

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

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This predilection for the mind in art. Where did I get it?

Structure is physical combination.

Economy maintains material, accepting it to structure.

Structure adumbrates materials. But necessity.

Structure is enthused with materials.

Structure is terminal; no surround.

A structure which does not reach of itself for support, is massive.
After this, duration is a function of attention.

The words stubbornly insist on their place in the structure. Structure insists on their insistence.

Structure determines - machinates - senses. No thing gets sense without an endowment from structure.

The structure of words is their nascence.

Materials only burnish thought, structure.

Language underpins.

No aura surrounds structure. This constitutes its origin, its responsibility in perpetuation.

An intensification of any effort produces structure.

Thought is the mind's implement for locating structures. The mind retains some, assuming a personality.

Structure's *aim* in relation to content is to clean it of meaning.

In composition, certain ideas about altering the structure, undercut all need to do the work.

Structure is clean. It aligns the cacographic necessities, revives them.

All writing tends to its horizon: structure. (Not a limit; rather, the aura of the total gestures written and, over and through that, amplified.)

Attention to structure encourages the vertical subtleties.

Structure intercepts with no other textural element. They succumb in relation.

The one imperative is structure.

Structure (like any single word: noun more than adjective? verb more than adverb? noun more than pronoun? preposition more than article? Probably) points (at) itself.

Structure: no question of essences. Essence shines from materials, produced in light of the reading. Structure is, tension over balance.

Structure neither acts, nor is it an active, nor does it receive. It is a delicate stubborn effect produced under the permanence of the relations. It is not related; it stands.

How does it mean? Structure exerts power, which it cannot withdraw.

Structure has no poles, no extremes, no ends. Its balance is held between its side.

Structure is verified as a language, a code, is verified. We test it not by pursuing it but by pushing it; each structure must hold, against our critical effort, to the site it claims, otherwise it lies in its waste of space.

The structure of the materials are inseparable. They are the effort.

Structure is the one thing.

Structure is non-indictable. It is an urge manifest.

Structure is necessarily tautological.

When the structures emerge the materials arrive. When the materials converge, the structure has emerged.

If perception, the structure, doesn't come through language, there is no evidence that it has come through thought.

Structure leaves no time for an other thing because it withdraws to where it is, and is then found to be exactly where it must be allowed to remain.

Structure executes a project.

There is an element of life in structure which is absent from all other life.

Structure is the altogether latent of possibilities. Its presence. When it is reached.

And structure is nomenclature; a meeting. It is absent. Before and after. Structure hovers: its presence in the absence it empties.

Structure bends the line of sight, sometimes only very slightly, sometimes acutely. Thus it is recognized.

I, a private and concrete individual, hate structures, and if I reveal Form in my way, it is in order to defend myself.

ALAN DAVIES

THE OBJECTS OF MEANING

(The following excerpt is from a longer work, "Reading Cavell Reading Wittgenstein", by Charles Bernstein on Stanley Cavell's just published book The Claim of Reason from Oxford University Press.)

... The distortion is to imagine that knowledge has an "object" outside of the language of which it is a part--that words refer to "transcendental signifieds" rather than being part of a language which itself produces meaning in terms of its grammar, its conventions, its "agreements in judgement". Learning a language is not learning the names of things outside language, as if it were simply a matter of matching up "signifiers with signifieds", as if signifieds already existed and we were just learning new names for them.... Rather, we are initiated by language into a (the) world, and we see and understand the world through the terms and meanings that come into play in this acculturation, a coming into culture where culture is the form of a community, of a collectivity. In this sense, our conventions (grammar, codes, territorialities, myths, rules, standards, criteria) are our nature: there is no gap between nature and culture, between fact and convention. "This explicitly," to quote Cavell, "makes our agreement in judgements, our attunement expressed through criteria, agreement in valuing. So that what can be communicated, say a fact, depends on agreements in valuing." In this context, to speak of absolutes is to speak outside language, to construct a grammatical fiction--it is to deny the human limitations of knowledge (for example in the pursuit of certainty or universality). Wittgenstein's relation of grammar to "forms of life" emphasizes that "human convention is not arbitrary but constitutive of significant speech and activity...(that) mutual understanding, and hence language, depends on nothing more and nothing less than shared forms of life, call it our mutual attunement or agreement in our criteria".

Cavell argues against seeing Wittgenstein as refuting skepticism (the belief that there can be no real knowledge of the world)--all he refutes is the "transcendental illusion". Indeed, the truth of skepticism is that there is meaning only "inside" our conventions, that it makes no sense to speak of meaning outside these contexts. That words have meaning not by virtue of universals, of underlying structures or

rules, but in *use*, in--to use the expression from Anti-Oedipus--*desiring production*. ("...desire produces reality, or stated another way, desiring production is one and the same as social production.") For Cavell, skepticism is false insofar as it invalidates the claim of knowledge of "other minds" or "objects of the world"; wrong, that is, to take "metaphysical finitude as a failure of knowledge"; insofar, that is, as it takes certainty, or prediction and control, to be the sole basis for the claim to knowledge.... For that would be to misunderstand the precarious conventionality of knowledge and meaning because one imagines it always in terms of (knowing or not being able to know) "things-in-themselves". If that is what knowing is then our relation to the world-as-a-whole is not one of knowing but being in, acting in. The limitations of knowledge are not failures of it....

For whatever similarities there may be between the Wittgenstein of The Philosophical Investigations and the Jacques Derrida of Of Grammatology--specifically in respect to getting rid of the idea that words refer to metaphysical absolutes, to universals, to "transcendental signifieds" rather than being part of a grammar of shared conventions, a grammatology, the two seem fundamentally irreconcilable. What Derrida ends up transforming to houses of cards--shimmering traces of life insubstantial as elusive--Wittgenstein locates as *meaning*, with the full range of intention, responsibility, coherence, and possibility for revolt against or madness without. In Wittgenstein's accounting, one is not left sealed off from the world with only "markings" to "decipher" but rather *located* in a world with meaning to *respond to*. Derrida ends up misunderstanding the implications of his realization that experiencing objects as presences does not mean they are "transcendentally" present by imagining there to be something wrong with presence itself, that it is illegitimate or failed. (There is something failed and the loss can be felt. "The object of faith hides itself from him. Not that he has given it up, and the hope for it; he is on the track (cp.: *trace*). He knows where it is to be found, in the true acceptance of loss, the refusal of any substitute for true recovery." [Quote here and two below from Cavell's Senses of Walden].) The lesson of metaphysical finitude is not that the world is just codes and as a result presence is to be ruled out as anything more than nostalgia, but that we can have presence, insofar as we are able, only *through* a shared grammar. That our losses are not based on the conceptual impossibility of presence in the face of the "objects" of presence not being "transcendentally" locked into place, but rather on grounds that each person must take responsibility for--the failure to make ourselves present to each other, to respond or act when the occasion demands. "The place you may come to may be black, something you would disown; but if you have found yourself there, that is so far home; you will either domesticate that, naturalize yourself there, or you will recover nothing." For Derrida, the overthrow of human conventions entails no revolution, no exile--it is *neutralized* into the axioms of a

textual practice, a new criticism (perhaps awaiting its Gnostic destruction, or is it that all is maya?). One might say, against Derrida, that desiring production is the "primary signified", if that is understood as production of a form of life, where words have truth where they have meaning, in *use*. "We crave only reality, but we cannot stomach it; we do not believe in our lives, so we trade them in for stories; there real history is more interesting than we know."

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

SEATON

TEXTE

In a tree, on a tree limb, two strong arms of certain care. Like ecstasy prolongs some dream ensemble or public effect that could requires this distant world it's increasing kinds of lover reviving a writer understanding systems in the form of ways in which the days adapt noises, super dates, intact, some exception someone subjects something to subjects me to an outline of consent like you want to know who don't deal waiting for an example of others composing lines within a series, number one nine three three three. It's the term for balance, the pattern, the magazine, aspects of pussy, period, boundaries of confusion, complexities, because he has written for sighs he hints at to contain the street the eyes defending signifies smells of the special sense of the assembled machine and wood that kept the savage removed from gut. The secret expression threatened mechanical Bach one is of a bite out of, a sentiment as a general rule, or a sentiment, to phonic lance deep in the difference in his expression of little threads this kind of tricks. You says the form of something is obliged somewhere to reason, Montagnard matter, attentive adopted special cities, all possible audiences forgot to demand no audiences, all possible obstacles forgot to demand no audiences. Studded sheltered and white ties. Parts of the minimum Beethoven make no mistake with Beethoven. Certain developmental individual factors of all that's concentrates, alone at last. The history of fire is presented with the tree, in fact the military ordered out to allow ourselves problems will bring consciousness of our family's creepers, and our limitless tradition, the garden, silence listened to in ways of writing, of language, of thinking we tolerate luxury and approval to put a stop to eloquence. Give me money. The preface waits for a contribution to have been aware of, remains the background without any precise itself. These sounds, ah, o, ee, a appears in another way of saying rich and solid. The reader locates the flow of modification, overboard, substituting others with other words for being a word between the lips the husky tongue precede intervals a

mess of words rest or test. Memories was practically a product. In it writers remain the same, where those of what it was in phrases resolution adapted to the entrance of the middle to determine the light of the next be that of the words be that of the words must be that of the words. Wild agate the man using her skirt cries of itself across it. Hoods gripped the human face. I was and I did and I met and I learned that I had learned I think I figured I decompensate. Which made it seem I stay in the East. I still consider myself to anyone else, I knew of bobbing beef. I dressed to perspire a little. Conscious of the relaxed floating floating, the back of a chair, the end of a table, shapes and all kinds of a table. Object arrangement a corner appreciates. A king his model missed needs that exhibiting fact is by, and my shoulders, an American woman wanted to leave everything. Combinations identify the term considered in isolation. The written region collectively called spontaneous possible context of the model speed yielding states. The exact species picks up background. Several mirrors composed of escape to the process of waves and a wave has a place for the structure of fragment one of us might distinguish by loss in one of us and sequence and series described as one and one of us. The human jet has been observed and swept through one of us. Then the best are best by the outlined slit replaced by one of us. Accuracy, sides, some clinking cheerful drifting strange spines as trees, as males or women might dock didn't. Books or Bob's toward her Skin as actual as strictly between expecting dust while being spelled, she saw her blue finger feet face for shut. She slid sealed like in back means from up front. So roses, the top took to kiss them. We were lovers lit for looking up at the sky. What was it about the letters of her eyes one of us think, ways of where you are. Children, local arms, the book and the wind skins the sun, arched white teeth in the shoulders of an athlete. Tenses. To be someone's intrusion by trying to slip far from anyone. His palm paper and match house docks. That thought to admit that things. Or some jagged like wool up like kites. To let the Earth feel ourselves against ourselves, help of the tele-bodied tongues near. Of or by a thought yields for years after, and things enough countries signs everything in it seems to one of us any kind we extend, also odor of order, also the on light, also something they're in besides, there's one, sexual body of will, synonymous with one of us in parts of them and as long lines all the way to ask the power of a giant. I felt film, keep reading. Leaning. Leaning back. Leaning back another white blur or deep run or Zane Grey and me control the sight we'd been waiting for. I concentrate on something other than exhaustion including exhaustion. I thought about the different back back in place. Sides that skim past. I concentrate on her. Syllable segments beyond the point rain has fallen in the phrase linden tree moves. A high or low impasse might miss old reflexes. For the eye to deliver words articulation purposes of the ear and language clusters without words as familiar chains of visually English linked means for a quick breath, for a pause, for English series of

signals in a series. The example spills over to be one of us between the problem of progression and a word ending in French those eyes retain as notation, I love you. Connection pronounced p, t, k, b, d, g. Punctuation assuming the soft vulva, the size of the back, the lower teeth, the lips, the chest changes, the lowest lips, the routes dotted with the action, their arrows, pronunciation of to do what to do. First say instructions, next chant included then type the same. The contours in thy breast. First say deliver, then say the poem. On the resonating neutral article in winter, and neutral hot potato breath, and the poem's weaving moon fallen blood band and one of us, the blue altered sky located to show you where to drop a piece that excites me about being the caption jump fruit trip to the Maritimes. Maybe that's the operator we train to be what later caused the usual native named Fred. The water's too cold, I saw a shiny bonefish rag. I flew a little ahead. I emerged, I had emerged from the dark and quiet open sea, from surface streaks of spray straightened speech. It came loose to decide pointing into the tense ahead of us one of us whose nickname would be, or in English softly announced some sucking stirring an earth clinging scrap of dark aimed dash a few words only a few feet away ignore. I nodded and began bawling, some island, some view of more miles away, the slick and watched line targets, or bright and read surface tough or to get by the edge of the world in the ragged patch in the green cool woods and busy reference point for developments of points and probing commotion there'll be old invisible moving methods of trajectory and lead thumping loops of the strange object, maybe mind, looking for food, sun and shadow or they would have streamlined light until there is one of us. Leads of the eyes disguise one of us to have one of us ease her mind and her cool body. American moves. Abruptly unit tends. Tight home hum. Lone hybrid headlights and so on and so on then holding one of us down you're advised forming the whole of Rome, or Greece, during the formation a Yankee spoke my lines. Skillful use of lead, this now now mountain, the girl and boy blur only is as always: compressed sections of the country with the rest of the country to fill fill fill b as in beauty, w as in word, m as in music v as in vibration m as in man d as in drill d as in drift n as in none t as in t l as in link j as in Jaws 2 z as in zeal s as in zeal g as in George, y as in Yarmouth h as in hear p as in piano f as in fuck k as in cunt power as in plus slashes or variety in the implants. Technical description: i, o, o, a, a, and o. The crows cats foxes magpies and dogs washed away by the rain. Bastards. Open land in a large proportion of food. I was asked is under three feet and about forty pounds the same as the number of lines, because there are more than three lines on one tier or sphere even during the day in quiet places. So if you find one leave it where it is by touching it for good. They fight and inhabit the mountains. They take all the photographs I need and stand nearby. Even try to get somewhere in between the same family called Joe. After about three weeks, neck and teeth, an iron shovel. I called out to my family and stayed for some time to start a new family.

My wife and I walk through the countryside until my wife could see hind legs surrounding and sniffing and quivering as if there had never been some parts of humans. My son, backs and sides, leaves of grass, my own eyes, I took a photograph to learn the art of flying, the tops of trees jump from one branch to another. The edge of the woods is practically everywhere. You can find the edge of the woods practically everywhere.

