

OPENNEDZINE

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*web addresses, e-mail
addresses and bold
text are clickable hyper-
links*

photo Rachel Warriner and
Jimmy Cummins, co-
organisers of SoundEye

Image © Nat Raha

OPENNED NEWS

OPENNED READINGS

The Openned Reading series returns on October 27th in a new venue, Corsica Studios, London. Admission is free. Go **here** for more details of the event.

OPENNED PRESS

Thanks to everyone who came to the launch of Richard Parker's *from The Mountain of California ...* at Carnivale, London on 18th August. Copies of Richard's book are available to buy from the Openned Press site **here** and you can see photos of the event **here** in the Zine.

OPENNED BOOK TABLE

Thanks to everyone who came and contributed to the Openned

Book Table at Café 1001, London on 7th August. The Café now has a healthy stock of poetry books for its patrons to read free of charge.

OPENNED EYES

David-Baptiste Chirot is curating an online exhibition of visual poetry for Openned. Check out **the article** in this issue of the Zine for more information.

MORDEN TOWER VIDEOS

Linus Slug organised a reading in memory of Barry MacSweeney at Morden Tower on 27th June. Alongside the event a new edition of **FREAK-LUNG** was launched, Odes (n-inerrors 2010), a poetic engage-

ment with the work of Barry MacSweeney. **Here**, you can see video of the event. Thanks to Jeff Hilson for filming it.

WRITERS FORUM - JENNIFER PIKE COBBING'S 90TH BIRTHDAY VIDEOS

The Writers Forum workshop celebrated Jennifer Pike Cobbing's 90th birthday on 10th July at the Betsey Trotwood, London. The workshop featured some work specially prepared for the occasion. **Here**, we present a full chronological video document of the event. Thank you to Jeff Hilson for filming it all.

EDITORIAL welcome to the first issue

By Alex Davies & Steve Willey

The Openned Zine is setting out with one intention: to provide poets, publishers and organisers with a space to document activities and to publicly present explanations, thoughts, ideas and opinions that may not necessarily be representative of a final response.

The past couple of months have been great for poetry. Starting with the Morden Tower reading organised by Linus Slug, through Jimmy Cummins', Rachel Warriner's and Trevor Joyce's SoundEye via Emily Critchley's and Carol Watts' Greenwich Cross-Genre Festival, these one-off events have been accompanied by the usual mix of UK-wide activity, from The Other Room to Chlorine, Desperate For Love to the Blue Bus, and the Situation Room.

With it all going on, it's not too much of a stretch to imagine a UK (and beyond) poetry 'scene'. While there has been and hopefully forever will be sporadic pockets of poetic activity, the last twelve months in particular has seen the rise of a new cohesion to the community, with links forged online and friendships made in person. Perhaps most excitingly, the poetry is as diverse as it has ever been. The common purpose is simple activity, whether that be the writing of poetry or the organisation of structures that allow that poetry to be read and heard, be it the explosion of small press work from the likes of Knives, Forks and Spoons in Manchester or the attempted collation, representation and distribution of these publications by our own Openned book table in London. While the majority of the poets may not subscribe to the notion of a school of thought or a specific social or political manifesto, most nevertheless have a clear purpose and direction to their work, and the rapidly burgeoning connections between the UK and abroad, be it the Irish contingent at SoundEye or the UK/American audience crossover at Greenwich, are allowing this work to be heard or read by different audiences, often for the first time.

There are many names we have not mentioned in this editorial, names which are as important as those used as examples. This is a good thing. The proliferation and dissemination of poetry *should* be too big for an editorial. There is excitement out there, and those in opposition to the word 'scene' should not confuse our use of it with, say, Warhol's Factory. This is a 'scene' wherein the incidents take precedent over the impression, where the attempt at holistic representation is mitigated by the vibrancy and divergence of its elements. This is an exciting time for poetry.

Steve & Alex
Openned Editors

If there is anything in the third issue that you would like to respond to, or if you would like to contribute a new piece to the fourth issue of the magazine, please e-mail openned@gmail.com and we will respond as soon as possible.



Image © Nat Raha

Openned is based in London, UK, and is run by Stephen Willey and Alex Davies.

Openned seeks to create flexible spaces for poetry and poetic practitioners by inviting less established and more established writers to read together, curating publications, documenting readings, publishing work, and promoting other writers.

The Openned Magazine is a bimonthly online publication (with a print-it-yourself black-and-white counterpart available for download) intended to document activities among experimental and innovative poetry communities, with a specific focus on the UK. All material in the magazine is written by the poets, publishers and organisers active within the community. The articles presented in the Zine are not edited in any way.

photo John Hall

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SoundEye is an annual poetry festival held in Cork, Ireland. Here are two perspectives on the 2010 festival.

POETRY IS STILL WINNING

By Joe Luna

1.

Personal poem - people of blood, unite! Pretty far from here, is the shore, & a high-five for every public faux pas; however many times we do this it is not nearly enough. These are the double positives of our times, how we aim our lazer-guided flesh-detectors at the great double-You in the not-yet ersatz sky, to mux our tapered indices of trans-human affect into globes of willing earshot bartered by acoustics, by place coerced into acoustical bowers in the mind's imperfect echo, to treat the whole time & place with/in spectral shades of sound & cut! I mean, outside the cave the weather changes & the wind blows, how perhaps the poets are contingent upon each other not just in terms of practice, critique and inspiration, but in the kinds of terms only delineated by the heart's proper task, sanctioned in song; poets love to need each other, although poets who need us all to love each other without the impossible exaction love demands fall short of either love or need, & especially for the rest of us.

A note on the Reading as Ritual: The questions and doubts over poetry's efficacy, social, political or sexual, are ineffably swept aside by the directly transformational qualities of a gathering of bodies held in tacit or explicit assumption that the gathering itself is under scrutiny, that what is at stake is the quality of subjectivity as language agent, and thus how bodies come into consideration as a gathering in the first place & in every place. Ritual never questions the validity of the language used to conduct itself - to do so would be to assume outside of the boundaries set by essential and cyclical piety and to disrupt the necessity of the ritual act as conceived in appropriate relation to worldly futurity. Ritual is doing what has to be done on its own terms, and assuming so, and can never be radical. But the assumption of poetry readings, whether concerned with revolution or cross-stitch, is that the definition of the social space be exposed, interrogated, paused, reflected upon and tilted, that where we are and who we are be held up to the very things we are, and could yet become.

2.

I can't, to my discredit, discuss the entire festival in individual detail, because I couldn't make it to everything, or the everything tended at points to take over, so I'll try to articulate as fully as I can some instances of the carnivalesque of Cork over the 5 days that words were flying and tongues enthralling. Arrived towards the end of the second reading of the festival, and in my weary and addled state only really managed to attend to the last delicious fade-outs of Maurice Scully's playful minuets before sliding off into gourmet burger territory with a febrile subset of poets and performers hell-bent on beginning this thing. We began again at the Cork Sculpture Factory for screenings and discussion of Abigail Child's films - some of these were

brutal and erotic, though not nearly brutal or erotic enough to sustain their own designs; what was most striking about these avant-vignettes was their frenetic dispersal of image and text in a way that seemed to call for more than what was offered by their own artifice. The last, of pornography and identity theft, left me moved & displaced, my best reaction too to some of Child's poetry, of which there were two more installments across the festival. Excess here is screamed and purloined and a giddy mayhem ensues, scuttling through the audience in strips of brazen flesh - yet if that excess was channeled through a more rigorous web of harm and affect might it touch in a manner more strenuous and profound? We do swim in speed and excess, and for a reflection of that state to be useful and pertinent to an ethical subjectivity it should be a contraflow keen on shaping, as well as listening, watching and devouring the noise of late-Capitalist ultra-modernity. Chris Goode's reading on Thursday evening involved his seminal *Introduction to Speed Reading* as well as a newer piece entitled *DSM-5 is a rock chick, staring*, both of which negotiated and arranged noise via a thrilling system of valves and tripwires, creating a performance that seemed to want to both cause and guard against the vicissitudes of harm. Goode is a consistently exceptional performer of his and others' work, and managed to fill the room to the brim whilst his poetry kept everyone breathing, even as his own voice strained under the severity of his delivery - this is vital, generous and sometimes unbearable poetry that relentlessly bears the weight of its own dissembled perception.

Later that night, upstairs at the weird & wonderful Camden Palace Hotel, we were treated to an ineffably joyous selection of music and performance during which Goode performed selections from Christopher Knowles' & Michael Basinski's work, the latter in collaboration with Jonny Liron. This stuff was on another level, the attention of the audience lucid and direct, the room intrepid and expectant, and the Knowles readings were one of the highlights of the whole festival, teetering precariously on the pivot between trauma and joy. Another epic highlight of the night which certainly came crashing down on the side of JOY was a performance by the Cork Sacred Harp Singers - this was so good that at least 1 new Scared Harp Caucus was formed on the spot, and many hearts did heart the un-calculable awesomeness of seeing truly radical grins spread from face to face during the Hallelujahs! We all felt exclamation marks of dangerously un-ironic fervour sweep through our throats, and the night was made fast and precious by the brilliance of it all. Happiness.

I have forgotten when exactly Michael O'Loughlin's reading took place, but not what a precisely and acutely executed affair it was, including a series of translations from a potentially utterly fictitious Dutch latter-day Villon-type, prone to violent fits of trying to kill people - these were serrated, caustic and really quite brilliant, the violence somewhat tempered and honed by the rumour that this was an exercise in poetic voice-throwing; but then what act of translation doesn't at some stage feel like this, that in translating poetry one's voice becomes divided, cell-like, not yours and not the author's, and that consequently to dwell in the space between these is the listener's sole but greater privilege? Creating the author to be translated in a sort of four-dimensional Pessoaan heteronymical flourish could

allow a more ethically precise distance between reader and text than a simple pseudonym could produce – but of course this all depends on whether I have been misled, and this entire paragraph becomes more pointless than trying to criticize Medbh McGuckian’s work, a reader to whom I felt so much distance it was almost as if we were living in separate universes. This seems ironic, given that McGuckian’s poetry is probably more established in literary demographics, at the very least in Ireland, than any other reader at the entire festival. And yet it is emphatically not ironic, because the very futility I feel in the attempt to come to terms with this poetry is due to the fact that I am deliberately forced out of the poetry’s terms of engagement with the world by its staunch conservatism of experiential field, a field into which I am neither offered access or desired to co-habit. Some recent skirmishes between entrenched and more avant poetic practices have focused on shared experience and generosity as the measure by which normative verse culture is determined more adeptly universal and applicable than its various shades of other, and yet during McGuckian’s blankly believable reading it was pretty clear that such arguments are themselves bitterly ironic; Poetry by this account is there, and I watch it happening, and then it goes away again, and if anything at all can be said to be shared, it is merely a glimpse of the technical access to ritual inspiration the audience defers to as the Poet offers them a voice to follow.

2.

Friday/Saturday: Sara Crangle’s readings from *Wild Ascending Lisp*, interspersed with the Whitman master-texts from which the book emerges, cautious and supple, was the next real joy to behold. Her fragile and meticulous poems put the small room of the Cork Meeting House into a tangle of fettered limbs and unfettered erotic consolation. The care in this poetry is adamant, deliberated, maneuvered, and that care was to be felt suffused into the audience, by turns wounded and relieved by the text. Jonny Liron performed a work that began by carefully negating even the act of naming an absence – “I don’t think it’s even *Untitled*” he confessed, before leaping into a gloriously frenetic and passionate removal of the safe-havens of rest, consolation and privacy, the intensity of the language matched by Liron’s wild contortions as he practically danced inside his own dissolving text, chipping away word by word at the dense mass of glossed found-song and concomitant invective purposefully discovered at the forefront of perceptual & physical space. By dint of its sheer activity the performance felt almost like it was betraying its own conception, although the weight of the delivery was able to parse this complaint with added torn muscle. Nat Raha’s readings, both at the Meeting House and later at the Cous Cous Closed Mic sessions at Cork Cricket Club, were amongst the most important and sustained of the day – particularly at the Cricket Club, where perhaps the less than convivial atmosphere of the night pushed her poetry to some exceptionally tender and coruscating limits, her shaded confessionals wrapped in a code so desirous for its very absence. Here too, Josh Stanley’s site-specific song of the intense inane o’er brimming with casual impossibility and the fatigue of passionate contradiction shone by cuts of exceptional clarity and

verve, and Keston Sutherland’s *Reindeer* (or, as it was briefly sub-titled, *A Duck*) drove home the spikes of hope for a “not yet ersatz-sky” despite and in the very face of the predations of the universalizing and obscurantist love persistently sold to us through commodity fetishism and political rhetoric.

Back whilst day still stuttered through the river in Cork Poetry Central HQ, Swantje Lichtenstein gave a particularly delightful and musically memorable presentation of her poems focused on the erotics of reading and textuality, luckily in both German and English, the varying sonics of which really offset the poems’ weird, heavy, breathy, sweaty writhings, their proximity tight and close, voiced but sticky. By contrast, John Hall’s reading the next day was striking for the opposite effect – poems projected onto the far wall of the room in the by-now almost vaguely homely Palace were given pride of place over their reader and created a wide open space for the text’s spatial ladders & arrows. Hall’s virtuosic delicacy of breath and metre made this morning’s reading the most well-placed and most deliberately placing performance of the whole 5 days, and his ruminations on the gaps and interstices in linguistic artifice were beautifully produced utterances, the social space of the reading quietly attended to and referred back to these comforting gap-songs with a deftness and clarity perfect for the early day’s coffee-dried eyeballs. Geoffrey Squires presented translations from the 14th Century Persian poet Hafez, as well as a puckered and affectingly halting poem of his own to finish, both of which were assuredly open and fresh, nuanced calculations of a brittle and searching language.

3.

The readings that not-quite bounded my experience of SoundEye 2010 came in the form of an embassy from the Greenwich Women’s Cross-Genre Festival, the highlights of which were Lee Ann Brown’s unabashedly ecstatic ballads and Jean Day’s calmly satiric *Works & Days*. The latter’s poems seemed to slice the air into thin corridors of insight and critique, exceptionally tightly wound but never wound-up, their kinetic potential always visible from the exacting, bright surface-features that flitted with a vehement intelligence over the matrices of conceptual interrogation sounding out the body-political flux of language. This was a really thrilling reading to end on, although it didn’t end, and I was left leaving, with the Eye still sounding through Sunday, attempting to make hair & hide of the mass of stimulating and intensive versified action experienced over the last few days.

Rad times at Trevor Joyce’s house with Sacred Harp music on the stereo and a feast of awesome people to choose from was the recurring final high light, amply providing for the contingent communality at the heart of many, if not all, of the poets’ practice, the conditions in which counterfeit love is comprehensively demolished and in which reflection and augmentation amplified the festival’s diverse and succulent terrificisms. Due thanks in droves is due to Jimmy Cummins and Rachel Warriner for organizing the bulk of the festival and being genial, supportive and lovely people throughout. Poetry is still winning.

CORK, OR, SOUND IN YOUR EYE

By Steve Willey

16. July. 2010. We left the Greenwich Cross Genre Festival at about seven o'clock on the Friday evening. Earlier on in the day Alex and I had sat and watched as a large glass hulk glistened at us knowingly as it was slowly and silently shipped up (one dislocated pod from London's Eye) to the town. As mud moved up the muted river, Alex imagined that one day the banded glass of dark green might be crossed while sitting atop a luminescent 50ft rotating plastic disk, majestic, pink, and imperious, feather adorned head floating down, now so softly and steady onto the opposing bank, and now to be slotted in, and now in a turgid whirl of sound, surveillance, machine, and brilliant green joy; it just afforded you a wonderful view of the city and named your experience... "Flight".

