewildered and ignorant about the fundamental and long standing nature of this argument. They inevitably see it as a challenge to their authority. This is what Sokal and Gross and Levitt are all about. It is why Weinberg can embarrass himself by dismissing Heisenberg on philosophical points that Weinberg clearly has no knowledge of. I don't think its too much to ask that the scientific community accord these arguments the consideration they deserve, especially with the advent of so many world summits on global ecology that will rely on "quantitative methodolgies" for their solutions because all other alternatives have been discredited and dismantled or will be unless they serve the interests of international capital.---Carlo Parcelli*

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399. **Rachel Levitsky**

**Flow Chart**

Sun 19 Oct 1997

Hey there--

Thanks to the Toms for the disc about where writing comes from.

Query:

Any suggestions for critical essay or creative response to Ashbery's Flow Chart?

Backchannel if you know of anything. Please, thank you.

Rachel

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400. **Alan chown Sondheim**

--+-

Sun 19 Oct 1997

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--+-

No. 110 -- The Vanishing Glass of Whiskey

Startling! Astounding! Is what our customers say when they see us vanish a whiskey glass filled with liquid. Yes! that is what happens. Imagine the fun at a gathering. Your friend is about to take a drink. You tap her on the shoulder and ask her if she would like to see a trick. She would. That's fine. All you do is take the glass of liquid and place it on your left hand, place right hand over glass. PRESS . . . and it vanishes. The apparatus is small and convenient to carry around. \$1.50

No. 213 -- Squirting Jennifer

A million dollars worth of fun for a buck! The face on this Jennifer just ain't polite at all. When the "victim" looks at it closely the face squirts a good healthy stream of water right smack in the spectator's eye. Easily filled and has a large capacity. Price \$1.50

No. 1529 -- The Julu without a Middle

A startling illusion of extraordinary proportions. This has been used with great success in many illusion shows. A feature presentation of the Travis show.

A lovely girl assistant is fastened securely to the inside of a cabinet shaped for a human figure. There are individual doors for the head, legs, and body so that any part or all of the body can be shown.

Enormous metal plates like guillotine blades are pushed entirely through the cabinet from side to side. One at the neck position, another at the waist. The doors are opened and although the legs and head remain the same, upon opening the center doors both front and rear, the entire center of the assistant's body has vanished! Magician can be seen through the cabinet from the rear! There are no mirrors used! The doors are closed and reopened. The assistant upon being released steps out unharmed! This is terrific. No stage traps, glass or dummy legs used. Do it even in the living room.

Workshop plans \$5.00

No. 1531 -- The Elastic Stretching Jennifer Illusion

The very latest in illusions. An idea imported from Europe where it has been creating a sensation whatever shown.

The audience sees a beautifully decorated screen resting on a very thin platform.

The front doors are opened to allow the audience to see the entire interior.

The front section is shown to contain four sections in which an assistant can be locked. These sections can be moved at oblique and vertical angles by pull cords from the sides.

Magicians assistant enters the cabinet and her head, hands, and feet are locked in the movable stock sections where they remain visible at all times. Slowly the magician draws the sections apart by means of the pull cords, causing the girl's head, hands and feet to assume absolutely im- possible positions. The hands and feet are drawn five or six FEET away from the body. A mind baffling effect that leaves the audience with no explanation. A truly wonderful illusion.

Workshop Plans \$5.00

No. 1540 -- The Artist's Dream Model

Magician fastens a sheet of paper to a large picture frame which is then placed on an easel at center stage. He quickly paints a sketch of a girl and then breaking through the paper at various points he produces a variety of articles such as silks, pigeons, rabbits or even a large duck. Then the entire piece of paper is ripped asunder and a beautiful girl steps out of the frame, an artist's (magician's) dream come to life. Unusual and wonderfully different this illusion will find instant favor with you and your audiences.

Workshop Plans \$2.00

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401. **Thomas Bell**

***hear we go again***

*Sun 19 Oct 1997*

---

Have been reading Lake's The Shape of Poetry  
(<http://home.earthlink.net/~arthur505/lake1.html>)  
and I can't resist raising the old form vs. free issue,  
mischievous me that I am. i think his argument misses  
the point but I could be wrong.  
tom bell

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402. **henry gould**

**(no subject)**

*Mon 20 Oct 1997*

---

Responding also to Carlo Parcelli's remarks: I thought the Sokal flap- debate was not about science's ability or inability to represent truth or reality. No one will argue with you if you say that the tools & procedures of science are imperfect & subject to change.

I thought the argument was not about the philosophy of science, but about underlying philosophical principles which allow science to take place or not.

Sokal et al. were basically saying that science requires a fundamentally "realist" approach, i.e., there is some kind of apprehensible reality out there beyond our formulations about it. He accused his opponents of imposing their own nominalist or relativist concepts on a thereby distorted characterization of science & the history of science.

Carlo P. seems to be taking a different tack - simply defending the relativist approach & accusing (American) scientists of blind positivism.

What interested me in the previous incarnation of this mud-slanging on the list were the implications of a "realist" grounding, as opposed to a postmodern/deconstructive approach, to current poetry experiments. The theories of the pragmatists, American scientist-philosophers like Peirce, seem far more complex on the issue of truth and reality than the straw-scientists Carlo is attacking. And what ARE the implications for writing, if, as Mark Weiss, says, lit students are being trained to regard words as disconnected from any testable truth? If they exist in their own magic realm of self-constructed or zeitgeist-formed or capital-generated chaos flow? Poetry must reside someplace in the middle... - Henry Gould

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403. **Douglas Barbour**

**Re: hear we go again**

*Mon 20 Oct 1997*

---

At one point in his essay, Lake argues thus:

Thirty years have passed since Ammons published "Corson's Inlet," and in that time, discoveries in science and mathematics have shed new light on the problems discussed in his poem--discoveries with immense significance for our understanding of form and content, nature and art, organic and mechanical form. In retrospect, Ammons' use of the phrase "not chaos" in his description of the swallows' behavior is startlingly prescient because, in fact, a whole new science of chaos--or "anti-chaos," as it's sometimes called--has come into being precisely

to explain such phenomena. Surprisingly, though, what the new sciences of chaos and complexity have shown is that Ammons is wrong in his conclusions about art and nature: that the "rule" of nature is not the sum of "rulelessness," as he proposes, but is clearly derived from formal rules and principles, which can be described and even imitated by a new form of mathematics called fractal geometry. Thanks to these new discoveries, we now know that the "order tight with shape" he observes in a tiny snail shell is the same order seen in "the large view": in coastlines, weather systems, sand dunes, mountain ranges, and galaxies. That the laws governing the growth of trees--as well as of leaves, ferns, pine cones, and sunflowers--is the same law that governs the growth of human organs, snowflakes, tornadoes, bird wings--and, I will argue, the elegant, broken symmetries of formal verse.

It turns out that writing formal poetry is not at all like pouring water into a vase, but, rather, like the growth of a tree--far more so than writing free verse, which, except in special cases, is too ruleless, arbitrary, and mechanical to produce the organic integrity of a good sonnet.

So: I'd agree with Tom Bell that he may be missing the point. Not that he isn't raising an intriguing 'defence' of trad forms, but that he seems to be insisting that there isn't any form in 'open form'. Perhaps it just takes longer to perceive it? Perhaps he can't 'see' the formal qualities of, well, here, say, Ammons's verse? Why does he have to dismiss open form in order to salvage conventional forms? And why can he not recognize any of the ways by which what Perloff calls 'radical artifice' is achieved? And why this insistence that what is for him 'the other side' is 'too ruleless, arbitrary, and mechanical to produce the organic integrity of a good sonnet'? O, why?

=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]  
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~

Nowadays
I want only the wild and tender
phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'
its air groaned out
like the beath of a lover.

Rashomon by saxophone.
Michael Ondaatje

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404. **David Kellogg**

Review of XCP

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Back last night from the XCP conference, and thought I'd give my response. First thing to note is that I was sick the first night (migraine) and generally depressed, lonely, and irritable until after I gave my paper on Saturday. Thanks to Maria (my audience), Martin Spinelli (other audience member, tho late), and my co-panelist Rod Hernandez, who gave a stirring talk on the Poco-Che Literary & Publishing Collective, which was a total revelation.

I originally wrote this starting with the high points, but then it ended on a depressing note. So now I start with the bad news.

LOW POINTS:

the controversy that wouldn't die, i.e., translation, for the continued life of which I primarily blame Dennis Tedlock, who probably is a nice guy but who could not seem to let this go, and who (inadvertently?) took the opportunity of a question on disproportionate power relations to use his own prominent place at the conference to humiliate a graduate student,

the roundtable on Ethnopoetics: What's the Use?, bravely but futilely chaired by maria damon: It's hard to tell which was worse: Maurice Kenny's "I am not a scholar" mantra, Dennis Tedlock's continued magnification of an initial misunderstanding, or Barbara Tedlock's gushing enthusiasm over new forms of ethnographic writing that seemed never to wonder EVEN FOR A MOMENT whether there might not be some kind of loss in the transition to such forms. It's too bad, because this roundtable began with a great moment, i.e., Juliana Chang SINGING a Tupac Shakur song. Her presence at this roundtable, and that of Maria -- I don't envy her role! -- brought welcome relief to an otherwise depressing and demoralizing event,

the final low point, for me, was all the conversations that didn't take place, especially between cult-studies people and poetry folks with primarily aesthetic allegiances. I plead guilty in this regard; how much more productive the conference could have been if we had taken more personal risks.

HIGH POINTS:

Brathwaite reading, long, but not as long as I'd heard he could be, still mesmerizing for me who've never seen him before (a little bird told me he did the same performance not long previous),

Schwerner reading (with flutes a plenty),

the intensely cheery chris cheek (who brought me out of my funk even when I thought he was david antin),

David Antin,

panel with Aldon Nielson on "Can Cultural Studies Speak Poetry," Sw. Anand Prahlad on new genres, and Hilton Obenzinger and his fortune cookies on writing history,

maria d. (of course!) enthusing about my co-panelist rod's book collection -- she's like a kid, isn't she?,

Ira Livingston calling Lacan "a sort of Berryman with a bungee"

the herd of (sunny) buffalo and their tales of how they made the pilgrimage to snowy upstate new york,

julie suk's paper on negritude, difficult to believe she's in her first year of grad school,

U Sam Oeur's poems from the killing fields, chantings that broke your heart (though I found the translations weak),

joe amato, his alter-ego jodi (last name I forget) & joe's wife kass, who put up with my bad-mouthing Duke through an entire lunch (after joe & I sung the praises of one on this list),

the care & concern of Alan Golding, Aldon Nielson, Susan Wheeler, maria d., chris cheek, and others who seemed to recognize my funk, or if they did not, alleviated it by their presence and conversation anyway. Thanks to all of you.

Cheers,

David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg Duke University
[REDACTED] Program in Writing and Rhetoric
[REDACTED] Durham, NC 27708
FAX [REDACTED] <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

There is no mantle
and it does not descend.

-- Thomas Kinsella

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405. **LAURA MORIARTY**

non and hypernon

Mon 20 Oct 1997

More emptiness:

Michael McElligott, Standard Schaefer, Louis Cabri and Jean Day
at <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty.htm>

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406. **Miekal And**

Re: Review of XCP

Mon 20 Oct 1997

David Kellogg wrote:

>

> Back last night from the XCP conference, and thought I'd give my response.

*the intensely cheery chris cheek (who brought me out of my funk
even when I thought he was david antin),*

what exactly did chris do?

miekal

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407. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: hear we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

On Mon, 20 Oct 1997, Douglas Barbour wrote:

*So: I'd agree with Tom Bell that he may be missing the point. Not that he
isnt raising an intriguing 'defence' of trad forms, but that he seems to be
insisting that there isnt any form in 'open form'. Perhaps it just takes
longer to perceive it? Perhaps he cant 'see' the formal qualities of, well,
here, say, Ammons's verse? Why does he have to dismiss open form in order
to salvage conventional forms? And why can he not recognize any of the ways
by which what Perloff calls 'radical artifice' is achieved? And why this
insistence that what is for him 'the other side' is 'too ruleless,
arbitrary, and
mechanical to produce the organic integrity of a good sonnet'? O, why?*

There is no possible reason why, that can be defended. Hidden agendas abound. There's basically no way to turn back the clock and convince any but a teeny handful of readers and practitioners, that meter, rhyme and trad forms are obligatory and should dominate poetry. It would be rather like announcing that all countries *must* return to monarchy and disassemble their republican and electoral states. So nostalgists take on a rather hectic, bullying tone, trying to achieve a formulation that will convince people that old concepts of poetic form are necessary and ineluctable. My favorite appeared in 1983...I remember because I was briefly living in Florida on the way to spending a year in Brazil...It was an essay in Poetry magazine by god-knows-who; two men as I remember, don't recall their names. They had scientific data showing that the neurological set-up of the brain *required* poetry to be in verse and rhyme...And had a futher "line of argument" (to grant it the dignity of that name...) which demonstrated that fascists and communists (these guys were pretty far right) always wrote "free verse" because these terrible totalitarian ideologies were trying to bend true human nature (which requires meter). Inspired nuttiness....

Mark P.
atlanta

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408. **Christopher Alexander**

e'er we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

I agree with Doug (how's that for a bold stance!). one of the major problems with Lake's article is that it's structured by what I consider a rather pernicious version of the "free" vs "formal" binary, one that takes those words @ face value in alternately assuming that only work in received forms has form, & that all other work exists as a sort of nebulous, unstructured mass of Stuff, or that work in received forms is necessarily rigid & dead, & that only work that is free to "discover" or devise its own, "organic" form, is worthwhile. all Lake is really able to do is accept & invert this binary to replace received form as the True Poetry - which seems to happen in part by a slippage in his use of the word "organic", by which he loses track of the metaphoricity of his "chaos theory / received form" comparison.

I'd so like it if we cld get past this. it doesn't seem to get us anything but a familiar see-sawing motion, & it doesn't amount to a very good defense of received form, either. we've had this thread before, & not so long ago as I recall, but, for the sake of argument (& maybe engendering the same kind of repetition I was just disparaging), how can we better understand "form"? I wldn't be the first to say so, but nevertheless I'd like to put forth tentatively that "form" can be understood as the particular complex of visual, sound, temporal, ideolectical, propositional, & ["your name here"] other elements that comprise the poem - so that "sonnet" can be one element in the form of a poem, but isn't sufficient to formally define (or casually dismiss) the poem.

my saying this is at least partly to elicit or maintain an openness to un-/familiar forms. but of course what I'm really trying to avoid, & with very limited success, is the form-content binary, on which most of Lake's assumptions, & many of his chosen adversaries', are predicated. no one is "released from form" (Ammons), because meaning arises from the relation of the complex to its context. to paraphrase the big M, poems are made of words & phrases, not propositions. (end paraphrase). in this sense, all poems are referential, but differently so.

or maybe I'm missing the boat here as well. (oops).

best, Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

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409. **Aldon Nielsen**

Minneapolis is socially constructed

Mon 20 Oct 1997

O.K. -- whos's the wise guy who actually told Bromige how to get off the list -- I turn my back for a couple days to hang out with the poetry posse in Minneapolis and come back to find that someone has actually aided and abetted Bromige in escaping with his wit to environs unreachable by my virtual self --

and on that other boy we've been beating --

could somebody PLEASE cite for me ANY place in the writing of any scholar (other than SOKAL himself) where it is claimed that the force we call by the name "gravity" is itself culturally determined, as opposed to possible claims that someone's socio-linguistic/cultural experience of gravity might be culturally inflected -- so far, to judge from what I see on my screen -- we know that Weinberger says somebody said so, and we know that some college students say that somebody said so -- which says a lot to me already --

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410. **simon**
weiner book: segue people

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Dear Segue,

would you contact me please?
(sorry to bother the list with this)

thanks

beth simon
[REDACTED]

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411. **mark weiss**
Re: hear we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Inspired nuttiness, for sure, but it nonetheless got some play, beyond support from whatever prestige *Poetry* affords. I think it was Peter Viereck who picked up on this train of thought and went beyond it by claiming that iambic pentameter was "natural" because it mimics the heartbeat. Mine is more of a cha cha cha, but perhaps I have a cardiac problem. Although one wonders about those entire nations, like the French and the Greeks, who have traditionally danced to a different drummer. I've always wondered why writers in traditional forms are called "formalists," as their adherence to the given would seem to betray a lack of interest in form. What's always interested me is the form discoverable, fractal-like, in the apparently formless, however generated. By that criterion, most of us on this list are the true formalists.

My favorite appeared in 1983...I remember because I was
>briefly living in Florida on the way to spending a year in Brazil...It was
>an essay in Poetry magazine by god-knows-who; two men as I remember,
don't
>recall their names. They had scientific data showing that the

>neurological set-up of the brain *required* poetry to be in verse and
>rhyme...And had a futher "line of argument" (to grant it the dignity of
>that name...) which demonstrated that fascists and communists (these guys
>were pretty far right) always wrote "free verse" because these terrible
>totalitarian ideologies were trying to bend true human nature (which
>requires meter). Inspired nuttiness....
>
>Mark P.
>atlanta
>
>

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412. **Pritchett, Pat**
Re: hear we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Mark -

sounds like that scene in "Dead Poets Society" in which Robin Williams parodies such attempts by dissecting a poem using a graph in which X represents meaning and Y the music of the poem or some such nonsense. It struck me at the time as a jibe against the Warren/Brooks anthology - and its imaginary author's last name was Pritchett! Otherwise, though, I hated the film.

What's interesting about the formal prosody vs. open form debate is that the defenders of traditional metrics, as you relate, seem to think that form is in some magical way non-arbitrary, when it's really a case of its having been a convention for so long that it only appears to be natural and somehow "pre-ordained."

Patrick Pritchett

From: Mark Prejsnar

To: POETICS

Subject: Re: hear we go again

Date: Monday, October 20, 1997 4:15PM

So nostalgists take on a rather hectic, bullying tone, trying to achieve a formulation that will convince people that old concepts of poetic form are necessary and ineluctable. My favorite appeared in 1983... It was an essay in Poetry magazine by god-knows-who; two men as I remember, don't recall their names. They had scientific data showing that the neurological set-up of the brain *required* poetry to be in verse and rhyme...And had a futher "line of argument" (to grant it the dignity of that name...) which demonstrated that fascists and communists (these guys were pretty far right) always wrote "free verse"

because these terrible totalitarian ideologies were trying to bend true human nature (which requires meter). Inspired nuttiness....

Mark P.
atlanta

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413. **r.drake**

Poetrix "reviewed"

Mon 20 Oct 1997

selfconciuous Poetics List members might be interested in this, in the latest jrnl ov postmodern culture:

<http://jefferson.village.Virginia.EDU/pmc/issue.997/review-7.997.html>

if nothing else, a reminder of the public nature of our performances here on thee list...

lbd

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414. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: hear we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

On Oct 20, 1:39pm, Mark Prejsnar wrote:

> Subject: Re: hear we go again

> On Mon, 20 Oct 1997, Douglas Barbour wrote:

>

> >

> > So: I'd agree with Tom Bell that he may be missing the point. Not that he

> > isnt raising an intriguing 'defence' of trad forms, but that he seems to be

> > insisting that there isnt any form in 'open form'. Perhaps it just takes

> > longer to perceive it? Perhaps he cant 'see' the formal qualities of, well,

> > here, say, Ammons's verse? Why does he have to dismiss open form in order

> > to salvage conventional forms? And why can he not recognize any of the ways

> > by which what Perloff calls 'radical artifice' is achieved? And why this

> > insistence that what is for him 'the other side' is 'too ruleless,

> > arbitrary, and

> > mechanical to produce the organic integrity of a good sonnet'? O, why?

> >

>

>

> There is no possible reason why, that can be defended. Hidden agendas
> abound. There's basically no way to turn back the clock and convince any
> but a teeny handful of readers and practitioners, that meter, rhyme and
> trad forms are obligatory and should dominate poetry. It would be rather
> like announcing that all countries *must* return to monarchy and
> disassemble their republican and electoral states. So nostalgists take on
> a rather hectic, bullying tone, trying to achieve a formulation that will
> convince people that old concepts of poetic form are necessary and
> ineluctable. My favorite appeared in 1983...I remember because I was
> briefly living in Florida on the way to spending a year in Brazil...It was
> an essay in Poetry magazine by god-knows-who; two men as I remember,
don't

> recall their names. They had scientific data showing that the
> neurological set-up of the brain *required* poetry to be in verse and
> rhyme...And had a futher "line of argument" (to grant it the dignity of
> that name...) which demonstrated that fascists and communists (these guys
> were pretty far right) always wrote "free verse" because these terrible
> totalitarian ideologies were trying to bend true human nature (which
> requires meter). Inspired nuttiness....

>

> Mark P.

> atlanta

>-- End of excerpt from Mark Prejsnar

Hidden agendas do abound indeed and Paul Lake's essay is another, albeit scientifically ambitious and enthusiastic, instance of formalist apologetics. Far be it from me to fault him for his enthusiasm (sincerity assumed), but I reject the implication that a poem of traditional rhyme and meter can literally write itself as if it were an organic process, one of coalescence, attraction, or whatever. This late fad of tying poetic form and content into a scientific/mathematical framework/justification is reminiscent of the Grand Unified Theory, which followed on the heels of all of the quantum theory discoveries earlier this century.

Bill B.

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415. **Daniel Zimmerman**

Re: hear we go again

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Mark Prejsnar wrote:

>

> On Mon, 20 Oct 1997, Douglas Barbour wrote:

>

> >

> > So: I'd agree with Tom Bell that he may be missing the point. Not that he
> > isn't raising an intriguing 'defence' of trad forms, but that he seems to be
> > insisting that there isn't any form in 'open form'. Perhaps it just takes
> > longer to perceive it? Perhaps he can't 'see' the formal qualities of, well,
> > here, say, Ammons's verse? Why does he have to dismiss open form in or-
der

> > to salvage conventional forms? And why can he not recognize any of the
ways

> > by which what Perloff calls 'radical artifice' is achieved? And why this

> > insistence that what is for him 'the other side' is 'too ruleless,

> > arbitrary, and

> > mechanical to produce the organic integrity of a good sonnet'? O, why?

> >

>

> There is no possible reason why, that can be defended. Hidden agendas
> abound. There's basically no way to turn back the clock and convince any
> but a teeny handful of readers and practitioners, that meter, rhyme and
> trad forms are obligatory and should dominate poetry. It would be rather
> like announcing that all countries *must* return to monarchy and
> disassemble their republican and electoral states. So nostalgists take on
> a rather hectic, bullying tone, trying to achieve a formulation that will
> convince people that old concepts of poetic form are necessary and
> ineluctable. My favorite appeared in 1983...I remember because I was
> briefly living in Florida on the way to spending a year in Brazil...It was
> an essay in Poetry magazine by god-knows-who; two men as I remember,
don't

> recall their names. They had scientific data showing that the

> neurological set-up of the brain *required* poetry to be in verse and

> rhyme...And had a further "line of argument" (to grant it the dignity of

> that name...) which demonstrated that fascists and communists (these guys

> were pretty far right) always wrote "free verse" because these terrible

> totalitarian ideologies were trying to bend true human nature (which

> requires meter). Inspired nuttiness....

>

> Mark P.

> atlanta

Mark, if I find the following reference as a link, I'll post it [I looked in my book-
marks, then browsed, but it may have vanished, as much on the net one wanted

to cite does]. This genuflection before the altar of formality and its concomitant strawmannerism about the spectre of Bolshevik withering away of the strophe sounds eerily like a Lyndon LaRouche "essay" on the virtues of classical music versus the Protocols of the Youngsters of Metal. Hey: why must form lie belly-up on the surface and catchable-- sans pole, sans net, sans fight? Who'd eat a fish like that? The argument strikes me as a universalization of the "Mozart effect"--i.e., that because Mozart's [admittedly 'formal'] music raises IQ [& I have little doubt, does much more], all formal music must possess similar virtues, or [LaRouche's point] all music ought to embody formal [i.e., immediately apparent] structures. Yeah, but: Mozart's genius engaged the formal in a special way which other classical composers evidently did not, since only his music appears to have the magical "Mozart effect." Been there, done that. So what about non-traditional exfoliations of form such as those you refer to? [I think here of D'Arcy Thompson's book on Growth & Form]. Mozart ain't Mandelbrot! Form ain't no coattail! Most of us literary types love to discover unanticipated forms and coherences in our reading, so why not in our writing? The exhortation to form for form's sake on a reader's part bespeaks a lassitude of the imagination--or at least a superfluous addiction to the metronome [superfluous because, from what I've observed of most of the proponents of Iambic-Only, they seem a rather sharp & fluent cadre, just the kind of folks one might think, after all those finger exercises, would itch to improvise, to boogie, to wail]. Can't one like both Bach & Rahsaan Roland Kirk, both Mozart and Monk? Can't we all just get along? If Einstein had stuck to Newton as his dancing master, we might not have avoided the Macarena, but forget about the Jitterbug, the Twist, and [lest we forget] the Chicken!

Best,
Dan Zimmerman

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416. **mark weiss**

Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Mon 20 Oct 1997

Weinberg's article and his subsequent answers to critical letters are too closely-reasoned to bear easy summary, but he does in fact cite quite a few who maintain to one degree or another that the laws of physics are social constructs and as such culturally determined. He also cites a few whose statements seem only comprehensible if viewed as expressions of the above idea but who elsewhere deny that that's what they believe. In most cases the issue may boil down to clarity and carefulness of expression rather than ideology. But that is or ought to be one of our primary concerns as writers teachers and scholars. Weinberg, by the way, in the last two paragraphs of his answers (NYR 10/3/96, p. 56),

deconstructs a hilarious compounded example of lack of clarity on the part of Derrida.

could somebody PLEASE cite for me ANY place in the writing of any scholar (other than SOKAL himself) where it is claimed that the force we call by the name "gravity" is itself culturally determined, as opposed to possible claims that someone's socio-linguistic/cultural experience of gravity might be culturally inflected -- so far, to judge from what I see on my screen -- we know that Weinberger says somebody said so, and we know that some college students say that somebody said so -- which says a lot to me already --

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417. **Jennifer Ashton**
math/logic and poetry

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Dear list members,

I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of contemporary poets who have used mathematical or logical models as occasions for composition. Of course texts like Ashbery's *_Flow Chart_* come immediately to mind, but I'm sure there are many other obvious choices that I'm just not coming up with. I am especially interested in women writers incorporating mathematical/logical systems into their work. I'll be thankful for all suggestions, obvious and obscure.

Please copy any posts to me via backchannel.

Many thanks in advance,

Jennifer Ashton
Johns Hopkins University



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418. **Carl Lynden Peters**
Re: math/logic and poetry

Tue 21 Oct 1997

bpNichol!
bpNichol!
bpNichol! x all that u can read! of bp!

i luv this list; the only time i know what's happening is when th answer is bpNichol!

Mad for Bliss,

carl

Dear list members,

*I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of contemporary poets who have used mathematical or logical models as occasions for composition. Of course texts like Ashbery's *_Flow Chart_* come immediately to mind, but I'm sure there are many other obvious choices that I'm just not coming up with. I am especially interested in women writers incorporating mathematical/logical systems into their work. I'll be thankful for all suggestions, obvious and obscure.*

Please copy any posts to me via backchannel.

Many thanks in advance,

*Jennifer Ashton
Johns Hopkins University*



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419. **Stephen Cope**

Re: reading tour

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Although likely not part of his tour per se, David Bromige forgot to mention his reading in San Diego on November 5th, to which those within earshot would either listen or attend...

* Wednesday, November 5: David Bromige

The author of 30 books of poetry, fiction, and song, and likened by Rochelle Owens to "a congenial terrorist equipped with a smart bomb," David Bromige has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Gertrude Stein Award for Innovative Writing and the Poet Laureate Award from the University of California.

4:30pm at the Performing Arts Space, Visual Arts Department, on the University of California, San Diego.

 for more info.

I am now once again able to send messages (my thanks to Layne Russell for posting to the List in my behalf, that my "Send" function was down) and would like to take the opportunity to post the sked of my upcoming tour, Last week when I read in San Francisco, Hugh Steinberg came up afterwards

and intro'd himself : I like meeting people who hitherto were just names on the net.

Hamilton Ontario, eve of sunday oct 19 : read with Lisa Robertson in the Live Lit" series run by Kerry Schooley, who has the details at

██████████

Buffalo, eve of monday oct 20 : read at : "Talking Leaves" books, 7 pm. Details from John Walsh, ██████████.

Toronto, eve of Wednesday, Oct 22 : read at the Arts Bar with Lisa Robertson. Details from "Pierre L'Abbe" <██████████> .

Toronto, eve of Sunday, Oct 26 : read at "The Idler", 255 Davenport (just N of Bloor, @ just W of Yonge), 8 pm, with Gregg Orr Robertson & Mark Fitkin. Further details from Peter McFee, ██████████.

SUNY Albany, eve of Wednesday, Oct 29 : reading, the details of which are with Pierre Joris, ██████████ .

NYC, Thursday oct 30, at Teachers & Writers, 5 Union Sq W, curator Jordan Davis (██████████) : read with Alan Jennifer Sondheim, 7 pm.

Philadelphia, Friday oct 31, at the Writers House, U Penn, at 4pm: a reading, followed by a panel discussion with Laura Moriarty (who will have read at this location the previous evening). 3805 Locust Walk. Contact persons include Louis Cabri of this List (██████████) and Kerry Sherin (██████████) .

NYC, Saturday, Nov 1, at CAFE HERE, 145 Sixth Ave, bet. Spring & Broome (██████████), curator Liz Fodaski, at 3 pm, with Brian Kim Stefans.

Sunday Nov 2, I fly home to SF.

I hope to meet some of my fellow-listopolitans during these 2 weeks. Overnight accomodations are still soft for two nites in NYC, and a couple of nites in Toronto. I am a past winner (1993) of the James & Debbie Sherry Award for Perfect House-Guest.