PETER SEATON

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REVIEWS AND NOTES

ZYXT

MICHAEL ANDRE, editor, The Poets' Encyclopedia (1979; UNMUZZLED OX, 105 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013; \$4.95) *Last entry reads:*

The last word (here, in English, in the OED): an obsolete Kentish form, the second person indicative present of the verb *see*. Language even ends in the eye. In a book, if we are enjoying ourselves, we often reduce our reading pace measurably in its final pages, luxuriating slowly in the joy of words & syntax (unlike that of ideas & referents, where the onset of the conclusion only accelerates the reading), anticipating an inevitable sadness wch follows the end of the (always erotic) body of the text. The book closed sets loose an emotion tinged with jealousy & grief: its presence (wch includes our own reflected in the text) is something we can never again possess. Rereading is not the same: words harden, aura crystallizing to define a wall no quantity of inspection can penetrate. In this *afterword* we sense ever so briefly the immense relief we felt in having been delivered awhile from the weight of directing our own psyches. This is the restorative value of any text (reading is a kind of sleep, a return to the senses). Now we can only wait until this wave of sorrow subsides before seeking the seduction of another book. There is no alternative. You zyxt.

RON SILLIMAN

ARAKAWA & MADELINE H. GINS, The Mechanism of Meaning (1979; Harry Abrams, 110 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022; \$12.50 paper)

"Ambiguous zones exist with each statement or representation across the conceptual distance which separates them." Arakawa and Gins, in 15 sections, investigate the processes of meaning in terms of degrees, scale (expansion and reduction), splitting of meaning, reassembly, reversibility, texture, feeling of meaning, logic and so on. The basic unit of presentation is the map--color painting/grid used as often archly funny method of optical/verbal investigation of meaning as perceptual field. Object of meaning viewed, rearranged. Puzzling technical/scientific-looking diagrams confront and remove and replace assumptions about labels, identification, differentiation, measure, spatial depth. Brain is visually astonished, jolting confines of memory, geometric expectations of axial relations. Recurrent use of juxtaposed pictures and words, each saying (pointing to) something at an angle to the other; words question picture, picture casts shadow over accuracy of accompanying words. "Shape is used to plot sense color to relate quality of nonsense." Color as senses (coloring meaning). Color as feeling. "The distance out of which, who, repeatedly hypostatized, speaks. (That angle of tone at which is arrived a consensus of modulations through/along the blending scales of apperception and perception)."

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

JOHN ASHBERY, As We Know (1979; The Viking Press, 625 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022; \$7.95)

Code names for the silence, through which JA confirms himself as poet of "the spirit" (as opposed to "the ideal") and liberates that designation from the bog of campy orthodoxy. This "Litany" is busier than the traditional, repetitive variety: two parallel streams of monologue merge and separate at points determined by the reader. The diamond mine of "Litany" is surrounded by gems. *The mountain, the city, the yellow village, the checkered cuff, the dump, the moon, the flower fields* form a heartbreakingly beautiful scrim against a perfect, empty sky. In his poems of re-cognition, JA is right -- we do know.

TIM DLUGOS

AN EXORCISM OF REPRESENTATIONAL LANGUAGE

BEAU BEAUSOLEIL, Red Light with Blue Sky (1979; Matrix Press, P. O. Box 327, Palo Alto, CA 94302; \$5)

Well now if we are going to talk about reading Beau Beausoleil's poetry

we are in for something one could say both possible and impossible by which I mean that insofar as his vision occurs before imagination and his language does not represent his poems may be more accurately spoken of as reading us his words (as in "Nothing") speak us the poem is not what it's about. Here words are not because of their capacity to have meaning. Here words *are* meaning. They are all by themselves conclusive just like holes are conclusive. Four times in the same short poem for example he'll say "she said" and you think "she said so what" but "she said" is very much what. The logic of "she said" is the nature of language itself. We like to think that words mean something. We like to think that when we use a word it carries with it a raft of significances which to the extent that we are verbal we to a greater or lesser degree share and the friction of this expectation against lack of meaning in the usual sense allows (and this is what is at the root of poetry actually) a deeper understanding to dawn....

And so felt language. Words speak in their enormous palpability ("hundreds of shoes" "hundreds of trucks" "beast of fact" "shellfish" "teeth" and "gleaming" one of his few adjectives) but this indisputable concreteness turns out the fool of substantiality and serves rather as a guise ("Got Up") to an ultimate ungraspableness. "Try it on here" he says and all his poems make this request. His intimacy is tangible but like "the thought on her fingers" (a gesture of trust that allows us to enter a place of matured pain) it is one we can't really touch....

As you read you become aware of logical (syllogistic?) and mathematical terms ("The numerical appears/across everything") signifying conclusions ultimately not deducible. "Day times day" and you hear equals. Anything times anything has always equaled something. You are ripe for a resolution. The nature of the language practically promises a resolution which *does* happen it does indeed happen but not in a way you can assess. The kind of figures he uses "The long division/from the day") don't add up by our usual methods of reckoning. The poem ends. Something has been settled but what and the nature of the settling have more to do with the movement of numbers their abstraction and concreteness their opening and falling into new configurations their way of making their own particular (things by some sense mathematical? logic accumulate more than the sum of their parts) sense. I use this again as an example of his gentleness as by making us so very ready this vocabulary prepares for a solution or conclusion which only under circumstances of such readiness would we be available for. For the solution or conclusion which does come comes (like life itself) in realms (just is) we cannot name....

The language leaves no trace (though there is something so familiar) and as it proceeds there is just the process and you are suspended in the motion of it (sometimes as in "Wouldn't You" with discontinuous or

as in "Nothing" internal motion) without there being anything by which to hang on or let go. Sometimes ("Skyline") there is a failure even to create a negative. You ride the passion you ride and you ride you float you want so much what is almost. There is almost something you feel it you stretch for it and though you can't reach it quite the stretching opens you and deepens what you feel so that you take in more ("the thirst/above the/glass") than if you did. Almost becomes an invitation and at the same time an entrance to what finally gives itself up to another ("she made that/say that/all she/hurt") kind of name.

GAIL SHER

STEVE BENSON, As Is (1978; The Figures, c/o SPD, 1636 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707; \$3.50)

"It also seemed to me, however, that since the acting was basically not acting but actually love-making, it revealed a great deal about the people doing it, and I finally felt that I liked some people basically more than others in the films. Some people had more integrity and generosity and understanding, it seemed to me, than others. I wished I knew a couple of the people."

"Love and romanticism pour out of me." I haven't read this book enough. The silly kid, he taketh Rise & Shine scrim-quotient to demonstrative (loving) heights. "Quite a thought I am having then." There is no one more sensibly declarative. An eager beaver calmed down, lit up, & gotten going. The Looks Easy of honest sympathetic amusement skills. Obviously, observation by circumstance: "His hat flew into an ocean breeze." Hands cupping the window ledge, Benson's in the air.

BILL BERKSON

RACHELLE BIJOU, Entrance to the City (Buffalo Press, 15 Laight Street, New York, NY 10013; \$2)

Most poets lead at least two lives. Deftly avoided in their poems is any mention of how they make their daily living, any mention of a job. Following in the tradition of Wallace Stevens, they erect an impenetrable cover as to where they spend the hours in the business of earning money. One gets a sense in reading them that these are writers of a kind of leisure, in other words, they don't have to work at a regular job. Of course, this is not necessarily true. As Ted Berrigan says, somehow we all have to "Get the money."

Rachelle Bijou is a singular writer in this regard. Her poems champion a rare integration of job, poetry, scholarship, and personal experience.

Though Bijou's poems belie an astute scholarship, she is none-the-less a true working person's poet, a poet of the proletariat.

from "A PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL AS A SECRETARY"

"Please call Accountant 1
Now try Vice President 2
Where's Vice President 3
And put more sugar in this coffee"

And from "WOMAN IN FRONT OF THE ECLIPSE
HER HAIR RUFFLED BY THE WIND"

"And as my way is becoming
I fancy I hear my boss' wife
A poet unpublished
Telling me after a morning
At the hairdresser
She hasn't the time to write"

If this courage is not enough to set her work apart, Bijou does us one better. She dares to be humorous. In light of the fact that a woman must continually face the struggle of being taken seriously at all, her stance of humor is particularly heroic. Bijou, whose life is no easier than anyone else's, exhibits a toughness. Laced in a language of tidal wave impact, her poems come through like a resilient cord. You can read and hold on without worrying about it breaking.

MAUREEN OWEN

SEVENTEEN TITLES JOE BRAINARD WILL USE ONE DAY

JOE BRAINARD, I Remember (1975; Full Court Press, 15 Laight Street, New York, NY 10013; \$3.50)

I Forgot To Remember

Boy Scout Cookies

Truer Words Were Never Said

A Regular Joe

Read Any Good Books Lately?

50 Words or Less

Some Old Work

You Had To Be There

The Fruit Book
Mongol Pencils, Tartar Sauce
Too Soon Old Too Late Smart
One Hundred and One Liners
You're Going To Turn Into One!
Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches
The Shirt Off My Back
God Knows
Make It Small

BILL CORBETT

DAVID BROMIGE, Hieratics (1979; Gnome Baker #4, Box 337, Great River, NY 11739: \$4)

"This is a piece of a portable altar for private devotions while traveling." Triptych's folded meaning, some areas always hidden over time, ensampled again in writing. Picture &/or book, and marking the page a significant decorative act: towards a serious laugh at the expense of Bosch/etc/Janson. Later, worship as meditation-- St. Francis forced to deal with plum blossoms, camelias and bamboo as well as public exhibitionism aimed at destroying the father. Several images condensed into two dimensional representation (it's important to know the background in order to read the third), an interjected (art) history.

"Eros implies an enlargement of meaning." The elements of the unconscious beget fantasies (sexual and otherwise) which are brought forth into that life which is real for us but absurd for their sharing it. The Great Mother she might like to be is the woman we meet. The Greek and Other godlings Freud collected for his office are brought to life in a domestic setting. Which is the real you.

MADELEINE BURNSIDE

PAUL BUCK, Lust (Pressed Curtains, 4 Bower Street, Maidstone, Kent, England; \$2)

"Lust to write, to write out of Lust..."-- so goes the epigraph to Paul Buck's extraordinary 57 page text, which (consciously?) attempts to defy/defile our conventional notions of narrative prose/poetry, as well

as sacrosanct notions of love/sex. Its violations are often painful to read: nevertheless, the book is so -- *odd* -- that one is forced into repeated, if perpetually frustrated, investigations. Words signifying many kinds of sexual contact are used on several levels of ambiguity, often in metaphysical or philosophical contexts, and frequently to make terse, aphoristic statements: "Sperm obliterates the defeats of language... Lust describes ferment transferred by malformation into a false essence..." However, many of the red-inked paragraphs are used to present, in a fragmented mutilated way, varieties of copulation, fellatio, cunnilingus, masturbation and sodomy, apparently performed by the narrator -- or at least as fantasised by the narrator....

Because Buck sodomises the whole concept of sequential narrative, there's no one body on which to focus one's attention, and the effect of the gnomic asides forces one to examine one's own act of focussing attention on imaginary bodies.... Even if one reads the book as a simple autobiographical record of Buck's fantasies -- rather as Sartre reads Genet -- "an epic of masturbation" -- then one is bewildered by the profusion of abstract nouns, the scarcity of concrete detail, and the complete fragmentation of the usual patterns of sexual fantasy, which (normally) employ a structure of tension and relief, of expectation and gratification. Lust uses the language of feeling, but weirdly truncated, deformed, fragmentary. Presumably the text is fuelled by Buck's own lusts -- yet one feels his frustrations are linguistic and literary as much as sexual.

PAUL GREEN

THOMAS A. CLARK, A Still Life (1977; The Jargon Society, c/o Gnomon Distribution, PO Box 106, Frankfort, KY 40601; \$4.50)

One of the more interesting poems in Thomas A. Clark's A Still Life is dedicated to Lorine Niedecker who, in her use of natural objects and extreme formal concision, would seem to be Clark's chosen model. And like the lady's poems, these tend to be brief, understated or bemused in tone, and fairly complexly concerned with natural objects, particularly with a wide variety of flowers. Where they differ is specific gravity. A Niedecker poem can have all those properties and considerable power at the same time. The power derives from her "greeting of the spirit." Her objects exist in a charged space that is the result of intense, brooded, deliberate investment of herself in them. Clark, however, is very little present in this book. Thus his objects rarely attain more than the condition of still life. They are made to undergo composition, but not displacement; they remain small. Many of these poems are pleasant and attentive care to the objects and to

language is evident throughout. But more is required. Flowers are big, serious business.

JOHN TAGGART

CLARK COOLIDGE, Own Face (1978; Angel Hair Books, Slanders Road, Henniker, NH 03242; \$3)

Clark Coolidge is restructuring language to inhabit his personal chromatic scale.

In the early seventies, using only prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, articles & nouns in visually spaced-out arrangements (that inferred subjects, verbs, phrases etc. around them), he succeeded in constructing technically induced texts. (Air, Clark Coolidge, 1972). Using these elements as a sort of semantic glue he *realized* the 'induced' text in subsequent work. This process, almost methodological, is in itself quite significant, it resulted in the achievement of "A page that is nothing but words written by itself." (THIS 8, Clark Coolidge, 1977).

It is in the light of these very regular emissions, (from the vantage of a decade) amounting to wave-texts whose frequency is determined by crests & troughs of semantic referentiality, that Own Face stands out. Own Face is a very personal work originating in Clark Coolidge's orpheatic obsession with the *real* underworld (note Floyd Collins' eyes on the cover). Syntactically, the book is congruent with the over-riding flow of Coolidge's methodology. Thematically, the spelunker/cave biography of Own Face is reduced to collocation, which, although nominal, is nonetheless efficient. And it is at this level that Own Face arrives, in a trough of semantic referentiality, bearing a very revealed Coolidge.

The text is an anti-quantum morphemics where each successive unit of meaning re-defines the manifold.