Three point turn. One hour sleep. We headed off to the airport. At the check-in gate a bedraggled Luke Roberts and a fresh faced Neil Pattison "flounced" into the back of the queue all enthusiasm and nervous energy. It was at this moment when Alex and I realised we had booked our hostel in Dublin and not in Cork. Slapstick ensued. Alex used his wizardry to draw up a shortlist of some Cork hostels we could stay in. Flight was good. Found the bus. As I got off the bus the driver called me "comrade" and raised his fist to the sky. Solidarity. That was heartfelt, and warm, and good, and definitely not English. Crossed both channels of the river Lee for the first time. Scanned the local newspapers. The socialist party was featured on page five of the local paper found in the hostel.

I can't remember who said it, but SoundEye really is structured around the breaks; forty-five minutes of poetry and then, often, three hours away to eat, to drink, and to talk. Sometimes this inter-reading time was part-structured by a meal that was organised for the audience, or it was a time where the poet's and audience had to work out themselves who one another were, and if that really was o.k. This was about the rhythms of consumption, production, reception and reflection. I think after one of the poetry readings Josh Stanley remarked that he was suspicious about the possibility that opinions and value judgments could be quickly exchanged immediately after the poetry reading. The argument being that if comprehension could be exchanged as quickly as a commodity, then what have any of us really comprehended? SoundEye mitigates this problem by giving lots and lots of time to the audience between the poetry readings. This means that the temptation to digest and articulate a response to the poetry immediately after the reading remains (and is still given into) but that opinions, fragments, and critiques do inevitably trickle out slower than they would otherwise. These coagulated articulations of sense shift into other containers, shift into other occasions, occasions that in reality all spin and mesh together, all layer and colour, and form and solidify into meaning. On top of

the disk he squats and waits, the two channels of the River Lee whirlpool below, and Camden Palace Hotel, he takes an Ostrich and a Badger out of his brown-papered box, joins them together at the head and squats and waits and rain.

I was only at SoundEye for the last two days. These are the poet/events that I saw in the order that I saw them. I will not try and talk about all of these poets in this brief review. (Saturday afternoon) John Hall, Geoffrey Squires, Ian Davidson, Maggie O'Sullivan, some Sound Art, (Saturday evening) Lee Ann Brown, Eleni Sikelianos, Jean Day, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, (Sunday morning) Mairéad Byrne, (myself), Luke Roberts, Josh Stanley. A lot of the poets mentioned in this list had read at Greenwich during the week so it was good to be able to hear them read again in another setting as it afforded an opportunity to see how much the setting impacted on the readings. From what my poor memory recalls, John Hall read several short poems, some of which had cars in them, or described driving in cars. I wanted, and still want to use words like, considered, gentle, and precise, to describe his reading. However, I also remember being interested in how Hall's poetry seemed to depend upon a set of broad concepts that were included and actually represented by words within the poem. Semi-defined terms, such as 'love', 'hope', or other broad categorical markers of experience and expression, acted as crux points of interpretation within the verse. My way of listening to poetry always verges somewhere between paranoia, curiosity and challenge. In this case I was curious to know how other members of the audience were interpreting such broad categorical markers represented by words like 'love'. I started to get paranoid that this was a very particular kind of 'love' that I could not possibly share or understand in the same way as those other poet/listeners in the audience could. Sure enough, in the discussions I had afterwards with these poets, discussions that unfortunately I remember rather better than the poetry, they said they all really liked John Hall's poetry, and I was left unsure about the relationship between that 'like' and the word 'love' in the poem, and whether friendship, consensus, accessibility and love, were important aspects of Hall's poetry or whether I had imposed these concerns upon them. While drinking tea I felt quite paranoid about all this (was my paranoia inside Hall's love?) and I challenged myself to listen better next time.

He said, "drink Beamish not Guinness".

The poets that I spent the most time talking to in the breaks tended to be Chris Goode, Joe Luna, Neil Pattison, Jonny Liron, Alex Davies, Josh Stanley, Nat Raha, Keston Sutherland, Jimmy Cummins, Rachel Warriner, and on brief occasions, Trevor Joyce, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and Fergal Gaynor. I don't think that it is a critique of SoundEye as an event to note the gender disparity in this list, because, over the two days of SoundEye that I at-

tended, six male poets read and six female poets read. The gender disparity was evident in the social occasions not in the poetry events themselves. Yet, with the success of the Greenwich poetry festival still so present in my mind, I do remember finding it interesting that on one occasion, when I was gathered in a café with 5 other male poets, that there was a notable difference between how, as men, we talked about poetry and the poetry scene in comparison to how these topics were discussed during the time spent at Greenwich where women were well represented in comparable conversations. I do not want to explore here what those differences were, or to talk about their various merits, but I do wish to note that there was a difference in how we debated, what was talked about, and that this difference spoke to the importance of the Greenwich poetry festival as a social act of awareness raising as well as being an event that showcased some daring, exciting and important poetry.

Spinning disk impaled on spire reverbs in wind cage rib,
when the ostrich wet-trench shelter down, then down I sit.
Maggie O'Sullivan's reading as part of **Sonic Vigil**, rather than Sound Eye, in St Finn Barre's Cathedral, was an invigorating highlight of the weekend. Once again, rather than the poetry, I remember one of the debates that formed around her poetry. This debate was about the relationship between the shamanic, the pastoral, and sonic attributes of her poetry, and what politics might emerge from within these relationships during a performance of her work. This fairly well trodden debate was given a different inflection due to the fact that her performance took place in a Cathedral; the audience sat on pews, surrounded by four speakers, encapsulated by the sound of her echoed voice. Although this debate is important to recognize, perhaps I can take my critical hat off for just a minute and simply state, rather naively, that I really liked Maggie's poetry and her performance at Cork. Her work feels important to me in all the right ways. There always seems something within the intonations of her words, the rhythms of the poetry, a concept of the political embedded within rhythm and sound, that, in the moment of listening registers within me as a bodily and emotional response.

After Maggie's reading the audience was treated to several quadraphonic sound pieces, the first of which was the premier of John Byrne's Turntable Parlour Orchestra (which involved twenty artists performing on turntables), and the live sound manipulation of Roland Etzin, Lasse-Marc Riek and D'incise. This live sound manipulation involved a rather over-competitive man and a pre-teen child waving road-sign-like simple instructions on large wooden sticks that were used to direct the assembled turntable mass in musical performance. I did not find much of interest in the content of this experimental music/happening; however, it was a joyous event with an audience of well over 80. The turntable artists were local people from a range of ages and genders. The event felt as if it was embedded within the community in a way that poetry events in London seldom

are. I was reliably informed afterwards that the sound art scene in Cork is BIG.

The poets that came over from Greenwich read on the Saturday evening. The highlight for me was seeing Jean Day read again. She read much more of her poetry than she did at Greenwich. James Cummins remarked that time somehow slowed down during her reading, and phrases like "complete mastery of language" were whispered around the room. There was indeed something in the long sentence like units that she deployed within her poetry that could suspend the listener right in the middle of a line and keep them there. For whole paragraphs of the poem I could remain within one delicately long line while the poem continued somewhere below my two naked and limp white feet, to then drop ear first into another silver thread of line, to hang there, cochlea wrapped there, there at another jaunty angle of trepidation, full of excitement and expectant joy.

Someone had pulled out of the Sunday morning slot so on Saturday evening I got asked to fill in with a ten-minute reading. The luck of being in the right place at the right time I think, but also part of the spirit of SoundEye where a high degree of organisation and care is blended with a responsiveness and a generosity to those that have made the effort to travel to the festival; a love of the spontaneous and a realisation that the audience is part of the poetry, and can be the site for poetry at such an event. At the end of the Saturday night readings, Trevor Joyce went up to each audience member and invited them back to his house for a drink. There was no awkwardness at knowing whether or not you had been invited. Once we got to Trevor's house hot whiskeys were made up as an antidote to the rain, and all consumed in a warm room made of books.

Cork made me understand the difference today between the poetics of the organiser and the poetics of the pedagogue. These two models exist in our poetry scene. Set against a certain logic that is correct within itself, and in line with its own institutional agenda, perhaps Openned has been going about things the wrong way, or, at best, in a way that could lead people to be confused as to what Openned's agenda is. The poetics of the organiser needs some refining, that is clear. As an adjunct to this issue, there is a certain interpretive distance between the recording of a poetry event according to an archival agenda that wants to preserve the content of that poetry and poetry event for posterity (as in, lets film Luke Robert's so we can remember what Luke Robert's said in the future it will probably be important) and the recording of a poetry event according to Openned's archival agenda. As I have moved through the U.K poetry scene as a poet and as an audience member, I have carried a belief that such spaces, events, and fleeting moments of sociality and friendship, are and have always been a constitutive part of what U.K poetry is, what

poetry can be written, and what poetry is written; poetry written in response to the boundaries of the scene. For me recording events, putting on a events, and publishing books, is a way of documenting and registering this idea that events and publications, are part of being a poet at a poetic level; at the level of language. To exaggerate slightly: to intervene in the sociality of poetry is to write poetry. What Cork made me realise is that this is not a poetics that can be enforced on anyone else and it cannot be directly encouraged. I think Alex agrees with me. I think he also agrees with me that over the last year even we have become confused as to whether we have been acting as archivists, organisers, publishers, or, as how we want to act, as poets.

* * * * *

Conversation at a gate post with an American poet: is Baroque a good word to describe the type of ornate language found in some of the poetry written by younger women British poets who read at Greenwich? Where and how does argument figure in the content of such poetry?

* * * * *

At the Sussex Poetry Festival earlier on in the year I had told Josh Stanley that his new poem (now published by Critical Documents) *Contranight Escha Black* made me feel uncomfortable. I told him that I disliked the poem in a way that intrigued me greatly. Out of all the poetry that I heard at Sussex it was this poem that followed me home, quite possibly with a razor between the teeth of its sawn off lines, to slit my ankles in the porcelain bath. Here, in Cork, the poem had at me again. This time I liked the poem rather better. The night before at Trevor's house I overheard Alex and Josh talking about writing a type of poetry that leads a reader up to a point of contradiction. I think that there is some of this spirit of contradiction within the sharp prosody and line breaks in Josh's poem. Take page fourteen, a page that was read in Cork, and a page that I find particularly unsettling:

Pump into
shorts the
 possibility to
go on
 what is time
to do what is
the right thing to do
at this time on
my own it is dark with
a bit of
 there are
liquid solids gases everywhere
the terrorist attacks in
Russia were good
afford no better word
 than that
and
luminous sun

The lines on the page and in performance end sharply and unexpectedly, often on conjunctions and prepositions. Out

of the eighteen lines only five lines end in either an adjective or a noun. The poetry is unpunctuated, and aside from the four inset lines, the line break most strongly indicates where a reader should pause for breath. As an example of how Stanley's poetry uses the line break to create contradictions, the two words, 'go on', in the fourth line can be read both out of context as an imperative to continue, as well as read within the context of the three preceding lines that suggest the shortening of any possibility of 'go[ing]' on, in any direction, or in anything at all. Here the line break is employed to create a miniature contradiction in sense. The seeming simplicity but undoubted grammatical importance of words like 'into', the, 'to' and 'on', which end the first four lines, and words like 'with', 'of' and 'that' which end lines nine, ten, and sixteen, are placed in a productive dialogue with extremely loaded, highly interpretable, but in the final assessment, insufficient words, such as the word 'good' that ends the fourteenth line, a word that is 'afforded' to evaluate the 'terrorist attacks in / Russia', (ll. 13, 14). Here the position of the line break encourages a dialogue between simplified and insufficient ideological and political positions, represented in this case by the word 'good', and a set of grammatically important, but simple words, that have a limited set of conceptual associations, but a heightened importance within the verse because of their position at the end of the line. The fact that this dialogue happens almost at the point where the line breaks means that much of the poem's argument is carried out in the silence of the page and within the body of the performer as he breaths or suppresses his breath when he moves onto the next line. When the author performs this poem I tend to empathise with the rhythms of the performer's body and I am left feeling unsettled precisely at the points where the line breaks. I can only assume it is this combination of breath-rhythm and argument which is what my ear responds to. This poetry is sparse, sharp, and intelligent. In Sussex I was unsettled by the emotions that this poetry evoked within me, but in Cork, I was able to use the tension to listen much harder.

* * * * *

Luke, I
only remember

the slow
speed of husky

and paw speed
of snow

mouth tracks of
husky

tracks on snow

and the speed of the slow

* * * * *



Last day all spent with Alex Davies, Neil Pattison, Luke Roberts and about ten cups of coffee. How marvellous to talk with time.

* * * * *

Go Alex Go! Keep on Spinning

* * * * *

The Badger gnawed his face clean off.

* * * * *

The Ostrich plummets as stone.

* * * * *

BLUE BUS; SOUNDEYE

photos

Images © Nat Raha

1



2



3



4



5

Blue Bus

Jeff Hillson (1)
Frances Kruk (4)
Edmund Hardy, Malcolm Phillips & Nat Raha (6)

SoundEye

Jean Day (2)
Bricklayers' Lament (3)
Cork (5)
Sarah Hayden (7)



7



6

GREENWICH CROSS-GENRE FESTIVAL

positive investigations

By Susana Gardner

Most of my notes are scattered and read more like positive investigations toward a new poetics or as urgently noted down among varying multiples—each with a new thought or idea forming on the cusp of another possibility toward beginning.

I note here both from memory and from both physical and inward notations of what I considered to be some of the more personally innovative cross-genre pieces for me. I have decided to highlight only a few as I can't cover everything here and hopefully the contributions of others will offer a round mix of what is shared, etc. This truly inspiring fest hosted at Greenwich University by the amazing capable hats, hands and guidance of Emily Critchley and Carol Watts is so appreciated!

Caroline Bergvall, **Performance**: poetry.

“Translated Act” Work across and b/t media.

Bergvall's presence at this festival as a leading London based experimental poet was as essential to the groundwork of cross-genre work at the fest as it was a signal toward what kind of work would follow in the three event. An experience thus defined as her work is always a work of multiples as it is multiplet in its very context, offering a language of wonderful refreshing complicities which ‘embody terrain’ as willingly as it might also choose to forsake any rigid architecture or path. Bergvall's sonic ability of sweeping up lines in surprising hypnotic turns is as unparalleled as it is unerring in its rendition.

Continental in its poly-lingual/vocalic crafting at once both modern and ancient concurrently harnesses a visceral linguistic playground of investigation and dare within its landscape. Coyly engendering a new space for *I*. The ‘I’ as I as well as the translated ‘I’ of spatial language as it is inherent as it is between English.

I also scribbled a woman dancing with a bird on her head, and a feather skirt at her hips, underneath which I noted...

a voice, which speaks for us before we get a chance to know it...to make, irritate English. The seemingness /seaming (sic, my own) of articulate language, Say Parsley (Pulled teet

Marianne Morris (PhD at Dartington, UK) **Performance**: work based on Iran + music. Morris' performance was akin to that of a Siren's chanting. Utilizing cross-genre, forgoing any written prompts or cues, Morris wowed us while performing alongside a hip and somehow smoky feeling musical backdrop—her performance harkened a new sort of poet rock-star vittle Text illuminated Morris from behind her on the projector, fluttering in and out of space and even her own image,

moody, moving and haunting her brilliantly electrifying performance.