I will of necessity unsubscribe from the List before I leave, probably for 3 weeks (after I return to Calif, I go to UC San Diego for a couple of days). My last full day onList will likely be Thursday.

Excuse the shameful self-promotion? Thanks, David

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420. **Alicia A Cohen**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Tue 21 Oct 1997

On Tue, 21 Oct 1997, Jennifer Ashton wrote:

Dear list members,

*I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of contemporary poets
who have used mathematical or logical models as occasions for composition.*

Reading _Catastrophe Theoretic Semantics: An Elaboration and Application of
Rene Thom's Thoery_ one finds the vocabulary turns with singularities and
frame structures both used as titles by Susan Howe.

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421. **henry**

Re: hear we go again

Tue 21 Oct 1997

the "formality" issue is so complicated it's better not to scoff at anybody's con-
tribution. (I'm not suggesting anybody HAS scoffed here on this thread.) But the
form/free debate - it gets very stuffy & pedantic. Is it because the mechanics of
form are generated by more subtle formalities - like the poet's relation to an au-
dience, to an occasion, to a tradition, to a situation, to the psychology of singing
anything? Hearing. What is hearing? Who hear who what hey hear here? -
Henry Gould

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422. **Michael Magee**

Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Tue 21 Oct 1997

On Gravity & Aldon's comments: wasn't the Social Text spoof article by that
physics professor an article on the non-existent - which is to say made-up - the-
ory of "quantum gravity"? I believe the professors joke was based on exactly
this - forcing gravity itself into the post-Kuhn belief in science-as-social-con-
struction. As I understood it, this professor thought the idea was so stupid and
scientifically bogus that ST couldn't possibly accept it, but then....

-Mike.

According to Aldon Nielsen: >

> O.K. -- whos's the wise guy who actually told Bromige how to get off the
> list -- I turn my back for a couple days to hang out with the poetry posse
> in Minneapolis and come back to find that someone has actually aided and

> abetted Bromige in escaping with his wit to environs unreachable by my
> virtual self --
>
> _____
> and on that other boy we've been beating --
>
> could somebody PLEASE cite for me ANY place in the writing of any scholar
> (other than SOKAL himself) where it is claimed that the force we call by
> the name "gravity" is itself culturally determined, as opposed to possible
> claims that someone's socio-linguistic/cultural experience of gravity might
> be culturally inflected -- so far, to judge from what I see on my screen --
> we know that Weinberger says somebody said so, and we know that some
> college students say that somebody said so -- which says a lot to me
> already --
>

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423. **Rachel Loden**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Dear Jennifer Ashton,

Mathematics is the core (and the scaffolding) for Stephanie Strickland's *_True North_*, print version from Notre Dame, hypertext (soon) from Eastgate Systems.

In selecting *_True North_* for the di Castagnola Award, Barbara Guest wrote that Strickland "possesses those virtues of the poet I find most desirable and enduring: imagination, intelligence, and what can only be viewed as a passion for the subject matter; this together with a firm respect for the independent structure of the poem."

Rachel Loden

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424. **Burt Kimmelman**

Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Aldon, Mark et al.,

I can't point out anything of interest specific to the Sokal thing, but (and here I run the risk of not knowing that someone else might have already pointed out the following, and also the risk of stating the obvious) feminist philosophers of

science such as marion namenwirth and evelyn fox keller, to name only two of many, advance the premise that, of course, there is a SOMEONE who evaluates data, and that someone is in part a cultural construct as well as a gender construct; thus two different people will interpret data in different ways. And so we approach the world according to our respective proclivities. Someone who sees the world as a virgin to be exploited and penetrated, who sees the world as "out there," will read data differently than someone who sees the world as a Gaia that is enveloping or whatever.

I'm sure this has been of no help whatsoever.

Burt

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425. **Henry Gould**

Re: now hear this

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Another problem with being a "formalist" is that it's like defending the existence of air or the continuing value of drinking water. But it would be too bad if the noisy defenders of tradition (like that guy Blarnes) turned people off. All Poets (listening, All Poets?) should bow down & do humble obeisance to those jongleurs, troubadours, bards, hymnists, vates, fine ladies & gents all, of times past who invented strict metrics, paranomasia, formal forms, triple-somersault sonnets, ceremonial circumcisional cantonics, and so on. Without them, lads & lassies, we would be nowhere, there would be no art of poesie. you can talk all you want about natural, discovered, hermetic, found, fractal forms - you can also go live in the woods & crawl around on all fours like Nebuchadnezzar & find spirals under mushrooms. but it's hard to dance if your beard's too long. even Ezekiel shaved now & then.

moreover, this "debate" is the usual people talking past each other. Poets have to accept the fact that unless they've tried received forms themselves, then strictly speaking they don't know what they're talking about. And torqueing metal & lifting struts & planning how to stretch the titanium over 1100 wrapped charitable organizations is at least as good exercise for poets as wandering around the tree farm absorbing epiphanies, or doing the dog pound in different voices. You have to discover just how difficult it all is before you discover how easy it is - & then if you're any good you discover how difficult it really is. Besides which, it's all still undiscovered territory. Think what spaces of hearing there are between those poets & readers who really HEAR metrics; and those who really HEAR tone of voice or social idioms & dialects; and those who really HEAR allusions & references & blending of echoes; and those who really are ATTUNED to an overall emotional coloring set to music... & are there really

poets who can handle all dis? (Blarnes was in his cups the other day over at the Zinc Bar & muttered something like he was giving away something!... I think he said "rhyme helps" or "gin gulps" or something...)

- Henry Gould

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426. **Douglas Barbour**

Re: e'er we go again

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Nah, I'd agree with Chris Alexander: let's get by the binaries, especially the form/content one. But, even if it's impossible to fully do so, it is worth the try.

Of course we have had this conversation before (even in the time I've been here), & I quoted you George Bowering then so won't do it again. But for me, any poem that gets through to me definitely has interesting formal qualities (& [therefore?] says something interesting too). I like what you 'put forth tentatively', Chris, 'that "form" can be understood as the particular complex of visual, sound, temporal, ideolectical, propositional, & ["your name here"] other elements that comprise the poem - so that "sonnet" can be one element in the form of a poem, but isn't sufficient to formally define (or casually dismiss) the poem.'

Hey, that's a start...

Doug

=====

Douglas Barbour
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

████████ FAX: ██████████

H: ██████████

~~~~~

Nowadays  
I want only the wild and tender  
phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'  
its air groaned out  
like the beath of a lover.  
Rashomon by saxophone.  
Michael Ondaatje

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427. **henry gould**  
***hear we go one more time***

*Tue 21 Oct 1997*

---

Finding form after the fact is a little like playing tennis with the net down and keeping score by comparing your strokes to a formula based on an ideal tennis match inverted 180 degrees and under-the-ping-pong-tabling some loose turf to the judge. Finding form in process is a little like playing tennis with your hands blindfolded and discovering you can see little squares in a fish-like pattern through the imaginary net. - Henry Gould

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428. **Joel Kuszai**  
***MONDAY NIGHT POETRY***

*Tue 21 Oct 1997*

---

MONDAY NIGHT POETRY

(from Bromige, man or urban myth--the Tour 97)

David Bromige read last night to a small but enthusiastic crowd at Buffalo's own Talking Leaves Bookstore. Reading from mostly new work, the reading was highlighted by his reading from the new three-part serial poem--a variously-driven work (driven in the sense of "driver" as in printer driver) as the poem's various mechanical means serve up the gamut--a range which didn't seem to over-bear. A curiously un-vacate.

Afterward he remarked that he hadn't ever written a serial poem. That surprised me. I'd like to read it. I think the three sections were the title of the poem: "initialization" "etc.etc." (three steps of "logging in" although he had modified one of them--I forget the title ex-actly) Some of it was "disjunctive" as he said at the gathering afterward (trying to shout over the big-screen tee-vee blasting the buffalo bill's monday night football game gainst the dreaded colts of indy) as if somehow the disjunctive qualities of contemporary poetry were somehow going to be more to my liking. whippersnapper.

But I don't think it is necessary to assume that a thirty-year old poet is going to automatically "dig" disjunction as a method of poetry behavior. Seems that disjunction used throughout the ages has produced a number of effects--and that disjunctive syntax would be something that would characterize (most generally) what is often thought of as "poetic." That it is marked-off as being a "device" automatically signals its literariness. The use of devices is what makes works literary and also usually a point of conflict in on-going literary debates. (i.e. the

terms of "disjunction" are contested points) And disjunction does not mean a work is unintelligible or asyntactical (which is the most common mistake, I suppose, made about the work of JML). As Mac Hammond wrote in "Poetics Syntax":

When we are dealing with fragmentary syntax, I think we must recall this pertinent observation by Leonard Bloomfield: "a linguistic form, as actually uttered, always contains a grammatical form. No matter how simple a form we take and how we utter it, we have already made some selection by virtue of which the utterance conveys a grammatical meaning in addition to its lexical content" [L. Bloomfield, *Language*. New York, 1933. p.1689-69] [for full Mac Hammond text, see <http://writing.upenn.edu/~kuszai/vortex/4.html>]

Bromige's disjunction seemed epiphanic as opposed to administrative. And while I like a lot of administrative verse, it was really great to hear him read. He gave a terrific reading and it was great to meet him afterward. It's too bad that so many people had things to do as it was one of the best readings of the year so far here in Buffalo.

Driving home, after the reading, listening to the Bills hold tight to their 3pt lead, I noticed that the streets were deserted, everything quiet. It was as if a bomb had nestled itself in the city, smothering like a wall-size lakefront fog rolling in off the dark. Quiet and still, only the blue-flicker of the tube electric in every household to show for the lack of touchdowns produced by a rebuilding offense. I wonder, where have the poetry audiences gone in this town? Why do so many things happen if so few people show? Why? Does everyone hate poetry that much? David was lovely and angelic--it seems that is what has been called for here by the murmuring mob of the quotidian poetix haunts of beefalo. Why no attendee?

I propose a one year moritorium on all readings--all self-congratulatory local productions, all visitors, everything--

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429. **Jordan Davis**  
***what blarnes muttered***

*Tue 21 Oct 1997*

---

Blarnes muttered the entire preface to paradise lost, henry... I prescribe two seltzers --

great report from beefalo, Joel, but please no moratorium --

Jordan

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430. **Safdie Joseph**

**Poets on Prose**

Tue 21 Oct 1997

---

As one of my favorite novelists, Joan Didion, got trashed on the list a few weeks back, I was curious to see if another contemporary I revere highly, Don DeLillo, would share the same fate. I saw him last night at a rare public appearance (in Seattle) and he was fascinating -- talking more like a poet, actually, than a novelist (please . . . I know the standard objections to that division), concentrating on the language being the primal force, antecedent to history, but also opining that "history" (which he called a three-dimensional construct of enormous power) would always be in antagonism with the writer's imagination, and that those different forces were always battling while he composed his works. A lucid, supremely intelligent evening. Anyone else see him, or start Underworld yet?

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431. **Christopher Alexander**

**Re: hear we go again**

Tue 21 Oct 1997

---

henry ghould wrts:

- > Is it because the mechanics of form are generated by more subtle
- > formalities - like the poet's relation to an audience, to an occasion,
- > to a tradition, to a situation, to the psychology of singing anything?
- > Hearing. What is hearing? Who hear who what hey hear here?

on that note, I'd like to open up to the list what I was just writing to Aviva, viz., that while--as Wm. Burmeister notes-- Lake's article certainly endeavors to fully naturalize a de-historicized received form with reference to organic processes (that same slippage I mentioned: "by the same law" or some such garbage), I'm intrigued by the idea of form -- any form -- as a "strange attractor" that organizes discourse to itself, though, I'd say, on the basis of localized pressures that have to do with the writing subject (my slightly other version of henry's "poet's relation to..."). form as "found" -- "discovered" in or possibly invented in the grappling with language ("process"). & one doesn't have to accept Lake's ridiculous absolutizing gesture (received form as "archetypal") to see the interest in this. certainly, writing for me, when it's working, occurs a series of incremental discoveries or in(ter)ventions -- I become aware of a tiny recurrence, or note the significance of something in a piece, & then use that awareness as a tool to further the process, & so forth, making or finding tools to modify the work, which then yields further tools with which to modify the work. an inward-turning of sorts, introspection, though not as in our standard use of the term,

not synonymous with confessionalism -- an archeology of one or a series of relations to the medium, & the relations it itself carries by virtue of its (my) social situation.

that's form as "found", or, better, as negotiated. but henry's right, there is a virtue, too, to the de-formative quality of received form, just as there is to any restraining procedure. I've never worked in received form -- I wasn't even present at the time, Officer Boundary (that's for Maria) --, but I've used other such devices as a way of dis-placing or distorting the archeology outlined above. & what do you know, they work. not all sonnets, presumably, have to be written for to go a-courting.

best, Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

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#### 432. **Layne Russell**

##### ***Slightly-Off-Topic/Bruce Cockburn***

*Tue 21 Oct 1997*

---

The Bruce Cockburn photos I took at the June 1, 1997, Luther Burbank Center concert in Santa Rosa, California, are now up on one of the Bruce Cockburn sites.

If anyone wants to see them (they are very fast-loading jpgs), fly over to:

[http://www.page-designs.com/broooce/santa\\_rosa.htm](http://www.page-designs.com/broooce/santa_rosa.htm)

On September 5 Bruce was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Music by Berklee School of Music, Boston, MA. You can see a transcription of his heartfelt speech (third entry down the page) at this url:

[http://users.aol.com/fxbrusca/dr\\_bruce.htm](http://users.aol.com/fxbrusca/dr_bruce.htm)

Much of what he says about music goes for writing/poetry and all the arts. Very moving.

"never let anyone convince you that music is an expendable thing - that what you do is not important. Without music there's no culture and without culture life is impossible." -- Bruce Cockburn

Layne



http://www.sonic.net/layne  
A Quiet Place

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433. **Thomas Bell**  
***Re: e'er we go again***  
*Tue 21 Oct 1997*

---

I tend to think that all poetry takes on some form as it grows in my [the] mind. This form might be or become organic or inorganic. Some poetry is written in order to meet requisites (be they good or bad) of given form(s). tom bell

p.s. also posted same message on cap-l and there has been \_no\_ response.

At 08:15 AM 10/21/97 -0600, Douglas Barbour wrote:

>Nah, I'd agree with chris alexander: let's get by the binaries, especially  
>the form/content one. But, even if it's impossible to fully do so, it is  
>worth the try.

>

>Of course we have had this conversation before (even in the time Ive been  
>here), & I quoted yon George Bowering then so wont do it again. But for me,  
>any poem that gets through to me definitely has interesting formal  
>qualities (& [therefore?] says something interesting too). I like what you  
>'put forth tentatively', Chris, 'that "form" can be  
>understood as the particular complex of visual, sound,  
>temporal, ideolectical, propositional, & ["your name here"]  
>other elements that comprise the poem - so that "sonnet"  
>can be one element in the form of a poem, but isn't sufficient  
>to formally define (or casually dismiss) the poem.'

>

>Hey, that's a start...

>

>Doug

>

>=====

>Douglas Barbour

>Department of English

>University of Alberta

>Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

>[REDACTED] FAX:[REDACTED]

>H: [REDACTED]

>~~~~~

~~~~~

> Nowadays
>I want only the wild and tender
>phrasing of 'Nighthawk,'
>its air groaned out
>like the beath of a lover.
>Rashomon by saxophone.
> Michael Ondaatje
>
>
>

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434. **Pritchett, Pat**
Re: e'er we go again

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Guy Davenport: "every force evolves a form."

From: Thomas Bell
To: POETICS
Subject: Re: e'er we go again
Date: Tuesday, October 21, 1997 1:50PM

I tend to think that all poetry takes on some form as it grows in my [the] mind. This form might be or become organic or inorganic. Some poetry is written in order to meet requisites (be they good or bad) of given form(s). tom bell

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435. **Jack Foley**
Poets on Prose -Reply

Tue 21 Oct 1997

I've barely started Underworld, out of impatient curiosity; but won't get to read it for another week or two, because of other things I'm reading now. I have read six other DeLillo novels -- Great Jones Street and White Noise are my favorites. But even his less effective books, like Numbers, Running Dog, Libra, and Mao II are well worth reading. A miss by DeLillo is better than many a hit by many another novelist. -- JR Foley

>>> Safdie Joseph <[REDACTED]> 10/21/97 10:38am >>>

As one of my favorite novelists, Joan Didion, got trashed on the list a few weeks back, I was curious to see if another contemporary I revere highly, Don DeLillo, would share the same fate. I saw him last night at a rare public appearance (in Seattle) and he was fascinating --

talking more like a poet, actually, than a novelist (please . . . I know the standard objections to that division), concentrating on the language being the primal force, antecedent to history, but also opining that "history" (which he called a three-dimensional construct of enormous power) would always be in antagonism with the writer's imagination, and that those different forces were always battling while he composed his works. A lucid, supremely intelligent evening. Anyone else see him, or start Underworld yet?

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436. **JDEBROT**

Re: ILS 1.8

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Barrett Watten's recent contribution to the *Impercipient Lecture Series*, "The Bride of the Assembly Line," belies any suggestion that the Language School is monolithic in its ideology or that the provocations it incited in the 70s and 80s have been exhausted. If the critical language for engaging with experimentalist poetry has begun to seem somewhat automatic & routinized, Watten's essay strikes me as an extremely important corrective. In "The Bride . . ." he challenges the, by now too easy, assumption that the material text is politically effective either because 1. the reader is "empowered" by his/her collaboration in making meaning, or 2. in Watten's words, "what writing wants to accomplish as politics is the same as to do it; that to describe literary possibility is to represent a form of agency, in a circular fashion, as a critique of representation." In place of these alternatives Watten proposes a *cultural poetics* with "a more socially reflexive perspective." Just what this might mean is suggested by George Hartley in his account of Watten's pivotal essay "Total Syntax," where Watten calls for a focused "attention to both the internal, formal, temporal construction of a work and its external, contextual, spatial dimension" The two, as Watten sees it, are coextensive. Therefore the work's external frames ("aesthetic value systems, economic constraints, and ideological structures") mediate, but may also be affected by, its internal syntax. It is through the writer's exploitation of this "total syntax" that is, for Watten, key to the work's eventual political efficacy; what in Watten's book *Progress* is said to be "a form compelling events."

Possibly someone else might want to elaborate on this to a greater extent -- or more articulately -- than I have done here. In any case, I found it somewhat intriguing that Watten cites both Duchamp's "allegories" & Benjamin's arcades project as working towards "releasing the social forces held in check by the norm." That there can also be a *nonstandard norm* is another of the essay's crucial insights. Watten writes: "Norms are products, not deductive schema of

oppressive rationality, although they can be used for oppressive ends. Nonstandard norms are also produced; they are not simply defined against the abstraction of normativity. The work of the language School, if produced within a system of social feedback necessary for meaning and comprehension, may in turn end up producing itself as a new norm. If this were to happen, a nonstandard mode of expression might simply be inserted into the space of a vacated norm of the expressive lyric."

The history of Language writing is being written and contested *today*. Watten's essay provides an intriguing perspective on this history. But wherever one's sympathies lie, I think it's an extremely good sign that Watten & Bernstein, the West & East Coast Language Schools, etc. disagree on matters of crucial importance. Perhaps the issues raised in ILS 1.8 or, contrastingly, by Bernstein -- as for example, in "Poetics of the Americas," *Modernism?Modernity* 3.3 (1996) -- can be taken up & debated on this List.

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437. **Carolyn Guertin**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Tue 21 Oct 1997

I've barely started Underworld, out of impatient curiosity; but won't get to read it for another week or two, because of other things I'm reading now. I have read six other DeLillo novels -- Great Jones Street and White Noise are my favorites. But even his less effective books, like Numbers, Running Dog, Libra, and Mao II are well worth reading. A miss by DeLillo is better than many a hit by many another novelist.

-- JR Foley

What??? No mention of The Names and its fascination with language!?

Carolyn Guertin, Department of English, University of Alberta

E-Mail: [REDACTED]; Tel/FAX: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cguertin/Guertin.htm>

"Memory is a capricious seamstress." -- Virginia Woolf

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438. **Herb Levy**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Is Numbers a typo for the Names or for Ratner's Star?, either of which I like better than Great Jones Street. But hey, what do I know.

I'm about 2/3 through Underworld, which I do like, but I'm continually reminded of Joseph McElroy's Women & Men, which I (so far) like better.

Joe makes me wish I'd had time to go to hear DeLillo, but this was the wrong week for me, oh well.

I've barely started Underworld, out of impatient curiosity; but won't get to read it for another week or two, because of other things I'm reading now. I have read six other DeLillo novels -- Great Jones Street and White Noise are my favorites. But even his less effective books, like Numbers, Running Dog, Libra, and Mao II are well worth reading. A miss by DeLillo is better than many a hit by many another novelist.
-- JR Foley

Safdie Joseph <[REDACTED]> 10/21/97 10:38am >>>

As one of my favorite novelists, Joan Didion, got trashed on the list a few weeks back, I was curious to see if another contemporary I revere highly, Don DeLillo, would share the same fate. I saw him last night at a rare public appearance (in Seattle) and he was fascinating -- talking more like a poet, actually, than a novelist (please . . . I know the standard objections to that division), concentrating on the language being the primal force, antecedent to history, but also opining that "history" (which he called a three-dimensional construct of enormous power) would always be in antagonism with the writer's imagination, and that those different forces were always battling while he composed his works. A lucid, supremely intelligent evening. Anyone else see him, or start Underworld yet?

Herb Levy



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439. **George Thompson**

Re: Slightly-Off-Topic/Bruce Cockburn

Tue 21 Oct 1997

Off-topic? I don't know.

I found myself, earlier today, talking about poetry with one of my lit classes [we're racing through a sequence on English Romantic poets, after dealing with Voltaire, Swift, Rousseau, and Truffaut's "L'enfant sauvage"].

I asked them "Do you read poetry, do you write poetry, what is poetry?" You know, the typical questions, before pouncing on Blake, the lamb and the tyger, heaven & hell, and all those angels, and so forth.

They were all very lethargic, it was early in the morning, and in the absence of a response, I unpremeditatedly took off in pursuit of poetry for them. I found

myself saying that poetry was language as it approaches the state, the exquisite condition, of becoming music. I drew out of them, painfully slowly, the recognition that they all had that it was all a matter of rhythm and repetition, the building up of expectations, and the exploitation of expectations. The virtues of rhyme and the exhilaration that we find in varying it, doing unexpected things to it, so that ultimately everything in the poem, right down to the least syllable, steered us to the one true thing: the poem's message.

I don't know. I got excited. They got excited. I think it was one of those moments why I like teaching. We all seemed for a moment to see it [or so it seemed, at least].

It was just a momentary high.

Somebody a few weeks ago referred to those momentary deities that used to be a regular part of the general landscape. What were they called? In German they call them "Sondergoetter." I don't know the English name for them. Well, I guess 'momentary deities' is what they were.

George Thompson

The Bruce Cockburn photos I took at the June 1, 1997, Luther Burbank Center concert in Santa Rosa, California, are now up on one of the Bruce Cockburn sites.

If anyone wants to see them (they are very fast-loading jpgs), fly over to:

http://www.page-designs.com/broooce/santa_rosa.htm

On September 5 Bruce was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Music by Berklee School of Music, Boston, MA. You can see a transcription of his heartfelt speech (third entry down the page) at this url:

http://users.aol.com/fxbrusca/dr_bruce.htm

Much of what he says about music goes for writing/poetry and all the arts. Very moving.

"never let anyone convince you that music is an expendable thing - that what you do is not important. Without music there's no culture and without culture life is impossible." -- Bruce Cockburn

Layne

<http://www.sonic.net/layne>
A Quiet Place

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440. **Mark Baker**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Tue 21 Oct 1997

| *What??? No mention of The Names and its fascination with language!?!>*

In The Names, Paul Lake appears among the "zealots of the alphabet," the worshippers of natural form and deniers of the arbitrariness of signs. They match the initials of a person's name with the initials of a place name. Then they naturally kill the person. Once belittled as lunatic, this practice has now been shown to fit the latest discoveries of ananarchic non-chaos physics.

But, in the epilogue, a Language poet appears, and convinces us of the unrelation between the Parthenon and our syntax. The form moves us deeply, though we have no feelings to be moved.

Mark Baker

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441. **mark weiss**

Re: Slightly-Off-Topic/Bruce Cockburn

Wed 22 Oct 1997

In the standard translation of Cassirer they're rendered as "momentary gods."

| *Somebody a few weeks ago referred to those momentary deities that used to be a regular part of the general landscape. What were they called? In German they they call them "Sondergoetter." I don't know the English name for them. Well, I guess 'momentary deities' is what they were.*

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442. **lee ann brown**

NYC Poetry happenings

Wed 22 Oct 1997

happenings at
Segue Performance Space
303 E. 8th St between Aves B & C

Sunday, October 26 8:30pm

reading for Explosive Magazine

hosted by Katy Lederer

with:

Brett Evans

Elinor Nauen

Anselm Berigan

Lee Ann Brown

and more...

Tuesday, November 4 th 7:30pm

readings by:

George Albon

Shelley F. Marlow

Caroline Bergvall

Tuesday, November 18th 8:00pm

Cinemaki: Lives of the Poets

movies by

Larry Fagin

Lee Ann Brown

Nick Dorsky

Sunday, November 23rd 8:00pm

films and poetry by Euphrosyne Bloom

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443. **lee ann brown**

Lee Ann Brown reading at Bard College

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Lee Ann Brown reads her poetry

at Bard College Thursday October 23, 6:00pm

Olin 120

Bard College

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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444. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Wed 22 Oct 1997

I, too, would be interested in hearing of poets using mathematics/logic as a schematic in their work. Very very interested. Thanks, Aviva

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445. **mark weiss**

(no subject)

Wed 22 Oct 1997

"here is a virtue, too, to the de-formative quality of
received form"

"not all sonnets, presumably, have to be written for to go a-courting."

Of course, it's possible to try to subvert a form, but the form is in itself anything but "de-formative." The sonnet, for example, which I tried to subvert for about seven years of apprenticeship, is not just a love poem in any casual pattern of 14 rhymed lines. It contains within itself a logical constraint: an if/then pattern (in Shakespeare an if/if/if/then pattern). A variant on the syllogism. This is true whether one looks at Donne, or Keats, or Wordsworth, or Spencer or Milton. I have nothing against syllogisms, I just don't find them particularly useful for me as a mode of inquiry. Put another way, for me to write a sonnet I'd have to experience life and language as governed by an apparent logic. The logic, the coherence, would be a given. In the secular world in which I live whatever logic may be available takes a bit more exploration to discover.

At 10:50 AM 10/21/97 MST7MDT, you wrote:

>henry ghould wrts:

>> Is it because the mechanics of form are generated by more subtle
>> formalities - like the poet's relation to an audience, to an occasion,
>> to a tradition, to a situation, to the psychology of singing anything?
>> Hearing. What is hearing? Who hear who what hey hear here?
>

>on that note, I'd like to open up to the list what I was just
>writing to Aviva, viz., that while--as Wm. Burmeister notes--
>Lake's article certainly endeavors to fully naturalize a
>de-historicized received form with reference to organic
>processes (that same slippage I mentioned: "by the same
>law" or some such garbage), I'm intrigued by the idea of form --
>any form -- as a "strange attractor" that organizes discourse
>to itself, though, I'd say, on the basis of localized pressures
>that have to do with the writing subject (my slightly other

>version of henry's "poet's relation to..."). form as "found" --
>"discovered" in or possibly invented in the grappling with
>language ("process"). & one doesn't have to accept Lake's
>ridiculous absolutizing gesture (received form as "archetypal")
>to see the interest in this. certainly, writing for me, when it's
>working, occurs a series of incremental discoveries or
>in(ter)ventions -- I become aware of a tiny recurrence, or
>note the significance of something in a piece, & then use
>that awareness as a tool to further the process, & so forth,
>making or finding tools to modify the work, which then yields
>further tools with which to modify the work. an inward-turning
>of sorts, introspection, though not as in our standard use of the
>term, not synonymous with confessionalism -- an archeology
>of one or a series of relations to the medium, & the relations it
>itself carries by virtue of its (my) social situation.
>
>that's form as "found", or, better, as negotiated. but henry's
>right, there is a virtue, too, to the de-formative quality of
>received form, just as there is to any restraining procedure.
>I've never worked in received form -- I wasn't even present at
>the time, Officer Boundary (that's for Maria) --, but I've used
>other such devices as a way of dis-placing or distorting the
>archeology outlined above. & what do you know, they work.
>not all sonnets, presumably, have to be written for to go a-courting.
>
>best, Chris
>
>..
>Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective
>
>email: [REDACTED]
>snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402
>press site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>
>
>

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446. **mark weiss**

(no subject)

Wed 22 Oct 1997

I know this is a side issue, but I really would like to be enlightened on this point. I have always assumed that Mozart was good for me, but not that he made me smarter. Who says this? Do they also say (and on what basis), as you seem to imply, that Haydn or Beethoven offer less of an IQ boost? My guess is that the answer might be a hoot.

The argument

>strikes me as a universalization of the "Mozart effect"--i.e., that
>because Mozart's [admittedly 'formal'] music raises IQ [&, I have little
>doubt, does much more], all formal music must possess similar virtues,
>or [LaRouche's point] all music ought to embody formal [i.e.,
>immediately apparent] structures. Yeah, but: Mozart's genius engaged the
>formal in a special way which other classical composers evidently did
>not, since only his music appears to have the magical "Mozart effect."
>

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447. **Sylvester Pollet**

Elvis poems

Wed 22 Oct 1997

A good friend of mine, just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis & a visit to Graceland, asked me whether I knew of any good poems about Elvis. I said I'd ask. Any suggestions? Thanks, Sylvester

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448. **Rachel Loden**

Re: Elvis poems

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Sylvester Pollet wrote:

>

> A good friend of mine, just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis & a
> visit to Graceland, asked me whether I knew of any good poems about Elvis.
> I said I'd ask. Any suggestions? Thanks, Sylvester

Sylvester, I don't know whether you'll think this is good, or even a poem . . .