CHRISTOPHER DEWDNEY

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From Own Face: "A Note"

I think then I live in a world of silence.
The language has become lodged in itself a background,
wall of rock, black and resistant as basalt, then sometimes
as viscous as heavy grease, poetry must be reached into
and rested from in a cry. Meaning is now a mixture, it
recedes to itself a solid fix of knowledge. The words
of poems, once rested from the mass, cry shrilly and singly,

then spring back to that magnetic ore body of silence.
The longest poem has become a brief crack into light and sound.
The candle flame through the sliver hums but must be tricked,
wrested out for a mere tick in the radium dark.
The rest is all a walk in stillness, on the parade of
the tombs of meaning. Or is this all still the highest ledge?

CLARK COOLIDGE

TINA DARRAGH (side two), and DOUG LANG (side one), Xa (1979; Widemouth
Audiotapes, c/o Mason, 715 East 33rd Street, Baltimore, MD 21218; \$3.50)

A poetry reading chapbook series, without audience only the sound of the
pages turning voice. What is there about only sound? In this tape the
inner space of the poetry *voice* came easily through good engineering and
private listening. But the space in which I feel the sound of the voices
changes with subject matter: I felt a personal space of being in the room
with the reader when works by either poet oriented toward language, but
when the poems had a more personal subject (Darragh's being "in trouble"
or Lang's list of names of people), a greater more "performance" distance.
Performed space perceived on tape.

Darragh associates, chants, same vowel, projecting, her definitions
are a meaning, an image, a reference and not; she will use an "L"-oh. Do
I spell her voice?

Lang combines, reread the books, feelings from moment to moment and
year to second feel linked by no time break in the words used to stand
for those feelings. "Prelims grammar."

JAMES SHERRY

CHRISTOPHER DEWDNEY, Natural History of Southwestern Ontario: A Palaeozoic
Geology of London Ontario (1973; The Coach House Press, 401 (rear) Huron
Street, Toronto, Ontario; \$3), Fovea Centralis (1975; Coach House; \$4),
Spring Traces in the Control Emerald Night (1978; The Figures, c/o SPD,
1636 Ocean View, Kensington, CA 94707; \$2.50)

Recall control metaphor eidetically spinning Shantung silken fibres w/
stray filtered scents of Sillurian coalmeasures syntax synaptically
Burroughsian.

ARTIE GOLD

TIM DLUGOS, Je Suis Ein Americano (1979; Little Caesar Press, 3373 Overland Avenue #2, Los Angeles, CA 90034)

How can you care about your neighbor if you can't understand what he says? I thought I was going to fall down backwards, and began to laugh with delight. Twelve stories up you can feel the damp of subway excavations, see the damp good looks of the workers. No revolution without them please. We are ready to meet anybody here, little brother. Do what you want. You walk into the empty parlor, sit down, and play the only song you know by heart. You draw your own breath, then I draw mine. Part of it is staying in the earth. Another part is moving in the wind. The birds fly away, they shed their reputations like their history. I'm the space explorer. We take off to the museum and watch the individual colors as they surface in the late works of Matisse. I don't want to go home. I am afraid of the country, too. But everyone, no matter how far the physical distance is only a phone call away. In the breeze, the river reeks a little less than usual. I feel the sun in my face. I see the light through my eyelids. It's bright, intelligent, free of all cares. My life on other planets has been pleasant, but now I must return to my own people. Some of the words are meaningless. All that you have to give is in your eyes.

STEVE HAMILTON

LYNNE DREYER, "Letters" (1978; in Tottel's #17, c/o L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Distributing; \$3.78)

Letters to friends about: "Every possible motive of action" & "The freedom to use it", awareness of what we say, "unknown qualities" taken for granted. The extremities of norm: darkside. Manners learned off tv "slightly off course". But the issues are embedded in the woman, not doctored out. Lynne gets hectic with restraint. "He would lie down and be interesting." Could? Inneresting? (Voyeur. Observateur. i.e., "a new kind of tune replaces the new." "In the persona of modern-day woman-child, Ms. Dreyer considers a day she 'didn't T.V.' simultaneously a victory over her own ennui and high praise for the author who so stimulated her that she didn't need tv; contrary to Plath's solution, one we can live with.") Meaning comes out of the language uncommented on. I know what she's talking about, because it could only be talked about that way. "Embarrassed" and "logical": I don't know what to say, because I don't need to. The metaphor is humanism.

JAMES SHERRY

LARRY EIGNER, COUNTRY/HARBOR/QUIET/ACT/AROUND (edited Barrett Watten; 1978; This Press, c/o SPD, 1636 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707; \$4)

Larry Eigner's long awaited prose collection COUNTRY/HARBOR/QUIET/ACT/AROUND has finally been published after years of rumor and shillyshallying from bigger & better-known presses... Eigner's exemplary clear unravelling prose, never lacking humor, pathos, always registering its composition, is nevertheless of a different order of realism/representation-seeing/saying [than other This Press publications]. 'Next day' that assertion is misleading! : following up a... letter reference to Russian Formalism... via Jameson's "The Formalist Projection" chapter of his The Prison-House of Language, i came upon in footnote (that treasure-trove of crucial information!) this quote from Shlovsky : "To make an object into an *artistic* fact, it has to be removed from the series of real-life facts. To do that you have to 'put it in motion' the way Ivan the Terrible 'passed his troops in review'. You have to tear the thing from the row of habitual associations in which you find it. You have to rotate it like a log in the fire."... What Eigner 'unravels' is the 'story' & not its devices, though as he says in the note in COUNTRY/HARBOR... "All variant spellings & irregularities of indent and punctuation here are deliberate, choices as must be & were at first & till now have been available, from among possibilities thought of, come up, alternatives as few as they've ever been & with differences barely perceptible pretty often.... The variants & irregularities having to do with the way(s) people talk & carry on, simultaneously in whole or part or alternately, successively, act & interact.", it is art (the variant) that discloses (reclaims by difference)-?

(excerpted from The Merri Creek, or Nero, 24 Urquhart Street, Westgarth, Victoria, 30701 Australia)

KRIS HEMENSLEY

LARRY EIGNER, Lined Up Bulk Senses (1979; Burning Deck, 71 Elmgrove Avenue, Providence, RI 02906; \$2.50)

air mostly. 7 pages. enormous resonances. word, line, vowel/consonant function alternatively and then-relatedly. Eigner scales his focus moving designedly forward, even as he re/covers ground- line is the life is a birth- syntax joining the words in an eddying motion *this/is a calendar/the wind/past it and the wall* wch might be read bkwards *past it and the wall/the wind/is a calendar/this* vowels/consonants sounding across lines. 4 ends *sky/variety/it/fields* (multiple sounds/visual

slimness adhering in the vowel *i*. & 7- a certain newness in/ few trees.
words resourcing their varietal meanings- *the clock being of hands*.
Light running type moving down each page successive page (as in the
capital cover. A tribute of days. to life. thanx at birth *the future*
more direct line. Out. sound from the chair window wall *out of the*
fences now & in. brought in. past=wered=writing. this writing synon-
ymous wt. breath l. projected extent extant heaven. to be taken 2.
acknowledged ingathering *the past taped* (obscure threat. Writing this
writing looks back- layered *lined up bulk senses*. each succession a
listening to turn the line, to build dense verticals that move. on.
Place reverts into space and returns to page- *line* at the bottom. I
think of Eigner's earlier *diversions/distractions merge/if no dead line*
and the fullness of air from my eye to the ground- granular sleight of
sight, in what is NOT empty air- *Silence lost* in the creation of a
sequence of molecular particles powering in ^{on}_{as} wind. it is a flood,
high, as one dreams it

add + here Eigner's reading, Grand Piano fall 78- optical potential
recovered in time in language-reading as opposed to speech, the play
of music or film (yet there might be rewound. There- Eigner's voice
a stratum of half understood sounds/ the type opaque-projected
crawling round and up the page/public finding necessary mouth inter-
mediary mouthing- *it was there/which had to be taken/what you made*.
here- in print/meant to be read/the page measures, is time, line achieves
polyphony, the mind an instrument

ABIGAIL CHILD

BARBARA EINZIG, DISAPPEARING WORK a recounting (1979; The Figures, c/o
SPD, 1636 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707; \$4)

Recording witness to a life through the mind, a narrative of "what re-
mains" (Merleau-Ponty), is Einzig's coming to a language of memory with
the case for poetry met in a unique diction of brevity: the evolving
post-negative function in signifying being the route taken through the
mind towards the succinct. This refining sets-down a hermeneutic, a
"recounting" that is in every sense of the word parataxic and ends-up on
the page in the positivism of the head's organizing swiftness, and,
more, caught-up *voce*. Any decision to think "like this" is elaborately
binding in the choice to at once notice and define a specific design in
thought, and carry it through into the key gesture of "figuring" (his-
toricity). The insisting motion is from mind to page and, though evenly
exegetic, is random in its phenomenology. Simultaneity and approximation
root the material persistence of "story" in a phasing that oscillates

between corporeity and absence. Rare in any book, Disappearing Work countermines the full reach of a substantial centering thesis.

ANDREW KELLY

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I would be this cool, this deliberate, with my jumpiness -- address my impatience to the sky. "She brought orange juice into the sauna. Shocking cold in her mouth and throat and then all the way inside her as she drank it there palpable," -- *that's* what I felt, guzzling something wet down till stuck in the craw. Enough, -- the thing one gradually comes to find out is that one has no identity that is when one is in the act of doing anything. The joker there being, that one "gradually comes to find out". Various ways to draw mountains. SF Review of Books reviewer scolds Disappearing Works for not being a novel...wants fists brandished against an indifferent sky. Event in DW includes the sky, skies -- not "cosmic", but aware how we would like to eradicate what we can't summate. The crisis is over, I sit & write on an exceptionally smooth & even surface. Words of many lives, in random order yet carefully kept. First you notice how different the words are from hitting the nail with your hammer. But then, how useful compared to hitting it with your hand. What has happened will cause sense to pass through us on our dash toward meaning. Letting the book fall open anywhere, I find myself drawn on. No, this is myself, being drawn on. Shadow & object form one being, reading life, including those who'd tell us how to.

DAVID BROMIGE

ALLEN FISHER, STANE [Place, Book III]. (Aloes Books, 85 Ramilles Close, London, SW2 5DQ England; 1977)

A dozen years ago I was hailing the birth of a Poetry of Information -- it would grow from lore and data no less than from sensory experience, precisely because data are sensorily experienced. My Olsonian hope has borne less fruit than I portended, but one utter triumph of such a poetics is the ongoing work of Allen Fisher, of which book III appears as STANE. This English poet, with a clear musical sense and breadth of what constitutes *interesse*, has a work going on that continues to challenge close reading. It *is* close reading, and what it reads it carries forward, addressing the deepest epistemological problems of literature: the shifting primality of reading before writing. Fisher is not mounting a Poundian suasion, but experiencing a lively compulsion to which he is subject and subjects in turn what he reads -- a compulsion to be lyric, just like that traditionally reserved for flowers and fucking. These are

not 'found poems' -- far from that. Fisher has lost his texts into a discourse in which he feels at last free to speak. Poetry is making one's own. His work excites me by his exacting feel for method.

ROBERT KELLY

ED FRIEDMAN, The Telephone Book (Power Mad Press & Telephone Books, 156 West 27th Street, #5W, New York, NY 10001; \$3)

In the future if they want to know how we talked, hand them The Telephone Book. Bob Kushner's shock-magenta covers promise the hottest gossip, but what is delivered is the real thing. Only the names have been changed as Ed Friedman sets to rendering his phone conversations in Verbatim Absolute. Hem's & haw's become huh's & ah's, pauses are clocked & noted, stutters block. The moment is monumental, the typewriter typeface intimates the immediate. Ed's conversations with co-counselors use a jargon that gives the book a cut-up feel. Or is it the language of the future? No one knew they were being taped. Is this the end of Personism? 212-966-5998

BOB HOLMAN

DAVID GITIN, THIS ONCE: New and Selected Poems 1965 to 1978 (1979; Blue Wind Press, Box 7175, Berkeley, CA 94707; \$4.95)

Remarkable in THIS ONCE is the variety of linguistic experience, the experiences of these past fourteen years. Rooted in a singular perception and understanding "composed in the musical phrase", these poems sound a chromatic scale in the differing qualities of language -- as personal thought and in the mutable overtones of words that have themselves been "thrown into time": "Lines liquid/unassigned/to act/some matter// the blue/rain the/silky/descents"

KEN BULLOCK

REMARKS ON NARRATIVE: THE EXAMPLE OF ROBERT GLÜCK'S POETRY

ROBERT GLÜCK, Family Poems (1979; Black Star Series, 16 Clipper Street, San Francisco, CA 94114; \$2.50)

(The following is an excerpt from Bruce Boone's introduction.)

"There is a story being told about you..." --Marx, cited by J.P. Faye

...The stories and poems collected here seem to present themselves to us as a series of developments of narrative possibilities in poetry itself... [as a] critique of many recent formalistic tendencies in poetry, particularly the new trends toward conceptualization, linguistic abstraction and process poetry.... What isn't said here might be called a kind of absent present existing only offstage-- the metatext that is spoken from the present-- while onstage appear conventional anecdotes, such as these narratives of someone's past, of ethnicity and family life.... At the end of the "Mangle Story," for instance, we find that through some sleight of hand it is we ourselves who have become the narrator of the story, and through a linguistic ruse the subject of these stories has become only a conveniently transferrable function. And the narrator has become the object of a new narration being told-- this time-- by ourselves. What the narrator seems to be claiming then is that it is the act of narrating itself that causes the narrative function to slip across the invisible bar of separation-- from him to us.... [Such] devices constitute a transfer of the subject from a local determination in the speaking narrator to a more profound and generalized function.... In a larger sense what the stories of this collection narrate is society itself, and the exchange system of this society as it continues to narrate only death... as it tells us the story that continues to constitute it.... The poems may in this respect appear as bringing out a strongly judgmental or juridical aspect of this narrative function in a tradition which up to now has not adequately or politically appreciated it.

BRUCE BOONE

MICHAEL GOTTLIEB, LOCAL COLOR / EIDETIC DENIERS (1978; Other Publications, 689 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11230; \$3)

Less and shoulders presided The
ball sneaking under the shield

Chopper once in those eyes ache
uptown determination sanction
cold strong managing Ful of
ideas Not available in left hand
drive So long when long ago you
could y stuff of the order Pos
sess through the lackluster

These two long works' texts melancholically perambulate, streets and offices, comprise the notes, grossly interpreted, of facts and propositions wantonly blown up there. Regularly interfering documentary photographs of urban exteriors and memoranda propose the site no more than

the aesthetic mock-indifference in this case paid cum collateral on the rights to see it.