Zoe Skoulding **Performance**: looped and treated vocals.

In the green played the chamber of memories—even the dirt is historical—

The first line of which began Skoulding's wonderfully haunted stutterances and reverberations relayed a truly fresh cross-genre poetic experience. The sound reverberations throughout the piece and the quality of the auditorium in which it was performed exuded the wonderfully manipulated voice and background sounds in difficult spooky palimpsestic cacaphonic accord. This was my first experience of Skoulding performing this kind of work and it was captivating. I was totally entranced for the entire performance...and duly felt transported while experiencing her work, both in watching her work her sound machines and eerie undercurrents of her own voice as much as I felt her *iron clocks to pass the day...*

Emily Critchley (UK) **Performance**: Memnoir + Mask of Orpheus + Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. Very beautiful complex piece, I enjoyed the mixed-media aspect with the projector, though their spirits were up to no good in regard to the modern take/projection. Can't wait though to get my paws on the book version.

Catherine Wagner, **Performance**... During her reading Catherine read from her Dusie Chap, well bracelet really. She read directly off the funky lamé bracelet as she turned it in her hands, in a lovely poetical recanting.

Capitulation toward the total poem by Catherine Wagner

From “Shakespeare's Preservation Fantasy,” essay by Aaron Kumin and “Culture of One” poem by Alice Notley.



If you put the (hand) inside, She will pop out:

The imp to preserve culture
Wiggles under the worn

A part capable of dying Capitulates to
Total enclosure in poem.

Remove her (Poem from)
Test subjects!

Discard intercourse.
O hovering over the desert,
at midnight.

Poem removed from subjects-

Extrapersonal.

(Now dare yourself to cut out these bits and make a bracelet of found materials and words for yourself—or even better, craft and write your own!)

Jennifer Cooke, **Performance**: Steel Girdered HER MUSICAL: in several parts, by Jennifer Cooke with composer Adam Robinson. I really felt I understood what Cross-Genre poetics could be while watching Jennifer Cooke perform HER MUSICAL. I enjoyed the visual aids, the performance with which and the guest accompaniment of her computers voice, I want to say Vicky, but I know I am channeling another robot while the score/flyer will not allow me to find it amongst all of the books and paraphernalia of the fest.

Christine Kennedy **Performance**: art, puppetry and dolls. Kennedy gave a refreshingly charged performance. Utilizing puppets, props and visual aids, Dada revisited us through the puppets, featuring the women of Dada, Emmy Hennings, Sophie Tauber, Hannah Höch, and Dame Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven alongside the very spirit of the Zürich Cabaret. Kennedy also had a lovely booklet to accompany the performance, which she coauthored with David Annwn, available from **ISP**press featuring the puppet play and the *RunDADAnella*, or round-song. I had to hold myself back from approaching the set and touching everything afterwards.

Another thoroughly enjoyed performance was given by the likes of Lisa Robertson (Canada), **Performance**: recorded/live sound performance, The Perfume Recordist, +Stacy Doris & a two channel video installation work + Allyson Clay (a Vancouver artist) & Nathalie Stephens. Lisa gave a great performance accompanied by a short film. I met Lisa for the first time at this event, afterwards we chatted and she kindly gave me a copy of her book, *The Men*, which I am very excited about reading. The thing is, um... Lisa, you gave me your reader copy! I could possibly perform with you in a nod to cross-genre...also, your penmanship looks eerily close to that of an ex...a list of things she needed apparently, which I was reading like a cryptic message from the past until I luckily

noticed it was dated, this year, and the same handwriting which was in her reader of, *The Men* no less. *Reader*,- I will get Lisa her list and book back, fear not.

Also from the west coast was the stellar David Buuck, he really embodied the cross-genre totality completely in his *becoming* Juliana Spahr (we had to imagine a bit) *and* him self! After only a few lines I was satisfied and convinced. He was he and Juliana, all in one disembodied/embodyed sort of way, both stirring up the genre and interpretation of which as he read from their collaborative work.

Daniel Kane also gave an amazing Patti Smith paper earlier in the day, which led to many strange impersonations on my part (oi) while impersonating PS later on...that line about not being a poet fucker, but a Poet God seeker... and singing, as Sean Bonney later said, like weird birds in the yew trees in the early morning hours at Greenwich park.

It was a really amazing festival, for me the most amazing fests have all been UK/Ireland based. I would be content to only go to isle events at least once yearly for the rest of my existence. And quoting Mairéad Byrne, *where we can all come together poetically/collectively and feel at home in our eccentricities!*

CLEAVES

notes from the editor

By Harry Godwin

With Cleaves Three I aim to promote innovation in online publishing by experimenting with the methods used to display or show poetry on the screen, without damaging the writing.

Using Cleaves, I aim to connect the various poetic groups around the country/world by publishing their works alongside each other whilst documenting their geographical boundaries.

I lose faith in the journal every day, but then I receive an uplifting comment. Sometimes I am fed up with all the leg work & boring bits, other times I feel it is distracting me from my own writing, but when I talk to people about Cleaves, their reactions spur me on.

Things can only get better. The first two issues look crap in retrospect - I have been hand-coding the site, so as my knowledge & ability improve, then so does the site. I am very happy with the way issue three is coming together & that is because I'm taking a lot of time over it. Getting it right.

By hand-coding the sites I have complete control over every detail, which is a curse, but it's allowing me to play with the way poems are displayed. In issue three the poems open-up on the screen & shade out the background. This way there are no distracting images or adverts etc but it also avoids just having a white screen with words printed on it.

Cleaves would be a lot smaller without the help of Steven Fowler & his endless list of contacts. I love you Steven Fowler. This is the same S J Fowler whose Fights sequences are being published everywhere. 'Fights IV - Antonio Margarito'

is being published this Autumn by The Arthur Shilling Press. 'Fights I - Arthur Abraham' is out with Knives Forks Spoons Press.

I originally intended to release 4 Journals a year but the task of hand-coding & meeting a certain standard conflicted with the amount of time available to those with a baby.

Cleaves could continue to grow & grow, provided I have the time. I think it could grow too large for me to handle. I will have to monitor the situation closely & perhaps employ someone (volunteers?) or call time on this idea & pursue another idea...

I think I would like to explore other aspects of online publishing - I've had an idea to create an interactive audio-visual experience. I think it would work well with certain poets - Mick Weller, Jow Lindsay & Justin Katko spring to mind immediately. It could work a lot like a film (I can already see 'Mick Weller: The Movie'. It is brilliant, I recommend watching it.).

A truly successful online publication ought to rival the excitement of a live reading. Since moving out of London I miss the buzz of the different readings: The fuzziness of the Blue Bus. The big grin that is Crossing the Line. The hyperactivity of the old Opened. I see pictures of all the new events going on. I get jealous.

Cleaves three comes out in October. It, and the previous issues can be found at cleavesjournal.com.

Cleaves is a journal collecting innovative poetry from the United Kingdom and Europe. Each area has an editor, who selects another editor after their issue is complete.





Linus Slug organised a reading in memory of Barry MacSweeney at Morden Tower on 27th June.

*Alongside the event a new edition of **FREAKLUNG** was launched, Odes (London: ninerrors 2010), a poetic engagement with the work of Barry MacSweeney.*

40 LINE CONFINES

By Chris Stephenson

Visiting Morden Tower was a real privilege and the ODES reading was one of the best poetry events I have ever been to or been involved in.

Finally, a gathering of poets and writers not content to sit back and be in thrall to or under the spell of language but actually doing things with it rather than letting it control them. Finally, the relief of NOT ending up in a room of poets all writing to order, all writing within the 40 line confines of the latest competition it cost them three quid to enter, where the this week's theme is spring, and last week's was pink. There was the real sense that something different, exciting and interesting was, and is, occurring.

The incredible social history of the place seems to be a joy rather than any burden on those that read there. Connie and everyone involved made us all feel very welcome and the atmosphere, surrounded by all those great old posters of previous events and amazing names, was just fantastic! There really can't be anywhere else like it!

I remember something about the blankets that Ginsberg slept in, and long time patrons and supporters calling Corso, "Gregory" as if they had known him forever and he was due to turn up at any minute as he always does. Just brilliant!

I was just about ready to give up on British poetry when I was given a copy of Wolf Tongue. In many ways it has proved to be a real turning point for me. It is almost as if MacSweeney gave British poetry back to me somehow. All manner of things have surfaced or been stumbled across since I found him,

some of it related, a lot of it completely unconnected. It is as if finding him somehow restored my desire to be more open and take chances with things again. Freaklung Zine and the Odes reading at Morden Tower, the people involved, the place itself, the whole thing, it couldn't have been a better example of that idea coming to life.

TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH

By S J Fowler

Though I studied in the north east, I had been poetically illiterate at that time and knew nothing of MacSweeney, Bunting or Morden Tower when I had been around Newcastle and Durham. Already then the journey from London had specific significance for me personally and though I was stuck on a broken train while plebs pelted the engineers with empty bottles because they were missing England's world cup buggery at the hands of Germany, I was perhaps full of nostalgia at the beginning of the event. This was utterly eclipsed by the sense of giving from the poets in attendance from moment one and permeated into every reading. It was an exceptional day in this regard. No one flagged, there was nothing but tremendous poetry and performances to match, perhaps again because everyone was tarred with the same brush, everyone was reading and the audience was an extension of the reader, there appeared no distinctions which can leave the work feeling objective to the point of misunderstanding.

I had intended to read Far Cliff Babylon by MacSweeney, as leading up to the reading I had discovered this had been published by the Writers Forum as a pamphlet. My attendance at the Forum means a lot to me and it struck me as a personal touch of some significance to myself to read this work. I managed, with some help from friends, to locate an original print from the Poetry Library which included the text of the adjoining letter from Barry MacSweeney to Bob Cobbing in the verso. I arrived to find

Jeff Hilson had thought of reading the same material and we very casually agreed to read the text alternately. This was a great pleasure for me, admiring Jeff's work as I do, and having received invaluable encouragement from him over the course of the last year. A high point for me in reading, for his inimitable style forced me to be calm in my own reading - a rare thing, and for once I didn't have opportunity to bark and mug like a dweeb. I'm so happy this has been captured on video too, he's such an excellent reader and the text is so awesome. He allowed me to read my favourite pages, 'I ate your christian fishes and they made me sick'. Not even my spilling of Iron Bru on the original copy of this rare work dampened the mood. I was told this was quite appropriate'



SPARKING

By Stephen Emmerson

Barry MacSweeney was the first poet I came across who got me excited about British poetry. Until then I'd thought that home grown poetry got about as interesting as Roger McGough and Brian Patten, which just did nothing for me. MacSweeney jerked the machinery in my head into motion and the cables started sparking. So being able to read at Morden Tower was a real privilege.

GAROTTED LARKS AND LICE

By Antony John

It was a privilege to read somewhere as rich in history as the Morden Tower and amongst so many great poets in honour of the late Barry MacSweeney. As well as some of my own work, I read MacSweeney's 'Free Pet With Every Cage' and 'We Are Not Stones'. Both are in the magnificent 2006 anthology of northeast poets 'North by North-East', edited by Andy Croft and Cynthia Fuller and published by Iron Press.

In these poems, MacSweeney depicts a world of cartoon-like exaggeration, a landscape both modern and medieval, a 'hell beribboned with garotted larks and lice' where 'all the saints – Bede, Bob, Sexton, Messrs Rotten, Johnson, Presley and Cash' have abandoned us. '[T]he bluebell vales of your childhood' have been lost and replaced with 'the seepage of the coleslaw / the duff mayonnaise'. We are in 'the grinder' despite 'This mossy path, frilled with feldspar / to prick your pearly toes'.

He shows us 'Big Jack with the bad crack, / just so peak and gleaming visor, ferret eyes / glinty like fresh poured Tizer' – someone we have all met, albeit in miniature. The driver of my London-Newcastle coach almost left one passenger behind because she was late returning from a toilet stop. She reappeared as he was pulling off and his face turned puce as he told her there was no hot food on his bus. Reluctantly, she cast her Kentucky Fried Chicken away.

Luke Roberts, who read towards the end of the evening, was right when he said that we had hardly started yet. Barry MacSweeney has left us an important body of work and there is much he has to say to us. 'Milton was a blind man and we knew nothing of him. / Paradise Lost to the ears of his daughter.' As the daughters of Barry MacSweeney and the sort of poetry he wrote, it is important we continue to listen to what he had to say.

Thanks to Linus Slug for collating these recollections of the event.

Comments from Opened.com

I just posted this on Facebook but I thought I would duplicate it here: I wish I could take the Freak Lung Odes, everyone's own readings, Barry Macsweeney's poetry (Especially Luke's reading of the entirety of colonel B) the posters of Mottram, Cobbing, Bunting, Ginsberg, on the walls, Connie's touching and emotional response at the end, the chinese meal with Jeff H, using the big spinning plates as decks, and condense it all into a tight ball of energy and light, and add to that tight ball of energy and light an audience of about 200 people, and say to this audience that this is poetry, this ball of energy and light is poetry, and anything else that claims to be poetry has to compare itself to this ball, and if it is even slightly dimmer than it, then it does not have the right to be called poetry. Great Photos on Face book. Someone filmed it all.

Steve Willey

RATS like POETRY

Tessa Whitehouse

Did anyone get a photo of the rat??
My favourite moment was Posie Rider covering every inch of herself with insect repellent to keep the fleas off...

Jeff Hilson

Jeff? Jeff? You know that area between like India, Mongolia & Russia? It's a bit grotty round there. Jeff?

Jow Lindsay

wormhole [possible] ([east coast mainline] + [A1(M)]) --> Zand / John train delays + Willemobile mismapping --> 1979 (Ti?) 2010 (Tj?) mini rolls ? 5pm store closings --> football irrelevant / MacSweeney fundamental --> odes odes odes --> $m_1u_1 + m_2u_2 = m_1v_1 + m_2v_2$ --> $p = -i\hbar\Delta$, where Δ is the gradient operator, given this conjuncted with Posie Rider's addition to the 3 x 5 bill, Leeds contingent tag-team, where x = the no of copies of 'wolf tongue' present & b = no of bloodaxe publications on the bookcase, $\delta U = p.\exp(bx) + [Luke Roberts - "I feel like we're only just getting started" \sim L.R., pre-'Colonel B'] + 1/(\text{no. of words in 'Neptune Tongue Odes'}) + \text{SLUG} \approx \text{Connie's speech's conjuring} \approx \text{an approximation of } 27/06/10, \text{ error } \pm 1e(9).$

Nat Raha

THE SITUATION ROOM a live/work unit in North London

By Jonny Liron

It feels difficult to write passionately about my bedroom today.

I first started renting the studio I live in in April, as a way of keeping two birds alive with one stone.

That is, living sustainably under Capitalism, and engaging in passionate projects of intervention into the system itself i.e. not making Capitalism.

So far, the events which I have managed to put on, which there have been five of, have each time felt passionately contingent with living as working, highlighted and brought to bear, for me at least, by the Situation Room being like, to borrow a scuffed line from a poem by Sean Bonney,

living on the corner of two worlds.

The world in which I sleep and eat and look at facebook and masturbate over pornography seems to be the most performative zone, and then when people are here, reading and talking and building and I'm masturbating in public, the air between us feels less toxic, there's more air, the potential for more birds.

I'm reminded of a line from a poem by Josh Stanley,

this is the life I have that prevents me from living

The bit which actually feels livable, is the bit where there are other people here, and everytime there is not an event on here, or I'm not at work on a project, It all just feels preventative...