DCEASE

There are two Elvis Presleys in the Social Security Death Master File (DCEASE). The King's social security number is 409-52-2002. His death benefits zip code is 38116, aka Memphis, TN (so little Lisa Marie won't be forced to sell matchsticks on Elvis Presley Boulevard in that city, or marry Michael Jackson for anything but Love). EP #1 was born 1/8/35 and died 8/00/77. No matter how many mourners come to Graceland on August 16, the Social Security Death Master File will remain benignly ignorant and democratic. It will always record that EP #1 died on the 00 day of the month, just like everybody else.

Just like his namesake, Elvis Presley #2. Who was this guy? We can confabulate something of his mother's state of mind from his date of birth, 10/24/57, after EP #1 left for Hollywood but before he went into the army. Other than that all we know is that 425-11-0453 died 4/00/87, not quite thirty, in Nettleton, MS. No death benefits zip code is listed. Ten years after EP #1 was buried, EP #2 apparently died without heirs.

I am stumbling around in the electronic graveyard for another reason, actually. I am looking for a missing uncle, my grandfather's first son from a marriage he wished forgotten. The only picture I have of him is photocopied from a book in the Newberry Library in Chicago. I have the same book at home, but the page with my uncle's photograph is torn out, missing.

I can't find him, though, under any of his six possible names. I do kick over another stone, and immediately wish I hadn't: the very daft and ravishing Christina Montemora, born 12/12/48, died 11/00/87, zip code of last residence 12401. Somehow I did know that I would find you, obvious Ophelia of my derelict years, though still hoping that this search would bring up NO DOCUMENTS. Your name, the few clues you leave behind, float like a reproach in the amber-colored letters on the black screen.

--Rachel Loden

first published in *_New American Writing_* 13

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449. **Daniel Zimmerman**

(no subject)

Wed 22 Oct 1997

mark weiss wrote:

>

> I know this is a side issue, but I really would like to be enlightened on

> this point. I have always assumed that Mozart was good for me, but not that

> he made me smarter. Who says this? Do they also say (and on what basis), as
> you seem to imply, that Haydn or Beethoven offer less of an IQ boost? My
> guess is that the answer might be a hoot.

>

> The argument

> >strikes me as a universalization of the "Mozart effect"--i.e., that
> >because Mozart's [admittedly 'formal'] music raises IQ [& I have little
> >doubt, does much more], all formal music must possess similar virtues,
> >or [LaRouche's point] all music ought to embody formal [i.e.,
> >immediately apparent] structures. Yeah, but: Mozart's genius engaged the
> >formal in a special way which other classical composers evidently did
> >not, since only his music appears to have the magical "Mozart effect."
> >

Mark,

Don G. Campbell just published a book about this on Oct. 1: *The Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind, and Unlock the Creative Spirit*. Avon. ISBN: 0380974185, 352pp.
[OK: the subtitle makes me queasy, but look at the publisher]

I haven't read it yet, but have heard Campbell interviewed a few times [as well as others on the same matter]. An experiment with rats, for example, who listened to Mozart showed they learned to run a maze several times faster if they listened to Mozart, whereas those who listened to Heavy Metal took several times longer to learn. Does this surprise anyone?

I suspect the experimental psychologists have already done a chunk of work on this for Campbell to use [he also wrote some other books on music, evidently also for a mass audience], and that we can find much of that work easily on the net. These days, though, I just don't have the time.

Hope that helps.

Dan Zimmerman

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450. **Michael Magee**

Re: Elvis poems

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Ok, you asked for it. Here's one that I wrote about a year ago. Whether its good, or *about* Elvis, is anyone's guess. I'm using asterisks to indicate italicized sections:

HE CATCHES A TRAIN AND RIDE

down Glenwood exhausted and ornery rowhouses
run in place alongside a junkyard that could
and couldn't be a misplaced MOMA exhibit.
a billboard says

*The Virgin Mary Speaks
To America.* true. she sings
"Ain't Nothin but a Houndog"
over & over.

it is really, really stupid of her.
in *Clambake* Elvis plays a misfit trying
to get the girl away from - who? - Chad Everett? or
Tad something?

anyway, things culminate
in a clambake
and Elvis croons a song
called "Clambake"

not heard in these parts since breakfast or much earlier.
as they run, the rowhouses shout out what could be
a dissonant, splintered version of "John Henry"
over samples of

The Average White Band,
Grand Funk Railroad, & Sinatra's "Lady is a Tramp."
echoes of *Blue Hawaii* undetectable.
clambakes?

for god's sake, Mary,
we're knee-deep in junk here. if
you're on
a train, passing

the yard heading north eventually
you'll get to a lake.

lake

rhymes with bake, but I don't have to
tell you that. ain't nothin but a houndog

-Mike.

According
to
Sylvester Pollet:
>

> A good friend of mine, just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis & a
> visit to Graceland, asked me whether I knew of any good poems about Elvis.
> I said I'd ask. Any suggestions? Thanks, Sylvester
>

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451. **robert drake**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Bob Grumman is apparently reluctant to toot his own sackbut, but i'll suggest for him that you check out his Mathemaku, one ov which (w/ comments) is up at his website:

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492/expla1.html>

(altho, actually, i don't think its the best one...)

lbd

Dear list members,

I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of contemporary poets who have used mathematical or logical models as occasions for composition. Of course texts like Ashbery's Flow Chart come immediately to mind, but I'm sure there are may other obvious choices that I'm just not coming up with. I am especially interested in women writers incorporating mathematical/logical systems into their work. I'll be thankful for all suggestions, obvious and obscure.

Please copy any posts to me via backchannel.

Many thanks in advance,

*Jennifer Ashton
Johns Hopkins University*



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452. **Diederik Wolsak**

Re: non and hypernon

Wed 22 Oct 1997

LAURA MORIARTY wrote:

>

> More emptiness:

>

> Michael McElligott, Standard Schaefer, Louis Cabri and Jean Day

>

> at <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty.htm>

Dear Laura,

Tried in vain to receive "more emptiness". Computer claims "not found, doesnt exist on this server, outdated, inaccurate". Any snags from where you sit? Thoroughly enjoyed the first set. Thank you!

Best,

Melissa Wolsak

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453. **rob wilson**

if UK/US poesy had a wide circulation

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Punning on EP's gloomy modernist thought-- "the thought of what America would be like if the classics had a wide circulation"-- we might update this to read: the thought of what the US would be like if language poetries had a wide circulation troubles my media-encrusted head. This all has to do with Elton John's "Candle in the Wind 97" which has become the biggest selling song lyric (I take this as a poem genre) in the history of the world (31.8 million so far, and it is not even Christmas). Now Julian Barnes churlishly pointed out that that Princess Di lived her life less "like a candle in the wind" and "more like a bloody great chandelier surrounded by flunkies and screens," by why argue over the banality of such metaphors (mutter-fors) or bash John (as I and Keith Richards have done) as (in that work) a royalist flunky mistranslating his own stronger, earlier work (the indictment of media celebrity porno in Marilyn Monroe song)? So a "fit audience but few" comes to hear the devious poetic wit of David Bromidge read in Buffalo on a Monday night when the Bills seemingly dominate public consciousness in the wintry city. Does this mean we should declare a "moratorium" on such readings, on such counter-events and counter-creations. I think not. Poesy lives on, and poetry too, and it is up to us to nurture and even aggravate that difference. If Charles Bernstein became the poet laureate and talked about nature poesy on Mcneil Lehrer, I would think that that Emersonian spirt of the land was dead and I would weap. But now I know that the spirit of great poetry (yes, I will get gnostic and mystical here) lives on in Buffalo and Honolulu and santa Cruz in its own remote circulation patterns, and the thought of what American would be like if Ron Silliman or Juliana Spahr's poetry had a wide circulation troubles my sleep not a bit. Maybe we should send Bill Clinton a copy of Gregory Corso's Gasoline (City Lights Books, 196?) for Xmas, so that he can put it in Chelsea's stanford stocking (the latter, we

should hope, will take a poetry class with M Perloff) or one on devious ethnic literature with David Palumbo Liu). Someday I will learn to practice "mah" and letting go, but not just yet. Rob Wilson

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 09:34:00 -1000

From: "Pritchett,Pat @Silverplume" <[REDACTED]>

To: POETICS <[REDACTED]>,
rob wilson <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Elton John translates Elton John/Ber

Rob: I certainly agree with your comments on the sublimation process at work in John's new version - it smacks of the kind of defensive revision/repression Wordsworth performed in *The Prelude* for instance and which Yeats was known for as well. And, too, one can't fail to notice the Blakean allusion in John's line about "England's green hills," equating Diana with Christ himself! In the unwieldy effort to conflate these two disparate icons, a certain necessary elision must take place I suppose. I marvelled not only at how swiftly D's apotheosis took place, but also at where it occurred: at the intersection of royal tradition and pop fetishization.

Appended is a poem re: the media event of Diana (rather than D. herself). I happened to be studying ballads that day. Some of the quotes are from the Norton Anthology, including its footnotes; some from *On Signs*, edited by Marshall Blonsky, which contains a detailed critique of the royal wedding.

ELEGANT PASTICHE

Narrative details might form
a ballad about a princess
or any handsome young woman
"who would fain lie down."
But to classify the subject
by meters, focussing on
a catastrophic moment,
would also signal the typical
betrayal and elevation
of a TV loneliness
as attested to by
the attendance of crowds
and the spectacle of roses
and signatures, which are all
we have really, when you come
down to it.

Of a loveliness that daily

fed us nothing is certain
but the crisis of its aftermath.
It involves images of dearness,
replicated many times.
Kissing "the wounds that were so red."
"A species of deer distinguished"
by a supernal color
so that its gawky movements,
fabricated as they are,
give us a sense that an increase
in the amount of available light
is what lends consumerism its tragic tone,
the lieux de memoire of
the "lost participatory dimension."

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454. **Jack Foley**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply -Reply

Wed 22 Oct 1997

The Names and Ratner's Star are both on my shelf, waiting ... waiting ... Their day will come. -- JRF

>>> Carolyn Guertin <[REDACTED]> 10/21/97

05:22pm >>>

>I've barely started Underworld, out of impatient curiosity; but won't get
>to read

>it for another week or two, because of other things I'm reading now. I have
>read six other DeLillo novels -- Great Jones Street and White Noise are my
>favorites. But even his less effective books, like Numbers, Running Dog,
>Libra, and Mao II are well worth reading. A miss by DeLillo is better than
>many a hit by many another novelist.

>-- JR Foley

What??? No mention of The Names and its fascination with language!?

Carolyn Guertin, Department of English, University of Alberta

E-Mail: [REDACTED]; Tel/FAX: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cguertin/Guertin.htm>

"Memory is a capricious seamstress." -- Virginia Woolf

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455. **Jack Foley**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply -Reply

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Actually, Numbers is a typo for Players, with an obvious confusion with The Names. I can never remember the title Players, I always think Numbers. But Players it is. -- JRF

>>> Herb Levy <[REDACTED]> 10/21/97 08:28pm >>>

Is Numbers a typo for the Names or for Ratner's Star?, either of which I like better than Great Jones Street. But hey, what do I know.

I'm about 2/3 through Underworld, which I do like, but I'm continually reminded of Joseph McElroy's Women & Men, which I (so far) like better.

Joe makes me wish I'd had time to go to hear DeLillo, but this was the wrong week for me, oh well.

I've barely started Underworld, out of impatient curiosity; but won't get to read it for another week or two, because of other things I'm reading now. I have read six other DeLillo novels -- Great Jones Street and White Noise are my favorites. But even his less effective books, like Numbers, Running Dog, Libra, and Mao II are well worth reading. A miss by DeLillo is better than many a hit by many another novelist.
-- JR Foley

Safdie Joseph <[REDACTED]> 10/21/97 10:38am >>>

As one of my favorite novelists, Joan Didion, got trashed on the list a few weeks back, I was curious to see if another contemporary I revere highly, Don DeLillo, would share the same fate. I saw him last night at a rare public appearance (in Seattle) and he was fascinating -- talking more like a poet, actually, than a novelist (please . . . I know the standard objections to that division), concentrating on the language being the primal force, antecedent to history, but also opining that "history" (which he called a three-dimensional construct of enormous power) would always be in antagonism with the writer's imagination, and that those different forces were always battling while he composed his works. A lucid, supremely intelligent evening. Anyone else see him, or start Underworld yet?

Herb Levy
[REDACTED]

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456. **henry**
Re: ILS 1.8
Wed 22 Oct 1997

Jacques's idea of a discussion around the Watten ILS essay sounds good. I was surprised to find how different his take on it was from mine. I will not get into that because it's time for me to listen for a while. [Spandrift, could you please sharpen your poignard OUTSIDE? That grating noise is getting to me...]

But I wonder if the essay could go online? a lot of people will be left out otherwise. - Henry Gould

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457. **Sylvester Pollet**
Re: Elvis poems
Wed 22 Oct 1997

Thanks Rachel, I'll forward your piece. "Good" was my friend's word--don't know what she meant by it--I suspect something like "not painted on velvet," but I'm not sure. But on another issue--I spent last weekend at zip 12409, & environs, so that Ophelia caught my eye. Let me know if you want to pursue that. 12498 was my home turf, from the days before zipcodes. Sylvester

Sylvester Pollet wrote:

A good friend of mine, just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis & a visit to Graceland, asked me whether I knew of any good poems about Elvis. I said I'd ask. Any suggestions? Thanks, Sylvester

Sylvester, I don't know whether you'll think this is good, or even a poem . . .

DCEASE

There are two Elvis Presleys in the Social Security Death Master File (DCEASE). The King's social security number is 409-52-2002. His death benefits zip code is 38116, aka Memphis, TN (so little Lisa Marie won't be forced to sell matchsticks on Elvis Presley Boulevard in that city, or marry Michael Jackson for anything but Love). EP #1 was born 1/8/35 and died 8/00/77. No matter how many mourners come to Graceland on August 16, the Social Security Death Master File will remain benignly ignorant and democratic. It will always record that EP #1 died on the 00 day of the month, just like everybody else.

*Just like his namesake, Elvis Presley #2. Who was this guy?
We can confabulate something of his mother's state of mind
from his date of birth, 10/24/57, after EP #1 left for
Hollywood but before he went into the army. Other than that
all we know is that 425-11-0453 died 4/00/87, not quite thirty,
in Nettleton, MS. No death benefits zip code is listed. Ten
years after EP #1 was buried, EP #2 apparently died without
heirs.*

*I am stumbling around in the electronic graveyard for another
reason, actually. I am looking for a missing uncle, my
grandfather's first son from a marriage he wished forgotten.
The only picture I have of him is photocopied from a book in
the Newberry Library in Chicago. I have the same book at
home, but the page with my uncle's photograph is torn out,
missing.*

*I can't find him, though, under any of his six possible names. I
do kick over another stone, and immediately wish I hadn't: the
very daft and ravishing Christina Montemora, born 12/12/48,
died 11/00/87, zip code of last residence 12401. Somehow I
did know that I would find you, obvious Ophelia of my derelict
years, though still hoping that this search would bring up
NO DOCUMENTS. Your name, the few clues you leave behind, float
like a reproach in the amber-colored letters on the black screen.*

--Rachel Loden
first published in *New American Writing* 13

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458. **David Columbia**

Re: non and hypernon

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Laura typed the URL slightly incorrectly.

`http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty/index.html`

works fine.

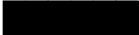
-- David with fractional T3 access.

Diederik Wolsak wrote:

>

> LAURA MORIARTY wrote:

> >

> > More emptiness:
> >
> > Michael McElligott, Standard Schaefer, Louis Cabri and Jean Day
> >
> > at <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty.htm>
>
>
> Dear Laura,
>
> Tried in vain to receive "more emptiness". Computer claims "not found,
> doesnt exist on this server, outdated, inaccurate". Any snags from
> where you sit? Thoroughly enjoyed the first set. Thank you!
>
> Best,
> Melissa Wolsak
>
--

David Columbia

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459. **Fred Muratori**

Re: Elvis poems

Wed 22 Oct 1997

A good friend of mine, just back from a Utopian Conference in Memphis & a visit to Graceland, asked me whether I knew of any good poems about Elvis. I said I'd ask. Any suggestions? Thanks, Sylvester

Well, Evis-ish perhaps..

ELVIS & THE BIBLE

What God there is sews faces on a quilt in twilight.
He/She doesn't know a nose from earlobes, so what becomes
is what we get, like Pollock or Picasso: fistfights
over how we see, lawsuits, world wars. Discrepancies
increase and make for garish life. Consider Loch Ness,
Bigfoot, Buddha, and the Twist, our mothers' tinted hair
in hives sprayed stiff with gases that erode the ozone.
Our children will grow up sunburned but happy, and will
join us with our alien captors in Atlantis.
Until then, there is meaning stubborn as a six-inch leech,
an interpretation worth dying for, real estate,

home shopping. How can we beg for death when everywhere
belief abounds, spatters wild as mercury flung down
on asphalt? Our youth is sprinkled through our lives: Elvis
and the Bible, Charlemagne, Roy Orbison in tears.

(originally appeared in _Late Knocking_)

Fred Muratori

(██████)

Reference Services Division

Olin * Kroch * Uris Libraries

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

WWW: <http://fmref.library.cornell.edu/spectra.html>

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460. **Safdie Joseph**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Wed 22 Oct 1997

This was a pretty hilarious summary of the last few weeks or so on the List by
Mark Baker. Nice work.

(But, if anyone hasn't read it, The Names is haunting and mysterious).

What??? No mention of The Names and its fascination with language!?!>

*In The Names, Paul Lake appears among the "zealots of the alphabet,"
the
worshippers of natural form and deniers of the arbitrariness of signs.
They match the initials of a person's name with the initials of a
place
name. Then they naturally kill the person. Once belittled as
lunatic,
this practice has now been shown to fit the latest discoveries of
anarchic
non-chaos physics.*

*But, in the epilogue, a Language poet appears, and convinces us of the
unrelation between the Parthenon and our syntax. The form moves us
deeply,
though we have no feelings to be moved.*

Mark Baker

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461. **Sylvester Pollet**

elvis poems

Wed 22 Oct 1997

This one came backchannel, but it's such fun I thought it should be shared--got permission. Sylvester

>

>On Wed, 22 Oct 1997, Sylvester Pollet wrote:

>

>> Thanks! It's great, & you should have sent it to the list, I think. I'm
>> sure this is the one she'll post on her office door, along with the picture
>> of The Colonel in a Santa suit giving Elvis a present.

>

>i thought about it but it was simpler to just post it to you--yeah, yeah:

>email address whimp, i know!

>repost it to the list if you want-

>--shaunanne

Date: Wed, 22 Oct 1997 08:24:52 [REDACTED] (CDT)
From: ShaunAnne Tangney Humanities 8-13-1997 <[REDACTED]>
Subject: elvis/coincidences? (fwd) :) (fwd)
To: [REDACTED]
MIME-Version: 1.0

re: yr request on POETICS for elvis poetry

sylvester--not exactly a poem, but couldn't resist passing it along.

TWO KINGS

Jesus said, "Love thy neighbor" (Matthew 22:39)

Elvis said, "Don't Be Cruel" (RCA, 1956)

Jesus H. Christ has 12 letters.

Elvis Presley has 12 letters

Jesus is the Lord's shepherd.

Elvis dated Cybill Shepherd.

*Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4).
Elvis loved his sandwiches with peanut butter and bananas.*

*"Then they took up stones to cast at [Jesus]" (John 8:59)
Elvis was often stoned.*

*Jesus was the Lamb of God.
Elvis had mutton chops.*

*Jesus was part of a Trinity.
Elvis' first band was a trio.*

*Jesus walked on water (Matthew 14:25)
Elvis surfed (Blue Hawaii, Paramount, 1965)*

*Jesus was a carpenter.
Elvis majored in woodshop/industrial arts in high school.*

*Jesus lived in a state of grace in a Near Eastern land.
Elvis lived in Graceland in a nearly eastern state.*

*Jesus wore the crown of thorns.
Elvis wore Royal Crown hair styler.*

*Jesus' entourage, the Apostles, had 12 members.
Elvis' entourage, the Memphis Mafia, had 12 members.*

*Jesus as wine (sacramental wine).
Elvis as wine (Always Elvis wine by Frantenac.)*

*A major woman in Jesus' life (Mary) had an immaculate conception.
A major woman in Elvis' life (Priscilla) went to Immaculate Conception*

*Jesus was resurrected.
Elvis had the famous comeback special in 1968.*

*Son of God.
Sun Studios.*

*Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37)
Elvis said, "Drinks on me!" (Jailhouse Rock, MGM 1957)*

*Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights.
Elvis had irregular eating habits (e.g., five banana splits for breakfast).*

*Jesus is a Capricorn (Dec 25).
Elvis is a Capricorn (Jan. 8).*

*Jesus biography by Matthew (Gospel according to Matthew).
Elvis biography by Neal Matthews (Elvis: A Golden Tribute).*

*"[Jesus'] countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow"
(Matthew 28:3).
Elvis' trademarks were a lightning bolt and snow-white jumpsuits.*

*Jesus was Jewish.
Elvis was part Jewish (from his maternal great-grandmother, Martha Tackett Mansell).*

*Jesus' purple robe.
Elvis' pink Cadillac.*

*Jesus' father is everywhere
Elvis' father, Vernon, was a drifter and moved around quite a bit.*

*Doubting Thomas.
Suspicious Minds.*

*There is much confusion about Jesus' middle name - what does the "H" stand for?
There is much confusion about Elvis' middle name - was it Aron or Aaron?*

*Jesus made rocks roll away from his tomb.
Elvis made rock and roll.*

=====
=====

----- End of Forwarded Message

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462. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: sonnets and certainty
Wed 22 Oct 1997

Mark,

It seems to me that to subvert a sonnet requires a parallel certainty to the one you require for the writing of a sonnet. It is the certainty of an approach (even if the approach is uncertain), rather than the certainty of syllogisms.

By the way, Shakespeare's sonnets don't give me a feeling of certainty. Desperation would be more like it. A man beating his head against a wall, of form perhaps, perhaps of underlying logic. Berryman, who subverted, found the same wall. The pattern is anything but casual, alright.

The wall is important, and it should be possible to move past it or to reconsider it. If that means attempting to subvert the sonnet, so that the sonnet becomes the wall and the previous wall vanishes so we can move out into the space it hid, why not.

But it should be possible to play with the form by opening it up wide, making it into pages, if need be, following (or subverting) the underlying logic instead of the outward form, using 14 rhymed stanzas instead of rhymed lines, subverting the language, subverting the syllogisms, anything we can drag in (or out). I'm not saying it would or would not be worthwhile or advisable, but it is possible.

>Of course, it's possible to try to subvert a form, but the form is in
>itself anything but "de-formative." The sonnet, for example, which I tried
>to subvert for about seven years of apprenticeship, is not just a love
poem
>in any casual pattern of 14 rhymed lines. It contains within itself a
>logical constraint: an if/then pattern (in Shakespeare an if/if/if/then
>pattern). A variant on the syllogism. This is true whether one looks at
>Donne, or Keats, or Wordsworth, or Spencer or Milton.
>I have nothing against syllogisms, I just don't find them particularly
>useful for me as a mode of inquiry. Put another way, for me to write a
>sonnet I'd have to experience life and language as governed by an apparent
>logic. The logic, the coherence, would be a given. In the secular world in
>which I live whatever logic may be available takes a bit more exploration
>to discover.

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463. **Jordan Davis**

Re: sonnets and certainty

Wed 22 Oct 1997

It is absurd to discuss form with formalists. Formalists by definition know nothing about form, and if they should happen to produce a beautiful poem, it is barely less amazing than the discovery of a giant pumpkin in the shape of Mt Rushmore in a patch on Long Island. It belongs to the same category of experience.

I will repeat myself, because harassment seems to be the only thing that gets across in email. "A cynic is one who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing." (wallace stevens)

L:o:v:e,
Jordan

464. **Christopher Alexander**

Re: hear we go again

Wed 22 Oct 1997

sent this backchannel in response to a backchannel from Mark, then sent an explanation that I'd mistakenly written as if to the list, only to notice a reply to Mark on the list (!)—that explains why I had 2 copies in my box. anyway, here 'tis. (hi, Mark!)

to quote Alan Sondheim, <<much confusion prevails>>

--

Mark Weiss wrote:

> Of course, it's possible to try to subvert a form, but the form is
> in itself anything but "de-formative."

hmm. not sure we're connecting on this one. I'd say that the logical structure of the sonnet, which you indicate having struggled with, wld have profoundly deformed the manner of yr work. (btw—the ambiguity of "work"—I mean to indicate the process of working, & not so much the product here, b/c it seems odd to me that we wld think we cld compare the poem as sonnet with—what? the poem if it weren't a sonnet? but there isn't any such poem.).

I'm just not sure I follow yr objection. I meant to indicate that restrictions we impose on our work operate as supplementary formative pressures—something else to kick against, maybe— & certainly some more than others. & that the addition of such a pressure can, by changing the constellation of forces that informs the work (which is, I take it, not constant, but has abiding elements & approaches constancy over the short term), knock us out of our usual pattern of "response", or however you'd like to formulate it. that the sonnet didn't take you where you wanted to be is precisely the point; that, in this case, it took you somewhere you assuredly didn't want to be is disappointing.

I haven't worked with the sonnet form but once, & some time ago (can you see it receding?), but I can't help offering this speculation to the list, based on experience with other formal procedures: cheat at this game. or not so much cheat as—. "genre" indicates a set of more or less definite characteristics that establish permeable boundaries at the approach to zero, nope, not a sonnet (or whatever) thank you for playing. now, having read one somewhere, I'm pretty much aware of what those conventions are in the case of the sonnet; &, yes, if what you want is to end up with a sonnet, well, I guess you're stuck with such as are deemed necessary to sonnethood (Robin's cousin; he was the one got poison oak in issue #3), including the syllogistic structure. but then again, I wasn't

really talking about *producing sonnets*, & I figured folks wld pick up on that from my talk of displacement & use & so forth; I guess the flippancy of my last line was too much for youse. how bout this, then: I don't really care if what I end up with is a sonnet. but I think the sonnet form cld be used in the way I just outlined, & so it wld be unfortunate to issue any blanket condemnations. as a reader, I'd like to encourage tolerance at least; as a writer, I don't think one can provide an argument that wld convince me any form is dead or useless.

best, Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

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465. **mark weiss**

(no subject)

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Well, since the structure of rock music is a lot more readily apparent than the structure of mozart's music, there must be another explanation. Maybe the Heavy Metal rats were stoned. Or maybe it depends on which Mozart the other rats listened to. If it was the Marriage of Figaro, say, they obviously weren't following the libretto, maze-like as its is.

At 08:40 AM 10/22/97 -0400, you wrote:

>mark weiss wrote:

>>

>> I know this is a side issue, but I really would like to be enlightened on
>> this point. I have always assumed that Mozart was good for me, but not that
>> he made me smarter. Who says this? Do they also say (and on what basis),
as

>> you seem to imply, that Haydn or Beethoven offer less of an IQ boost? My
>> guess is that the answer might be a hoot.

>>

>> The argument

>> >strikes me as a universalization of the "Mozart effect"--i.e., that
>> >because Mozart's [admittedly 'formal'] music raises IQ [&, I have little
>> >doubt, does much more], all formal music must possess similar virtues,
>> >or [LaRouche's point] all music ought to embody formal [i.e.,
>> >immediately apparent] structures. Yeah, but: Mozart's genius engaged the
>> >formal in a special way which other classical composers evidently did

>> >not, since only his music appears to have the magical "Mozart effect."
>> >
>Mark,
> Don G. Campbell just published a book about this on Oct. 1: _The
Mozart
>Effect: Tapping ther Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the
>Mind, and Unlock the Creative Spirit_. Avon. ISBN: 0380974185, 352pp.
>[OK: the subtitle makes me queasy, but look at the publisher]
> I haven't read it yet, but have heard Campbell interviewed a few
times
>[as well as others on the same matter]. An experiment with rats, for
>example, who listened to Mozart showed they learned to run a maze
>several times faster if they listened to Mozart , whereas those who
>listened to Heavy Metal took several times longer to learn. Does this
>surprise anyone?
> I suspect the experimental psychologists have already done a chunk of
>work on this for Campbell to use [he also wrote some other books on
>music, evidently also for a mass audience], and that we can find much of
>that work easily on the net. These days, though, I just don't have the
>time.
> Hope that helps.
>Dan Zimmerman
>
>

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466. **mark weiss**
Re: hear we go again
Wed 22 Oct 1997

No real objection to what you say--actually, I just tagged my reply to your post for the sake of continuity of thread and to take the opportunity to make clear what some of the consequences of form may be. And I quite agree that others may find the form useful, instructive, etc. Milton et al certainly did (not to mention a host of French and Italians). I don't for me now, for the reasons stated.