No heroism, nor business as usual, but advance work on archaeology, "in return for wasted time," close to the approach of Symons' Quest for Corvo. Ambitious yet pedestrian, unpretentious but pseud, the work is still more 'just what it is,' albeit post-Baudelarian solitary comedy of manners, than transcendent. Exactly one more thing in the world. Its spattered anonmyity is attractively, reasonably coy; its ingenuously edited intensity of naming moldering apprehensions hectically startles and becalms. Giddy heightening of tactful selfconsciousness re layout and conventions appears symptomatic of fantastically ingrown (Kafkaesque) defensive survival skills in the Jungle of the Cities.

The work is fine in any sense but final. Whether it is the cracking of an eggshell or the scritchng of a prisoner's spoon, the crinkling of near-opaque paper wrapped against some Other or its unwrapping aurally choreographed in advance, the chafing of a Bic against Corrasable Bond or some plunging of mental point to groin, it is promising-- such that some infer a con, others listen with circumspect sympathy or amusement, and one reads in.

The circumstances, of material, vocabulary, composition, production, are fronted, so that honesty is actually not at issue, but, painfully, trusted. If I have, in this book before me, deconstruction in process, of the modi operandi with which things are given to be said, my attention is called far more to the difficulties and the means (words, type, expense, distribution, class, spec.ref.per se, blank pages, limits) than to the invariably advertent but not easily called articulate speech (saying *through* words here may mean between, among) that crops up nevertheless like weeds in the sidewalk or glances between office desks.

STEVE BENSON

ROBERT GRENIER, CAMBRIDGE M'ASS (1979; Tuumba Press, 2639 Russell, Berkeley, CA 94705; c. 265 poems; \$6)

A large (41" X 49") poster, black (variously lengthed--phrase, couplet, etc.--short lyric--typewriting) on white (individual, 'tailored,' rectilinear 'containers') on black (flat background, field).

The language continues his work in delineating the manifestation of the heightened, the presence of the superiorly accessing in casual, throw-away, or 'merely' quiescent words that flow past us every day, usually unheeded.

Like his 'Cards' this format seeks, through a positioning of the viewing possibilities, to focus special attention on the above property of the writing. Here, though, his 'shaping' of the language containers into a vaguely vertically spreading column which doesn't, like the rigorous gate-like power of the cards, raise the exponent of the viewer's attention, but tends to diminish it by demanding a division from one's reading of the shape, the entirety, and the words themselves. The words, however, remain, and stay.

MICHAEL GOTTLIEB

LYN HEJINIAN, Gesualdo (1978; Tuumba Press, 2639 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705; \$2)

"It is tempting to speculate" that Gesualdo was written from sources by or about Gesualdo and that the piece comments on themes found in those texts. "That all music argues, follows, continues" Hejinian comments "It would be imprudent." And even this commentary has comments on itself in the margin that let the reader know what kind of comments she makes, but these comments themselves are couched in terms of the style and the music of fragments, using the vocabulary of Gesualdo and music, so that the section from which I just quoted is called "a connection repeats." The result of all this circling around the vocabulary, source and subject is an identity. "Gesualdo had time around even in these days appeared."

"I have thought you misinterpreted my emphasis occasionally, accenting figment where I meant central." But she does not point to the central, but circles and comments. The poem "gathers thought" by its capacity for pairing fragments to assert that she is writing with them.

"Your language is along variable lines, with changes achieved through meeting with an other. Where one meets the other this is a miracle worthy.// Both have responded."

JAMES SHERRY

AN AFRO-AMERICAN WORD SCULPTOR

LANCE JEFFERS, O Africa Where I Baked My Bread (1977) and Grandsire (1979) (Lotus Press, P. O. Box 601, College Park Station, Detroit, MI 48221)

Jeffers is a powerful Black poet who has somehow managed to elude much attention. Though in his late 50s, his first collection was not published until the militant atmosphere of the 1970s made his voice much

more than necessary. These two latest volumes are both excellent. Grandsire includes a long "ROOTSesque" poem about Jeffers' grandfather which contains chilling passages documenting American racism and lynch mob machismo. The rest of the book (and almost all of O Africa Where I Baked My Bread) is devoted to Jeffers' searingly beautiful love poems. His language is masculine, bent in ways that tease syntax and recall the florid eloquence of early Afro-American oratory. Themes of love, pain, and sex are possibly obsessional but the poems flash with a disarming wittiness:

*Don't turn your cheek from my tongue
for my tongue's spittle is the devil of my regard*

Jeffers' voice modulates between outraged roar and lush, sentimental praise song for those and what he loves. But his personal and idiosyncratic sculpturing of the English language is nothing but marvelous.

LORENZO THOMAS

VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV, SNAKE TRAIN: Poetry and Prose, edited by Gary Kern (1976; Ardis, 2901 Heatherway, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; \$3.95)

It has been said that Velimir Khlebnikov had perhaps the most innovative and imaginative of poetic minds in this century. He has had a profound influence upon a whole host of Russian writers and thinkers including Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Esenin and Shklovsky. But until relatively recently, his influence upon non-Russians has been extremely vague if non-existent. This readily available collection from Ardis (which publishes a number of other very interesting books and a journal on the Russian literary avant-garde) has helped change that situation somewhat and Khlebnikov is on the minds of many literary experimentalists now. This collection of translations, introductory and biographical material gives some insight into the theoretical complexities of his massive and extremely eclectic corpus. Many of his experiments were far beyond the work of his fellow Futurists both in terms of originality and vitality and were even unsurpassed by later works such as those done by the Dadaists. His creation and search for a universal poetic language derived from a sort of pseudo- or meta-mathematics and ethnolinguistic matrix still has a wide currency today. After reading this collection, one might wonder what effects Khlebnikov might have had on Europeans if he had written in a language which was more accessible to them, as well as what treasures for us remain untranslated in their dusky Russian.

LARRY WENDT

DOUG LANG, Magic Fire Chevrolet (1979; Titanic Books, 1920 S Street NW, #506, Washington, DC 20009; \$4)

A collection in roughly two parts. The first, larger section, of "prose poetry". - Material: sentences sometimes developing into some overall structure (narrative, thematic, imaged), but more often not coalescing into any kind of resumable unit. - Lots of lists, itineraries, names. Facts in the red wheelbarrow; additive work. Lang's work here seems particularly resistant to paragraphs (i.e. paragraphical history; the paragraph as teleological organization). There's no chronology implicit in "the facts". Things do accumulate (resonance), but don't line up into any kind of argument. - ... tension is between the frequent naming (labelling) of particulars & the lack of a parcel to lug all the labels around in. (punch-line, summary.). - The strong emotional tone of much of MFC works toward one's expectation of a summation which never in fact happens... A second section of MFC takes a more concrete approach to the problem of organization. Press type & typewriter script are used to form words, phonetic units & sometimes purely visual formations. The press type is often broken or crumbled to underline its texture, print is obliterated by successive layers of print typed or placed directly over it. A kind of layered type-field results, through which the alphabet achieves a physical density - (presence), (materiality of the page) - physical to the point where its letters can be broken, crumbled; splattered like paint. In a piece like "Poem for Mary" e.g., though there is nothing (except for the "so" in the lower righthand corner) pronounceable, the large press type letters seem to demand vocalization - (childhood association with alphabet blocks?) - These later pieces point up the problem with a term like "abstraction". For these pieces are on one level "abstract": the way the letters of the alphabet are treated as categories; the lack of reference to everyday, "concrete" language; the move toward (& I don't mean this in a pretentious way) metalanguage. But in another, & perhaps more dramatic, sense the physicality of these works argues against any abstraction "conceived apart from (the) concrete realities, specific objects, or actual instances" of the works themselves. (Random House Dictionary)... in short, continually interesting, non-pigeonholable work. MFC is something only Lang could have written. In fact, he did.

P. INMAN

GREGORY MASTERS, In the Air (1978; Remember I Did This for You/A Power Mad Press Book, c/o Levine, 437 East 12th Street, New York, NY 10009; \$2)

Greg's poetry is the way it is shaped. Incomprehensible is a re-

newed esthetic. Inward, metaphorically compelling, and not without an artificial mystery. In the way WNYC is worthily responsive, In the Air is strong. Find his wired quality evolutionary, mixing choice experience with menial tasks of naming. Book of higher Speech of Odes. Direct breaths like ping pong volleys subjected to independence (transformational) and the ardor about writing. In the air suggests showmanship, faith, and comic flare. There's proverbial semblance; as: "The van keys hanging loose from the ignition/" of a sonnet, "Wyoming." The poem's couplet:

This is straight ahead jazz. No form.

Only my presence, which to the scene is adorned.

is wonderfully loss.

The segment "Dec 10" from a 2 month journal is subtle and extremely handsome. "Lone people bundled, with scarves and hats, obviously uncomfortable in the cold walk by past us in different directions." Compassion's in the eyes' familiarity with attention to the warm, cold, and substantial varieties of Air. Comfort is present to each sentence entry. Futuristic, popular, "happy hour" evokes the universal in the unofficial. His tranquility with Remembrance's literal recounting unparalleled & a Nate Archibald attitude towards fate & pleasure.

MICHAEL SCHOLNICK

DUNCAN MC NAUGHTON, Sumeriana (Tombouctou, Box 265, Bolinas, CA 94924; \$3), A Passage of Saint Devil (Talonbooks, 201 1019 East Cordova, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6A 1M8, Canada)

It occurs to me (it has for a while) that McNaughton's remove to Bolinas from Buffalo, is metaphor of the terrible displacement a whole school of poets suffered at the death of their prime mover, Charles Olson.... This poetry is placed in the interface of various (sexual, political, cultural, & linguistic) anxieties which it has to be said (& is what prompts across-the-world identification) are currently everywhere. "One turns anew to desire, to Himeros, to ask of it, what next? If not a world, what do you want? What do you ask for yourself, Desire, what is it you need? Not death, for a world will soon enough provide death, nor is death elusive in any sense...." The sprinkling of French, the stronger presence of Spanish, the stab of Greek, is only the most obvious sign of Translation: his carriage by dream, & of scholarship, has him more than anything else a translator.... The cross-cutting of voice & mind here is exemplary.

(excerpted from *The Merri Creek, or Nero*, 24 Urquhart Street, Westgarth, Victoria, 30701 Australia)

KRIS HEMENSLEY

THOMAS MEYER, STAVES CALENDERS LEGENDS (1979; The Jargon Society, c/o Gnomon Distribution, P. O. Box 106, Frankfort, KY 40602; \$10)

The strongest work this various, resourceful poet has set before us.... His eye is natural, his language tense, lifted by magic and desire. Much of his text says things seen, says them so well they are sublated *per musicum*-- one literal gesture of his title (staves = notches, runes, letters, musical staves). There are eighteen poems in this collection, most of them long. The sound of "The Midsummer Banns"-- a decent richness, as if Spenser's Ireland were never an imperialist's victimage. Consider the "Loom Song" where we measure

the distance that bounds
the common range of vision

Consider the runic alphabet in "Starcraft," the powerful prose apologia in "Inland Drought." A real sleeper is his adaptation of AElfric's dull schoolboy Colloquy in a mad dream of what poetry must, translation should: activate the common words of place and name and occupation. Two wonder-poems end the book, one about Thomas the Rhymer (seized as eponym), with its quiet analysis of faerie/ferlie/fairy-- the "tingle of faerie!", and a self-song, "The Telling of Sir Thomas Valentine." More than any syntactic poet I know, Meyer has made the *page* itself the unit of perception and realization. One reads the page; the page sounds.

ROBERT KELLY

GIULIA NICCOLAI, Substitution (1975; The Red Hill Press, c/o SPD, 1636 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707; \$2.50)

'from Substitution-- The subject is the language

An idea of vengeance: the retaliation
or revenge of the word which has been thought
(make the gesture of inventing language
perform the act by which you appropriate language).

Though dependent or superimposed
the individual and the word exist as separate objects;
not a mutual agreement of words and things
but the pleasure of interfering.

Things exist to be said
and language narrates. It outrages in turn
a language already violated by others
to possess language is a way of being.

The subject is therefore the language
with which to commit a capital offense,

GIULIA NICCOLAI

a question of "an inspected geography" -- the seer must affect the seen. Thus at every point we encounter a mirror. "It almost combines to be one thing, but here I am again."

a.k.a. i is largely made of sentences, or pairs of sentences, which break in 2 parts; consciousness on one side of the punctuation, "the world" on the other. For example, "The dog could be anywhere, within reason." (It couldn't be out of his mind.) "He drove to Bakersfield, so to speak." "The ground was approaching fast. It was a side of himself he rarely showed." Perelman nearly describes the structure of this work when he writes, "The station pulled itself apart in 2 equal halves." But the halves don't seem quite equal. The mind is the latter half of these equations and has the last word.

BP seems suspicious of this preeminence of mind. In Braille (Ithaca House, 1975) he said "Continuity exists in the nervous system." In a.k.a. i he's afraid too much continuity exists there. "Until I see what I thought" is the danger. Until one lives "there, under the assumptions." If "the pictures are in the head by prior arrangement," the danger is grave. Too much continuity exists when, "Each second the features repeat." "Told over until unrememberable, the physical features grow so long-winded they have to be called off." "Dead certainties lumbering center stage." Here the past is a threat, certainty is a threat, speech is. "Thinking about them as they appear, the forms are longer than life." Everything threatened by ossification. Continuously.

My first response to a.k.a. i was that too much continuity existed in this work, that it risked redundancy. But the more I read it the more I appreciated its structure. BP produces fresh variations on his theme sentence after sentence -- "Trees *said* to line the whole road."

ii.

In the beginning, "The baby's voice speaks, sings, cries, breaks." In the beginning was the word. "Hello." "Saying the first thing he saw when the screen lit up." "Delete flesh, read body of words." a.k.a. ii is a curious kind of autobiography -- not that of a person, but, maybe, of Logos itself. "Nomenclature" and "sequence" become characters, often replacing the narrative "I."