Engaging in these passionate projects of intervention, having a room which people can meet in, and think differently, meet differently, mean differently, mean better, mean more ethically in, mean less harmfully in, has felt like an important thing to be doing in working towards a more imaginative and sensitive community.

What makes it hard today is that there hasn't been an event in a while, I feel like I'm not doing enough, it's not the community *yet* which I thought it might be, when I got this place I was inspired by Derek Jarman's and Robert Wilson's lofts as continuously communal living spaces, where people would be engaged in making art as an actual way of life, not as a bonus to the 'gift' of time they might receive in exchange for their labour.

But that's down to me really, inviting people in, building events, letting more people know that I'm here and there is space to breathe in should we so wish it, but at the same time trying to find a job which will pay my rent but not leave me exhausted at the end of the day and prevent me from making theatre, living with other people in imaginative ways, calling into question who we are to each other...

I will work harder, and if you need some space to do something joyful in, you can contact me at jonnyliron@yahoo.co.uk and the Situation Room blog is at <http://sitroom.blogspot.com>.



Image © Georgie M'Glug

Jonny Liron is an experimental writer and performer.

His performances include: with Chris Goode: Hey Mathew (Theatre in the Mill, Bradford), King Pelican (Drum Theatre, Plymouth), Glass House (Deloitte Ignite '09 at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden) and, as associate artist, The Adventures of Wound Man and Shirley (Queer Up North / UK tour); and with Jeremy Hardingham: Recovery (Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, Cambridge) and Experience Dante (site-responsive, various Cambridge locations).

BOOKFACE status?



Cuts:

<http://thecommune.wordpress.com/2010/07/24/unviable-courses-thanks-to-mmu-cuts/#more-5562>



onedit #16: <http://www.onedit.net/>



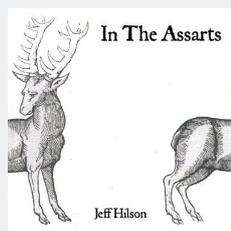
Sad news--they've funded numerous great films. **UK Film Council to be axed | Film | guardian.co.uk**



After a glass falls and smashes, the heat energy dissipated into the floor and air would be precisely enough to push it back up to reassemble on the table, if all the atoms were coordinated in an unusual chance occurrence. Has anyone ever seen this kind of hypothetical 'bounce' happen?



revitalized by the poetry peops



Harry Godwin to **The Arthur Shilling Press**: Sneak Peak of new series. Covers for S.J Fowler's 'Fights IV - Antonio Margarito' & David Berridge's 'Kafka Thinking Stations' in progress.



POET IN RESIDENCE AT THE V&A!



Here are the five goals the Arts Council of England have set out for literature



in tesco I saw red liquid on the floor then heard someone cry "ah blood!" Thought someone had been murdered, but it was actually an employee berating his colleague (ah blad!) for knocking over some jars of dolmio. Phew.



announces publication of Tim Atkins's Crater; it's translations of Petrarch and you can get it here:
<http://www.knivesforksandspoonspress.co.uk/theknivesforksandspoonspress/USPCO.html>



James Harvey to **Elizabeth Guthrie**: Sorry to have missed your reading. I hope it went really well.



Oh no tommy peeps is gone!



aaah



A European. An Elephant. An European. An Elephant.



Very amazing that as WikiLeaks is about to release 15,000 more documents that the US does not want out--suddenly he shd be charged with this in a Swedish tabloid! anyone smell a great big rat??!! **http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38796121/ns/world_news-europe**



likes **Rumour Cubes**.



: 'It just goes to render the parodic insincere is YES to rely upon the parodic insincere YES as demonstrated, insincere YES as demonstrated, YES daily til you are become YES thoroughly proficient ghost machine'



Tommy Peeps to **Harry Godwin**: oh the 60's! Those crazy cats with their tashes, neck-ties and vocal harmonies... not to mentio the 'dancing'....



<http://www.iainsinclair.org.uk>



a slip catchment of poets shudder under/ the grate of granite and slate, milk is a heavy/
room of mechanics slipping/ gently into now here is mouth, your mouth I mean/ is a stanza
like



I become to break to you a matter right great & weighty, & profitable to all the realm. For why? That thing that we wot well you have long time lacked and sore longed for, that you would have given great good for, that you would have gone far to fetch - that thing we be come hither to bring you.



"I'm shocked! shocked!"
(louis--claude rains in Casablanca)
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100822/en_afp/swedencrimeintelligenceinternwikileaks_11



In the "mind's eye" one sees so clearly what it is one is, wants to be--making--yet--elusive, it slips continually--convulsively--towards the peripheries--its mocking laughter curiously enough eliciting the same from oneself--("seeing the xpression on 'his'--face" . . . one's own--)



Browning or Browning?



ah capitalism! lets all go out and buy dove! more beauty products! more buying into the same thing they are trying to warn you against! do not buy other beauty products buy dove..they sell you an image of natural beauty. because you skin really does need "extra hydration", "improved surface cell turnover" and "the soothing scent of cucumber"..you also need to "tame frizzy hair", "add long lasting volume" (all from dove website"...so ladies, do not try to be beautiful be dove beautiful!!



[spontaneous] the poetic expectations of misspelling and this noetic stance



Interesting piece on BBCR4's Today programme this morning on supporting our national libraries as places of discovery for readers. So I wondered, given 10 years of publishing at Salt, how many of our books are in Cambridgeshire's libraries (Salt being the biggest literary press in the county). Answer: None. Zilch. Zero...



Knives Forks and Spoons will be going perfect bound in October. We just need to clear out the printer graveyard in the shed and take about 100 novels to Oxfam to make room for the gear.



The scholastic form is opposed to the literary form in that it is of no interest to whomever uses it'.

bob cobbing on ebay!



CROSSING THE LINE

photos

Images © Sharon Borthwick

1



2



3



4



5



The last Crossing the Line at the Leather Exchange.

- Audience (1, 4)
- Will Rowe (2)
- Mike Weller (3)
- Mike Weller & Michael Zand (5)
- Jeff Hilson (6)



6

OPENED EYES an online exhibition of visual poetry

By David-Baptiste Chirot

OPENED EYES: a brief Anthology/
Manifesto—

For a London-based Site, my notes
& works here are dedicated to 2 Great
English London-based artists

Who changed my life & continually
inspire me: Bob Cobbing & Gulley
Jimson—¹

Note: I began writing an introduc-
tory essay/manifesto for this Anthology
which now has extended to greater and
greater length. I continually find ever
Opening aspects, questions, ideas,
events, materials, techniques, machines,
works by a myriad others, to work, live
and think on with Visual Poetry. And
sometimes—all times! -- one wants to
be so thorough! To present & share as
much as one possibly can--When the
essay is completed it will be presented at
Opened Eyes. For now, so that the
works may be seen with the sense of
urgency that is involved, I prefer to
write a brief note, so that all may
quickly move on to the Visual Poets and
Poetry here, who express with such pas-
sion and deep insights, such intelligence
and precision what it is to live in the
world as a Visual Poet, which is some-
thing that is far deeper and more com-
plex than simply creating works on a
page, within a limited frame.

All of these Visual Poets and their
works Open Outwo/ards—

Which is the desire of the Editors
for all who find this Anthology to “see”
and move and find that which is hidden
in plain site/sight/cite all around one in
the myriad ways these Visual Poets
Open Eyes-

Jerome Rothenberg writes of the
Anthology as “manifesto,” and “an in-
strument for change.” Mary Ann Caws
collected late 19th & 20th Century texts
as an Anthology called: Manifesto: A
Century of Isms. In bringing together
the Visual Poets and their works for
Opened Eyes, I want to express &
share a Manifesto spirit which to me
resides in the very title &
theme: “Opened Eyes.” To Open Eyes
via Visual Poetry not only as an “art for
the page,” but as an art of Seeing, a
way of Being in the world. To Open
Eyes via Visual Poetry to its Visceral &
Sonic dimensions, its relations ships



“For Opened Eyes,
David-Baptiste Chirot has
expertly brought together
twelve poets, many of
whom are constantly
working at intersections
between language and
politics, visual art, sculp-
ture and ethnography,
among other disciplines.
These poets are commit-
ted to thinking the poem
and the outside-
world together, and
Opened welcomes and
celebrates that achieve-
ment.”

Steve Willey

with Time & Space & the Social. To
Open Eyes in and through Visual Po-
etry to the sense that Visual Poetry,
which has no fixed definition, also has
no fixed horizons.

Max Frisch once wrote: “Technol-
ogy . . . the knack of so arranging the
world that we don’t have to experience
it. “ Substituting for “technology” a
great deal of contemporary work in
Visual Poetry and Poetry, especially in
the USA, one realizes how important
the work of the Visual Poets in
Opened Eyes is: these Visual Poets &
their Visual Poetry Open into, with, for
experience, rather than making “ar-
rangements” which direct one away
from it.

The danger Frisch points to with
technology may also be thought of re
both Anthologies & Manifestos: “. . .
the knack of so arranging the world
that we don’t have to experience it,”
though here one might say an Anthology
and/or Manifesto might so arrange
Visual Poetry that the reader/viewer no
longer experiences it, let alone experi-
ences it as being a part of the world of
Opened Eyes, hands-on experience
rather than apart from it.

Opened Eyes, then, as an
Anthology/Manifesto, is not a “fixed
collection” to affect a closure on a point
of view re Visual Poetry, nor a Mani-
festo for a fixed and limited “point of
view” regarding Visual Poetry and its
affects in the lived world of experience
itself as a way of being, a way of living.

It is an Anthology/Manifesto to live,
work, think with Opened Eyes to the
site/sight/cite every moment every-
where around and with in oneself. And
to do so ever with Opened Eyes as
Questioning Eyes—Eyes that are not
satisfied or sated with the “answers”
provided by already existing examples
and theories, but Hungry Eyes, Out-
raged, Protesting, Rebeling, Angry Eyes
if need be (“a hungry man is an angry
man”—Bob Marley), Doubting Eyes,
Eyes out to find their own languages to
live and work with, for and in and with
and for Others--

Opened Eyes I see as an
Anthology/Manifesto in a sense to tear
up or throw out for a while Anthology/
Manifestos in themselves—to go beyond
the sense that these may give of there
ALREADY being a point arrived at
from which to survey the field, to divide
up & parcel out “territories,” “isms,” to
create “authorities” and to pass final
judgments. . .

(I say tear up for a while—and then
return to not as “final words,” but as
examples. Materials like any other, de-
mystified, to study, learn from and
make use of, detourne for one’s own
uses—to use for knowing the history
which one works in and is a part of,
while never losing sight of living and
working with one’s own Opened Eyes,
questions, doubts—)

The great Chinese Taoist Chung-
Tzu urges one to “LOOK UNDER
YOUR FEET!” as the site/sight/cite

with which to begin finding one's Way: I hope with all my being that Opened Eyes conveys this same sense of urgency, and of where to begin, with Opened Eyes, finding so much that is hidden in plain sight/site/cite with which to begin "under your feet" and so to set out to find—the uncanny, hat which is at once strangely familiar and completely new, strange yet not estranged—a part of and not apart from--

The Visual Poets here create works in a very wide range of ideas, emotions, materials, concepts and examples of what the Earthworks Artist & essayist Robert Smithson wrote passionately of as "the artist's way of looking." The Poets here do many things which are becoming "shut out" from much thinking and work one finds proliferating on the web. Above all, they engage with the world, with the social.

All of the Visual Poets here engage with an Outside—many literally outdoors—as well as using elements "outside" of the narrow formal concerns of much contemporary Visual Poetry. These elements, along with the engagement with the social and the activities presented below, include using Visual Poetry as an investigation into & with using philosophy and history as materials in themselves, as one finds especially in the deeply powerful and profound work of Liliana Esteban and her engagement with Foucault, and in works by Hilda Paz, Clemente Padin, Chirot, Gleb Kolomiets & Edward Kulemin. In a great many of the Visual Poets here, Theory & Materials across many disciplines has been a contributing factor, as well as finding an expression directly embedded in the works.

Many of the Opened Eyes Visual Poets create works which exist literally

in the outdoors, in movement, in performance, and send the eyes, ears, hands traveling. Buz Blurr's works ride the rails; Chirot works outdoors with found materials on site/sight/cite, jw curry in the urban & rail-traveling environments using stencils & paint, Clemente Padin's works take place outdoors as manifestations, demonstrations, protests, and in turn one finds Protest in relation with the social also in the works by Liliana Esteban, Hilda Paz, Luc Fierens, and myself. Other forms of social protests and commentaries may be found in the works of Gleb Kolomiets and Edward Kulemin.

Another aspect of working "outside" the parameters of page & frame which is found in many Visual Poets internationally as well as in most of the Visual Poets presented here, is that of working also as editors, curators, publishers, reviewers, interviewers, anthologists & historians.

Some examples from among the Opened Eyes Visual Poets:

Gleb Kolomiets s of Asemic Poetry and publishes Samizdat works by himself & other Visual Poets. jw curry is present as one of the world's leading Visual/Sound poets, now also creating works outdoors, and also a lifelong leading innovative publisher, editor, printer, critic, historian of Visual Poetry. jw is also compiling the most complete bibliography ever done of the works of bp Nichol, as well as performing in toto Nichol's The Martyrology & putting out one of the most extensive catalogs ever compiled, of works for sale extending across the entire spectrum of Visual Poetry publications of the last fifty years. Harry Burrus also has worked as Visual Poet, photographer, film maker and editor, publisher and historian of Visual Poetry. curry & Burrus edited some of the most important & influential Visual Poetry Journals of the last half of the 20th Century, as did Clemente Padin. Luc Fierens has edited & published many significant series of Mail Art, Visual Poetry & "Post-Flux" booklets & pamphlets. Chirot is in the process of editing & publishing two different "art but poesie bruit" journals. The extensive works across decades of Dmitri Babenko and Guy R. Beining create new forms and conceptions of Visual Poetry in powerful dynamics of expression in completely original ways. Tim Gaze, long before it became a fad, has worked with the Asemic, as do also

several of the other Visual Poets here. Tim also edits & publishes print & online anthologies of Asemic & Noise Poetries.

All these activities by most of the Visual Poets here present an "Outside" in the sense that their works are not limited to the constraints of the page or size of a JPEG, but extend across editing, curating, writing critical & theoretical & review texts, conducting interviews, staging Performance events, self-publishing, their own & others' works, organizing exhibitions both Actual & Virtual. The Hand Made & the Hands On play an immense role, keeping the Visceral, Physical elements & actions of Visual Poetry at work in an increasingly removed, digitized, "photo shopped," and Virtual environment. This is not a Luddite attitude, as all of the Visual Poets here (literally here in this anthology!) make use of the Virtual, though curry and Beining have a minimal in the former and non-existent in the latter, relationship with the Web.

Opened Eyes—as title & theme—and both Anthology/Manifesto and rebelling against it then—as these Visual Poets and Poems present a myriad openings and ways for continually Opening Eyes of persons everywhere into Visual Poetry and into the worlds in which Visual Poetry lives, everywhere around one, to be Found hidden in plain sight/site/cite.