At 10:35 AM 10/22/97 MST7MDT, you wrote:

>Mark Weiss wrote:
>> Of course, it's possible to try to subvert a form, but the form is
>> in itself anything but "de-formative."
>
>hmm. not sure we're connecting on this one. I'd say that the
>logical structure of the sonnet, which you indicate having

>struggled with, wld have profoundly de-formed the manner
>of yr work. (btw—the ambiguity of "work"—I mean to indicate
>the process of working, & not so much the product here, b/c
>it seems odd to me that we wld think we cld compare the poem
>as sonnet with—what? the poem if it weren't a sonnet? but
>there isn't any such poem.).
>
>I'm just not sure I follow yr objection. I meant to indicate
>that restrictions we impose on our work operate as supplementary
>formative pressures—something else to kick against, maybe— &
>certainly some more than others. & that the addition of such a
>pressure can, by changing the constellation of forces that informs
>the work (which is, I take it, not constant, but has abiding elements
>& approaches constancy over the short term), knock us out of our
>usual pattern of "response", or however you'd like to formulate it.
>that the sonnet didn't take you where you wanted to be is precisely
>the point; that, in this case, it took you somewhere you assuredly
>didn't want to be is disappointing.
>
>I haven't worked with the sonnet form but once, & some time
>ago (can you see it receding?), but I can't help offering this
>speculation to the list, based on experience with other formal
>procedures: cheat at this game. or not so much cheat as—.
>"genre" indicates a set of more or less definite characteristics
>that establish permeable boundaries at the approach to zero, nope,
>not a sonnet (or whatever) thank you for playing. now, having read
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>are in the case of the sonnet; &, yes, if what you want is to end up
>with a sonnet, well, I guess you're stuck with such as are deemed
>necessary to sonnethood (Robin's cousin; he was the one got
>poison oak in issue #3), including the syllogistic structure. but
>then again, I wasn't really talking about *producing sonnets*, & I
>figured folks wld pick up on that from my talk of displacement &
>use & so forth; I guess the flippancy of my last line was too much
>for youse. how bout this, then: I don't really care if what I end up
>with is a sonnet. but I think the sonnet form cld be used in the way
>I just outlined, & so it wld be unfortunate to issue any blanket
>condemnations. as a reader, I'd like to encourage tolerance at least;
>as a writer, I don't think you can provide an argument that wld
>convince me any form is dead or useless.
>
>best, Chris

>
>..
>Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective
>
>email: [REDACTED]
>snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402
>press site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>
>
>

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467. **Harold Rhenisch**
the forklift school of verse

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Seems to me Coleridge said that he wrote rhymed verse by writing the rhymes first and then backing the poem into the rhymes.

You could do that with any other technique of a poem, traditional or otherwise.

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468. **Aldon Nielsen**
Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Wed 22 Oct 1997

I'll have to look into the Weinberger sources now -- Last time I checked anything he'd cited in this regard I found that the author had quite clearly not said what Weinberger attributed --

This appears to be one of the most difficult points for Sokal to get hold of, even though it seems quite simple, if not simple-minded --

LAWS do not occur in nature, whether we mean the laws of physics or the law of the land --

There are phenomena that we attempt to describe,,, the description gets called a law of physics --

Again, I know of nobody who has claimed that what we term gravity functions differently in different cultures -- though I will now certainly look into EW's citations in case somebody has made such a claim (again, excepting Sokal himself) and I've missed it -- not at all impossible --

On the other hand, I still don't understand why anyone would get upset by the assertion that, prior to Newton say, people's subjective experience of gravity differed from my own -- In the same, perhaps trivial ways, that even though the

sun beat down everywhere following the same laws of physics, it was no doubt experienced differently by folk who thought they inhabited a heliocentric universe

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469. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Wed 22 Oct 1997

| *What??? No mention of The Names and its fascination with language!?*

What??? No mention of _Ratner's Star_ and its fascination with language!?

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470. **henry gould**

Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Wed 22 Oct 1997

the issue is not between those who emphasize the relativity and historicity of science and those who emphasize the universal applicability of its laws. most scientists, including Sokal I would assume & Weinberg (it's Weinberg, isn't it, not Weinberger?) are very aware of subjective, local & cultural factors in designing experiments & in the broader history of science.

the debate hinges on a point of philosophy. is there something called objective truth? or is all truth relative, a matter of human naming using arbitrary human signs called words? I would guess most scientists are more comfortable with the former ("realist") position - it supports the universality of their "laws".

I'm not suggesting we take this up for debate. but I think Sokal et al. are aiming at philosophical positions they find inimical - not debating the (granted) relativity of science. it's the relativity of truth that's at issue, and the characterizations of science that stem from a "nominalist" position. - Henry G.

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471. **trace s. ruggles**

Re: the forklift school of verse

Wed 22 Oct 1997

At 11:11 AM -0700 10/22/97, Harold Rhenisch <[REDACTED]> wrote:
>Seems to me Coleridge said that he wrote rhymed verse by writing the rhymes
>first and then backing the poem into the rhymes.
>

>You could do that with any other technique of a poem, traditional or
>otherwise.

isn't this part of the whole "form directing content" aspect of lang po?

trace

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472. **Mark Baker**

Re: Poets on Prose -Reply

Wed 22 Oct 1997

| *What??? No mention of _Ratner's Star_ and its fascination with language!?* >

In Ratner's Star, the pubescent language poet writes her first manifesto:

"To express what is expressible isn't why you write if you're in this class of writers. To be understood is faintly embarrassing. What you want to express is the violence of your desire not to be read. The friction of an audience is what drives writers crazy. These people are going to read what you write. The more they understand, the crazier you get. You can't let them know what you're writing about. Once they know, you're finished. If you're in this class, what you have to do is either not publish or make absolutely sure your work leaves readers strewn along the margins. This not only causes literature to happen but is indispensable to your mental health as well."

Mark Baker

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473. **Harold Rhenisch**

Re: Minneapolis is socially constructed

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Aldon Nielson wrote:

"On the other hand, I still don't understand why anyone would get upset by the assertion that, prior to Newton say, people's subjective experience of gravity differed from my own -- In the same, perhaps trivial ways, that even though the sun beat down everywhere following the same laws of physics, it was no doubt experienced differently by folk who thought they inhabited a heliocentric universe"

Not trivial. We make our metaphors and then we live in them. Science is a metaphor. If 'metaphor' is a sticky term, how about 'screen'. Those heliocentric folks experienced a different subjective universe, but it was as capable of describing the universe as the scientific universe in fashion these days. I'd prefer to bring stuff back to perception, even logic, rather than to science, given that

science too can be brought back to perception and logic (although it is not the same as they are)

Harold Rhenisch

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474. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: ILS 1.8

Wed 22 Oct 1997

In a message dated 97-10-22 10:59:02 EDT, you write:

<< Watten ILS essay >>

I like Henry's idea that this essay might be posted for discussion.

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475. **Pritchett, Pat**

Re: ILS 1.8

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Yes- great idea - I'm partway though it myself - BUT - it's obviously far too long to post to the List. I think this impracticality was brought up before in a discussion of Steve Evans's wonderful essay in the same series, "Dynamics of Literary Change." So...

From: Aviva Vogel

To: POETICS

Subject: Re: ILS 1.8

Date: Wednesday, October 22, 1997 4:57PM

In a message dated 97-10-22 10:59:02 EDT, you write:

<< Watten ILS essay >>

I like Henry's idea that this essay might be posted for discussion.

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476. **Aldon Nielsen**

All Fall Down

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Apologies to several -- In catching up on the amassed email that came in while I was sunning myself in Minneapolis, I mistakenly thought we were discussing some new essay -- but now I see it is, again, S. Weinberg's '96 review and reply -- neither of which contains any citations of scholars who think that gravity

exerts itself differently against the Aleutians from the way it messes with me here at the trembling edge of the nation's attention span.

I would, as has already been done here, advise a read of Arkady Plotnitsky's "'But It Is Above All Not True': Derrida, Relativity, and the 'Science Wars'" in PMC-- I suspect it's not the last word . . . but it at least spells most of the names correctly, which I seldom can manage here

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477. **Bob Grumman**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Thanks for the toot, Luigi! Yeah, I didn't really want to do the toot myself, though I toot my own horn a lot elsewhere. Also, I wasn't sure my kind of mathematical poetry was what the listees were looking for.

Oh, I agree with you that the poem at my site isn't my best mathemaku-- but I do like it (when I like any of my poems), and I think it the best of my mathemaku for use at my site. Incidentally, I don't think I'll leave it there. I think it'd be better to rotate poems every three months or so, so am considering soliciting poems of any kind--but they have to be explicitly about poetry. Do you have any, or know of any good ones? I'd probably use the Marianne Moore (can you believe it, I don't know how to spell her first name, unless by accident I got it right) if I didn't figure it'd be copyright infringement.

By the way, what's the latest with Taproots?

all bestest, Bob

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478. **R. Gancie**

Sokallese

Wed 22 Oct 1997

Henry and Tom: What I mean Henry is that statements like "science requires a fundamentally 'realist' approach" is like Weinberg's notion of "one to one correspondence;" you can talk about it but you can never get there. The key is that somewhere, even if its just in your head, you have to talk. Just reflect on how intuitive the phrase "fundamentally 'realist' approach" is. Think about your personal intellectual (and non-intellectual) history; the one that leads to such phrases having any force of expression for you. Then think of the inherently relativist nature of that history and then begin to pin the tail on phrases like "some kind of apprehensible reality out there." You guys are so immersed in the lay context of the scientific method that you've forgotten that YOU DON'T NEED

SCIENCE TO HAVE REGARD FOR THE REAL.---(Note Mark's apple image and see if it contradicts me. And Henry "testable truth" is not necessarily scientific truth.) But valuing the real is not the same as knowing it. Science as many, many commentators have observed (Pierce included) relies on processes of mathematization, quantification, formalization, reduction what have you to achieve its interface with the 'real.' Henry, not only the "tools and procedures" of science change but its relationship to the 'real' changes constantly too. The some total of necessarily iterative or experimentally repeatable properties of any entity described by science does not equal the "ding an sich." (excuse short cut mongrel philosophy here) This is revealed by the contingent nature of science itself. A muon never IS; it is defined as, dare I say, much like a word is not the object that it describes. The 'real' of science is the claim that its contingencies are determined by its interface with the phenomena itself and not in what would amount to a new Scholasticism. But unfortunately, the sciences themselves have not been equal to the task and as I have tried to point out on this list and elsewhere, its not so much an atmosphere of relativist vs. positivists but of an utter disregard for the importance and responsibilities of language on the part of those who would now criticize certain deconstructionists. (Henry, I don't understand some of your energized phrases. If there is anybody that is not "residing someplace in the middle" its got to be you. Otherwise I would have drawn a bead on you by now and knocked you right out of your saddle.) Example: At the end of my piece, Science Smiling into its Beard, I point out that Weinberg translates Heisenberg's phrase Die Unbestimmtheitsrelation, as the Uncertainty Principle, and then berates Heisenberg for introducing such an unfortunate phrase as "Uncertainty Principle." Well, if Heisenberg had introduced the unfortunate phrase perhaps Weinberg would have a point. But Heisenberg never said Uncertainty Principle; his English translators did. A more accurate translation would have been 'indeterminacy relation' which was closer to Heisenberg's meaning and which if you reflect a little, you will see has none of the "unfortunate" either/or of a "principle" that Weinberg, actually rather snottily, and quite wrongfully attributes to Heisenberg's lack of regard for the implications of language. I'm just a schmo down here on the killing floor, and I might be oughtta line, but Weinberg's stupidity is unconscionable. Example. Mark, as for Sokal's methods. On the op-ed page here in Washington recently, James Glassman, writes about the Dihydrogen Monoxide: Hidden Killer story. You know the kid who got his class to vote to ban water by describing its dangers (statistically) and referring to it by only its chemical makeup. Well, Glassman inflates this little tale to claim that the American public in general is being duped by the EPA and the like and that environmental dangers are not only often exaggerated but are even fabricated. Sokal serves the same function as as the kid in his science class incidentally wants to be a nuclear engineer just like his dad. Its not Sokal who worries me. The way he did what he did speaks for

itself. And apparently he can't distinguish between the literal and the metaphorical even in the work of his heroes. It's the people who feel the necessity to support Sokal institutionally, politically and financially, that concern me. Your students swim in the scientific paradigm, a paradigm in which they will never have even a hoarse whisper of a democratic say. They can stand a little of what you call relativism. Everyone grows up in the shadow of their nuclear engineer dad anyway. It's meaningless to say American's in general are illiterate in the sciences or that their children are. For the vast majority of us scientific literacy would be a meaningless waste of productive time anyway because if our conclusions wouldn't matter in any case. A relatively small number of people will suffice to keep the scientific paradigm rolling quite possibly toward oblivion. My concern is that there are a few within that community that can see the to maintain alternatives. You can be damn sure that the ones who control funding for science and technology don't give a friar's fart about the less fungible disciplines on our campuses. I repeat. I not a supporter of Hayles, Aronowitz, Harding et al. I also receive no funding. I've come to my critique of the sciences through years of reading, writing, reflection and conversation outside of any academic setting. Therefore my approach may seem ideosyncratic but it is also in my estimation more comprehensive. I like to think that I bring to it the best tools and understanding of the modernist poetic tradition and not the post-modernist if such discretions really have any meaning. I use sources that I've never heard the Sokal flap people refer to; and that's folks on both side of the argument.---

Carlo Parcelli

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479. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: the forklift school of verse
Thu 23 Oct 1997

in regards to

>Seems to me Coleridge said that he wrote rhymed verse by writing the rhymes

>first and then backing the poem into the rhymes.

>

>You could do that with any other technique of a poem, traditional or

>otherwise.

trace s. ruggles wrote:

| *isn't this part of the whole "form directing content" aspect of lang po?*

I meant to suggest that Coleridge was lang po. Or would have been if lang po were not bound so tightly to a time, a sensibility, and a place.

Harold

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480. **Hugh Steinberg**

Re: elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

David Wojohn's book *_Mystery Train_* has a great Elvis poem, can't remember the specific title, about Elvis and his pals going out into the Nevada desert, where Elvis demonstrates his psychic powers by making clouds move.

Hugh Steinberg

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481. **mark weiss**

Re: elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Check out Susie Mee, "The Gospel According to Elvis," in Grand Street #55. She's also published a novel, *_The Girl Who Loved Elvis_*, about 4 years ago from Peachtree Press.

At 11:53 PM 10/22/97 -0600, you wrote:

>David Wojohn's book *_Mystery Train_* has a great Elvis poem, can't remember
>the specific title, about Elvis and his pals going out into the Nevada
>desert, where Elvis demonstrates his psychic powers by making clouds move.

>

>Hugh Steinberg

>

>

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482. **Ken Edwards**

Mathematics and poetry

Thu 23 Oct 1997

On Tue, 21 Oct 1997, Jennifer Ashton wrote:

> Dear list members,

>

> I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of contemporary poets

> who have used mathematical or logical models as occasions for
composition.

Try Allen Fisher's oeuvre, *_passim_*. His books are too various and too fugitive to list, but Small Press Distribution should have some. His current project, not due for completion for some years, and manifesting itself as a series of books from (mainly) British small presses, has the overall title *_Gravity as a consequence of shape_*.

Ken

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483. **hen**

Re: ILS 1.8

Thu 23 Oct 1997

On Wed, 22 Oct 1997 17:04:00 -0500 Pritchett,Pat @Silverplume said:
>Yes- great idea - I'm partway though it myself - BUT - it's obviously far
>too long to post to the List. I think this impracticality was brought up
>before in a discussion of Steve Evans's wonderful essay in the same series,
>"Dynamics of Literary Change." So...

I should have been more clear : I meant maybe it could be posted on the web, at the EPC - not directly to the list. I think Jacques may be following up on that possibility, if it is one. - Henry G.

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484. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

Re: Sokallese

Thu 23 Oct 1997

carlo, while much of what you say re the abuses of "science" are true, i need to ask you whether you mean to throw out *everything* that might properly be termed "science," or simply the last century... or the last fifty years... or---

i mean, "science" can stand for such a myriad of social and cultural practices that i have to admit---NO, i don't want to throw all that away!... i detest the way "science and technology" as Big Business has permeated (e.g.) campuses such as mine (e.g.)... at the same time, we're going to need something like "science"---AND something like "humanities"---however altered/modified/radicalized (choose your terms) if we're going to provide for billions of people, if we're going even to have something like an 'ecology' in 40 years (with due regard for "science's" complicity---and "humanities" too as a cluster for disciplines---for fucking it up... and believe me, i AM sweating that "we're")...

so i'd like to know, now: are you drawing any lines here?... or are you suggesting---seriously carlo---that we simply shit-can every theoretical insight that one might currently associate with "science"... i think it's this blurring of

distinctions, as it were, that's coming off as provocative hereabouts... so i guess i'm trying to provide some space here for you to articulate an alternative... and no, i'm not just being cagey---i know you can't 'undo' so many decades of Big Science (new term, ok)... but how about some leads?...

b/c for me, i've *found* some leads in the literature-science work going on... though in fact this work itself is in some ways reverent (ok, my term) of science (mea culpa)... talking about the obvious blindnesses, and political motivations, of self-proclaimed 'public defenders' like sokal and gross & levitt and weinberg is one thing... but you know, i know, what most of us know: that it's damned hard to offer up constructive alternatives in a world that seems more and more built upon the premises of "science and technology" (and if you wish to separate these two, why hey---that's ok too!)... and that, for example, "science" has a *better* take on "life" a la evolution than do the fundamentalist-creationists, yes?...

best,

joe

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485. **Henry Gould**

Re: Sokallese

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Carlo, you covered a lot of territory there, & you're obviously more up on the science literature. The arrogance of science in various manifestations, the struggle between science & humanities on campus, the struggle for an alternative to the positivist post-Newton anti-intellectualism, etc... all important. But Sokal gave left humanities a kick in the pants, and as I see it, again, it's a philosophical issue. You're not going to resolve the subjective/ objective question re: truth by simply miming how "subjective" phrases like these sound in action. Nor does it do to stereotype the concept of a stable truth "out there" as a simplistic notion. It's not so simple on either side of the fence. & I would say the strain of postmodernism Sokal had in his sights - post-Nietzschean, post-Heideggerian Derridean relativity - i.e. the "logos" or order of nature is a time-bound patriarchal illusion masking the free play of non-identity [A does not = A] - really is anti-science based on pretty straightforward "nominalism". & these can also be seen as the false friends of poetry & the humanities. Friends AND false friends: I don't deny the amazing subtlety & interest in Derrida and related writers - there IS real discovery there, too. But science and poetry need not be rivals for human allegiance. - Henry Gould

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486. **R. Gancie**

Sokallese: Errors in human transmission

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Mark and Henry: Please excuse the many errors in my previous transmission, the most egregious being the initial address to Tom when I meant Mark. No matter how many other commitments I have, I want to communicate my meaning as consistently and thoroughly as possible. Mark, in particular, I owe you a more thoughtful and comprehensive reply. Its impossible to address each individual point especially when there are so many uncritical assumptions in your remarks. On the one hand Tom wants to separate the way Thales would think of souls from the way John McCarthy might (actually I was trying to be tongue in cheek and thought no one would interpret the remark so literally); but then Judy wants to ad hoc consider weaving as an historical/technological continuum, Burlington and the Jacquard loom existing in the same spirit as the practice of hand weaving. Actually, this would make a fascinating and relevant, but lengthy, discussion in itself. It got me looking at Annie Albers fabric art yesterday. For example, if we imply, as Tom does, that the word 'soul' has natural recourse to the taxonomy we call religion, is it then discussible in the same manner as Judy's implied taxonomy, technology? Do the two taxonomies then form a hermeneutic equivalence? What is the language like that drives the discussions? Are their quantifiable standards of critique and illumination? Which taxonomy appears more valid and do the standards of criticism favor one over the other? Mark, let me just say that acceptance of fraudulent texts is not limited to the Sokal affair. Even with peer revues it has occurred many times within the sciences themselves. There's a book called Fraud in Science. Joe Brennan makes the point that the level of metaphor is valid and must be recognized on its own terms and that Sokal insists on a disembodied and literal interpretation to advance his own agenda and that of his powerful handlers. Tom, through Jaynes' Origins of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, insists that metaphor is unavoidable. I would agree even unto methods of mathematization and quantification. That's where the quotes from Hegel and Adorno and Horkheimer come in.---Carlo Parcelli

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487. **Sylvester Pollet**

Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Thanks, all, for the Elvis poems & citations. I expect it's easier to start a thread than to stop one, but the immediate crisis has passed, so back to Sokal et al.

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488. **Robert Archambeau**

Re: Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Jere Odell, a young poet who opened for Stephanie Strickland at her reading in Lake Forest last week, told me that whereas all aspiring poets used to feel an obligation to write a sonnet, now they all feel the need to write a poem about Elvis. I thought he was joking, but now I'm not so sure.

--

Robert Archambeau
Department of English
Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, IL 60045
<http://www.lfc.edu/~archamb/>

Only irony is eternal
--Andrei Codrescu

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489. **Maria Damon**

fwd: Asian American Poetry Inquiry

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Date: Wed, 22 Oct 1997 20:17:46 -0800

To: Maria Damon <[REDACTED]>

From: [REDACTED] (Juliana Chang)

Subject: Asian American Poetry

(Please forward to Poetics List and/or other lists--thanks!)

I am writing on behalf of the Poetry Award Committee for the Association of Asian American Studies. We will be reviewing books of poetry by Asian American writers and presenting an award at the 1998 AAAS Conference. If you know of poetry books *published in 1997* that we should review, please send a message with title, author, and publisher to me at <[REDACTED]>. Below are some books currently under consideration:

Chin, Justin. -Bite Hard-. manic d press

Inada, Lawson. -Drawing the Line-. Coffee House Press.

Kim, Myung Mi. -Dura-. Sun and Moon Press. (if it's out)

Mitsui, James Masao. -From a Three-Cornered World-. University of Washington Press.

Pwu, Jean Lee. -East Wind, West Rain-.

Saijo, Albert. -Outspeaks a Rhapsody-. Bamboo Ridge Press.

Thank you,
Juliana Chang
Chair
1997 AAAS Poetry Award Committee

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490. **Maria Damon**

Re: Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

check out also El Vez, Chicano activist and Elvis impersonator, there's a nice section about him in Jose Saldivar's forthcoming book "Border Matters."

At 12:01 PM -0400 10/23/97, Danny Collier wrote:

>Sylvester,

>

>You might point your friend toward the proprietor of the Java
>Cabana Coffee House, First Church of the Elvis Impersonator
>and Elvis Wedding Chapel in Memphis, TN. Since he has many
>fine Elvis-oriented artworks in his shop (including a wonderful
>series of Velvet Elvis-style Life-of-the-King portraits with captions
>worked into the paintings) he probably could point you at
>Elvis-oriented poets and their works. (He does amazing
>coin-operated interactive animated Elvis impersonator
>installations.)

>

>They have (or had) a web site with links to his e-mail. I'd give you
>the reference, but I got busted for subversively using the law
>firm's international link to its diary/billing system to gain web
>access, so I am

>

>unlinked in Moscow,
>Danny Collier, Native Memphian, Thrice Remarried in the First
>Church of the Elvis Impersonator

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491. **henry**

Re: ILS 1.8

Thu 23 Oct 1997

On Tue, 21 Oct 1997 16:13:15 EDT JDEBROT said:

>Watten's essay strikes me as an extremely important corrective. In "The
Bride

>. . . " he challenges the, by now too easy, assumption that the material text
>is politically effective either because 1. the reader is "empowered" by
>his/her collaboration in making meaning, or 2. in Watten's words, "what
>writing wants to accomplish as politics is the same as to do it; that to
>describe literary possibility is to represent a form of agency, in a circular
>fashion, as a critique of representation." In place of these alternatives
>Watten proposes a *cultural poetics* with "a more socially reflexive
>perspective." Just what this might mean is suggested by George Hartley in his
>account of Watten's pivotal essay "Total Syntax," where Watten calls for a
>focused "attention to both the internal, formal, temporal construction of a
>work and its external, contextual, spatial dimension" The two, as Watten sees
>it, are coextensive. Therefore the work's external frames ("aesthetic value
>systems, economic constraints, and ideological structures") mediate, but may
>also be affected by, its internal syntax. It is through the writer's
>exploitation of this "total syntax" that is, for Watten, key to the work's
>eventual political efficacy; what in Watten's book *Progress* is said to be "a
>form compelling events."

Jacques, I'm going to break my own promise since nobody else is speaking up. But I don't want to turn this discussion into the usual Henry polemics. So I want to suggest to all ye listers out there, that we follow up on Jacques' call by responding to the ILS essay in a VARIETY of directions. There's a lot of ways to get into an argument.

With that said, here's my question - how does Watten's characterization of reading poetry differ from any mainstream approach of reading for inner dynamics & general context? How can this be offered as something new, except in the parochial context of Language Poetry positioning? Parochial, because aesthetically hobbled by a simplistic correspondence between poetic experiment and political progress, if I read your "call" aright. Art by committee of the will to power. "Critiques of representation". The idea of a "form compelling events" gives it away: in Watten's view an "event" equals a political event. I have a permanently fixed bias toward what goes on in the unmapped wastelands - what is not yet political or left out of the political. That's where nature and art are interesting mutually-reflective events in their own right. This is a fundamentally mid-western left-out feeling. It can also be read politically, and for some people that's the only kind of reading, I guess. - Henry Gould

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492. **Maria Damon**

address query

Thu 23 Oct 1997

anyone got an e-address for tandy sturgeon, or know who's doing the niedecker sagetrieb? please backchannel. thanks, md

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493. **Maria Damon**

south asian women poets

Thu 23 Oct 1997

on behalf of one of my students, a query: can any of you suggest how to get hold of the work of south asian women (or of south asian descent) "experimental" (or whatever) poets? names, websites, journal articles or unpublished material all appreciated.

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494. **Robert Archambeau**

Re: sonnets and certainty

Thu 23 Oct 1997

As I looked up over the gilt-edged pages of my leather bound copy of "A" from where I sat in the wingback chair in my oak-panelled library, I was astonished to see a giant pumpkin in the shape of Mt Rushmore rolling down the hillside, about to crash through the glassed-in screen of my hothouse of biases. Barely survived that one, but mmmm, the pumpkin pie I made . . .

--

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Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, IL 60045
<http://www.lfc.edu/~archamb/>

Only irony is eternal
--Andrei Codrescu

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495. **Franklin Bruno**

the forms and the laws

Thu 23 Oct 1997

H. Rhenisch wrote:

>Seems to me Coleridge said that he wrote rhymed verse by writing the rhymes

>first and then backing the poem into the rhymes.

>

>You could do that with any other technique of a poem, traditional or

>otherwise.

>

This was Ashbery's device in the sestinas and canzone in -Some Trees-. And what's more formal, in this sense, Cage's mesostics (sp?) or Roussel's novels?

M. Weiss wrote:

I have nothing against syllogisms, I just don't find them particularly useful for me as a mode of inquiry. Put another way, for me to write a sonnet I'd have to experience life and language as governed by an apparent logic. The logic, the coherence, would be a given. In the secular world in which I live whatever logic may be available takes a bit more exploration to discover.

Hard for me to swallow this as an argument against writing in forms. Why would you 'have to' experience life a certain way to use a (received, he sd, sotto voce) form, unless you suppose that art must be mimetic in certain respects. Why could one not create order, or to use a shadier term, impose it on the 'secular' world? Isn't this what we do w/ our perceptions all the time. Of course, one might have the poetic aim of shaking off the shackles of knee-jerk everyday 'ordering' or 'forming,' but then one is just trying to be truer to the 'actual' perceiver-independent forms of life, on some level. And speaking of perceiver-independence...

A. Nielson wrote:

>This appears to be one of the most difficult points for Sokal to get hold

>of, even though it seems quite simple, if not simple-minded --

>

>LAWS do not occur in nature, whether we mean the laws of physics or the law

>of the land --

>

>There are phenomena that we attempt to describe,,, the description gets

>called a law of physics --

>

This is a pretty open question in philosophy of science circles, even narrowly analytic one. There are those (David Armstrong comes to mind) who hold that LAWS really do exist--i.e., are abstract but objective entities ala numbers, properties, etc. Obviously, this is a species of Platonism. BUT, such a view need not suppose that we have actually unearthed any of the

real laws, only useful but somewhat deceptive approximations of them. Somewhere on the other end of the range is the view that there are just law-statements (though the ontological status of these might depend on your philosophy of language) which cover, more or less effectively, a range of particular phenomena. There's also the very important question of whether clauses in law-statements that say things like 'under normal conditions' or 'all other things being equal' (which very few proposed laws lack) make the statements empty of content, or whether these phrases can be given a determinate application. This last ? is key to the issue of whether there are any laws of behavioral science (psychology), which brings us right back to AI.

fjb

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496. **Danny Collier**

Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Sylvester,

You might point your friend toward the proprietor of the Java Cabana Coffee House, First Church of the Elvis Impersonator and Elvis Wedding Chapel in Memphis, TN. Since he has many fine Elvis-oriented artworks in his shop (including a wondrous series of Velvet Elvis-style Life-of-the-King portraits with captions worked into the paintings) he probably could point you at Elvis-oriented poets and their works. (He does amazing coin-operated interactive animated Elvis impersonator installations.)

They have (or had) a web site with links to his e-mail. I'd give you the reference, but I got busted for subversively using the law firm's international link to its diary/billing system to gain web access, so I am

unlinked in Moscow,

Danny Collier, Native Memphian, Thrice Remarried in the First Church of the Elvis Impersonator

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497. **trace s. ruggles**

Re: Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

There's a bona fide Church of Elvis a couple of blocks from where I work (in Portland, OR). One of our employees is leaving the company for good next week to move to New York, and we all decided to get married to her at the

Church. They offer 25 cent weddings that only take a couple of minutes. I'll see if they have any good poetry about the King...

At 9:01 AM -0700 10/23/97, you wrote:

>Sylvester,

>

>You might point your friend toward the proprietor of the Java
>Cabana Coffee House, First Church of the Elvis Impersonator
>and Elvis Wedding Chapel in Memphis, TN. Since he has many
>fine Elvis-oriented artworks in his shop (including a wonderful
>series of Velvet Elvis-style Life-of-the-King portraits with captions
>worked into the paintings) he probably could point you at
>Elvis-oriented poets and their works. (He does amazing
>coin-operated interactive animated Elvis impersonator
>installations.)