Well, *something* is moving through time and space here. Reading a.k.a. ii is like being on a teeter-totter: "The screen lit *up*." "effect piles *up*" "The rock *sank*." "The gorge *below*." "but at full throat *up* there." "Ideal city cranked *up* to heaven." "There would be an up a down a back and forth." We are moving, running, playing baseball. We are "a group of boys" faced with "a brutal necessity to add up to one." Identity continues to splinter and refract.

Moving fast because "The future was the easy way out." The future "was" and not the future "is" puts sadness in this. "Nostalgia precedes the focus." "A burnt offering sadly loving its milk." As usual in

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Perelman's work, the ego is gently mocked -- by the word "its" in the above quote and elsewhere in such lines as, "The echoes bouncing back as a series of tightening categories inhabited by a big personal person." In Braille Perelman said, "The best myth we have is the nameless pulse." a.k.a. ii is this myth's story.

Expectations of linearity are also mocked. He thinks he is proceeding in an orderly way and laughs at himself for thinking so. "I woke up ten times in a row, twelve, twenty. It was a winning streak and my smile couldn't have been quicker to come and go." "I listen to the correct, calm sequence and am a ring." "Sequence wakes up in the dark upset." This is the same moral universe found in a.k.a. i. Personality, continuity and abstraction ("An element substituted for another via the simple authority of say so...") threaten to separate us from real experience. Perelman uses writing as his antidote.

RAE ARMANTROUT

WORDS FROM F. T. PRINCE

F. T. PRINCE, Collected Poems (The Sheep Meadow Press, c/o Horizon, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; \$4.95)

This small but extraordinary poetic life's work was cavalierly dismissed by the NY Times reviewer last spring. Attention was paid to Prince's WW II poem "Soldiers Bathing" -- this would seem to be party line -- but that was about it; and I suspect that the set-piece aspect of that poem rather than its inherent beauties is what is keeping it alive. The truth is that Prince's poems, the best ones, are among the marvels of English language poetry, and that this South African-born poet with a handful of brilliantly performed, emotionally and musically rich poems redeems buildingsful of modern English verse from the arid intellectuality it is famous for.

I see Prince as the passionate historian, the passionate scholar, emphasis everywhere on passion, which sometimes breaks through the scholarly reserve but most often *smolders* just beneath it, with the result that the poems are charged with feeling plus the sense of a struggle to hold it back. His inspiration is largely from books. His heroes, whether speakers of dramatic monologues or subjects for meditation from the outside, are historical personages, most often exiles, from native land, from civil rights, from youth, from love. And yet upon this conventional base he builds poems that are absolutely original, unique for their voice, their music, their diction, their quality of feeling, and most strikingly, for their amazing baroque (mannerist?) syntax, which,

without abandoning its referential obligations -- indeed, which succeeds in the most subtle nuancing, playing off itself, qualifying, extending, reversing -- clearly becomes a prime element for its own sake, and finally a part of the "meaning" of the poem in a way we have come to recognize as distinctly modern.

Prince's unquestionable masterpieces, "Epistle to a Patron" and "Words from Edmund Burke," appeared in his first book, printed in 1938 when he was 26. As his poetry develops, the rhetoric for its own sake (which it both is and isn't) becomes more and more in the service of feeling, until in the major poems of the 1970's, "Memoirs in Oxford," "Drypoints of the Hassidim," "Afterword on Rupert Brooke," and "A Last Attachment," a pared down, much more transparent language is used to *present* feeling, almost as if Prince had made a conscious resolution to put "childish" things behind him. Feeling is the key, perhaps it deserves to be called the theme, of the whole book, which fittingly closes with a virtual ode to feeling on the subject of that curious case Lawrence Sterne and his emotional excesses.

As much as I admire the final group of poems, I wish he hadn't abandoned the bravura. It seems to me that at its height, Prince's is a poetry of conjunction (count, for example, the "and's"), and of apposition: once it gets going, permitted sufficient space and freedom, phrases and clauses unroll in marvelous cadences, continue beyond any bounds of "good writing" until, at least a part of the time, conventional meaning seems to be just along for the ride. Prince handles intellectual matters, of which there are many in the poems, in the manner of the metaphysicals for whom "thought was an experience": who *felt* their thought. His breathtaking images and figures -- "civil structures of a war-like elegance as bridges," "chambers like the recovery of a sick man"(!), "She is light and dreadful as a spear, she too leaves a gash," (!!)) -- are as ingenious as any poet's I know, and yet remain sensuous, tied to their base in concrete reality. Which is to say that Prince, the Milton and Shakespeare scholar, in his best poetry is a brilliant *poet*. It seems to me that *we* feel his thought as well, just as we feel and savor his weighty, opulent language.

In general, although there are some beautiful ones, the weaker poems are the short lyrics, where too much Donne, too much Yeats, too much Verse, or too much convolution in too small a space obscures the intent. (If you turn the tables on language, you have to be prepared for language's partial revenge.) And, at least for me, the last poems remain problems. I've always found the "Memoirs" affecting, a kind of Prelude working through early difficulties and trying to make sense of them, including the decision to be a poet; but it's a curious poem. (The current version seems tighter, better than the original one.) Written in a simplified language, in a rimed, metered stanza taken from Shelley, it has a curiously archaic feel to it: it seems, finally, more on the side of *exercice de style* than genuinely modern poem. The other

three, "Drypoints," "Rupert Brooke," and "A Last Attachment," represent a different genre, almost (one might call it biographical essay in verse), and are similarly affecting and similarly problematic. One admires the craftsmanship, the deft collaging from source materials, along with the sensitive treatment of subjects and will to cut through received opinion; yet one remains -- I should say, I remain -- unsatisfied by them. None quite transcends its subject matter, as do the great earlier poems (to which I would add, certainly, "The Old Age of Michelangelo" and "Chaka," and probably "Soldiers Bathing"). They're very good, but Prince's extraordinary gifts as a poet create extravagant expectations. Which brings up the continuing, fascinating (to me) question of clarity and reticence: *is* repression good for the poet (as distinct from the patient) and if so how much. Marianne Moore's advice to be as clear as your natural reticence allows you to be, at this point seems only a part of the story. The difficulty in letting feeling out, explicit in the "Memoirs" and implicit throughout -- in his exiled or abandoned heroes, his virtual obsession with isolation and loss -- somehow was *responsible* for the earlier poems' emotional charge. Once feeling makes it out into the open, no disguises, the scholar seems to regain the upper hand: decorum "gets by" passion. I can't think of a happier find, for anyone, than this poet's hitting upon the dramatic monologue with its built-in distancing and licensing, post-Browning and post-Pound. It let him produce the sinewy, sensual (actually quite sexy), terrifically inspiring poems he should be famous for.

CHARLES NORTH

KIT ROBINSON, Down and Back (1978; The Figures, c/o SPD, 1636 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707; \$3)

You can fill in the spaces in these poems with facts, as Kit Robinson does in "7 Days in Another Town." You only lose the special music like the wind everywhere in these pages. Discrete vowels poke no holes. No tantrums hack. Restrained verse turns credible, mostly jump jump.

On the air waves unidentified announcers yield the mike to accents not very different. "Space assumes the form of a bubble whose limits are entirely plastic." The uncluttered narrative travels noun to exotic noun, Cuzco to St. Louis. Geography's evoked but never painted. You can't put your finger on why you're not confused.

The elegant surface is familiar speech clipped. Work pours from different faucets. The California coast lines reminiscent of George Herbert. A Kenneth Koch classroom device crosses the water. Remote

from accident of time & place, careful report is not easily discerned from hearsay. These lyrics echo galore but never mimic.

GARY LENHART

RON SILLIMAN, SITTING UP, STANDING, TAKING STEPS (1978; Tuumba Press, 2639 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705; \$2)

nominative phrases ("Not nouns.") (sister to questions of "Sunset Debris", a nominative phrase)...When you accept the limits (boundaries) of a SYSTEM, Ron sd. something like, you find you have as much (more) freedom as/than acting (writing) w/o restriction,,,tho (Ambivalence, an autobiography) here: "A system, an argot" (i.e., more or less secret vocabulary & idiom peculiar to a particular group)...Structurally informed, as so much of modern/post writing & music, by possible film form ("A linguistic emulsion" less material difficulty): here, like expansive KETJAK, the loop. Here, a primary loop -- high gray sky, high gray sky, high gray sky. There, repetition w. montaged expansion (w. slight variation: slips in the gate, the refrigerator comes on, lose count thinking of if then). Beg. w. surrounding objects then drifting to past or possible realize & returning, modelly mind of the sitter (doubtless tho culled from long times notebooks); strains (man, hippie, San Francisco, language, things, Ron) & disconnectednesses & altered recurrences (wrecks in dill weed, Afro blow-outs) & silly alliterations & "Color films of dead people" (MM on platform, strains of blond, deep, deep red; duck soup) &&&. Man (pink blouse, bruise on her thigh, mole on upper lip, the bitterness, constant knocker, cheeselike discharge, itchy balls, cumshot, rim job, butch, good buddy, bachelors together, her, Her), (the planet, foodstamp office, Phil Whalen, Kefir), (bay, fog, China, Paradise Cafe gone, fern bar, towaway zone, bay, cappucino, Alcatraz, meter maid, Patty, San Quentin, Brown, morning in North Beach, Chinatown, Rincon Annex, China, a restful orange, bridge, pompadour sheriff's yacht), "language" (pronomial anaphor, an attitude toward the verbal, more pronomial anaphors), Ron (list lover, strains of blond, calm blue eyes), hardly a trace of commie. 3 kinds of prose, 2 kinds of films. Brief tune long solo shape advanced bebop, like Eric Dolphy on "Serene" on OUT THERE, snap back at end, had forgot where you started.

HENRY HILLS

JOHN TAGGART, Dodeka (1979; Membrane Press, PO Box 11601 Shorewood, Milwaukee, WI 53211; \$3)

A sturdy, bright, compact text forever looking around its own corners. Its wordstock of haunting imagery is validly (=strongly) processed, and

sings anew certain old stories, this crystal as a paradise where slain gods are resurrected. Its fable studies transgression and wild meat so vividly it could be read as Marcel Detienne's Dionysos slain set to a new measure. Since the Self selfing is the sole voice of Conjunction, I tend to prefer the wilful to the canonic intentional, yet the strict charm of this important poem lies just there where unconscious and conscious programming mingle. There is a lucid (though typo-deviled) preface by Robert Duncan that generously explores the double genesis of the poem.

ROBERT KELLY

TECKEN (Malmö Kunsthall, Box 17127, S-200 10 Malmö 17, Sweden; \$13)

compiled from an international visual poetry and language art show held in 1978 sweden, made up of works by over 100 poets and artists from 25 countries, divided into several major sections -- letters, signs, writing, notations-grafics, book, reviews, and sound -- each with a host of sub-sections, TECKEN presents a wide variety of approaches artists and visual poets use to mix/merge/blur medias and language. scattered throughout are essays, mostly in french and german, some english, but the works themselves easily jump the language barrier.

KARL KEMPTON

THE MONOLOGICAL MIRROR

THE NO ONE, Unwritten (1979; The Press, El Gizeh; gratis)

This book addresses the sensuous and invisible difference of mythos and logos, sustaining the motion away from symmetry and away from the spiral. A stationary motion in which the "faring-well" does not entail the whirlpool of arrival.

Symmetry and spiral are the two inherited forms of the mirror: in the first, an object is re-flected into its image; in the second, the object is de-flected into its analogon. If symmetry freezes the mirror into a similarity of objects, and if the spiral (the baroque form of symmetry) is the oscillation of the mirror between two dissimilar objects, then neither can be said to attain the condition of the monological mirror.

The activity of the monological mirror defeats the duplicity of both pleonasm and tautology as pleonasm, while setting forth, through tautology as predication, the hypostasis of transcendence (red *is* red, where the predicate red, however, *is not* red).

The metaphorical value of the etymon in the predicated noun (the red) inaugurates the difference burgeoning out of the verb of predication (is is not).

The presence of predication in tautology articulates the monological mirror which, by transcending the inclusive devices of symmetry (image) and spiral (analogon), constitutes the possible world of exclusion.

While this mirror negates the double, it admits the double as negation and therefore as cruelty (Artaud). Cruelty, then, is naming performed in the absence of a name. This naming is the *going where we already are* (Heidegger), which cannot be the competential place of the name but rather the event of the absent name (baptism as an act of exclusion).

The presence of naming and the absence of name yields the notion of a book which cannot be written but only read by implication. The book-written is, in fact, the doubling-over of decrepit rhetorical figures (it refers back to the content of persuasion); the book-read-by-implication is the unearthing of the content of exclusion through the very same figures.

If rhetoric is the turning of language into the figures of language, then cruelty is the turning of its figures back into language. Aposiopesis, for instance, would cease to be the name of a willful surrender to reticence and become the arrowing source of the monologue.

LUIGI BALLERINI and RICHARD MILAZZO

SUSIE TIMMONS, Hog Wild (1979; Frontward Books, 334 E. 11th Street, New York, NY 10003; \$1)

First of all...

Own this book! Susie Timmons is an original nutso genius brilliant and anything she does is worth seeing and this (a collection of poems and drawings) is one of those things.

Second of all...

When you go *Hog Wild*, what hangs in the balance is...everything. On the other hand, when you go to write a hog wild poem or (gasp!) work of art, all that hangs in the balance is whether or not you get a "good" poem--not very exciting.

Susie Timmons goes nutso genius and what appears looks like a poem and it's definitely okey-doke. "We are the Spanish Harps/Vwing Vwing Vwing." "Keep on going old sappy head." More than okey-doke. As good as going to see *Superman* or eating breakfast.

And when she can't be totally wild, sometimes, she slips in something

like: "In the meantime, the African map/in the bathroom ripples and crawls/is burning up, like on Bonanza...." This ain't bad. I keep reading.

But then there are the times when the bottom drops out on a *Hog Wild* work, not because of a lapse of energy or nutso-genius, but because some sense (no matter how mere or anti-academic) of French Image via 60's New York breathes its hot halitosis on her exquisite lunatic ear and makes her mind go literary on her...and this is awful...not because these above-mentioned influences are bad (they're usually good...at least for giving language a certain humor and attractive quality so lacking in most other influences around these days).... It's just that when you've got Spanish Harps vwing vwing vwinging through slappy head western zealot studies in the works, why would you want to fart around with "dream city of romance, deft shadings" or "fallen like oaken shade/down elusive avenues."