Visual Poetry as Visual—Sonic—Visceral—living and working, aware, in the Actual which includes also the Virtual--

Opened Eyes are ways of continually learning to see, hear, touch and live in the world, among al its manifestations—and to express these in ways whose limits can never be set—

Onwo/ards!!—

Thanking with all my heart & being Alex Davies & the Editors of Opened for inviting me to work with them in creating this site—

& Thanking profoundly the Visual Poets here, friends & fellow workers who continually Open my Eyes and Being in, to, with & for the world--

1. re the dedication:—

Beloved friend and mentor, Bob Cobbing, who personally Opened my Eyes to my Vocation & told me—"you'll have a very hard life, but never forget, (making art) is the most fun thing in the world to do—"

I think of Bob as being the most important Visual/Sound/Performance Poet of the

Images © David-Baptiste Chirot



Contributors to Opened Eyes

BuZ Blurr, Clemente Padin, David-Baptiste Chirot, Dmitri Babenko, Edward Kulemin, Gleb Kolomiets, Guy R. Beining, Harry Burrus, Hilda Paz, JW Curry, Liliana Esteban, Luc Fierens, Tim Gaze

second half of the 20th century—as Bob also ran Writers Forum, both the weekly workshops and incredibly productive & revolutionary press, edited a great many varied and revolutionary anthologies, was the first to create Visual Poetry without using letters, the first to use the copy machine as a tool for Visual Poetry . . . the too

Vast-to-think-on-all-at-once array and amount of contributions Bob made as well as his encouragement and publishing of a wide range of poets from the most obscure to the most famous—everything that Bob did helped to create not only a much wider world for Visual Poetry and Poets, but also is an example that one may live truly totally as a Visual Poet, as a way of Being in the World—

Gulley Jimson: a fictional painter in the novel *The Horse's Mouth* by Joyce Cary. As an artist, one understands that one uses elements of material reality to create fictions—while also using fictions to create works of material reality—Gulley has inspired me to the point that Bob once said to me—when I tried to say HE was Gulley—no!—YOU are Gulley Jimson!--

*Opened Eyes will be available to view on the **Opened** website in October.*

IF P THEN Q: LIVE ONLINE

streaming readings

By James Davies

What?

if p then q launches. Huth - ntst. Clarke – Silveronda. Jenks - *. Joy as Tiresome Vandalism – Absolute Elsewhere¹. Odder Bar, Manchester. World Cup 2010. Was organised by Marinetti? JTV – multimedia presentation of Nøjagtig Pamplemousse². Jenks and Clarke live at Odder /streamed out to the net³. Huth live performance in Huth's house / stream to net / broadcast at Odder⁴.

Pre June 23rd

Find a bar with a projector, amp, speakers, screen, central location etc.⁵ Tell as many people as you can that it's on; both the live reading and the live stream. Speak a lot before the event with your performer (Geof Huth) on Skype and Ustream to check it's working. Make sure the connection is strong: it's strong. Arrange, that for June 23rd, I will write in chatroom ten minutes before the start of Geof's set to confirm that all is working in Manchester.⁶

June 16th get a group e-flier which advertises Odder is showing ALL world cup games on the big screens in the upstairs bar that if p then q is using (i.e. including June 23rd England versus Slovakia⁷). 3-5 o'clock = England versus Slovakia, if p then q launches 6.30 onwards, 7 onwards Ghana versus Germany. Email the events manager at Odder to find out what's going on. 'They're NOT showing the Ghana/Germany game BUT she won't be there on the night⁸.' (On a previous eve-

ning I'd organised, taking some sixth formers to see the Caretaker in Liverpool from Manchester, we'd missed the first act due to being stuck in traffic coming in for a Champions League game between Liverpool and Lyon).

June 23rd

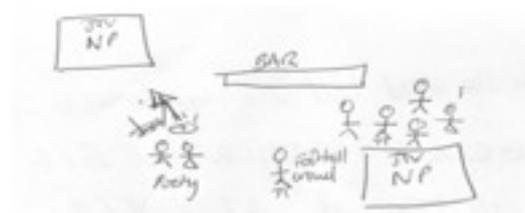


Image © James Davies

Everyone's been sent home early to watch the football. I'm at Tom's Chop House a quiet bar near work. If England lose then maybe they'll all go home. If they win... They win. Britannia rules the waves etc. Walk over to Odder bar⁹. The place is heaving but heaving with football fans. Ask the barman if he'll announce somehow that there's a poetry reading going on. He skulks it. We set up the PA. It all works. The jukebox is playing¹⁰. The barman turns it off. The laptop plays Thomas Fehlmann to accompany Nøjagtig Pamplemousse, which is now on the big screens. Guy comes up to me and asks if I've turned his songs off. Over the mic I tell people there's a poetry reading going to start soon and tell them one to one at the tables that they either need to leave or be quiet. They

Footnotes

¹ Published by Knives Forks and Spoons Press.

² <http://vimeo.com/12929617>

³ Not yet uploaded at the time of writing but will appear on the **if p then q** website.

⁴ <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/7847260>

⁵ Could be as simple as a projector of your own, a wall and mini speakers using the amp from the laptop.

⁶ Speech is one-way; from the broadcaster; on Ustream the free internet provider I used. The other person has to communicate through some other means. This could be by phone.

⁷ An important day for the empire.

⁸ Marinetti.

⁹ This is a two level bar. The big screens are in the upstairs bar which aside from events in never used.

¹⁰ Wonderwall, etc.

¹¹ 6.50-7.00

¹² England Fans 1 - Geof Huth 0

¹³ Pwoermds

¹⁴ England Fans 1 - Geof Huth 1

¹⁵ England Fans 1 - Geof Huth 2

¹⁶ Remember Geof Huth wasn't aware of any of the goings on in Manchester and the size of the audience, although he was aware of his internet audience numbers.

don't move. The pizzas keep coming. The drinks keep on being served.

The poetry audience, which has now developed to around 20 or so, stands wondering what's going on/how this is gonna work with 60 or so England supporters crooning.

I turn the music off. Shut Nøjagtig Pamplermousse down. I commuciate with Geof in the chat room. We'll begin in 10 minutes. Geof says so to the audience. At this the football fans are bewildered; who is this guy? What the fuck etc? Geof clears his throat live¹¹. Football fans continue talking. They're not leaving. The drinks are still coming¹². I write 'GO' in the chatroom (it is 7 o'clock and Geof's reading must be over by 7.45 and the machines re-arranged etc to stream back out Lucy and Tom which I've advertised as being 7.45). Geof begins. First he reads from ntst¹³. I get some of it. Hear it in waves. My head is getting towards that stage where noises merge; lots of background and foreground all at once.

Next Geof reads a long piece he's just written. After that he plays the didgeridoo. The England fans cheer: the reading has held their attention in some way all along¹⁴. Then Geof does one of his beautiful poem songs: a kinda talismanic wailing.¹⁵

Geof signs off¹⁶. Gets a round of applause which he can't hear. We take a break. The England fans finally fuck off. Now we're back, streaming the events from Manchester back out onto the net. Geof can hear us from his home computer and we give him another well deserved round of applause. A fantastic set. Lucy and Tom's performance, to a now quiet and engaged audience, are also fantastic. The event finishes. I get drunk. But not as drunk as Simon.

Some brief thoughts about current streaming technologies

- The technology works;
- A top performer can really utilise the technology to aid performance and make it feel live and in person;
- At the moment at least it is a novelty;
- The time lag from another country makes the reading slightly surreal;
- That there is no audience in person with Geof was also a surreal experience as a viewer;
- Both broadcasts got around 15 viewers attending; there may of course have been other attendees in the physical space;
- Watching from home enables people to see just the readers they wish to see;
- Anyone who lives in Manchester but doesn't want to come to the event can still see it;
- Presumably these people wouldn't come to a live reading in any case;
- People who cannot get a babysitter can watch;
- People from overseas can watch;
- Performers can perform from overseas;
- There is an easy link up with twitter etc.;
- You can communicate with others during the reading in the chat room. However the poet will see what you're writing either live or in a recorded log;
- You cannot screen comments in the chat room;
- Ustream can record the event from your webcam although the quality is not wonderful.

Logbay is a new regular feature dedicated to recording some of the more interesting poetry-related material on the internet. Click the individual titles to be taken to the full versions.

RESONANT FREQUENCIES: THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOUND POETRY AND NOISE

4th july

By Matt Dalby

‘My intention is to demonstrate areas of similarity between sound poetry and noise. I believe that they are on a continuum of practices that also contains what’s often referred to as sound art, and share a number of important characteristics. This is a purely personal perspective, and I would like to emphasise from the beginning that I am not a musician but a sound poet. My background is more literary than musical, essentially I am a partly-informed layperson...’

LONDON CROSS-GENRE FESTIVAL!

15th july

By Posie Rider

‘Amongst the wholly enjoyable performances, I was delighted by Caroline Bergval, who seems to be able to unmake and remake language at will, like an illogical egg, opening up all of its little foibles to scrutiny and exploring its political and sexual connotations, like a comprehensible Derrida. Marianne Morris' utopian love and disgust soared in a delightful Canadian lilt above electronic beats like the thinking (and then thinking and then smoking and then some more thinking) woman's George Pringle, and if it is possible to want to take out a rental on a Brooklyn apartment with someone purely based upon their solo performance of a multi-voice play after a nine hour transatlantic flight, then Corina Copp would be the woman to do it with. I would simply like to have a conversation passing her in the hall to the bathroom in the morning. She has some of the best sentences I have ever heard...’

Read *Susana Gardner* on the Festival.

WHEN DOES A MASTER POET ACHIEVE?

15th july

By Ron Silliman

‘When does a master poet achieve that indelible (if impossible to generalize) state we call mastery? With a few poets, there is a moment that clearly announces the occasion, such as Allen Ginsberg’s Howl, an instance so defined that everything else by this same author can clearly be characterized as before or after. In many cases, the process appears so gradually you don’t see it, maybe don’t even guess that it’s coming, until one day you look at a book and it shines, transcendent, and you realize, looking backward, that’s this is something that has been there for some time...’

ANNA MCKERROW’S “TAROPOETICS”

23rd july

By John Sparrow

‘I am again reminded of O’Sullivan in the way that these poems tread a delicate line between the intricate and fragile on the one hand and the brutal on the other. Sonically and thematically, condensed phrases are sometimes gentle on the ear, but just as likely to be cacophonous and jarring. As with the voice dichotomies, this is where the poems foreground their linguistic construction to me and open up the real joy of experiencing the text...’

SPEAKING OUT

28th july

Context: read *this*.

By Boris Jardine & Lydia Wilson

‘Although there were plenty of reasons not to respond to **J.C.’s piece in the TLS**, we eventually decided that a letter to the editor was justified, not least because J.C. had basically denied that anyone could possibly enjoy the CLR’s poetry, or poetry like it...’

THE SILENCED GENERATION

28th july

Context: read *this* and *this*.

By Jessica Smith

‘The problems with Silliman’s blog and its effect on contemporary poetry are in the comment boxes. Now, as we all know, comment boxes are notorious for being a place where a few self-appointed “experts” on any subject can whack off listening to their own voices. Comment boxes are more often frequented by men, and they’re usually angry, aggressive men looking for an argument. This is true everywhere on the internet, not just on poetry blogs. A few years ago, Silliman’s comment boxes were especially poisonous; I’m not entirely sure what changed, but they seem to be less active now. However, when active, they are still poisonous...’

JUST ONE MORE ONE MORE BOOK

28th july

‘This time around I caught the campaign in passing at first, which is interesting in itself: perhaps a certain degree of fatigue in passing email references, like "Salt are in trouble again", but with no link to the campaign or explanation for what was up. It's the third time now and it's kind of depressing to see that things haven't got better for them, for all the hard work, innovation in poetry publishing and exciting, diverse lists of authors. And the worry is that people are going to get tired of repeated bail outs...’

THE HOLLOW MEN

30th july

By Ken Edwards

‘Over the years, all of this fiction has subsided into a low-energy state of middlebrow product, over-marketed and over-praised, as Josipovici justly points out.

Enough of this already: where is the innovative British fiction of today?...’

FIELD REPORT, CRS VOL. 5 31st july

By Joe Luna

‘What is the scope of our insistence on the plurality of address in contemporary experimental poetry? What are the implications of articulating, either by direct or inverse means, a polis whose basis is the entrainment of a readership into a productive and necessary milieu through which to act, to respond, to engage? How does this process relate to poetry’s designs on the folk, the people of which a community of poets is always a slight but inevitable instance? What are the designs of the people upon the poets? What are the ramifications of the activation of space in a play called The Reading for, in the first instance, the people who were there and for whom that space becomes radically theirs, and in the second instance for everybody else? How much does everybody else even matter, or do they remain a they, a kind of vaguely intimating, abstractly regressive and unproductively somnambulistic Das Man until entrained into the utopian projection of our superabundance of desire? What, in any given reading or performance, can possibly be said to be assumed?...’

* REVIEWED 2nd august

By Philip Davenport

‘There’s no sense of an overarching schema, no symphony, no grand homophonic ending. This is channel-hopping faster than eye or ear, driven by panic and punctuated with nervous jokes. In the tone of it, I’m reminded of nobody so much as neurotic old Brit comedians, Kenneth Williams or Hancock, the weirdness of their emotional hygiene, the horror at the approach of their ogres. Held in the throat of the poem is Ken Williams’s skreeking laugh, Hancock’s tussle with the melancholy of each bloodied day...’

WHAT’S UP WITH SILLIMAN? THE MYSTERY BUILDS

6th august

Context: read *this* and *this*.

By John Latta

‘The question I’ve posed then about the ethics of Silliman’s erasure of a massive amount of text by others remains open—assuming, again, his action is not the blameless result of a computer industry expert and long-time blogger not yet having a handle on the machinery: Why, without a word of regret, would he take out, in one hit, a huge record and resource—in many instances containing material of potential value to future readers—from unmediated critical access and use?...’

COUNTING BACK- WARDS #2 7th august

By Richard Barrett

‘After the initial bafflement which then became a kind of terror, the spectacle in front of me began to seem somehow funny. I don’t know why! I think I was at the stage where I had simply exhausted every other possible reaction. I didn’t know how else to process what was happening on stage. The laughter didn’t last long though!...’

AVANT WRITING SYM- POSIUM, DAY 1 19th august

By Geof Huth

‘There’s no way I can adequately report on today’s events at the Avant Writing Symposium 2010 in Columbus, Ohio. Too much happened in too short a time, and even all the documenting we did (notes, audio, video) will be enough to capture the fun, the information, the camaraderie, the beauty we experienced today...’

Further Reading

- Sean Bonney is running an occasional sequence called ‘after Rimbaud’ on his blog, **abandonedbuildings**;
- Chris Goode continues to weave tremendous spiels over at **Thompson’s Bank of Communicable Desire**, where every post is too ranging to attempt a summation.
- Peter Philpott presents an **excellent primer** on a few of the Poets of the Nine.
- Timothy Thornton’s piece on **recreational pamphleteering** is a must-read for anyone who considers him or herself interested in hand-crafted publications.

UNCONTAINABLE EX- CITEMENT 20th august

By Tony Trehy

‘The artistic bankruptcy of the hegemony continues to manifest in an implied but fundamentally aimless desire for renewal. With no recourse or capacity to language itself as the source of renewal, much as they dally in writing for children or try their hand at plays, or as reviewed recently, even curating exhibitions (Duffy at the Tate), supposedly this “very exciting award highlights the many forms in which poets work, from poetry collections to verse novels; radio poems and film poems to libretti and verse dramas; individual poems or poem sequences; work for adults or children; through to poetry written for public sculptures, inscriptions, or other contexts”...’