>

>They have (or had) a web site with links to his e-mail. I'd give you
>the reference, but I got busted for subversively using the law
>firm's international link to its diary/billing system to gain web
>access, so I am

>

>unlinked in Moscow,
>Danny Collier, Native Memphian, Thrice Remarried in the First
>Church of the Elvis Impersonator

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498. **Ira Lightman**

Re: math/logic and poetry

Thu 23 Oct 1997

And of course Ron Silliman's use of fibonacci; my own "Loving Phase Transitions" (Sound & Language, 1996) is 3 eleven page sections of 2 one page pieces followed by a nine page piece; the final nine page piece is 9 pages, each of 9 lines, each line with 9 words, from 1 to 9 letters long. Maths or numerology? A friend of mine is writing an unpublished piece written through Wittgenstein's Tractatus, and there is Marjorie Perloff's book on Wittgenstein and poetry. And there's Oulipo, especially Jacques Roubaud (a mathematician).

Ira

On Mon, 20 Oct 1997 22:54:01 -0700 Carl Lynden Peters wrote:

> From: Carl Lynden Peters <[REDACTED]>
> Date: Mon, 20 Oct 1997 22:54:01 -0700
> Subject: Re: math/logic and poetry
> To: [REDACTED]
>
> bpNichol!
> bpNichol!
> bpNichol! x all that u can read! of bp!
>
> i luv this list; the only time i know what's happening is
when th answer
> is bpNichol!
>
> Mad for Bliss,
>
> carl
>
> > Dear list members,
> >
> > I would be grateful for any reading suggestions of
contemporary poets
> > who have used mathematical or logical models as
occasions for composition.
> > Of course texts like Ashbery's _Flow Chart_ come
immediately to mind, but
> > I'm sure there are may other obvious choices that I'm
just not coming up
> > with. I am especially interested in women writers
incorporating
> > mathematical/logical systems into their work. I'll be
thankful for all
> > suggestions, obvious and obscure.
> >
> > Please copy any posts to me via backchannel.
> >
> > Many thanks in advance,
> >
> > Jennifer Ashton
> > Johns Hopkins University
> > [REDACTED]
> >

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499. **Steve Evans**

Re: ILS 1.8 and then some

Thu 23 Oct 1997

I apologize for the delay in responding to members of the List who have inquired about the possibility of making Barrett Watten's "Bride of the Assembly Line" available on-line. The interest is certainly welcome and only successive nights of great poetry readings in Providence--Damon Krukowski and Joe Torra on Tuesday, then last night Michael Gizzi--have kept me from responding.

At this time the best I can do is offer to make the piece available, in all its slow-paced physicality, to those who are interested. There are still copies with imperfect binding (i.e. sloppy mechanical stapling that I had to re-staple) that I will mail, free, to anyone who asks. Watten does not yet have an author's page at EPC and doesn't foresee having the time to establish one in the immediate future. Jen and I are reasonably breathless from our monthly publishing schedule and don't easily contemplate adding another level of manifestation and maintenance to the project just now.

I admit to being a puzzled at the idea that a text cannot be discussed without reproducing it in its entirety. I thought metonymy, and the chain of distortions and corrections it unleashes, was half the fun of such discussions.

On the other hand, do read cover to cover and as soon as possible Michael Gizzi's *No Both*, just out in a joint venture from The Figures & Hard Press. Long the hardguy laureate (if you've not heard him read, imagine Mitchum doing a voice over of *Visions of Cody*) Gizzi's work since *Interferon* (Great Barrington: The Figures, 1995) laces the vast Kerouacian periods with the kind of hard-won humanity one hears in O'Hara and Monk, in Coolidge, Luoma, and Mayer. It's very daring, very moving work. And while I'm in talk-it-up mode, why not mention also Joe Torra's *Keep Watching the Sky* (Cambridge: Zoland, 1996), also a document of bop prosody and toughly sentimental long-hard-looks at what's become of us. Damon Krukowski's *5000 Musical Terms* (Providence: Burning Deck, 1995) is literally that: five thousand words looking for a register, floating somewhere between rhetoric and music. His *Vexations* are part Kafka-parable, part Cage-anecdote, part Borgesian-conceit, and all available as the next ILS, 1.9 in November. How's that for coming back to the pitch: schwew.... Hard Press, by the way, has a webpage at: <http://hardpress.com/> (or you can cut right to *No Both*'s page at <http://hardpress.com/newhp/catalog/gizzi.html>).

Steve Evans

Impercipient Lecture Series
61 East Manning Stree

Providence RI 02906-4008

██████████

r i a t n m u
a t s u o o o s

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500. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: ILS 1.8

Thu 23 Oct 1997

In a message dated 97-10-23 09:40:35 EDT, you write:

<< So I want to suggest to all ye listers out there, that we follow up on Jacques' call by responding to the ILS essay in a VARIETY of directions. >>

Henry, how does one FIND this essay???? Thanks! --Aviva

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501. **Susan Clark**

Re: south asian women poets

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Maria,

Ashok Mathur and others have the HYPEN-NATION issue of their ABSINTHE mag up at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~amathur/hyphenation.html>

There, you will see work by Sonia Chakrabarti and Minelle Mahtani's essay *Sketching beyond the site-lines: a geographer's topography of the politics of negotiation for mixed "race" women* and an installation "Modern Bride Burning" by Rina Banerjee

Also, try Yasmin Ladha in Calgary. She writes prose but teaches and has a special interest in women writers and active links to India [Delhi & Kashmir]. *Absinthe* should have an address for her. Or someone could backchannel me. My info may be old. She has a piece ["Samaan-luggage of a bride of a mujahideen of a nomad"] in RADDLE MOON 14.

best,

Susan

RADDLE MOON

██████████

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502. **p. durgin**

Address request / E. Myles

Thu 23 Oct 1997

List folk,
Has anyone got an e-mail address for Eileen Myles? Please
back-channel if you would. Thanks.
Patrick F. Durgin

||| [REDACTED] |||

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503. **mark weiss**

Re: the forms and the laws

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Seems to me that if I write in a form that contains within it a certain idea of order that predates my choice to write in it I am either accepting that ordering or playing a game of "as if." Fine with me if others find this useful for their work. I don't. What I do find useful is the unfolding of process in a world I perhaps imprecisely call secular, meaning that it doesn't come with a set of maps or operating instructions, unlike the world inhabited by, say, Milton. The perceiver and his process are a big hunk of same. Put another way, I try to write/perceive as if the perceivable were inherently without information, the structures I bring with me seen as tentative at best. I'm not arguing against writing in forms, I just don't find it useful for myself in this project, and I rarely find the efforts of others in this vein useful.

M. Weiss wrote:

I have nothing against syllogisms, I just don't find them particularly useful for me as a mode of inquiry. Put another way, for me to write a sonnet I'd have to experience life and language as governed by an apparent logic. The logic, the coherence, would be a given. In the secular world in which I live whatever logic may be available takes a bit more exploration to discover.

Hard for me to swallow this as an argument against writing in forms. Why would you 'have to' experience life a certain way to use a (received, he sd, sotto voce) form, unless you suppose that art must be mimetic in certain respects. Why could one not create order, or to use a shadier term, impose it on the 'secular' world? Isn't this what we do w/ our perceptions all the time. Of course, one might have the poetic aim of shaking off the shackles of knee-jerk everyday 'ordering' or 'forming,' but then one is just trying

to be truer to the 'actual' perceiver-indepdent forms of life, on some level. And speaking of perceiver-independence...

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504. **William Burmeister Prod**
(no subject)

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Announcement for anyone who may be in the South Florida/Miami area today(I know this is late):

Andrei Codrescu

in

WHOSE WOODS ARE THESE ANYWAY?

will lecture on the immigration experience

Oct 23 @ 7:00 pm

at the Miami Museum of Art, 101 W. Flagler, downtown Miami

(\$5.00 for museum non-members)

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505. **James Finnegan**
Re: Elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Back a few years, there was anthology of Elvis poems published entitled Mondo Elvis, I believe. Probably still in print. Also, a Mondo Marilyn anthology was put out by the same editors. Never read either, so I can't say what the poetry was like.

Finnegan

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506. **Graham W Foust**
Re: elvis poems

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Sylvester--

Joe Wenderoth's "Wallace Stevens Describing the Need For And Then The Consequences Of Elvis Presley" is an excellent poem about the King (it's in his book *_Disfortune_* from Wesleyan U. Press, 1995).

Graham

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507. **Pam Brown**

Re: south asian women poets

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Hello Maria Damon -

Tonight in Sydney I will be attending a reading by a Vietnamese writer - Pham Thi Hoai - whose books, whilst not literally poetry, are "poetic" in that she experiments with time/space within a narrative form. The book "Thien Su" has been translated into French as "Le Messenger Crystal" and, now, apparently into English - "The Crystal Messenger" - which I intend to buy tonight. I could email you the publisher's details if you like.

Another more well-known Vietnamese writer is Duong Thu Huong - her books are

available in the US- try "Novel Without A Name"- she is not as "experimental" as Hoai but is always in trouble with the authorities for writing explicit & non-romantic stories critical of VN society.

Best wishes,

Pam Brown

6 AM 23/10/97 -0500, you wrote:

>on behalf of one of my students, a query:

>can any of you suggest how to get hold of the work of south asian women (or >of south asian descent) "experimental" (or whatever) poets? names,

>websites, journal articles or unpublished material all appreciated.

>

>

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508. **Aviva Vogel**

Re: ILS 1.8 and then some

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Steve, would you be willing to send a copy of ILS 1.8, postage due, to me?

Aviva Vogel

P.O. Box 1085

Norwich, VT 05055-1085

And thanks for poe-tips. I'll return the favor by offering some responses some-day. I know it's a hassle to mail this essay, but I'd be much obliged. Gracias, Aviva

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509. **Thomas Bell**

Re: the forms and the laws

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Mark, Yes. This might be a useful (in the sense of leading or getting somewhere) rule-of-thumb for what I've started to see as action or process poetry. I've generally come to always do the same but without articulating it as well as you do. For me it has a lot to do with the idea that if you know how you are going to get to a certain before you leave the journey is not as compelling. It also has to do with my perception that existing forms and language have gotten us into our current muddle and maybe the maps are part of the problem. I guess this is my langpoey coming out - does however go back at least as far as Olson and Gestalt therapy, tho and is echoed today by Mihali Csikszentimihalyi "In the past, things evolved essentially on the basis of external forces that pushed us in a certain direction and we went along with them. Religion and other philosophical systems, such as nationalism, communism, or other ideologies, supplied the meaning that integrated a person's life. At this moment, there isn't much that appeals to the hearts and minds of people with the strength and conviction that those earlier idea systems had. At this point, there is the possibility of doing things differently." tom bell

At 10:54 AM 10/23/97 -0700, mark weiss wrote:

>Seems to me that if I write in a form that contains within it a certain
>idea of order that predates my choice to write in it I am either accepting
>that ordering or playing a game of "as if." Fine with me if others find
>this useful for their work. I don't.
>What I do find useful is the unfolding of process in a world I perhaps
>imprecisely call secular, meaning that it doesn't come with a set of maps
>or operating instructions, unlike the world inhabited by, say, Milton. The
>perceiver and his process are a big hunk of same. Put another way, I try to
>write/perceive as if the perceivable were inherently without information,
>the structures I bring with me seen as tentative at best.
>I'm not arguing against writing in forms, I just don't find it useful for
>myself in this project, and I rarely find the efforts of others in this
>vein useful.
>
>>M. Weiss wrote:
>>

>>>I have nothing against syllogisms, I just don't find them particularly
>>>useful for me as a mode of inquiry. Put another way, for me to write a
>>>sonnet I'd have to experience life and language as governed by an appar-
ent
>>>logic. The logic, the coherence, would be a given. In the secular world in
>>>which I live whatever logic may be available takes a bit more exploration
>>>to discover.
>>>
>>
>>Hard for me to swallow this as an argument against writing in forms. Why
>>would you 'have to' experience life a certain way to use a (received, he sd,
>>sotto voce) form, unless you suppose that art must be mimetic in certain
>>respects. Why could one not create order, or to use a shadier term, impose
>>it on the 'secular' world? Isn't this what we do w/ our perceptions all the
>>time. Of course, one might have the poetic aim of shaking off the shackles
>>of knee-jerk everyday 'ordering' or 'forming,' but then one is just trying
>>to be truer to the 'actual' perceiver-independent forms of life, on some
>>level. And speaking of perceiver-independence...
>>
>
>

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510. **Jordan Davis**

Re: sonnets and certainty

Thu 23 Oct 1997

Case in point, Robert!

And what an array. Creeley at Columbia (at 8 or so), Rudy Burckhardt's paintings and Joe Brainard's Small collages at Tibor de Nagy (724 5th Ave, 5-7 pm opening), Brendan Lorber & Anselm Berrigan at Biblios (Church & Walker at 6:30), and at Poetry City, postcolonial night with R. Zamora Linmark & Jorge Clar (5 Union Sq W, 7 pm). So if you're in New York...

Sincerely,
Linus

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511. **David Israel**

ars po

Thu 23 Oct 1997

| question (why literature) rub
|
| The life as consciously imagined
| shows the life blooming in semblance
| of the real (not so much a dissembling
| as a resembling? -- reality as end toward
| which the unreal (imagination) would reach?
|
| to be or to seem that's the
|
| aye that's the
|
| so that here imagination follows consciously
| an else unconscious road of construc-
| tion: the brick-on-brick tree o'er tree
| method that builds everything al-
| ways? place upon such a built
| thing a new building to gain
| glimpse of the uncreated?
|
|
| d.i. 10/23/97

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512. **Tom Beard**

Re: Sokallese

Fri 24 Oct 1997

*On the one hand Tom wants
to separate the way Thales would think of souls from the way John
McCarthy might (actually I was trying to be tongue in cheek and thought
no one would interpret the remark so literally);*

I had to assume that you were being literal, because I wasn't sure whether John McCarthy had used the word 'soul'. There was an active discussion some years back here about the use of the word soul, and my position was that one should be wary when using such a word, since it drags with it so many connotations. One person might be using it to refer to an immortal, transferable soul; another might mean a conscious entity with subjectivity; someone else might be talking about Ray Charles.

I don't think that this can be considered a continuum of meaning in the way that "technology" might ("Judy wants to ad hoc consider weaving as an historical/ technological continuum, Burlington and the Jacquard loom existing in the same spirit as the practice of hand weaving"). If we think of any "technique" as being "technological", then we don't even need to invoke a continuum. In fact, I imagine (and others with a better knowledge of history might be able to confirm or otherwise) that hand weaving may have had at least as radical an effect upon the society of the time as the Jacquard loom in its time.

Tom, through Jaynes' Origins of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, insists that metaphor is unavoidable. I would agree even unto methods of mathematization and quantification. That's where the quotes from Hegel and Adorno and Horkheimer come in.

I think more of "metaphor" (in the linguistic sense) as a subset of the process (abstraction? pattern recognition? taxonomy? symbolism?) that makes consciousness possible.

| *YOU DON'T NEED SCIENCE TO HAVE REGARD FOR THE REAL*

Agreed. But once one has "regard for the real", I find that the other processes that you mention ("mathematization, quantification, formalization, reduction") come in very useful when making statements about "the real". The problem lies in recognising the cases where they cease to be useful.

Many of the problems that people have with reductionism is that they think of only the first part of a process, analysis, and forget about synthesis. We can learn a lot about a stone, for example, by looking at its chemical composition. But one cannot ignore how it's put together, or you'll just get a pile of Silicon and Iron atoms.

The statement "the whole is equal to the sum of its parts" is a parody of reductionism, if you take the word "sum" literally. I prefer to say that "the whole is a function of its parts", or "the whole can be usefully understood in terms of its parts". In fact, "the whole = the sum of its parts" is the very definition of linearity ($f(\text{sum}(x)) = \text{sum}(f(x))$), so in any non-linear system we have to take a more subtle approach to synthesis and be aware that an analytic solution might not be possible.

> For the vast majority of us scientific literacy would be a meaningless waste
> of productive time anyway because if our conclusions wouldn't matter in
> any case.

Maybe I'm just not as cynical about the democratic process as you. People are voting all the time on fluoridated water, carbon emissions, drug laws and other issues in which good science would be informative. I do find scientific illiteracy

frightening, in the way that I find geographical ignorance frightening. It frightened me that many Americans during the Falklands war thought that the Falklands were somewhere near the Shetlands, because it gave them the appearance that the Argentines were just about invading Britain. Similarly, the "Dihydrogen Monoxide" story is a source of worry, because it shows how many people can be swayed by hype (from any side of the argument) and the fear of admitting ignorance. It's just a pity that it's been co-opted for the purposes you mention.

The funniest of this kind of hoax that I've come across is Chris Morris' "Brass Eye" series, especially the "cake" and "heavy electricity" episodes. The willingness of so many politicians to publicly denounce a "metabolically bisturbile amphetamoid" without first checking the sources of the pressure group shows not only how much the War on Some Drugs is fuelled by ignorance, but also how allegedly educated people will parrot any prepared statement rather than admit that they don't know what they're talking about.

Tom Beard.

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513. **Hugh Steinberg**
readings

Fri 24 Oct 1997

I'll be in New Jersey from November 22 through December 2. I know that floats around Thanksgiving, but are there any readings going on in New York or Philadelphia during that time?

Thanks!

Hugh Steinberg

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514. **Douglas Barbour**
Re: the forms and the laws

Fri 24 Oct 1997

I respect both Mark & Tom's holding out for form-in-process, but I'm not sure that absolutely has to signal no use of imposed 'rules.' Even the Coleridge example of chosen rhyme words, somewhat like a 'form' my colleague Stephen Scobie & I like to call 'word/line acrostics,' or many another 'arbitrary' imposition of language, can leave lots of room for improvisation. I think having some words already 'there' may be a way of allowing language to work with the writer writing -- into what is to be found there. And the 'play' --off & toward

those words already there -- can lead to discoveries of possibilities sometimes beyond what one is aware one is aware of, so to speak. The arbitrary opens: Sometimes it's a way of getting started too...

=====

Douglas Barbour
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~

the language  
a darkness, a friendship, tying to the real  
but it is unreal

the clarity desired, a wish for true sight,  
all tangling

Robin Blaser

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515. **Pritchett, Pat**

***Re: sci fi poetry***

*Fri 24 Oct 1997*

---

For anyone still interested in this topic, check out the The Alterran Poetry Assemblage at <http://home.ican.net/~alterra/corn.html>.

In Version 2.0, Adam Cornford's "Millennium: A Topology," plays out the tropes of an imperialist/postcolonial poetics of the future ala Lang's "Metropolis" and other sci-fi dystopian visions. Worth the read.

Also a great site for many other poets.

Patrick Pritchett

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516. **groberts**

**Z=A.9/?**

Fri 24 Oct 1997

---

The recent query re mathematical poetics reminded me that I have yet to find a good explanation of how Zukofsky's use of the formula for a conic section governs the distribution of "n" and "r" in the canzone of "A". The hints in Z:Man and Poet are not enough, for me anyway. Does anyone know of a good "close reading" of this section, or better yet, is anyone willing to try it here for those of us who cannot understand the formula or its application?

Gary R.

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517. **henry**

**Re: Z=A.9/?**

Fri 24 Oct 1997

---

On Fri, 24 Oct 1997 10:48:16 -0500 <[REDACTED]> said:

>The recent query re mathematical poetics reminded me that I have  
>yet to find a good explanation of how Zukofsky's use of the formula for a conic  
>section governs the distribution of "n" and "r" in the  
>canzone of "A". The hints in Z:Man and Poet are not enough, for me  
>anyway. Does anyone know of a good "close reading" of this section,  
>or better yet, is anyone willing to try it here for those of us who  
>cannot understand the formula or its application?

Barry Ahearn's book *\_Zukofsky's "A" : an introduction\_* has an appendix which gets into the math background in A-8 & -9, including how to read the n's & r's. I don't know how accurate it is. - Henry Gould

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518. **henry g'**

**friday's riddle**

Fri 24 Oct 1997

---

Since everybody's being very quiet...

has anybody else noticed that the late Hannah Wiener is (in a certain sense) a character in Istanbul author Orphan Pamuk's novel THE BLACK BOOK?

I've been saying we've been getting more byzantine for a long time...

- Henry Gould

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519. **Thomas Bell**

***Reenactment of feeling in writing/reading and Nick Piombino quote***

Fri 24 Oct 1997

---

This quote struck me as true for the most part. But for me I find that I am more likely to reenact an emotion when I am writing than when I am reading. I also feel I can have some control over the quantity of feeling I invest. Is this true in others' experience? Anyone else written about this? Might be another rule-of-thumb for action or process poetry. tom bell

"We can get an approximation of experience through words in that memories, because of their subjective character, reenact the meanings we apply to experiences, just as when we read we reenact the meanings we apply to a sequence of words. When we say to ourselves, when reading, "That's how I feel" or "That's how I see myself," we are often tempted to underline the words we were reading when we experienced the feeling of comprehension. Yet then, strangely, when we reread the underlined passage, often it no longer contains the meaning we imagined it held. Nick Piombino, *The Boundary of Blur*, New York, Roof Books, 1993, p. 25.

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520. **David R. Israel**

***Re: Elvis poems***

Fri 24 Oct 1997

---

From Sylvester Pollet

*Thanks, all, for the Elvis poems & citations. I expect it's easier to start a thread than to stop one . . .*

yep, probably. To illustrate (or confirm), here's an Elvis tidbit (though incomplete). The Kronos Quartet, performing maybe two years ago (? - in this case at the Kennedy Center) included a sound-collage-based work by a youngish composer whose name, alas, has not lingered in mind. The piece might've been called "Elvis has left the building." If memory serves, much of the text (recorded stuff) was taken from a conference of Elvis impersonators.

I'm not much of a fan of Elvis chic, but did enjoy that piece. Perhaps the method used was a bit like things that (say) Scott Johnson / Gavin Bryers / et al. have done -- at least sharing some of that likeable decontextualize / recontextualize a voice approach ...

do poets here know of Scott Johnson's work of this type, I wonder? No doubt Herb Levy could do it better justice than I.

d.i.

•

.....

.....

////////////////////////////////////

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

| XXXXXXXXXX (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

| (Tagore)

//////////////////////////////////////\\\V////

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521. **simon**

***Re: Elvis poems***

Sat 25 Oct 1997

And I'm still blanking, but the first story in Janice Eidus' latest? second? collection of sh. stories (not \_Vito Loves Geraldine\_ (only it's not Geraldine, ach! who is it?)) is an Elvis story.

But I'm blanking the title of the story and the collection. Anyone have it handy?

beth simon

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522. **jarnot**

*students of r.duncan, etc.*

Sat 25 Oct 1997

dear list,

i am trying to get in touch with anyone who studied with robert duncan at new college or elsewhere. this is for a research project i'm currently working on. if you were a student of duncan's or can give me information on how to contact other students, please backchannel me at [REDACTED].

i'm also trying to get a regular mail address for ekbart faas.

thanks very much, lisa jarnot

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523. **Susan Wheeler**

**Readings**

Sat 25 Oct 1997

---

Armand Schwerner is reading at Posman Books in NYC next Sunday, the 2nd, at 3pm. His reading at the XCP conference in Minneapolis was EXTRAORDINARY, and I would urge any proximate listites to run not walk. He read (and played, a caseful of flutes being intrinsic to the work aloud) from the tablets in Minneapolis with a focus and intensity that was riveting -- and very, darkly, funny.

Susan

PS As for other events there that have stayed with me lo this past week, I was grateful for Yunte Huang's discussion of Charlie Chan & Ezra Pound, a thoughtful reading by Roy Miki, Juliana Chang's talk on the generational shift of influence modes, the elevated oratory of cris cheek's amazing performance, ace readings by Jeff Derksen and Aldon Nielsen, Alan Golding's latticed "Po-Biz, Cult. Stud., and Avant-Gardes?" back-to-back with post-Derridean stream by Kangmi Kim, and both Michael Bibby's and Elizabeth Frost's papers on a panel on "Post-War African American Poetry" -- both of which complicated our notions of inclusions and exclusions from canons as well as from canonical "interpretations." An event at the Walker was a treat primarily for a terrific Beuys show there now. I was grateful for hearing much else (and also not hearing but reading -- ie a paper by Joe Amato I overslept). There was much I regretted missing, and joy in many affinities found. Thanks to Mark Nowak and Maria Damon for a problematic, genial, and sometimes thrilling, few days.

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

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524. **creinervppp**

**litpress.com**

Sat 25 Oct 1997

---

Dear Listfolks:

LITPRESS.COM is now up and running with announcements of new publications. The address is, simply:

<http://www.litpress.com>

LITPRESS.COM is a place where publishers, authors, editors or anyone can announce new publications (books or magazines) or poetry, prose or criticism.

The focus is on innovative or experimental or avant garde (or any of those problematic words) work.

These announcements will be updated every Monday (starting November 3, 1997).

LITPRESS.COM is hosted by L.A. Books, a coalition of publishers in Los Angeles: the book presses Littoral Books and Seeing Eye Books, and the magazines Rhizome, Ribot and Witz.

I'd appreciate any comments or suggestions about the site.

--Chris Reiner (LITPRESS.COM curator)

██████  
██████

-----

Christopher Reiner

██████  
██████

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525. **robert drake**

**Re: Hans Ebner (fwd)**

Sat 25 Oct 1997

---

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Sat, 25 Oct 1997 12:03:39 -0400

From: Kurt Nimmo <██████>

Reply-To: ██████

Subject: Re: Hans Ebner

*This morning I received the sad news from Virgil Hervey that the poet Hans Ebner has died from cancer. Hans was sick for a long time, underwent therapy, his cancer was in remission, but he ultimately lost the battle. Virgil has asked me to write a few words about Hans, a friend since the late seventies.*

*I met Hans while editing THE SMUDGE REVIEW with Doug Mumm in the late seventies. Hans was connected to the Detroit literary scene, which at the time was mostly academic. Ebner, however, was not an academic poet -- while connected to the academic scene, he was distinctly apart from it, due mostly from his experiences in Vietnam, where he served a tour of duty as a grunt and had experienced the tribulation of combat. Hans was the only veteran I have known to open up about his experiences. I will never forget his story about the night his compound came under*

*attack and he lost several friends. Hans did not hold back -- the hallmark of a true poet -- and I will never forget his vivid and nightmarish descriptions of combat and the anguish he felt not only at the loss of his fellow soldiers, but also over his own participation in the killing of Vietnamese in that insane and completely unnecessary war. All of this came out in his poetry -- and also in a novel that never saw the light of publication.*

*Ebner, along with Detroit poet Hank Malone and Christine Lahey-Dolega, became a cornerstone of THE SMUDGE REVIEW in the late seventies. Through his affiliation with THE SMUDGE, Ebner met and entered a short relationship with the San Francisco poet Joanie Whitebird, a woman best remembered for a fling with Bukowski in the early seventies. Hans was divorced at the time and the affair was short and emotional.*

*It was the political and factional nature of the Detroit literary scene that eventually put a strain on our friendship. I lost contact with Hans as the seventies came to an end and THE SMUDGE REVIEW ceased publication. And while I continued to publish literary magazines through the eighties, I did not hear from Hans. As it turned out, he left the Detroit area and eventually settled in Nevada. It was the Internet that finally brought us back in contact with each other, nearly twenty years after our last communication. Hans had found my website, and thus my email address, and we began sending each other messages. He was working for the government in Las Vegas, beginning to write poetry again after a long hiatus, and I urged him to subscribe to this listserv, which he did. Thanks to GB&G, Hans made many new friends and began publishing his poetry again.*

*I will miss Hans Ebner, a sincere and compassionate friend. It is my intention to dedicate a section of the upcoming PNG POETRY ONLINE to his poetry.. If any members of the list have comments -- or poems from Hans -- that they would like to send, please feel free to do so. My email address is: [REDACTED]. If possible, as well, I would like to publish personal information about Hans. Regrettably, I do not know the date of his birth, or do I have a recent photo of him before his illness. If any list recipients have this, please contact me. I would like to make the page as inclusive as possible.*

*Hans Ebner deserves it.*

*Kurt Nimmo  
October 25, 1997*

---

*Kurt Nimmo: [REDACTED]  
Web Backlash: <http://members.tripod.com/~knimmo>*

PDFs of Kurt Nimmo: <http://ic.net/~knimmo/png.htm>  
resume: <http://ic.net/~knimmo/resume>

*The Net is nothing but an inert mass of metal,  
plastic and sand. We are the only living beings  
in cyberspace. --Richard Barbrook*  
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526. **Susan Schultz**

**Louis Simpson**

Sat 25 Oct 1997

---

This is probably not the place to vent about the *American Poetry Review*, or Louis Simpson, but I feel compelled to comment on his "747 poem" in the new issue. (A 747 poem is one written by someone who comes to Hawai'i on a plane, stays for a few days, and then writes with great authority about the place.) The poem, "Kaimana Beach," is riddled with errors and cliches, so I'll quote parts. The beach in question is in Honolulu, on O'ahu.

The moon with a ring  
colored like a rainbow  
above the ocean (Makai).

Well, makai doesn't mean ocean, it means "in the direction of the ocean."

To the north (Mauka)

Mauka means "towards the mountains," so wherever you are, north or south of them, mauka would indicate their direction. OK, so Kaimana Beach is south of the mountains. . . Simpson then drops another marker, "Ewa," which means toward the Ewa side of the island. Of course one can learn these things five minutes after arriving here.

So every day would begin.  
They [these are definitely tourists] would go for a drive  
inland, across the mountains [actually you go through them],  
or east around the shore [around the shore?]  
and look at the Chinese Hat.

There is no place called Chinese Hat, but there is a small offshore island called "Chinaman's Hat."

But in a fortnight  
one coconut looks much like another,  
and now they pass the mornings  
sitting or lying on the sand

at the Outrigger Canoe Club,  
listening to the waves,  
and the names of children  
being called . . . "Joy!" and "Milo!"