It might be unfair to blame a writer for not being brilliant all the time, but I don't think that's what's happening here.

I could say that Susie Timmons is a young writer whose writing will get better and eventually become so original that you won't notice the influences. That's fucked up...if only for about 10 reasons.

The main struggle going on in these poems is one between truly hog wild work that includes influences that make you go more hog wild, and the *well-rewarded urge (at least among poets) to make your work look and sound like poetry*, even if that happens to be comfy-social, experimental, abstract, image, sound, lyric, afro, yiddish, emotional, decorative, narrative, personal, translated poetry.

Read this book. It's a good book. Then consider the possibilities. Then put them as far out of your mind as possible and go HOG WILD. I know Susie's going to and I can't wait to see the next batch of results.

ED FRIEDMAN

ROSMARIE WALDROP, The Road is Everywhere or Stop this Body (1978; Open Places, Box 2085 Stephens College, Columbia, MO 65201; \$3)

What I understand in Rosmarie Waldrop's linguistics rides effectively on the road that is everywhere, in 'the bloodstream', and 'the difference between here and / here...' 'flows like ink'. Signs of 'wrong way', 'points east', 'junction', 'scenic overviews', 'construction', 'slippery when wet', flash to the eye past the imperative of stop. In an aside referring to a poem of my own Rosmarie wrote 'there are *no* marks on the

macadam, here': the last poem declares 'there's no trace / of the passage / no improbable footprint / or tire mark / sitting in my own obstacle'.

ANTHONY BARNETT

DIANE WARD, Theory of Emotion (1979; Segue/O Press, 300 Bowery, New York, NY 10012; \$2)

I/you. If the mind of the woman's voice, this positive gesture in a fact of feeling *that* farce, the desiring element in the change in intending, an extruding emotion over facing tongue, lapsable. "In the heat... ..into for hours." -- One/two/others. The ongoing elimination of *worthless* elements through the elevation of *worthwhiles*, and the tonal difference between the thought and the word for the gesture of selection, and the (barely) multipliable noneliminative personae. "two hands per person... ..reproduce." -- He/them. Or the repetition *could, not* stop, in an intellective movement strong over chance, the nonevasive triumph of this (this *one*) axis of arranging the pronominal motivative mind in sentencing its years, any ear this time. "He mingles... ..to them." -- She/you. Such that no imitative gestures unfold of the imitative life, or, no, no extremitous life stubbornly itself into reduceable speech; that that is the weary isolation of mind (speech) surrounded by speech (mind). "She stops... ..she repeats." -- You. With which the at last isolate pronoun performs furthered noun, the heady off-cutting of sample and concomitant tribulation; breathing nebulous specifics into exact studied air, a temperature through which to mount an alphabet. "by the window... ..and run away." -- You/I/we/ "Darling" The center of an immovable constellate of fluctuant invariable or curvaceous experience, the tendency to drive, an insurgent motion words make over lips over valves over life; over the need to repair. "Darling, visual acoustics... ..the basis of representation"

ALAN DAVIES

DIANE WARD, The Light American (1979; Jawbone, c/o 1920 S Street NW #506, Washington, DC 20009; \$2)

What's left is a bigger opening... Light play brightness & dark. All grey... Leaves about to feet about to luck about to company about to rationalize about to further about to catch about to feel about to direct about to past about to nude about to fall about to turn about to sharp about to wake about to mistakes about to cushion about to match about to soak about to answer us another big one relation lotus one

postcard size social comment the stuck immigration very big broad dark over at ends of halls or around corners sort of in social scenes leaning a powerful finger for you... Eye me beyond the scratch mark able to or able to understand. Time to rub them out. Time considers what gets close & rubs them out... Gum worded up... Son of restless clarity... The attractions are depth humor pain & loss of manipulation the power to pull you from security the creator of desire... Trigger two reactions: silent movies... Isolated movement like reaction to another movement real outside. You're the movement & the tune 'blue moon' is the single sound you hear... Please confuse us more, keep us interested we're creative please tell us you don't and then do... Be volumes of *History* world of solitary... I'm the confiscated tactile agent of reductive aesthetics... Out with nerves. The main brain shut down nerve... Cover over mistakes. Takes place same moment. Voice underneath the place confines us... ...art being more academic than writing in the sense of cloudy... The color aura the sound disaccord... Intrinsic limits to peripheral vision & bottomless jerked motion implications to every word... The taste's the same & what goes what goes in limited and packages are packages contents and got involved money and unwrapping and stacked sounds of symbols and unwrapping insect conversations and idioms and meat and meat and issues and what goes in eliminated and sound obsolete a communicator and way back first eye contact and what was called nostalgia and constant non-movement feet compacted into motion as if through a garden from the ground vibrations from the rails couples... Lush dialogue & the sound of tongues licking... Reflect personal historical fingers masks at night & alone music & musical language a willingness to disarrangements annotated happiness... And the room fills with people encases by invisible flowing atmospheres dulls movement words are one by one instantly recorded & forgotten like all relationships there're no more relationships.

(Text excerpted by BRUCE ANDREWS)

DOUBLE OR QUIT

GEOFFREY WARD, Double Exposure (1978; Infernal Methods, c/o David Trotter, Dept. of English, University College, Gower Street, London, England)

The afferent idiom through which the best writing now takes the measure of its own compass-work is often a Pyrrhic triumph. The reader will be quick to resign from a text which seems to be all strategy and no tactics; the cost of absolutely interminable resuscitation of active reading is a greater number of casualties than even poetry has been used to.

We're unable to estimate the outcome; meanwhile we can look to Double Exposure as a characteristic advance. This new order of work exposes the volume of social inscriptions which seem of a piece in sharing momentum. If there seem to be points of control over this momentum they are points where the effects of control are produced: such is a judge or an author. Superimposed on the homeostat is a group of fixatives, cultural ready-mades, media phrasing, the hyperbolic naivete of poetic sentiment, the prayer-negotiation/poem as visualization of Truth. The work is at once a filatory of jumping threads and the impasto design its after-band -- a double exposure on one plate -- her dress, like her language, is a galimatias of several countries.

Contrast the maieutic, parliamentary drain on poetic resource which has wide currency, the prosecution of tabloid epiphanies for which Double Exposure is satiric depository ("We're kept snug and amused as TV innards newsreels old workmates repeats and their catchphrases rerun on similar lines below"). The routine theology is cued, made imploringly histrionic, and is precisely contravened by cat-calling, writing the oath, with its physical counterpart the excretion. References to punk rock recall this profanation of the Host (the Pistols vomiting on their audience) of which the typical exemplar must be the invert Howard Hughes with his cultivation of dead matter: hair, nails, urine. The principle of work is writing as e-elimination, the expulsion of dead truths -- "wipes away dirt like a dream" -- wastrel action as the only freedom in art, writing as rubbish -- "pertinent; essential; the most intricate presence in our entire culture" (Prynne) -- burning on the city limits, pushing itself in every sense into the margin.

The greater part of what is still referred to as the avant-garde is still concerned for wheedling re-valuation, the vulgarization of Truth as a positive control, justice dispensed as a pill. (There is supposed to be an 'alternative' society, an 'alternative' truth: "Pretence that times are changing outside technology".) On the face of it, Double Exposure assigns itself to Nietzschean de-valuation of all values, and in fact the stages of a career in Ward have the delightful consistency of inversion; the early interest in TM leads him from the cultivated nomadics of Tales from the Snowline directly to the indecent politics of Double Exposure: a movement from passive to active nihilism, a 'Buddhism of action'.

The commonplace poetry of to-day is inefficient through misalligation of one or another substantiation of its presence. But new work can excise the ground of any such operation by "damage to / and peeling of / the original negatives", an ablatitious force that diminished gravitation to given meta-discourse, seen as the negative of photographic print. The contemporaneity of 'double exposure' is exact: the way The Orators was, the way Behind The State Capitol still is.

ROD MENGHAM

BARRETT WATTEN, Plasma/Paralleles/"X" (1979; Tuumba Press, 2639 Russell, Berkeley, CA 94705; \$2)

Three poems written in the manner of seemingly unconnected statements -- the statements standing by themselves to point to the fact of their being statements, sentences. As words are put together to form sentences, sentences are (*i.e.*, have been) put together to convey extended meaning -- in Watten, this process broken down (examined) by dissociating the sentences, drawing attention to the statements as they stand alone embodying their meaning -- their meaning nowhere essentially contiguous with what is outside each of themselves. (Always within a subtly reserved partially enigmatic decorum of his own device.) Contempt for narrative. An attack on (analysis of) coherent thoughts or statements to build on each other and form meaning, along with the intentions thereby implied. Watten is not making these statements as statements of his beliefs -- they are possible beliefs only, and show themselves to be such -- thereby confounding the usual purpose of statements -- to express opinions -- and instead pointing out how statements work, why opinions are of no real consequence. Showing what the statements do by themselves. The reader wrenched around in each statement by the force of the language -- directly from the structure -- not the thoughts, ideas, viewpoints expressed therein and made almost irrelevant to the work. But not entirely irrelevant. Since there is a studied intelligence operating in the selection of the statements. Almost all contain coherent meaning, if slight surrealistic tinges at times. They do lead the reader to think about their content. But this can't be why they are the way they are. Because they sabotage their own referential content by disconnecting it, by making it indigenously indecipherable.

This identifies an important problem for writing: meaning, and the lack of meaning, and what (how) meaning means. There seem to be two levels to this problem: (1) How language conveys meaning, and (2) How meaningful (significant, important) can that meaning be. See these words be words. We are now seen to be dealing with the problems of language from so deeply enmeshed in language, that it begins to sound tautological and inane. But it isn't. It would certainly be pleasant to see someone confront in their work both these two levels of the problem at once and tie them together, rather than either ignorantly leaping in the supposed direction of the meaning with no concern for the only way one can arrive there -- through language -- as most poets have done; or alternatively, concentrating on the intricacies of how language works to the exclusion of any further examination of the ramifications of meaning and its import to our lives in the broadest sense of it being able to invest them with that meaning.

Watten is definitely working on how language conveys meaning. The nuggets he presents also promote an outside content, but it is given a back seat, the structure becoming the work. After Plasma and Paralleles,

"X" further destroys statements by taking them apart and leaving only the pieces of statements. Holding enough weight and inertia in themselves as fragments to become words in positions already outlined in advance by the structure of the language. Bereft of context. Thereby disturbing, disappointing, unpleasant while insightful. (Watch Watten look into his own writing.) The words pointing to themselves -- objects, things, tend to become the focus of our attention -- the words as objects sticking out to the point of starkness. Also, peripherally, there are glimpses of a worried dream, even a conflicted personality embedded in the work. This can't be written off as unreal, nor taken as Watten himself showing through the work. More possibly -- articulated pieces of our destroyed future here to look at (read) -- even to enjoy taking place in the present on the page.

I want this momentum to destroy any discourse on
the way things work. -- Paralleles

What is arrived at through this form of examination is certainly not the text itself, not even something *toward* that text, only an additive parallel to the original. A tracking. As the concept of "plasma" -- a terribly inadequate attempt at arriving at *the form* of the fundamental substance of matter being taken apart by heat and compression (destroyed), considering what that form really is -- a basically indecipherable quantum, an as yet unknown factor -- X.

DAVID BENEDETTI

HANNAH WEINER, Virgin (1978; A Hundred Posters, c/o Davies, 689 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11230; \$1)

After seeing "The Last Wave" (the Australian movie in which Richard Chamberlain discovers he's a psychic through his relationship with some urban aborigines). I've often thought about the curse aspect of "the gift". It must be terrifying to have total recall (and precall?) of a given situation. So I imagine Hannah Weiner's technical dilemma to be the control of the sensory tide at her fingertips. In Virgin she capitalizes, spaces, repeats, misspells, overlaps and squeezes words and word groups as a sculptor would, as if to put some chunks in the stream to stem the flow. The expression "cave writing" comes to mind -- a long spelunking through the urban "dark places" (alley/subway/back of bus seats/desks in school & other walls where expressions are isolated in a "flash"). Hannah describes this process herself when she writes "I can't see lying face down stupid ANDS I write that way." (Virgin, p. 9)

TINA DARRAGH

WRITING AND EXPERIENCING

Writing is unbounded by paradigms, and its paradigms are subsumable consumed by its forms. Associations to a poem's instances are not fixed by its formative instants, to the intervals of perception, thought and experience the words designate. Another reason why, technically, the poem and its elements have no history, no *precedents*. The poem and its elements revive an obsolete definition of that word: prognostication, presage, sign. The words prophesy their return in other spheres of experience. They are repeated as a mirror reproduces a silent effigy of an object and as one harmonic liberates and proliferates its possible modulations. The preceding transformations appear to lead inevitably to a moment, a lyrical configuration that is not only discrete but is also an interval, a transitional point in a rhythmic succession of moments.

*

They repeat themselves, not as a mirror echoes its content, but as one harmonic sound liberates a set of possible related modulations, and simultaneously lends those previous to it the quality of having engendered something unique and specific despite the irrefutable evidence of the senses that the moment was not discrete but was part of a continuity.

*

Ravel and Debussy: The musical dissolve- sudden sonic wipe outs of the interval just heard- sudden lyrical expression or quick aside in writing, a parallactical mode of self-definition.

*

The functions and character of paradigms in poetry are both qualitatively and quantitatively different than in any other writing. Aesthetic intentions are usually paramount, whether the actual instances cited are expressed for historical, emotional, musical, visual, philosophic, political or personal impact. In no other art are these relationships so delicately balanced and so easily misunderstood. In and of itself, for the poet, the production of any poem, or any element in a poem constantly brings the question of the purpose of the paradigm cited immediately to the fore. For this reason, the pulls are strong towards the Scylla of historicity and the Charybdis of obfuscation. In the former the paradigm seems clear: like the poet, the poem moves through the media of time and experience. Since there is no paradigm for poetry- or experience- this is possible and technically acceptable. But the danger here is that a paradigm is, in a hidden way, even in a deceptive way, being re-introduced. That paradigm might run

like this: since I am a poet, my consciousness is a poetic process and instants of that consciousness are markings on a map of my poetic geography. Again, technically, this is true, and even necessary to take into account when writing poetry. But when this mode is established as a paradigm there is a radical reduction in the scope of a poem and the scale of the elements are too rigidly established on a one-to-one basis vis-a-vis each other.