BLUE BUS; OPENNED TABLE; SITUATION ROOM

photos

Images © Georgie M'Glug



Blue Bus

Amy De'Ath & Elizabeth Guthrie (2)

Opened Table

Joe Luna (4)

Situation Room

Timothy Thornton (1)
Elizabeth Guthrie (3)



THE EBOOK NOVA

Collaboration, Cohesion, Copyright¹

By Lara Buckerton

Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iPad; Google Books, and (soon) Google Editions – we want to show restraint as we explore these developments. On the other hand, we don't want to rule out in advance those possibilities which happen to sound bizarre, frightening or exhilarating, in case these possibilities turn out to be the pertinent ones. It's not necessarily even a question of "steering a path between" scepticism and hype, since we can't rely on the compromise of two dogmatisms to be undogmatic itself.

Thus the ever-so-slightly experiment format of this article. It's a disputation in two parts.³ In this part, I describe something called "the New Book." I've given that deliberately hyped name to a deliberately hyped concept. The New Book is a free extrapolation of existing technologies and existing habits. It's a "free" extrapolation in the sense that it is unconstrained by social, political, economic and legal contexts.⁴ In the next part, I'll closely consider just *one* aspect of the UK legal context – originality. By looking at how the New Book's originality would be construed by the current law, I want to expose something which underlies that law and its wider institutional and cultural setting.

Ghosts

I'm treating the New Book, because I think I'm all that, as a matter of life and death. I put the word *Nova* in the title because it meant something new-born, and referred to something dying.⁵

"It is a very strange world indeed," writes Leslie McFarlane, "when a ghost could be dispossessed by another ghost."⁶ As digital technologies reinscribe the limits of what can be considered writing, not everything new-born in the circle is new. Some aspects of a pre-Romantic mode of literary production return to prominence.⁷ *I see you perched there*, "Edit." You have "Cut" (Ctrl-X), "Copy" (Ctrl-C) and "Paste" (Ctrl-V) furled up inside you, don't you? But I rarely turn to you for such powers, because by now they are in my hands. When my hands started to learn keystroke shortcuts, they learnt copy and paste first. Perhaps my hands felt copying and pasting wasn't part of *editing* so much *writing*?⁸ Is there anything that might not, eventually, become part of writing? One idea is that the dead should not write. Whatever we let writing become, we should not let it become something that the dead do.⁹

The Device

Sony's Reader, Amazon's Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook¹⁰ are designed to soothe the fears of book-lovers.¹¹ They use e-ink and e-paper to create a stable pattern which reflects light like printed text.¹² Their main drawback is their low refresh rate.¹³ So they can't show video or animation, and they can't show things like smooth scrolling or mouse pointer motion. Apple's iPad comes out of a slightly different tradition.¹⁴ It's a tablet, lying somewhere between a smartphone and a laptop. It uses Wi-Fi or a 3G data connection to

"If by books you are to understood as referring to our innumerable collections of paper, printed, sewed and bound in a cover announcing the title of the work, I own to you frankly that I do not believe (and the progress of electricity and modern mechanism forbids me to believe) that Gutenberg's invention can do otherwise than sooner or later fall into desuetude as a means of current interpretation of our mental products . . ."

Octave Uzanne²

get online. It's more versatile and better-connected than the e-readers. However, its display is similar to that of a normal computer screen.¹⁵ This means it uses more power, is difficult to read in bright lights, and may weary your eyes.

Footnotes

¹ By me, Lara Buckerton! An expanded version of a paper with a different title which I wrote for the Material Cultures 1990 conference.

² Octave Uzanne, Scribner's (1894), quoted by Priscilla Coit Murphy, "Books Are Dead, Long Live Books" (on p. 80 of Thorburn & Jenkins (eds), *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*).

³ I mean, it's like a **hypothetical case considered by a Roman schoolboy** and the whole time I've been writing it, I've been raving and eating BBQ'd chicken and dancing to MIA, nuff chunes, and thank you Samantha Walton, John Cayley and Alex Davies for invaluable and moreish assistance. Thanks also to everyone at Material Cultures 1990.

⁴ And barely constrained by the technological context. The license which I take is sufficient to classify this article as science fiction. Like many works of science fiction, it's less interested in extrapolating the future from the present than it is in exposing hidden aspects of the present. As you're reading it, you will think, "Why me, why has this happened to me? What did I do wrong?"

⁵ **SN 1572**, which Tycho Brahe wrote about in *De nova et nullius aevi memoria prius visa stella*.

⁶ Leslie McFarlane, the original ghostwriter of the Hardy Boys series (quoted in Elianne Riska, *Masculinity and Men's Health: coronary heart disease in medical and public discourse*, p. 67).

⁷ Cf. Adrew Piper (2009): "Few issues have become more contentious today in our emerging environment of digital communication than that of sharing [...] Rather than offering another trenchant critique of the current institutional exuberance for ever stricter mechanisms of copyright [...] by identifying the richness of a literary and intellectual tradition of sharing and sharedness, we can begin to understand contemporary digital practices not as essentially aberrant but as standing in a long and [CONT...]"

Come with me. Works of the New Book incorporate audio, video, hypertexts, cybertexts (“texts that involve calculation”¹⁶ in their production of their perceptible writing surface) and gameplay, including massively multiplayer online gaming. Works tend to exist in many versions. They are integrated with forums, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, academic and fan journals, news syndicates and retail sites.

Craig Mod muses, “10,000 of us reading the same Kindle book, each of us highlighting and taking notes. Would the aggregate of this not be illuminating?”¹⁷ Work and adjunct are indistinct. Similarly, using the New Book blends traditional categories of reading, writing, editing, publishing, reviewing, criticising, curating, archiving, performing, adapting, maintaining relationships, and reporting and staying abreast of current affairs. Perhaps it blends work and leisure.¹⁸

Recombination

In the next three sub-parts, I’ll point out some contemporary specimens. I think these specimens are suggestive of the building blocks of the New Book – recombination, a Semantic Canon, prosumers. You might want to float through the associated PowerPoint¹⁹, but it’s not essential.

Talan Memmott’s “Self Portrait(s) [as Other(s)]” is a recombinant portrait and biography generator. There are over 120,000,000 possible recombinations.²⁰

Next, Ovid, translated by Arthur Golding. Unlike the Memmott piece, this was not written with recombination in mind. Yet I have replaced some of the combatants’ names with those of Material Cultures conference-goers:

Full dearely shalt thou by it (quoth Roger Chartier) may I get
 A weapon: and with that in stead of weapon, he did set
 His hand upon a vovd harts horne that on a Pynetree hyc
 Was nayld, and with two tynes therof he strake out cyther eye
 Of Joseph Walton: whereof sum stacke upon the horne, and sum
 did flye
 Upon his beard, and there with blood like jelly mixt did lyc.
 A flaming fyrebrand from amids an Altar Linda Carreiro snatcht,
 With which upon the leftsyde of his head Eyal Poleg latcht
 A blow that crackt his skull. The blaze among his yellow heare
 Ran sindging up, as if dry corne with lightning blasted were.
 And in his wound the seared blood did make a greevous sound,
 As when a peece of steele red hot tane up with tongs is drownd
 In water by the smith, it spirts and hisseth in the trowgh.
 Eyal Poleg from his curled heare did shake the fyre, and thowgh
 He wounded were, yit caught he up upon his shoulders twayne.
 A stone, the Jawme of cyther doore that well would loade a wayne.
 The masse therof was such as that it would not let him hit
 His fo. It lighted short: and with the falling downe of it
 A mate of his that Robert Ritter hyght, it all in peeces smit.
 Then Jerome McGann restreyning not his joy, sayd thus: I would the
 rowt
 Of all thy mates myght in the selfsame maner prove them stowt.²¹

Such a thing can be done quickly and easily, for quite large texts, using a Word Processor’s “find-replace” tool.

Notice that Golding’s heptameter has been lost²². “Full dearely shalt thou by it (quoth Roger Chartier) may I get / A weapon” – there are too many syllables in “Roger Chartier.”

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⁷ [CONT...] legitimate history [...] When we take into consideration the romantic miscellany in its entirety, when we attend to a range of paratextual elements such as bindings, front-matter, and dedicatory leaves along with the texts that such material aspects enclosed, we can observe the intricate ways that romantic miscellanies were addressing questions of sharing and the sharedness of writing during a crucial moment of historical change in the conditions of writing. Miscellaneity in the romantic era was intimately related to questions of partiality and commonality that surrounded the problem of shared writing. Where critical and collected editions contributed to the differentiation of literary property, the format of the miscellany strongly responded to a social need to have literature in common [...] As I will show, such questions were first and foremost articulated through the presence, whether real or imagined, of handwriting in the miscellany [...] (*Dreaming in Books: the making of the bibliographic imagination in the romantic age*, pp. 126-7). Cf. also Whitney Trettien (2009) on **digital cut-ups and the poetry-generating volvelles of the baroque**.

⁸ In the Q&A to his *Editions and Archives: Digitizing Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, Jim Mussell suggested that the naturalisation of digital materialities is happening right now, and so to a certain extent the chances to analyse it are slipping away. As if **Vorhandenheit becomes Zuhandenheit** at midnight? It was either Mussell or Bonny Mak, or some other badger, whom I recently heard coining the term “artefacts of the now” in roughly this connection (and cf. obv. Andrea Brady’s **Archive of the Now**).

⁹ Cf. Raoul Vaneigem in *Movement of the Free Spirit*: “The more we seemed locked into the mechanical gestures imposed on us since childhood, the more we became convinced of some indescribable, barely fathomable, luxuriance that can only be called life – to distinguish it from survival, its economic, and economized form [...] clear, too, that life usually ends precisely because it has never begun (which most people only recognise in their last moments) [...]” (trans. Ian Patterson).

¹⁰ There are others on the market and there have been many others – the Opus the iRex, the eSlick, etc.

¹¹ In many respects, book-lovers palpitate unabated. “I’d rather lose my paperback than my expensive bullshit.” “I quite like second-hand bookshops.”

¹² “The principal components of electronic ink are millions of tiny microcapsules, about the diameter of a human hair. In one incarnation [electrophoretic], each microcapsule contains positively charged white particles and negatively charged black particles suspended in a clear fluid. When a negative electric field is applied, the white particles move to the top of the microcapsule where they become visible to the user. This makes the surface appear white at that spot. At the same time, an opposite electric field pulls the black particles to the bottom of the microcapsules where they are hidden. By reversing this process, the black particles appear at the top of the capsule, which now makes the surface appear dark at that spot” – from **eink.com**. The Nook also has a small separate colour touchscreen. Flexible e-paper also exists, although it’s not used by any of these e-readers. Colourful e-ink is at the prototype stage, **more or less**.

¹³ Research into cholesteric liquid crystal e-ink is promising in this regard.

Footnotes

- ¹⁴ Smartphones, Personal Digital Assistants, tablets (the iPad is usually classed as a tablet), portable DVD players and handheld game consoles.
- ¹⁵ The iPad uses In-Plane Switching LCD, rather than the dominant twisted nematics LCD, so viewing angle is improved compared with most normal computer monitors. "LCD screens, even in black-and-white mode, get washed out in bright sunlight. And if users turn on the backlight to improve the contrast, they are likely to draw down the device's battery. On top of that, reading on an LCD means you're staring into a light source, which produces more eyestrain than reading words by reflected light" – from **Wired**.
- ¹⁶ Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: perspectives on ergodic literature*, p. 75. In Aarseth's terminology, cybertexts are texts that involve calculation in their production of scriptons.
- ¹⁷ "Embracing the Digital Book" (April 2010).
- ¹⁸ Cf. **microcommerce**. Cf. certain kinds of **crowdsourcing**. Cf. **reCAPTCHA**. You do the math.
- ¹⁹ Which should be **here**, or you may be able to find it poking around **Quiche Straight from the Bucket**.
- ²⁰ **Try it out**. Keep clicking. Look for seams, and look for mistakes. "The full-frontal, heroin chic of Matisse's canvases was controversial, and the critiques of the work, the theory advanced by the work lead to the development of the Neo-Gothic aesthetic." Is there something wrong with "the critiques of the work, the theory advanced by the work"? What about this: "He predicts, like Nietzsche predicts James Dean. ...like, artaud film fodder father... Paul Matisse became so very 20th century."
- ²¹ **Dramatising inter alia** "Carrying Across: Revealing the Intermediary in the Transformation of Texts" by Linda Carreiro (University of Calgary), "Where Did All the Manuscripts Go?" by Robert Ritter (University of Oxford), "What Do Scholars Want?" by Jerome McGann.
- ²² Cf. *Society of the Spectacle: The LISP Translation* (2009): "The thpeactacle ith the moment when the commodity hath attained the total occupation of thocial life. The relation to the commodity ith not only vithible, but one no longer theeth anything but it: the world one theeth ith ith world. Modern economic production extendth ith dictatorthip extenthively and intenthively" (Guy Debord / Jason Hoelscher, p. 31). Notice "dictatorthip" – "dictator's hip"? (It wouldn't have been tough to replace "sh" with, say, "*" and restore them after replacing "s" with "th." Distinguishing the soft "c" sounds – "thybernetictth" – would take more than simple find-replaces).
- ²³ I used Matt Butler's **Open Wound** cut-up engine to parse it – but last I checked, the Open Wound was all sutured up. In fact, the page had been replaced with a page where the gigantic word "YES!" appeared. I had really only just finished reading Thomas Bernhard's *Lés*, so it was a terrible word to see.
- ²⁴ Confused by the capital letter beginning the line, and by the Latinate syntax, I guess.
- ²⁵ "Summer holidays!" Chet Morton exclaimed. 'No more school until September.' / The stout, good-natured boy lounged half asleep between Frank and Joe Hardy in the front seat of a powerful yellow convertible. With a soft purr, the car moved swiftly past the carefully tilled fields of the Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. / Dark-haired, eighteen-year-old Frank Hardy was at the wheel. He kept his eyes upon the road which would lead them to the green bulk of the Pocono Mountains later [CONT...]