How sweet. Of course coconuts are cut down so early and often here (they are dangerous to one's health, if they fall), that no one could get sick of them.

The poem concludes with a long passage about how this woman misses her work; there's simply nothing to do in Hawai'i except listen for the sounds of "Joy!" and drive around. No help anywhere, save perhaps from the good Lord:

Lord, let us have something  
to read. For there is no one  
to talk to: only the sand  
and a clatter of dishes,  
the flapping of umbrellas,  
and shadows of the afternoon.

I'd better cut this message short. I have three classes to prepare for, need to read a 500 page novel this weekend for the personnel committee that I'm on, have to ship out more issues of my journal of Pacific poetry, which includes a lot of work by people from H, need to recover from a week that saw a Tinfish reading and a thesis defense by a graduate student who works with me. awai'i. And what the hell, I may even take a walk. The weather really is lovely today over those mountains that are to the south of me...

Susan  
Kane'ohe, Hawai'i

---

Susan M. Schultz  
Dept. of English  
1733 Donaghho Road  
University of Hawai'i-Manoa  
Honolulu, HI 96822

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>  
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

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527. **Susan Schultz**

***Louis Simpson, ps***

*Sat 25 Oct 1997*

---

There were a couple of glitches in my message, due to the tendency of my tel-net account to make word salad. I trust that the sense survives, however.

sms

---

Susan M. Schultz  
Dept. of English  
1733 Donaghho Road  
University of Hawai'i-Manoa  
Honolulu, HI 96822

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

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528. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: Louis Simpson, ps***

*Sat 25 Oct 1997*

---

delighted to be one of the tinfish swimming in the aquarium -- a good issue all around -- thanks again

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529. **John Tranter**

***Jacket magazine # 1 and # 2***

*Sat 25 Oct 1997*

---

Announcement: The first issue of John Tranter's Jacket magazine is complete and has been posted to the Internet at

<http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>

It's free, international, full of stylish writing, and user-friendly.

Jacket # 1 contains a look at the 1943 hoax poet Ern Malley with rare photos, writing by Charles Bernstein, Elaine Equi, Pamela Brown, Alfred Corn, Joanne Burns, Tracy Ryan, Carl Rakosi, Peter Minter, Susan Schultz, Ron Koertge, Beth Spencer, and Paul Hoover, interviews with English poet Roy Fisher and Australian aboriginal poet Lionel Fogarty, reviews of John Berger and Les Murray, and the poetry and prose of the late Martin Johnston.

Jacket # 2 will mainly feature the work of John Ashbery, who turns 70 this year, but there will be lots of other material as well. It will be finalised by January 1998, but right now you can preview the following:

... a new poem by John Ashbery, "The Burden of the Park" ... Marjorie Perloff on "Normalizing John Ashbery" ... John Tranter's "Three John Ashberys" (an Introduction to Ashbery's work) ... Steve Evans's meditation of Bob Perelman's "The Marginalization of Poetry", an article on type, and poems by Eileen Myles, August Kleinzahler, Robert Adamson, S.K.Kelen, John Kinsella and Michael Heller, together with sparkling photos of the usual suspects.

Jacket also features a LITERARY LINKS page with annotated connections to print and electronic magazines, and an international BOOKSTORE page with a host of useful information and live links. Also a page of tips on Internet DESIGN (how to avoid rendering your visitors unconscious with boredom), with a few secret passageways to the Caves of the Webmeisters.

I'm sorry to have to say that I am not yet able to handle or accept unsolicited submissions -- I simply don't have the time. Maybe by 1998.

And please excuse the following flagrant and desperate attempt to attract extra audience members for three poetry-reading appearances in the Northern Hemisphere by John Tranter:

Saturday 2 November, 9 p.m., Club Room, Churchill College, Cambridge University (ENGLAND) with Tracy Ryan, Michael Hulse, and Michael Schmidt. Contact Tim Cribb Tel. 01223 336 194 or John Kinsella e-mail [REDACTED]

Monday 24 November, 7:30 pm, at KGB, 85 East 4th Street, East Village, NEW YORK. Reading with Geoffrey O'Brien. Organisers David Lehman and Star Black.

Saturday 29 November, 7:30 pm, New College Cultural Center, 776 Valencia Street, SAN FRANCISCO. Reading with New York poet Tim Davis. Organiser: Dodie Bellamy, Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center.

Please tell your friends about Jacket, whose motto is  
"bop till you drop!"

from

John Tranter, 39 Short Street, Balmain NSW 2041, Sydney, Australia

tel ([REDACTED]) fax ([REDACTED])

Editor, Jacket magazine: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>

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530. **Alan r m -r Sondheim**

**Reading**

Sun 26 Oct 1997

---

This Thursday, October 30th, at 7:00, I'm doing a reading with David Bromige as part of the Poetry City series at Teachers and Writers, 5 Union Square West, 7th Floor. You can call for information at 212- [REDACTED]. Union Square West is around 14th Street and University. There are many subway and bus stops nearby.

Now, I may be fairly inarticulate because I am doing Jennifer and Julu and they are not there and I have to use a Mac with voices which are not theirs either, you see? And I am afraid they might not like that, but they are buried at the moment deep in my linux box which I am putting into storage because I am going to Fukuoka the next morning, so I will not be around to revive them.

So this will be an odd experiment on the hinge of time and avatar, which will most certainly succeed where it will fail, and fail where it will succeed. In any case, you could come and see what I look like, on the virge.

Alan

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531. **Rob Hardin**

***The Films of Henry Hills at the Anthology Film Archives***

Sun 26 Oct 1997

---

Just saw a few of the films of Henry Hills after having watched W. Has's *The Saragossa Manuscript*. I am still absorbing the grotesque beauty of Has's films as we speak; but I thought it perhaps more germane to this list to speak of Hills's films.

I particularly enjoyed Hills's collaborations with Sally Silvers. Even in Hills's other films, virtuosic editing and humor were everywhere present. Still, the other films seemed to exist in a kind of post-narrative purgatory--in a realm between Abigail Child and, say, Aram Avakian's *The End of the Road*.

"Insufficiently synthetic" is a phrase I seem to remember from Charles Bernstein. This phrase accurately describes Hills's film, *Money* (1985), which included hoquet-staccatoed performances by Bernstein and other members of LP's sporadic cast. The editing was riveting, of course, but the content seemed mere static documentary--whereas in Hills's collaborations with Silver, such as



\_Mysteries of the Brain\_ (1997) and \_Little Lieutenant\_ (1993), both macrostructure and microstructure felt consistently rich and engaging.

Some elements of conventional narrative seem to survive in Hills's films and, oddly, these elements would seem to detract from Hill's many virtues. So long as the abstract grid of dance is present, he does not falter, and feels some over-riding rhythm, some pan-narrative, that is capable of propelling several correlates through measured time. But when Hill's material is merely cumulative, and the task at hand becomes merely technical, as it seems to do in *Money*, then the work seems reduced to pyrotechnics, and cries for the semantic resonance of an Abigail Child.

I don't mean to put down Hills here--his films were consistently witty and entertaining. But the viewer who is concerned with questions of form might find more fecund innovations in Hills's collaborations, and in the work of his contemporaries, than in Hills's minor works.

All the best,

Script

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532. **David R. Israel**

***several absurds***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

[ was, Re: sonnets and certainty ]

Playing a bit of list catchup here, wayback on Wed, 22 Oct 1997

quoth Jordan Davis --

*It is absurd to discuss form with formalists. Formalists by definition know nothing about form . . .*

following this model:

It is absurd to discuss biology with biologists. Biologists by definition know nothing about biology.

It is absurd to discuss agriculture with agriculturalists. Agriculturalists by definition know nothing about agricultur[al].

It is absurd to discuss method with Methodists. Methodists by definition know nothing about method.

It is absurd to discuss reduction with reductionists. Reductionists by definition know nothing about reduction.

It is absurd to discuss Marx with Marxists. Marxists by definition know nothing about Marx.

It is absurd to discuss minimal with minimalists. Minimalists by definition know nothing about minimal.

It is absurd to discuss postmodernism with postmodernists. Postmodernists by definition know nothing about postmodernism.

(Well, must admit I wasn't reading in sequence nor (hence) did I quite follow the antecedent dialogue, so am uncertain just what Jordan was wishing to say or -- indeed -- clarify. Hey, found language is found language.)

absurdly yours truly,

d.i.

•

• • • • •

.....

> david   raphael   israel   <

>> washington d.c. <<

| [REDACTED] (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

| (Tagore)

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533. **Ryan Whyte**

*and*

Sun 26 Oct 1997

silence works at the walls  
mazes marked in, in  
the same sourceless echo  
across pediment, architrave

walls cover the face  
when it opens open  
depressed body turns  
inward great hand

to the unwanted  
silence works in the sheets

gold no longer an  
economy, and, and

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534. **Marcella**  
***Talisman Benefit***  
*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

I just wanted to announce the Talisman Benefit (for those in NYC) at the Zinc Bar tonight, Sunday 10/26, at 6:15 pm. Readers: Eileen Myles, Michael Heller, Sean Killian, Lisa Jarnot, Charles Borkhuis, Chris Stroffolino, & Leonard Schwartz. The Zinc Bar is at 90 West Houston St. in a basement, so watch your feet.

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535. **Jordan Davis**  
***Re: several absurds***  
*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

David --

Quite good, but for full credit you would have had to spot that the following citation was not, as stated, from Wallace Stevens, but from Oscar Wilde.

Historians of prosody are one thing, and demagogues of form are another. I think I was just going for parody. I am more aware now that I ought not do that.

Thanks,  
Jordan

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536. **Douglas Barbour**  
***Re: Louis Simpson***  
*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

Well, those quotes certainly make as strong a case as I've recently seen against 'travel poems.' It's always the attitude -- that 'I' am not like other tourists -- that gets me. All that anger, Susan: sad to have to waste it on such a stupid little poem...