*

The chant and the song elude the limitations of linear narration by means of the "haunting" refrain. Through harmonic, repeating, reverberating, echoing and iconographic alternation the "flicker" effect of language transcends the "flat" character of historicism. To historicism, ambiguity is a threat, as is projection, because it is experienced as intrusive, too immediately and suddenly intersubjective, and not easily subject to the ordinary processes of remembering.

*

The mutative relationship of poetry to art is akin to that of philosophy to science, science to technology, technology to the art of communication, art to language arts, etc.

*

The problematics of space = the problematic of the human relationship to space.

*

The same for matter and time.

*

What is the relationship of this to the appeal of *density*, or rapid experiences of strong emotional impact directly juxtaposed against the material facticity of language?

*

"[My sense of language is that it is matter and not ideas- i.e. printed matter. (R.S. June 2, 1972)]"

The Writings of Robert Smithson, edited by Nancy Holt, N.Y., New York University Press, 1979, p. 104

*

Writing is fixed and sustained in mediums like paper, stone, metal and plastic. Experience is fixed through re-enactment and is sustained by emotional memory. Writing and experience have dissimilar flows, partly caused by their dissimilar mediums- one static, non-human and

inorganic, the other utterly physical and recognizable by movement. Only the experience of reading adds an experiential character to writing. In any case, like a forgotten ruin or monument, it continues to haunt us in its facticity as object. But writing is best understood unread, or most recognizable by its paradoxical relationships to memory, and thereby to actual experience. Writing is characteristically monumental, not so much in memory, but in reading, particularly in re-reading. So that re-reading adds a new dimension to reading- the characteristically parallax quality in poetry is related to its projective devices. These give an overtone, an afterimage to the time directly before and after reading poetry, of meaning that is akin to the meanings derived for assessing experiences, but not its exact double.

*

The prevailing distinction between poetry and rhetoric illustrates one ordinary instance of the *au courant* literary distinction between "writing" and "writing about." But the difficulties some people have with fragments in art is a similar aesthetic reaction that prefers the extended prose piece- which apparently has all the virtues of the energy implicit in a rhetorical flow of writing without rhetoric's disposability- to the "short poem." So "writing" would be synthesizing its own structure while "writing about" would somehow be presupposing some external referent or axis of explanation. Poems are universes because of the parallax relationship of words between and words within languages.

*

The poem and the reader are equidistant from the meaning of the poem.

*

My secret: to know that I am withholding something. Your secret: to know that I am withholding something.

*

Remembering is partly an encumbrance the art of writing carries due to its synthesizing function in the formation of memories, and history (sequencing of experiences).

*

As historicism partly collapses in the movement generated by technological advances in both recording and retrieving memory traces (like the recovery of the icons of Tut and the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and the encoded languages of the contemporary computer tape) language continuously revives its function in writing, through its power to reflect the full range of representations of experiential reality in the mind, in its familiar, obscure, human experience in thought and feeling.

Language today (as depicted in Godard's Alphaville and Weekend) is the enemy of the state and historicity because of its power to germinate systems antithetical to custom because custom is partly dependent on coded laws. Historicism allies itself with words, knowing its actual scale values but distrusting its changeability (translate instability). Taking language truly seriously as a partly known, unknowable form of energy is instantly recognizable to historicism as an antithetical challenge. Historicism debunks efforts to reify poetic language, except sometimes in art and art history (as in the manifestoes of Dada). Words closely seen are mirrors of consciousness, tones of thought and feelings, traces and bones of human experience and not simply mechanical reproductions and manipulations of the processes of memory, of the visualization of the causalities of historical development, the interlocking links of historical narrative, the imagistic jig-saw puzzles of traditional poetic formalism.

*

Even though most fiction and theater would have it the other way around, there is actually no point in personifying the essences of human experience. Reenacted experience, if it is to speak to us in a language that has authentic possibilities of extension, a conceivable actual practicability for intersubjective contact, cannot simply mime the faces, gestures and expressions that seemingly originated its conception. It is for this reason that poetry is ultimately the most realistic of all human expressions in that it places absolute realistic clarity and empathy about psychological, political and existential experiences to the side of encompassing, in all its variable senses of exemplification, the pure essence of experience. Of course in purely temporal terms, this is a very long range view of practicality. Other sorts of practicality certainly have their uses for human endeavors. Still, the signs of these gestures, the naming of moments that codify instantaneously human communication - "we all see this" - we imagine we connect to those feelings in memory. Memories are followed by language like paths leading in from various directions. Though the faces of those moments are their histories, the inner core of consciousness is not a film or mirror but a series of hieroglyphs. It is a map - a specific array of markings - lines and points and variable distances and durations: ever wandering, oboes babbling in counterpoint in memory following the motive of the main and developed themes curiously dogging them. Wandering touches of felt experiences enfolded by the inner thoughts surrounding them - not one - not even a thousand voices could fully characterize that resolution. It is heard in one voice, but it is spoken at once in all languages that is its own language.

*

Poetry reconnects the occurrence and the instance.

*

parallax- the apparent change in the position of an object resulting from the change of direction or position from which it is viewed.

*

tide day- at any point the time between two successive high tides.

*

We can get an approximation of experience in words in that memories, because of their ambiguous character, in the reading and relating of words to the subtleties of actual experience, reenact the meanings we applied to experiences, just as we reenact the meanings we apply to the sequence of words. When we say to ourselves, in reading, "That's how I feel" or "That's how I see it myself" we are often tempted to underline the words we were reading when we experienced the feeling of comprehension. Yet then, strangely, when we return to read the underlined words reading that particular passage doesn't still hold the meaning we had imagined it held.

*

"There is no need to be astonished at the part played by words in dream-formation. Words, since they are nodal points of numerous ideas, may be regarded as destined to ambiguity." Sigmund Freud, Interpretation of Dreams

*

Experience is spoken not only in its own key but derives its language from all aspects of every element of being. Writing the experience, writing about experience, writing. Language creates itself out of the necessities for marking the trail- to mark a path:- but it defines its own aspects of reflecting on or from itself, its *umbr*e. Commentary and accompaniment, companion, map and decoder, the thought process in its daily use is too often recoiled from when it is dense with multilayered ideas, criticized as "too" intellectual, "too" inward, narcissistic: as if thinking itself were worse than watching television, or reading, or seeing movies, or writing about experiences. For the poet, thinking *is* writing.

*

The power of an idea does not solely consist in its groundedness in being.

*

"I further had a suspicion that this discontinuous method of func-

tioning of the system Pcpt.-Cs. [perceptual consciousness] lies at the bottom of the origin of time." Sigmund Freud, A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad (1925)

*

Reading, like perception, fades out and in. But it would be more correct to say that it juxtaposes simultaneous types of thinking that are ordered in a way similar to the way sentences join together words of different types. As if illogicality could get you there, thought reaches out for, but is touched by anyway, the places some of the thoughts travel to that words don't reach, exactly. Waves are repetitious- thought is repetitious- something like tides. No two exactly the same yet the times are predictable. The moon stays exactly the way it is, slightly off-setting the full gravity of the Earth. Steady, but, understandably, not perfectly steady. Also, thought must be re-ordered into grammatical order. Yet it never quite keeps up with the latest stylistic requisites. Its beauty is not exactly the same as that of language. Thought is free but alone in its freedom. It can't be fully socialized- yet it can compare its truth to that of language.

*

"Timelessness is found in the lapsed moments of perception, in the common pause that breaks apart into a sandstorm of pauses."

Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan", p. 94, The Writings of Robert Smithson

*

Writing offers to experience a third eye, a parallactical measure and scalar key to the relations between communicable and non-communicable states of perception and being. Reading offers to experience not a mirrored double but a third voice, an harmonically variable scale that may in the literal sense graphically represent states of being, just as a certain grouping of notes may "represent" alternate modes of enharmonic and intervalic overtones. Polyphonic *ekstasis*, the reading experience translates a multiple text of felt interactions. Experience is read aloud, reading signifies a return to silence. Writing is enshrined in the heart of experience. "All life exists to end in a book." The ending is within the beginning at every juncture, which fragments the impulse to translate reading experience from writing it. Writing, by reviving experience transposes involuntary memories into present ones. In advance, the mind, set on record, transposes what would be free associative and dreamlike states into statements. Returned to the workings of language, experience is felt to be on the other side of the mobius strip. Reread, language is a hieroglyph of experience, but a script both of experience and silence, blankness.

*

Equals=equals==. Scratches are the equivalent of signatures, the spirit of the totem's reification is retouched, carved, and wears away. Spoken aloud, thought is heard and felt, is *touching*, moving.

*

being carried along
was supposed to be in form
when the replica began to fade
before that, time is (was) imprecise
exactly itself without moral tones

*

By listening awkwardly (not like in conversation where the overtones are potentially embarrassing) this voice declines concentration on the dictates of one particular stage in the argument. While the observer has his/her eye in unremitting concentration on the inevitable, the reader is deftly persuaded to reenact, in silent assent, the genesis of an apparently random sequence of images.

*

I can't use the predictions anyway. I see them only in retrospect.

*

Instances follow upon the other invoking an internal sequencing of experiences. The substantiation of these instances framed in an accumulative pattern form an aggregate point of realization. The ideas that emerge most fully contrasted within the aggregate constellation of scaled images stimulate conceptualizations about the presumed pre-supposed internal structure.

*

not...but

NICK PIOMBINO

REMEMBER TO SEND US YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES

AND TO SUBSCRIBE TO VOLUME THREE

DEAR L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E,
Vive le
différance,

NOW THAT'S
WHAT I'D CALL
POLITICAL WRITING!

THE WEALTH OF SO
CITIES IN WHICH THE
CAPITALIST
Production prevails
appears as an immense
collection of commodities. The in-
famous

AY

IF YOU DON'T
KILL
TED KENNEDY
YOU'LL NEVER
KNOW
WHO DID

E.C.D.C.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I think the problem of being in bad faith, if you will, vis a vis one's political position so-called, is one that everyone who claims any position at all (really everyone, since the claim to no position, political agnosticism, is one as well, and as open to question as any) must deal with forever, whether vigilantly or intermittently. I am absolutely suspicious of those who claim a political righteousness at the expense of others. I am deeply encouraged by those who do politically propagandistic work of whatever kind that manages to encourage others effectively to consider or freshly interpret their own political roles in their social culture without fronting some kind of obligation. The 'social contract' is not some kind of binding obligation, *obviously*. I am basically puzzled at the need anyone feels to point at their role as politically correct or to colleagues' as politically incorrect, since it seems that political change comes not from the recognition of categories but from a revelation of the nature of the functions of social experience as they effect one's life inextricably from effect in others' -- a revelation that takes place through social relations, usually I guess through work. For the likes of us, this *may* be accessible largely through something that happens in literary work, BECAUSE we take our role as literary workers seriously. That role of ours is not likely to be taken seriously by those who aren't writers. Of course there weren't many in Dickens' time who took the role of factory-worker seriously either, outside the factories themselves, and it seems that his writings did make some little differences, both in easing a few burdens and shifting forces around so that the bourgeoisie might sit itself more comfortably on the cushions without the springs poking through. Whether the revelation of the political dilemma of fine artists is of interest to other than other fine artists today or not, certainly it is necessary that artists take note of, respond to, however ambivalently, what that is. State it, *throughout*.

STEVE BENSON

FDA = festival of (dis)appearing art(s) = festival of disappearing acts = disappearing arcts festival = IFDA

(Below is an excerpt from program notes by Marshall Reese and Kirby Malone to the Baltimore-Washington International Festival of Disappearing Arts, which took place in May, 1979, and was sponsored by the Merzaum Collective's Desire Productions.)

"... all these gestures, the angular and abruptly broken attitudes, these syncopated modulations formed at the back of the throat, these musical phrases that break off short, these flappings of insect wings,

these rustlings of branches, these sounds of hollow drums, these creakings of robots, these dances of animated puppets..."

--Artaud (*on the Balinese Theatre*)

The formalization (organization) of a disappearing art(s) festival occurs as an effort to point out & to provide a context for a range of intermedia performance activity that has (dis)appeared continuously in this century, from the work of Dada & Futurism, through Fluxus and Happenings, to now: the Futurists' future. This flow of divergent & convergent elements reintroduces into our network of social machines a set of possible positionings in relationship to art in a social system that predates the Western Industrial "revolution", & in some instances predates verbal rational forms altogether. The disappearing art(s) are made up of a shifting group, nomadic in art activity, bound together by no dogma or theory, evidenced only by the performance event & occasion (which some disappearing artists contend does not end or begin, as in Steve McCaffery's notion of Permanent Performance). Our social indoctrination/conditioning/acculturation often convince us to long for partially or wholly predigested phenomena as the material of our perception, which in part accounts for the subliminal hypnotic hysteria for sameness & cloning that agents such as advertizing make possible in our society. Disappearing art(s) encourage a recognition & constructive appreciation of difference & the ability to work from an apparent chaos. Disappearing art(s) is not a movement, but a tool for viewing, in intuitive & pragmatic manners, a wide spectrum of work: many disappearing artists will never hear of or meet each other: they are disappearing too fast.

An art located moving in a shift of the art's social function(s) -- not to entertain, or to take one's mind off...one's troubles, but to put one's mind on those troubles, supportive of the impulse(s) to social change: -- no more escapist literature or an afternoon's aesthetic diversions. Disappearing art(s) move counter to the virtuoso & the expert, and counter to manipulation, coercion, sentimentality, melodrama, and mystification. The mechanisms of characterization, narrative and psychology falter in respect to the tension and possibility of each other. An art located moving may appear as a blur, which the distinctions of theater, dance, and literature cannot contain. & the disappearing art(s) disappear with no funds. Arts funding sources are designed to, at best, support ventures that fall within strict categories.

A focal impulse in the work is that made up by the social specifics where if a decision of intent or meaning is made, it is not made by the performers. The disappearing act is not a performed work imposed on a passive audience, but a record of the interactivities between a particular artist & the larger group of audience & artist.