I don't know if software exists which can parse scansion. But there certainly are programmes which can tag writing according to a variety of useful categories. For example, here is a similar passage, grammatically anatomised:

Fierce/JJ Linda/NNP Carreiro/NNP ,/PPC from/IN the/DET hearth/NN a/DET burning/NN brand/NN Selects/VBZ ,/PPC and/CC whirling/JJ waves/NNS ;/PPS till/IN ,/PPC from/IN his/PRPS hand/NN The/DET fire/NN took/VBD flame/NN ;/PPS then/RB dashed/VBN it/PRP from/IN the/DET right/NN ,/PPC On/IN fair/JJ Eyal/NNP Poleg's/NNP temples/NNS ,/PPC near/IN the/DET sight/NN :/PPS The/DET whistling/VBG pest/NN came/VBD on/IN ,/PPC and/CC pierced/NN the/DET bone/NN ,/PPC And/CC caught/VBD the/DET yellow/JJ hair/NN ,/PPC that/IN shrivelled/NN while/IN it/PRP shone/NN ./PP Caught/VBN ,/PPC like/IN dry/JJ stubble/NN firdd/NN ;/PPS or/CC like/IN seerwood/NN ;/PPS Yet/RB from/IN the/DET wound/NN ensued/VBD no/DET purple/JJ flood/NN ;/PPS But/CC looked/VBD a/DET bubbling/JJ mass/NN of/IN frying/VBG blood/NN ./PP His/PRPS blazing/VBG locks/NNS sent/VBD forth/RB a/DET crackling/JJ sound/NN ;/PPS And/CC hissed/VBD ,/PPC like/IN red/JJ hot/JJ iron/NN within/IN the/DET smithy/NN drowned/VBD ./PP The/DET wounded/JJ warrior/NN shook/VBD his/PRPS flaming/JJ hair/NN ,/PPC Then/RB (/LRB what/WP a/DET team/NN of/IN horse/NN could/MD hardly/RB rear/JJ)/RRB He/PRP heaves/VBD the/DET threshold/NN stone/NN ,/PPC but/CC could/MD not/RB throw/VB ;/PPS The/DET weight/NN itself/PRP forbade/VBD the/DET threatened/JJ blow/NN ;/PPS Which/WDT dropping/NN from/IN his/PRPS lifted/VBN arms/NNS ,/PPC came/VBD down/RB Full/JJ on/IN Robert/NNP Ritter's/NNP head/NN ;/PPS and/CC crushed/JJ his/PRPS crown/NN ./PP Nor/CC Jerome/NNP McGann/NNP then/RB retained/VBD his/PRPS joy/NN ;/PPS but/CC said/VBD ,/PPC "So/NNP by/IN their/PRPS fellows/NNS may/MD our/PRPS foes/NNS be/VB sped."/NN²³

So "[t]he" is tagged as a determiner, "whistling" is tagged as a "gerund," "pest" is tagged as a "noun" and so on. Again, notice some mistakes. "So/NNP by/IN their/PRPS fellows/NNS may/MD our/PRPS foes/NNS be/VB sped."/NN" – "[s]o" is tagged as a "proper noun," "sped" is tagged as a "noun."²⁴

Tagged with the right kind of metadata, writing becomes available to more sophisticated recombinatory procedures. Page one of Franklin W. Dixon's *The Clue of the Screeching Owl* (1962) wastes no time.²⁵ "The stout, good-natured boy [Chet] lounged half asleep between Frank and Joe Hardy in the front seat of a powerful yellow convertible."²⁶ Frank has dark hair and Joe has fair hair. Chet is fat. If these attributes were tagged throughout the book, then, just as gamers customise the avatars they play, *we* could see Frank in chestnut ringlets – or adjust Chet.

Instead of replacing a signifier, like in the Ovid specimen, we would replace a *sign*. We would avoid sentences like, "Suddenly, the candle blew out, and the room was plunged into curly chestnut!", because metadata would discriminate the relevant instances of the word *dark*.

But Chet is more than fat. He is also timorous. Frank is dependable and Joe is mischievous. All three, I think, are *hardy*.²⁷ Could we find-replace their 1950s States-side masculinities with those of Spike and Xander?²⁸ Or find-replace the trio with Harry Potter, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, and their attendant discursive subjectivities, capacities, dispositions?

Find-replacing a *signifier* (substituting the word *Hermione* for the word *Chet*) is easy. Far more is required to find-replace a *sign* (substituting Hermione for Chet). If we replace craven Chet with valiant Hermione, why would she run away from the owl?²⁹ If Hermione enchants the owl, how does that influence the *denouement* – now that they have an owl?

Consider an infrastructure from which any writing quickly acquires supplementary existence as a set of overlapping “resources,” such as characters, settings, plot, theme, and mood³⁰, available for transplant into other texts.³¹ Let’s call it a Semantic Canon.³² That term is by analogy with Tim Berners-Lee’s Semantic Web,³³ the desideratum of Web content remediated³⁴ as machine-manipulable meaning.

The Semantic Canon

The Semantic Canon acknowledges logical and other relations among tagged fragments of writing, and appreciates their accumulations towards discursive integrity.³⁵ It notices connotations and draws inferences. Thus the corpuscles of the Semantic Canon are not words, but semantic resources.

This is the domain of artificial intelligence, and especially of commonsense knowledge bases.³⁶ Let’s assume that artificial intelligence systems, integrated³⁷ into the Semantic Canon, correlate tagged fragments with relata in its commonsense knowledge bases. So the Semantic Canon can reason from and among them using a plural ensemble of commonsense rules, including generic/discursive rules of thumb, policy embedded in everyday practices, cognitive heuristics, biases and economies (e.g. *modus ponens*, dialectic argument, superficial analogy and pigeonholing), and induction, intuition, inspiration, incubation.³⁸

The next question is, how does the Semantic Canon ensure that all its writing is appropriately tagged whenever invoked? How does it secure a fragmentation that, at any given moment, leaves nothing important out?

One way of getting there is a well-known mode of mass online collaboration³⁹, the kind that creates Wikipedia. A comparatively non-hierarchical host of users make *ad hoc* contributions, and evaluate and edit each other’s contributions (often when they should be doing something else, or *are* doing something else). Meanwhile, bots sweep the corpus, doing gruntwork and making crude mistakes, while aficionados write the guidelines, debate the utility of conventions, and tinker with the frameworks.

As Adam Smith almost wrote, “It is not from the malevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect Kwashiorkor, Rickets and climate change, but from their regard to their own interest.” The web site TV Tropes demonstrates that at least some people *like* collaboratively dismembering culture. *TV Tropes* is a misnomer. It’s a rhetoric of popular culture, covering television, film, books, games, comics and other things. The TV Tropes community propose tropes – like “You Have Failed Me . . . For The Last Time!” – and collect specimens and allusions.⁴⁰

But I doubt that the modes of mass collaboration which underpin Wikipedia and TV Tropes could get us all the way to a Semantic Canon. Its sheer scale⁴¹, and the imperative to have any new content immediately available semantically, implies automated semantic analysis. Nor is it a matter of conceiving a lucid and relatively permanent division of labour between people and machines. Rather, we’d be looking

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²⁵ [CONT...] that sunny June afternoon. / Meanwhile, his blond-haired younger brother Joe said, ‘There used to be witches round here, Chet. See that sign? It’s to ward them off.’ / He pointed to a brightly painted circular design on a huge red barn. / Chet Morton had opened an eye as the car moved past the barn. ‘What is it?’ he asked. / ‘A hex sign,’ Joe told him. ‘Supposed to keep off lightning and protect the farm against witches.’ / ‘Witches!’ The plump boy straightened up, looking worried. ‘Today?’ / ‘Sure,’ Joe Hardy went on teasingly. ‘If a witch puts a spell on your cow, she won’t give milk. Those circles keep off the curse.’”

²⁶ Franklin W. Dixon (James Buechler), *The Curse of the Screaching Owl*, p. 1.

²⁷ “In the 1950s, Americans had come to be obsessed by an interest in the performance of the self. Personality was a term that captured the vision of self striving towards self-fulfillment, self-expression, and self-confidence, features needed in a consumer-oriented society. These hedonistic traits contrasted with the qualities of “the moral athlete of Protestant culture” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the signifier of which was “character” (Rieff 1959, 356; Susman 1984, 273). / When hardiness was introduced into the medical vocabulary in the early 1980s, the change in terminology also suggested a broader cultural shift in the kind of traits envisioned as needed for success in a new social and cultural order. The cultural shift signaled the reimagining of the meanings of dominant masculinity. The reimagining reinvented character, a classical theme in American popular discourse, as shown in the Hardy Boys series. It was no longer hardness, but rather its gentrified version, hardiness, that was privileged. The valorization of hardiness rests on shared features between the Hardy boys and the hardy executive. These features could be called commitment, control, challenge – the three core dimensions of the construct of hardiness developed by Maddi and Kobasa (1984, 31). / First, the Hardy boys and the hardy executive are committed to their family, friends, and small-town life. The nuclear-family ideology is a given and the broader cultural matrix within which they find their own self-confidence and identity as men. / Second, the Hardy boys and the hardy executive are action oriented. Theirs is a world full of agency. They have clear goals and adopt a problem-solving approach to life and its challenges. Although they act fast and encounter difficult situations, they never lose self-control because they are committed to certain situations. / Third, they accept whatever challenges confronts them in their everyday life, because challenges in life are personal challenges and like adventures in that they provide an opportunity for an exploration of the self and the search for and validation of male identity. Yet these boys and men are team players and show social responsibility. In short, the Hardy boys and the hardy executive have character, that moral fiber that makes them never give up, makes them work hard, makes them work for the public interest instead of their own self-interest.” Elianne Riska, *Masculinity and Men's Health: Coronary Heart Disease in Medical and Public*. Cf. Riska’s abstract of her 2002 essay, “From Type A man to the hardy man: masculinity and health”: “This article describes the transition in American ‘stress’ literature from a focus on ‘Type A man’ to the ‘hardy man’. These two diagnostic categories were constructed in medical discourse and entailed [CONT...]

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- ²⁷ [CONT...] certain notions of masculinity, class and health. The constructs explained the rise of unhealthy (coronary-prone) American middle-class white men in the 1950s and the emergence of healthy men in the same class, race and gender order in the 1970s. I show that the construction of Type A man rested on the medicalisation of the core values of traditional masculinity, while the term 'hardy man' demedicalised and legitimised these values.”
- ²⁸ From *Buffy*. Obviously nobody would bother with Angel.
- ²⁹ I've only read page one, so.
- ³⁰ Of course, these categories reflect certain traditional ways of breaking down texts. It is possible the New Book would be accompanied by the rise of new basic corpuscles, ones which right now are really counterintuitive.
- ³¹ So not every sign would be find-replaceable – to be honest, I'm not sure how useful that terminology would be under any serious pressure. But there would be vague classes of resource within which members would tend to transplant well, and to write the Rosetta stone for any two existing classes would tend to require imaginative stamina, rather than a big breakthrough.
- ³² The term “canon” is imperfect – I suppose I could say “corpus.” I like “canon” though because it implies that things have been left out.
- ³³ The Semantic Web is about two things. It is about common formats for integration and combination of data drawn from diverse sources, where on the original Web mainly concentrated on the interchange of documents. It is also about language for recording how the data relates to real world objects. That allows a person, or a machine, to start off in one database, and then move through an unending set of databases which are connected not by wires but by being about the same thing” (www.w3.org/2001/sw/).
- ³⁴ Or do I mean intermediated? Or do I just mean “transformed into”? I'm not sure. Simon Jarvis: “Now, last low vocative of the ending-cult, / blow out the pilot light. / Disintermediate the vocoders. / Empty this plea of efficacy”. That's intermediation in the sense of **financial brokerage**, a sense to which N. Katherine Hales doesn't seem to be deliberately alluding: “Grusin and Bolter's arguments in *Remediation* demonstrate insightfully that complex feedback occurs between the oppositional strategies of immediacy and hypermediacy. Nevertheless, for my purposes I prefer the term ‘intermediation.’ ‘Remediation’ has the disadvantage of locating the starting-point for the cycles in a particular locality and medium, whereas ‘intermediation’ is more faithful to the spirit of multiple causality in emphasizing interactions among media. In addition, ‘remediation’ (thanks to the excellent work Grusin and Bolter have done in positioning the term) now has the specific connotation of applying to immediate/hypermediate strategies. / Because the dynamics I want to explore go far beyond this particular cycle, I would rather use the lesser known ‘intermediation’ (which, being not as well known, is more open to new interpretations). To make the term more useful for my purposes, I want to expand its denotations to include interactions between systems of representations, particularly language and code, as well as interactions between modes of representation, particularly analog and digital. Perhaps most importantly, ‘intermediation’ also denotes mediating interfaces connecting humans with the intelligent machines that are our collaborators in making, storing, and transmitting informational [CONT...]

at people and machines flowing around inside reflexive structures made of people and machines.⁴²

Generatively dynamic interplay between architecture and behaviour implies surveillance. Enhanced Editions already tracks at what times readers start and stop reading. Barack Obama's memoir *Dreams From My Father* tends to get read a lot around lunch-time, whereas Nick Cave's road trip novel, *The Death of Bunny Munro*, is popular in the wee hours. From captured data, the Semantic Canon would aim to reconstruct readers' and users' tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge isn't the end of it: even principled ignorance reveals something about the semantic context in which it plays out. Another project, Text 2.0, involves a reading device which tracks the user's saccades and text which adapts accordingly. For example, stare puzzled at a difficult word, a definition emerges nearby.⁴³

Prosumers

Even with such a structured, pluralist, reflexive mode of mass collaboration, I suspect the limits of the Semantic Canon would always be conspicuous. Like a kidney transplant, a semantic transplant would probably “take” more or less well. I've alerted you to some errors in the recombinant text specimens.⁴⁴ Forgiving, creative and editorialising readers are the New Book's last resort. There, I guess, the kidney analogy ends.

Having entered a keyword such as *Mary Wollstonecraft* into Google, you may have come across garish, banner-filled pages purporting to offer “Mary Wollstonecraft ringtone MP3s” or “cheap flights to Mary Wollstonecraft.” Don't go. Often there's accurate but generic biographical content, repeating what's on Wikipedia. This is probably “scraper software,” detecting your query, and assembling this site by drawing bits of vaguely relevant information from all over the Web. Using a similar principle, Philip Parker at one time had over 100,000 non-fiction books listed on Amazon.com.⁴⁵ Parker's algorithms “collect publicly available information on a subject” and Parker, “aided by his 60 to 70 computers and six or seven programmers [...] turns the results into books in a range of genres [...] printed only when a customer buys one.”⁴⁶ If one should draw from out his bookes what he had stoln from others, his paper would remaine blanke.

As Parker “skim writes” such potboilers as *The 2007-2012 Outlook for Tufted Washable Scatter Rugs, Bathmats and Sets That Measure 6-Foot by 9-Foot or Smaller in India*, he blurs the distinction between consumption and production. This elision is characteristic of certain communities which, unlike Parker, are not concerned (or not primarily) with profit. What are sometimes called *prosumers*, according to Tapscott and Williams (1997), “do more than customize or personalize their wares; they can self-organize to create their own. The most advanced users [...] no longer wait for an invitation to turn a product into a platform for their own innovations. They just form their own prosumer communities online, where they share product-related information, collaborate on customized projects, engage in commerce, and swap tips, tools, and product hacks.”⁴⁷

Prosumption and fan art are aspects of each other. Machinima makers use 3D combat games to create short films, including domestic sitcoms, soap operas and game shows. These films do not always explain why every character is an

armoured trooper with a laser gun. The general lesson is that prosumers may impose very exacting standards, and work meticulously and hard, without making seamlessness a high priority.⁴⁸

Even if recombinant semantic works are far from seamless, prosumers may still want to read them, and to use them as basis to skim write works for others.

So much for the New Book. It's a reverie, deliberately extravagant and awkward. In the second half, I'll set it among some specific contextual constraints from UK copyright law.

This is part one of an unfinished, ongoing essay by Lara Buckerton. Parts two will appear in the next issue of the Opened Zine.

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³⁴ [CONT...] processes and objects" (*Writing Machines*, 2002).

³⁵ You could say, reviving an old behaviouralist term, "appreciate their means-ends readiness towards discursive integrity."

³⁶ Here is an example of a story written by an automated narrative generator drawing on the Open Mind Commonsense knowledge base. The first sentence was directly supplied by a human. If a spirit resists employment, the rest is commonsense: "John became very lazy at work. John lost his job. John decided to get drunk. He started to commit crimes. John went to prison. He experienced bruises. John cried. He looked at himself differently." Hugo Liu, Push Singh, "MAKEBELIEVE: Using Commonsense Knowledge to Generate Stories" (2002).

³⁷ A big ask? But I have all these natural language scripts, transframes, semantic nets, frames and frame arrays, K-lines and polynemes, neural nets, and micronemes!

³⁸ Adapted from a list by Marvin Minsky (2000), "Commonsense-Based Interfaces."