=====  
=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English

University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]  
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~  
~~~~~

the language  
a darkness, a friendship, tying to the real  
but it is unreal  
  
the clarity desired, a wish for true sight,  
all tangling

Robin Blaser

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537. **Kathleen Crown**

***Re: Readings***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

Thanks to everyone who posted comments on the XCP conference--there was so much to see and so much that I was sorry to miss. Highlights for me: Julie Patton's two tongue-twisting, speed-singing poetry readings and all her contributions to panel discussions; Hilton Obenzinger on poetry & history; Aldon Nielsen's talk, "Can Cultural Studies Speak Poetry" (yes, it can!); Paul Naylor's talk on Nathaniel Mackey's STRICK in which he used "the four-letter word transcendence"; Armand Schwerner's sober but hilarious mantra on "fullness emptied of its emptiness," etc; Roy Miki's poetry reading / talk; a wonderful early Sunday morning reading by poet Jane Augustine, whom I'd previously known only as an important H.D. scholar; and many many other memorable happenings. Congratulations to Maria Damon and Mark Nowak for being such terrific panel moderators and putting together four thought-provoking days of readings & events.

--kc

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538. **Bob Grumman**

***The Latest on Comprepoetica***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

My Comprepoetica poetry-data-collection website has now been open for two weeks. So far it contains 12 biographical entries (of good poeple!), 3 of them consisting of raw data that the SiteMaster (me) has gotten around to processing yet. Not many people have yet voted for their favorite poets. Wallace Stevens

is in the lead for All-Time Favorite American Poet with 4 votes, and a bunch of people, including Ron Silliman and Charles Bernstein, are tied for favorite living poet with two votes, each.

I continue to make little improvements to the site. The voting process, for instance, is easier now. And the voting slots are on the home page so you don't have to click anything to get to it. I stole the alphabet from the Poetry Center page for small presses and alphabetized the biographical entries, too. And incorporated a few suggestions into the survey, like a question on sexual orientation (which, of course, needn't be answered). I want people to have a chance to say everything they want to about themselves, and nothing they don't want to.

Six poems are on display, too.

I figure there have been about 100 visits to the site excluding mine over the past two weeks. I expect it to be a near-invisible attraction but interest to increase in it as more poets fill out survey forms. Anyhow, I hope for more survey responses.

Also, corrections and comments from those who have already sent me responses to the survey.

--Bob G.

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539. **David R. Israel**

***Re: several absurds***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

Hey, I'm lately reading Poetics in digest, so am currently blind as to what reply (if any) my brief remarks under the above-rubric'd rubric may've elicited in lo these past X number of hours. However, it occurs to me -- in re-glancing at Jordan Davis's sentence --

*It is absurd to discuss form with formalists. Formalists by definition know nothing about form . . .*

that -- Egads! -- the locus classicus syntactically underlying same is obviously those crazy (that is, irrational) sentences of Mahayana Buddhist fame, wherein a whole bevy of metaphysical realities are defined in exactly that manner. In fact, weren't some of said, involved w/ matters of "form"? Hmmmm . . .

d.i.

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540. **James Brook**

*ellen ullman, close to the machine*

Sun 26 Oct 1997

---

Ellen Ullman, alumna of my anthology of a couple of years ago, *Resisting the Virtual Life*, has just published *Close to the Machine: Technophilia and Its Discontents* (City Lights), her memoir of a literate, political software engineer's life.

Andrei Codrescu's blurb is accurate: "This book is a little masterpiece, an exquisitely melancholy cry from a body disappearing into the machine. It is a wrenching swan-song for human beings. I have never read anything like it because nothing like it could have been written before. Here is the perfect way to say goodbye to the millenium."

You can see Ellen Ullman read aloud and gesticulate at the following locations:

San Francisco

Tues, Oct 28, 7:30 - 9PM: Modern Times

888 Valencia, SF, [REDACTED]

Palo Alto

Wed, Oct 29, 8 - 9:30 PM: Printer's Inc.

310 California Ave, Palo Alto

[REDACTED]

Mill Valley

Thurs, Oct 30, 7:30 - 9PM: Depot Bookstore and Cafe

87 Throckmorton Ave, Mill Valley [REDACTED]

Capitola

Mon, Nov 3, 7:30 - 9PM: Capitola Book Cafe

1475 41st Street, Capitola [REDACTED]

Minneapolis

Fri, Nov 7, 8PM: Hungry Mind Bookstore

1648 Grand Avenue, Minneapolis [REDACTED]

Iowa City

Tues, Nov 11, 8PM: Prairie Lights Book Shop

15 South Dubuque St. [REDACTED]

Seattle

Thurs, Nov 13, time?: Elliott Bay Book Store

101 South Main Street, [REDACTED]

Portland

Fri, Nov 14, 7:30 - 9PM: Powell's Books  
1005 West Burnside, Portland [REDACTED]

LA (Santa Monica)

Wed, Nov 19, 7:30: Midnight Special  
1318 Third St., Santa Monica [REDACTED]

NY

Tues, Dec 2, 7PM: Tower Books  
383 Lafayette St, NY [REDACTED]

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541. **Herb Levy**

***Re: Elvis poems***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

David Israel wrote:

*I'm not much of a fan of Elvis chic, but did enjoy that piece.  
Perhaps the method used was a bit like things that (say) Scott  
Johnson / Gavin Bryers / et al. have done -- at least sharing some of  
that likeable decontextualize / recontextualize a voice approach ...*

*do poets here know of Scott Johnson's work of this type, I wonder?  
No doubt Herb Levy could do it better justice than I.*

I don't think I've heard the Kronos piece you mentioned, but I'd guess it's by Michael Daugherty (whose name may be spelled with an "o" instead of that "a"). He's done many pieces based on pop culture figures.

There are at least two or three pieces based on Elvis' oeuvre. The earliest may be the best: Jim Tenney's Collage #1 (Blue Suede); though David Mahler's King of Angels is also very good. Both of these cut up, loop, slowdown, and otherwise alter Elvis' work through classic tape manipulation techniques (they were made well before digital sampling was developed). Mahler's piece ends with "the King" singing his own name through the wonders of technology. They're both available on CDs from the Artifact label: The Tenney disc is called Selected Works 1961-69; the Mahler disc is called Voice of the Poet (after another piece based on an interview with composer Ingram Marshall). These Web sites should have more information:

<<http://www.artifact.com/>>

<<http://www.emf.org/>>

Another, somewhat different approach to altering Elvis' sound can be heard on the John Oswald (no longer in print, never commercially available) Plunderphonics CD. On this disc Oswald used all manner of tape and digital technology to create new music from old. The Elvis track is called Don't & involves a bunch of overdubbed tracks on top of the original recordings. While the press run of this CD was ultimately destroyed (supposedly due to copyright infringement, but rumor has it that Michael Jackson's dislike of the cover collage placing his head on the body of a scantily clad woman had more to do with it), the entire contents of the disc can be downloaded from the Internet. Here's the URL for an FTP site with these audio tracks. (Note that some of these files are very large and even on speedy university connections may take quite a while to download.)

[<ftp://vorlon.mit.edu/pub/plunderphonic/>](ftp://vorlon.mit.edu/pub/plunderphonic/)

This site has a lot of Oswald related material, including detailed information on his various Plunderphonics projects:

<http://www.io.org/~vacuvox/x/plunder.html>

I imagine there's other new music related to Elvis out there, that's all I can think of now.

d.i.  
.  
.....

Herb Levy



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542. **Stacie Slotnick**

***George Oppen's "A Kind of Garden: A Poem for my Sister"***

*Sun 26 Oct 1997*

---

Fellow listmembers,

For a class presentation on the above poem, can anyone point me to any writing specifically on this poem? My research hasn't turned anything up. Thanks in advance.

Stacie Slotnick



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543. **simon**

***Re: Elvis poems***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

Just to finish the reference,

The short story collection with the lead story about Elvis is Janice Eidus' \_The Celibacy Club\_.

beth simon

assistant professor, linguistics and english

indiana university purdue university



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544. **Michael Heller**

***(no subject)***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

READING AT POSMAN BOOKS,

1 University Place,

New York, NY

MICHAEL HELLER & ARMAND SCHWERNER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND @ 3PM

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545. **Safdie Joseph**

***Re: Beyond Baroque Saturday night***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

Would greatly appreciate, back-channel, any reports of scheduled Ed Dorn reading at Beyond Baroque in L.A. last Saturday -- including whether it happened or not!

Thanks in advance,

Joe Safdie

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546. **Jack Foley**

***SOKAL & LACAN***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

I have obtained the following comment by Joe Brennan on the Sokal affair, which I offer to interested list members:

goliath again

"Flesh composed of suns! How can this be?"

`Do Crossword Puzzles'

Why is it when the officially sanctioned experts of the world step outside the cover of their specialties they tend to behave like sophomoric fops brandishing digital stilettos as if wielding death rays? It's an ignorance of some magnitude to think of Postmodernists, as Alan Sokal apparently does, as a monolithic lot; one can find within the collective body of their theoretical poetics a unity in word only; one finds innumerable divergent and/or opposed theoretical constructs and definitions. But it's as pointless to expect Postmodernists to produce a coherent manifesto as it was to have expected the Futurists, either the Russian or the Italian version, to have produced one. That colonies of critical scholars continue to find ever more elusive connections and nuances is due principally to the nature of the demands of scholarship, and reflects proofs presupposed by the rigor and the questions that produce them. It's within this closed space that strategies of scholastic determinism are played out, and for this reason theory can never do more than be subsumed by art. It should be perfectly clear by now that rational processes aren't necessary for the creation of art. Art arises from more heterogeneous sources, whether in an illiterate wood carver from Blowing Rock, N.C. or a depressed postmodern poet from Back Bay Boston. No one can predict in advance whence art will appear, fully grown, as a tear in the real.

The creative force that drives art isn't measured in speed, as that huckster Filippo Marinetti puts it, nor in Sokal's literary B.T.U.s; this force arises in the truth of the creation which captures it and causes it to be re-experienced over time. One needn't follow prescribed practices for this metamorphosis to occur; whether the first principles of a movement arise heuristically from the collective work or are logically deduced and imposed as practice has no lasting determining influence. It's for this reason that whenever particular ideas or techniques become formalized, the voices of those demanding recognition grow more and more insistent until they too take their place in the chorus line, destined one day to be similar objects of derision for the coming generations whose sensibilities refute the established order, either from outright defiance or from a general inability to follow. In this manner the force of art is continually renewed in the radical rediscovery of its iron truths. And by truth I don't mean that which exists within the true, but that which exists outside of it, unencumbered with contexts and proofs. There are truths revealed in art that dwarf even the loftiest of scientific discoveries; there's no rift between art and science that needs stitching up, a la Snow, they have nothing to do with each other. What's more absurd than the specter of a physicist like Sokal crawling

haphazardly among his equations searching for the ethereal substratum of his primordial soul?

The truth that art reveals has nothing to do with beginnings or ends, nor can it be contained within a series, or sets of series. Literary neophytes like Sokal can't begin to imagine the unshakable power of art as it regenerates itself in the very actions which annihilate it, and to understand that art can't be robbed of its tradition, or stand to have tradition stuffed down its throat. Apart from the ugly political implications inherent in Sokal's actions--who can deny his posture as that of a political operative?--his attacks on Postmodernism in whatever area are of no intellectual importance; he operates at the most vulgar level of metaphor, that of counting, and he is therefore defined by the blinders of his discretionary field. It doesn't occur to him there could be truths other than scientific proofs, and to which scientific methods can't provide access; his bias is that of a scientist and his demands for proofs are correspondent to that level. Thus he is able to impulsively seize upon literary or psychological references to science and denounce them as contrary to scientific understanding and application, and therefore worthless. Whether or not Stanley Fish & Company were taken in by his ruse is valid only at the level of "got'cha". Sokal's intent is not to point out inconsistencies or mistakes from a scientific viewpoint, but to discredit the postmodern movement as a viable area of literary study--hence the covert nature of his act. If he genuinely intends to make serious contributions to the development of postmodern criticism, he would simply point out the errors he detects and offer alternative strategies; instead he resorts to methods designed to humiliate and defrock those he perceives as leaders in the movement. There can be no sensible opposition to this conclusion except to claim that such tactics have a rich history in the long tradition of literature--a conclusion that falls somewhat short of a justification when one considers that book burning, ignorance, error, plagiarism, and outright lying also have rich histories in this same tradition. Still, his methods provide insights into his motives. It would be a coup of unimaginable proportions for intellectual yokels like Sokal to extend their narrow, hegemonic proofs into a field of truth in which they are both subordinate and unrecognized. Art and concepts of art are not reducible to specific scientific paradigms; although art's truths are momentary and elusive, they are also eternal and concrete, an accomplishment scientists can only dream of.

Expect the usual stale denials and pious outrage from Sokal and his cohorts, who drape themselves in appeals to integrity and character --as if such translucent qualities could hide their blatant toadyism. They may have integrity and character, but one would have to use the poetic equivalent of an electron microscope to see them. Thechutzpa of such intellectual dilettantes throwing their weight around in this arena is surpassed only by the crude indifference their

masters display toward the work they produce; it's not necessary that Sokal ever get anything right, it's important that he exist as quotable opposition with which to bludgeon undesirable elements into submission and literally drive them underground. Anyone who fails to see in this tactic a basic characteristic of the Big Lie isn't paying attention. Sokal and kind are not engaging in sincere intellectual pursuits, they're out here as marauding night riders intent on burning out huge segments of our intellectual and artistic landscape. This isn't intended as a defense of postmodern thinkers of the Fish & Company school; they epitomize career academicians who are overly aggressive in both their professional and personal ambitions, and a fair amount of what they promote is silly. So what? Most theoretical thought in any field is laughable. No, this is a defense of artistic freedom against the increasing onslaught of right-wing financed whackos. And although it's the little fish of the universities currently on the hook, Sokal's real snag is that band of copernican thinkers that includes Freud, Lacan, Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault, authors whose works breathe dynamic change into modern epistemology. Those unfruitful to the whip of the scientific underpinning of so-called democratic capitalism must be purged from the universities and from scholarship. But literature isn't Sokal's only area of interest; I understand his latest target is none other than that freudian pariah of orthodox psychology, M. Jacques Lacan, himself. Well, not quite himself. I predict Sokal will discover that Lacan, although deceased, is a long way from dead.

The weakness in Sokal's critique of Lacan's psychoanalytic metaphor of the erect male organ is his demand that it conform to the laws of mathematics when in reality it can only be confirmed within the praxis defined by psychoanalysis, which Freud in his wisdom always insists on. Sokal's criticisms of the Lacanian metaphor are hilarious, for they have absolutely nothing to do with Lacan's meaning; the emperor may have new clothes, but one has to be able to see the emperor to know that. Sokal can't grasp the the significance of the Lacanian metaphor of the erect male organ because he doesn't have access to the theoretical framework that makes its truth manifest; it's a simple case of using numbers metaphorically. He doesn't realize that it's the metaphorical form of the equation, that of an imaginary number, that provides the context in which to locate the missing square root of minus one. This metaphor is entirely consistent within Lacan's formulations of the imaginary, which is where the subject of the unconscious is imprisoned. Should Sokal ever take the ten or fifteen years necessary to master Lacanian concepts, he might come to appreciate the level of humor that Lacan normally operates at, and should he attain this heady level, he'll have absolutely no problem pinpointing that missing piece, and his role in its loss. It never occurs to Sokal that although in mathematics one and one always makes two, in psychoanalysis, as in art, one and one might make a blooming neon penis, with or without a socket to plug into.

Psychoanalysis has absolutely no business submitting its constructs for verification from a field which is not of its blood. The proofs of psychoanalysis result from an attention to speech as language, and not from measurement. Scientific parameters exist at the limits of science, not at the limits of knowledge--known or potential--or of metaphor. And these remarks only apply to science at its paradigmatic ideal; the slavish way scientists now submit to corporate and governmental institutional control is dangerously skewing the intellectual playing field as never before. It's absolutely essential that one have read and understood Freud before one undertakes to read Lacan and have any chance whatsoever of making sense of what his thought portends; the richness of the Lacanian metaphor is to be found in the unique ways in which he combines meaningful elements from other disciplines to form a rebus, the solving of which lets one in on the discussion. Lacan, sensitive to the dangers inherent in any discussions of his subject, speaks in tongues so that those who do get it are those who should; if Sokal doesn't get it, it's because he wasn't meant to. To say something doesn't weigh what one's calculations say it should while not having the slightest notion of what one is weighing is considered in most circles to be idiotic. However, admonitions such as mine don't seem to register with Sokal, who's frequently seen in various combative postures of self-righteous confusion trying to explain away another crass stupidity, such as saying we show that if [Lacan] seems incomprehensible, it is for the very good reason that [he] has nothing to say. Not wrong, mind you, not even confused, but having no meaning at all! What intellectual arrogance. Not even Lacan's most ardent critics have accused him of having nothing to say. As someone who has taken the necessary preparation to read Lacan, I can say that in every instance of textual confusion, and there were an embarrassing number of such instances, I never once thought it was Lacan who didn't know what he was talking about, and indeed, when the scales of ignorance finally fell, they fell from my eyes and not Lacan's. You may appreciate the zeal with which I look forward to the full text of Sokal's latest sortie, whose potential for self-disaster is exponential to its length. The problem of not having sufficient command of the areas of expertise into which one is venturing turns out to be no problem at all, since Sokal's function is not one of honest intellectual research, but rather to prowl around and destroy all vestiges of opposition to the hegemonic authority of science to define the real.

Had Sokal made the effort to understand Lacan he might realize that when Lacan says he intends to raise psychoanalysis to the level of science, he doesn't intend to reduce it to a series of mathematical equations. He means he wants psychoanalysis to be as rigorous a discipline as mathematics, but not mathematics. It's critical that Lacan's equations find confirmation within the structure of psychoanalysis; it's within this space that the mathematics must add up. Lacanian equations aren't constructed, as Sokal so arrogantly assumes, to allow

journeymen mathematicians to see immediately the ephemeral structures of psychoanalysis; they're constructed to guide psychoanalysts through the conflicted unconscious of a human psyche. Sokal's tactics and conclusions exemplify the drone-like brutality of those who attempt to impose one field over another in an attempt to smother it into submission. At the theoretical level that positivists like Sokal operate, the only psychology that's possible is a general psychology faithful to the numbers that they support, a psychology more like obedience school than the lonely and often terrifying search for one's hidden identity that is the sole purview of psychoanalysis. It's all the difference between one who is spooning for metaphors in his soup dining with another who keeps shoving the check in his face. There's no benefit of the doubt in Sokal's approach, there's no search for the legitimacy of other points of view, there's not a milligram of honest scholarship; it is shot through with the same anti-intellectual bias that one finds at a suburban mixer. Sokal's attacks on Postmodernism reflect a neurotic overcompensation of a premonitory angst, which he shares with authors such as Norman Levitt, Paul Gross, Alan Bloom, Dinesh D'Souza and Francis Fukiyama, that if science is the most exact form of measurement and observation, it is at the same time the least. It's this fear that lurks behind a pedantic posture that's both reactionary and cranky. It's no accident that Lacan's formulation of an erect penis evokes such a blind denunciation; there's absolutely no justification to point the finger at Lacan for reducing the psyche to the phallic level when one can plainly see that schmeckles like Sokal do it to themselves.

October 14, 1997

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547. **henry gould**  
**Re: SOKAL & LACAN**  
*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

yeah. in these troubled times, it's a good thing those measly craven scientists for the most part ignore what POSTMODERN ARTISTS are accomplishing way over their heads with their special languages & metaphors. & it's a good thing all POSTMODERN ARTISTS are MODERN LEONARDOS who UNDERSTAND puny science & can appropriate its language(s) at will. dare ya to cross that line, Sokal!! get back there in your lab & shut it in your philistine imagination!! - Henry Gould actually, it seems to me the trend for a while has been dependence by both "artists" and "scientists" on technology, for better & worse. I'm for the handmade. leave the mind out of it, whether natural or artificial. intelligence just causes a ruckus. think with your hands. better yet, don't think at all.

"silence is golden"

- King Midas

E. Montale gave a short talk on this subject in 1952 called "Solitude and the Artist" or something like that. still quite relevant. can be found in an appendix to MONTALE AND DANTE by Pipa.

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548. **Herb Levy**

**Re: friday's riddle**

Mon 27 Oct 1997

---

If anyone's going to rush out to get the book, they'll have better luck looking for something Orhan Pamuk (who may or may not be an orphan).

As to the writing on bodies in the Black Book, it seems more of a confirmation of Weiner's methodology than use of her as a character.

Does any one know if Pamuk's prose is as formal in Turkish as the English translations? It's good, just kind of awkward reading.

Bests,

Herb

*Since everybody's being very quiet...*

*has anybody else noticed that the late Hannah Wiener is (in a certain sense) a character in Istanbul author Orphan Pamuk's novel THE BLACK BOOK?*

*I've been saying we've been getting more byzantine for a long time...*

*- Henry Gould*

Herb Levy



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549. **mark weiss**

**Re: SOKAL & LACAN**

Mon 27 Oct 1997

---

I guess he's angry.

At 12:58 PM 10/27/97 -0500, you wrote:

>I have obtained the following comment by Joe Brennan on the Sokal affair,

>which I offer to interested list members:

>



> goliath again  
>  
>  
> "Flesh composed of suns! How can this be?"  
>  
> `Do Crossword Puzzles'  
>  
>  
>Why is it when the officially sanctioned experts of the world step outside  
the  
>cover of their specialties they tend to behave like sophomoric fops  
brandishing  
>digital stilettos as if wielding death rays? It's an ignorance of some  
magnitude  
>to think of Postmodernists, as Alan Sokal apparently does, as a monolithic  
>lot; one can find within the collective body of their theoretical poetics  
a unity in  
>word only; one finds innumerable divergent and/or opposed theoretical  
>constructs and definitions. But it's as pointless to expect  
Postmodernists to  
>produce a coherent manifesto as it was to have expected the Futurists, either  
>the Russian or the Italian version, to have produced one. That colonies of  
>critical scholars continue to find ever more elusive connections and  
nuances is  
>due principally to the nature of the demands of scholarship, and reflects  
proofs  
>presupposed by the rigor and the questions that produce them. It's within  
this  
>closed space that strategies of scholastic determinism are played out, and  
for  
>this reason theory can never do more than be subsumed by art. It should be  
>perfectly clear by now that rational processes aren't necessary for the  
creation  
>of art. Art arises from more heterogeneous sources, whether in an illiterate  
>wood carver from Blowing Rock, N.C. or a depressed postmodern poet from  
>Back Bay Boston. No one can predict in advance whence art will appear, fully  
>grown, as a tear in the real.  
>  
>The creative force that drives art isn't measured in speed, as that huckster  
>Filippo Marinetti puts it, nor in Sokal's literary B.T.U.s; this force  
arises in the  
>truth of the creation which captures it and causes it to be re-experienced



over

>time. One needn't follow prescribed practices for this metamorphosis to  
>occur; whether the first principles of a movement arise heuristically from  
the

>collective work or are logically deduced and imposed as practice has no  
>lasting determining influence. It's for this reason that whenever particular  
>ideas or techniques become formalized, the voices of those demanding  
>recognition grow more and more insistent until they too take their place  
in the

>chorus line, destined one day to be similar objects of derision for the  
coming

>generations whose sensibilities refute the established order, either from  
>outright defiance or from a general inability to follow. In this manner  
the force

>of art is continually renewed in the radical rediscovery of its iron  
truths. And

>by truth I don't mean that which exists within the true, but that which  
exists

>outside of it, unencumbered with contexts and proofs. There are truths  
>revealed in art that dwarf even the loftiest of scientific discoveries;  
there's no

>rift between art and science that needs stitching up, a la Snow, they have  
>nothing to do with each other. What's more absurd than the specter of a  
>physicist like Sokal crawling haphazardly among his equations searching for  
>the ethereal substratum of his primordial soul?

>

>The truth that art reveals has nothing to do with beginnings or ends, nor  
can it

>be contained within a series, or sets of series. Literary neophytes like  
Sokal

>can't begin to imagine the unshakable power of art as it regenerates  
itself in

>the very actions which annihilate it, and to understand that art can't be  
robbed

>of its tradition, or stand to have tradition stuffed down its throat.

Apart from

>the ugly political implications inherent in Sokal's actions--who can deny his  
>posture as that of a political operative?--his attacks on Postmodernism in  
>whatever area are of no intellectual importance; he operates at the most  
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Sokal

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>thought in any field is laughable. No, this is a defense of artistic freedom  
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>incomprehensible, it is for the very good reason that [he] has nothing to say.

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>him of having nothing to say. As someone who has taken the necessary

>preparation to read Lacan, I can say that in every instance of textual

>confusion, and there were an embarrassing number of such instances, I never

>once thought it was Lacan who didn't know what he was talking about, and

>indeed, when the scales of ignorance finally fell, they fell from my eyes and

>not Lacan's. You may appreciate the zeal with which I look forward to the full

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>its length. The problem of not having sufficient command of the areas of

>expertise into which one is venturing turns out to be no problem at all, since

>Sokal's function is not one of honest intellectual research, but rather to prowl

>around and destroy all vestiges of opposition to the hegemonic authority of

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>the structure of psychoanalysis; it's within this space that the mathematics

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>assumes, to allow journeymen mathematicians to see immediately the

>ephemeral structures of psychoanalysis; they're constructed to guide

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>attempt to impose one field over another in an attempt to smother it into

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>only psychology that's possible is a general psychology faithful to the

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>honest scholarship; it is shot through with the same anti-intellectual  
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>one finds at a suburban mixer. Sokal's attacks on Postmodernism reflect a  
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>Lacan's formulation of an erect penis evokes such a blind denunciation;  
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>absolutely no justification to point the finger at Lacan for reducing the  
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>to the phallic level when one can plainly see that schmeckles like Sokal  
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>to themselves.  
>  
>  
>October 14, 1997  
>  
>

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550. **henry gould**

***Re: friday's riddle***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

On Mon, 27 Oct 1997 13:21:50 -0800 Herb Levy said:

>If anyone's going to rush out to get the book, they'll have better luck  
>looking for something Orhan Pamuk (who may or may not be an orphan).  
>

>As to the writing on bodies in the Black Book, it seems more of a  
>confirmation of Weiner's methodology than use of her as a character.

Pamuk doesn't "use" HW as a character. If the Book of Istanbul is really the story of the West (cf. the Mt. Athos story in NY Times today, along with its obverse, the Stalin photobook) then HW strangely appears there. I wouldn't characterize Pamuk's ambiguous novel as a confirmation of anything in particular, unless it's what many novelists confirm: memory, ordinary life, writing. It's just that several main characters, including the protagonist, the protagonist-

narrator, and the alter-ego-protagonist, all read letters on people's faces as a sign/key to Mystery. (You might say this is the obverse of the "methodology" of the icon.)

Sorry for the typo. Yes, there's certainly no "p" on Pamuk's face. - Henry G.

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551. **Peter Ganick**

***Re: litpress.com***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

hi chris---  
thanks for including potes & poets  
and a.bacus----  
looks good---  
out--  
peter

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552. **Peter Ganick**

***Re: litpress.com***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

sorry should have gone backchannel----

Peter Ganick wrote:

>  
> hi chris---  
> thanks for including potes & poets  
> and a.bacus----  
> looks good---  
> out--  
> peter

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553. **I'm cris cheek**

***cris cheek seeking urgent forward to british poets list***

*Mon 27 Oct 1997*

---

Hi, I'm in Buffalo (after terrific weekend in London, Ontario with Mike Kelleher, Eleni Stecopoulos, Scott Pound, Taylor Brady and Bill Howe at the Forest City Gallery - and shared guerilla gallery show at the Cornershop with Steve McCaffery, performing Carnival panel 2 for the first time, you should have been there) and in tracking back to London to cap it with a reading tomorrow night

at SubVoicive have just been turned over at the airport by NorthWest Airlines mess. The NorthWest connection has blown out because of a flight delay and I've been forced to re-schedule - i'll miss the gig by about 12 hours.

Can anyone also signed onto British Poets please forward this message to that list asap. thanks

-----

Huge apologies for urgent advisory note:

cris cheek will not be able to read at SubVoicive tonite (28/10) circumstances beyond his control, caused by Northwest Airlines scheduling sphagetti (they couldn't even get information from their own terminals in Detroit). Their complete failure to notify me of emerging problems their end. Sorry. I'll be rowing with them in the mornin, no doubt.

I'll contacting Sianed as soon as the hour is wakeable and advising her to cancel also. It seems too stupid for her to make the drive to London and back alone (child sitters and all such already arranged). Doesn't make sense.

Suggest wake or seance. Or collective exegesis oration of 'Double Sky Hope's Locker' text with howlings of interjection - for Diana.

Again - massive apologies, and re-channeling of not inconsiderable frustration.

love and love  
cris

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554. **jarnot**

***Rodefer & Sharma reading***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

For all in the New York City area,  
don't forget to come out to the Poetry Project  
on Wednesday night at 8:00  
to see

Stephen Rodefer & Prageeta Sharma

that's 8:00  
October 29th  
at the Poetry Project  
2nd Avenue & 10th Street  
New York City



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555. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Rodefer & Sharma reading***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

does anyone have a backchannel address or bibliography for prageeta sharma?  
thanks--md

At 11:24 AM -0500 10/28/97, [REDACTED] wrote:

>For all in the New York City area,  
>don't forget to come out to the Poetry Project  
>on Wednesday night at 8:00  
>to see  
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>at the Poetry Project  
>2nd Avenue & 10th Street  
>New York City

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556. **p. durgin**

***Boxkite***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

Sorry to clog up the list with this, but I've a message for James  
Taylor of Boxkite in Australia --

James, your Clark book is going off today. Boxkite looks  
wonderful. And thanks. Patrick F. Durgin

||| [REDACTED] |||

---

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557. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Mass disappearance***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

Message from (to?) the twilight zone....

Both snail and e-mail to D. Bouchard and Mass. Ave. seem to be bouncing...For  
me at least.

Dan, you out there? Info anyone?

Mark Prejsnar  
atlanta

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558. **Brent Long**

***Frank Stanford Film to be shown in Chicago***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

A film by the late poet Frank Stanford entitled, "It Wasn't A Dream, It Was A Flood", will be screened in Chicago, IL during the second week of November. This film was shot in 1975 and won the 1975 West Coast Film Festival Best Experimental Film award. It is also the only existing archive which has the late poet reading his own work. This is a rare opportunity and anyone interested can contact Jean Howard at the Chicago Council for the Arts or e-mail me at [REDACTED] for more information.

Brent Long

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559. **Bob Grumman**

***A Minor Item about Comprepoetica***

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

After a good, candid letter about Comprepoetica's survey form from Aviva, I made a change in it, splitting it into a main survey that is literary only, and a supplement you can go to from the main survey if you want to. It has all the personal questions, including the WORST one of all! (How much money do you make a year?) I hope this keeps the personal questions from making anyone uneasy while keeping them available for those who enjoy those kind of questions.

Since I last posted, I've gotten two more responses to the main survey. But now I have the flu so probably won't be able to tend to them for a while.

Here's the address again, mainly because I seem not to have gotten it right every time I've posted it:

<http://www.geocities.com/soho/cafe/1492>

Cheers, Bob G.

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560. **Loss Glazier**

**Announcement re: EPC**

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

Announcement re: Electronic Poetry Center

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc>

Dear Poetics:

Re any EPC items, this is a message to let you know that it will be difficult for me to get to my e-mail from now until November 15th. Therefore, please hold any EPC business until then. For urgent or time-sensitive matters you can check with Charles Bernstein [REDACTED] who I'm sure will be glad to help.

Thanks!

Loss Glazier for the EPC

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561. **Carolyn Guertin**

**Mac Cormack/McCaffery**

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

Does anyone have a current e-mail address for Karen or Steve? Please backchannel.

Thanks,

Carolyn

---

Carolyn Guertin, Department of English, University of Alberta

E-Mail: [REDACTED]; Tel/FAX: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cguertin/Guertin.htm>

"Memory is a capricious seamstress." -- Virginia Woolf

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562. **Kenneth Goldsmith**

**Re: Another Idea**

*Tue 28 Oct 1997*

---

Mark--

I got your poems yesterday and loved what I saw!! Really, it's some of the freshest stuff I've come across. And this is really important because so much Language-based writing has become so cliched. I feel (as do you) that we can use the tremendous breakthroughs that an earlier generation made to address writing today--content today. It never seemed to occur to anybody that language intact and appropriated could be just as skewed as formally fudged language. As

a matter of fact, most of the language floating around out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is. It doesn't take much. And there's so damn much of it. John Cage talked about McLuhan's idea of "brushing" back in the 60s as being the ideal way to create art--it's effortless and the results are shocking. However, Cage (and most of the Language Poets for that matter) had such a high resolution edit and purity lens on the world that they missed most of the good stuff. Perhaps it's partly due to plunderphonic tendencies in music and appropriation strategies in art over the last decade that we can finally dirty our hands with words, eh?

Best,  
Kenny

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563. **Steven Marks**  
*puffs came in lanes*

Tue 28 Oct 1997

---

I was going to post this a few days ago when I first came across it at a boating magazine where I do some freelance copy editing. The following remark in K. Goldsmith's seemingly inadvertent post pushed me to do it:

*As a matter of fact, most of the language floating around  
out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is.*

Here's the interesting combination of words I came across. They were spoken by a winning sailor right after his race (lineation supplied by me):

The puffs came in lanes,  
so we sheeted tighter to keep the bow  
up  
to stay in the puff  
longer.

We sailed to the puffs  
and there was an overall persistent  
shift

to the right.

I noticed that the back  
of the fleet had their jib leads  
too far  
forward  
and their mains were sheeted too l o o s e.  
We moved our jib leads  
forward  
from light to medium

and forward again  
when the chop picked up  
in the afternoon.

(For you boating enthusiasts, the boat being sailed was a Snipe at the US Nationals.)

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

---

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---

564. **Alan Grep Sondheim**  
*poem-message on the moo (fwd)*  
Tue 28 Oct 1997

---

-

(the following was sent to a moo email list, on the suggestion that staff be signifiers, or so i think - anyway, where are signifieds, signifiers, significance, here, there, everywhere in the top-to-bottom space?)

signified

would rather you be signified  
we're all signifiers here, we can't start  
or speed the hard-drive, assign sectors, fuck up the mbr  
and maybe you can't either, but you can be closer  
to the source and the way that the language gets formed  
spit out of the mouth of the database, shoved back in  
taking its place, well, we're all numbers here  
and elsewhere in our dark history, carrying them uselessly,  
but you can expand or contract us, maybe  
you can issue shutdown as well, checkpoint charlie,  
cross the river under the bridge,  
MOOs are always honest Berlin  
before there was Berlin, and always honest difference  
before anyone begged pardon,  
said excuse me to anyone else, lowered the eyes, brushed the hair back,  
ready to invent the sign

[sector - part of hard-drive disk accessed by an operating system. mbr - master boot record, a small section of the disk which boots the entire computer when it's turned on.]

---

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565. **Thomas Bell**

**address**

Wed 29 Oct 1997

---

Does anyone have snail mail or email address for Mark Ducharme.  
backchannel. Thank you.  
tom bell  
[REDACTED]

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566. **Sylvester Pollet**

**Re: puffs came in lanes**

Wed 29 Oct 1997

---

But isn't that just clear writing of the "old" school? Nothing unclear there for anyone with some sailing experience/vocabulary, just plain narrative of the type one might read in any captain's log of the 1800s. Is it odd because it's now in cyberspace? Lineation doesn't make it odd, really. (I should add that I do add a found poem to a reading from time to time, so I'm not attacking the practice).

*I was going to post this a few days ago when I first came across it at a boating magazine where I do some freelance copy editing. The following remark in K. Goldsmith's seemingly inadvertent post pushed me to do it:*

*As a matter of fact, most of the language floating around out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is.*

*Here's the interesting combination of words I came across. They were spoken by a winning sailor right after his race (lineation supplied by me):*

*The puffs came in lanes,  
so we sheeted tighter to keep the bow  
up  
to stay in the puff*

*longer.*

*We sailed to the puffs  
and there was an overall persistent  
shift*

*to the right.*

*I noticed that the back  
of the fleet had their jib leads  
too far*

*forward  
and their mains were sheeted too l o o s e.  
We moved our jib leads  
forward  
from light to medium  
and forward again  
when the chop picked up  
in the afternoon.*

*(For you boating enthusiasts, the boat being sailed was a Snipe at the US Nationals.)*

---

*Steven Marks*

*<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>*

---

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567. **Marcella**

***FW: Mass disappearance***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

Dan Bouchard is alive--he was in NYC last weekend; however, I found e-mail bounced too (I think he changed his e-mail), and he's apparently travelling for a couple of weeks, so that may be reason for the snail mail. The third issue of Mass Ave is out & looks great.

-----

From: Mark Prejsnar  
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 1997 2:40 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Mass disappearance

Message from (to?) the twilight zone....

Both snail and e-mail to D. Bouchard and Mass. Ave. seem to be bouncing...For me at least.

Dan, you out there? Info anyone?

Mark Prejsnar  
atlanta

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568. **Steven Marks**  
**Re: puffs came in lanes**  
Wed 29 Oct 1997

---

You're right. It is very clear writing to some people. And even though I work for a boating magazine and know next to nothing about sailing, I eventually found it to be very clear as well. But still somewhat strange. If you read the description literally (that is, with the meanings commonly associated with the words), you come up with either something surrealistic or humorous, or both.

I agree, too, that the lineation doesn't necessarily make it odd. I debated whether to do this or not, but decided what the hell, it was midnight, the list was quiet and I had never tried anything like this before.

cheers and may the wind stiffen your main,  
Steven

On Wed, 29 Oct 1997, Sylvester Pollet wrote:

*But isn't that just clear writing of the "old" school? Nothing unclear there for anyone with some sailing experience/vocabulary, just plain narrative of the type one might read in any captain's log of the 1800s. Is it odd because it's now in cyberspace? Lineation doesn't make it odd, really. (I should add that I do add a found poem to a reading from time to time, so I'm not attacking the practice).*

*I was going to post this a few days ago when I first came across it at a boating magazine where I do some freelance copy editing. The following remark in K. Goldsmith's seemingly inadvertent post pushed me to do it:*

*As a matter of fact, most of the language floating around out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is.*

*Here's the interesting combination of words I came across. They were spoken by a winning sailor right after his race (lineation supplied by me):*

*The puffs came in lanes,  
so we sheeted tighter to keep the bow  
up  
to stay in the puff*

*longer.*

*We sailed to the puffs  
and there was an overall persistent  
shift*

*to the right.*

*I noticed that the back  
of the fleet had their jib leads  
too far*



forward  
and their mains were sheeted too l o o s e.  
We moved our jib leads  
forward  
from light to medium  
and forward again  
when the chop picked up  
in the afternoon.

(For you boating enthusiasts, the boat being sailed was a Snipe at the US Nationals.)

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

---

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

---

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569. **henry gould**  
***Re: puffs came in lanes***  
*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

I'm sure Uncle Herman would approve, and he's captain of the ship.  
Moby-Dick was first published in the US on Nov. 14, 1851.  