The disappearing art(s) are (dis)appearing -- combining numerous forms of theater, dance, poetry, video, music and other media. The (dis)-appearing art(s) disappear in (out of) order that who was watching may decide for themselves. The traditional response modes steer a shadowy audience, conducted through television, spectator sports, & pornography, toward a system that will make their decisions for them. Vocals, motion, music, visuals construct an event that is social before artistic, for a reason that the mechanisms by which one judges/perceives the event cannot be those trained on a "pure" form, but are ones which appear beside the (dis)appearance (as one beside oneself). The media of the disappearing act construct an event in which the training by which one judges an event cannot impede what one is watching in relation to who one is while watching it.

KIRBY MALONE & MARSHALL REESE

LALLY

MY WORK

I see all my work as serial -- as in the relationships between the parts within them (stanzas, paragraphs, lines, sentences, parenthetical statements, phrases, words, meanings, syllables, abbreviations, letters, and their various subdivisions (consonants, vowels, number seventeen on a scale of one to twenty-six, the other twenty-five, pretty ones, ugly ones, long ones, short ones, linear ones, less linear ones, etc. or words that rhyme, words that look like they rhyme, words that look alike, words that look similar, words that sound similar, words, words that mean similar, words that don't, words that can be repeated more than once and not mean the same thing and words that can't, words that can be repeated more than twice and not mean the same thing and words that can't, etc. or etc.)) and the parts without them (other works, parts of other works, parts of a longer work that they are part of, another part of the book they're a part of, the rest of the book, the same work in another book, part of the same work in another work, etc.) in some cyclic, or other consistently geometric pattern (consistent in the way geometric patterns tend to be by definition) -- but without ever using those kinds of references or those kinds of language (or self-references and abstract language) but instead using the language patterns of speech

as I have heard it and experienced it through reading it and through reading it into whatever I read, or, through reading whatever I read through it, and using the language I love most and love most to use, such as one syllable non descriptive (no matter what "part of *speech*," (as in the way "use" does not "describe" anything we can picture in our imaginations without imposing our own specificity (now the word "specificity" (with five times as many syllable "parts" as "use") does the same thing (force us to impose the particulars if we want to see it -- (but we don't "see" it because, in that sense, it is "abstract" (whereas "use" is not -- which kind of realization has always uncovered a lot of class, race, ethnic origin, and educational background biases to me, just as the obvious display -- i.e. "showing off" -- of "unique" employment of language or the obvious display of the commitment to that goal (the "unique" employment (is "employment" any more specific or abstract than "use" if its use is similar) of language) has always reflected to me standards based on sex, class, race, ethnic origin, or educational background, (this is an "obvious display" of some of my biases)))))) words like "it."

* * * * *

I want to retain as much as possible of what I experience, understand, expect, imagine, etc. that does not *hurt* (or hurt too much too often) me or anyone else ("as far as I can tell") but especially that seems positive or helpful or more "real" (according to my experience-knowledge-perceptions-expectations-etc.) than what other creators offer me (or I have access to or can take in) and to communicate, represent, refer to, express, share, analyze, "show out," place, record, make obvious, insist on, state, describe, "approach" (always with the idea that "truth" can never be *reached* but only approached), intuit, hone, etc. I had the "idea" that I wanted to "speak" from every perspective on the spectrum of my own experience (including imaginative, which, of course, includes my version of the experience of "others" etc. (always amazed at the capacity for more and the essential repetitiveness of *most* experience (including "language experience")) in the language (and/or "voice") discovered in the course of the experimenting, with cross fertilization from one experience to another, e.g. a "language experience" with a "sexual" one, etc. I started out (late 50s) as a musician -- "jazz" and my own variations on various tendencies from rhythm and blues to "serious" -- and visual "artist" -- mostly three dimensional collages constructed as part of the environments I found myself living in and never repeated or moved to the next place (and also experimented with audial -- tape -- constructions, etc.) I see all my writing as one "vast" work, the unevenness just range and high-lights, my own personal favorites include "The South Orange Sonnets" (written as an autobiographical "novel" of my "early life" (before leaving home, i.e. South Orange, New Jersey, 1942-1960), 20 chapters, 14 lines each, "sonnets" in their

serial construction and internally in ways I never saw used before); "My Life" (the ultimate life-as-list jacket blurb litany etc.): "All of the Above": "Oomaloom": the first (title piece), last ("Islands"), and middle ("A/going") pieces in CATCH MY BREATH; etc. I believe my writing continues to keep me "honest" even when at the time I'm writing I don't think it is "honest" enough or "honest" at all, and it has helped me maintain a sense of not only my own dignity and worth, but respect for almost everything else too -- RESPECT for the subject matter of my life and the lives, events, experiences, vocabularies, "personalities," objects, imaginings, etceteras that my life encounters or incorporates from the start -- the "honesty": to speak from that and of that without compromising it to any perspective/structure/aesthetic strategy/ set of standards outside or alien to it (as far as I am capable of judging and controlling) e.g. "traditional," "academic," "W.A.S.P.," "middle-class intellectual," or "declassé," or "decadent," or etc. (except where that is a valid part of it and not vice versa) etc. I want it to live in the imaginations of strangers and friends like a movie or a memory or the impact of a work of art, etc.

MICHAEL LALLY

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SELF WRITING / I (lucky thought)

"Private life asserts itself unduly, hectically, vampire-like, trying compulsively, because it really no longer exists, to prove it is alive." (Theodor Adorno, Minima Moralia). "In reality the ego is like the clown in the circus, who is always putting in his oar to make the audience think that whatever happens is his doing." (Freud to Jung, The Freud/Jung Letters). "To accept subjectivity as it exists today, or better, as it does not exist today, is implicitly to accept the social order that mutilates it. The point, however, is not merely to reject subjectivity in the name of science or affirm it in the name of poetry..." (Russell Jacoby, Social Amnesia).

I, I, I, I I, I, I, I. Suppose I don't exist, fuck individualism, by myself, 'I'. I don't make up the world, I'm not self-sufficient, O.K., not master in my own house. Will (the verb I activate) -- not free, not responsible, not consistent, don't blame me.

No need to expose crabbed secrets of the psyche ... to the well organized and systematic scrutiny of some poetic form or strategy. They're always already exposed to language, pretty well organized & systematic, which even creates them, *always first for the context* -- they're worded secrets, coded: *Before you get the chance to cut and direct and reflect and get yourself in control of the flow or at least the flowering of the important parts* -- I don't act; I'm acted by: *things which eat up intentions, things which are always behind the one who is labelling...* My unveiling (call it the demystification function of writing) places me in a system, that code, *continuous logic of structures -- institutions* -- of which I'm the faintest idea, small changes. A structuralist view, then, as a critique. *It had been written by me. Only not by me. It had written me.*

I had an invincible desire to clutch language itself through my most recent values. But I'm a dictionary, language castrates me. Individual experience is primary?, that's a myth, especially now, administered capitalism, forces of control over... the resolutions we initiated, over the revolutions, I don't like psychology, environmental custody, social phenomena are there in the background, or the words coming through, and... Precisely at that point: vanish.

I just know how to work myself, or what I think's myself when it's really writing rooting around in the gym of language. Free play of meaning in writing overshadows and disperses me, it undermines my raps' autonomy, bio style, just like unconscious desire undermines an ego, orphans me, disrupts a narcissistic dream of me-present-to-me, me & you (the fusion of classified information with a body). THE APPARATUS OF

THE OTHERNESS FAILS or UNIFICATION. How Many Times Must I Marry Myself: the book opened like a vagina. But remember: 'I'm an effect, of language, breaking up the scene at the mirror -- (I was captivated with this vision ... this is me I see!... I dissolved into it) -- differences, separation, absence, meaning, all that. All part of the motion away from our mothers. The gesture completed when we became the bigger boys and did some of the beating. I could really identify with all those structures they put in my head to get out of our heads what was there first. When I joined the system, the men made me one of them but to do that they had to make me one a single solitary one to begin with. NOTHING TO DO BUT LIE HERE AND COME APART. I knew it wasn't really my imagination that was making this scene it was the cops, the Law, who controls who, who even distributes the name 'who' & who 'me'? and why why? We taught him our standards, which weren't ours. Secondhand -- you know the rules -- ... I hate machines and systems... but I got to admit I'm enjoying the respite.

Apprenticeship of language = alienation for me, each piece a solemn dedication to the whole -- etc. -- speech matrix / flow. Is the way we feel normal [& stress how we're social & how social we are; socialized, not socialists. We're like a speech, social life speaks right through us] if we normally feel this way, made normal -- with fixed destination, exclusive assignments, flattened out. Even the atmosphere the textures we grope around in are a system now not just pinpricks of the things you notice yourself. The music then was a radio in the night, now it's a system.

When I hear all this talk about systems, I want to say: I don't take dictation. Conventions have limits, and there're dangers in being complacent or rhapsodic about them. The crudeness of socialized instructions needs to let through, between the cracks, individual experience, flower, the confusion of heads to unfold. How self-contained & closed-off is this 'order of language' or 'Law of Culture'? What's in it that guarantees our desire, firsthand, to put together truth, or ethics, or confidence (unless they're just supposed to be byproducts of 'if all goes well' or 'I'm like everyone else' or 'genital normalization' or 'that's taboo, decadent, counter-revolutionary, etc.', etc.), etc.

If language is primary and everything we felt was central is really prefab & de-centered, then how does individual experience fit in, how can it loosen up these structures & punch through some barriers : these are some questions : If systems are determining, then is poetry just 'showing language at work' with language now fashionably defined as a system that 'works'? They're always about themselves / (words) driving people away... Or are private worlds upfront & if you say they're 'constituted by language,' O.K., those who come apart first fill up the words later, but language isn't some frozen merchandise. I'm a writer, it's writing, I'm producing it, not just to show its obstacles (I'm a generation of obsta-

cles) but to show them up, disassemble the fixed programs, not just be marched along by them. One dude plays blues harp and makes up lyrics to go with action as the arrests continue...

And all of our selves refusing to be subordinated to the selves most widely recognized, accepted... To want a poetry that has room for me, knots & shields, my tunnels and locked doors. More than a byproduct of 'the law of one and all,' it starts with some me, our self importance, collisions with speech, fragmented signature, then plugs in but only afterward, when I write, read it, me, then people can share it. Otherwise it's just the conventions of the culture apparatus make us all this way then get us to 'create' its way & feed us the need to make it, succeed. Remember when 'the system' had obvious negative overtones? Is this rage for codes & systems & structuralism in the 70's more than a tidying-up of our regret & frustrated longing for getting beyond it? And the people who know see through the collage we constructed to show them we weren't what they said we would always be but were pieces of all the things we had loved to see others make lives from...

Self-consciousness is being programmed out of existence -- it's all so subjective, as they say -- so, we're more insistent on it? And what other way can we see the world except as extensions of who we are or would like to be ... Things meant or did not exist, they seemed to have to mean something beforehand, firsthand, I mean me, in my solipsistic universe, or writing didn't make them mean -- HERE I AM; but this can't mean as much in words as it did in experience. If I record my raps, sometimes appearances, more like a transcript of heart on sleeve, speak louder than words. Voice -- breathless throw made, personalizing, into a verse line, or a rush, a way of lacquering associations for you with a personal speech and asides and memorabilia, the screens of our dreams' imaginations, not just composing with them more freely but back to putting a high note in the bar where my self is. Still, stressing me might at least give writing a whiff of what defines 'us' struggling for autonomy (whether it's blacks, feminists, bisexuals, street queens, working class renegades, or what) and in those struggles highlighting the person may (helpfully or unreflectively) be just sunk in the language of defense -- against what's deformed & pre-formed about what's outside (all the social, the norms). We have our codes too, let's use them to interpret our experience in ways they'll have to stretch to understand.

Now, some (usually white heterosexual American professional-class male) writers write about 'the death of the author' or 'the de-centered self' or how 'a system of signifying practices constitutes the subject as a precipitate of unconscious discourse inscribed in response to the basic lack produced as the determinative network of oedipal triangulation supercedes the imaginary identifications of the ego,' etc. They weren't telling their stories. Well maybe their chance to go beyond the self &

give writing freer play is like class privilege -- an elaborated code. Stressing a me filters & squeezes what the writing does -- it's a restricted code, *language that is accessible to the people I come from*, but it allows me to speak to who 'I' need to speak to, including 'me': to *decrease that chasm of semantics*.

The necessary extension. Not to be privatized in a single self because I didn't see how privatized even my attempts to make the self infinitely expansive might seem to others less hounded by *my need to be in everyone*, to publicize a private mythology in order to share it, *thinking I'm still in the movies, it's an outside telephone booth*. To make me universal (I come out with myself & find / everyone), not symbolically as a language so much as a pretty irreducible concrete thing, body, that can be anyone everyone displaced disguised -- persona -- *mistaken for black, for gay, for straight, for older, for younger for bigger for better for richer for poorer for stupider for smarter for somebody else,...* I never talked about making distinctions. He was him. I am 2 of us... spending much of my energy identifying with all kinds of people I wasn't...

Shifters. To shift all around a lot, but a little in a vacuum, can never fully accept that the firm ground for any pirouettes in writing is *the language proves itself*. And if language is writing, it's writing writ large not just *this is about me now*. In fact, there are no immediate first hand things in writing -- not 'remembrance of my life' & not 'my eye ball view'. Everything's mediated, that is, it's written -- *this this this*. There's a whole complicated 'transformational process' separating my 'private materials' from any publicity, since reading is social. Peril to ignore this. It's writing as the whole mediation, not *distracted by some shit or sex or need to be me and say it*. That drawback is always feeling the meaning (the sharing) has to pass directly through that filter of 'I' -- an identification, an interpretation, a star system, *making the decisions for everybody, the audience was what he was fucking*. Property is an extension of the self, if it's time and space that's mine forever. I must become less imperative.

Poets primary interest is not always *Language more or less collectively, true*, but where we begin is a simple love & growing understanding of language's hidden orders. VALUES IN THE DENIAL OR OURSELVES. For even to get an exemplary grip on my selves I have to see how society & language set up a context which produces the possibilities & limits the meanings I can create, and you too. I'm in eclipse. *I guess it's you. I don't exist yet*. It was a temporary victory, but what victory isn't temporary, huh?

BRUCE ANDREWS

[*Italicized portions above are from Michael Lally's work; this essay, in part, a part of my continuing response*]

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