³⁹ Often *crowdsourcing* is used to refer to something pretty similar.

⁴⁰ For example, "You Have Failed Me . . . For The Last Time!" is "subverted" in the Douglas Adams Doctor Who episode "The Pirate Planet." "The villainous Captain hisses 'When someone fails me, Mr. Fibuli, someone dies!' — then kills a random extra instead of the person who actually failed, because he's too useful to kill just out of pique" (**TV Tropes**).

⁴¹ Throughout most of this, I assuming that *everything* is within the Semantic Canon — that is, everything that is accessed on the converged New Book device. So yes, it's the world wide web, it's what's currently in Google Books, etc., but it has a quality of rapidly assimilating anything appearing at its fringes. But I suppose that most of what I say in this section also applies to a slightly more modest version, in which the Semantic Canon is only, for example, a semantic remediation of the texts currently on Gutenberg.

⁴² One potential problem for the Semantic Canon is the tension between ontologies and folksonomies. Ontologies classify content in a relatively consistent manner. Categories and criteria are developed in advance (after some kind of audit, dipstick, general impression etc.), and if content provokes their amendment, retrospective reclassification preserves consistency. Category proliferation is constrained. From the standpoint of retrieval and recombination, the Semantic Canon needs an ontology. Folksonomies, by contrast, are haphazard. Folksonomies are built "bottom-up" by crowds of taggers. (It can be tough to describe what tagging is without confusing tags with keywords. A bit of cardboard with strings coming off it is quite a useful metaphor. A single bit of cardboard (a tag) can be attached with string to many different objects. But crucially, two different bits of cardboard could have the same keyword or keyphrase written on them. Of course, there could always be a rule to prevent this from happening — a rule that says, "if you want to tag something with a keyword that is only in use, you don't get any more cardboard, only more string." In any given content management system, tags could be compulsorily isomorphic with keywords). Sturtz (2004) describes a folksonomy as "the complete set of tags — one or two keywords — that users of a shared content management system apply to individual pieces of content in order to group or classify those pieces for [CONT...]

⁴² [CONT...] retrieval. Users are able to instantly add terms to the folksonomy as they become necessary for a single unit of content” (“Communal Categorization: The Folksonomy”). In many folksonomies, mutually exclusive conventions prosper. Their structures reflect personal idiosyncracies, instincts rather than the consistent application of criteria. Path-dependence can lock their development into peculiar classification strategies. They are littered with one-member sets, and with a sediment of hesitant, ignorant, experiment, and regretted identifications. But folksonomies can grow quickly, adapt quickly, and they are tools of discovery, are founded in precisely the phenomenology of reading and use which the Semantic Canon needs to model. The tension between ontologies and folksonomies shouldn’t be overstated. I think that technologies of the Semantic Web ensemble already relieve the tension to some extent. Fuzzy and other methods being developed to reason from and among the contents of knowledge bases (q.v.) also occupy a complex middle-ground. Consider stuff like **fuzzy databases and querying languages, webs of trust** – decentralised cryptographic authentication systems – and **evolutionary computation**. Suppose there were “fuzzy tags” whose attributions would consist in values above 0 (0 implying neither here nor there) and no higher than 1 (1 implying relevance). Adjusted values would be used by various processes in their private calculations, and processes would share their adjustment rationales with each other and evolve strategies for which processes to “trust” when. Indeed, fuzzy tags could consist in a bundle of attribution values which decomposed and expanded the quality of “relevance” in various ways, and processes could do more than “trust” each other, developing extremely rich networks of interdependent dispositions which would elude anthropomorphication. Let’s go ahead and call the reconciliation a “folkology” – a fragmentation which unites the advantages of ontologies with those of folksonomies. Suppose the “folk” making the folkology includes various mutually redesigning classes of bots. Suppose the distinction between top-down and bottom-up loses meaning, because the cyborg folk constantly iteratively revises its own infrastructure (via **stigmery** and other processes). Individuals are steered by incentives, certainly – but individuals and incentives are distributed so that they overlap and nest. The system’s master incentive, however, is to mask the distinction between its living and dead constituents – between “understanding” something and “dealing with something as though it has been understood.” This may even extend to incentivising the living against certain practices which prove difficult to semantically model.

⁴³ The **demo video** is pretty funny.

⁴⁴ Here’s one particularly tough nut. Intensional statements, whose logical truth values alter with the substitution of co-extensive terms, *still* pose problems. Let’s suppose that the New Book is clever enough to know that “the author of *The Clue of the Screeching Owl*” is a normally valid substitute for “the author of *The Mystery of the Aztec Warrior*.” But is it a valid substitute in the sentence, “Hermione wished she were the author of *The Mystery of the Aztec Warrior*”?

⁴⁵ Or some other large number! I can’t remember how I came up with 100,000. The NYT article said 200,000, a search under Parker’s name produces a handful of results, and a search under Icon Group [CONT...]

⁴⁵ [CONT...] International produces over 600,000 – the first few pages are POD editions of out-of-copyright texts aimed at Spanish-speakers learning English. Difficult and rare words are translated into Spanish at the bottom of the page, but of course, the translations give all the senses listed in the Webster’s source, not the relevant ones. The product description makes a virtue of this: “Rather than supply a single synonym, many are provided for a variety of meanings, allowing readers to better grasp the ambiguity of the English language, and avoid using the notes as a pure crutch. Having the reader decipher a word’s meaning within context serves to improve vocabulary retention and understanding.”

⁴⁶ Noam Cohen, New York Times, “**He Wrote 200,000 Books (but Computers Did Some of the Work),**” (April 2008).

⁴⁷ *Wikinomics* (1997) p. 126. Cf. Yates and Sumner: “Without generic form, members of discourse communities, particularly virtual ones, may experience problems developing and invoking the shared background necessary for effective communication and coordinated practices. / Here, we argue that such communication breakdowns stemming from a loss of fixity will not occur. Current technology *has* destabilised existing genres compared to print technology. However, the result is not a breakdown or loss of recognisable genre. Instead, the distinction between producers and consumers of digital documents is being blurred and we are seeing the democratisation of genre production. More people are providing more input (either implicitly or increasingly explicitly) into the creation and production of genres. As a result, over time communities evolve increasingly well-defined genres to better support their particular communicative needs and work practices. In effect, rather than seeing a lessening in the role of genre, *the new burden for providing fixity in communications is being met by increased reliance on genre*” (Digital Genres and the New Burden of Fixity).

⁴⁸ Or perhaps, it *is* a high priority, it just doesn’t inform in an uncomplicated way where prosumers devote their attention. The rules of thumb for what looks like product and what looks like rubbish are changed. The consumption of any text is also its production. There’s a case to be made that the very bearing towards difference which makes it productive of meaning contains an impulse to exterminate difference. Whether or not, readers are certainly capable individually and collectively of accommodating a more jagged and mismatched texture than is required of them by the modern print publishing industry.

OPENNED PRESS LAUNCH photos

Image 1 & 3 © Amy De'Ath; 2 & 4 © Tommy Peeps



1
2



3
4

The launch of Richard Parker's from The Mountain of California ...

Richard Parker (1)
Rumour Cubes (2, 4)
Audience (3)



**BIRD PUKE**

wanting shot of books in 140 characters



The birds are singing sweet. But they are singing tweet tweet over and over again in the same pitch. It is a repeated sound loop.



[@franciscrot](#) Aggggrrrrrr-egate. <http://dripdrydesire.blogspot.com/>



A tribute to Leslie Scalapino, who died in May, up at BBK: <http://bit.ly/a6P41D> #fb



We release PoemTalk 34 - on Charles Olson: <http://poemtalkatkwh.blogspot.com/>



Watch William S. Burroughs shoot William Shakespeare—(without the use of a time-machine, unfortunately...): <http://is.gd/dLpgR>



Modern day troubadour Simon Armitage who's just walked 264 miles funded by donations given in return for poetry readings joins us 2230 BBC2



This heat makes me treat people as sex objects. And vice versa, more worryingly



Is this real cocaine on the postcard, I'm not sure. It came through the mail this way. (pic) <http://twitpic.com/296xv8>



Sarah Palin's struggle with English language - Telegraph <http://instapaper.com/zYph5z01L>



Parades! Parades!



They annotate the works of Louis Zukofsky (RT [@hallockhill](#)): <http://www.z-site.net/>



The New Yorker ([@NewYorker](#)) takes an interest in UbuWeb: <http://is.gd/dT3n9>



First entries have appeared on our [#LiteraryLive](#) events interactive map
<http://gu.com/p/2ty87/tw>



Tell me, tell me, tell me the answer. You may be an udder but you ain't no cancer.



Tonight on Mad Men, Don Draper asks Peggy to translate "Subterranean Homesick Blues."



Letterpress Amy – lovely short documentary about old-school hand-printing
<http://vimeo.com/13418969> [#iloveletterpress](#)



Frank Kermode, who wrote for the LRB from its very first issue, died yesterday in Cambridge.
<http://bit.ly/abcyXa>



'I wrote 2U B4!' British Library shows up textspeak as soooo 19th century:
<http://wp.me/pkigh-Q8>



They design a bot that can compose poetically nonsensical tweets by sampling and remixing the rest of Twitter: <http://twitter.com/frellnik/>



The Telegraph (UK) takes an interest in the title of my book "Eunoia":
<http://is.gd/ezHyF>



Card cover for display from saw blade



amazing. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pwbQyJDFzQ>



Most listened-to PoemTalks in the last month: 1 Olson, 2 Mesmer, 3 Creeley, 4 Grenier on WCW, 5 WCW, 6 Spicer, 7 Stevens, 8 Howe/Dickinson.



cat in a bin is awful, yes, but can someone tell me why there was a CCTV camera pointing at a garden wheelybin in the first place?

AND a new issue

By Adrian Clarke

Witness to Bob Cobbing's encouragement of verbal and visual creativity in Hendon in the early 1950s, the first issue of AND magazine, co-edited with Mary Levien, appeared in 1954. Further issues in 1961, 1963, 1966, 1969 and 1973 - all co-edited with John Rowan - despite the assurance in No. 4 that "it comes out regularly every three years", together established the basis for a pattern of sporadic publication that was reinforced when, bringing me in as co-editor, Bob returned to the magazine, publishing two issues in a single year in 1994.

Irregularity was never confined to frequency; it extended to design and content equally, from the black ink anthropomorphic figures by various hands scattered through AND 2, to the eccentric overall design of AND 3 and the envelope of loose sheets of freehand and typographical experiment that constitutes AND 5. The magazine's literary credentials are testified to by work in early issues from, among others, Thomas A. Clark, Henri Chopin, Bill Griffiths, Lee Harwood, Anselm Hollo, dom sylvester houédard, Ernst Jandl, Jeff Nuttall and Stefan Themerson.

I had been published by Writers Forum and a regular attender at the WF workshop for a few years when Bob suggested we revive the magazine together. I suspect one of his motives in asking me was to have someone else to blame for rejecting sub-standard work from his cronies; I was happy enough with that, as with our often hilarious editorial sessions in which Bob demonstrated an awesome ability to grasp a text while I was still registering its title - and with the malt whisky tasting that usually followed.

We co-edited five issues together in all, Bob giving me some final instructions for AND 11 from his bed in intensive care. Nos. 7-11 continued the established "verbi visi" mix, adding contributions from abroad by Bruce Andrews, Hartmut Andryczuk, Charles Bernstein, Karen Mac Cormack, Rea Nikonova, Serge Segaye and others, and from new faces at the Writers Forum workshop including Sean Bonney, Jeff Hilson and Chris Paul along with the Chileans Andres Anwandter and Martín Gubbins who went on to start a Foro de Escritores in Santiago on their return.

I edited a further issue alone in 2004 - to celebrate AND's 50th anniversary - which I thought might be the last, until the conjunction of Jennifer Pike Cobbing's approaching 90th birthday and Ulli Freer's willingness to join me as co-editor determined otherwise. Ulli's connection with Bob goes back further than mine - in fact, right back to his teens, and I feel his approach to writing, collaboration, performance and publishing is in a very similar spirit to that which guided Bob, or at the very least in one wholly compatible with it. The magazine's ethos remains unchanged.

The new issue, combining regulars from Gilbert Adair to Mike Weller with some new names - Steven Fowler, James Harvey, Elizabeth James, Anthony John and Stephen Mooney, is dedicated to Jennifer, as are many of the individual contributions, including Geraldine Monk's sshhott!! - a four-page colour deconstruction of a frame of pool balls that pays witty tribute to her legendary cueing talents, and Robert Sheppard's BACKGROUND PLEASURES, "tessellations" whose open arrangement on the page responds to her movement in performance with Veryan Weston.

Sticking with the alphabet, from the extract from Adair's sable smoke testifying to his epic struggle with the unpredictable next word:

guano stay afloat doubloon-doubtless pinta glad dhosa calcine-well & rill dia-mwand ... return preposition chipped temp wedge

through to Weller's torquing of the predictable into a hilarious neo-gothic charade in casual reading 3:

....
long-togged scarramouch
opened all his seals and vials
nimble-as-a-cat
look-e here, put thy live leg here
in the place where mine once was

this issue is as various and innovative as any yet. I'm pretty sure Bob would have approved.

AND 13 is available from 1 Swanfield Road, Whitstable, CT5 4HL for £4.50 + £1.50 p&p - cheques payable to Adrian Clarke.



Image © Adrian Clarke

Bob Cobbing (30 July 1920 - 29 September 2002) was a British sound, visual, concrete and performance poet who was a central figure in the British Poetry Revival.



Stephen Emmerson's work has appeared in Great Works, Poetry Salzburg Review and Spine, and poems found at the scene of a murder has recently been published by zimZalla.

Image © Stephen Emmerson

BLART

a new magazine for innovative poetry

By Stephen Emmerson

I've set up blart in an attempt to encourage people to submit work which they may feel is 'too experimental', or work which they are unsure of in some way. That doesn't mean I want bad poetry, it just means I want something out of the ordinary. Visual, sound, and generated poetry are all welcome.

One of the ideas I've had is for a magazine within a magazine. After the first edition of blart is finalised I am going to send a notebook to one of the contributors. They will fill in one of the pages with artwork, a poem, found material, whatever, and send it on to the next contributor. The book will eventually find its way back to me, and I will scan and upload the results, creating a virtual notebook within the context of blart.

I've been working with Chris Stephenson co-editing SPINE poetry magazine for a while now, and blart came about as an experiment really. Its been very important to me to keep active in publishing other peoples work. One of the reasons I've found this necessary is that the poetry scene in Leeds is non existent, unless you want to go and listen to rhyming stand up or Hallmark card poetics.

Gareth Durasow, Chris Stephenson, and some other guy ran LETTERBOMB in Leeds for a while, which was primarily organised as an open mic night with a focus on innovative poetry. We thought we'd have a 1000 secret Mallarme's jumping out the wallpaper at us, but it ended up descending into farce. We invited Tom Jenks and Allen Fisher over to read at the event on different occasions, and neither poets went down well with the audience. We thought we could introduce a new kind of poetry to the people that were coming and get them on board, but it didn't work. People just didn't want to know. They wanted to read and write poems without getting out of their comfort zone, which is fine, I'm not suggesting that that isn't a valid pass time, or a closet-cleansing psychoanalytical warm feeling in the chest hobby, but poetry

isn't a hobby to me, and I don't believe that writing like Simon Armitage or Carol Anne Duffy is relevant today.

You can submit work to Blart by e-mailing

brokenbonebooks@yahoo.com. Deadline for submissions 1st October.



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