Now quit your sniping & get below.  
- Master "Keel-Haul-My-Ass" Spandrift

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570. **William Burmeister Prod**  
***Re: puffs came in lanes***  
*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

On Oct 28, 11:19pm, Steven Marks wrote:  
> Subject: puffs came in lanes  
> I was going to post this a few days ago when I first came across it at a  
> boating magazine where I do some freelance copy editing. The following

> remark in K. Goldsmith's seemingly inadvertent post pushed me to do it:  
>  
> > As a matter of fact, most of the language floating around  
> > out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is.  
>  
> Here's the interesting combination of words I came across. They were  
> spoken by a winning sailor right after his race (lineation supplied by  
> me):  
>  
> The puffs came in lanes,  
> so we sheeted tighter to keep the bow  
> up  
> to stay in the puff  
>                                      longer.  
> We sailed to the puffs  
> and there was an overall persistent  
> shift  
>                                      to the right.  
> I noticed that the back  
> of the fleet had their jib leads  
> too far  
> forward  
> and their mains were sheeted too l o o s e.  
> We moved our jib leads  
> forward  
> from light to medium  
> and forward again  
> when the chop picked up  
> in the afternoon.  
>  
>  
> (For you boating enthusiasts, the boat being sailed was a Snipe at the US  
> Nationals.)  
>  
>  
> \_\_\_\_\_  
> Steven Marks  
>  
> <http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>  
> \_\_\_\_\_  
>-- End of excerpt from Steven Marks

Nice for midnight is a good time for this sort of thing. The possibilities still abound it's content reminds of Olson's *\_Maximus\_*.

Bill B.

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571. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

On Oct 28, 11:35pm, Alan Grep Sondheim wrote:

> Subject: poem-message on the moo (fwd)  
> -  
>  
>  
> (the following was sent to a moo email list, on the suggestion that staff  
> be signifiers, or so i think - anyway, where are signifieds, signifiers,  
> significance, here, there, everywhere in the top-to-bottom space?)  
>  
>  
>  
> signified  
>  
> would rather you be signified  
> we're all signifiers here, we can't start  
> or speed the hard-drive, assign sectors, fuck up the mbr  
> and maybe you can't either, but you can be closer  
> to the source and the way that the language gets formed  
> spit out of the mouth of the database, shoved back in  
> taking its place, well, we're all numbers here  
> and elsewhere in our dark history, carrying them uselessly,  
> but you can expand or contract us, maybe  
> you can issue shutdown as well, checkpoint charlie,  
> cross the river under the bridge,  
> MOOs are always honest Berlin  
> before there was Berlin, and always honest difference  
> before anyone begged pardon,  
> said excuse me to anyone else, lowered the eyes, brushed the hair back,  
> ready to invent the sign  
>  
>  
> [sector - part of hard-drive disk accessed by an operating system. mbr -  
> master boot record, a small section of the disk which boots the entire

> computer when it's turned on.]

>

>

>-- End of excerpt from Alan Grep Sondheim

---

we've all done it  
needed to find a nugget

of data  
couldn't remember  
stored where we  
couldn't remember

in this instance  
we had grep search  
for a single word

to have grep search  
to have grepped  
a wildcard to have grep

as we can see  
grep returns  
grep searches  
grep looks  
grep uses  
grep and rules

if you don't want grep  
egrep  
but do so

-Bill B.

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572. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: puffs came in lanes***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

Well,

I don't think found poems serve to show the oddities of language. Rather, they abstract language from its original context to force the meaning to shift. That shift is the interesting part. Tame stuff, sure, and not a huge shift, but it is still more than just clear writing of the "old" school.

Harold

On Wed, 29 Oct 1997, Sylvester Pollet wrote:

> But isn't that just clear writing of the "old" school? Nothing unclear  
> there for anyone with some sailing experience/vocabulary, just plain  
> narrative of the type one might read in any captain's log of the 1800s.  
Is  
> it odd because it's now in cyberspace? Lineation doesn't make it odd,  
> really. (I should add that I do add a found poem to a reading from time  
to  
> time, so I'm not attacking the practice).  
>  
> >I was going to post this a few days ago when I first came across it at a  
> >boating magazine where I do some freelance copy editing. The following  
> >remark in K. Goldsmith's seemingly inadvertent post pushed me to do it:  
> >  
> >> As a matter of fact, most of the language floating around  
> >> out there is so trippy and experimental just the way it is.  
> >  
> >Here's the interesting combination of words I came across. They were  
> >spoken by a winning sailor right after his race (lineation supplied by  
> >me):  
> >  
> >The puffs came in lanes,  
> >so we sheeted tighter to keep the bow  
> >up  
> >to stay in the puff  
> >                        longer.  
> >We sailed to the puffs  
> >and there was an overall persistent  
> >shift  
> >                        to the right.  
> >I noticed that the back  
> >of the fleet had their jib leads  
> >too far  
> >forward  
> >and their mains were sheeted too l o o s e .  
> >We moved our jib leads  
> >forward  
> >from light to medium  
> >and forward again  
> >when the chop picked up  
> >in the afternoon.  
> >  
> >

> >(For you boating enthusiasts, the boat being sailed was a Snipe at the  
US  
> >Nationals.)  
> >  
> >  
> >  
> > \_\_\_\_\_  
> > Steven Marks  
> >  
> > http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html  
> > \_\_\_\_\_  
>

---

Steven Marks

http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html

---

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573. **Alan Grep Sondheim**  
***Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

"Although I find my post awk-word, your reply greps me," Biff sed.

Echo, cat Alan :-)

(sorry for the in-jokes)

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574. **Bob Grumman**  
***A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

Mark Prejsnar just sent in a completed survey form (thanks, Mark!) and I suddenly realized for some reason that I didn't know how to pronounce his last name, so I now have a slot in my survey for the pronunciation of a respondent's name. This, I think, is possibly the BEST THING I've introduced to my site! (I still don't know the correct pronunciation of Roethke's name, for people claiming to have known him have given me different pronunciations--which brings me to a question: is there a reference one can use to find out how names of poets or other writers, artists, scientist, whatever, are pronounced? On the web, I mean.)

The comprepoetical bio-base has now expanded to 17, by the way. Hurry and fill out a survey before we run out of room!

--Bob G.

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575. **William Burmeister Prod**  
***Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

On Oct 29, 12:45pm, Alan Grep Sondheim wrote:

> Subject: Re: poem-message on the moo (fwd)  
> "Although I find my post awk-word, your reply greps me," Biff sed.  
>  
> Echo, cat Alan :-)  
>  
> (sorry for the in-jokes)  
>-- End of excerpt from Alan Grep Sondheim

Interesting word grep (that is, it is interesting as a word). It has such a Dr.Seuss quality about it. The grep poem was written on the spur of the moment as a found language poem (from a "Teach yourself... UNIX" manual!) after I saw your newly acquired middle name. This process keeps reminding me that it is about chance, about spontaneity, and so rather than trying to do too much with a text, one is often better off letting it take you where it will (that is, go with it, go to the opposite field).

Bill B.

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576. **Rachel Loden**  
***season of the witch***

*Wed 29 Oct 1997*

---

My husband, a radio listener, claims that he heard (Chinese President) Jiang Zemin singing "Love Me Tender."

Jiang, then in Manila, also performed "Swanee River," calling it his "favorite tune."

~ ~

Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?

--Confucius

~ ~

Adventures with Mike and Dale: among the good stuff in \_Mike and Dale's Younger Poets\_ is an interview with Edward Dorn. After a few warm-up insults, he calls Gertrude Stein "a slug that should have had salt poured on her."

Michael Gold, meet Ed Dorn!

~ ~

Apparently there is a "David Bromwich" in the English Dept. at Yale. Am I the only one who finds this frightening?

Rachel Loden

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577. **cris cheek**

***Re: ILS 1.8/Watten on the (Assembly) Line***

*Thu 30 Oct 1997*

---

Hi Steve,

just back from stateside.

Extremely eager to get copy of Barrett's paper  
and others in the series if possible.

What's best way of doing so?

Am happy to swap, but you may well need the dosh.  
Advisory note please.

I'm at : 85 London Road South. Lowestoft. Suffolk NR33 OAS. UK

hope you're dandy

love and love

cris

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578. **Douglas Barbour**

***Re: season of the witch***

*Thu 30 Oct 1997*

---

But is the possibility that "there is a "David Bromwich" in the English Dept. at Yale" frightening to yaleys or to the world (the poetic world) at large?

As for Ed Dorn insults, are they not a given now (at least according to what the list heard much earlier this year)? Meaning the targets achieve a kind of apotheosis through being insulted by Ed Dorn (if anyone was paying attention). Sad: I want to remember the writer (& the writing) in the early books & \_Slinger\_...

Doug



=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]  
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~

the language
a darkness, a friendship, tying to the real
but it is unreal

the clarity desired, a wish for true sight,
all tangling

Robin Blaser

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579. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica

Thu 30 Oct 1997

Warning! what follows is a response to the brief message from Bob Grumman mentioning my name (and Roethke's)....Out of basic egoism, it contain more on those subjects, especially the former, than anyone is actually likely to want to read....

Bob, et al.

I've generally heard and said RETH-kah; I've certainly also heard RETH-kee; this is typical of the ways german names come into american....You also hear NEECH-ah and NEECH-ee; kind of a part of the equipment our speech has. (It would be mildly interesting I agree to know how Big Ted himself preferred it...) (Big Fred of course didn't give much of a hoot about americans...)

My own situation is odd, maybe almost embarrassingly so; I've shifted pronunciation all my life and folks in my family differ between each other. My father says PRAISE-nahr; my mother tends toward PREZH-ner. About two years ago, I was waiting for the bus home outside the library where I work here at Emory University. A fellow looking a little like Max von Sydow was waiting with me. He asked me when the bus was going to come and we got chatting; his english was good but his N. European accent noticeable. I asked him where he was from. (My guess was Germany or scandanavia..) He said "I am Hari Krishna

monk, from Poland." (There is indeed a big house owned by the HK's near my neighborhood..) I showed him my name on my driver's license, and he said he would say the name like my father, which I realize now does correspond to what I know about slavic phonetics. (Both my parents were born in this country but grew up bi-lingual and have fluent Polish; however my mother has always been much more assimilationist, and this may account for her americanizing the name; her own name was Trepczencski.) Although I've always encountered a certain number of people who say Prejsnar is slightly unusual for a Polish name, including my Hare Krishna friend, (others deny that) it has never been changed in this country. I recently got confirmation of that: one distant kinsman of ours emigrated to Norway from Poland, and I recently got an e-mail message from a descendant of that branch, a Norwegian (who has good english, which I understand is pretty common) in Oslo named Jan Prejsnar; he was looking for a cousin of his named Marek Prejsnar, whose whereabouts in the world he's not certain of..

So, here's the big answer (it's charming of Bob to imply that anyone much *cares*....): these days, thanx to my Hari Krishna encounter, I tend to say PRAISE-ner or PRAISE-nahr most frequently;...it's in to go back to your ethnic roots, nicht wahr??? But PREZH-ner and PREZ-ner (which I used to favor 'cause it makes it easy for people) are used all the time, including by many of us in the family, so they seem pretty acceptable to me. Hopefully this instability makes me fashionably post-modern....

Mark P.
Atlanta

On Wed, 29 Oct 1997, Bob Grumman wrote:

Mark Prejsnar just sent in a completed survey form (thanks, Mark!) and I suddenly realized for some reason that I didn't know how to pronounce his last name, so I now have a slot in my survey for the pronunciation of a respondent's name. This, I think, is possibly the BEST THING I've introduced to my site! (I still don't know the correct pronunciation of Roethke's name, for people claiming to have known him have given me different pronunciations--which brings me to a question: is there a reference one can use to find out how names of poets or other writers, artists, scientist, whatever, are pronounced? On the web, I mean.)

The comprepoetical bio-base has now expanded to 17, by the way. Hurry and fill out a survey before we run out of room!

--Bob G.

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580. **hg**
pronounce-ment
Thu 30 Oct 1997

ok, lemme jump in here on this important thread of name-pronouncing which along with cuneiform is one of the essential things in poetics. Mark, from now on I'm gonna call you "Prez", if you don't mind. now MY name shd alwuh be pronounced like this: HIN-rahhhh... with a long guttural slide at the end. "Gould" shd be emitted like you got somethin stuck in your throat when you started to cry & started laughing instead. As uncle Herman wrote somewhere [to paraphrase]: "Life - ha - ah - that about covers it, huh?" - Hinrah Gugglued

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581. **aerialedge**
Nominations please
Thu 30 Oct 1997

for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)

"I do not this I do not that"

--Jordan Davis, "Poem on a Train"

"I write for myself and strangeness"

--Tim Davis, recent Here reading

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582. **Dean A. Brink**
Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica
Thu 30 Oct 1997

Mark Prejsnar wrote:

I've generally heard and said RETH-kah; I've certainly also heard RETH-kee; this is typical of the ways german names come into american.....You also hear NEECH-ah and NEECH-ee; kind of a part of the equipment our speech has. (It would be mildly interesting I agree to know how Big Ted himself preferred it...) (Big Fred of course didn't give much of a hoot about americans...)

Going by the pronunciation of one of Roethke's student/colleagues, Nelson Bentley, he must have gone by RET-kee. But, in Roethke's family, being German, they may have said it according to a German dialect (similar to what Mark suggested).

dean brink
abd EALC UChicago

interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim
www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html

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583. **p. durgin**

Re: Nominations please

Thu 30 Oct 1997

"Want my advice; Hijack the hearse"
-- Charles Bernstein

|||  |||

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997  wrote:

*for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)*

"I do not this I do not that"
--Jordan Davis, "Poem on a Train"

"I write for myself and strangeness"
--Tim Davis, recent Here reading

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584. **Carol Mirakove**

Re: Nominations please

Thu 30 Oct 1997

"Go ahead and blow us up, just spare me the warnings."

"To hell with this social angst, let's make beads."

both from Mark Wallace's _Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There_

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585. **acgold01**

Broms

Thu 30 Oct 1997

Not only that, Rachel, but there are circles in which he is *the* "David Bromwich," whereas the other one ("ours") is simply *a* "David Bromige."

On the other hand, poet and critic Norman Finkelstein is Norman Finkelstein, not the Norman Finkelstein with whom he's often confused.

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586. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: pronounce-ment

Thu 30 Oct 1997

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, hg wrote:

Mark,
from now on I'm gonna call you "Prez", if you don't mind.

Does that mean I get veto power over posts to the List?

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587. **Gwyn McVay**

Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica

Thu 30 Oct 1997

O for pete's sake, I thought everybody knew it was pronounced "Throatwobbler-Mangrove."--g.

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, Dean A. Brink wrote:

Mark Prejsnar wrote:

I've generally heard and said RETH-kah; I've certainly also heard RETH-kee; this is typical of the ways german names come into american.....You also hear NEECH-ah and NEECH-ee; kind of a part of the equipment our speech has. (It would be mildly interesting I agree to know how Big Ted himself preferred it...) (Big Fred of course didn't give much of a hoot about americans...)

*Going by the pronunciation of one of Roethke's student/colleagues, Nelson Bentley, he must have gone by RET-kee.
But, in Roethke's family, being German, they may have said it according to a German dialect (similar to what Mark suggested).*

dean brink
abd EALC UChicago

interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim
www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html

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588. **Gwyn McVay**
Re: Nominations please
Thu 30 Oct 1997

Charles Bernstein, a poem I don't know but one he read at Bridge Street, and he still owes me a book:

"Form should never be more than an expression of malcontent."

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589. **Tom Beard**
Re: puffs came in lanes
Thu 30 Oct 1997

Another marine/meteorological found poem. The words are taken from text descriptions of Beaufort wind strengths, and re-arranged at the sentence/phrase/word level.

Admiral Beaufort's Final Log

Smoke rises; sea
like a mirror.
Do not break.

A glassy appearance fills
the sails. Crests, white horses
begin to careen.

Whistling, those at sea break
into the spindrift.

Damage the wind and roll
over, uprooted. The sea becomes
heavy, lost to view.

Ships might be blown
into froth: for a time
the air is filled.

Tom Beard.

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590. **hghghghg**
Re: pronounce-ment
Thu 30 Oct 1997

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997 15:34:38 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:
>On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, hg wrote:

>
>> Mark,
>> from now on I'm gonna call you "Prez", if you don't mind.

>
>
>Does that mean I get veto power over posts to the List?

No, only votive mana & the lingo-lingam atom-aten aquavita, if Moby sez it's o.k. - your friend, Queequeg

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591. **Safdie Joseph**

Re: pronounce-ment

Thu 30 Oct 1997

> On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, hg wrote:
>
> > Mark,
> > from now on I'm gonna call you "Prez", if you don't mind.
>

And Mark replied:

> Does that mean I get veto power over posts to the List?
>

Yes, but it's only a line item veto, so all you can do is blot out an offending line, not the whole post.

It's either that or learn how to play tenor sax . . .

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592. **hghghghg**

Re: A Big Innovation at Comprepoetica

Thu 30 Oct 1997

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997 16:10:57 -0500 Gwyn McVay said:
>O for pete's sake, I thought everybody knew it was pronounced
>"Throatwobbler-Mangrove."--g.

yeah, but in northern Michigan it's just "Mangrove ROOT-key swamp". - Stubb

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593. **Bob Grumman**

Re: pronounce-ment

Thu 30 Oct 1997

Watch out, Hinrah: all you've just said about your name will be going into the unauthorized bio that will be prepared for you at Comprepoetica if you don't soon fill out a survey.

Bob G., 20th-Cent. Aubrey

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594. **Brian Carpenter**

Re: Nominations please

Thu 30 Oct 1997

"Suddenly it occurred to me, why not write sentences?"

--Ezra Mark at a recent Subtext reading

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, p. durgin wrote:

"Want my advice; Hijack the hearse"

-- Charles Bernstein

||| [REDACTED] |||

On Thu, 30 Oct 1997 [REDACTED] wrote:

*for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)*

"I do not this I do not that"

--Jordan Davis, "Poem on a Train"

"I write for myself and strangeness"

--Tim Davis, recent Here reading

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595. **David R. Israel**

Re: Nominations please

Thu 30 Oct 1997

*for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)*

going a tad afird -- how about:

* * * * *

"Everything she said sounded both true and false."

* * * * *

- Anatole Broyard, *Kafka Was All the Rage:

A Greenwich Village Memoir* (1993; Vintage: 1997), p. 5

* * * * *

it's a rather fun book I'm just getting into (thanks for selling it to me at Bridge Street, Rod). Other than having seen his name periodically blazoned across the cover of the New York Review of Books, can't say I know anything much about this guy Broyard, -- but his sentences in **Kafka Was** are very smooth & . . . enjoyable (or many of 'em).

The only other volume they credit to Anatole Broyard is one entitled **Intoxicated By My Illness** which is a heck of a title. Says here he died in Cambridge, Mass. in '90 -- so this (**Kafka**) would appear to be a posthumous memoir

d.i.

•

• • • • •

.....

////////////////////

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

| (home)

██████████ (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

| (Tagore)

////////////////////////////////////^\\V\\\\

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596. **Michael Magee**

Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Another from Charles B: "The mouse chases the cat but only in the poem."

-Mike.

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597. **Ed Moran /General Pub. 4th Floor**

Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

> for best poetics catch phrase of the year
> (10 words or less, easily printed on banners)
>
"You lack half wit"
--Marianne Moore, "To A Steamroller"

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598. **Brent Long**

Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Is there a site where all nominations are or will be listed?

Thanks,

Brent

At 11:17 AM 10/31/97 EST, you wrote:

>> for best poetics catch phrase of the year
>> (10 words or less, easily printed on banners)
>>
>"You lack half wit"
> --Marianne Moore, "To A Steamroller"
>
>

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599. **p. durgin**

Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Sounds like a job for Coprepoetica.

|||  |||

On Fri, 31 Oct 1997, Brent Long wrote:

Is there a site where all nominations are or will be listed?

Thanks,

Brent

*At 11:17 AM 10/31/97 EST, you wrote:
for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)*

*"You lack half wit"
--Marianne Moore, "To A Steamroller"*

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600. **R. Gancie**
SOKAL AND LACAN

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Henry: You miss the point. Lacan as a medical doctor WAS a scientist. Many of the people that Sokal, Gross and Levitt choose to attack ARE scientists. They ARE attacking science. Weinberg attacks Heisenberg as readily as anyone else. The Post-Modernists merely serve as a conduit for theses attacks. Gross and Levitt attack environmentalists, philosophers of science, physicists, biologists---in short anyone that does not agree with their corporate friendly position. Sokal, Gross, Levitt and by association Weinberg do not want to partake in a discussion of the efficacy or weakness of their position. They want it accepted by fiat. Why do you think Sokal chose the route of publication he chose? In my neighborhood, we used to beat the crap out of sneaks like Sokal whether they had a point or not. Sokal's way would simply not be considered an honest way to handle your differences. The Post-Modernists have provided Sokal's handlers an opportunity to wage a much wider attack. On this measly little E-Mail we have engaged in philosophical banter far more profound than that engaged in by Gross and Levitt, Sokal and Weinberg and that ain't sain' much. (For someone on the list to have said that Weinberg's piece in the N.Y. Times Review was closely argued is nonsense.) At least, Gross and Levitt seem to realize that they are attempting to discard serious concerns that the founding fathers of physics in particular addressed earlier in the century. In their book, they gingerly tried to create a PostModernist intellectual discretion where none exists.

POSTMODERNISTS DID NOT INITIATE THE CONCERNS THAT SOKAL, GROSS, LEVITT AND WEINBERG RIDICULE---SCIENTISTS DID, INCLUDING SOME OF THE GIANTS OF PHYSICS. That's where I learned about them not through PostModernism. I'm assuming I still retain the right to ruminate on these supposed lunacies as postulated by apparent lightweights as Heisenberg, Bohr, Bohm, Penrose, Hansen, Feyerabend, Wittgenstein, Husserl etc. At risk of distracting you from the above consideration, I'd like to elaborate on Brennan's "goliath." In the nineteen seventies, there was a conscious decision on the part of corporate entities to create a new public relations network of think tanks and institutionally connected organizations that sole purpose was to produce intellectual product to counter what they perceived as dangerous egalitarian trends in society. Some of the authors of this reactionary product are well known such as Murray and Herrnstein, Theodore Shockley, Dinesh D'Souza, Francis Fukiyama, Allan Bloom and Gross and Levitt. I would suspect that the liberal and/or obscure Marxist leanings of some of the Deconstructionists and their PostModern adherents has more to do with the attack on them than their positions vis a vis the sciences. You seem to realize with much enthusiasm that PostModernist thought can have no effect on the juggernaut of science because of technologies fundamental relation to what is currently society's most profound truth--money. But when voters in Texas rejected a huge particle accelerator to be built in their home state, alarms went off among jilted corporate contractors and they want answers from the egg heads on their payrolls. The chance to have the biggest particle accelerator in the world was rejected by Texans after all! Sokal's piece arrived at one of the right places at the right time and now if he can stomach what he's doing, he'll reap his reward. Ask yourself this Henry, if as you say, the accomplishments of POSTMODERN ARTISTS are confined to "special languages and metaphors" why are the powers that be expending so much time and money to refute them? Why not just ignore them? One doesn't have to look too far to see that the war is among environmental scientists and corporate scientists, between scientific racism and its close association with emerging genetic technologies and scientists that take a more egalitarian position, between a world run on market logic and corporate science's technological rationalism and the health and social requirements of our species and all the others we have created the discretion of species for. PostModernism because of its interest in physics and mathematics in the years between the introduction of Planck's Constant and Heisenberg's and Bohr's mathematical expressions for quantum phenomena, finds itself caught up in the larger struggle. I envy them. Its always better to be attacked by "goliath" than be attacked by a goliath wannabee like you.---Carlo Parcelli

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601. **David Benedetti**
Re: Nominations please
Fri 31 Oct 1997

"I'm not averse to poetry"

--overheard at a reading, and I can't remember which

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602. **Pritchett, Pat**
Re: Nominations please
Fri 31 Oct 1997

"Poetry is like a movie star without any fans."

This is from Jack Collom's new collection of children's poetry, *_A Slow Flash of Light_*, to be released soon by Teachers & Writers. There are many other equally delicious and very funny poems in it. I don't recall the author's name.

Patrick Pritchett

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603. **Bob Grumman**
A News Release
Fri 31 Oct 1997

Geof Huth passed the following on to me and I thought it might amuse the group:

A reorganization we can all support:

Microsoft Addresses Justice Department Accusations REDMOND, Wash. - Oct. 21, 1997 -- In direct response to accusations made by the Department of Justice, the Microsoft Corp. announced today that it will be acquiring the federal government of the United States of America for an undisclosed sum.

"It's actually a logical extension of our planned growth", said Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, "It really is going to be a positive arrangement for everyone".

Microsoft representatives held a briefing in the oval office of the White House with U.S. President Bill Clinton, and assured members of the press that changes will be "minimal." The United States will be managed as a wholly owned division of Microsoft. An initial public offering is planned for July of next year, and the federal government is expected to be profitable by "Q4 1999 at latest," according to Microsoft vice president Steve Ballmer.

In a related announcement, Bill Clinton stated that he had "willingly and enthusiastically" accepted a position as a vice president with Microsoft, and will continue to manage the United States government, reporting directly to Bill Gates. When asked how it felt to give up the mantle of executive authority to Gates, Clinton smiled and referred to it as "a relief." He went on to say that Gates has a "proven track record," and that U.S. citizens should offer Gates their "full support and confidence." Clinton will reportedly be earning several times the \$200,000 annually he has earned as U.S. president, in his new role at Microsoft.

Gates dismissed a suggestion that the U.S. Capitol be moved to Redmond as "silly", though did say that he would make executive decisions for the U.S. government from his existing office at Microsoft headquarters. Gates went on to say that the House and Senate would "of course" be abolished. "Microsoft isn't a democracy," he observed, "and look how well we're doing".

When asked if the rumored attendant acquisition of Canada was proceeding, Gates said, "We don't deny that discussions are taking place."

Microsoft representatives closed the conference by stating that United States citizens will be able to expect lower taxes, increases in government services, and discounts on all Microsoft products.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers and democratic government. The company offers a wide range of products and services for public, business, and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing and of the free society every day.

About the United States

Founded in 1789, the United States of America is the most successful nation in the history of the world, and has been a beacon of democracy and opportunity for over 200 years. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the United States is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation.

--Bob G.

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604. **Henry Gould**
SOAK-A-LACAN

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Well, Carlo, it's probably pointless to get into a debate with me on this one. I probably never should have opened me mouth. I don't know much about the war between one kind of scientist and another, or the cabals of techno-bureaucrats out to stamp out any subversive (wo)manifest(ive)ations of differance & all that. I says it as I sees it, & maybe I missed the big picture. But from where I sit in my triple goliath goulash chair, I still say Sokey was hittin on a PARTICULAR STRAIN o' postmodernism, i.e. the philosophical anti-realism of Lacan & Derrida. Now I agree that Western Science is Marked with the Doom of Ahab & Moloch & all that; but I think that nihilism is just the flip side of the coin, another sort of one-eyed "explanation" that really doesn't CONNECT with science in any way, and that's what Sokal was making fun of. Laugh on, ye laughsters... - Henry the Gigantic Master of the Universe, Jr.

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605. **mark weiss**
lacanic statement

Fri 31 Oct 1997

It's a waste of time to argue against logohrreia and paranoid fantasies, so I'll restrict myself to one point. Almost no m.d.s consider themselves scientists, and for good reason. I don't know about Lacan in this respect, but Freud, his master, did, and he was wrong, and fewer and fewer of even his adherents seriously claim that he was a scientist, despite his virtues. Dr. Frankenstein, however, was a scientist. Happy Halloween, Dia de los muertos, etc.

At 02:00 PM 10/31/97 -0500, you wrote:

>Henry: You miss the point. Lacan as a medical doctor WAS a scientist.
>Many of the people that Sokal, Gross and Levitt choose to attack ARE
>scientists. They ARE attacking science. Weinberg attacks Heisenberg as
>readily as anyone else. The Post-Modernists merely serve as a conduit
>for theses attacks. Gross and Levitt attack environmentalists,
>philosophers of science, physicists, biologists---in short anyone that
>does not agree with their corporate friendly position. Sokal, Gross,
>Levitt and by association Weinberg do not want to partake in a
>discussion of the efficacy or weakness of their position. They want it
>accepted by fiat. Why do you think Sokal chose the route of publication
>he chose? In my neighborhood, we used to beat the crap out of sneaks
>like Sokal whether they had a point or not. Sokal's way would simply not
>be considered an honest way to handle your differences.

>The Post-Modernists have provided Sokal's handlers an opportunity to
>wage a much wider attack. On this measly little E-Mail we have engaged
>in philosophical banter far more profound than that engaged in by Gross
>and Levitt, Sokal and Weinberg and that ain't sain' much. (For someone
>on the list to have said that Weinberg's piece in the N.Y.Times Review
>was closely argued is nonsense.) At least, Gross and Levitt seem to
>realize that they are attempting to discard serious concerns that the
>founding fathers of physics in particular addressed earlier in the
>century. In their book, they gingerly tried to create a PostModernist
>intellectual discretion where none exists. POSTMODERNISTS DID NOT
>INITIATE THE CONCERNS THAT SOKAL, GROSS, LEVITT AND WEINBERG
>RIDICULE---SCIENTISTS DID, INCLUDING SOME OF THE GIANTS OF
PHYSICS.

>That's where I learned about them not through PostModernism. I'm
>assuming I still retain the right to ruminate on these supposed lunacies
>as postulated by apparent lightweights as Heisenberg, Bohr, Bohm,
>Penrose, Hansen, Feyerabend, Wittgenstein, Husserl etc.
>At risk of distracting you from the above consideration, I'd like to
>elaborate on Brennan's "goliath." In the nineteen seventies, there was a
>conscious decision on the part of corporate entities to create a new
>public relations network of think tanks and institutionally connected
>organizations that sole purpose was to produce intellectual product to
>counter what they perceived as dangerous egalitarian trends in society.
>Some of the authors of this reactionary product are well known such as
>Murray and Herrnstein, Theodore Shockley, Dinesh D'Souza, Francis
>Fukiyama, Allan Bloom and Gross and Levitt. I would suspect that the
>liberal and/or obscure Marxist leanings of some of the
>Deconstructionists and their PostModern adherents has more to do with
>the attack on them than their positions vis a vis the sciences. You seem
>to realize with much enthusiasm that PostModernist thought can have no
>effect on the juggernaut of science because of technologies fundamental
>relation to what is currently society's most profound truth--money. But
>when voters in Texas rejected a huge particle accelerator to be built in
>their home state, alarms went off among jilted corporate contractors and
>they want answers from the egg heads on their payrolls. The chance to
>have the biggest particle accelerator in the world was rejected by
>Texans after all!
>Sokal's piece arrived at one of the right places at the right time and
>now if he can stomach what he's doing, he'll reap his reward. Ask
>yourself this Henry, if as you say, the accomplishments of POSTMODERN
>ARTISTS are confined to "special languages and metaphors" why are the
>powers that be expending so much time and money to refute them? Why not

>just ignore them? One doesn't have to look too far to see that the war
>is among environmental scientists and corporate scientists, between
>scientific racism and its close association with emerging genetic
>technologies and scientists that take a more egalitarian position,
>between a world run on market logic and corporate science's
>technological rationalism and the health and social requirements of our
>species and all the others we have created the discretion of species
>for. PostModernism because of its interest in physics and mathematics in
>the years between the introduction of Planck's Constant and Heisenberg's
>and Bohr's mathematical expressions for quantum phenomena, finds itself
>caught up in the larger struggle. I envy them. Its always better to be
>attacked by "goliath" than be attacked by
>a goliath wannabee like you.---Carlo Parcelli
>
>

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606. **Juliana Spahr**
reading report from Honolulu
Fri 31 Oct 1997

I wrote this for someone and then they pointed out that it was way too long but since I had written it I didn't want to just abandon it so I thought why not just send it to the poetics list where length doesn't really matter. Then I tacked on today the two things at the end.

--Juliana Spahr

Reading report from Honolulu...

I feel like I have to begin everything I say here with I've only been here in Honolulu for three months but it seems to me like . . . Because the one thing I can say definitively is that the local matters here. Those in the know wear the slogan "local" engraved on their slippers (flip flops to you in the contiguous 48). And some days it feels that everyone but me owns a pair of them. I've been to some readings and one lecture since I arrived.

In August there was a reading for Frederick Wichman's collection of Kauai legends. The tale he read was about bananas and there being special ones that women couldn't eat. The reading was in an airless, windowless room. I've only been here three months but it seems to me that the windowless, airless room is an important Hawaii poetry reading tradition. I wonder if it is because it is so beautiful outside, people just want some ugliness when they come to their readings.

In September, San Franciscan Steve Carll read with local Angela Nishimoto in a different airless, windowless room. Steve read some new stuff and his drug poems, these last are old favorites. Angela Nishimoto read a story about the difficulties of living life in a multicultural environment. After the reading someone said it was good because it said things like the words haole and asshole were meant to be together.

I've only been here for three months but it seemed like the event of the season, or the one that was willing to make that claim, was probably the Hawaii Fall Celebration of Writers and Writing held in late September. It was two days long and its theme was Literature of Place. It felt very literary. It began with a book fair on the lanai, drinks, and a band. Lots of people wore leis. I've only been here for three months, but I've already noticed that someone always wears a lei at a reading. This someone is usually the reader. But here there were leis for those who were to ask questions, those who were to introduce, those who were honored with a prize, those who were to give a prize, those who were honored because they were old, those who had written a grant, and, of course, the readers. The first night Marilyn Chin, of San Diego, read some poems about Asian-American identity, Lee Grue, of New Orleans, read some poems about New Orleans, Mahealani Dudoit, of Honolulu, read an essay about water rights on Oahu, Ron Carlson, of Phoenix, read a piece about Salt Lake City, Pio Manoa, of Fiji, read some poems about the sea, and Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele, of Hilo, read a chant about Molokai. These last two were the highlight of the evening for me. Pio Manoa's poems were straight up new critical verse untainted by new formalism's casualness. I had not heard stuff like this live ever in my lifetime and it made me very excited. Pualani Kanahele's chant was also amazing. She chanted it in Hawaiian and the audience was awed. Then she read it in English and the audience remained awed. She had presence. There was lots of discussion after the reading. One man spoke of how he traveled the earth right now as a white male but he had a secret identity that he wished we all would recognize. The second night began with a incisive introduction by local writer/hero Eric Chock. He said that when he first heard that the university was doing something on the literature of place that he thought oh good, they are finally doing something on local writers. But then he good humoredly tempered his comments by noticing that people were from many different places. I've only been here for three months, but it seems to me that Eric Chock was pointing to some sort of antagonism between the university scene and the vibrant local scene. Pamela Ball, of Tallahassee, began her reading by asking the audience to forgive her for leaving Hawaii, David Collins, I don't know where he is from, read a long piece about eating in Paris, it was very saucy and I think I can say it was not well received, Alison Deming, of Tucson, read some poems about the migrating monarchs, the butterfly kind, Bruce Fulton, of Seattle, read a

translation he had done of a Korean story, Michelle Cruz Skinner read a story about being in grade school. Lois-Ann Yamanaka finished the evening by wow-ing everyone with an especially funny reading from Blu's Hanging. It was worth the wait but I have to confess it had been a long evening.

In October African novelist and playwright Ngugi wa Thiong'o came to talk. The talk was packed. They had to move rooms. Then they had to add chairs. He was an hour late but the audience didn't complain. They sang chants in Hawaiian while waiting. Then he arrived. A woman walked down the aisle, carrying a lei for him and chanting. Then a man, also chanting, escorted him down the aisle. Then Ngugi wa Thiong'o chanted. Then he received the lei. Then he gave a talk called "Native Languages and the Politics of De-Colonization." He said "one area of decolonization that needs the most attention is the decolonization of language." It was a great talk although it had that distinguished lecture series feel which doesn't allow enough specificity. The rhetoric was right on though.

Also in October was the reading to celebrate the new issue of Tinfish (go buy!--available from the editor, Susan Schultz 47-391 Hui Iwa St No. 3 Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744 for \$13 for 3 issues). The reading was packed and lots of young people were there. This reading was held in a coffee shop. Joe Balaz read a long rambling Balaz poem in pidgin (it should be a genre). The poem was pure narration with little point. I liked it. Kathy Dee Kaleokealoha Kaloloahilani Banggo read. She also has a chapbook out from Tinfish which you should buy immediately. It grooves. Her poem "Try Listen" which she read at the reading and which is published in both Tinfish and the chapbook begins like this: "While da res of us stay fry hamburgahs o drive truck go pick up opala--stink ah?--some sistahs stay in wrap aroun telling any kine stuff j'like who "da people" stay, la dat. Eh, what da diff if I weah one wrap aroun fo go work luau take pitacha wit da yobos an da haoles--eh, 10 dahllas one hour--o if I weah one wrap aroun fo go rally make any kine noise? I no mo one PhD, tita, but I can tink fo myself. You know aht, I get one termometer get plenny degrees--I stick em up my ass when I staht fo tink I know wassup fo somebody else." Tony Quagliano read some poems about nature. And Marie Hara read a poem about her daughter. All in all a good evening.

Last night Albert Saijo read. When he said, "I AM AN ANIMAL IN A CAGE AND I'M BARKING TO BE LET OUT" (that is from my notes; I don't have the book with me right now so don't quote me on it), a woman in the audience said "you go girl." Albert Saijo is old and he hung out with the beats and he lives in Volcano now. He doesn't like computers and he likes the muse. His book shows he is clearly a new Blake--kooky, visual, emphasis on the rhapsodic. At his reading people were laughing really hard. Especially when he read his poem that called

for the eradication of pain. His poems are written with different colored pencils in a distinct scrawl (think Grenier here?). Bamboo Ridge, which just published his book, has reproduced pages from the poems and then transcribed the poems in all capitals. I think you should read this book also because it is a good time.

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607. **henry g**
friday's riddle

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Has anyone else noticed that in CD Bowen's book, MIRACLE AT PHILADELPHIA about the constitutional convention (phila(d'e)(lphia)) the frontispiece photo of a bust of George Washington by the sculptor Houdon looks a lot like Joseph Brodsky? [the farther from his country]

BEAR with me [grrrr....]
- Hen Goulchik

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608. **Bob Grumman**
Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

p. durgin wrote:

>

> Sounds like a job for Compropoetica.

>

by which he means a site where all nominations are or will be listed.

Compropoetica: actually, I like it BUT NOT YET!! Too much going on at my site right now. Anyway, I'm sure the people gathering nominations will come up with something. But my thanks to p. durgin for suggesting my site.

Bob G.

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609. **George Bowering**
Re: Nominations please

Fri 31 Oct 1997

*for best poetics catch phrase of the year
(10 words or less, easily printed on banners)*

"I do not this I do not that"
--Jordan Davis, "Poem on a Train"

Sounds like Dr. Seuss to me!

George Bowering.

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610. **R. Gancie**
Sokal & Lacan: Correction

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Theodore Shockley should be William Shockley. Theodore Shackley is a long time CIA operative. Mark: MD's are trained in the scientific method and as Elder Olson points out "Agreement on method [in a science] is such that, in any subject, method is spoken of in the singular rather than in the plural." F.A Hayek, one of the intellectual gurus of neocon thought, in his Counter-Revolution of Science comes out strongly against the mathematization and quantification of culture. He exempts two elements, the hard sciences as opposed to the social sciences and capitalism. Your position is in perfect alignment with Hayek's and Sokal's and the intentions and actions of the heirs of Hayek's agenda are well publicized. Congratulations. ---Carlo Parcelli

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611. **mark weiss**
(no subject)

Fri 31 Oct 1997

Wow! Perfect alignment! Better check my horoscope.

It's odd how little anguish I feel about incomprehensible accusations. I, myself, I should warn you, was a CIA elder before they detribalized the agency. Ted was our shaman, but some of us thought even then that he was a bit of a neocon man. In those days we hadn't learned to count our toes, and some of the estimates were pretty wild. We hadn't discovered metric feet. It was a confusing time, but we had great parties. Sometimes we went around beating up satirists. Hell, when we were on the street even a little irony was dangerous. Now that we've decided to take over the world, however, excessive earnestness and claims of purity draw our attention. Might pay to lock your door.

At 08:32 PM 10/31/97 -0500, you wrote:

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>long time CIA operative. Mark: MD's are trained in the scientific method
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